



Union Street

A joint zine by Jeanne Gomoll & Scott Custis

© Pink Slip

[JG] Last week I received notice that the Department of Natural Resources has decided to eliminate all three graphic design positions. All three of us graphic artists went up to the Bureau Chief's office, one after another, and were told that our last day will be August 1, 2003. I've been with the Department for 23 years. My co-worker, Georgine Price has worked here 25 years; and Linda Pohlod has been a so-called "limited term employee" for at least 10 years. A lot of other people received "at risk" notices the same day I did, but I haven't heard any numbers yet. Our bosses are "respecting our privacy" and have not yet publicized the extent of the carnage. Layoffs are happening in most other Wisconsin departments as well. All of it's due to the state's serious budget deficit. Wisconsin's financial woes are rooted in former Governor Tommy Thompson's exuberant spending sprees on the prison system and road-building. In spite of the market crash, prison and road-building lobbyists are now successfully protecting their subsidies, and as a result, Wisconsin's educational system and any other programs disliked by Republicans are suffering. The DNR is, of course, a prime target. (On the other hand, because it is protected by the road-building lobbyists, Scott's job at the Department of Transportation is safe. And that's a good thing.) Most of us at the DNR believe that the legislature is consciously (and gleefully) dismantling our department. What was formerly one of the most progressive, most effective, and most respected natural resources departments in the United States is being reduced to a toothless, badly wounded organization. It's sad.

I go back and forth feeling angry and scared and overwhelmed by everything I need to do in the upcom-

ing weeks. But I think I'm doing OK. Mostly I am focused on making the best use of my time left at the DNR to get ready to do freelance work. I've been burning cds so that I have copies of job files from the past couple decades, putting together a resume, designing business cards, and contacting DNR clients to let them know that I will be available to take jobs as a private contractor. I'm registering with the state procurement office so that state employees can legally hire me as a contractor. I'm making plans to upgrade my equipment and the electrical service in my office at home. My bosses may have chosen the discrete path in order to "respect the privacy" of laid off personnel, but I'm not going quietly. I just sent out a first round of about 350 emails to DNR staff for whom I've done design work in the past decade. The news of the elimination of the graphic artists' section will come as a complete shock to almost all of them, and I suspect that a fair number of them are going to express their anger to upper management about the situation. Not that I think this will have any effect on the decision to eliminate our positions, but I'm glad to provide the first shockwave of criticism to those who made the decision. I've already begun hearing back from some of my clients, and most of them sound really worried about how they're going to get their publications designed and have promised to send me work if they can. Within a week after receiving my layoff notice two clients have already promised to send me work. I have no idea how many real jobs this will actually yield, but I'm very hopeful that I will be able to support myself financially.

Some of the time left until August 1, I'll spend organizing files for when we're gone and finishing up jobs that we accepted before the layoff notice, especially for potential future clients. I'm also keeping an eye on the job bulletins, because in spite of everything, I'd really rather keep getting a paycheck every two weeks than take this huge, unplanned risk and deal with the chronic uncertainty of the feast or famine freelance life. In fact I have already applied for a graphic design job. It is the one and only graphic artist position currently being offered by any state

agency in Wisconsin. It would be a one-step demotion for me (Senior Graphic Designer to Graphic Designer) at the UW Medical School; nevertheless, I'd be able to retain my current salary if I get it. Unfortunately, the deadline for automatic transfers has already passed. I've submitted my résumé, but there is a huge number of other applications which means that there's a lot of competition. So I'm proceeding on the assumption that I won't in fact get this job and will be working from home starting in August.

The odd thing is that even though I am scared about the uncertainties of starting my own business, at times I also find myself nervous about applying for other jobs. I'm not scared that I *won't* get the job; I'm scared that I *will*, and that then I'll never find out if I can make a go of a freelance business. The tricky thing is that the only way I will qualify for unemployment insurance is if I apply for at least two jobs each week starting with the first week in August. Freelance income doesn't count. I don't have to report this income. Apparently I could make a million dollars one week and as long as I was applying for jobs regularly, they'd still send me an unemployment check every week. (The assumption is, I guess, that I'm doing freelance work just to "tide me over" until I get a real job.) Anyway, I guess it's a good sign that I'm looking forward to starting my own business to the extent that the chance of finding another job actually feels like something to avoid.

When I'm feeling angry, it's generally about the fact that I'm being laid off only three years before I am eligible to take an early retirement. Georgine is only 2 years away. Both of us have a huge amount of saved-up sick leave, which is very valuable in the Wisconsin state service, and one of the reasons why people tend to stay with the state after they've built up enough seniority. Upon retirement, the hours of the retiree's sick leave are added up and matched by the state. This number is then multiplied by the retiree's hourly wage, and that amount is credited to the retiree for continuation of health insurance benefits. The number of sick leave hours I have right now would yield about \$35,000, or about 5 years worth of health care benefits after retirement. But since I can't retire, I am going to lose it all. (On the other hand, if I get the UW Medical School job, I will be able to take those hours with me, which would of course be a great reason to take the job if only for a few years.)

When I'm feeling scared, it's mostly about losing those bi-weekly paychecks. It's been a long time since I worried about paying basic bills and it scares me to think about going back to that again. I'm also worried about whether I will be able to deal with the business of running a freelance business. I'm not all that good at keeping track of accounts and I tend to get buried in work to the point where it's only when I emerge from a project that I realize

I haven't thought much about what I'm going to do *next*. This happens to me every year after WisCon. And clearly this behavior is something I will have to change because I will need to be constantly thinking ahead to make sure I've got jobs scheduled for future weeks and months. But at this point, despite my doubts, I think freelancing is the thing I need to do, and I'm going to go for it and try my best. I do not want to take a non-artist job with the state for three years. I shocked my DNR human resources adviser by not expressing much interest in looking for non-artist transfer possibilities within the DNR. But I will not go back to typing for a living. Or answering angry telephone calls at the Information Desk. I will not allow my computer graphics skills to languish, and make it much more difficult to get back into the graphics field in the future. More importantly I love this work, and want to keep doing it. So I guess I'm not as scared as I *could* be, because if I was, I'd probably have begged for that Information Desk position.

So despite the flashes of anger and fear, I think I'm doing fine. The layoff notice didn't come as a complete surprise. I think I may have mentioned the possibility to some of you already. I've worked in several bureaus in the DNR; but the graphic artists have never been considered central to any of those bureaus, so whenever cuts were called for, we were always listed as expendable. This is because we work for the whole DNR, not for any one bureau. So when the cutbacks became so severe this year and real layoffs had to be done, we were among the first sacrificed by our bureau (which probably uses our services less than any other bureau we've ever joined). The graphic artists are currently located in the IT department, an arrangement that can only be explained if you assume that it's logical to group people who work on computers together. A lot of DNR staff are really angry that this single bureau which is largely uninvolved with print publications has deprived the whole Department of vital services. But that's the way it's going to go.

Despite draconian cutbacks in the DNR budget (on top of the position eliminations), which will mean an inevitable reduction in the number of DNR publications, some things will still have to be published (including a number of legislatively-mandated pubs) and will need layout and design services contracted from the outside because they are way too complex and high-end to be done with word processing programs. I intend to get as many of those jobs as I can. The DNR spends \$1.5 million each year on printed publications. So far the prediction that the Internet will make print obsolete has not come to pass. The number of publications will no doubt decrease, but I predict that the amount of money that the DNR will pay for those publications that survive will skyrocket. It may even turn out that the bureaucrats will change their minds in not too many years about the business sense of getting

rid of its graphic artists, that is, if they can shift their focus from the elimination of positions to changes that actually save money. If they do, I have automatic reinstatement rights for the next 5 years, and who knows, maybe I'll still retire out of the DNR. I doubt it though.

I'm glad, in a way, that the news came in early June. If it had come any earlier, the stress of my impending layoff *plus* WisCon would have pushed both Scott and I over the edge. It's hard anyway. We had both been happily anticipating a slower, calmer, enjoyable Summer to follow the blistering franticness of the Spring. No such luck now. We had been planning to buy a new used car right after WisCon too, but we're putting that off now. Well, we won't be taking a long driving vacation in September as planned either, so the car thing isn't a big issue now. But I know Scott is really disappointed. He was looking forward to car shopping.

Years and years ago, when I was a teenager, I drove my dad's car to the grocery store. He'd just had the car tuned up, but apparently one of the spark plugs was loose. As I drove home, the spark plug jiggled out of its slot and became lodged against the accelerator. Every time I hit the accelerator pedal, the car would speed up obediently ... and then would lock at that speed. I could go faster, but never slower. By the time I pulled into the driveway I was going way too fast. I had to put the car into neutral and then turn off the motor to avoid a collision with the garage. I still remember dad standing in the front yard with a rake in his hand and his eyes huge as he stared at me barreling into the driveway. Well Scott and I both feel like the accelerator on our lives has gotten jammed somehow, and even though we'd planned to hit the brakes right after WisCon, we're still racing at breakneck speed.

There's so much to do, so many decisions to make.

Scott is being extraordinarily supportive, of course. I've been comparing some of the things he's said in the last couple weeks with what my co-workers' partners have been saying to them. Georgine's partner, Joel, attempted to pressure her into applying for a transfer to that dreadful information desk job, saying that she should be able to tough it out for just two years (so that she could keep her sick-leave-to-health-care-insurance benefits). Linda's partner, Joe, seems to be taking out his own fear and anger on Linda, frequently bursting out with things like, "You have to find a job right away!!" and forcing her to spend a lot of time and energy reassuring him, while she hides her own fears. Both Georgine and Linda have decided to go freelance too, but neither of them has an office set up at home right now and neither has done any freelance work before. In contrast, when I told him the bad news, Scott immediately assured me that he would support my going freelance, even if it meant that I wouldn't be able to bring in much or any money right away because I'd

have to invest in some equipment at the start. He assured me we could survive for a while on his salary, and that I shouldn't worry about the mortgage. Hearing him say that was a huge relief, not only because he agreed with me that my plans were reasonable, but also that there was no suggestion from him that my situation was my fault and if I didn't grab *some job, any job* right away, I'd be making things worse for us.

Of course I need to cut some of my expenses until I see how well I can do as without a regular job. One of the things I brought up in a discussion with Scott was that I will have to reduce the number of books I buy. Scott agreed. As it happened, we went bookstore shopping the next weekend for my dad's birthday/Father's day present and while we were at the store, Scott pointed out Margaret Atwood's new novel. "I should wait till it comes out in paperback," I said sadly. "Oh no, you shouldn't have to wait!," said Scott, and then told me he wanted to buy it for me. Sweet Scott. Nevertheless I will have to get stronger in my resolution. The next day at work, I told Georgine this story and it turned out that she had a shopping story too. She and Joel had also been talking about how they should start economizing. Georgine momentarily forgot her resolution in one shop and started oohing and ah-hing at something. Joel sternly stated "I am not going to buy that for you!" I'm not trying to compare Scott's possibly impractical generosity with Joel's possibly practical frugality. What stands out for me, is that even though it had been only a few days since Georgine had received a layoff notice (she still has two months of paychecks coming), and even though they have been earning approximately the same wages for more than 25 years, he easily and immediately switched into the role of the bread-earning husband in charge of the money. This is something Georgine had expressed as her deepest fear with respect to losing her job, that she would no longer have control over her own finances, that she would become dependant as her mother had been dependant upon her father. Joel knows this. But he said it anyway.

I have a lot to be thankful for, Scott foremost. I am also thankful that I have a set of skills that makes it possible for me to contemplate going out on my own, and that I've kept up with the industry and that I can hope to continue a career in a field I love, despite being laid off. But I'm still scared as hell. And occasionally pretty angry. But primarily OK.

© Mailing Comments on *Turbo* N^o. 201

Lee Murray

[JG] I know you're probably not reading this, but just in case you browse through back-issues of *Turbo* someday, I want to say how much I've enjoyed your writing, your friendship and your stories. Please come back when you can!

© Greg Rihn

[JG] There are three Tiptree judge alumni among the Turbo apa members and ex-members:

- 1993 Jeanne Gomoll (chair)
- 1999 Diane Martin (chair)
- 2002 Jae Leslie Adams

© Tom Havighurst

[JG] I guess it's a little late for PageMaker tips, but if you're still looking for some, my main tip would be to always, always, always use Styles. If you have questions I'd be glad to try to help. I know this program very well even though I've moved on now to Adobe's upgrade of PageMaker — InDesign. Which I love.

© Lisa Freitag

[JG] I never got the chance to ask you at WisCon. *Did* you feel back to normal by then?

© Paul Kincaid

[JG] The barely concealed irritation by the U.S. administration that there are no weapons of mass destruction to be found in Iraq reminds me of cops who plant evidence on the bad guy, and then get really pissed off when the "perp" somehow manages to get rid of the evidence before the official "discovery." My sister Julie just pointed out to me that the White House isn't using the WMD phrase much anymore. They now talk more often about discovering convincing evidence that Iraq had developed *a weapons industry*. What does *that* mean? Anything, I would guess.

Official disparaging words about the effectiveness of the United Nations really gets me angry. The U.S. has engaged in a more or less continual *campaign* to undercut the effectiveness of the U.N. for several decades. I predict that a similar process will happen here in the state of Wisconsin too. After gutting effective programs in the Departments of Natural Resources, Health and Social Services, and Public Instruction, the Republicans will feel completely free to criticize the ineffectiveness of those very program. Skip the future tense; this is already happening.

I also did not want the Iraq war (which the Bush administration has now re-named the *battle* of Iraq) to be started in my name. But having begun it and having claimed that it is now over, even though it's plainly not, I have to say that it all *did* happen in my name and that I share the responsibility to provide reparations and work to install a U.S. government that will not do this again.

Interesting comment about your perception of the difference between American and British use of prescription drugs. Do you assume that most of the drugs taken by Americans are unnecessary — or necessary only because of Americans' typically less healthy lifestyles? Or are you suggesting that Brits are being cruelly refused efficacious remedies for some reason? Or are you hinting that Americans and Brits rely on prescriptions to a similar extent, but that Americans are simply less discreet about talking about their drug use? It seems unlikely that, for instance, a drug that prevents congestive heart failure would be offered to Americans, but not to Brits; and equally unlikely that a Brit would be more likely to refuse a course of drugs that reduced chronic pain. Personally, I take no regular prescription drugs, though I am never without antacid tablets these days and I do take daily vitamin pills. I hope I will be able to avoid needing lifelong prescriptions for as long as possible. Given the horrendous mark-up of drug prices and the lack of adequate insurance coverage, I'm pretty sure that most Americans would not *choose* to rely on prescription drugs; they're just too damned expensive! On the other hand, maybe **Georgie** is right: prescription drug advertisements are hideously effective. But I still doubt that we are, as a population, significantly more hypochondriac than yours. But I have no evidence other than anecdotal observations. Certainly if your observation is correct, I'd sure like to know why.

Yup, five inches of snow is really just a minor inconvenience in Wisconsin. But isn't that the way with many of the garden-variety weather extremes? In the places where they happen regularly, they are treated as the norm. Folks in the southern U.S. states won't evacuate their homes except for the really exceptional hurricanes, and then only at the last moment. People re-build homes on flood plains after flooding and speak philosophically about their endurance. San Franciscan residents treat minor earthquakes as commonplace and have calm, practical plans prepared for the "big one." People on the outside look on and swear they couldn't live in a place so vulnerable to quakes, floods, mudslides, hurricanes, blizzards, tornadoes, extreme temperatures or whatever. But if it's home, we apparently all learn to live with our own familiar weather disasters. We develop efficient ways to cope with the disasters when they occur and expect that we'll survive.

I was going to go into some detail on those great American nominations of mine that you questioned, but I've already read *Turbo* #202 and see that **Greg** did a great job in writing about Robert LaFollette, and that **Vicki** wrote a bit about Thurgood Marshall and George Washington. Thanks Greg and Vicki! Vicki's suggestion as to why George Washington belongs on a list of great Americans closely resembles my own opinion. As the first president, Washington's behavior established an ideal that remains powerful to this day, and that is that government should embody the ideals of its revolution. If a different man had been our first president, one perhaps more enamored of pomp and royalty, I think the presidency would be a much different thing today. It really has to do, in my mind, with the power of how an organization *starts* and the people who are on stage in the first act. Maybe I'm being disrespectful to compare the beginning of whole nation to small SF groups, but I think there's something extremely powerful about how a group or a nation starts. Before there are any traditions to keep or bend, *anything* is possible, and so a new group or nation can go wild. The individuals who are part of that beginning, experience a thrilling sense of power when they realize that starting a new thing is so easy.... Much easier, in hindsight, than it is to change the traditions later on, inch by inch. I do, I think, have a bit of sympathy for the so-called "Great Man" theory of history, though of course the pronoun riles me.

I agree, my list of great Americans is missing a representative of jazz and/or blues. The day after we published *Union Street*, I thought of Scott Joplin and wished I'd included his name. Scott growled at me, though, and said "TEN! You were supposed to choose only ten names!" As for Sinclair Lewis, well actually that was a typo or memory-o or something. I meant Upton Sinclair, one of the great muckrakers of the early 1900s.

© Jim Nichols

[JG] I'm glad you are all alive and undamaged too.

© Ruth Nichols

[JG] Ah, George R.R. Martin's series, *A Song of Ice and Fire*... I fear that in future years we addicts of this series will have to form a support group to help one another cope with the long periods between new novels being published. I am looking forward with vast impatience to the fourth book, even more than I am to the new Harry Potter.

What a scary experience that accident must have been. It sounds like your kids did exactly the right thing. I'm glad you're all OK!

© Jane Hawkins

[JG] It is great seeing you here in *Turbo*, Jane!

I loved *Lilo and Stitch*. I was taken completely by surprise by Lilo's unorthodox family, though amused that Lilo's sister resembled a single mom in everything but her title. (**Lisa** commented on this too.) I especially liked the lack of skinny white girls in major character roles. The great thing about this movie for me was how it affirmed the value of chosen families. (I wonder what the religious right wing nuts think about it?) I'm glad you found a self-affirming nugget in it for yourself, because you are most certainly still good. A LOT good.

Seattle is a wonderful city; the northwest is an attractive place in general to me. The first time I visited back in 1979 (?) is when I met you, and I think I knew then that I could find a home there. I almost did move when Vonda's sister offered me a job in Seattle, but then the DNR made its own offer, and I ended up staying here in Madison. It's hard to imagine how different my life would have been if I'd left. Actually, I can still imagine moving there.

I totally agree with you that Jackson's *LotR* is a masterpiece because Jackson and the people who made the film loved the book and put all their passion into making it right. Ironically, the Harry Potter movies have been incredibly faithful to their books too, but their makers may have lacked the passion about the original which may have accounted for the lack of spark in the films themselves.

© Jeannie Bergmann

[JG] Scott's and my experiences at the candlelight vigil was similar to yours at the peace rally which seemed, as you wrote, "long on purpose, short on direction." We didn't chant slogans, it being a candlelight vigil, but we were led by a drummer as you were. In fact, by the time we got up to the top of the Capitol steps, Scott and I happened to be standing right next to the drummer, who seemed rather nonplussed that everyone was following him, since he had no idea as to *where* he should be leading folks. Myself and a couple other people ended up telling him what we'd read on-line, that the march was supposed to meet with a stationary vigil in front of the City-County Building. We urged him to lead us around the Capitol building and down Martin Luther King Boulevard, which he was glad to do. We met the "stationary" vigil on Main Street, whose members were just as confused as we had been and as we approached them, they turned around and we all tramped down MLK Blvd together. Once there, people began looking around. We expected, I think, that speakers would appear. But none did. We waved at some inmates waving down to us from their cells in the upper floors of the City-County Building. We sang a few songs. And then

people began wandering away from the crowd, blowing out their candles as they left. It was definitely anti-climactic. The walk up State Street and looking down at the river of candle light snaking down State Street was wonderfully inspiring, but due to the haste with which the event had been organized, the ending felt rather scattered.

Thanks for telling us about the Internet Anagram Generator! Since my name has so many vowels the generator turned up a long list of alternate names for me. Some of my favorites were:

Lola Mennejog
Joan Melengo
Mango né Jello
Jay Melon Noel
Mean Joel Long
Mean Jello nog
Neal Glen Mojo

Very cool. Scott's name yields fewer but still interesting variations:

Sci Cuts Tots
Tics Cuts Sot

As for chariots drawn by polar bears, that seems a familiar image from *His Dark Materials*.

Comments on *Turbo* N^o. 202

Greg Rihn

[JG] You wrote that you were appalled to learn that program participants are eligible to vote for WisCon's guests of honor. Not true, actually. Everyone who attends WisCon is eligible to *nominate* a GoH, but only active concon members are eligible to vote. Programming participants are not considered members of the concon. Department chairs must certify that a concon member has in fact actively worked prior to a convention before they can cast a vote in the election for next year's goh. (We used to abide by the rule which required voters to have attended at least two concon meetings, but this has become impractical now that we have so many active out-of-town concon members.)

The WisCon concon does indeed start out with a pretty long list of nominees, which isn't surprising since so many people can nominate. WisCon committees haven't purposely tried to fill multiple guest categories since WisCon 13, or 14 years ago. That hasn't prevented non-authors from becoming guests, but it's true that WisCon has invited fewer non-authors than authors as guests in its lifetime. Out of a total of 64 past guests, here have been 11 author-editors, which is how we most frequently accommodated the tradition of inviting both an author and someone from another category. There have been only two artists (Steven Vincent Johnson, Alicia Austen); four

critic/academics (Susan Wood, Beverly DeWeese, Catherine McClenahand, Susanna Sturgis); five editors (Don & Elsie Wollheim, Jim Frenkel, Gardner Dozois, David Hartwell); and five fans (Amanda Bankier, Gina Clarke, Stu Shiffman, Buck and Juanita Coulson). And I'm not sure which category you'd choose for me. That makes a total of 17 guests from the non-author categories, or a little more than 25% of all our guests. That seems appropriate and democratic to me. These numbers are actually fairly generous compared to the small number of nominations we actually receive in non-author categories.

To me the most "lamentable" part (to use your phrase) of WisCon's goh-choosing process is not that we have tended to choose authors more often than artists or fans or critics, or that our nomination list runs too long ... it is that so very few eligible voters actually vote. Only a small percentage of the concon takes the time to send in their ballot or cast one at a meeting.

© Georgie Schnobrich

[JG] I agree with you that the phrase "whatever doesn't kill you, makes you stronger" is sometimes silly. Certainly it shouldn't be treated as a prescription! ("I need to *suffer* in order to become an artist!" Bad idea.) But in retrospect, I suspect that most people who find the strength to cope with, conquer, or simply to accept the slings and arrows of a lifetime, discover that the strength they found becomes useful for other things too, and that they have gained something valuable from the experience.

Choosing a fictional world to live in raises the question about whether it is preferable to live in an exciting world (in the Chinese sense) or in a boring one. I suspect that most of us would choose a boring one. We would prefer to live in the time *between* holocausts, rather than during one. We might tend to be more interested in *reading* about worlds in turmoil than we are in histories of pleasant, peaceful, quiet times or fantasies of the same type. But, given the choice, we would tend to avoid a world in which we would constantly risk losing access to food, shelter, employment and extended relationships.

© Lisa Freitag

[JG] About 15 years ago, my folks also started saying "I love you" at the end of all our phone calls. The reason was fairly obvious. My brother had just died. We'd all been together with Rick when he died and were all suddenly much more aware of how easy it would be to lose one another. It surprised me too to hear this postscript at the end of each phone call, especially since I didn't feel that Rick's death had actually brought me into much closer understanding with my folks. But I went along with it, and

very quickly got used to saying the same thing at the end of my phone calls.

© Vijay deSelby Bowen

[JG] My negative opinion wasn't about fantasy cons in general, but about the World Fantasy Convention in specific.

© Soren deSelby

[JG] You noticed the power of pretending while performing at *Rocky Horror* performances. I learned as a freshman in college, the first day living away from home, when I pretended that I wasn't afraid of hornets and killed one for a terrorized housemate. I was merely pretending to be confident and capable, but she took me at face value, and gradually I discovered that I could actually become a confident and capable person. But it does seem to take a while to fully integrate the knowledge that one can so easily change how people perceive you. And even more time to realize that the process changes ones real self too.

Good piece on the mixed American message of winning, equality and mediocrity.

© Andy Hooper

[JG] You're sounding a little Clintonesque there, Andy. It depends upon how you define "conversation"! The word isn't a particularly ambiguous term. Not that I think there's anything wrong with apazines that perform more than they converse, I've just been expressing my preference. But it's pretty clear to me that there's a marked difference between the kind of zines you and I tend to contribute to *Turbo*. You say "everything I do here is affected and inspired by everything else I read and see in Turbo, even if I don't necessarily make direct reference to it in comment form." So it's all conversation as long as it was somehow "inspired" by the apa? I don't think so. This is what this kind of the conversation feels like to me: I'm standing in a group talking to several people in a party and I respond to something you or someone else in the group says, at which point you make a long statement that has no direct link to anything that any of us have been saying, at least none that I can perceive. You stare off into space as you speak, seemingly unaware of the conversation going on around you. You are articulate, entertaining and thought-provoking and I almost always enjoy what you have to say, but it's not like I think of you as taking part in the conversation. Your zine this time is a rare example in which I feel like you are actually talking directly to me and to other apa members.

So, one of the reasons you say you avoid direct conversation is because you disagree with some of the political sentiments expressed in the apa? Yeah, it does sound like we disagree on a number of points. Especially on the subject of means and ends. And about whether we should just give up on protesting because the media isn't giving us any credit for having any effect, and about whether the media's estimation of dissidents' power is any kind of real measure of its impact. I might also ask you why you consider voting to be any kind of effective activism when you yourself characterize the last election as something stolen by Bush. Compared to voting in a fixed election, protesting in the street is way more likely to change things. But I don't see why disagreeing would necessarily turn into a brawl. I would actually prefer an engaged discussion, with your part based on the historical background if you like. But you know that about me already. And if you prefer to go back to contributing essays that seem at best tangentially related to Turbo conversations, that's fine too. I just can't call it a conversation.

By the way, speaking of Ken McLeod, Scott and I got to meet him at Seacon in April. He spoke very passionately against the war in Iraq at one of the panels and stated that he was not going to travel to the United States because of the situation. He didn't say how long he planned to avoid travel to the U.S., but Scott and I went up afterwards and told him how much we admired his work and hoped that he might consider coming to WisCon someday.

Thanks for including part of the script from *Why You got this Zine is Late* from Corflu. I enjoyed the performance but was glad to be able to read some of the lines that I missed.

© Jae Adams

[JG] Enjoy your freedom, Jae. But it looks like you're still tethered to some extent. Gotta get those charts out of your system!

© Tom Havighurst

[JG] Sounds like you had a great time in New Orleans. It must have felt much different to be traveling with someone. Did you notice that people talked to you less because you were part of a couple?

I'm really sorry to hear about your mom's death. Take care, Tom.

Comments on *Turbo* № 203

Sorry, no time for comments on the most recent issue. Next time. Scott too.

--Jeanne Gomoll, 19 June 2003