



Welcome to *Union Street* (issue #27 and *Obsessive Press* #126), the zine with the transmogrifying masthead (this month referring to several Big Big changes in Scott's and Jeanne's routines: Scott's returning to school and Jeanne is again swimming every day at the YMCA). 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, 1992. January 1992 for Turbo-Charged Party Animal APA #67. Members FWA.

All mailing comments are by Jeanne this time.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Tracy, I like the idea of talking over some of these more complicated issues (like the method of proposing new apa members) at WisCon, but I still very much dislike the idea of doing any actual voting there. It's unfair to the out-of-town members who cannot attend the con. I'd rather that we published very brief summaries of what we discussed at the con, and give the out-of-town people a chance to join in the discussion, at least briefly before an official vote is called. The whole point of doing an apa, is that it is a method of written communication. I don't think that we should segregate an important part of its structure to a face-to-face forum.

COVER

What a beautiful serendipitous cover, you guys! I loved it. Too bad neither Bill Hoffman or Kim Nash got credit for their collaboration.

HOPE KIEFER

It was great to see you New Year's eve, Hope. One look at our refrigerator door, and I would have known you were here, even if you'd hidden out from us all night long. Too bad Karl couldn't have come to the party too. Did he like the bottle of Scott's Brau? It turned out we almost had another way-out-of-town visitor (besides you and Barb Zanger), that night: My sister Julie tried to get airplane tickets at the last moment in order to surprise us all, but the tickets proved too expensive and were available only in the most inconvenient times and she gave up on the plan.

Thanks for the updated "Mom Report." I'm really glad to hear that she's doing so well. Tell her good luck for me in her job search.

What kind of fan are you, Hope!? Scott and I put your name in the *Iowa City Post Herald Tribune Gazette* for egoboo-scanning purposes, and you take it as an insult! In the Olden Days, fans were grateful to be mentioned at all, no matter what the context. Or was that a thinly veiled hint, that you want to be paid for your support like some other apa members?

KIM WINZ

I hadn't thought about the translatability of Dr. Seuss books until you brought it up, but I suppose it would be terribly difficult to make his stories available in other languages. You'd need a translator as extraordinarily imaginative as Dr. Seuss himself, and the resulting texts would end up being almost separate, new creations in themselves. The ideal solution, of course, would be if Seuss himself was polylingual and was able to write the different language versions himself. Does anyone know if Seuss had more than one language?

I hope I didn't insult you when I described my impression of your Madison persona...

I'm not on Internet. In fact, I'm not even hooked up to a modem, either at work or at home. It's coming though. We're supposed to be hooked up to the Ethernet at the DNR sometime this year, and I know I'll be using E-Mail at that point. People are constantly asking me if they can send me E-Mail and act exasperated when I say no. Almost like the way I feel when I try unsuccessfully to call folks who don't own an answering machine. I don't know yet what that will mean in terms of Internet, though.

ANDY HOOPER

Well, General, we thank you for your support. I believe there's still some Classic Coke left in the fridge. Unless Scott has finished them off by making Rum and Cokes for himself, those cans might enjoy a longer life than the remaining several cases of Diet Coke.

LYNNE ANN MORSE

You wrote: "something that irritates me totally out of proportion to its significance is that Roelof only puts ONE space after a period, while I was trained to use two." Did you make a pun on purpose? It is after all, the technology of typesetting and other word processors which produce *proportional* type that changed the rule about two spaces after a period. If you use a word processor which produces letters that occupy a space proportional to their size, as you do for your zine, the rules are different from that of a regular typewriter which produces letters that occupy the same



size space, no matter what shape the individual letter has. One of the telling signs of a novice typesetter is that they put two spaces after a period, which often produces ugly rivers of white space running vertically through blocks of type.

If I weren't brought up Catholic, I probably wouldn't have suggested that Tracy genuflect. Lucky for her that I wasn't brought up in some religion that requires prostration instead of a mere, deep knee bend.

PAT HARIO

What cartoon? Where? Did you paste it into everyone else's zine except mine? Is this part of an evil plot to drive me crazy?

STEVE SWARTZ

I was surprised and shocked by the Thomas/Hill confrontation because I can't stay pessimistic all the time. In order to work towards change, I have to believe not only that change is possible, but that change is occurring. Sometimes my optimism carries me a bit too far, I guess, and periodically I crash to the ground with renewed awareness of how far we've got to go yet.

But the mere fact that we've got a ways to go, is no reason to declare the current wave of feminism a loss and to say that we had better start all over again. That to me is one of the tragedies of previous waves of feminism—that they were considered lost causes and forgotten by later feminists. I suppose it might be an attractive thing to some people who are just beginning to consider them active feminists to say, OK, we all start new here, and it will be different and better this time. But I'm not just beginning. I may occasionally feel badly beaten up by current affairs, but I do not in any way feel beaten. I'm not about push my work into the closet and start with a new slate. I've got a lot invested in the work I've done so far. Some people might think that's a lot of baggage to put onto the meaning of simple terms, feminism and post-feminism, but I don't. We've been talking a little bit in this apa about the importance of naming, and this is definitely one of those crucial names to me. I will continue to call myself a feminist, and continue to resist the term, post-feminism, because I think that—by its image of scrapping the past, and starting over again—it encourages an anti-historical perspective. And right now we need all the help we can get, including the knowledge that the work that was done and that continues to be done by feminists who grew up in the 70s, actually did change things and continues to change things.

CATHY GILLIGAN

I never owned a car before Scott and I bought our station wagon a couple years ago, and I resisted it for a number of reasons until then. A car was an added expense that I could never afford, not if I wanted an apartment which included a separate room for my office. I also felt that as long as I lived in a town with such a fantastic public transportation system, that I should take advantage of it both for environmental/political reasons and health reasons. I bicycle more often than most people do. However, everything changed with the house. Jobs come up too frequently that involve stores off the bus line and payloads that can't be carried on a bicycle rack. Neither Scott nor I

regularly use the car to commute to work (Scott drives to work on weekends sometimes, when bus schedules are bad) but we'll never be without a car as long as we own a house.

JAE LESLIE ADAMS

I loved e. e. cummings's *The Enormous Room*. In fact I've still got the book on my shelves. People sometimes thought it was weird when I called them "magic mountains," but I just assured them that it was a compliment.

Scott and I give our apas to Lucy Nash when we've finished with them, and so I rarely have back issues around when I read the newest issue. This means that I got a bit confused as I read your mailing comments, because I don't always remember the name of people's zines (I normally think of them in terms of "Bill Dyer's zine," or "Par Hario's zine.") I sure would appreciate it if you would put a last name in parentheses (or something to identify the person) in your comments.

I loved your chain-of-cause-and-effect paragraph that connects your high school driving class to a cup of expresso. Nice style.

MICHAEL SHANNON

You agree with me that women have to cope with institutionalized sexism on a daily basis, but you say that you don't like my appraisal of men's situation in all this. You described an event in which a black woman tried to unfairly take advantage of some of the new attitudes and laws which are based on the recognition of institutionalized sexism and racism, and suggest that a white man (you) was one of the real victims in this situation.

I agree that your experience and your supervisor's was a horrific one, and I truly do sympathize with both of you, but I hardly think that this sort of example can be used by any man to excuse sexist conduct (or by any white person to excuse racist conduct). Nor do I think that the fact that one can point out a few examples of dishonest women taking advantage of anti-sexist attitudes and laws means that we should therefore begin with the assumption that all women are willing to lie about sexual harassment.

You and I probably don't actually disagree that very few women are running around indiscriminately accusing men of imaginary crimes and that paranoid distrust is a reasonable reaction on the part of men in this culture. (Do we?) And so I'm unclear just why you began your essay with the statement that you disagreed with my "appraisal of the situation that men find themselves in." You weren't at all specific about what I said that you disliked.

My point was that I objected to the commonly heard idea that male-female interactions these days is a battlefield strewn with sneaky, invisible traps for men. I tried to say that the dangers are real but that they exist mostly for those men who refuse to open their eyes, look around and learn to become more aware of the feelings of those around them.

I think of a lot of traditional relationships that I've observed in this way: The woman is "in charge" of emotions and the guy professes to be either uninterested in or unskilled in that area. (And yes, of course, there are other unfair divisions which are equally unfair to men.) She wants

to talk about their relationship and he tries to avoid those conversations. She soothes tempers when he hurts someone else's feelings. I've even seen the woman take over gift-giving and care-giving responsibilities from him with *his* family. This is the analogy I've used in my head: The man is wearing a blindfold and the woman helps him negotiate obstacles, warning him that there's a wall in front of him or that he is about to break a fragile vase. If she relaxes her vigilance, she takes the blame for the broken vase, because it obviously wasn't his fault. Feminists want guys to take responsibility for their emotional sides. We say that if men choose to walk around blindfolded, they will walk into walls. It's no use being angry about the fact that women used to guide them. A lot of women have left the room; they've got their own lives to lead, other skills to cultivate. Men have got to take off their blindfolds and start doing work that they are perfectly capable of doing if they want to avoid bopping their heads on corners and breaking vases.

Now, on to something completely different...

Steve Johnson's and your comments about whether those two guys did all the crop circles themselves, or whether some of the circles were created by some other agency, seems beside the point to me. Before the two joksters revealed their activities, some crop circle students were frequently heard to comment that the phenomenon could not possibly have been created by any method known to human beings. To me, the very simple methods shown to have created at least some of the crop circles, completely disproves that statement, and removes the extra-ordinary aspects from it all.

I don't think that special education programs for gifted students should be discouraged in the interest of a democratic society. Varying levels of intelligence is a fact of life and have nothing to do with the ideals of democracy. It's not an either-or situation, democracy or the encouragement of gifted students. In fact, I think it would be a cruel, discriminatory thing to actively discourage (or even to fail to encourage) a brilliant student from exercising their intellect to the fullest extent possible. Every child should be helped to do the best they can. That, in my mind, should be the goal of our educational system and the ideal of equal opportunity, for students of every level, average or not. And selfishly, I'd prefer to enjoy the benefits of a society whose technology and arts are flourishing because we encourage the best among us to accomplish amazing things, than I would to live in a society that values conformity. Did you ever read Kurt Vonnegut's short story, "Harrison Bergeron?"

There are lots of "x's" in the margins of my copy of your zine, Michael, and most of them mark the places that I have disagreed with you. In spite of that, I have to tell you that I am enjoying your writing and enjoying the discussions we're having here. I hope you are too.

TRACY SHANNON

You asked for comments on the typeface you're using in your zine. It looks to me as though you're using a 12 point san serif face, while Michael is using a 14 point serif face. Both the slightly larger size of Michael's type and the fact that he's using a serif make his choice a bit easier to read. But it also looks as if Michael's zine is printed using a better printing quality setting than your's. (Could it be that he uses "better" and you've been using "faster?")

JULIE SHIVERS

Believe me, you have so far not seen my "look of absolute horror." I save *that* expression for times when I am surprised and aghast at some unexpected turn of events. And I was far from surprised at your announcement that you would be changing your name from Shivers to Humphries. I wasn't chanting feminist slogans in my head when you said that. On the contrary, the thing I was thinking when you talked about not liking your name and wanting to change it, was that this was consistent with your other similar and frequent expressions of dislike for various parts of yourself. I suppose you could say—as you did—that my expression contained a bit of disappointment. I do feel bad that you dislike so many things about yourself. I think you would be a much happier person if you learned to accept and like yourself more. You have said out loud and have written in your last apazine that you dread saying your name out loud in introductions because you despise your name. You wrote that you find it embarrassing. Well, embarrassment is just a extreme form of caring very much about what other people think about you. Unfortunately, it will be impossible to change or hide enough about yourself so that everyone (in your perception) will totally like everything about you. You've got to like yourself first.

VIJAY BOWEN

I have the same visual memory of remembered passages from books. When I recall a part of something in a book or a magazine, the memory comes complete with a picture of the whole page and the excerpt's place upon it. It's extremely useful, as you pointed out, to be able to skim a book and keep your eye on the upper middle right-hand side as the pages flip by. I miss the ability to do that when I've read something on a computer screen rather than on a physically palpable paper page.

STEVE JOHNSON

A few years ago, Scott and I were driving somewhere in southwestern Wisconsin on our way to Wildcat Mountain State Park for a day of canoeing on the Kickapoo when we drove through a small town—Viola, I think. Scott had the wheel and I navigated—map in hand—from the passenger seat. We were both in a fine mood, laughing at the absurd sound of some billboard ads we'd been reading aloud to one another. In that spirit, we simultaneously announced the words on two signs in Viola that caught our eyes. Scott spied and shouted out: "Viola Tavern!" at the same instant that I shouted, "Viola Library!"

It was a riotously funny moment. (Well maybe you had to be there.) We were just getting to know one another then, and the contrast between what Scott chose to see and what my eyes focused upon, threw us both into a fit of laughter.

I remembered that moment of split perception when I read your zine last time, Steve. I thought again about how people can have a lot in common, but still see life very differently because they're looking for different things. You seem to be battling against the tendency of people to ignore the "other" point of view, which I think is certainly a good thing. We all need to be reminded that there are many ways to view reality. What's interesting to me now, however, is



the differences between the pattern of your reactions to "mysteries," and my own.

I grew up Catholic, attending 8 years of Catholic parochial school, and part of the dogma that repelled, fascinated, and baffled me most about my religious training was the part that focussed upon "faith" and "mysteries," both of which are core ideas/foundations in Catholic theology. There are supposed to be some truths that are literally beyond the understanding of mortal human beings, and these truths must be accepted *on faith* if one is to find salvation. One of these truths is that God (and possibly Mary) is capable of doing miracles, which are flashes of the supernatural dimly reflecting upon history. Our world touches mystery—an occurrence that (by definition) cannot be explained in the terms of ordinary life.

I rejected all that when I rejected organized religion. Cicero wrote: "Nothing happens without a cause, and nothing happens unless it can happen. When that which can happen does in fact happen, it cannot be considered a miracle. Hence, there are no miracles." This idea that things are caused (whether by chance or by leverage), does not in any way lessen the mysteriousness of the world and of reality for me. I accept the fact that there are a myriad of things, events and ideas that I will never comprehend and that human beings may possibly lack the time or capacity ever to understand. But I refuse to assume—as a beginning theorem—that a certain portion of potential knowledge is automatically and forever out of reach of human grasp.

Many of my discussions with you and a lot of what you've written in your apazine, lead me to the conclusion that you desire precisely this view of the universe—that you tend to view or want to view a certain portion of your own and other people's motivations, along with some events, as deriving from supernatural power. And I think that's why I so frequently feel uncomfortable with your interpretations of reality.

Take, for instance, your speculations in your most recent zine about the fannish subculture, in which you suggest that fans may actually be aliens who have partially forgotten their heritage...

I understand you were only suggesting a story line, not making a statement of belief there. And, in fact, you might be interested to know that Doris Lessing's best novel—in my opinion—*Briefing for a Descent into Hell*, was written using almost exactly that idea. "Michael"-like entities who re-enter the mortal plane in order to help humanity must be re-born as mortals and, in the process mostly forget their origins, but nevertheless find themselves gathering together in an attempt to rekindle those memories. Most of them get locked up as lunatics when their memories begin to be refreshed. Lessing speculates that many of the prophets and great religious figures were people who had simply made more progress in recalling their true natures. She is drawing, of course, upon the research of Joseph Campbell, whose lifework was based upon the amazing similarities to be found in the world's myths and religions. Campbell describes mythic figures and stories that get repeated over and over again in all the world's cultures and suggests that they have their root in some basic human archetypes and dreams, which in turn, are reflections of the basic thing that makes us human. I love

to read Campbell's stuff and like the way he looks inward to explain the similarities in human mythology. Lessing interestingly (but oddly—to me) chooses to look for an outside agency to explain these similarities. In other books, like *The Four-Gated City*, she continues to underline her idea that people who are normally considered "insane" are actually in contact with other-worldly intelligences. You would probably like *Briefing for a Descent into Hell* a great deal, Steve. If you want to borrow it, let me know.

What struck me about your speculation on fannish communities was the fact that I have taken the very same idea in a different direction. Many of us in fandom have remarked upon the peculiar family-building mechanism that seems to work within the fan community; it's a "hot" topic for serious fannish writing. "Who are we?" "Why do we come together?" "What do we have in common?" The last question isn't nearly as easy a one to answer as it seems at first glance, because the longer a fan is a fan, the less they tend to read SF, for example, and one is left with this unexplained sense of kinship. In any case, the direction I have always taken that thought is *inward*. Many of us who have written about the phenomenon have noted that there are in fact many other special interest groups which function exactly the way fandom does. David Emerson has written on the similarity of Grateful Dead fan groups and of pinball game fans. Darrah and Peggy Chavey have pointed out the almost identical structures and traditions that dancing fan groups have in common with SF fan groups. Spike has described the convivial network of beer brewers in the same terms. There are many others, too. But the route my mind gets tugged is the question of what basic part of human nature wants to make artificial families for ourselves? What need, inside ourselves, gets satisfied by the friendships we seek out and finds security within the inter-personal weavings of groups? To me, this route of inquiry is far more compelling than speculation on the possibly other-worldly genesis of our feelings.

That's what I was reacting to in the last *Union Street* too, when I asked you why you wanted to explain creativity as a sort of supernatural process, rather than seek to understand it from within, as a function of yourself as a human being.

The image that comes to mind in all our verbal interactions, Steve, is this: I see us both as looking at and trying to understand an event or a phenomenon. But you look up and outward, seeking an external cause for the thing. And I look inside the phenomenon or myself, looking for a cause within the event or the thing.

Which is not a bad thing, I guess. It's probably a benefit to all that we human beings divide up the guard duty—watching each others' backs, so to speak. But it's probably not fair to complain that others are not looking at reality the same way we ourselves do. There's a big, complicated, and rewarding view anyway you chose to look.

BILL HUMPHRIES

What a gorgeous, funny parody of *The Nation*, Bill! We loved it; way cool. "The 'Perk' Factor" sounds as if it could be an actual editorial title. And thank you for the left-leaning economist's view of the East Side conflict.

Iowa City Post Herald Tribune Gazette

New Year's Eve Battle: Stalemate!

OBSESSIVE PRESS, MADISON, WI. The Near East Side War's first battle was fought to a stalemate on New Year's Eve upon Union Street territory. Although many uncommitted apa members floundered in the line of fire, and several fearsome weapons were fired off by both the Union Street (US) and Objectionable Shit (OS) alliances, there were no fatalities and only one serious casualty was counted at dawn. Tracy Shannon, the new Turbo apa OE, was injured in a mysterious fall late in the party and was reported to be in satisfactory condition after she was evacuated from the battlefield.

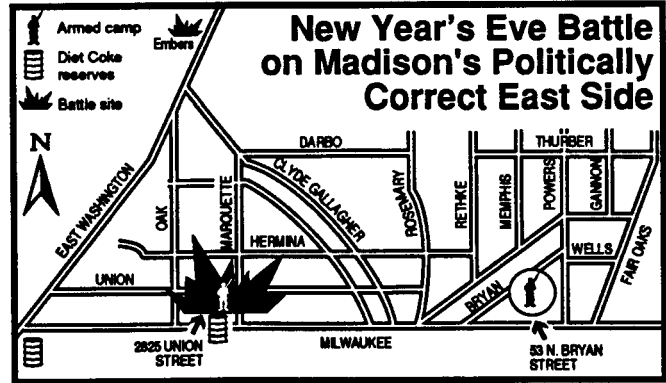
OS alliance members, Steve Swartz and Pat Hario deployed their forces early in the evening with ally, Elk Kriser, all armed to the teeth. Kriser, Swartz' arms agent, had transported a "Kitchen-Aid Mixer" from their Arlington, Virginia base, which Swartz used to concoct deadly "egg nog" bombs. Earlier in the week, career diplomat, Diane Martin had attempted to head off possible chemical warfare by offering Swartz an egg nog recipe which involved cooked (rather than raw) eggs, but Swartz rejected her counsel. Laura Spiess warned the New Year's Eve revelers that Swartz's concoction might be lethal, and described the risk of salmonella poisoning in grotesque detail to

anyone who would listen, hinting darkly of war crimes and international sanctions. Swartz only laughed sadistically and poured more cream into the mixture. According to one eye witness, he didn't even bother washing his hands.

Hario too, threatened scores of lives with her own weapon of hideous destructive power, a weapon which she conceived and planned months before its awesome introduction in the New Year's Eve Battle. It all started more than 100 days earlier, when Julie Shivers revealed to Hario that she coveted the sexy, black dress worn by Lorelei Manney at the Chicago worldcon. An idea dawned, Hario smiled a small evil smile, and said sweetly, "I'll buy you a sexy black dress for Christmas, Julie. And you can wear it to Scott and Jeanne's New Year's party." Almost immediately, tension began to rise as apa members anticipated the sniping battle of the sexy, black dresses to come. Some doomsayers predicted a duel at dawn, with both Shivers and Manney demanding that everyone present take sides and declare who they thought looked sexier. There can be no winners in a desperate situation like this.

High casualty rate predicted

Some correspondents predicted that the combination of nasty chemical and psychological artillery available to the OS Alliance would shut down the New Year's Party early, possibly even before the critical M-Hour (midnight). Left-wing economic analyst WHump warned in *The Ozone* that the US Diet Coke supply was threatened on all sides by OS embargo, and was frequently observed counting cans of Diet Coke, shaking his head and recording his findings in a small notebook. US representatives, however, confidently



OPINION

Let's Reconsider, East-Siders...

by Scott Custis

In the cold, harsh brilliance of the day after the ferocious New Year's Eve Battle, it dawned on me (oops, no pun intended) that it was about time we looked at this war thing in a new light... er, I mean, we need to wake up and smell the coffee... Oh forget it.

As is often the case in wartime, people have shown great courage and creativity under fire. Look at last month's apa featuring a delightful *Nation* parody by Bill Humphries and the high octane gonzo ramblings of Andy Hooper. Much as it is tempting to see what other gems might be found in future war-related contributions, I have decided it is time to put an end to this silliness. I am snatching the olive branch Pat rather fitfully waved at us last month.

The reasons for peace are almost too numerous to count. Jeanne and I have too much in common with Pat to be fighting her. All of us are Politically Correct Eastside homeowners (Steve will soon be a Politically Correct Eastside home renter) who are not only trashing our precious investments with this war, we are hurting our whole end of town with skirmishes. It would be far better to lob bombs at the

Fashionable Westside Snobs. Pat and I have both been victims of harassment from Steve Swartz—the Shit end of the Objectionable Shit Alliance. Jeanne has better uses for her artwork than war propaganda. I guess I'll just have to accept the fact that Steve can't help producing awful covers, and the best response is polite silence. Pat really is too "nice" for war and I just remembered that I'm supposed to be morally opposed to war. Pat and I both hate puns, we both like beer. Finally and most importantly, neither of us is a fan. It's just too complicated to make war. Pat and I need to stick together as non-fans and as anti-punsters. Peace makes sense.

So, here's the deal. I'll agree to apologize to Pat for declaring war on her (I apologize, Pat) in exchange for a retraction of her Iowa remark. I promise not to call her "perky" even if it is accurate. She should refrain from mouthing foul acronyms when she sees me wearing my IOWA sweatshirt. I'll call Jeanne off the computer if Pat will cease and desist disgusting cover collaborations with Steve. Hey, it will be hard for all of us to restrain ourselves, but that is what peace is all about.

DES MOINES REGISTER OPINION POLL

What's the best thing to come out of Wisconsin?

- Scott's Brau beer 42%
- Other beer 20%
- Scenic views 10%
- Riverboat gambling fans 9%
- Harkin supporters 8%
- Cheeseheads 5%
- Highway 151 4%
- What? Where? 2%

Continued on page 8

Drink & Enjoy



The liquid refreshment favored by Iowans who move to Wisconsin for love, but still think Iowa is heaven

New Year's Eve Battle, *continued from front page*

forecasted that their fully-stocked arsenals would easily repel OS attack. They projected total party success. Custis unveiled an entire bathtub full of home-brewed beer, *Scott's Brau Dark*. Kitchen counters bristled with champagne bottles, all but one of which would be detonated by the end of the night. There were enough plates of goodies, and ice chests filled with additional liquid rations to supply a full siege (including Classic Coke for General Hooper). Festive decorations and Virtual Mistletoe decked the battle field and Custis donned his fierce, black, Iowa, Hawkeyes sweatshirt. US forces were well prepared for a battle, and in the end, OS forces withdrew, sparklied, from US soil.

US gets lots of help

US leaders were gratified by the bountiful outpouring of support by attending apans and owe a significant portion of their successful resistance to that generosity. Aid was donated in the form of rations by so many of the Turbo apans, that—

the next day—the US discovered a larger inventory of liquor, wine and sweets than they possessed before the party had begun. In deference to the danger of a Diet Coke embargo, very little of that rare liquid was consumed on New Year's eve; the US stockpile was barely touched. Probably the most significant material contributions were made by Julie Shivers and Karen Babich who lent the US a vast array of explosive armaments which were deployed during the midnight skirmish.

US forces attracted a surprisingly large number of recruits. Lorelei Manney, Kathi and Kim Nash, all attended despite severe cases of the flu. Jae Adams let her husband babysit and watch *This Old House* re-runs so that she could attend. Barb Zanger traveled all the way from Texas and arrived with General Hooper and Carrie Root. Karen Babich drove up from Chicago and Hope Kiefer flew from the distant Philadelphia for New Year's Eve, although she maintained a careful silence as to whether her

allegiance lies with current (Swartz) or past (Gomoll) objects of acolytism. Bill Bodden set up a peace games table, and it is unfortunate that war fever so provoked the emotions and conversations of the combatants that this opportunity for a diplomatic solution was ignored by both sides.

Black dress scheme derailed

The threat of the sexy black dress duel was defused with a remarkable display of solidarity among Turboapa women. In the tradition of Christian Norwegian citizens, who—during WWII—declared solidarity with Jewish Norwegians and wore Stars of David to prevent Nazis from isolating and deporting the Jews, most of the women on US front lines chose to wear sexy black dresses. Thus was Hario's planned battle of the sexy black dresses defused.

M-Hour

M-Hour came finally, with Steve Johnson bearing the brunt of the Shivers/Babich explosives. Johnson's mantra shield held, however, and he emerged from under a mass of swirling gases and ribbons, unscathed. As the hours passed, with no apparent egg nog victims and the party an unqualified success, OS forces may have become desperate to turn the tide of battle. Alcohol levels were high, so it is unclear exactly what actually happened—whether Tracy Shannon was pushed or whether she fell down the five steps. She did, however, sustain a really big bump on her forehead and several nasty bruises which were hidden for the moment by her sexy black stockings. Observers commented later how suspicious it was that Steve Swartz suggested that the Shannons might find it profitable to "sue Union Street for everything they've got!" an instant



after the OE's head crashed into the wall. It was almost as if he *expected* the accident to occur, as a witness was later heard to whisper. In fact, we may never know the truth about what happened on those treacherous stairs that night.

Stalemate

By 4:00 am, battle fatigue was setting in and apans began to cut their losses and withdraw from the field. Some worried that both Root and Zanger might be suffering severe cases of battle shock; however they both recovered consciousness by the next afternoon. By 5:00 am only the main combatants remained and a field truce was agreed upon by all parties. Hario, Swartz, Kriser, Custis and Gomoll cooperated in a sweep of the grounds. Debris from the conflict littered the floors (and every other surface), but was mopped up within an hour, thanks to the cooperative atmosphere fostered by the temporary truce. The survivors, exhausted and bleary-eyed, withdrew entirely from the Near East Side battle zone and shared a breakfast at Embers, where only minor skirmishes were reported. No further casualties were incurred.

What now?

OS representatives have since been heard to threaten US forces (something about a fold-out toilet apa cover), but US diplomats expressed gratification at the news that the OS alliance have deferred the January cover to Lynne Ann Morse. Observers who know what they're talking about speculate that the OS alliance may have suffered significant internal damage during the months Hario and Swartz have shared a roof. The OS alliance may now believe it cannot survive an extended war with the US. Swartz was heard to mumble derisively that Hario and he are turning into an old married couple. Hario—not

her best in the morning—is resisting Swartz's attempt to hook her on coffee.

The world holds its collective breath as peace and a whole lot of Diet Coke hangs in the balance.



Thanks too for that amazing news about the upcoming videocart technology in discount stores. That will keep me out of Wal-Mart, for sure. A really horrifying thing just occurred to me: shopping at TV Lenny's could get even more irritating than it already is. Can you imagine Lenny shouting at you even every time you turned a corner? Yuck.

Re the Orson Scott Card discussion: I too, very much dislike the idea (which seems implicit to some organized religions' teachings) that a person cannot choose on their own to live a moral life; that without the presence of a god and without that god's rules, we would all be murderers, liars and worse.

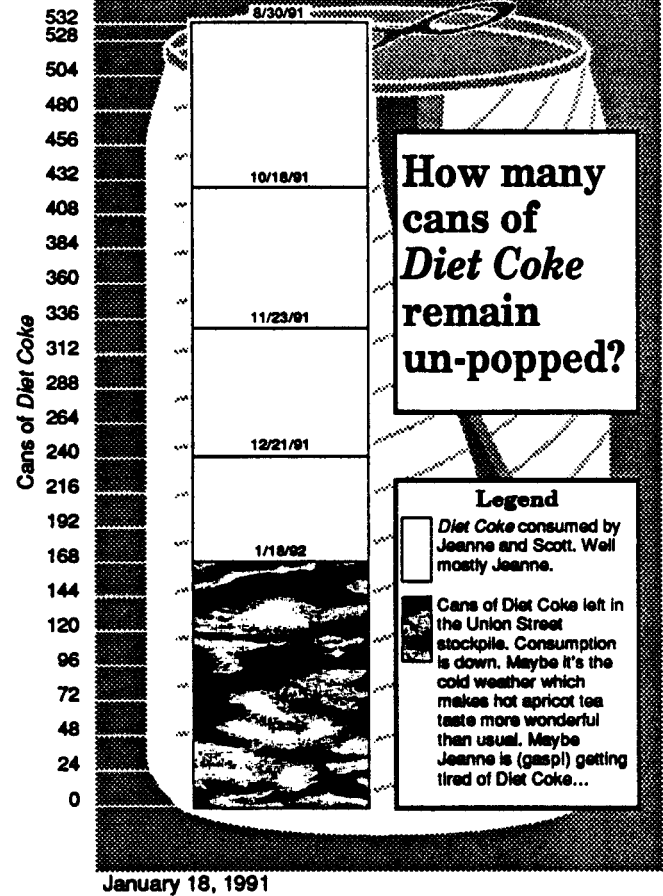
My sister Julie actually is looking for DTP artists, but her main problem is finding people who are already highly skilled and experienced on sophisticated graphics programs like Adobe Illustrator and Photoshop, and who know prepress techniques inside and out. She's always got a pressing backlog and needs to find people who don't need to be trained: her company is too small yet to support people who need to learn on the job.

EVERYONE

Diet Coke consumption seems to be decreasing around here. I probably drink less soda in the winter because I don't get hot and thirsty. But I also seem to be wanting more juices than caffeinated sodas now that I'm back to swimming laps every day. I finally signed up at the YMCA and am exercising regularly again. It feels really good. However, it may cast some of your Diet Coke consumption estimates into the trash. Sorry about that.

Scott will be back with mailing comments next time, hoping that he doesn't have soldiering to do anymore.

Jeanne





Beer-Brewing on Union Street

by Scott Custis

There has been a growing interest in beer and brewing around here lately. I tried my hand at home-brewing last month; several people in the group have talked about brewing beer on a regular basis, and interest has culminated in a roadtrip to Appleton to check out a couple of micro-breweries, one of which won honors recently in a national beer-tasting competition. The roadtrip is scheduled for the day of Turbo deadline, so maybe I'll write more on how that went next month.

I mentioned to Jeanne on several occasions before we bought a house, that I would like to try my hand at brewing beer someday. I thought it would be nice to have a house in which to do this so space would not be a problem. Jeanne took me at my word and about a year and a half ago presented me with a home-brew starter kit on my birthday. The kit included both ingredients and equipment. I have never brewed beer before and since my cousin Spike left town, I didn't really know anyone around who was doing it. I decided I wanted some sort of instruction or practice instead of just plunging ahead with only the recipe and some vague instructions as a guide. What I found out was that classes are surprisingly hard to find. Among educational institutions that do general interest short courses, the UW Extension for example, does beer-tasting but not beer *brewing*. The Wine and Hop Shop on State St., where Jeanne bought the beer kit, had a sign-up sheet for a brewing class they were planning. I signed up. They never called. In fact I signed up twice and, despite their assurances that they were planning the class "soon," I was never contacted. I finally gave up on them.

Last November Jeanne and I hit on the idea of throwing a New Year's Eve party and it occurred to me that it would be fun to be able to offer some home-brew beer. Jeanne does not drink beer and would normally have no motive to get excited about home-brewing, but she thought home-brew for New Years was a fine idea. But her interest was seriously engaged at the thought of designing beer labels. This is what is known as a "fun" graphic project. It was fine with me. She volunteered to help and I liked the name she suggested—Scott's Brau.

We started on the Sunday before Thanksgiving. We were ready to bottle by December 8. Using only the recipe and some general instructions, I now understand a lot more about the details than I could have ever surmised by studying the reading material. I made several silly errors and miscalculations, discovered there must be easier ways to do many things. I wish I had had a class or some other experience to follow. But in the end, it was pretty easy. Beer has been brewed for thousands of years and although exactness and fussiness help insure top-grade results, you do have a measure of leeway to make minor screwups and still wind up with drinkable product.



We were careful about the things that mattered. Equipment was clean and sterile and we followed instructions precisely on timing and measurements. I was afraid I had contaminated the wort a few times (syphoning is especially tricky) and once I thought I had left the house thermostat on too low a setting overnight. Most of the work can be done by one person and a lot of the equipment preparation can be done well in advance. Bottling is a two person job though, and has the potential of being very messy.

On Dec. 8, the total production came to 21 Sprecher 16 oz. bottles and 19½ Point 12 oz. bottles. I could probably count on 46 to 50 twelve oz. bottles in a batch depending on waste. Capping the bottles was

the easiest part. The bottles of beer fit into two Xerox boxes and were stored for a week at room temperature in our upstairs bathtub (in case of exploding bottles) before they were moved to the basement.

Tasting the product was the penultimate step. Jeanne would not start designing a label until it was decided if the beer was a success or not. On about December 20, racked with curiosity, I opened a bottle—or rather a bottle that was only half-filled with the last of the brau—and tried it. It was very disappointing. It was flat as a pancake and very sweet and fruity. I thought I'd failed. However on Christmas Eve, Steve Swartz dropped by and convinced me to try a couple full bottles. We each popped the top on one and poured it into a beer glass. It was beautiful. A perfect foamy head, bubbles rising from the bottom of the glass; the beer itself was dark and clear. It smelled good. It looked great. The taste was good. It's somewhat sweet with a slightly bitter, almost a metallic aftertaste. Not outstanding, but certainly drinkable. I shall see if the aftertaste improves with age. The beer was quite young when we tried it. It is not quite a perfect dark beer for my taste, but drinkable by all means and a hit at the New Years party, boasting Jeanne's label as shown above. It turns out, the partial bottle I originally opened failed due to the amount of air in the bottle, according to Steve. A bottle not full enough will not carbonate properly and a bottle filled too full will explode.

Jeanne and I took a bottle of Scott's Brau to the Wine and Hop Shop to get the expert opinion of the proprietor. We strolled around the store while the owner and his assistant waited on another couple. I wasn't watching them too closely until I realized he had my bottle of beer and was setting out six small cups so everyone in the shop could try it. All agreed that it was fine, no evidence of error in the process and he insisted that any problems I had with it could be remedied by altering the recipe. I received the final "official" approval with relief and a pleasure.