

Welcome to *Union Street* (issue #26 and *Obsessive Press* #125), the zine with the transmogrifying masthead (this month celebrating the end of the year and reminding you all of the New Year's party at our house). 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 Adobe Illustrator 3.0 and Adobe Photoshop 2.0. All contents are copyrighted © by Scott Custis and Jeanne Gomoll, 1991. December 1991 for Turbo-Charged Party Animal APA #66. Members FWA.

## OFFICIAL BUSINESS

(JG) I would like to remind the *Lame Duck OE* that the idea of mail-in ballots which he now claims are possibly illegal were—in fact—his idea in the first place. I hope that the new OE, *Tracy Shannon*, will honor the re-written version of rule #8, as agreed upon by a majority of Turbo members. If not, I will resubmit the proposals next month.

I vote (my 1/2 vote) for Bill's rather convoluted proposal for membership qualification. I've got the feeling however, that as a result of its many-faceted construction, that lots of people will have objections and suggestions for changes. I think we definitely need a new, less easy method of introducing new members, but in case Bill's motion does not immediately attract 15 votes, I suggest that we talk a bit more about this issue and in the interim, that Tracy unilaterally declare a hiatus on new member nominations until the matter has been resolved.

In spite of that (how embarrassing to nominate someone right after I suggested we stop doing it for a while)—Madison fan, Ellen Franklin asked me to remind you, in case *Klm* failed to mention it to you, that she asked to be put on the wait list for the apa.

I also support Bill's proposal that we limit the number of joint memberships to 1/3 of the total membership, as long as no existing joint memberships are affected as a result of this new rule.

(SC) I cast my 1/2 vote in favor of *Bodden's* motion to limit joint memberships. I withhold my vote at this time on his proposal on qualifying for membership. I think a procedure is necessary but more discussion is needed before voting.

## BILL HOFFMAN

(JG) Your story of meeting the racist at the tavern struck a nightmarish chord with me. People whose obsessive fantasies so dominate their lives, to the point that they perceive *everyone else's* universes as lies, rationalizations

or lunatic, are indeed scary people. There seems to be no bridge over which to communicate with them; they've surrounded themselves entirely with a moat that admits none except those who will abandon other viewpoints. Part of the nightmarish part of meeting this sort of person, of course, includes the suspicion that we are all like that—probably to a lesser degree—about some of our own beliefs. But the heart of the nightmare for me, involves the fear that people with authority over my life will use blind-folded power against me no matter how much reason, clarity, or compassion I bring to a confrontation with them. Lately I've been feeling a lot of moat-building going on in defense against the women's movement, and although I still feel pretty powerful in terms of choices I personally can make in my own life, it's a scary thing to see people raising those bridges.

I admire your electronic (*Bumfuck, IA*) practical joke, Bill. I may borrow the idea some day, if I can manage to keep a straight face through the doing of it. That's my big problem with practical jokes, which I usually do like perpetrating: I can rarely stop from laughing and giving away the show. Doing it in print (or in art) works better.

(SC) I confess that *Bumfuck, IA* does exist. In fact it is part of a sister city arrangement with *Dumfuck, WI* (North of here) and *Scumsuck, OR* (near Portland on my map).

## ARBUTHNOTT & WHEATLEY

(JG) Sometimes I have trouble keeping track of which of you, *Cathy* or *Owen*, is writing and have to back up and figure out who started, who interrupted, etc. It's especially troublesome when I go back over your zine to make comments, looking for the little checks I put in the margins, marking the places where you wrote something to which I wanted to respond, and I have to track backwards again, looking for a clue as to whom I am speaking. Any chance that you could work out a bit more clear way of marking the author? If not, don't worry, I'll live. I enjoy your zines a lot: they're playful and thoughtful and I don't want you to think that having finished critiquing people's punctuation that I am now preparing a commando assault on your format. (Or anyone else's, *Julle*.)





To Owen: I laughed at your plaintive complaint about so often finding yourself the sole, representative male in groups of women talking about the insensitivity of men. I laughed because I know that I often put Scott in situations like that. Last year we traveled down to Austin, Texas, to visit my sister Julie who lives with her lover, Rachel; employs a staff of women, and mostly hangs out with a group of (great, wonderful) women. I hadn't been thinking about the effect of the intensive all-women environment on Scott until late in the vacation when he mentioned to me that he was feeling a bit overloaded. It put me in mind of the feeling I once or twice experienced during my visit to England a few years ago. Whenever I was sitting around with a group of left-leaning, politically active Brit fans, I felt like I was "standing in" for all Americans of whatever, but especially, nationalistic, hair-brained persuasions. The thing you should keep in mind though, Owen, is that the mere fact of your being there, included within that conversation was a compliment.

To Cathy—it is true, I wouldn't ever put my complete trust in a man to take care of contraceptive duties, not as long as women tend to bear the most onerous penalties and responsibilities for mistakes in that area. The use of condoms for disease-prevention doesn't change my judgement either. Even the awareness of AIDS for many men includes the knowledge that, right now, they are far less likely to contract AIDS from a woman than visa-versa. This is an area where the double standard won't go away until society makes real, radical changes, involving responsibility for child care—spreading it around much more than it is right now, or—sadly—for the AIDS crisis to grow to such monstrous proportions that all sex acts for everyone, involve acknowledged, lethal risks.

(SC) On contraceptives. I don't have to worry about any of that stuff. Jeanne takes care of it.

Seriously. It's been a long time since I had to deal with contraceptives. I would probably prefer to use some sort of oral contraceptive since I was never a big fan of condoms. In the Age of AIDS however, condoms are the safer choice and would be the most sensible all-purpose solution. If we ever see the day again when AIDS is no longer a threat, then a male "pill" would be great. I think there will always be difficulty getting men to take responsibility for contraception unless faced with a deadly threat like AIDS or serious community effort to back comprehensive sex education in the schools.

## LYNNE ANN MORSE

(JG) Comments in the last issue of the *Turbo* reminded me of how much I enjoyed seeing how beautifully your calligraphy skill has progressed. Your work is truly gorgeous and I was very impressed and happy to see the lovely examples you shared with us at worldcon. Thank you again for showing the pages to me! I still get a few requests from people at the DNR who remember that many years ago I recommended you for a calligraphy project (personalizing certificates, or something?). "Do you still know that woman who does calligraphy..." "No, sorry," I say. "She's living in Europe." You were good when I knew you in Madison, but you are a fine, fine artist now.

Thank you also for your (and Roelof's) generous impulse to send me a copy of *SimCity*. I was pretty excited

when I opened the package and found the diskette. Unfortunately, it seems to be an IBM version of the game, and I only have access to Macs. So I guess I'll just have to purchase it for myself some day. I'd been meaning to anyway. Thank you for thinking of me.

Re paranoia: I know exactly what you mean about having bitter thoughts about doctors who resist giving young, single women tubal ligations. I've had suspicions about some of those doctors myself, who seem to think that the potential for pregnancy is God's punishment of naughty women. Some people think that AIDS is the justifiable moral judgement upon naughty sexuality, too. I used to have horrible nightmares about rich, white, childless couples refusing me the right to prophylactic products or access to abortion because they felt they had a right to own a healthy white baby which superseded my own rights concerning my body. In fact, I seriously suspect that were it not for the growing demand for healthy, white, adoptable kids in this country, that there'd be significantly less opposition to abortion.

Don't feel nervous about talking with me about your thoughts on accepting the label, "feminist." It's an interesting conversation. I'm not going to dislike (or like) you because of it. I am curious, however, about why you think you must somehow prepare and certify yourself to be a feminist, whereas you are willing to adapt the label "wife" to yourself after the fact. Possibly the differences you and I have on the restrictiveness or non-restrictiveness of the feminist label have their roots in your question to me—about what I think "the feminist agenda" consists. I don't think there is a standard list, you see, to which all feminists would agree, and that openness—to me—is the most important part of being a feminist. A feminist, to me, is someone who strives to make all choices available to herself and others, without reference to expectations of gender. I resist expectations that all women should build careers and avoid all men, just as much as I resist the more traditional expectations that women's main priority should involve raising children and emotionally supporting men. The freedom for women and men to live their own lives, discover their own sexuality, govern their own bodies and respect the rights of others to govern their bodies, and to equally accept the responsibility for those they love and the children they create together: that's what I believe the ideal of feminism strives for. It isn't so much an agenda as a shredding of other agendas...

I haven't been really comfortable about a few of Suzette Haden Elgin's opinions in the area of women and current affairs. (I also subscribe to *The Lonesome Node*) I've learned a lot from her in areas of nitty-gritty conversation and choice of words in verbal confrontations (in her zine as well as in her non-fiction "Gentle Art" series of books). But sometimes I experience cultural dissonance with her point of view that seems to place manners and people's perception of manners above all other issues in certain situations. She blamed Ferraro's failure to inspire confidence as a vice-presidential candidate on one, rude response to an old, Southern gentleman during the campaign, who asked her if she could bake a cherry pie. And in the most recent *Node*, Elgin seems to want to explain the committee's acceptance of the truth of Thomas's statements on the rudeness, and un-womanly conduct of Hill



(revealed by her use of using foul language in public). It's an odd thing. I really admire Elgin, and I had been expecting some insights like the ones she shared with us after North testified to the Senate about evidence she found in his verbal and body language to suggest that he was blatantly lying.

Thanks for printing Kington's amusing "The Other Story of Easter."

## ROSS PAVLAC

(JG) "There were more fire bombings of abortion clinics in the first eight months of 1991 than all of last year, according to the National Abortion Federation (NAF). The culprit? NAF blames Operation Rescue and predicts more conflicts to come." *Ms.*, Vol 11, No 3.

## TRACY SHANNON

(JG) All your proposed changes with regard to mailing agent duties sound fine to me. If you're looking for formal endorsements or votes in the matter, you've got mine.

(SC) I also support your changes to mailing agent responsibilities don't know if you have decided to go ahead with a "Rule making Congress" at WisCon, but I think it would be helpful in any event to publish an organized statement of issues/changes/proposals that are up for consideration. Discussion would be good, especially before WisCon, so people who won't be there can have some input. Ideas are currently flying around without much organization.

I like the idea of "Bill-Of-The-Month." Are you taking nominations for this?

## ANDY HOOPER

(JG) Sorry to be so brief when you've been so expansive, but all I can say this time is that I enjoyed all your stuff, part one of Madison's Civil War history, and *Nine Innings*. I especially liked the mixture of reviews with the baseball game in the latter. The reviews (and the explanation of your prediction as to who would win the Hugo) were really well done, I thought, and have inspired me to check out Kube-McDowell's *The Quiet Pools*. Eventually.

By the way, if you get any requests for copies of *Jeanne Gomoll 40*, I do have some extra copies in my files that Ellen gave me and I would be glad to forward them on to anyone who wants one, as long as supplies last.

(SC) Your massive contribution may have the effect of discouraging comment since it is rather hard to do justice to the whole enterprise. In my case, I will not be finished with *Nine Innings* before deadline this month so I will be taking notes on it as I finish to include in next month's Union Street.

I enjoyed the Madison history section again, as usual. You've been successful with Jeanne and I in stimulating interest in the subject, so much so that we grabbed a copy of Mollenhoff's *Madison A History of the Formative Years* at the UW Bookstore's 20%-off sale. This along with a couple armloads of Xmas. gifts. It is clear that you have studied the Civil War carefully and have an excellent perspective on Wisconsin's involvement. In my hometown, the most impressive statue and memorial at the Riverside Cemetery is dedicated to the town's Civil War dead. Yet to this day I have no idea where they fought or what happened to

them. It is a subject too casually overlooked. Since Burn's PBS documentary, I have wanted to learn more about them.

## BILL BODDEN

(JG) I laughed and sympathized much with the seasonal retail hell you described. It's something I doubt I could put up with for very long. I can sometimes get irritable when I receive more than a couple phone calls when I'm working on the computer at work. By that, I mean only a couple phone calls a day. Once, long ago in high school, I applied for a part time job at Sears. They gave me a test and I flirted momentarily with the notion of filling it out the way I thought they wanted, but decided against it and was as honest as I could be. The results came back that I would best be employed working in an area with as few people as possible, making decisions with as little supervision as possible, with as little need for social skills as possible. I got ready to stand up and apologize for taking up the interviewer's time, when he smiled and said he had the perfect place for me. I worked that year in the inventory room, down in the bowels of Sears, slicing open corrugated boxes of merchandise, counting it, checking it off on the inventory slips and sending it along to the proper department. There were three other women down there doing the same thing, no one of us really in charge. We talked companionably every once in a while, but frequently the silence extended for hours at a time. I kept a notebook with me and jotted down ideas every once in a while; I had lots of time to think. It was probably the most enjoyable job I ever held while I was in school. It was lucky, I think, that I decided to be honest on that test, otherwise I would have been flailing around out on the floor, being driven crazy by berserk holiday shoppers.

I'm glad you chose to live, Bill. I like you quite a lot and I know that my life would be diminished for your absence. Stick around, Bill. Please. Give me a call sometime, when you're short on people to talk with.

(SC) I scored in the 6-8 point range on your hilarious quiz. I most enjoyed your Map story, particularly the part about Mr. Antles. With regard to your proposal for qualifying for membership. I think a simpler system is called for. I agree that some mechanism should be in place for evaluating and approving new members and possibly limiting nominations to the spec. list.

Very disturbing discussion about your experiences with depression. It is hard for me to visualize you just being a bit blue, much less contemplating suicide. I guess that makes it clear how casual our friendship really is. I feel sad about that because I would like to be someone you feel you could call when you are struggling with such powerful feelings. You should consider these experiences seriously and take some action now to deal with them. Such a level of depression is a dangerous thing. By not dealing with it, you may be playing a form of Russian Roulette with yourself.

## BILL HUMPHRIES

(SC) On Chompsky, yes he's brilliant and I want to read more. I think it is frustrating that he is not considered a credible voice by much of the mainstream media. On Porn Week, one worrisome criticism I heard about it was that there was very little debate on pornography. It was mostly the Anti-Porn faction and little real dialog on free speech and press issues. On David Duke, most disturbing to me was not only his level of popularity (a failure





of compulsory education?) but how carefully the media handled him. He rarely was pinned down aggressively in interviews that I saw or read. The media seemed afraid of him at times.

## JULIE SHIVERS

(SC) I think the apa is the perfect place to discuss wedding plans and issues. Those of us who are interested (I count myself among them) can keep up and to hell with everyone else. I haven't commented to you much lately because you've been the center of a couple of controversial issues and I did not happen to agree with you. I didn't think you needed another person getting down on you about it and it sounds like I was right.

## KATHRYN BETH WILLIG

(SC) Congratulations on being appointed sysop.

I think your cynical questioning of the Magic Johnson thing is well founded but we can hope that his example will be so bold that advertisers will stick to their pledges and the spotlight won't fade after all. We can also hope that other prominent people will join Johnson to keep attention focused. The idea of waiting five years before inducting him to the Hall of Fame is a standard method of putting an athlete's career in perspective before admission (instead of admitting a charismatic candidate in the heat of the moment when his statistics may actually not be that good.) Johnson is pretty much a shoo-in anyway, so waiting serves little purpose. Why not admit him now, further add luster to his reputation, and help him communicate his message?

## MISTRESS N

(SC) I know you are looking forward to our responses to your story and I hope you won't be disappointed. As for myself, I thought it was an engaging and well written piece. I don't feel you deserve cute cracks about taking the apa in a new direction or experimenting with the limits of our taste. I can say without qualification that I liked it and look forward to more of your adventures. I think the unfamiliar territory is at least as titillating as the sexual references themselves. I don't know much about this kind of sex play and I find it most interesting as a novelty. I know I would have problems engaging in it because I have serious objections to the dominating and submissive roles. I would not be comfortable and I like to be comfortable with sex.

(JG) Definitely, a riveting reading experience. I find the connection between sex and pain to be dissonant, to say the least, but your story certainly was certainly exciting.

## STEVE SWARTZ & PAT HARIO

(JG) On the eve of war, I sit here contemplating the subtext of the war we may begin... Do you notice that there are currently no members of the apa functioning as favorite scapegoats? First there was David Busch, then there was Ray Russell, and of course many of us poured a lot of energy into dealing with John Peacock. Perhaps you could even add one or two other names to this list and certainly we could all name one or two current apans who seem to be auditioning for the role. I'm beginning to wonder if Scott is attempting to perform a public service to the apa by offering to defuse the negative energy in search of a scapegoat by humorously offering himself—as a lightning rod—in this bogus war.

Of course I may be wrong. Just a moment ago, as I sat here typing, I called into the other room where Scott was stacking sandbags in front of the living room windows, and asked him for help with the names listed in the previous paragraph. He remembered the names clearly and after he spelled them for me, he chuckled and smiled fondly at me. "So, what are you doing, comparing Pat and Steve to those infamous fiends?"

"No," I said. "I was comparing the infamous fiends to you." Well it took him a while to calm down. It's a good thing that he was working with sandbags and not explosives at the time. Anyway, my interpretation of recent events didn't immediately strike him as the compliment it was meant to be.

In any case, I can already see that this war is going to be hell. In *some* wars, when lines got drawn in the sand, the sand doesn't melt the next day. We can't even find that old yellow line, much less the snow on which it was drawn... And, as yet, Union Street has failed to receive even the first million dollars in war support from our supposed allies. Ah well, I don't think I've ever voted for a winning presidential candidate or backed the winning side of a war yet. Why should this altercation be any different? I wouldn't know what to do.

## ON WAR

(SC) The residents of North Bryan St. and I have been trading good-natured punches in these pages for the last couple months and it has been fun. As last month's issue went to press, I recall predicting that the rest of the apa membership might find this amusing for a short time, but they would quickly tire of this nonsense and tell us to knock it off. So it came as a surprise that as of this week's deadline, a large number of otherwise level-headed apa hacks were gleefully taking sides, offering strategy and support-for-pay (thanks so much, Bill Bodden.)

Pat Hario has been particularly cocky lately. Boasting to me about all of the people who've lined up on her "side". She also dropped a threat that she and Steve Swartz have wrangled the January cover from new OE Tracy Shannon and they they eagerly plan to make use of it. Swartz told me he thought a good idea would be a package of excrement ("Objectionable Shit") cover. You all thought we were kidding about "chemical weapons". This should prove once and for all that Steve's depraved cover ideas come only from him. My only involvement has been to be the unfortunate first person to hear about them.

Well I'm not about to back down now. I've detected cracks in the Objectionable Shit foundation and I think collapse of the alliance is imminent. Hario is making a tactical error by recruiting Tracy to lob puns at me. Pat hates puns as much as I do and could be taking serious chances of being hit by "friendly fire" or even fragged. Swartz's Shit cover will surely gas everyone, friend or foe. I've got defenses in place, last will and testament made out, and phasers set on Shake and Bake. Let's do it.



The troop girds loins for battle, and arms himself with the infamous riding crop. "Let's do it," he says defiantly to "Objectionable Shit" enemies.



**JAE LESLIE ADAMS**

(JG) Welcome to the apa. I certainly enjoyed your first zine; it'll be nice to get to know you here, in print.

I liked your point about Madison being the same size as Shakespeare's London, with the potential for producing just as many geniuses as that city did. However, I think the magnetic properties of today's much larger, culturally more active cities, tend to draw away those talents to some degree from towns like Madison, in the same way that London and Paris during the Renaissance used to draw people to them from rural areas.

I didn't realize that you did calligraphy. As I was saying to **Lynne Ann**, I sometimes get requests from people at the DNR for calligraphic work, and rather than distress them by explaining that not all artists are good at all kinds of art, I'd rather, at least, be able to refer them to someone who can help them. Would you like me to mention your name and phone number in such times?

Excellent review of the latest Auel Cave Bear book. I won't be reading it, thank you. Do you feel compelled to read books once you've invested time in at the beginning of a series?

(SC) Welcome to Turbo. I hope you get as much from contributing as you seem to hope. The Apa can be pointedly frustrating to people seeking serious feedback. Welcome all the same. I enjoyed your contribution which seemed to read very much like a journal. Nice style. I hope you see fit to share some fiction with us as well.

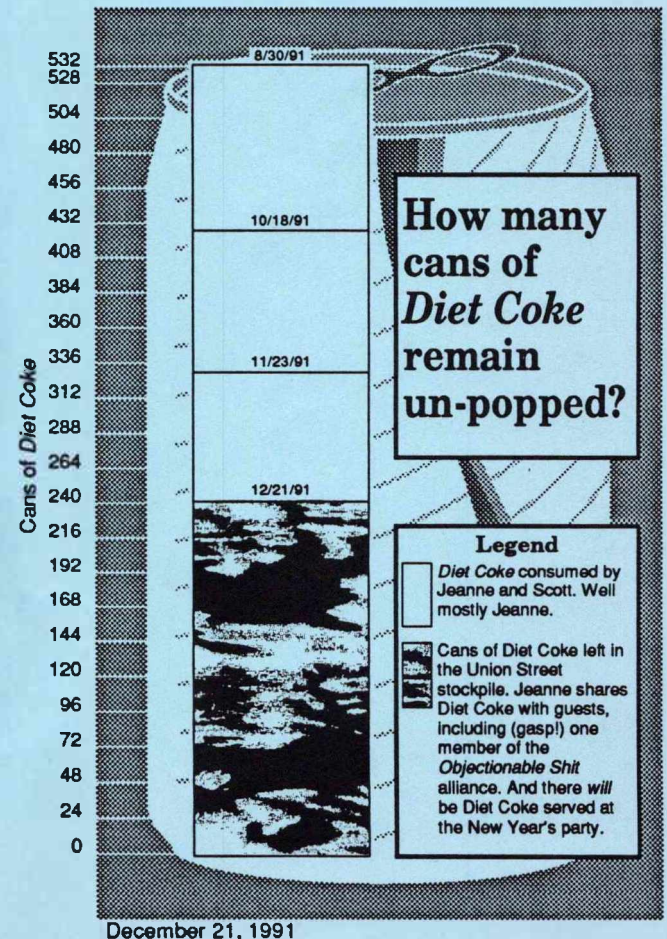
**KAREN BABICH**

(JG) The word, "cool" has slid into my vocabulary (again), and fairly recently too. I'm pretty sure it's a word we used in the 60s quite a lot, but it dropped from fashion along with other words of its generation, like "groovy" and "far out." I think I started using "cool" again when Scott's teenaged niece, Daphne, visited us for a couple days last summer. It was amusing, we started to use it around her and about her, in a sort of gentle kidding way. And then it got to be a habit. (This is a dangerous phenomenon. I've noticed that lots of people who adopt kidding nicknames for one another, eventually start using them minus the original sarcastic tone. It's happening with Scott and I: there's no longer quite the sarcastic edge to my tone of voice when I call him "dear," or...well, other, nicknames.) But that doesn't provide the total explanation for my renewed usage of the word, "cool." As many of you know, I do quite a lot of reading about Macintosh graphics software in connection to my job. The writers in this elitist little community (and, I assume, among other computer programmers and aficionados) tend to use "cool," as a synonym for an elegant, fun, innovative, time-saving feature or method. And for me, it really took root there, though it seems to have taken root more in my spoken vocabulary than written.

**ALL TURBO MEMBERS INVITED TO  
SCOTT & JEANNE'S NEW YEAR'S  
PARTY!**

December 31, 1991, 8:00 pm

We'll have champagne, beer, diet coke, egg nog and hors d'oeuvres. Snack-like food will be welcome, along with any other refreshments you'd like to share.



December 21, 1991