



Welcome to *Union Street* (issue #41 and *Obsessive Press* #143), the zine with the transmogrifying masthead (this month detouring into the pail o' legend period of SF<sup>3</sup> history). 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. June 1993 for Turbo-Charged Party Animal APA #84. Members FWA and the Freelance Franking Fencers Union.

## OFFICIAL BUSINESS

[SC & JG] Jeanne and I want to go on record as seconding the nominations of **Andy Hooper** (if he still needs one) and **Lisa Freitag** to the *Turbo* Waitlist.

We would also like to nominate **Bill Hoffman** (or second him if someone beats us to it) to the Waitlist. He did not intend to drop, and is very eager to maintain contact with this community. Bill is a busy guy, but also an excellent writer and good friend. I want to give him another try. All in favor, say "Aye."

[JG & SC] We both vote against **Bill Bodden's** proposal to drop minac requirements. Discussion continues in a mailing comment to Bill.

We also vote against **Jae's** proposal to raise copy count to include all waitlisters in the current membership roster. (Again, discussion continues in a mailing comment to Jae.)

## MADCITY NEWS

[SC] Update on the **Dick Russell** case. The case was dismissed during the first day in court. The judge threw it out because the astrologer in question was not specifically named in Dick's article. Just the same, the defense effort cost *Isthmus* a few thousand dollars in lawyer fees. The astrologer, it turns out, was representing himself and, therefore, is out nothing but his time. *Isthmus* intends to pursue a frivolous lawsuit action against the astrologer in an attempt to recover some of their costs, but Dick says their chances are not good. In court, the judge made some remark to the astrologer at the end of the proceedings that indicated he was impressed with the "depth and sincerity of (the plaintiff's) belief" in astrology. So it will be tough to convince the judge that the case was "frivolous." The astrologer, meanwhile, intends to appeal.

Dick got the last laugh. On his weekly Community Access TV interview show. Dick publicly named the litigious astrologer the Bozo Of The Week.

## KAREN BABICH

[SC] First, I want to congratulate you on a very well written piece on the "shadow" *Turbo* contributors. The piece communicated concern, but not panic or hysteria. It was also quite balanced. I have discussed your piece with several people, one of whom advised that a response is unnecessary because there is no apa rule

prohibiting this activity. But I say the balance and saneness of your piece deserves discussion.

I am the person making the extra copies of the apa. There are others (no reason to name them) who distribute them to **Bill D.**, **Julie G.**, and **Andy**. As you correctly noted, this activity did not begin as some shadowy back room plot. It just kind of sprouted up over time. Bill D. was contributing regularly until he got dropped due to a Post Office snafu last summer. Jeanne and I started sending our *Turbos* to him when we finished them so he could keep up and we agreed to frank through his material whenever he wrote something. I found out only recently that someone else was copying the apa for him so he could be more timely than waiting several months for Jeanne and I to send him one of our originals. Julie got excited about contributing to *Turbo* after our New Years party and WisCon. She wanted to keep in regular touch with as many of the people in this community as possible and decided to frank material through another *Turbo* member who was copying the apa for her. Andy, our Founder and a contributor in good standing, got accidentally dropped when he misread the deadline. He was also anxious to continue his contact with *Turbo* and asked to have someone copy the apa for him. When I became aware of these efforts going on more or less independently, I simply offered to do all the copying at once.

Although there is no apa rule forbidding this activity, you quite rightly pointed out that it violates the copyright with which virtually everyone adorns their zines. You are also correct in stating that it violates the idea of the distinction between Member and Waitlist. Not to mention raising the specter of someone else copying the apa for less desirable contributors.

So why do I feel this is a worthwhile thing to do? I have two reasons. First, I think these three people are superb former *Turbo* contributors. They are excellent writers. Andy is the Founder of the damned apa. Andy and Bill dropped accidentally due to minor errors, but were otherwise contributing regularly. All three live far away from Madison and, until Bodden moved, were also far from the nearest *Turbo* member (and a copy of the apa they could borrow.) All want very much to maintain a connection to the local fan community. This last is the most important. Bill is working two or three jobs and has not written much, but he passionately reads every issue. Julie has visited Madison three times in the last six months and has had a great time reconnecting with fandom and local folks and wishes to maintain that connection. Hooper is similarly dedicated to staying in touch with us. The equation as I



see it is Motivation + Quality = Justification for bending the rules. The rest of us come out ahead because we can keep in touch with *them* on a regular or occasional basis when we wouldn't otherwise hear from any of them in this forum *for years*.

Secondly, I don't think I'm bending the rules as much as it might first appear. They are on the Waitlist after all. I would not offer to do this for someone completely outside the apa. I'm committed to this project because of the three people I'm serving, but I would not object to someone else doing this for other Waitlisters. Once named to the Waitlist they will surely become Members at some point anyway. Aren't the main reasons we bother to limit *Turbo's* size, cost and administration? If cost were no object, would you care if there were forty members? Would the OE care except for the added administrative burden? In a way, I'm expanding *Turbo* without cost or inconvenience to anyone. You may feel obligated to comment to more writers, but then we currently have several full Members who contribute almost nothing. So Karen, what do you think?

[JG] Several issues ago, I pushed for a discussion on joint memberships because of its *de facto* expansion of the membership list and page count. The discussion didn't really go anywhere since everyone had a different reaction to the problem; indeed, many people didn't even believe a problem existed. Since I originally brought up the discussion partially out of a sense of guilt—as a partner in one of those joint memberships—I happily gave up attempts to continue that discussion. For certainly, I am far more irritated by non-contributing members than I am by the specter of members-who-contribute-too-much.

So... Although I am not involved in the copying of *Turbozines* for waitlisters, I am glad that it is happening. Except perhaps for the very first issue of the apa, we have never had an apa in which all members contributed. Even with the occasional franking of zines from waitlisters, I doubt that we will ever see that day. We're never going to be confronted with a *Turbozine* in which there are more than 30 zines, even if every joint member separately publishes their own zine and three waitlisters frank their's.

In any case I am far happier to read mailing comments from a waitlisters who is obviously reading the apa and keeping up with our conversation, than I am to read impersonal one-page minac-zines from someone who rarely indicates that they care or are even aware of the on-going discussion.

Re your "Rant on Fannishness," I am continually amazed that despite repeated assurances to the contrary, I keep hearing that discussion of fannishness are discussions of *value*. **Steve** says over and over again that he's using that term in a descriptive sense (much as you do, Karen). I say over and over again that I do not believe that one kind of activity is "better" than another. Nevertheless, that assumption seems to lie at the base of every angry response to those comments. It seems to me that the outline of the generic confrontation goes like this:

A. This is how I define fannishness. I am a fan.

B. By your definition, I am not a fan. Therefore you must not like/value/approve of me.

And by the time "C" enters into the fray, the assumption that fannishness contains a value judgment has become embedded into the fabric of the conversation. This is like conversations in which people try to link the word "art" with the adjective, "good," forgetting that there is good art and bad art. Calling a thing art presumes no value judgment. Neither does calling a person a fan or calling an activity fannish infer a value judgment.

## MICHAEL SHANNON

[SC] I've really been enjoying your zines for the last few months. I don't know how you were able to come to Corflu after partying all night and driving all day, but I remember when you showed up. Seems to me you were being just a bit modest in your zine. At Corflu, you made the effort to go around and seek people out. I think I would have just curled up in a chair next to the beer and accosted whoever went by.

I took motorcycle lessons years ago, but I never bought a bike and now I would have to relearn it all. I'd like to sometime, but I currently don't have the money for the lessons, much less the bike, so I'll have to put it off for "someday."

YCT me. As you stated, both *Cube* and *WisCon* have "expectations to fulfill" and people are moving away from them. I agree. But if there is only a trickle of people coming in to take over these projects, and then mostly out of a feeling of obligation, is that healthy? I think we are both seeing the same trend, we only disagree about what it means.

[JG] I'm glad you got to see a bit of Corflu at least.

## BILL BODDEN

[SC] **Julie G.** sent me a tape with a selection of new music for my birthday. One of the great discoveries I've made thanks to it is Concrete Blonde. I'll be picking up the CD on my next shopping trip (we already have *Thelma and Louise*.)

Your zine this month was much more of a stream-of-consciousness style than I'm used to from you. Nice change. I also liked the look of your zine. It'll be interesting to see what you do with it as you learn the ropes of Desktop Publishing. You're already way ahead of me. All I know is On, Off, Save and Print. Jeanne does the rest.

The fun part about reading about Texas from you is that we are seeing it through the eyes of a very recently transplanted Wisconsinite. I hope and expect you will continue to show us Austin and Texas as you see it. Full of beauty and hazards (obviously the first things one notices.)

Very weird reaction you had from your family about your decision to take this job and move South. This is an excellent career move anyway you look at it if you are familiar with the job market for these skills. What did they think you should be doing instead?

YCT **Pat H.** I'm sorry if I've ever teased you too much about ordering drinks with fruit and little umbrellas. It's not a Machismo thing. I'm not much of a Machismo kinda guy. I tease everybody. Of course, now and then I order fancy drinks myself.

[JG] I very much agree with you that *Turbo* members should take responsibility for the (very minimal) requirements of membership. The fact that people sometimes do not however, is no reason to junk the requirements. So, you most definitely do not have my vote on your proposal to junk minac requirements. Without them, we would end up with an apa similar to *Apa of the Damned*, with which I believe you are well acquainted. You want two reasons why we shouldn't junk the minac requirement? 1) *Turbo* would get seriously ill; 2) *Turbo* would then die.

I found the image of vultures circling outside your window arresting. You know, some fan writers who indulge in literary foreshadowing would be tempted to use that image to begin story of Things Gone Wrong.

So what *do* you think of genital mutilation in light of your ideas on the evil of cultural interference? I just read Sherry

Tepper's novel *Sideshow*, which mostly deals with the question/morality of interfering in other cultures. If you've read it, or would care to read it, we might be able to start a fairly lively conversation from the ideas in it. Tepper definitely comes down on the side of intervention.

PageMaker paragraphs. Command-M. Heads should not have their initial lines indented. Command-M. Check it out. Or the Xpress equivalent.

## JAE ADAMS

[SC] Ted White did indeed pronounce all Corflu members to be members of fwa. There were several rather jarring surprises like that at Corflu. Wouldn't you agree?

I'd bet that even if we expanded *Turbo* to forty, we'd still have a Waitlist. A Waitlist is not all bad. We did vote for a simple selection process for proposed members to go through so we could have some say on who gets nominated. It's also necessary for controlling the copy count. Without it, we'd probably have a fluctuating copy count every month, a nightmare to administer. Plus there is the cost of getting bigger. Some people find the apa a serious financial burden as it is. Splitting the apa down the middle would be a bad idea. There are already several people concerned with perceptions of Elitism and Exclusion going on and splitting the apa would only add to their aggravation. The only real solution, I think, is if a number of people get fed up and organize a major Drop Out and Re-Form a *la Apa of the Damned*. I don't think that will happen soon because I don't sense a build up of that much anger yet.

I am glad you are sending out your work to publishers. I'm confident you will find success. You deserve it. That is the attitude you need to work on. You shouldn't stop yourself from submitting because of the piles of manuscripts already there. You should figure your stuff is gold, the rest is dreck and you deserve to get discovered. An inflated ego might be a good thing in this situation.

Your zine was enjoyable as always. I particularly liked *Report On The Altissima* and your comment to Tracy.

[JG] So, you don't think things are lively enough around here, hmmm? You think maybe splitting the apa in half would help? I can just see it. We'd have two captains picking members as if for a baseball team. Who gets left till last because no one wants them on their team? What about the members who (inevitably) say they will only be in an apa if they are put with their good buddies? And if the choice is made randomly, and the smoke clears, we'd probably discover that a chunk of so-called "elitists" have left to play with one another because they didn't like the way the split turned out. Yeah, that would sure give us all more to gossip about...

Well, I don't suppose you were really serious about that proposal, but I couldn't help describing the nightmarish images it provoked in my mind.

But I also disagree with your other, more serious (I think) proposal. Raising the membership count eliminates the wait list for now, but is only a temporary measure. It's not as if *Turbo* were the only apa in the world. There are lots of other apas. No one is being prevented from joining a congenial group of people discussing interesting topics. They are just being asked to wait their turn to join *this* one.

Interesting idea for a Fanpub Seminar. Remember to suggest a 200 copy print run, however, so that participants will be able to take advantage of dirt-cheap tax-exempt bulk mail permit..

## BILL HUMPHRIES

[SC] I liked *The Lost Fanac Game of IF*. Glad to see you're getting settled into your new apartment and job. Is it my imagination, or are we cursed in this group when it comes to packing/moving experiences?

## ALISON DAWSON

[SC] Congratulations on the Hockey victory, your election as captain and the new car.

Condolences on the death of your grandfather.

I have composed and rejected half a dozen responses to the rest of your zine. You are clearly angry. Some of us are clearly exasperated. Contributions you have sent in the past have often been very good. And I've said so. You have also submitted a lot of minac zines after two months of nothing. This is annoying because the Waitlist is full of people ready to write regularly. Since you don't intend to write to us again until August, here's a question maybe you'll answer for me at that time; why are you bothering with us at all?

## HOPE KIEFER

[SC] Study those state bulletins for job possibilities in computers. That is one of the truly hot fields for state employment. Management Information Specialists and Technicians come up regularly and from all over. You may also want to contact the UW and MATC. I'll see if I can get you some information from them.

[JG] I sympathize with your problem in choosing non-sexist clothing for Forrest, and (in a bizarre nightmare involving myself as a parent) I can see myself making the same choices you are making. I'd tend to avoid all the frilly, lacy pink outfits whether my child were a boy or a girl. But even as I think that, I feel uncomfortable. As you say, a girl in our culture can wear all the clothes in the catalog; a boy can wear only 25% of them. Even as I understand and agree with your impulses, I also see that my acceptance of that idea means that I accept the idea that male clothing is generic (male = people) and that female clothing is not generic (female = other). Even as I imagine myself in your place and know that I would prefer to dress my kid in baseball-motif shirts and would avoid the ribbons and ruffles, I can see that I also de-value any style that clearly identifies the wearer as a girl—according to our culture's stereotype. This is a very troubling revelation.

And it reinforces my feeling that we all have a long way to go, and much to think out and change in ourselves before it becomes an easy thing to raise a generation without sexist assumptions.

## KARL HAILMAN

[JG] You've been getting the want ads, I hope. Did you notice the Dairy Board catalog in on the last packages?

## VIJAY BOWEN

[SC] Ah, Corflu. I have a very sharp memory of you dancing Friday night. Watching you was mesmerizing. But I had to go to work, and after that night we just seemed to be missing each other. Well, I admit that I was a bit shy. I will take more care to seek you out and talk next time.



## KIM AND KATHI NASH

[SC] I'm going to make use of some of those slogans somewhere. I also enjoyed the Household True-False Test.

On Kathi's comment to Tracy. The only problem with a One Shot Rant is that once some of us get wound up to respond and discuss, it's frustrating to discover the conversation is over.

[JG] Kim, I think you are being unfair to Steve. He was attempting to be as honest and sincere as possible. Calling his words bullshit don't contribute to a dialog; it just stops conversation.

## LYNNE ANN MORSE

[JG] Sorry about the confusion with the cookbook. I really should have written a letter to all contributors, thanking them for their recipes and reminding them that since it is a charitable publication, we were not going to be sending out free contributors copies. (We would have had to give out at least 80 of them.) Actually, I should still write that letter. Thanks for the reminder.

Vijay and I had a short, but very pleasant conversation at Corflu. Something to build on, I expect.

I don't know if you've heard about it over there, but there has recently been an avalanche of further sexual scandals among U.S. Catholic priests. More and more I find myself believing that there is a link between enforced celibacy and abuses—either from the stress created by the enforced celibacy, or by the self-selected population of men who choose enforced celibacy.

Yes, it takes a lot of energy, self-knowledge and consciousness to perceive others' labels for oneself with objectivity ("fan," "godless commie," "feminazi," etc.). But I think the hardest work involves resisting the power of "unconscious" labels, for example, the unconscious assumptions that go along with words like "wife," "woman," "blue-collar worker," etc. These are labels that hardly any of us resist. I know of few people who would say "Don't call me a woman; I don't like labels." I know of many people who marry their lovers and think that their own definition of that marriage will prevail against everyone else's definition of a generic marriage. We all accept some labels for ourselves, and though we might define them differently from the way others define them, we still have to deal with those outside assumptions in everyday life. A lot of the time, I think, we don't realize how much of the outside assumptions we've accepted without thought. (My comments to Hope about children's clothing fits into this category.)

I find it very scary that among schoolkids today, intelligence is considered an unattractive thing, and that smart kids often try to hide their brains. I don't think that was as true when I was in grade school or high school; popular kids were often the smart kids. We become the thing we pretend to be. I hate to think of so many kids pretending to be stupid, or incapable of learning.

Interesting essay by E. J. Dionne, Jr. I disagree with him, however, that school and the military can be compared as having similar purposes. One of the purposes of school is (or should be, in my mind) to show students the range of choices they will have as adults. So, tolerating the conservative, religious desire to restrict choices is not at all analogous to tolerating homosexuality in the military (where it does not interfere with that institution's purpose).

Lynne, I can understand your impulse to try to find the "middle ground" between conservative and liberal, or any conflicting groups. Looking for middle ground often leads to conver-

sation and understanding. But sometimes the moral center doesn't correspond with the confrontational center. Compromise in that case is wrong. It would be wrong to trade tolerance in the military for repression in our schools.

## PAT HARIO

[SC] In your comment to Steve Swartz, you described yourself as being pulled between the urge to be more open about yourself in the apa, and the fear of revealing too much. I think your excellent article on strengths at the beginning of your zine was a definite move toward openness.

You and I place a similar value on security and independence. I would never describe myself as a risk-taker, particularly when it comes to my livelihood. I like having a job and knowing I can count on it being there for me as long as I want it. I also like my independence. Jeanne and I agreed from the start that we did not wish to give up our individual identities in the course of pursuing our relationship. These things are important to me and I am strong with regards to them. It seems to me that strength is often tied to a sense of priorities, what is important in one's life. Perhaps we only have a given amount of strength of will and so consciously or unconsciously use it for those things we really care most about. It's hard to fool yourself. For instance, I would like to focus on getting in better physical shape. I've made a few half-hearted attempts lately, but I haven't stuck with it. I'm starting to realize I just don't have the raw strength to do it. It's not important enough to me on some unconscious level. I have to compromise and find a solution that is enjoyable enough that I will pursue it out of pleasure instead of pushing myself through sheer willpower.

I also think there is a strength of character that comes from self-perception. In my case, it varies. In some social situations I'm uncomfortable with my sense of who I am and tend to seek the background and defer to more forceful people. At work I have confidence and power and I deal assertively with some of the most dangerous and unstable inmates in the state. I am comfortable playing a role I've always played in familiar situations, but I often lack the strength to carve out a new role for myself.

I believe that discovering one's strengths is an ongoing process. Some strengths we might never realize until circumstances bring them out (bravery, for instance, or competitiveness). We also change and our priorities change over time. I have discovered a strength to resist temptations that I once would not have had. Because the things that matter to me have changed.

Thank you for the compliments on our covers and on my writing.

[JG] I also found your essay very interesting in that it got me exploring thoughts in unfamiliar territory. You defined your strengths as being those qualities that help you to defend yourself against an aggressive, dangerous world. I also see some of my strengths as those qualities which enable me to deal with the outside world, but as I counted my strengths, I realized that I make different assumptions about the outside world, and that I have therefore built up a different "arsenal" of strengths. Where you perceive a world that will punish you for your weaknesses, I more often perceive a world that tends to ignore me unless I am active or competent or creative enough to stand out from the crowd. I assume that good fortune favors people who act over people who wait. I don't fear getting hurt nearly as much as I dislike the idea of not mattering. So, among my strengths, I count various learned skills. But I value even more my capacity for great enthusiasm for work that I love or for ideas which capture

my interest. Of course, along this same line, I value qualities like independence and self-esteem. When applied to interpersonal relationships, I feel that these values encourage all persons involved to both grow and care for one another in a healthy way.

The difference between your point of view and mine shows up in an amusing way when we discuss the possibility of non-apa members reading our zines. I assume that it is most likely that these unknown readers will care little about personal details they might be able to figure out from my zines. I prefer to publish my artwork and writing in more widely-distributed zines. You, on the other hand, prefer a more private apa than *Turbo* really is, and resist writing for a wider, anonymous audience. You distrust that audience; I'm waving wildly at it, trying to get its attention...

Another subject. Whenever I get a cd (or book) from a record club or book club that I refused too late, I just send it back, and scrawl "I did not order this book," across the bill. They have never complained. They just remove the charge from my record.

### JAMES BRON

[SC] I have a suggestion that I hope you take in the right spirit. It seems very clear that this is a difficult and chaotic time in your life and *Turbo* is something you care about but obviously can't be involved in as much as you (or we) would like. Why don't you take a real break until your thesis is finished, and you have a job and a place to live? If you drop out, I will put you back on the Waitlist. By the time you're eligible to contribute again, it will be a year or two down the road. In the meantime you can keep up by reading *Allison's* copy and occasionally frank zines through her.

### CATHY GILLIGAN

[SC] Congratulations on the wedding. As long as your celebration doesn't conflict with Worldcon, you can probably count on us being there in September. (Greg, take note.) It's been one of those wedding years for us. Two of my nieces are getting married this summer and a third one will tie the knot next April. My suit is getting a lot of use. Party, party, party....

### JULIE GOMOLL

[SC] So, you appear to have an awesome ability to print photos. Best reproduction I've seen in this apa so far (he chuckled, nervously). Ah yes, very impressive Julie. I'm starting to see your picture-taking tendencies in a whole new light.

Excellent essay on elitism, labels and social interaction. The two points that you made that stood out most for me was the idea that before one complains of being excluded, one has to make the effort to become involved. Sometimes that requires determination and self confidence. The other point was the idea that it is often a very subtle thing ("spark") that draws individuals together. I often can't put my finger on exactly why I like someone, I just do.

I loved the sayings and chants from the March.

YCT **Bill Humphries**. Although I have read some of the same information about Whole Foods that Bill was referring to, I am willing to be open-minded about the company considering your good experiences with them. If I come across some the articles I've read (I think in *The Nation*) I'll send them to you for your impressions.

[JG] It's too bad we don't have a photo of what happened with that doll just before you snapped a picture of Scott cuddling it. For those of you who didn't happen to notice the commotion at

our table at the WisCon banquet: there was a young girl playing underneath our table with her doll. Conversation was leaping around from serious to frivolous subjects, when suddenly the little girl thrust her doll from under the table, right up between Julie's legs. I would love to have a photo of her shocked and horrified expression as she looked down at the plastic baby grinning up at her.

Great essay on elitism and labels, Julie.

I don't know that I am much responsible for bringing people together in social networks; certainly I take advantage of the networks when I find them. And I enjoy making connections with interesting new people. Well, maybe that's what you mean. In any case, I very much agree with you that becoming part of a community is not a passive experience: it takes persistence and energy on everyone's part. I tend to have little patience for people who feel that they are too shy to extend themselves and yet get angry at others for not doing all the work for them.

### TRACY SHANNON

[SC] It was a pleasure working with you at Corflu putting together the beer tasting and cleaning up. It was so nice to work with someone with a real professional attitude, even though you weren't getting paid.

I think the problems with WisCon go deeper than how the meetings are managed. However, it would be interesting to see a Chair try out your theory. Would that Chair be you someday?

Excellent comment to **Steve Swartz**.

[JG] Yes, interesting idea for running Corflu: minimal meetings, optimal section chief responsibility. Still, saying that WisCon should work towards this sort of management format would amount to telling future WisCon chairpersons how to do their work. It could only work if and when this style matched the management style of the chairperson. I'm in favor of flexible styles based on the preferences of whoever happens to be doing the work at the time.

Interesting list of activities you'd eventually like to spend time on. About the only one I share with you is the stained glass window idea. I'd love to make two stained glass windows for our dining room, to let in the light but not the view of the house only a few feet away..

### HOW DO YOU SPELL RELIEF?

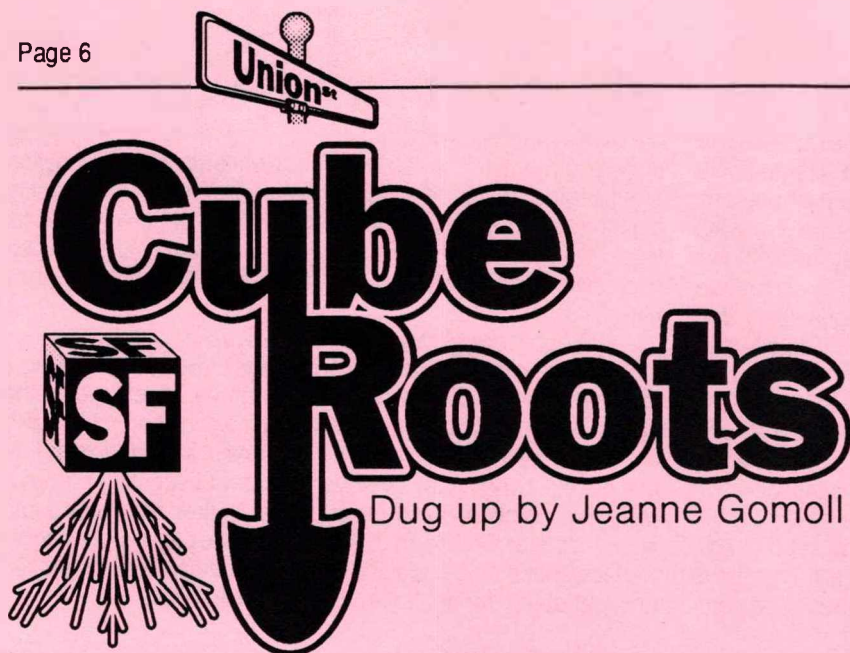
[SC] I don't feel I have to respond to **Ross Pavlac's** zine.

[JG] Isn't it great!? I kept sighing, and reaching for my pen to make angry little marks in the margin. But then I would grin and throw down my pen. I don't have to respond!

### A REPRINT

[JG] The article that follows is a reprint from the Corflu Program Book. I spent a lot of time on it, and discovered some strange correlations between current SF<sup>3</sup> discussions and earlier ones. I'd be very interested to hear what you think....

—Jeanne & Scott  
25 June 1993



Union

# Cube Roots

Dug up by Jeanne Gomoll

The Madison Science Fiction Group, known in various incarnations as Madstf, SF<sup>3</sup>, and "the group," has met every Wednesday night since its first meeting at the Madison Book Coop in the fall of 1974. Founded by Hank and Lesleigh Luttrell, Janice Bogstad, Phil Kaveny, and Thomas Murn, its membership has grown to about 100 people, and into a group that's hard to define....

The state of Wisconsin thinks it's simple. According to the state (and the IRS), we are the "Society for the Furtherance and Study of Fantasy and Science Fiction, Inc." — SF<sup>3</sup> for short — an official non-profit educational corporation. Some members do indeed pay dues to SF<sup>3</sup> — the corporate umbrella which facilitates the group's convention (WisCon), publications, and various activities — but dues are not required for any activity other than voting at the annual SF<sup>3</sup> meeting. On the other hand, the University of Wisconsin counts the Madison Science Fiction Group among the other official University clubs, and allows us to reserve space in Union South for concom meetings and special events. In the 70s, many of the group's members attended the UW; but nowadays, it's not that easy to find those required student signatures for our University Club Status Renewal Form. Some people define us according to our politics, and indeed, many of us are active feminists, but contrary to rumor, men are allowed to join and no test of political correctness is required. Most members attend WisCon, but declining numbers work on the convention committee. A few active SF<sup>3</sup>-ers no longer even live in Madison, though almost all members read science fiction. Some members seek connections to the international fannish community while others have time only for the local network of friendships it provides. Some members consider themselves "fans," while others bristle at the label when it is applied to them.

I would be hard-pressed to characterize the Madison SF Group with a one-sentence description. Few labels can be universally applied in our group; few traditions survive indefinitely, which may provide some explanation for the group's longevity. The group's resources have generally been adapted to whatever its members were interested in at the time. At the start, we were interested in publishing. In fact, it was the announcement of the imminent publication of an SF magazine that drew me to one of the group's Wednesday night meetings at the Book Coop. I remember saying, "I'll help."

Five issues of *Janus* were published on Hank and Lesleigh Luttrell's mimeograph machine in the back room of their flat on West Mifflin Street before we switched to offset printing. Edited by Janice Bogstad and myself, the zine exploded onto the fannish scene with a quarterly publication schedule and a provocative feminist perspective shared only by the short-lived, Canadian fanzine, *The Witch and the Chameleon*. *Janus* was the group's "only child" in those days and it was lovingly and obsessively groomed. Thomas Murn wrote long articles on popular culture, John Bartelt contributed short stories, Jan wrote very serious articles from a Marxist literary perspective, I began to experiment with a humorous style, and everyone wrote book reviews. Typing and proofreading chores were shared among all of us (including Mike Weidemann, Perri Corrick, and Doug Price), though I was fired from that task abruptly when it was discovered that I could spell a word in five different ways on the same page. Feminist SF was flourishing and we enthusiastically joined the conversation. Letters of comment flowed in, surprising the editors who hadn't understood they were joining a vast letter-writing community when they began publishing their "magazine," but soon the group began attending conventions and trading "fanzines."

Except for Hank and Lesleigh, no one in the group had ever attended a convention before the 1976 Minicon, but it was our second con, the 1976 worldcon in Kansas City — MidAmericCon, MAC, or Big Mac — which imprinted our minds with the most fateful ideas. The reason the first (1977) WisCon, which was, after all, only a small convention with barely two hundred members — boasted four tracks of programming was because Big Mac's programming had been scheduled in multiple tracks. That's how conventions *worked*, we assumed. Big Mac's masquerade featured a strip tease performance and quite a few fans shared their anger and feelings about it at the serious, feminist panel which Susan Wood had set up in spite of the concom's opposition. This landmark panel overflowed into an extended discussion/party/consciousness-raising session. *A Women's Apa* got its start in that room and both Jan and I joined. Afterward, we interviewed Suzy McKee Charnas and Jennifer Bankier and printed the transcript in *Janus*. And we resolved to produce panels for WisCon like that great feminist panel at Big Mac.

1976 was a significant year all around for the group. Many of us began attending conventions and meeting some of the people who had been writing *Janus* letters of comment. Also, the Wednesday night meeting moved away from its traditional bookstore site later that year. We had begun meeting in the Wisconsin Student Association (WSA) Book Coop, but when the store went out of business, our refugee group adopted Nick's Restaurant, and that move subtly changed the group's social interaction. We still laughed about (and took secret pride in) our group's capacity to turn any party into a meeting, but things loosened up. There was less talking about science fiction and more socializing. There was less note-taking and more eating and drinking. There was more flirting and many members began striking up casual and permanent liaisons with one another.

That trend toward greater socializing didn't actually begin with the move to Nick's; the move just intensified the changes.

The friendships had already begun to flourish in the bookshelves among this small group of people who committed every Wednesday night to conversations, and a publishing project that gobbled up more and more of their free time. In fact, Jan and I worried that the Wednesday night meetings were straying dangerously far from serious discussion of science fiction, and as an antidote we organized the monthly programs at Union South. The programs were elaborately planned, and the members responsible — Jan, Phil, Hank, Lesleigh, Rick White, John Bartelt, Perri Corrick, Richard West, Randy Everts, myself, or a special invited guest — often researched their topics as if they were writing a term paper. I spent hours each month drawing illustrations for the posters which were printed and tacked up onto University kiosks. Of course, this attracted more new people. Pat Sommers, Greg Rihn, Kim Nash, and Steven V. Johnson began showing up on Wednesday nights. John Bartelt, Greg Rihn, Doug Price, and Rick White rented a flat together on Gorham Street the next year, creating Madison's first slant shack.

*Janus's* expenses in 1974 and 1975 were largely paid out of our pockets. Everyone chipped in when it became clear that our fanzine publication would never produce a profit. The University of Wisconsin provided assistance: The UW-Extension, through the kind offices of Professor George Hartung, paid for the travel expenses of WisCon's first Guest of Honor, Katherine MacLean. The Wisconsin Student Association (WSA) awarded *Janus* several grants, and provided us with electro-stencils and use of their bulk mailing permit. But we considered ourselves fairly poor — individually and also as a group — and so tended to resist grandiose schemes. At least we did until Dick Russell and Diane Martin showed up at one of our monthly programs. It was, I think, a meeting intended to drum up interest in the up-coming first WisCon. In fact, it was the first Concom meeting ever held at Union South.

Diane and Dick joined the group in 1975. Dick immediately advised us to organize ourselves as a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation in order to reap the benefits of a cheap bulk mailing permit and avoid the hazards of financial liability, and went to work writing our bylaws, which were officially filed in the fall of 1976. Perri Corrick was elected "President for Life," though her term didn't last quite *that* long. Dick and Diane also convinced us (and contributed financially) to print *Janus* on an offset press, and the new, improved *Janus* appeared in December 1976, with number 6. Diane and Dick were an amazing, stunning whirlwind of proposals, assistance, humor and energy, who changed the group's activities and social map profoundly.

It's hard to believe now that the name "SF<sup>3</sup>" simply appeared within the mass of paperwork that Dick presented to us as the SF<sup>3</sup> bylaws, that we collected no nominations of possible names, that there was no voting. But the hot issue of the day did not concern our name; rather, we debated whether or not Dick was an evil force attempting to "take over" the group. In comparison, the name of this proposed corporate front group seemed like a very insignificant matter. (Most of us never expected to actually use the name outside of the silly annual meeting required by law.) Some of us worried instead that Dick's plans would change the group into one of *his* preference. It was hard to believe at first, that Dick was as unselfishly generous as he appeared. Did he have a hidden agenda? Eventually, however, those who distrusted this corporate transition were convinced to give Dick a chance and eventually adopted him as our "pet bureaucrat." Dick proved to be a tireless proofreader of *Janus*, and both Diane and Dick introduced to the

group a technology of monolithic importance (as in *2001: A Space Odyssey*): the IBM Selectric. Diane volunteered to help us organize our finances and worked as the group's treasurer for more than a dozen years. Jan gratefully handed over the shoebox. As a result, *Janus* commenced a period of high-quality production and by the second WisCon, the group's finances and legal standing had improved immensely.

Once the structure had been built — once we became an *institution* — we experienced an avalanche of changes and achievements.

I learned the basics of graphics and layout from my work on *Janus*. Offset printing allowed me to create and procure a larger range of artwork and our zine's graphic style improved from one issue to the next. Many fans and some pros began writing and illustrating for the zine and in the years that followed, *Janus* attracted several Faan awards and three Hugo nominations. My work on *Janus* and other zines eventually led to a professional book illustration job and later helped me secure a position as a professional graphic artist with the state of Wisconsin, where I work today.

By the spring of 1977, Jim Cox, Phil Kaveny, Hank and Lesleigh Luttrell were working at the local listener-sponsored radio station, WORT, on the Science Fiction and Fantasy Hour. Jim Cox was hosting the Madison Review of Books and had begun a separate organization of the same name with Lesleigh Luttrell, Phil Kaveny, Terri Gregory, and John Ohliger. For a couple years, Jim operated an office on University Avenue and packed the shelves with review books. Jim encouraged us to pick up a book at the MRB office, review it in the MRB newsletter or on the radio show ... and *keep* the book. It was a dream come true for some poor student-type members.

By 1977, the "Book of the Month Circle" sprouted from a discussion section of one of Professor Fanny Le Moine's Comparative Literature SF classes and was annexed, after a couple years, by SF<sup>3</sup>. (Le Moine taught the first science fiction class at UW-Madison in 1972.) The Circle met every month at people's homes. Richard West's Tolkien Society met every month, too, and attracted some members of our group, though the overlap was small. A group of rabid D&D players — including Bill Hoffman, Carl Marrs, Julia Richards, Greg Rihn, Lucy Nuti, Joanna Meyer-Mitchell and Emerson Mitchel — was meeting weekly by the end of 1977, utilizing the fictional world created by Emerson. Eventually almost all of these players invented "worlds" of their own based on the Emersonian model. In 1978, Phil Kaveny delivered the occasional lecture at a west side Madison high school and attracted another wave of new members — among them, Andy Hooper, Lynne Ann Morse, and Nevenah Smith. This "youth" wave touched off a minor controversy concerning the ethics of meeting in a bar with underage persons, and exposed a few ageist biases among the other members who were mostly in their 20s and 30s. In 1985, Dick Russell toured many public libraries in and near Dane County promoting D&D for the Summer Reading Library Program. Social relationships grew more tangled. At times, it seemed we lived in one another's pockets — attending the new releases of the first SF blockbuster films *en masse*, partying together, painting a mural in Diane and Dick's basement, and going to all those meetings. By 1979 the same people who had been presenting shows on WORT radio, created parallel shows on Public Access TV-Cable Channel 4. Dick Russell directed "The D&D Game of the Month," live the last Saturday of each month. Subtitled, "The Longest Program on TV," it corralled players and



artists from the group as talent, and trained interested members in the skills of production and video technology. The number of the group's activities became more and more complex and I quickly lost track around this point as to who was doing what with whom. At the same time, our contacts with fandom at large continued to increase.

*Janus* was not the only fanzine being published by Madison fandom. Hank and Lesleigh Luttrell, who had been well-known, Hugo-nominated fanzine editors before they moved to Madison from Columbus, MO, still published *Starling*. Perri Corrick's zine *Corr*, Richard West's *Orcrist* and John Bartelt's *Digressions* were listed under the SF<sup>3</sup> umbrella in our ads. We ran WisCon room parties at XCon, MiniCon, ArcCon, Confusion, WindyCon, ICon and many worldcons. As a result of all this publishing activity and convention traveling, many of us were developing strong friendships among other fan groups, especially in Minneapolis, Seattle, San Francisco, and New York. We exported cat-wrapping and my own "Dead Cats through History" slide show to conventions all across the country — demonstrating that Madison fandom was not all sercon, but our serious reputation persisted and the diverse feminist programming we pioneered at WisCon and published in *Janus/Aurora* continued to represent our image for most fans outside Madison.

WisCon's concom, which at the start overlapped almost entirely with the *Janus* editorial staff, began to take more and more time from members of the group. Issues of *Janus* were merged with the program books of WisCon 1 and 2 (1977 and 1978). But by WisCon 3, *Janus* went into a hiatus during the planning period of WisCon, "making up for it" with a special double issue (No. 12/13) that year. But *Janus* never again achieved its quarterly goal, and between 1979 and 1982 *Janus/Aurora* became a bi-annual publication. The group's primary focus had shifted away from the publication of its fanzine to the care and nurturing of its convention. By 1983, *Janus* could no longer meet even a bi-annual schedule. 1983 saw the publication of only one issue, number 23. Number 24 was published in 1985, number 25 in 1987, and the last issue came out in 1990.

*Janus* became *Aurora* in 1979 because its two editors could no longer work with one another. After an especially stressful year, Jan Bogstad and I decided to stop co-editing a fanzine together. Our styles clashed and personal disagreements between the two of us were making everyone uncomfortable. The whole group met in Hank Luttrell's bookstore, 20th Century Books, and Jan and I formally presented our disagreements as we saw them. It was decided at that meeting that Jan and I would no longer co-edit a fanzine named *Janus*, and that furthermore, neither of us would individually publish a zine of that name. Eventually Jan began publishing her own zine, *New Moon*, and I joined the former *Janus* production staff and we started work on the new fanzine, *Aurora*, though we continued the issue numbering system from the defunct *Janus*.

WisCon, in the meantime, flourished. Having achieved early notoriety with its feminist, political and radical programming, and having been dubbed "PevertCon" by disapproving fans — WisCon settled into its niche: as a small, serious, intense convention. GoHs were mostly chosen from the ranks of young, new, female SF authors, many of whom went on to win Hugos during that brief period in the late 70s and early 80s when feminism was actually fashionable: Vonda N. McIntyre, Susan Wood, Suzy McKee Charnas, John Varley, Octavia Butler, Joan D. Vinge, Chelsea Quinn Yarbro, Samuel Delany, Marta Randall,

Lee Killough, Elizabeth Lynn, Jessica Amanda Salmonson, Suzette Haden Elgin (WisCon's unofficial Fairy Godmother), and Lisa Tuttle. WisCon developed a loyal group of attendees, some of whom went to no other cons except WisCon, and others — fans and pros — who traveled a surprising distance for such a small con.

The first five WisCons were housed on campus (programming at the Wisconsin Center, sleeping rooms at Lowell Hall and the Madison Inn), but soon our burgeoning numbers and complaints from attendees, who for some reason disliked hiking two blocks through blizzard conditions, convinced us to move downtown to the Capitol Square for WisCon 6 in 1982. Much of the group's energy focused upon WisCon planning. Even the monthly meetings at Union South were reorganized for a while to function as "practice sessions" for WisCon programming. Recruitment drives were aimed primarily at attracting new fans who could be convinced to work on the concom. The group entered a period of time in the mid-80s when our bureaucratic machinery gained power and momentum.

I drew away from many of the group's activities in the mid-80s. *Aurora* had lost its excitement for me since my job allowed me to do lots of interesting graphics. The *Aurora* publishing subgroup seemed to have been sucked dry of most of its energy, which I suppose was not surprising since its two most active members, Diane Martin and myself had found fulfilling careers. Dick Russell had moved along into other obsessions — D&D, TV production, union organizing and junk mail management. Georgie Schnobrich, who had been helping me lay out *Aurora*, left town. Also, there seemed to be a larger force at work: most of the group's fannish energy was being focused on WisCon. But as WisCon got bigger, some of us discovered that we had developed a profound distaste for the bureaucratic machinery of concom meetings, and turned more and more of our energy toward writing, drawing, publishing and interacting with fans outside of Madison.

Part of my loss of interest stemmed from my friendship with Spike Parsons and some of the events that happened after she joined the group. Spike and I met one another in 1983, in the weight-lifting room at the YWCA, realized that we both worked for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources, and then discovered that we also shared an interest in SF. Spike, at the time, was reading Jessica Amanda Salmonson's *Amazons!* anthology and was excited to learn that in 1984, Salmonson would be WisCon 8's Guest of Honor. I convinced her fairly easily to attend a convention planning meeting, and after that there was no stopping her.

I think now that some members of the group reacted to Spike very much like they reacted to Dick Russell and Diane Martin's explosive entry onto our local scene. Spike upset the status quo by not "working her way up" into the active core group, and by almost immediately suggesting changes and assuming a very active role in our activities. Spike, being Spike, wouldn't have been capable of any other kind of behavior, but some members suspected the worst. It is the nature of our group, and probably every volunteer group like ours, that big personnel changes (who does the work) are mirrored by big changes on a purely social level (who is popular) And there are always some people in the group who resist those changes. Things got pretty ugly for a while later in 1984 when Spike headed the WisCon 9 publications committee and proposed to do things differently. She wanted to publish a *pre-convention* program book, which would have required the programming department to finish their work a



month or more earlier than usual. Heels were dug in, egos crashed, and finally Spike left the room and the committee. Whereas the group had gained enormously by accepting change with Dick and Diane's involvement, we lost when we appeased the anti-change contingent of the group and rejected Spike's ideas. She didn't disappear; she continued to work on the con and edited *Cube* for several years, but the social group seemed to fragment. The hostile reaction provoked the very thing that the anti-change contingent most feared: cliques and a loss of community within the group.

I walked out of that conconcom meeting with Spike. But unlike Spike, I never returned. I began agitating for a formal decision to kill off *Aurora*. Diane Martin almost single-handedly published the second-last issue (#25) in 1987, but the group continued to avoid the reality that we no longer had enough people or time to invest in *Aurora*, and it wasn't until 1990 that the last issue was published and we returned subscription funds and manuscripts.

*Cube*, the SF<sup>3</sup> newsletter, made its first appearance in October 1982, perhaps because the group missed the appearance of a regularly published zine. I edited it through Spetember 1985 issue number 14, and then Spike took over editor duties for 29 amazingly regular issues. Andy Hooper eventually edited numbers 45 and 46 of *Cube*, and after a 16 month hiatus, Steve Swartz took over its publication in May 1992, turning it briefly into a large-scale fannish genzine. *Cube*, still under Swartz' editorial control, has now returned to an ensmallled newszine format.

I attended and usually had a good time at the WisCons of the late 80s, continued to organize one or two feminist panels each WisCon, and offered advice when asked, but my attention drifted away from the group. New members joined, became active on the WisCon committee, but I didn't try to find out who they were or what they were doing. A complete history of the Madison fan group would, of necessity, be collaborative. No one member stayed active continually or was involved in all the different activities. I missed a lot.

Therefore it was a surprise to be drawn back into intense interaction within the group again in 1987 when Andy Hooper founded *The Turbo-Charged Party Animal Apa*. I had gradually realized that there was a whole new community of people active in the Madison SF Group and I began to get a little curious about them. I wrote to Spike, who was visiting friends in England, and told her about the new publishing development in Madison fandom. Pretty interesting, I wrote to her, and then realized that indeed I was interested. Although I was publishing my own zine, *Whimsey*, I had dropped out of *A Women's Apa* several years before that, and I thought I could manage a monthly apazine.

What a wonderful decision that turned out to be! I've enjoyed getting to know these folks and now count many of them as good friends of mine. I never did return to regular conconcom meeting attendance, even though the Tiptree Award pulled me back for some WisCon planning in 1992 and 1993. But it's been exciting to see the resurgence of interest in fannish publishing. Much of the credit for our renaissance must go to Andy Hooper who inspired people to write for *Turbo* and for the zine he co-edits with Carrie Root, *Spent Brass*. After immersing himself in back-issues of *Pong*, Andy emerged reborn, so to speak, and began to proselytize to the Madison masses, and his message was, "pub your ish!" When Andy and Carrie announced that they were going to move to fannish Seattle, we all wondered if the publishing boom would fizzle or continue to grow.

But nothing stays the same — except maybe our fears of change. A small but powerful wave of new members have joined our group in the last couple years. Ellen Franklin and Jim Hudson moved to Madison from Boston. Both of them are enormously experienced con-runners. Ellen is showing interest in publishing her ish, and both she and Jim enthusiastically joined the Corflu conconcom and have expressed interest in promoting a smallish Corflu-, Potlatch-, Reinconation-like con for Madison. And Steve Swartz moved to Madison with Elk Krisor from Washington, D.C. in 1991, about the same time Andy and Carrie left town, and picked up the baton Andy passed on when he and Carrie moved to Seattle. Like Dick Russell and Spike Parsons before him, Steve set off alarms for some people in the group. His editorship of *Cube*, his lobbying for a new mimeograph machine, encouragement of new publications, his tendency to volunteer to help everyone do anything, and the sudden affect on social interactions within the group, provoked uneasiness and distrust from some Madison fans — many of whom weren't even around when Diane and Dick or Spike first stirred up Madison's fannish waters. This repeating pattern of reluctance/rejection and final acceptance would be funny if it didn't cause real injury to the new person offering this gift of energy, and cheat us all of the work they might do. But I expect that Steve, Ellen and Jim will gradually become familiar enough fixtures in Madison's fannish firmament, and things will calm down until the next wave of immigrant fans stirs things up again.

And personally, I do *enjoy* it when things get stirred up! At the 1991 WisCon 15, for instance, GoH Pat Murphy stirred things up Big Time when she announced the birth of a new award to be named after James Tiptree, Jr. to honor gender-bending science fiction. Many of us felt that the convention had renewed our excitement and commitment to feminist discussion, and Murphy's announcement electrified her audience and recruited an avalanche of volunteers. It felt to me as if this award provided a culmination of all the work, all the WisCons, all the issues of *Janus* and *Aurora*, and all the feminist panels, that the Madison Science Fiction Group has supported. Suddenly those of us who never seemed to have enough time to spare for WisCon conconcom or other fannish activities were falling over one another to offer our time for this project. We organized bake sales and published the first Tiptree cookbook to benefit the award, *The Bakery Men Don't See*. At the first Tiptree Award ceremony at WisCon 16 (1992), we proudly presented Pat Murphy with a check for \$1800 to add to the bank account made up of donations and the proceeds of dozens of convention bakes sales held all over the country for the award fund. Eleanor Arnason (*Woman of the Iron People*) and Gwyneth Jones (*White Queen*) won the first two Tiptree awards. This year, 1993, we published a second cookbook, *Her Smoke Rose up from Supper*, and Elk Krisor (who is not a fan) is organizing the sewing of a king-sized art quilt whose design is based on Tiptree's novel *Brightness Falls from the Air*, also to benefit the Tiptree Award. Maureen McHugh accepted the Tiptree Award at WisCon 17, and the "Tiptree Machine," as Pat Murphy calls it, rolls on.

You may already have guessed by now that I think the *Khattru* reprint project falls under the category of stirring things up, too...

Obviously, his so-called "history" of mine is neither unbiased nor complete and needs to be fleshed out with some research into the activities I didn't witness, not to mention with some revelations about interpersonal relationships I am tactfully ignoring. But that's for another publication and another day. ❖