

Welcome to *Union Street* (issue #25 and *Obsessive Press* #124), the zine with the transmogrifying masthead (this month celebrates cabin fever). It is published by Jeanne Gomoll and Scott Custis, who reside in their home at 2825 Union Street, Madison, WI 53704-5136. Phone 608-246-8857. *Union Street* was created on a Macintosh computer—a IIx or an SE at various points in its lifetime—and hardcopy was printed on a Laserwriter IINTX printer. Text was created with Microsoft Word 4.0 and laid out with Aldus Pagemaker 4.0. The *Union Street* Logo was designed with Aldobe Illustrator 3.0 and Adobe Photoshop 2.0. All contents are copyrighted © by Scott Custis and Jeanne Gomoll, 1991. November 1991 for Turbo-Charged Party Animal APA #65. Members FWA.

## BUSINESS

(SC) I hereby cast my ½ vote for Tracy Shannon for OE. Let the Force (or at least a big stick) be with you, Tracy.

(JG) And my ½ vote makes it one whole vote from Union Street for Tracy Shannon. If you need help, please call on us.

## BILL HOFFMAN

(SC) Excellent comments on the Thomas/Hill fiasco. The most frustrating part of it all for me was the behavior of the Democrats. They were completely befuddled. They not only did not grasp the political significance of Hill's allegations, they were unprepared to deal with the ferociousness of the Republicans. The Republicans knew what they wanted and were willing to do or say anything to get it. Truth, justice and fairness had nothing to do with it.

(JG) I was glad to hear that Anita Hill is staying active. The other day I read that she was involved in some sort of round-table discussion in California about sexual harassment in the workplace. Good for her.

Like you, I also heard comments about Anita Hill's presumed liberal views. She must be liberal; her politics are surely opposite to those of Thomas because she is accusing him. It must have been very frustrating to Thomas supporters on the committee, poor boys, who would rather have argued on a slightly higher ground than the sewers they eventually chose, not to be able to directly cite partisan politics for her motivations. Nevertheless, it seems that Republican strategists very quickly understood that they could count on the American public to largely ignore the nuances of reality and cling tenaciously to their initial assumptions. It seemed that many viewers reacted to the televised hearing like dozens of other confrontations shown on TV sitcoms every evening: simplistic, black and white, compact, and after an hour, one can choose sides and click the remote control. Several times during the hearings, Thomas was allowed to suggest in his testimony that his and Hill's politics differed markedly with no challenges from any of the senators listening to him. None of them even challenged him when he voiced assumptions about Hill's political opinions in general. I was really pissed.

Anyway... Shit.

This whole thing makes it clear to me that the whole structure of our culture is still very much infused with the assumptions and mechanisms of sexism. Contrary to the commercials and those who assure us that we should be through with the feminist "stage" (and moving on to "post-feminism") we have not—as a country—come a very long way at all. Some *individuals* have made progress, and that's a tremendously positive thing, both for the individual women and men who have made changes in their own lives *in spite of* the world around them, and for society in general which grows through the growth of its members. But the big things, the real power, has not shifted much at all. The feminist revolution is most certainly not fizzling out for lack of enemies to fight. Unfortunately we've only just begun.

You also brought up a subject of conversation that I have been hearing more and more ever since the Thomas hearings. Even Steve Johnson, here in the apa, broached it. I myself have been approached a few times in the last month about this newly perceived "line" about which guys are now worrying. They seem to think there is some sort of invisible, shifting, nebulous trap out there just waiting for them. If they accidentally step into it, they will be unfairly punished. They worry that they will never find the road signs to warn them away from the trap.

Well, I'm afraid I haven't got a lot of sympathy for these guys. It seems to me that most men have been able to live out their lives without ever having to worry much about how people around them react or feel about their behavior towards women. I don't mean that men are somehow genetically or behaviorally incapable of dealing with subtle emotional signals. In fact, this myth of men's inability to talk about or understand emotions reminds me of men's so-called incapacity to do things like wash dishes, pick up dirty socks and type: it's invoked when the guys don't want to do those things, in the same way that women sometimes invoke the "I'm not mechanical because I'm a girl" excuse.

The only trap is the one that exists for *anyone of any gender* who makes unfounded sexual assumptions about another person. More women than men have always had to deal with this stuff: trying to juggle professional behavior



with friendly comradeship at work, worrying about the line between pleasantness and sexual come-on, dealing with societal norms that shift from one day to the next and from one state to another about whether our clothing is provocative enough to "cause" a man to rape her, or so un-feminine that she should be fired. Welcome to the world, I say to all those guys who are panicked at the idea that they must now pay attention to the feelings, expressions, and even the words of the women with whom they live and work. About time.

Thanks for your comments, Bill. I really appreciated reading them at a time I was largely incoherent with anger and frustration and fear for the future. I miss talking with you too.

Sorry to sound so darned *strident* in this comment to you this time, that's the price you pay for having the first zine and talking about the Thomas hearings. And then you also mentioned Orson Scott Card and I really have to share this clipping with you from—I think—the Queer Nation newsletter. A lot of Madison apa members have already read this, but I think it's important to publish it. I received it from Jessica Amanda Salmonson and I hope it gets circulated in fandom as widely as possible.

## BILL HUMPHRIES

(SC) Congratulations on the engagement. I will be looking forward to a big spring bash.

## BILL DYER

(SC) Good to see you again, ever so briefly, at Nevenah's party. I hope we run into you again before WisCon if you're in town.

## CATHY GILLIGAN

(JG) I mailed you a copy of *JG 40* today; hope you like it. Anyone else that's interested in seeing a copy of my birthday zine, just let me know and I'll be glad to send you a copy.

With all the local Madison news lately about crime on the south side, the growing crack trade, rising violence there, and the city's response ("blue blanket"), I've been wondering how you feel about it. We used to share a wall with you in that apartment building on Petra Place, and though I never had a break-in or violent encounter in that neighborhood, I must confess that I was getting a little nervous about the growing problems in the area, which have gotten much worse in the couple years since Scott and I moved out of there to Union Street. Have you noticed any changes on Petra Place? Are you seeing more cops lately? Have you joined the neighborhood association?

(For those of you non-Madison apa members, Madison's problems would probably not stack up significantly to those of large cities you're more familiar with, but they are significant for our small city. I hope we'll be able to learn lessons from the crises of the huge metropolises and be able to handle our considerably smaller scale problems, which right now seem to be largely imported from Chicago and Milwaukee, as residents of those cities are moving here in an attempt to escape the terrible conditions of those innercities.)

## Homophobic sci-fi author Orson Scott Card confronted...

by Sarah Lightfoot, *Queer Nation*

On July 10, award-winning science fiction author Orson Scott Card, author of the *Ender's Game* series, appeared at University Book Store [in Seattle, WA] for a book-signing, which was visibly attended by Queer Nation. An anonymous letter reached Queer Nation that included an article written by Card in a Mormon journal. In the article, he condemns homosexuality as a moral failing, and advocates the use of homophobic law to exclude Gay, Lesbian and Bisexual people from society. He writes: "Laws against homosexuality should remain on the books, not to be indiscriminately enforced against anyone who happens to be caught violating them, but to be used when necessary to send a clear message that those who flagrantly violate society's regulation of sexual behavior cannot be permitted to remain as acceptable within that society." (From *Sunstone*, February, 1990)

Queer Nation attended the book signing, talked with his fans, passed out informational literature, and urged an immediate boycott of Card's work. A Queer National also confronted Card about his position on homosexuality and informed him of the boycott. His response to the boycott was to accuse Queer Nation of setting out to "starve his children." The response from his fans were mixed: many put back Card's books that they were in line to buy, others ignored Queer Nation's request for the boycott. We were visible, straights were informed, the right knows we're watching. Thank you to ACT UP for passing the anonymous letter to Queer Nation, and thank you to the anonymous letter-writer for keeping us on the ball! Got any hot topics or events for Queer Nation to address or attend? Call our 24-hour Queer Hotline: 720-4686.

## KATHRYN BETH WILLIG

(SC) *He walks down a long corridor lined with doors, most of them nailed or boarded shut. In one office, near east exquisites on a green brass plaque, the Mugwump is catching termites with his long black tongue. The door of the county clerk's office is open. The county clerk sits inside gumming snuff surrounded by six assistants. — Naked Lunch by William S. Burroughs*

I don't think pros, or anyone else, should put up with the sort of abuse described in the Ellison article. I certainly wouldn't. If I were in their position I probably would quit attending cons, too. But I think it is naive of pros to expect that fame only translates into positive attention. Famous means being well known, not necessarily well loved. When I go to a convention, for example, I'm just a Joe Schmoe. I don't expect the red carpet treatment. Just the service I'm paying for. On the other hand, I would be pretty shocked at having a complete stranger throw warm vomit on me.

The point is, pros are treated well at conventions as they should be. But they should also be aware of a certain element of risk that goes along with being well known. They should try to be prepared if they decide to make public appearances. If I wander into a "bad" part of a big city without regard for the risk and get mugged, it is the mugger who committed the crime and should be punished. But I would merit little sympathy for ignoring the risk.

As for your insistence that fans could take more action to deal with pro abuse, I don't agree. Certainly any Con (or hotel) could and should toss out someone for assaulting another guest (pro or fan). However you're idea of making up and circulating a blacklist of "troublesome" fans is dangerous. When does a fan become "troublesome" as opposed to just annoying? I wouldn't want something like that to get started. Too much opportunity for abuse.

I think we've reached the point of "agreeing to disagree." It has been an interesting discussion. I can't tell if your responses are in anger or just exasperation, but I hope I haven't really pissed you off as that was never my intent.

(JG) *"Go! Go! Go!" they chant, pissing all over themselves with laughter. — The Western Lands* by William S. Burroughs

I wouldn't want to participate in a fandom that adopted the sort of police state tactics you seem to be advocating. I got upset enough a few years ago at the noxious behavior of some of the fannish paramilitary teams that some cons employed to run security.

We cannot require small-con behavior in the huge conventions that exist today, any more than society in general has been able to require that people behave towards everyone else in a big city in the same way as they would behave toward a member of their family. It would be nice, since some of us fondly remember cons in which it seemed as if we were all members of a big family, but it just won't happen in a convention which numbers in the several thousands. I've come around gradually to the idea proposed by some so-called "elitist" fans that what fandom needs is to specialize a bit more, so that fan groups with specific interests can meet together in smaller groups and regain that sense of family and cohesiveness. I no longer see very much value in a massive meeting of thousands and thousands of fans whose interest in SF derives from so many diverse sources: books, film, costume, publishing, etc. In the past few years, the most enjoyable cons to me have been the smaller, more specialized ones, in which more of us know one another, which I think automatically encourages more responsible behavior. My enjoyment of worldcons have been dependent upon the degree to which I am able to locate and participate in a small con within the con. That's probably what pros are doing too, and though that's disappointing for anyone who remembers the huge numbers of professional writers who used to attend worldcons, I can understand.

I said just what I meant. My 40th birthday party was my first birthday party. What's your question?

*The Summer Queen* is the third part of the trilogy which began with *The Snow Queen*. (The second book was the least interesting, *World's End*.) The book jacket is by the same artist, Michael Whelan, who did the jacket for the first book. I haven't begun it yet. I may decide to re-read *The Snow Queen* first, but I have purchased the new book already. It was out in Madison book stores in mid-October.

## JULIE SHIVERS

(SC) Congratulations on the engagement.

## BILL BODDEN

(SC) A very fine zine.

I remember when I turned twenty-six. 1982. I was unemployed, living in a strange city and the future did not look good. I probably got drunk.

What job would I want most in the world? I think Kim Nash and I would agree on a single modest choice. Win a jackpot lottery and just retire from work altogether. I can't think of anything I would rather do than nothing at all.

Too bad you didn't go to Armadillocon. I would have loved another trip report like your Corflu adventures.

(JG) My ideal career would be very close to the one I have now, except that it would pay a fabulous amount of money. I would be such a successful graphic artist that I would have more clients that wanted my services than I would ever need and could pick and chose between jobs according to how challenging, interesting and politically correct they were. I would employ people who would take care of the business-side of my career and I would be able to afford all the very latest computer graphics equipment and to experiment with animation, exotic printing techniques, and work at becoming a better artist. I would take time to travel and to write several good books in my lifetime. My ideal career would be one in which I felt proud of the artwork and writing I had created and had the resources to do my best work.

Do I find [watching on film?] sex between two members of the opposite sex erotic or arousing? Yes, I do, if it's done well. I also find watching sex on film between two members of the same sex to be erotic and arousing if it's done well. I haven't seen much hard core porn, but what I've seen, I'd mostly classify as not being done well, so the main point to me about what I find erotic or arousing is most definitely not the mere fact that two people are fucking. That's only a minor and frequently superfluous element of an image or movie that I may find stimulating.

...Which reminds me of a film Scott and I saw a few days ago, Martha Coolidge's *Rambling Rose*. It's certainly not a porn film, but it is about sex and love, and represents a genuinely different point of view than we normally get in movies. Consider for instance the scene in which a precocious 13-year old boy experiences sex for the first time with an older woman...and it doesn't involve his cock. Amazing! I'm going to be looking out for more Coolidge films. What did you think of it?

## STEVE SWARTZ

(SC) You accuse me of being a wimp for enlisting Jeanne's help with our cover. I accuse you of being a lunatic for strolling down to a highly questionable and dangerous part of town just to outfit an apa cover. I wonder if anyone else in the apa appreciates the trouble we've gone to for art.

I am not a fan. It's not a "denial thing," just the plain truth. My connection to fandom is always through Jeanne. The things I do on my own are not fannish. I attend conventions with Jeanne (it's a nice way to travel, I've seen a lot of the country this way that I wouldn't ordinarily gotten to visit). I met the people in the group through Jeanne. I write in the apa with Jeanne. Mostly the people



in the group and the apa don't have much to do with science fiction on a social basis. I've never worked on a convention or published a fanzine. Most of the books I read are not SF. I drink too much to be a fan. I don't have a fannish job. I can go on and on.

On the religion vs. science thing. Let me ask you this. Is it not common for scientists to belong to organized religions? How common is it for one person to belong to more than one religious faith? Religions are mutually exclusive. You can't be a Buddhist and a Catholic. But many Catholics and Buddhists are scientists. I think we've both been remiss for using "secular humanism" and "objective science" interchangeably. They are not the same thing. Secular humanism is a religion in only the broadest sense of the term. Science is not religion.

(JG) Well, I did sample the edible underwear, Steve, and it stuck to the roof of my mouth like the first time I received a host at my First Holy Communion. The two situations, as a first grader and as an adult who should have known better, could not have been more dissimilar. I eventually got to like the taste of hosts, though I disliked the things they stood for. I don't think I'll ever want a second helping of that underwear, though I greatly admire the decadence for which they stand.

Re your request for comments on the coloring process of your most recent edible cover, I like coloring in type backwards. I mean, I like to use a wide felt tip and print swashy, lively letters, and *then* to outline them (either closely or not) with a black pen. It makes for a nice effect.

Ironically, the problem with the kind of work that I do on the computer is that the sort of stuff that would appear on my screen if I were using the internet (or communicating on any electronic bulletin board), would instantly give away the fact that I was *not* working. My work screen mostly displays colorful graphics. The rows of text or numbers would strike my boss as the more unusual situation and might draw his attention, rather than allaying it.

I agree with you that it's time to help Scott to accept his fannishness and stop this foolish denial of his. Some of us here in Madison are working on a panel at the next WisCon at which Scott and perhaps a couple other so-called non-fans will get a chance to defend themselves in a sort of fannish court of law. The alleged non-fans will be allowed to defend themselves or to appoint a defense attorney, and the prosecution will present evidence to the jury (the audience) and attempt to prove the fannish motivation. It should be an entertaining panel. I think we'll need a judge to maintain order and prevent the rationalizations from getting too thick. But it should be a very fun event. I know there are lots of people very much involved in fandom, frequently through partners or spouses, who maintain their unfannishness for years. This could turn into a new tradition at conventions. (We're still looking for a couple of fun-loving alleged non-fans to keep Scott company on the defendants side of this trial, so if anyone has any suggestions for other possible panel members, let me know.)

## ANDY HOOPER

(JG) I enjoyed the Taco Bell war stories and the Madison history both. It seems to me that you will be able to use both of them, the experiences and the research, in your future writing. I look forward to reading the exotic results.

As I read along in your most recent chapter of Madison's history covering the pre-Civil War years I was reminded a lot of some of the historical material that Karen Fowler wove into her novel, *Sarah Canary*. Steve Swartz lent it to me and I plan on buying a copy, perhaps when it comes out in a trade paperback. She employs bits of historical trivia to evoke the sense of a world close to ours, but "off" slightly, because of the different assumptions about reality and morals, and then, later on in the book, ironically pulls the historical back towards us again, by parading bits of contemporary trivia that share more of that same perception of reality and morality than we at may have at first believed. The book is about reality and perception of the "other," ("other" = women, non-whites, crazy people, outsiders), and so the historical layer weaves in nicely. It's a technique I can imagine you employing well.

(SC) I have to admire your ambition here, keeping up two continuing series (Taco Bell and History of Madison) at once. You are aware of the downside to all this, I hope. Your "loyal readers" are not going to permit you to leave Taco Bell until you've found a more interesting (not necessarily better) job to tell us about.

## KIM WINZ

(JG) I laughed hysterically reading the hotel guest/staff correspondence. This deserves a dramatic reading sometime soon. I also liked the bad-attitude IBM humor.

Sorry to hear about Miles, and I'm glad Thor seems healthy and is making you guys happy.

Hmm, my little comment criticizing emoticons and excessive punctuation seems to be getting a great deal more attention than I ever expected. I thought I'd written more interesting things in that issue than that, but ah well, that happens, doesn't it? But OK, if that's what you all want to talk about...

I don't believe in dividing professional writing from fannish writing when it comes to talking about what I think is "good" writing. I would never say to anyone, "this is good writing for an apazine," and in fact, it sounds rather insulting. What I said describes my tastes. I like and prefer writing that makes use of words that communicate information in as clear a way as the writer can manage. I like the essays of Katha Pollitt. I like the fiction of Ursula LeGuin. Obviously, this does not mean I think everyone should stop writing unless they can write like these two people. I was merely describing the kind of writing I most admire and how I attempt to learn from that kind of writing. I'm sorry if it sounded as if I were advocating the establishment of some sort of grammar police in the apa.

As you and a number of others have pointed out, exclamation points, underlining, and even emoticons are often used in casual correspondence and fan writing to suggest body language or facial expressions. And I understand that this is the intent, but I think that these techniques only work well when you are writing to people who already know you and are already aware of the sort of body language and facial expressions you normally employ. If a person is known only through the written word, these clues serve more to confuse than to clarify. (Does that smiley face mean he thinks that sexist comment is awful and deserves to be scorned, or does that smiley face mean that he thinks it's an amusing situation? Sometimes you're sure only if you know him personally.)



You wrote that you think apa writing is closer to in-person conversation among a group of friends than it is to serious writing, and here—I guess—we'll have to agree to disagree. I think that all writing—with no exceptions—intrinsically differs from verbal conversation. The vocabulary of speech includes body language and the vocabulary of written communication does not, though there are compensations which make writing sometimes more expressive than speech. It's my opinion that it sometimes happens that in the attempt to reproduce the advantages of body language within written text, a writer neglects the advantages of the larger vocabulary available to a writer (available because one can take the time to find the right word).

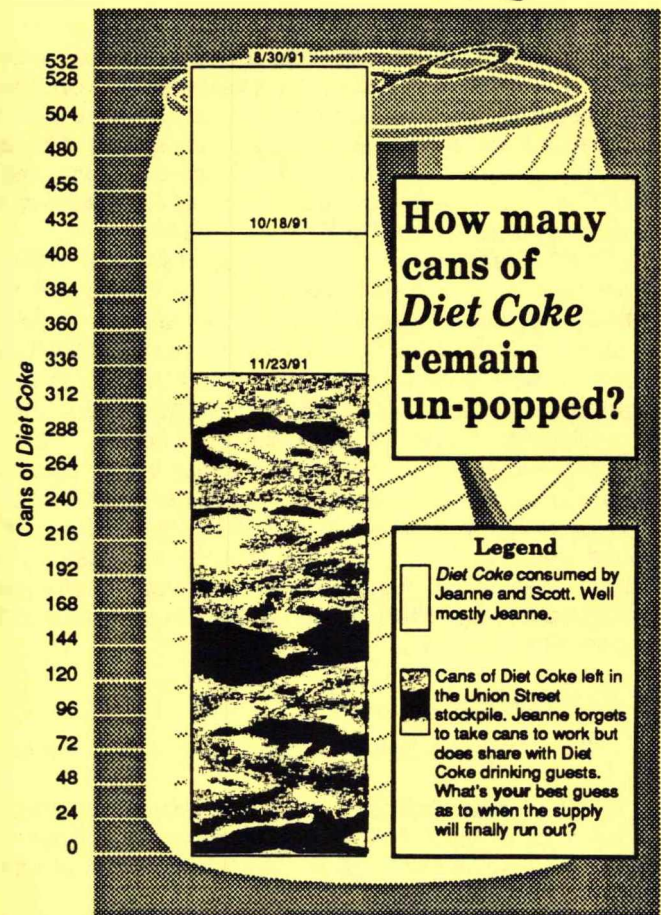
I grin and laugh a lot in my face-to-face conversations. I also make faces and inject funny sounds into my stories. But I think that my own style of written communication does a better job of representing me to you than emoticons would.

**HOPE KIEFER**

(JG) What a great trip report, Hope! I may have to start referring to you as "St. Hope," after reading about your travails. When DuCharme recovers, I think he ought to put together a collage apa cover honoring you: your head ringed with a glowing halo and hands clasping (symbolically) steering wheels, sandwiches, airplanes and an IV. Maybe there'd be a little blood splattered tastefully on your pure white tunic. Mike might get into that image, don't you think? Your feet would be crushing a police car, boxes, and a clock. Rather than a medieval landscape painted behind you, there would be a roadmap of your Chicago-Texas trip and there would be little Roman Catholic candles in the foreground, lit by Mike in your honor.

On the other hand, maybe I won't call you St. Hope. After all my work, you graduate from your term as my acolyte and right away start telling Julie that I'm not God. I don't know, I'm losing my touch. Tracy Shannon fails to feel awestruck by me and thinks I'm merely a "nice person." (Her little charade at Nevenah's party notwithstanding; I wasn't convinced about her change of heart by that little genuflecting act.) Anyway, if I'm not a god, how can I canonize you? Ha!

As to the Diet Coke raffle, here is the information you requested. Yes, Scott drinks Diet Coke, too, though less than I drink. I usually have a can open at home, while Scott tends to pop a can only when he's thirsty and then he drinks it down in one sitting. He can sometimes be a little irritating in pointing out this difference between the two of us. "Did you know you already have an open can in the living room?" he asks. "Yeah, I knew, I knew. I wanted to have a 'kitchen Coke,' too," I reply. And I've only brought cans with me to work once or twice, which is not because I don't drink Diet Coke at work (I do, at least one but sometimes two cans a day), but because I never remember to take one because it's morning and morning comes too early. So I end up buying sodas at work. We haven't brought many Cokes to parties: I think, so far, I've brought 5 or 6 cans to other people's houses to drink there. However, if Scott and I do throw a New Year's party which we are seriously considering, we'll go through a large number of sodas then.



November 23, 1991

(SC) Excellent travel story, Hope. You certainly deserve the red carpet treatment from DuCharme for competence and performance above and beyond the call of duty.

[Comments to Karl:] Fortunately, most Turbo Apans already have strong feelings about baseball so your experiences aren't likely to chase any potential fans away. It's great to hear from you again. I enjoyed the piece. You can count on one fan of baseball writing at this address. I hope to see you as a regular contributor again before 1993. Will you and Hope go Joint at that time or do you plan to do "your own thing?" You should at least loan Hope a computer to do her zine. Here she is sweating over a hot typewriter and you are obviously buzzing along on a computer.

"Flatter than Julie's chest?" Somehow I believe you'll live to regret that little slam at some future date.

**VIJAY BOWEN**

(JG) My name is pronounced with one syllable only. I was named after an old friend of my dad's and they used the French spelling to comply with the Catholic rule that kids have to be named after Saints—Joan of Arc (or Jeanne d'Arc, as she's known in France). Just to be sure, mom added a "Marie" as my middle name. I called myself Jeannie for a couple years, with two syllables when I was very young and dotted my "i" with a circle. But I got over it.

(SC) I think your suggestion that people submit proposals and business to the OE on a separate sheet of paper is very good.



## MIKE DUCHARME

(SC) The reproduction of your zine was poor, but the trip report was worth squinting through it. I can already see evidence of Texas influence on you. Your refusal to scream when expected indicates you are probably absorbing a certain amount of Texas macho by osmosis. You'll be a drawlin', chaw spittin', swaggerin' Real Texas Guy in no time. Or maybe I should congratulate you on showing those Texans that Yankees aren't wimps.

(JG) Great trip report, Mike, though I shudder to think how long it must have taken you to painstakingly type it out with the fingers of your left hand, one letter at a time. Possibly you could name your next apazine, "My Left Hand," hmm? After reading your zine I thought of that scene in the movie version of *The World According to Garp*, in which Garp and his wife are looking at a house, thinking about buying it, when an airplane crashes into its second story. Rather than taking that as a celestial sign to renew their lease, Garp enthusiastically makes an offer on the house because the chances that such a disaster will happen again to this house were astronomical. Maybe you should adopt that attitude. Things can't get any worse. It's all down-hill from here.

## STEVE JOHNSON

(SC) Congratulations on a great Halloween Party. It was fun.

Peacock was scientific rationalism's worst enemy. If I were on the fence trying to decide whether to embrace religion or science, I believe John's colossal arrogance would tend to turn me into a Hare Krishna fanatic.

(JG) I don't understand your need to make intuition into a supernatural thing. The ways in which the unconscious works may not be intuitively obvious, and may not be (at all) well understood by psychology yet, but it goes against Occam's Razor to infer a whole layer of extra-human mechanisms to explain the process of creativity.

## LYNN ANN MORSE

(SC) It was so good to see you again at Worldcon. Very nice zine this month. The small type was quite legible. I'm looking forward to your trip report.

## PAT HARIO

(JG) I liked your comments about the importance of a person's name. It does matter very much. By saying that it doesn't, by giving up our name for another person, or by allowing others to make up their own names for us, rather than claiming our own, we are making very definite statements about what we think of ourselves.

The thought of doing my own taxes after we bought the house intimidated me, but then I've always felt intimidated by tax forms (and balance sheets). So, after we moved into our house on Union Street, we began having our taxes done by an accountant. It cost a lot less than I thought it would, and it was very much worth the stress reduction around January-February to know that someone else was doing it (right) for me.

(SC) We would like to do another reprint from *The Nation* by our favorite essayist on feminist issues, Katha Pollitt. (It's on the next page.) This time a short reaction piece on the Clarence

Thomas hearings that sums it all up pretty well. I just hope the anger and frustration of this experience is eventually expressed at the polls.

Not only another Iowa joke, but a repeat of the same one. How totally rude. I think it should be clear to everyone that I am the victim of abuse here and any means I use to defend my honor and the Great State of Iowa (a.k.a. Heaven) is completely justified.

## TRACY SHANNON

(SC) Shame on you for those awful puns. Martha Shannon clearly has the good taste to avoid sinking so low. Her camping trip was a very pleasant read. You should take a lesson from her and stop the puns.

In spite of your lousy taste in humor, I am looking forward to your assuming command of Turbo. As mentioned above, Jeanne and I are willing to help. Please continue the "Zinetrospective." Great fun.

(JG) The apa-business I hope we are able to deal with in the future has to do with some sort of refinement in member-nomination procedure, and with OE term limitation. And I hope we can do it calmly and within the apa pages. By the way, good for you for volunteering your time to do the apa. You're a fine human being. And a great punster.

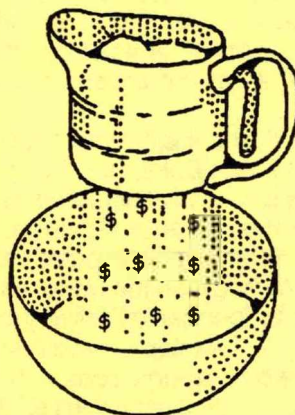
Sorry for having wrongly placed you in my memory of the Great Balloon Popping Contest. Having written about it, you are there, firmly installed in my mind's alternate-history images of the event, and I wonder who it was really, who initially challenged Pat.

## KAREN BABICH

(JG) By now you should have gotten a copy of the "How to Run A Bake Sale" brochure. Hope you like it. If anyone in the apa is planning on doing a bake sale (or is just curious) and would like a copy, just let me know and I will be glad to send you a copy.

Who is doing the WisCon bake sale??

### HOW TO RUN a James Tiptree, Jr. Memorial Award BAKE SALE



—Tips, Suggestions & Warnings—  
Written by Bake Sale Veterans,  
Hope Kiefer and Karen Babich  
Designed by Jeanne Gornoll  
October 1991

← Available free from SF<sup>3</sup>. Just send a self-addressed, stamped envelope. PO Box 1624, Madison, WI 53701-1624

## WOMEN SCORNE

by Katha Pollitt [*The Nation*, November 4, 1991]

She's a spurned woman. No, a lesbian. She's the naïve dupe of left-wing "interest groups." No, a female Iago bringing down a noble black man out of sheer spite. She's emotionally unstable. No, she's too calm and collected. She wanted anonymity—obviously, she has something to hide. She came forward—obviously, she wants money, fame, a book contract. Male and female, black and white, Americans could believe anything of Anita Hill, it seems, except that she was telling the truth about what Clarence Thomas did and said to her when she worked for him at the Department of Education and the EEOC. Forced to choose between a woman who had nothing to gain and a man who had everything to lose, a woman with a reputation for probity and a man who is a demonstrable hypocrite, a man who says he has never discussed *Roe v. Wade* with anyone on earth and who claims not to have written, intended or possibly even understood the ideas and opinions published under his name, most people found him the more believable. Is it any wonder women are reluctant to bring harassment charges against men? In countries governed by Islamic fundamentalists the testimony of a woman is officially given half the legal weight as that of a man. We've come a long way, baby, haven't we?

Now the psychodrama is over. Her four impeccable, sober witnesses versus his panel of office harpies. John Doggett, the walking personification of male vanity, insinuating that Anita Hill is still thinking about him ten years after he stood her up for dinner. Alan Simpson with his McCarthyite allusions to evidence he never reveals. Orrin Hatch with his quotes from *The Exorcist*. Howard Metzenbaum fumbling on about leaks, while his fellow Democrats, again and again, seemed to forget where they were and which side they were supposed to be on.

Clarence Thomas is our new Supreme Court Justice, and we are left with the hard realities of power politics—the ball the Republicans never, for a moment, lost sight of, the ball the image-obsessed Democrats dropped when it was, for a moment, in their hands. The women who pooh-poohed Anita Hill will soon get their thank-you note: the reversal of *Roe v. Wade*. The African-American majority who supported Thomas on racial grounds will get their thank-you note as well: a black hand, rather than a white one, penning the decisions abolishing the civil rights revolution.

Look on the bright side, women are told. On PBS, Catharine MacKinnon took comfort from polls showing that 24 percent of Americans believed Anita Hill; ten years ago, it would have been zero. Finally, the sea change in gender relations has lapped at the halls of power, and the 98 percent male composition of the Senate has been shown, decisively, to have real consequences. It's a good thing, I suppose, that senators of all political stripes felt compelled to recognize and decry the everyday sexual humiliation of working women. But mostly it was just theater, hard-boiled men pretending to be shocked by words like "penis" and "pubic hair." These are the same men who have exempted themselves from civil rights and sexual harassment regulations, and who can't get it together to pass civil rights legislation over President Bush's veto. They may condemn sexual harassment, but they don't care about it and they don't understand it. As the time to vote on Thomas's confirmation drew near, senator after senator professed himself baffled that a woman would put up with demeaning remarks in order to keep her career on track, as if they themselves would never kowtow to, say, the gun lobby, or swallow their pride before a hated committee chairman.

The Op-Ed pages are full of sexual harassment now—outraged essays by women, balanced with jocular essays by men who wonder how they'll dare, now, to ask out a co-worker without Long Dong Silver as an icebreaker. But this is more theater, more psychodrama. The real story on sexual harassment is this: On the same day that *The New York Times* reported Thomas's confirmation it also reported that California Governor Pete Wilson vetoed a bill that would have made it easier for victims of job discrimination—including sexual harassment—to sue for damages.

The political lesson of the Thomas confirmation goes way beyond the obvious fact that powerful men see the world differently from powerless women and should not be running the country like a frat house. Of course, we need more women in government. Of course, women ought to demand more of politicians who seek their vote. We do indeed need to rethink the lesser-of-two-evils philosophy that has brought to the Senate liberals like Daniel Patrick Moynihan, who benignly neglects all the reproductive-rights legislation currently languishing in Congress and who kept his office phones off the hook all weekend while he worked up his courage to vote against Thomas. And while we're at it, we need to rethink the never-mind-his-private-life philosophy too. The end result of that bit of fake pragmatism was Teddy Kennedy deliquescing into his chair as the hearings rolled on around him, reduced to virtual silence by his scandalous history, now capped by the supreme irony that his nephew's lawyers are currently using the same mudslinging tactics against the Palm Beach woman that Hatch and Simpson were using against Anita Hill.

But we also need to be on our guard against the assumption that more women in Congress means more feminism. Nancy Landon Kassebaum—half the women in the Senate—voted for Thomas. Yes, seven Congresswomen marched over to the Senate to convey their outrage at the Judiciary Committee's indifference to Anita Hill's charges at the time of the original hearings. But twenty-two stayed in their seats.

The real lesson, it seems to me, is that the Democratic Party is neither able nor willing to mount an effective opposition to the ongoing right-wing revolution. It's too compromised, too timid, too incompetent, too obsessed with courting the mythical center—too vested, in the end, in phony bipartisan statesmanship to do more than offer, in effect, a slow-motion version of the Reagan-Bush agenda. The men who rise to power through the Democratic Party will never be the means by which changing social relations between the sexes can enter the political process in any real way.

But it's too easy to rail at Congress. It may not be quite true that you get the government you deserve, but it's true enough. We need to elect more feminist and to refuse to vote for anyone, male or female, who does not embrace the expansion of our rights and only promises to delay their demise. We also need to create a militant movement outside the realm of representative politics. That is what AIDS activists have done. If ACT UP can force the FDA to change its drug protocols, women can force change through action. One-third of women sexually harassed at work? We can clog the courts with cases, we can confront harassers at the workplace as a group, we can boycott and take to the streets. We can picket hospitals that refuse to perform abortions—as 90 percent of them now do.

Of course, ACT UP activists are fighting for their lives. They don't have much time. Women and men who care about them need to realize that we don't have much time either.

# Iowa City Post Herald Tribune Gazette

## CUSTIS DRAWS LINE IN SNOW!

Saturday November 23 (Obsessive Press) Union Street Co-President, Scott Custis responded today to Objectionable Pulsations President Pat "Saddam" Hario's stunning "War" declaration, by pointing towards a suspicious yellow line in the snow bank in front of the Union Street residence. He issued a warning against further aggression, setting December 21st as the deadline for end of negotiations.

Custis stated resolutely, "OK Pat, I'm ready. Go ahead and make my day. Cross that line and just see what happens!" Custis was indignant, "She's completely over-reacting. She launched a devastating first strike on an innocent, Coke-rich neighbor by slandering my home state with her tasteless Iowa joke. I simply responded in kind with a Bugs Bunny quotation. Little did I know that she would follow up with an all-out declaration of hostilities. Well she can just come over here and settle it."

Custis claims this conflict may have arisen at a particularly opportune moment. Hario has historically

presented a "nice," friendly face to Turbo members. "I have long suspected Hario to be secretly forming illegal alliances with out-of-town members in violation of inter-apa non-proliferation agreements," Custis says. "Now is the time for apa members to band together in a coalition to halt this activity."

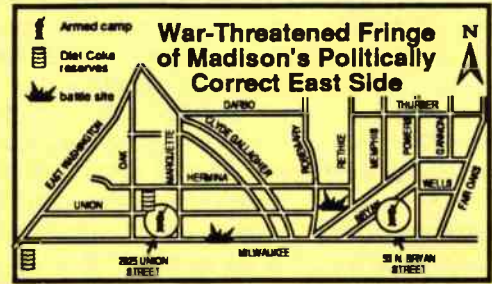
Hario hinted last month at the possibility of an unholy Hario-Swartz Alliance, primed for aggression. Custis stated, "Hario is declaring war under the flimsy pretext that I am the aggressor. Union Street is prepared to defend itself. But if we fail," he warned, "other apans, domino-like, will be next."

Union Street is mobilizing their Mac forces, and has already issued a call-up of reserve fonts.

"I've spent the last month on the phone with presidents of other apazines around the world, arranging support, and trying to put together a viable coalition force," Custis added. "Most have been receptive. Newly elected OE, Tracy Shannon, was unwilling to send

troops, citing her non-aggression constitution. Union Street expects her to kick in funds to offset costs of the conflict. She could cover her share for about three billion dollars. Current OE, Kim Nash, was enthusiastic until I told him beer would not be allowed in the war zone out of respect for local custom. I've been trying—so far unsuccessfully—to lure retired Field Marshall Andrew P. Hooper to assist

with battle strategy. He stands by his opinion that the whole conflict is silly beyond words. I believe that he may be the only leader that could frighten General Steamain' Steven Swartz off."



### WAR MIGHT GET UGLY

Unless peace can be negotiated soon, the Turbo-Charged Party Apa fears it will witness some terrible battles in future months. Custis has set December 21st as the deadline. "I can't hold this shaky coalition together indefinitely. Economic sanctions alone will not work against these demons," Custis declared.

Experts predict that the Objectionable Shit Alliance is poised to make use of its stockpile of chemical weapons—the awful edible covers, which have already been deployed twice during previous wars to blood-Kurding effect. The Union Street coalition stands ready with its own tested weapons, computer-aided art bombs. Tension within the aparises noticeably with each day of the crisis. Gas masks have been distributed to the civilian populations; Diet Coke is being stockpiled.

### DIPLOMATS STAY UP LATE FOR PEACE

Michael "I don't like to go to bed as long as there's something interesting going on" Shannon has been asked by several parties to attempt to bring the two belligerent camps together for talks. Shannon's close ties to the new OE lends him diplomatic credibility. Hopes are high (and Hope may be high, too) that his efforts will douse some of the heated rhetoric of the last several months. No details are yet available as to prospective peace talk sites, dates, or table shapes.

### DES MOINES REGISTER OPINION POLL

How do you respond to non-Iowans who say that IOWA stands for "Idiots Out Walking Around?"

- Iowa is Heaven, nyah, nyah, nyah ..... 61%
- Each US state's name should be shortened to 4 letters so we can make up acronyms, too. .... 15%
- It does not! ..... 12%
- Really? ..... 8%
- No opinion ..... 4%

## OPINION NOT IN MY NAME, NOT WITH MY MAC

by Jeanne Gomoll

Reports of my medical emergency have been greatly exaggerated. I'm alive and well, and just a little ticked off that my so-called pacifist partner is getting all red in his macho face with all these war threats, not to mention my so-called friends who so rudely insult my partner's homeland. Grow up, you guys! PEACE! (I was right in the middle of making bread when I learned of the war hysteria, and I was tempted to yell, "Peace in the mid-yeast!" but in deference to my pun-hating partner, I didn't. Then.)

Let me state firmly right here and now, that I am dead set against this war. Of course, once the war starts I'll have to support the troops—er, rather the troop—and will throw myself into a patriotic frenzy of blindfolded cheerleading. That's the American Way. I sleep with the guy, after all, let's get real.

But in the meantime, let's talk about the *real* reasons for this war. Commonly held misconceptions peddled by the media:

1. **Objectionable Pulsations published slander against the heavenly state of Iowa and must be punished.** How come only one guy in Madison Wisconsin is complaining about this slander? How come there isn't an army of angry Iowans marching this way right now? Well, OK, they probably got lost on the freeway, but that isn't the point. The real reason the Custis half of the

Union Street coalition got all fired up about the Iowa comment was because he has become so frustrated over *Action Interruptus* in *Star Trek: The Next Generation* storylines. Custis misses the old *Star Trek* fist-cuffs and photon battles and cannot easily accommodate himself to peace. Similarly, the manly man partner of the Objectionable Shit coalition is known to indulge himself in masculinist literature and seized upon this flimsy excuse to ally himself with Objectionable Pulsations president and exercise the porcelain john within him.

2. **Hario claims her image as a "nice" person has been libeled.** Do "nice" people go to war? No, They do not. According to Ms. Manners, nice people make a devastatingly polite comment which contains an insulting nugget and requires the insultee to say "thank you." Obviously, the Objectionable Pulsations president is threatening war in order to silence someone or ones who know too much about her real, not nice self. Could it be that her continuous and vociferous denials of fannishness have anything to do with it? Does the lady protest too much?

3. **Diet Coke conspiracy.** If Objectionable Pulsations succeeds in its war against Union Street, Hario will control about 20% of the known world Diet Coke reserves. Very significant. But remember, Hario likes Diet Pepsi better!