



Welcome to *Union Street* #72 (Obsessive Press [JG] #174 and Peerless Press [SC] #74), the zine with the transmogrifying seasonal masthead. 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 Quadra 840av, and hardcopy was printed on a Laserwriter IIITX printer. Text was created with Microsoft Word 5.1 and laid out with Aldus PageMaker 5.0. The *Union Street* Logo was designed with Adobe Illustrator 5.0 and Adobe Photoshop 3.0. All contents are copyrighted © by Scott Custis and Jeanne Gomoll, January 1996, for Turbo-Charged Party Animal APA #115. Members FWA.

Business

[JG] We'll take the April cover, and I join the mad rush to second **Elise Matthesen** for *Turbo* membership.

WisCon

[SC] The WisCon train is chugging along nicely at this time. We recently were able to add author, editor and critic Judith Merrill to our roster of attending pros as our Special Guest. In other news, a generous donation from Wizards of the Coast will cover the cost of those returning guests of honor who requested financial assistance. Our second flyer will go out in the mail yet this month to remind one and all to sign up before March 1st. Take advantage of our lower membership rates by signing up soon. We have set a hard attendance cap of 800 members this year. From where I'm sitting, I expect we'll get that many people. More reason to sign up soon.

We still need help for many areas of the convention. Probably the biggest job that remains unfilled is for someone to coordinate child care. At this point, much of the work is done. We have retained the services of a professional child care company—Nanny Placement Services—who will supply licensed child care providers based on our anticipated need. We have budgeted in such a way that we hope to be able to subsidize half the cost. What we need is someone to pick up the ball from here by keeping track of how many kids we get registered, costs and the number of care attendants we'll need. They may also need to help acquire toys as well as coordinate and set-up the childcare room at the con. If you are interested or know someone who is, we want to hear from you. Please.

The "WisCon Showcase" will display the talents of past guests—artists, writers, musicians—as well as Tiptree Award materials and items donated for Tiptree auctions. Jim Hudson is in charge and needs volunteers to staff the room during the convention. We would like to ask all former Madisonians and *Turbo* members to sign up for a shift of an hour or two during the convention (that is, if you're not already working somewhere else). We hope to staff the room with folks who know something of the history of WisCon and can make a stab at answering questions asked by WisCon attendees who view the displays. Contact Jim or us.

We are also in need of material for the WisCon program book (this year, it's called the Souvenir Book.) We are looking for photographs from past WisCons as well as articles on feminism, feminist SF, women writing SF and WisCon. We need anecdotes, reminiscences (ex. my <superlative adjective> time at WisCon or unsung heroes of a past WisCon) and artwork. We need people who are interested in writing bios of attending guests, historical pieces on WisCon, etc. If this sounds interesting to you, please let us know very soon.

We still need help in all sorts of other areas too, but these represent our most serious current needs. Thank you.

Jae Adams

[SC] Your zine looks great this month. On moving as a child, I grew up in a small town and didn't move anywhere until I went to college. I always thought I had a typical upbringing, and maybe it was typical for back then, but I think people move around a lot more these days. I eventually learned to hate living in a small town, but as I look back on it, I realize that growing up in one place that was safe and familiar was really kind of a luxury. I think I would have had a hard time adjusting to a big move to the city or another state when I was a kid. I really liked and needed the stability of knowing everything and everyone around me so well.

Regarding your interesting comment to Vijay and your rant about The Group, I am up to the brink of my hip



waders in The Group these days with so much WisCon planning. Much as I'd like to pursue a tangent of discussion on this topic, I feel I'm too close to the fire to be coherent right now. Maybe after I've digested this whale of a convention I've bit into, I can hold forth with some new wisdom about The Group. Hold that thought until summer, please.

I also liked your Dec. 13, 1995 piece.

[JG] What an interesting perspective your review of the Group's recent years gives to current controversies. I remember when the Group, as it was then, had only been together a few years. I played around with the idea of writing a chronicle of our already tangled history, and threatened to call it *Melodrama Rampant*. I never did get around to doing it and probably would have been sued for libel if I had. But now I have to laugh about how ridiculously that chronicle would have read if I had not only written it, but *continued* to write it, adding and subtracting characters, piling climax upon climax, rather like a very bad TV sitcom with so many twists of fate and character shifts that one can find no coherent plotline or character development. Anyway, I enjoyed your survey, and would love to talk with you about this stuff someday ... but like Scott, I am going to use WisCon politics as an excuse not to discuss specifics, at least not in a public forum.

I've been trying to find a video of Klaus Kinski's *Nosferatu* for years. I saw it in the theaters and have told Scott about it, but have never found it in video stores. I'd really like to see it again someday.

I really shouldn't try to discuss *Space: Above and Beyond* with you anymore. I haven't seen even one episode, and **Jim Nichols** justifiably criticizes me for analyzing what I know not. The ideas still interest me though. You (and **Vicki Rosenzweig** too) argue with me that SF stories that help members of powerful groups identify with members of less powerful groups, offer potentially good lessons for their readers. I see that, yes. In fact, I've even included a few paragraphs to that effect in some of my old college papers, and probably in one or two articles written since then. It's an admirable idea, one that shares respectable company with works like *Black Like Me*. And theoretically, such allegorical formats should still be capable of offering valuable insights to open minds. At least, I hope so.

But I think we're in the midst of a pretty horrific backlash right now—against most progressive values—and I think it's possible that some of the allegories out there are being written for and about angry white men who honestly do feel as if they are

the main victims in the modern world. You say, for instance, that it strikes you "as a good thing to coax white boys into identification with a minority position in an integrated society," but if the angry white guy *already* believes he is in a minority position in a too integrated society, there are no lessons being learned, just a lot of anger being stoked.

Tracy Benton

[SC] Very nice looking zine. The sexiest cars are red. Red doesn't make all cars sexy, however, anymore than all guys look sexy in tight jeans or tank tops. I would love to help you look for a new car. I won't get involved in the negotiating thing, but I can be counted on to test features and options and "ooh" and "aaaah" at appropriate times.

[JG] I enjoyed your review of dramatic performances with small casts. And I enjoyed *Greater Tuna*, as well, once in the Bay Area many years ago, with my brother and Danny Field and again with Scott here in Madison: both wildly wildly hilarious evenings. I think I enjoyed the radio bits the best, at least that's what I remember most.

What a great idea! The aftermath of *Sleeping Beauty*.... It would probably be far more interesting than the preliminary story, which I've always thought was a rather boring fairy tale. You should definitely write this up some day, Tracy. I just bought a book that you may be interested to see, *Feminist Fairy Tales*, by Barbara G. Walker, which features rewritten versions of very famous stories. I haven't read it yet, but am looking forward to it. Looks interesting.

Bill Bodden

[SC] "A zine...by the most hated man in Madison Fandom," I don't think so.

YCT me, we'll have to do it up big for you, Bill. My 40th happens in May and I won't be able to get too wild on the Saturday I plan to celebrate because (can you believe this?) I'll have a WisCon meeting the next morning....

Great cartoon.

[JG] I'll give you a note, Scott, excusing you from the WisCon meeting, so you can do it up big on your 40th birthday party. (Ooops, sorry, Bill, I forgot this is supposed to be a comment to you.)

I can certainly sympathize with you Bill, about how you perceive others as enforcing an image of you that you feel you've outgrown. I know that I have to fight turning into the 18-year-old girl I was when I left home, every time I go to Milwaukee for a visit.

The expectations are hard to fight. And of course, we all build up patterns and assumptions among our friends as well as our family, and when we want to change our images—both for ourselves and others—there is a lot of unconscious resistance. But I think it's important to recognize that most of the work that needs to be done is our own. The behavior, the patterns, are our own behavior and patterns, and it's unrealistic to expect that we can tell others how we want them to perceive us and then hope that they will change their behavior towards us and make it easier for us to change accordingly.

One of the most fascinating books I ever read, that had a most profound impact upon me, was Maggie Scarf's *Intimate Partners: Patterns in love and Marriage*, which is about how we tend to replicate patterns of behavior and relationships we grew up with (no matter how damaging they might have been) in our grown-up lives. Scarf says that we tend to do this because no matter how bad for us these patterns might be, they are *familiar*, and thus feel safe. Using several case studies, she demonstrates how individuals found mates who allowed them to play similar roles to those they used to play in their families when they were young. We need to be conscious of how and why those old patterns worked in the past before we can consciously change our current behavior. If you are interested, I would be glad to lend the book to you, Bill.

Speaking of changing bad old patterns, Scott and I did a little of that this holiday season when we went down to Austin, instead of to either of our parents' homes. Not that we missed the family gathering, because my folks were also visiting my sister Julie in Austin. But the change in scenery, and the many differences in the style of celebrating Christmas from our family's traditions, kept everyone slightly off balance, and (though the weekend was not without its tensions) there was so little that was familiar that none of us could fall into those same old patterns. We couldn't have the traditional dinner around a big table, for example, because Julie's house is too small, and we had to sit in the living room with plates on our laps. We went to an open house, a party given by one of Julie's employees, later on Christmas evening, and we all spent energy getting to know *new* people, being social, being cordial. Quite a switch. Most disorienting.

Mom and Dad left Austin the day after Christmas, and Scott and I spent the rest of the week socializing with friends, cruising the Internet at Julie's office, laughing at Austinites wearing down-filled coats in the balmy 50-60° F weather, seeing *Sense*

and *Sensibility* (which we recommend highly to all of you), meeting **Clay Colwell** which was a lot of fun, and worrying hardly at all about how difficult it was going to be to get together the New Year's party in only one days time when we returned to Madison. Ignorance is bliss.

Jim Brooks

[SC] You are the second source to tell me about the glut of returned SUV's. One car salesman told me that the trouble with so many of the SUV's is that people buy them and find out later that they are not designed to go real fast because they corner poorly. Some even have warning lights when the thing is in danger of tipping over because it's top heavy. Folks like to drive fast more than they like to look hip, it seems.

YCT **Hope** and **Steve**, it's really too bad that you spend so much time working. You could take a shot at running *Cube* or being president of SF³ or chairing WisCon and see what your perspective on The Group would be like then.

[JG] Interesting questions about art, whether the first art was created for pleasure or some magical use. I've noticed that people seem to want to divide art into different kinds, based on its perceived usefulness or lack thereof. (Real art, of course, lacks any usefulness.) The other day we artists at the DNR were madly putting together a map of our new office space. (The DNR is being reorganized, and we artists are being moved to a different floor to make room for some big wig execs who have lost their jobs as a result of the reorg and are temporarily going to be working as Reorg Chiefs, and well, they need office space since they've been kicked out of their's, and they want our's. Now.) As I said, we were madly arranging our new digs, trying to figure out the best way to set up our equipment so as to be efficient and pleasant. Our new boss got rather impatient with our concern over how our space was going to "look." What does it matter?, he squawked at us. And later I thought about how ironic it was that we are paid to make publications look good; we are paid for the way we look at things, for our appreciation of visual effect, and yet when it comes to setting up our own offices, we are supposed to ignore that sensibility, I suppose because it no longer seems useful to the people in charge. Usefulness is a relative thing. I find the visual organization of my surroundings to be far more than an aesthetic frippery.

As for the trustworthiness of government... (I'm changing the subject, even though it might seem



that I'm not) It seems to me that government is like a hospital. I avoid having anything to do with it if I can, but wouldn't want to abolish it, and think we all should do what we can to improve the institution for those times when we are forced to depend on its services.

I liked your radio messages. One of my favorite marketing bloopers isn't a radio message, but a printed ad that Econoprint will still proudly offer to you if you drop in one of their stores. Look for the flyer advertising color photocopying, scan the text, and praise the technician for their company's impressive achievement: Econoprint offers to make *one dimensional photocopies* for your convenience. When I first read that line, I was waiting for a job and laughed. The clerk looked up and I shared my find with him, thinking he too would find it amusing, but no, he sighed a professional sigh and (obviously thinking I didn't understand this technical term "dimension"), held up a piece of paper and explained that "technically, this paper has only one dimension." Wow. Econoprint: Copiers for Flatland.

You pointed out to **Tom Havighurst** that "train travelers seldom see the face of a city." True enough. When Scott and I traveled across country by train, we talked a lot about how we were seeing the very worst parts of the cities we went through. It even turned out we saw the back end of a few people too. As we chugged through a gorgeous, deep gorge in Colorado, we spied three tiny campers down in the valley. They were bent over, every one of them, with their pants down, mooning the train as we went past. But your comment got me to thinking that every mode of transportation permits a certain kind of view, one that is—by definition—limited and distorted. It would be sort of interesting to think about how differently one city might be viewed from a series of different transport modes: plane (zip! did you see that?), train (ugly!), car on a freeway (nice walls, nice signs, whoops wasn't that our exit?), bike or foot (both of which, I think, would give the passenger the better, more real feel for the place).

Lisa Freitag

[SC] We are looking forward to seeing you and meeting your new young man, at WisCon.

[JG] Costumes with built-in attitudes, indeed. The one time I dressed in a costume at a con was at the Denver worldcon with a bunch of friends (including Bill Hoffman) as *Snow Queen* characters. I was

supposed to be Jerusha, a cop, and discovered that the knee-high boots, heavy helmet, flowing cape, and wide belt with many attached instruments ... made me feel very powerful. My stride grew more purposeful, as if I was taking the role a lot more seriously than I thought I would. Perhaps this is one reason why I don't care to dress in costume. I don't like the transformational effect it has. I would rather choose the transformation for real, not play.

Jim Frenkel

[SC] I'm glad you're getting winterized rather than throw up your hands and head back East. It's not so bad out here really. Once you survive a spate of especially cold weather, then you earn bragging rights. Actually, the weather out East the last couple winters has been sounding worse than out here, what with the snow storms they've been getting. Think of poor **Vijay** and **Vicki** digging out from under two feet of snow this month.

Pat Hario

[SC] Certainly *Seven* is not a movie that is going to set one's heart soaring with optimism about the future. But I found the Morgan Freeman character's change more uplifting than you did. I saw him as totally defeated and cynical through most of the movie. He trashed his partner's idealism and looked forward to his retirement not to be happy but to escape and hide. I did not take seriously his talk about retirement. In the scenes where he is home alone, it is clear he is lost and lonely and miserable. That was not going to change after his retirement. His future was bleak and he knew it. He had no hope, no dreams, no goals. After losing his wife, Freeman grew disillusioned with the only other thing he cared about, his career. Pitt's murder of the bad guy is not what motivated Freeman to change. It was Pitt's total destruction that moves Freeman to change and adapt his partner's goal of fighting for the soul of the city. It's all there really is left for Freeman, to try to pick up the fight for his ruined partner.

I thought it was a great story. Very tragic, yet giving us just a little sign of hope at the end.

YCT Jeanne, I am more inclined to disagree with Siskel and Ebert when they recommend something. They have gone ga ga over a few movies that I thought sucked. Usually when they trash something, they are right. Still, I am willing to take a chance on most anything they both recommend. I don't necessarily have more faith in one guy over the other and I try to consult reviews by others too. I think the *Onion's* reviews are sometimes quite interesting. I used to rely heavily on Mike Wilmington when he wrote for *Isthmus*.

[JG] I agree with Scott about *Seven*. I saw Freeman's character as equating retirement with giving up on the world. Pitt's character and Pitt's wife gave Freeman a tiny bit of hope. And even though they were both destroyed, Freeman turned back toward life because he'd found that worthwhile people existed in the world.

My feeling about Ebert and Siskel is that their taste has gotten worn down by seeing too many bad movies. When they both turn thumbs down on a movie, I stay away, but they've made a few hideously bad calls when they liked a movie. So I'm wary.

As for the difference in length between their TV and newspaper reviews, well I heard Ebert say a surprising thing recently (in a late-night talk show interview, I think). He said that when he counted the words in one of their TV movie reviews, he actually came up with a higher word count than a newspaper review! Still, I agree with you that the written reviews *feel* more dense.

Tom Havighurst

[SC] Wonderful train trip piece. I enjoy touring the country with you via your zine. Jeanne and I like traveling by train, but we tend to keep to ourselves, that "Midwest conservatism" you mentioned, I suppose. A large part of the experience for you seems to be meeting new people. Lots of folks look forward to driving across the U.S., which is a more private and isolated kind of experience than training with a bunch of strangers. Do you like long car trips, too or is that too antisocial of a mode of transport for you? I love trains, but I can rarely take enough time off work to get somewhere by train and still have time to spend at my destination before coming back.

[JG] I would guess that I'd be more social with strangers on a train if I weren't traveling with a companion. I think we even talked to someone on our cross-country train trip who commented that couples tended to keep more to themselves on a train than single people. What do you think?

I like your train stories a lot, and had fun imagining that conservative Midwestern couple confronted with two questionable guys across the dinner table. My, you could have had an amazing lot of fun with them.

Hovermower (or was that Hooverhovermower?) sounds like an apa cover image to me.

Bill Humphries

[SC] Very interesting speech by Mike Goodwin. Thanks for reprinting it.

[JG] Yes, I liked it too. Excellent speech.

Lorelei Manney

[SC] Welcome back to *Turbo*. I think you'll find this a friendlier place than it often was in the past (although anywhere *Steve* is, you can usually find some degree of controversy. *Turbo* is no exception.) I'm looking forward to seeing you at WisCon and spending a bit more time talking with you than we had in Austin last month.

Tell us more about your work, and the hedgehogs, too, of course.

[JG] Welcome, Lorelei! Hedgehogs?

Jim Nichols

[SC] I particularly liked your comment to *Michael Shannon* on music. Singers are really called "fucking throats?" Wow.

Vicki Rosenzweig

[SC] I have sort of a love/hate relationship with Christmas. I love the holiday season and the chance to party and socialize with friends and family. I hate (along with you) the despicable gift buying spectacle that goes along with it. Sometimes the gift-thing works for me. This year my siblings and I used Christmas as an excuse to pool our resources and buy our Dad a TV he has been needing for awhile. He was surprised and delighted and that was good. But the week-after-week of advertising pressure to buy, buy, buy always turns me off. I like Christmas parties, I hate the travel crunch, etc.

YCT me on a panel on racism in SF, I have to admit that I am not nearly well enough read in SF to hold forth on a panel and I doubt that even a year of concentrated reading would give me sufficient grounding in the subject. Add to this the fact that I have absolutely no interest in being on convention panels in general. I was on a panel at WisCon once and I detested the experience. I'm not looking forward to doing it again. I would like to see such a panel and take notes on the books and stories discussed, but I would be a poor participant.

Great comments, Vicki.

[JG] It's a good idea for a panel though. You should suggest this to programming chair Steve Swartz.

Great idea about nominating *Four Ways to Forgiveness* for a Hugo. Who cares what it is. Let them sort it out.



Georgie Schnobrich

[SC] Great troll!

YCT Jae, "What I am ferociously against is the all-or-nothing either/or cast of our society, which seems to mandate that anything which is possible *must* be done...." Yes, exactly.

Steve Swartz

[SC] Your approach to the single life seems pretty idyllic to me in many ways. Having the option to curl up at home to work, eat, sleep, indulge hobbies and interests and be able to step outside to engage the world when you mostly want to is very enviable. Your place is becoming more and more cozy with the recent addition of comfy furniture. I like your set-up. Keep your eyes open, a cook of your caliber should have little trouble finding an eager dishwasher.

Jeanne & Scott
19 January 1996