



Welcome to *Union Street* (issue #39 and *Obsessive Press* #139), the zine with the transmogriying masthead (this month reminding you to compost those *Turbos*; don't toss 'em out!). It comes to you from Jeanne Gomoll and Scott Custis, whose address is coincidentally 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 5.0 and laid out with Aldus PageMaker 4.2. The *Union Street* Logo was designed with Adobe Illustrator 3.2 and Adobe Photoshop 2.0. All contents are copyrighted © by Scott Custis and Jeanne Gomoll, 1993. March 1993 for Turbo-Charged Party Animal APA #82. Members FWA; supporters of raising both consciousness and the Ban.

BILL BODDEN

[SC] On the drinking thing. I believe you are right when you say we agree more than we disagree on our perceptions of what is involved in going out on a little drinking escapade. I was wrong about your attitude toward smoky bars (although there is more involved than just smoke in a tavern atmosphere. Loud music, rowdy or rude customers, crowds, foul language, and smoke are regular characteristics of some of my favorite bars.) I may have also misjudged how open you are to wide ranging personal discussion.

The thing I was most responding to was the idea, as Steve Swartz so nicely put it, that you were "outside something that other people are into" and feeling pressure to conform or be excluded. My main point is that we are not trying to exert pressure, nor exclude you from our company. We are only doing something we occasionally enjoy that many of us feel you wouldn't enjoy. That sunny Sunday you and Bill and Steve and I spent together was a very fine time, but as different from a night out drinking as bicycling is to basketball. In the end, I think we can agree that I was perhaps half right about your feelings toward drinking and that you probably wouldn't enjoy joining us on one of those (rare) nights out.

Congratulations on obtaining a driver's license and on the news that you will soon be obtaining a new car. Welcome to the wonderful world of traffic congestion, demented fellow drivers, gasoline taxes, dishonest mechanics, tickets and citations, over-priced insurance, car payments, and breakdowns at the worst possible time in the worst possible place. Yeah, Bill, welcome.

[JG] Thanks for the interesting, long comment. I'm sorry I was so unclear about where my comment on Andy's zine left off and my digression began. I wasn't disagreeing with him, nor do I disagree with you on the subject of "Ugly American" and Westerners' often arrogant failure to appreciate the subtleties of other cultures. I meant to use my agreement as a jumping-off point to a discussion of the similar sentiment which one often hears: that the customs of all other cultures are equally moral and acceptable, which absolves us of any responsibility to aid those being enslaved, tortured, and murdered in those cultures. And it seems to me that you agree with me on that point too, since you wrote: "this doesn't for one moment excuse the way women are treated now in that region or any other." I would, however, go

further than you in saying what we in our culture might do with respect to women who are enslaved, raped and murdered women within other cultures. I don't think "setting an example" is enough, and in fact greatly admire the actions of a Canadian feminist group, which is currently pressuring their parliament to declare Canada an asylum for any women whose governments oppress them because of their gender.

I'm really glad things are turning out so well for you down in Austin.

BILL HOFFMAN

[SC] It's quite impressive how you manage to make dead raw fish sound so appetizing. No, I've never tried sushi. I thought I never would care to. But you made a very strong case again last month. I should have more than enough reason to trust your exquisite taste after all. I'll see if I can make time to try it while we're at WorldCon.

PAT HARIO

[SC] YCT Hooper. I will miss the Muskies. I can't complain about their leaving, however, because last year was the first year I ever went to see them. Andy tried several times to get me to go when he lived here and I just never got around to it. But last year was fun and this year I expect to see them a few more times before it's all over.

NOW IT CAN BE TOLD:

Pat Hario has purchased a membership in Corflu, the *fanzine* fans convention. — JG

[JG] You're right. I went off the deep end by attempting to blame the phenomenon of miscreant priests entirely on the Catholic Church. That's my deep-rooted anger at the Church peeking out. I've got lots of Catholic jokes as a result of my upbringing, but I've also got an axe to grind. The Church preaches misogynistic attitudes toward women; that can't help but encourage its members to act out in biased or abusive ways toward women.



So, I do believe that the traditions and rules of the Catholic priesthood have *at least some* effect on the miscreant priest equation. I think that the requirement of celibacy may attract some individual men to the priesthood who find their sexuality problematical. Furthermore, I think that the church's extreme view on patriarchal hierarchy (God is to humanity, as a priest is to his congregation, as a man is to his wife and children) leads to the arrogant abuse of power.

During the big snowstorm two years ago, state workers ended up with a similar problem to you city workers. Many of us managed to get to work, but when we arrived, we were told to go back home, that the building would be closed. Most people didn't try to commute in to work. Then, a few weeks later, we were told that we would have to use holiday time for the day or were allowed (magnanimously) to make it up. There were quite a few pissed-off people around my office.

Scary news about Priority Mail service, but a good thing to know. Thanks.

JAE ADAMS

[SC] I thought you handled the description of the WisCon Dessert Function nastiness quite well. I hope it ends there. I've heard some talk about publishing the details of this incident (someone else's version) in a fanzine for wider circulation, which I think is an awful idea. It would solve nothing, serve no positive purpose and be needlessly embarrassing for the participants.

Good comments to Steve Swartz about his "game" proposal. In fact, I enjoyed most all of your zine. As always, it seems.

Lately when I see you around, I tend to ask a lot of questions about the Writer's Place and your involvement with them. I don't quite understand where this curiosity I have comes from. I don't write fiction and often struggle with my miniscule output in the apa, yet I'm interested in writers and the process of writing. I'll have to come back to this when I've thought it out a bit more.

[JG] I was certainly there, but I didn't mean to "berate" you for lacking fannishness. There were no hounds unleashed. In fact, the main thing I was trying to explain was that, from my point of view, we all use two kinds of labels. The *first* kind of label is the interior kind we use to describe/understand ourselves: "I am a feminist. I am an artist. I am a fan. Etc." The *second* kind of label is the sort we as humans rely upon in order to communicate with one another. We generalize about things, animals, and people. "The building is designed in the Bauhaus style. That is an ugly dog. He's a saint. She is a bigoted racist. They are fans."

You define yourself as a fan or you do not. But that has very little to do with the fact that others, who share a definition of a label, use — or do not use — that label to describe you to one another. Just as conservative Republicans have no power to stop political radicals from describing them as "reactionary," and the political radicals have no power to stop the aforesaid Republicans from referring to them as liberal wackos, we are all described by others as belonging to one group or another. And that outside kind of labeling tells more about the labelers than anything else.

In the course of a discussion about what our identity as fans means to us and how we identify others in our group, statements like "that person is a fan; that person is not," were made in an attempt to clarify points. I'm sorry that you took offense at those statements. As you said, it was a tedious conversation, certainly, but we continued because the subject is of deep interest to us. That the conversation was not interesting

to you is fine. That you may not list the word fan among any of the words which you use to describe yourself is fine too.

My dad used to say things like "if you really want to be an artist, you would like to... (fill in the blank with something he thought was artistic and wanted to guilt-trip me into doing)." Other people have told me that I can't possibly be one of those strident feminists because I laugh easily and am too "nice" a person. That sort of labeling bothers me no more than it should bother you when someone tells you that they see you as a fan (or not). The act of labeling gives you potentially valuable information about how others see you; that's all. No one controls your interior (type 1) labels but you.

TRACY SHANNON

[SC] You know, Tracy, if you are tired and stressed out you shouldn't have to feel a need to go to heroic measures to get an apa contribution in. We'll understand. Really. Filling up three quarters of a page with so many truly wretched jokes and puns is just not necessary to maintain a presence. Fight the urge next time. Please.

[JG] You did a fine job on WisCon programming, and a fine job on the pun-page..

VIJAY BOWEN

[SC] Your discussion with Steve Swartz on s&m is fascinating. There is really nothing I have to add other than to step forward and say that I'm following your conversation with interest, learning a lot, and looking forward to more discussion.

YCT Tracy on "Spring fever for Scott and Pat", our OE/Ghod clearly has her ruthless side. She's quite willing to inflict howlingly bad jokes and puns on all the rest of you just to get at us. Confronting her as you did might help, but I think a chocolate sacrifice might be the best strategy.

MICHAEL SHANNON

[SC] Your speculation/proposal of a new relaxacon in Madison is one of several new convention ideas circulating around town. I have no opinion on the merits of your specific suggestion. My only point at this time is to say that all this talk about alternative cons represents to me proof that the local group is undergoing some dramatic changes. A number of people (and you appear to be one) are talking about doing their own fanzines. But no one is talking about doing a group zine. Is this simply because desktop publishing makes it much easier to do it all yourself, or is it also indicative of people wanting to move away from the group as a whole and explore their own interests and/or the interests of a smaller group of their friends? WisCon is continuing to experience trouble attracting volunteers for the Concom and *Cube* is still in search of an editor, yet people are talking excitedly about doing cons and zines, but not the established ones. Have these institutions become so grounded in the cement of group expectations that no one wants to try to change them to fit their own vision anymore? Is abandoning them the only solution? I'm commenting here as an observer since I've never worked on cons or zines. Sorry to dump this serious bullshit on your enthusiastic and upbeat zine. But I've been hearing a lot of this talk lately and I'm starting to wonder about what it all means.

LYNNE ANN MORSE

[JG] Very interesting and illuminating story of your first meeting with **Vijay**. It was pretty clear to me when I met Vijay at Minicon a couple years ago, that this is a person that I would not interact with easily right away. I'm hoping to have enough relaxed time at Corflu to do so.

KATHI NASH

[SC] If we can ever get it all to come together to go on a buying trip to Milwaukee (maybe this summer?) I'd be delighted to drive. Of course I'll probably be getting rather thirsty by the time we get back, but maybe our plans can deal with that.

You are not the first person to express feelings about exclusion and elitism in these pages. I would like to first refer you to my comment to **Michael Shannon** above. I think the group is experiencing major changes, possibly brought on by sheer burn-out from WisCon and some painful personality clashes. People here are starting to aggressively pursue new things. Enthusiasm still exists to work on zines and cons, but people seem to be running away from the existing institutions and toward more personal control and freedom. And they are doing these things with small groups of their like-minded friends. The door to the WisCon Comcon has generally been open to anyone, but that may not be the case with these new entities. People are doing them themselves or with a few close friends, not directly excluding others, just exercising personal freedom to do what they want without having to deal with Tradition or Bureaucracy or Politics. If you hang out with a group of people who don't happen to be involved in such a project, you may find yourself on the outside of some of what's "happening" without being actively excluded. That is bound to have an impact on the social cohesion of the group as it existed in the past. Does this make any sense? I cannot respond to the specific personality issue you addressed, but I do want to stress my observation that big changes are occurring right now and I don't think anyone can control them or predict where they will end up or what the effects will be on the social life of the larger group. I don't know whether any of this is good or bad. The most important thing I want say is that this process isn't about excluding you or anyone else personally.

[JG] In the course of writing a history of the Madison SF Group for the Corflu program book, I got to thinking about the similarity with which this group reacted to four people other SF³ members: Diane and Dick, Spike Parsons, and **Steve Swartz**. As I recalled the initial reaction that many people in our group expressed when these people with very forceful personalities and high energy levels began to involve themselves in our group, I can't help but observe a certain pattern. Dick and Diane donated money to the group to help us move from mimeo to offset printing of *Janus*. They also introduced IBM Selectrics to the production process, which required for a while, that *Janus* be produced at their house. Diane took over our accounts, and Dick convinced us to incorporate as a non-profit, tax exempt corporation. They also profoundly changed the social interactions of the group. Some people did not like the changes and argued vigorously against accepting them. Similarly Spike and Steve, two more very energetic people who threw themselves into SF³ activities, and who also profoundly changed the social interactions of the group, caused some people to react with distrust.

I think it's inevitable in all volunteer groups like ours which do double duty as a social group, that personnel changes (who does the work) affects social interactions. And I don't think it's a bad thing.

STEVE SWARTZ

[SC] Your discussion of the fan/non-fan debate was very good and very clear. You managed to sum up the positions very well as I understood them. Since the original WisCon Fan Trial, this fan vs. non-fan discussion has come up many times and it is always lively and often frustrating. It is unfortunate that feelings got hurt, but it was very late and I can verify that much beer was consumed. I can't remember (and wouldn't care to) all the times I've pissed people off under those circumstances. I hope folks will cut you some slack.

Your comments on WisCon and *Cube* illustrate a bit what I was writing above to **Michael** and **Kathi** on the state of the local group. If you can produce your own fanzine, why take over *Cube* and have to deal with the expectations of a large group of people? If half a dozen people can put on a small convention dedicated to the interests of those six people, why struggle with all the hassles of running WisCon? Why not make use of the resources of SF³ to do your own zine or convention? After all, that is part of SF³'s mandate. *Turbo* and *Tiptree* seem to be still drawing in an enthusiastic cross section of the local fan group to these "group" projects. But many people are talking more and more about small projects over which they have total control and are immune from the hassles and frustrations of trying to please everyone.

[JG] See my comments to **Jae Adams** about labels, etc. I understand and mostly agree with your definition of a fan, but for me, the important thing is that the labels we use for others are intrinsically different from the labels that people use from within about themselves.

I laughed long and hard at your calm, devastating comment to **Ross Pavlac**. Some people would have printed a resume. Your's was much more effective. Also intensely interesting.

If I think of myself as a story, I would have to say that the author developed the plot in a rather choppy and at times, discontinuous manner. Motivations change in mid-stream sometimes; strengths are discovered at the most "convenient" moments. Not entirely believable, I might say in criticism. For instance: when I went away to college, I decided that I wanted to get over my shyness. I was sitting alone in my room of the boarding house I had just moved into, the door open, and I saw a naked woman running and screaming down the hall. It turned out that she had been scared out of her room by a wasp. Now, I am very frightened of wasps. Ask Scott. But I decided to put my resolution not to be shy into effect right there and then. I grabbed a magazine and bravely strode into the woman's room and squashed the hornet with the rolled-up zine. Over the next few months, I continued "pretending" to be bold, unafraid, and outgoing. Gradually I realized that everyone was expecting me to be the person I had been only pretending to be, (they never knew anyone else, why should they expect another?) and that — even though I still feared wasps — I had actually *become* a confident, un-shy person. The impersonation worked and gradually reshaped my self-image. It's very weird to think back to my self-image in high school and the way I acted towards others — like another person, except that right in the center of that memory is the me that's still in my center now.



JULIE GOMOLL

[SC] Welcome to *Turbo* (this is not an Official welcome yet, of course, just a practical Howdy since your franking in). Your zine was simply eye-popping and will have many in the high tech desktop publishing set here turning a bit green with envy. Good for you.

Congratulations so far on the success of the postcard project. In spite of recent drawbacks, I'm confident you will come up with new (and even better) designs for the cards. They are still needed, the battle is far from over.

YCT Pat Dyjak. "Then I'm walking in Memphis, Walking with my feet ten feet off of Beale..." Beale must be a street in Memphis.

YCT Andy Hooper. SF³ is a non-profit educational foundation. It is a business in the sense that it is a corporately organized entity that cannot indefinitely spend money in excess of its income (as you pointed out), but it is not a business in the sense that making a profit is not its purpose. "Business" is probably a broad enough term to encompass both definitions, but it is important to keep in mind the idea that the group spends money without expectation of a return. That is our job. Fund raising is a separate issue. WisCon, for example, traditionally made money for the group, but it would have been OK if WisCon only broke even as long as annual dues or other sources of income had been sufficient to keep things going every year.

[JG] Gorgeous, stunning zine, Julie! Welcome aboard!

Well I don't think you have to listen to an enormous amount from Rush Limbaugh to know what he stands for. After reading some stuff by people that I respect very much — Steinem and Falludi — I am finding it very difficult to embark on the Paglia book you suggested I buy. But I will, eventually I will. I do agree with you that discussion only frustrates without first-hand information.

I agree with you about the seeming hypocrisy of some priests toward their vow of celibacy. The main thing that vow does for miscreant priests of the many recent sex scandals, is to provide a smoke-screen for their real activities.

PAT DYJAK

[JG] From the start, the Tiptree award was not "owned" by WisCon. Pat Murphy and others (myself among them), discussed the matter at the beginning, and we agreed that the award should not be tied to one convention. First of all, it seems like it would be a good thing for other conventions to be encouraged in the emphasis of feminist programming, and for WisCon not to be perceived always as the one and only feminist convention. But secondly, there has been much talk about the instability of the WisCon committee, and it seemed like a bad thing to saddle the *requirement* of a venue for the Tiptree award on a group that was unsure of the future of WisCon.

The Tiptree can come back again and come back often.

LAURA SPEISS

[SC] You were pretty downbeat last month, except for the sludge hunting expedition of course. An excursion like that would sure make my day. What I liked most about your zine was the layout. We don't seem to have many apans these days just going wild pasting things together or doing hand written stuff. Too many computers around, I think. We're all too focused on neat columns and cool typefaces. *18 Ways to Cope With Stress* were well chosen. I forgot why you have me wearing a fig leaf. I hope it's not embarrassing.

HOPE KIEFER

[SC] You and Karl have had a really busy time of it out there. I hope things are settling down a bit. Let me know if there is anything else I can do to help convince you to move back out here. Spring is busting out all over right now. The timing is good to look for an apartment with all the students getting ready to leave.

[JG] Ditto from me.

Jeanne and Scott, April 1993

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