

Union St

Union Street #2 is a two-way thoroughfare, trafficked by Scott Custis and Jeanne Gomoll from 2825 Union Street, where else, in Madison, Wisconsin 53704-5136 where there is no longer a red metal monstrosity in the backyard, the lilac bushes have been chastened, the

leaves are almost gone entirely and the bills keep piling up, i.e., home. This publication is an Obsessive Press publication #101, and is copyright © 1989 by Jeanne Gomoll and Scott Custis. October 1989. Members FWA.

It was about 8 pm and I was starting to get some clothing together for my trip out to San Francisco and I'd switched on the TV to listen to Rosanne in the background. But the program was interrupted before it began by an announcement about some disastrous earthquake in San Francisco. No, that couldn't be right, I thought to myself, I'm just letting my general sense of catastrophe get to me. I was, after all, getting ready to go to see my brother Rick for the last time. He doesn't have more than a week to live at this point. Suddenly some emergency vehicles roared and sired down our street, and then for no reason, the smoke alarm went off for a few seconds downstairs. Very weird. If I was a religious person, I'd probably think someone was trying to tell me something.

It's been a trying month.

As many of you know, my brother Rick has AIDS and doesn't have very much longer to live. A few weeks ago he came back to Milwaukee to see Fall color—which he did get to see, I'm glad to say (my dad drove him into the Kettle Moraine) — and during his visit his health took a dramatic nosedive. He became entirely unable to swallow. One of the effects of AIDS is that the brain atrophies, it shrinks. And gradually the person with AIDS loses many of their higher level cognitive abilities, along with a decreased motor control. Rick has had difficulty walking for some time, and in general has lost much of his mental quickness, being disoriented much of the time, but this last change was even more dramatic. Within the week he became unable to move at all: he can't even roll over in bed. And without the ability to swallow, he needed IV infusions of liquids and a tube was put down his nose and into his stomach for nourishment. Pretty awful. During his stay at the Milwaukee hospital, he never complained (he never does at all, in fact), and the only thing he wanted was to be back in his own bedroom.

I'd originally been scheduled to fly back to San Francisco with him and stay there a week, but that whole week I sat with him in his hospital room instead. And then, when they released him, Scott volunteered to go with me and help me get my brother back to his own room in San Francisco. It could have been a more harrowing trip than

it was, and certainly it could have been much more difficult without Scott, but Rick persevered and we managed. It must have been horrible for Rick — he couldn't relieve the pressure in his ears during pressure changes and when we got home, his nose bled for quite a while. But I think he was very happy to be home in his own bed, with his own music, with people he knew taking care of him.

That was Friday (the 13th). That same day, he decided that he didn't want the food tube down his throat any more and that he didn't want the liquid IV anymore. This means that he has about a week to 10 days (from the time of that decision) to live. Danny, his lover, and I called the family and told them in an extremely tearful conference call what was happening.

We all decided we wanted to be with Rick, and so everyone in the family made plans to fly out to San Francisco within the week.

Scott and I flew back to Madison Sunday, and I'm planning to go back tomorrow — Thursday — and it's going to be a rough weekend. I don't know for sure when I'll be back.

I'm doing OK. That seems to be the question when I get to this point in the description of recent events to friends. It's like the time I gashed open my arm and I bandaged it up on automatic, got into the car, rode (without memory) to the emergency ward, spied off a list of telephone numbers, insurance numbers, etc. that I would have sworn I didn't know by heart, and then when the nurse told me that I could wait in the other room, I stood up and fainted. As long as there's something to do, I'm OK. I'm cool, collected, efficient. Then when it's over, I fall apart. I'm sort of planning for a massive falling-apart scene next week. But right now I'm OK.

However, I did not manage to finish reading the apa. I read part of it out loud to Scott during a weekend getaway up North, but mostly, I didn't read it. So, most of the comments this time are Scott's. Most of my comments are smartass reactions to Scott's more thoughtful, and definitely more worthwhile work.

See you next month.

— Jeanne

Jerry Kaufman

[SC] Thank you for another fine apazine contribution. Your opening ramble about dreams was very interesting to me. I rarely remember dreams unless they are very vivid (usually nightmares). I know that I dream at night and often wake up knowing I had one or several dreams, but I have not been able to train myself to recall them. I think it is great that some people are able to remember their dreams so clearly that they can try to interpret them. Have you always been able to do this? Do you often try to interpret your dreams and how have your conclusions worked out? I would like to know what you ultimately decide about the two dreams you mentioned. Do you think your dreams are often premonitory or just views about events and situations you have already experienced?

[JG] I didn't get a chance to read much of the apa this time what with all my jetting around this past month, and what I did read was mostly out loud during a brief weekend trip up to Rock Island to see Fall color and get away from it all. As Scott drove I sat beside him and read bits of the apa. We agreed that your's was our favorite apazine of the issue. I recall some fine conversation inspired by your thoughts on dreams. Thanks.

Joy Kiefer

[SC] Has anyone ever told you that you and Hope sound alot alike in print? That's not a criticism, I just wanted to be the first to tell you. You both seem to live life on fast-forward. Frantic. Warp-speed. I think it is a very entertaining style, I just hope the OE does not elect to bundle your zines back-to-back sometime. I couldn't get through them both without taking a nap to rest up.

It is great that you have chosen to share with us some of your feelings about your mother's condition. It is a very painful subject and I just hope that writing about it helps you through it a little. Speaking for Jeanne and myself, you have our sympathy and support.

[JG] Yes. It's been a bad season for news of this sort. Lately I've been feeling positively apocalyptic.

Vijay Bowen

[SC] I would like to respond to the comment hook at the end of your fine zine. You found it odd that some men felt they could not tell you that you are "sexy" because you are married("attached"). Like so many things, it's not so much what you say as how you say it. I believe a skillful person with tact and timing could say some pretty outrageous things at a party and get away with it. Telling an "attached" person they are sexy is not really that outrageous anyway these days. Alot of people go to a great deal of trouble to look nice at a party and most would find a tasteful complement, even along the "sexy" line, acceptable-even appreciated. I admit, however, that I would find it inappropriate for some clod to come up to Jeanne at a party and, first thing out of his mouth, tell her she's sexy.

[JG] And he's spoiled more good conversations that way...

Hope Kiefer

[SC] Thank you for putting James Bron on spec. (see comments to him later).

Great story about Asimov the younger. Good example of how useful convention co-ordinator skills can be later in life. You would probably be surprised at how many people (myself included) would have no idea how to deal with that situation or select a poor solution ("Move it you geek, this is my table!").

[JG] Oh, come on, Scott. You've demonstrated lots of strong arm techniques to me that I'm sure would settle the situation.

Kim Nash

[SC] If your zine doesn't inspire the most comments, I'll be very surprised. I am speaking, of course, about your Marital Stress section. Opening this up for response from the "humble, but wise readers" took alot of guts. In view of that, you deserve whatever comments you get. I am going easy on you this time. I don't feel I am in a position to comment for three reasons:

1. Since I am not technically married, my opinion would not carry much weight.
2. I would need Lucy's side of the story before taking a stand.
3. You need more time to come up with a better story. That silliness you submitted as an explanation couldn't convince anyone. Try again.

I will be interested to see how you like having a pierced ear. It seems timely that you chose to do this just as we were discussing body piercing in the APA. Perhaps our discussion inspired you to action. If that's the case, maybe you'd be interested in piercing a few more things for the sake of discussion. Any suggestions anyone? Lucy?

[JG] Whew! And you were saying that you wouldn't know how to handle yourself in tight interpersonal situations, Scott...

Pete Winz

[SC] I had a fine time at your wedding and the reception. I could not stay long because I had to go to work. That's very regrettable because everyone I've talked to agrees that it was a great party. Thank you for the "trip report" on your honeymoon. Reading about such travels is not as good as going, but at least it keeps the hunger sharp (something Hope will be delighted to hear).

James Bron

[SC] Welcome. I truly enjoyed your submission and am looking forward to more. As I read, I could hear you talking to me very naturally. Your style is a bit frantic — you are a friend of the Kiefers', right? — and you have a problem with parenthesis getting out of control, but I think with time you will get a handle on that last part. I also think you're funny. Your comment to Tom Quale on issue #38, was terrific. Long overdue. Please write more descriptions of Scotland.

Jeanne and I were in Great Britain for 3 weeks a couple years ago. We spent only one night and part of two days in Edinburgh and never got a chance to see the countryside nor enough of the city. I still consider Edinburgh the most beautiful city of the whole trip and I, for one, would love to hear more about it and the country we mostly missed.

[JG] It really was gorgeous. I still remember the sight of the castle seeming to float over the night sky of the city. The crags on which it stood were of course black, but the castle itself, so high up above the city, was lit up with hundreds of lights. It seemed magical to me. Then we turned the corner and found a restaurant called "Tex Mex," and we dropped back to the ground again. That night, too, we went to an Edinburgh SF meeting at a small pub and met some of the local fans. I told one of them about how "young" most US buildings were in comparison to many of the centuries-old structures in his countries. "Like mansion on Langdon hill, built in the 1880's is one of Madison's really old buildings," I said. The guy looked at me with a sort of stunned expression and said, "My flat is older than that."

But yeah, I really liked that city too, though I suspect it would get a bit gloomy to me in the winter months. My favorite place was St. Gregory's Cathedral with the fantastic Art Nouveau stained glass windows... God, what I would do for some pictures or slides of those things.

Do you think I could claim this as part of my trip report?

Kim Winz

[SC] You have every right to be proud of the wedding. It was beautiful. I particularly liked the church. It had an intimate feel, like we were all part of the family. Very nice. I think you have convinced us to try a bed and breakfast around here sometime. We thought they were great

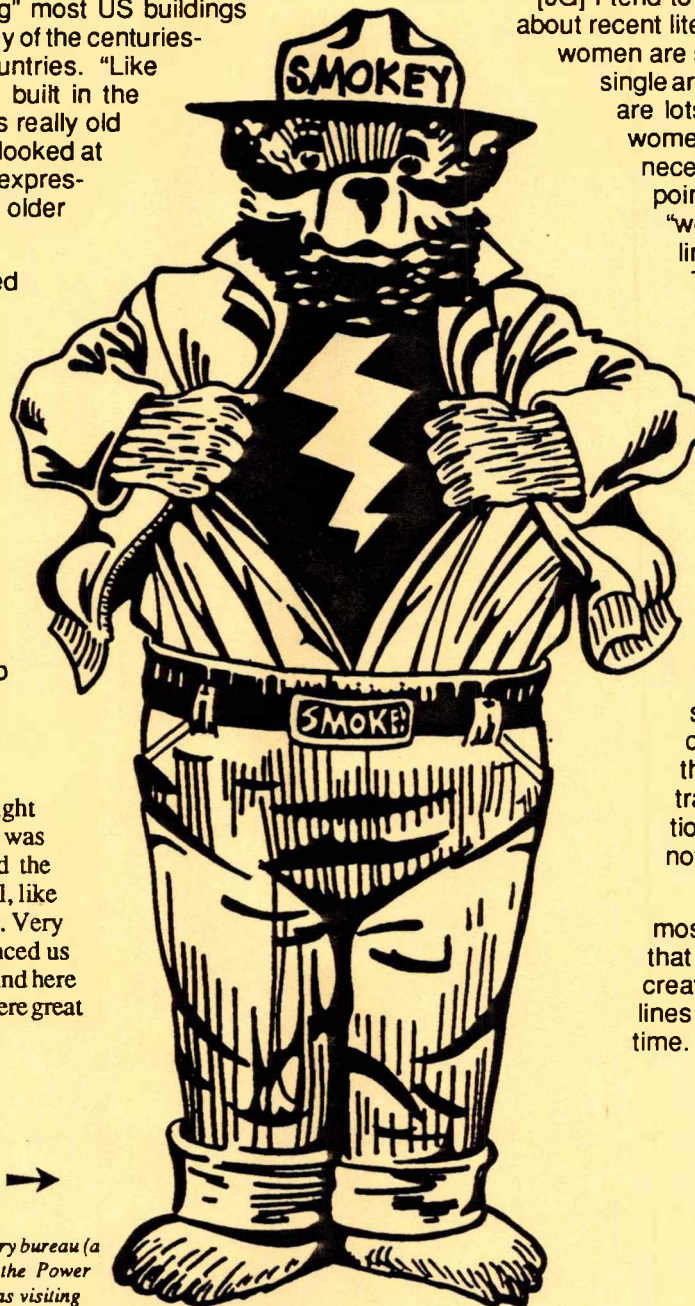
in Britain, and it would be a nice change from a hotel. I doubt Jeanne and I will be travelling to the Virgin Islands anytime soon, but the Caribbean as a general destination has interested us. I had a friend who used to go to Jamaica every year and insisted it was great as long as you stay away from Kingston. You and Pete again make a case for venturing in that direction. Unfortunately, I doubt Jeanne will bother to go along until I learn how to swim. That skill seemed to be significant in your "trip report."

You have provided the meatiest comment hook of the APA regarding your class Women in Science Fiction. This will probably be old hat for some the members, but I think there are still fresh possibilities in this subject area. I hope you find and reprint the Russ article next month.

[JG] I tend to be a little more pessemistic about recent literature than you, Kim. I think women are still very much stuck with our single archetype story. Certainly there are lots of stories out there where women do other things and don't necessarily fall in love, but as Russ points out, these don't have the "weight" of an archetypal story line, like "man vs. nature," etc.

There's a movie that I thought of when I read your comments that makes me realize how much I am controlled by this assumption (of one, women's story), and that is *The Year of Living Dangerously*. As long as I thought the Linda Hunt character was a man, the story hung together for me. Later when I realized the character was played by a woman, I realized that if it had been obvious from the start, that I would have been constantly on the lookout for the character she was most attracted to, whether that attraction would come to anything or not.

The thing about SF that I'm most optimistic about, though, is that I think it's got the potential to create some *new* archetypal story lines for women characters. ...In time.



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This is a drawing I did for the Forestry bureau (a program of cooperation between the Power companies and the DNR) while I was visiting with Rick in the hospital. Busy busy. —
Jeanne