



Union Street

A joint zine by Jeanne Gomoll & Scott Custis

Announcement

[SC] Believe it or not, I am actually going to start work on the SF 3 Directory a little sooner than the absolute last minute this year. So now is the time for all of you in *Turbo* to start checking your listings in last year's issue of the Directory as well as the latest version of the *Turbo* address page and let me know if you have any changes, corrections or other specifics about information you want included or deleted from your new Directory listing. Also, if there is someone you think ought to be added to the Directory OR you have noticed a listing in last year's issue that was incorrect OR you know about a listee who has moved OR is about to move, PLEASE let me know. Thanks.

Comments on No. 130

[SC] I don't usually bother to try to comment on issues of *Turbo* three months back in time, but I thought #130 was one of the best *Turbos* I've seen in a long time. There was a very high proportion of good stuff pubbed by everyone. I can't resist making a few remarks even this "late."

© Jim Frenkel

[SC] Scientology has always been one of those great controversial shadow organizations that strike terror into the hearts of Americans. For years I have read both viscous attacks and virtuous defenses of them just within the Left press. I have never been able to decide if they are a harmless, but consistently persecuted, religious cult or a wealthy power-mad threat to all things Ameri-

can. Someday I will spend some time reading all the various exposes on them, though I understand that publishing anything negative about them can be hazardous to one's career (or worse.) Still, it is hard to imagine anyone being able to strong-arm the IRS, the fearsome 800 lb. gorilla of government enforcement agencies. Your comments on Scientology's recent gain of tax-exempt status is interesting, but is it just a long overdue recognition of their legitimate tax status, or one more step toward world domination? I don't know, but I'd love to hear about any personal or professional experiences you have had with them. We'll promise to keep the apa out of their hands, and, if necessary, protect your identity.

Thanks also for the travel piece to the funeral in Cleveland.

© Andy Hooper

[SC] Thank you for sending the missing page to finish up the account of Roy Mackal's expedition. Thanks also for the offer to get a new edition of your zine with corrections, but frankly Andy I think I will wait for the book to come out (hint, hint.) I noticed that I wasn't the only one vocally complaining about the omission in the original version of your zine. This should prove once and for all that we are reading your stuff and we get annoyed if we have to miss part of it. Speaking of which, I very

much enjoyed your last installment on Mokele-Mbembe, the adventures of Rory Nugent. I had heard good things about *Drums Along the Congo* before reading your piece, but now I feel I should look for it.

Great comment to **Sandra Taylor** on movies. I was very pleasantly surprised by *That Thing You Do*. I have not seen *Grace of My Heart*, but I think I will add it to my list of videos to rent sometime as well as other of Anders' films.

© Barb Jensen

[SC] I have never been to a MiniCon. I have always been curious about it, but its size, expense, its reputed lack of serious programming and, for so long, its proximity

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Union Street #87
Obsessive Press (JG) #193
Peerless Press (SC) #89

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to WisCon have managed to keep me from making the effort to go. I found your piece on MiniCon fascinating and once again I am thinking I should at least go once and experience it for myself. I understand that Michael Swanwick will be a Guest next year, he would be a big draw for me. It was a wonderful piece, Barb, thanks.

© Ruth Merrill

[SC] Thanks also to you for the fine travel piece to Philadelphia. Though I have mostly conquered a childhood terror of heights, I still detest flying (on large passenger jets anyway.) I might have been on a plane once or twice before meeting Jeanne, now I have flown often enough that I can mostly ignore it except for landing and takeoff (the most dangerous times, most likely times the plane will crash.) I don't know why I focus on plane crashes so much when I fly. I never think about crashing the car when I drive and I have probably been in a dozen car accidents of various degrees of severity. I have never had anything remotely like a close call plane crash. I guess I can't get past the idea that when flying, the plane must function properly all the time for me to stay alive. Whereas with a car or train or bus, the opposite is the case. If a car runs out of gas or has a mechanical problem, you just pull over and stop. You can't pull over and stop at 35,000 feet.

On our only brief trip to Philly, I thought it was a nice enough city to visit, but I wasn't much interested in living there. I still have a t-shirt from a nice little place called the White Dog Cafe on Sansom St. The cafe featured a real white dog that trotted around the place visiting the customers.

You seem to be settling into this apa-thing well. Hope you are having fun.

© Lynne Ann Morse

[SC] Thanks for the great response to my query about contacts. You have answered many of my questions. At this point, contacts are something I will put on my "maybe look into this" shelf of ideas. I am about due for new glasses, so maybe it will be something I will consider seriously sooner rather than later. I have worn glasses since I was 11 and am well used to them, but the surge in soft contact technology in recent years has caught my attention. What I expect to find out is that when I finally decide I want them, my eye-doctor will tell me I need bifocals or something.

Re YCT me on a Bester essay, yes please do write it for us if the spirit moves you. We are rather recent converts to B5, but we know the character and I think such a piece would find an enthusiastic audience in *Turbo* right now.

© Georgie Schnobrich

[SC] I was amused at your suspicion of malevolent white cars. I owned one white car and I will never own another. I had a 1966 Chevy Impala, 4 door, that I bought from my brother-in-law in about 1974. It wasn't a very sexy car, but the paint was new and I kept it clean. It had a red interior and a manual transmission on the steering column ("three on the tree" we called it.) It was my third "first" car. My very first car was a 1950 Ford pickup that was given to me when I still only had a probationary license. It was a stick shift and since no one had time to take me out and teach me to drive it, and I wasn't licensed to take it out on the road myself, I ended up selling it to a friend's father. I don't think I hardly ever actually drove it. My second first

car was a 1963 Buick LaSalle that I more or less inherited from my folks and drove through high school as long as I paid all the expenses and insurance. So this Impala was the first car I actually bought, completely owned and drove myself.

I still hadn't learned to drive a manual transmission when I bought this car, but I was older and more experienced and I simply took it out on the back country roads and taught myself how to drive it. It took awhile but I finally got the hang of it (and, like bicycle riding, you never forget how to do it.)

The reason I will never own another white car is that it is very difficult to keep it looking clean. Absolutely every speck of dust or dirt shows up on white. The car was always either just washed or needed to be washed right now. No middle ground.

I had a few adventures in that car but it never displayed any malevolent behavior. The only dishonest thing about it was my brother-in-law's cheap paint job which began to wear through only months after I bought it. I owned it less than a year when I drove it into a ditch on a sunny Sunday morning and bent the front axle. I was sober (for once) and, in fact, on my way home from church, but that is another story.

© Jae Leslie Adams

[SC] The return of a Jae Adams Zine to our little enterprise was met with great relief by this reader. Wel-

Bumper Sticker of the Month #1

**We have enough youth,
how about a
Fountain of Smart?**

come back, I missed you.

I think I enjoyed Potlatch as much as any convention I've been to in a long time. Where you wrote about programming that was very meaty despite there only being one track of panels, I was mostly noticing the quirky hotel, the lovely neighborhood and the great bunch of people gathered together. It all flowed together so well as folks found the energy to focus on weighty topics while engaging in some silliness (you mentioned that they pantsed poor Luke the con chair, but he got his revenge when they discovered he wasn't wearing any underwear.)

YCT on speed-reading, your piece here was especially good for me. I have always been a slow reader and that has been frustrating as I watch other people fly through books that take me days to get through. I have often considered taking a speed-reading course, but always wondered how it would affect my enjoyment of fiction. I like to let a story unfold in my head by reading carefully, like savoring desserts. But I don't get much read that way. I am getting a little better at skimming newspaper stories and articles, but heavier work or school stuff requires study. Your conclusion is wisest, it's not how you read or how much, but the continuous dedication to reading that is most important.

Comments on No. 132

[JG] Even though Scott has written some back comments on *Turbo* #130—an issue we both thought was jam-packed with lots of good writing that didn't get its deserved feedback because of the thin packet of mostly minac zines that followed in *Turbo* #131—this issue of *Union Street* won't be nearly as massive as our last issue. Obviously I must have been repressing quite a lot of apa-writing energy in those months before WisCon. That, together with two huge con reports from Scott and I, made it our biggest issue of *Union Street* ever.

© Cover

[SC] Delightful cover, *Tracy*. Your wry sense of humor on apa covers is as distinctive as *Georgie's* lavish artwork.

© Hope Kiefer and Pat Hario

[SC] I wanted to acknowledge your remarks about running the Consuite. I sympathize with you both that you couldn't get away to see more programming, but I also heard more than one person regard our Consuite as one of the very best they'd seen. I think the surveys

confirmed that. I believe the Consuite is facing the same sort of volunteer problems that the rest of the convention is facing, not enough leaders to take turns running it and a shortage of volunteer grunts to help out.

© Andy Hooper

[SC] I always read *Apparatchik* as soon as it showed up in the mail. I am holding on to the last issue to finally write a long overdue loc. I can't fit in this comment all I want to say to you and Victor and Carl about how much I enjoyed it and how much I will miss it.

"The Ape in the Mirror" was excellent. I read it twice, partly because I thought it was the most challenging piece for me to completely grasp that you have thus far offered in this series. My understanding of biology only goes as far as a high school biology class. I was confused, for example, by your discussion of the mitochondrial DNA theory underlying the "Eve" hypothesis. If only female mitochondrial information gets passed on, then how is it that children can inherit characteristics from their fathers as well as their mothers? Obviously, there is something about genetics that I am not following. I was also lost a couple times as you talked about the statistics and 2 to 4 percent divergence rate. But I was completely with you as you brought in the conflict between the "Eve" hypothesis and traditional multiregional continuity theory and the Piltdown man hoax. Fine stuff. I wouldn't be concerned about the sections I wasn't understanding. I think you will get a good grasp on what needs to be fleshed out for explanation as you get feedback from more folks who read your stuff who have differing educational backgrounds in science.

My favorite part had to be your four opening paragraphs where you talked about your overall philosophy for the book, and three pronged approach to the material. I think you are working out a fascinating thesis here. Good job, Andy. I am getting pretty damned excited about this book.

© Bill Humphries

[JG] I loved the image of a bunch of execs sitting around an office playing with flubber. It turns out you are using a technique used in many group therapy sessions (including a certain series of conflict resolution meetings held by the DNR for members of my bureau). Clay or play dough is put in the center of the room, along with drawing tools, paper, and other toys for people who need that sort of physical outlet to focus on the conversation. It works real well with me in tense meetings. You may recall

me doing a lot of doodling at certain WisCon and SF³ meetings.

[SC] YCT Tom H. "I worry that running a small convention with a small committee can be just as draining as a large committee handling a large convention." Hope made a similar remark to Tom. My response to this is that I think it depends. In the case of any convention, if you don't have enough people to cover all the bases, you are going to be overworked. This is true for a Worldcon or a Corflu. When Corflu 10 was held in Madison, a small committee organized it. It drew on a large enough pool of people (from the local group as well as from around the country) that covering basic con functions was not a big problem. The committee was then free to devote passionate attention to the publications, the beer tasting, and the program events they wanted to do. They worked hard, but they mostly weren't burdened by trying to get the con to run, but doing the extra stuff they felt would be Real Cool. I think our local group has enough people to easily put on a smaller, simpler con. The question is, would our loyal new audience allow WisCon to shrink?

[JG] That's a really good point, Scott. Comparing WisCon to Corflu 10 compares two very different kinds of conventions. Corflu 10 had one track of programming, no dealers room, no art show, and no big events other than the Sunday brunch and auction that followed. We easily ran it with a very small committee and most of us got to be obsessive about parts in which we were really interested. I don't even think we bothered with gophers or any kind of security. Smaller scale can indeed translate into less need for workers. The problem is, I think, that almost everyone associated with WisCon absolutely defines our convention in terms of a scale that requires a fairly large community to run it.

[SC] I agree. Once, I would have advocated trying to shrink WisCon down to Potlatch size. I no longer think that is possible, as I hinted at in my last sentence above. But I also think it is incorrect to say, in a general sense, that any small con is as much work to put on as a large con.

© Lynn Ann Morse

[JG] Moving to Ireland, goodness! I hadn't heard the news through the grapevine, and hadn't looked much at the apa until early July, which probably makes me the last one in the fan community to have heard your news.

So does this mean you will have to learn *another* new language? My memories of Scott's and my one visit to Ireland (to Walt and Madelein Willis' house in Donaghadee, N. Ireland) include long periods of only vaguely understanding the gist of a conversation.

I'm very happy for you.

[SC] Yes, this is great news. I can't wait to read about your new place and the city of Dublin. Now we have a new reason to hop over to Ireland next time we are in the neighborhood.

© Michael Rawdon

[JG] I strongly agree with your opinion that churches should not be exempt from paying taxes. I think there would be an advantage to society if we were to establish certain tax-exempt activities—like feeding and housing the poor, and providing other services for the poor that the government would otherwise feel obligated to support. If that were to happen, some churches might never pay out any money for taxes if they funneled a large enough proportion of their money into such tax-exempt activities. But churches could not exempt income if it was spent on building churches, rectories or convents, since these would be expenses that the government would *not* otherwise support, not to mention support of political activities or candidates, financial investments, or land speculation.

You asked for opinions about that fight scene in "Face of the Enemy." I was impressed. It's hard for me to separate my interest in how the scene was filmed from a visceral reaction to the violence in the scene, however. This often happens for me when I watch commercials or movies which use electronic techniques that I know just enough about to be able to understand all or some of how the illusions were created. That fight scene was one of those occasions. It looked, at first, as if it was created with strobe lights, but after a moment I realized (and confirmed later on the *Babylon 5* Lurker page) that the live action shots were intercut with still photography. So there was a shifting back and forth between different image resolutions. I thought it was an excellent visual approximation of the chaotic moment of a physical fight.

Bumper Sticker of the Month #2

**Time is what keeps
everything from
happening at once.**

[SC] Wonderful WisCon report. Sounds like you had the quintessential WisCon experience of being able to spend some quality time with a writer you like. Mary was especially gregarious. One of the great things about WisCon is that it is a small enough convention that it is easy to run into the pros you want to meet and the writers we tend to host are rarely burdened with a prima donna attitude. It's a great place to meet people, pros or not.

Thanks for the review of *In The Drift*. Sounds great, I will look for it.

© Vicki Rosenzweig

[JG] I *thought* I recognized that particular drawing of a cardinal you used for your tattoo! I use Peterson's guides all the time as reference for drawings I do at the DNR. I can't copy any of the artwork directly, of course, because of copyright violations, but they're extremely useful nonetheless. Even though I think there's very little chance of most people ever getting hassled for tattooing copyrighted art onto their bodies without permission, I wonder if legal actions might be prompted some day in the case of extremely famous, visible people. For instance, put together a famous person like Madonna, with a company known for being ruthless in the protection of their art, like Disney . . . and I wonder what would happen if Madonna flashed a tattoo of a pornographic Mickie and Minnie before the cameras?

I took it as quite a nice compliment that Julie Humphries used my drawing as part of her tattoo, but I wonder what I might feel if I noticed my artwork on people who hadn't bothered to ask me if it would be OK . . .

Thank you very much, Vicki, for sending your zine, *Quipu 7*, through the apa. It was fascinating to read about your trip to Hong Kong. And so timely, too! I read your zine only a couple days after the handover by the British to the Chinese.

Now that Hong Kong isn't bound by the border between itself and China, I wonder if it will start sprawling away from the ocean?

Why did you have to fly over Siberia to get from Seattle to Hong Kong? It doesn't seem that there should be any Great Circle route that far west.

I was surprised to read, in your comment to **Barb**, that there will be no Reinconation this year. Is it true, Barb??

[SC] Thanks for sending *Quipu 7*. I have yet to get a tattoo, but as I read your piece I found it very easy to put myself in your place as you described your experience. I can imagine myself being very nervous and dithering a bit

at the start and then, once I took the plunge, feeling better about it. How did you choose the tattoo artist? There must be thousands in New York.

What I most admired about your tattoo piece, was your discussion of why you chose the cardinal design. I have mentioned before that I thought it was a very nice choice of an image, just for itself, but you managed to bring out the real point of a tattoo, at least for me. Tattooing oneself, as an act, is as much a personal statement as the choice of artwork. All my life, tattoos were for people who saw themselves as outlaws in some sense. That old notion may be going by the wayside as tattoos become more trendy, but a tattoo still holds power as a statement of personal individuality.

Wonderful travel piece to Hong Kong. I struggled all through reading it with serious bouts of envy. What a cool thing to do. While you were there, were you aware of any concern about the Communist Chinese takeover? Did you have time to check out any English language newspapers about it? I think if I had been there, I would have been a little obsessed about looking for signs of anxiety or panic. From what I have seen and read, the people of Hong Kong somehow imagine that the Communists won't care about political freedoms because the city is too economically important to them to bother with squelching free expression. I think the Communists figure that Hong Kong capitalists are too greedy to really care about their own political freedoms and won't object to tightening things up. My belief is they are going to surprise each other about how much they both care about politics.

© Georgie Schnobrich

[JG] I liked your list of six things you learned at WisCon 21. Interesting observations. You may be right that WisCon audiences have matured. There were no dead dog slide shows and no Alice in Wonderland croquet games. On the other hand, the audience at "The Spectrum of Respectability" panel and at the Lesbomania slide show were acting pretty darn silly. The potential for silliness hasn't gone away entirely.

Not only were we called "that Lesbian convention," we were called "PervertCon," in the early years of WisCon. I bet some people wish they hadn't used all their worst epithets on us so soon! We did not however, escape causing some folks to shudder at our much-too-tolerant attitudes. One survey response was filled out in loud caps by a very angry wit who castigated us for being "Gaylaxicon West." In answer to the question, "what was your favorite part of WisCon 21?", they wrote, "NOTHING!" And in

answer to the question, "what was your least favorite part of WisCon 21?", they wrote "EVERYTHING!" "What was missing at the convention?" To that question they answered: "RATIONAL THOUGHT!" Somehow, I think this person will not return next year. Ah well.

You paraphrased a writer for *The Wisconsin Light* as saying, "Here it is two weeks after *Ellen* came out, and *Reno, Nevada* is NOT full of formerly heterosexual women filing for divorce after declaring, "Oh! I can be a Lesbian. I never thought of it before." Apparently the religious right still thinks this may happen because it has labeled *Ellen* as a recruiting tool for lesbians. Apparently they were more impressed by the Toaster Oven recruiting bonus than most of us were.

Well, yes, if one had low enough expectations, *Lost World* was fun at times. But it depresses me that so many of the hugely expensive films made in recent years can only be enjoyed by carefully lowering one's expectations before seeing them, especially those expectations having to do with writing and plot. I got really really irritated toward the end of *Lost World* when the raptors seemed unable to bring themselves to actually attack the "good" characters (as opposed to the dinosaur food masquerading as soldiers-for-hire).

[SC] I was amused by *The Fifth Element*, but found the good vs. evil theme rather boring. I thought *Lost World* was just plain mean. They lost me early on when they brutally killed off the only really heroic character in the movie (the guy who was trying to save the heroes from falling over the cliff.) *Men in Black* was funny but the best SF movie I've seen this year by far is *Contact*. It is acted with passion, has a story full of ideas (imagine!) and they keep the special effects firmly in check until really needed.

[JG] It was the chance to say something about *Contact* here that tempted me to return to my comments and follow Scott's with a little more discussion. Boy did I love that movie! I think *Contact* ranks right up there with *2001*, *Close Encounters* and *12 Monkeys*. I was so impressed that the special effects served the plot and ideas rather than—as is so often the case—the other way around! (We've all gotten used to the plot whose only purpose seems to be to keep the hero in a truly dangerous place for as long as it takes for all the special effects to be run.) I am still thinking about the complexity of the science/religion idea, and am ecstatic that the ideas in this film are so central and not superficial. But mostly I loved how the film re-awakened my sense of

wonder, which doesn't often get bothered in modern movies. Tears streamed down my eyes as Arrowway reached up to the stars on that alien beach and the alien, cloaked in the appearance of her father, spoke to her (and to humanity) with parental love and welcome.... And I zoomed back to my feelings when I first started reading SF, and remembered that this is what I felt then. What a lovely gift! I thought Jodie Foster's character and her performance was wonderful. And I enjoyed her co-worker with the incredibly sensitive ears and Arrowway's relationship with him. The mysterious billionaire character reminded me (in a good way) of Heinlein's wise, old men, like Jubel Harschaw; at least he made an interesting *deus ex machina*. . . . And the love story wasn't bad either.

Oh, and what a lovely homage to Carl Sagan's *Cosmos* was that beautiful trip through the universe at the beginning of the film! It's really a shame that Sagan didn't live to see this movie.

I definitely want to go see *Contact* again.

© Jae Adams

[JG] On the 4th of July at Kathi & Kim's party, I had just started your zine. In fact I'd just read only the very interesting and useful piece on Madison's energy crisis, and had turned the page to see the photo of "Martha's Home." I hadn't paged ahead, yet, to see the other Martha photos. But anyway, it wasn't till we sat around at the party talking about Martha Stewart that I realized which Martha owned the grounds in that photo, on which the nude pool parties were held. It's hard to imagine Martha's other dimensions, especially those having to do with human relationships. So my mind only supplied me with Martha Mitchell as a possibility and I wondered why you were commenting on a historical phenom.

Re your bitter and angry feelings about WisCon 18 in your comment to Scott: I don't think you've ever sat down and heard the story from people who were on the other side of the struggle with Matt, which is OK. I'm not about to open up that ugliness again. But I'd like you to know that those of us who got involved with WisCon 18 did so with the express (and proclaimed) goal of helping on the convention, not taking it over from Matt. The original goal was to increase the number of people working on the convention, not eliminate others. And so Scott's and my current pleas for more involvement with the convention is not a hypocritical one; it is, in fact, a continuation of the opinions we have always expressed.

[SC] I can't say I feel too sorry for MG&E's predicament with regard to power outages. They have spent years encouraging us consumers to use electricity. Lately they've wanted us to use energy efficient light bulbs and cut down on air conditioning during the day, but we usually don't hear about how close we are to maxing out the system until we are suddenly facing a crisis. I don't see MG&E invoking a steep surcharge on developers to hook up a new forest of monster houses on the far West side. New business buildings don't face a big fee to add to demand. Most of the time, average consumers have no idea how close we are to the limit, but the utility always finds its voice when we are about to have a blackout.

Before this summer most of us probably didn't know how dependent we were on nuclear power plants. I do know that for years environmental groups have been hounding the utilities to get out of the nuke business, maybe if they had listened, our supply today would be more stable and safe.

YCT **Kim** on apa collating. I don't much care how Kim chooses to do collation, but I do have an opinion on whether zines in the front of the apa get more or better comments. I believe they often do. Relying on unscientific, anecdotal impressions for evidence, I think most people do their zines fairly late, often right before deadline. When they come to comments, they start in the front and work their way to the back, so they are tired or out of time when they reach the unlucky contributor at the end. Of course not everyone does it this way, but I think a lot of our contributors do. I think any collation sequence is OK so long as no one consistently gets stuck at the back of the apa.

© Bill Bodden

[JG] Your name would have been a nice thing to put on your zine.

I've always taken the description of "weird" as a compliment from some people. It depends on who the people are. If I think they are more than usually conventional, then it's a compliment. On the other hand, if I am trying not to look weird, trying to communicate on some important matter, I would take it as a signal that I am failing on some significant level.

[SC] On drugs, I think we are in almost complete agreement. If you separate out the Drug War rhetoric (which is almost completely political and has little to do with public health) and just focus on the drugs, I think the whole issue can be handled pretty rationally. Obviously marijuana and LSD pose little threat to anyone that we don't already assume with alcohol and cigarettes. Other

drugs are more complicated to the extent they are seriously dangerous to experiment with. It is rather easy to overdose on narcotics, for example. So I think there is still room for restrictions on some substances. But I think even that is a far cry from the madness that currently passes for public policy on the subject.

On the Nicole Sellers article, I had problems with her piece, but let me just say that I don't advocate outlawing strippers, closing down Hooters or censoring magazines. I do think that Sellers is naive about the strip club industry (it has long been closely associated with criminal enterprises) and I doubt that her experience in squeaky clean Wisconsin is true for all women everywhere in the business.

© Vijay Bowen

[SC] I have been following your comments about how your life has been going since leaving that job. You seem to be dealing with this as a transition period, and the news this month that you've chosen a model for your career is a healthy development (not to mention a cool image.) In other words, I am relieved that you are not sitting at home in a panic, losing self esteem and sleep at the same time. Good luck and keep us posted.

Re YCT us on Erotic Literature Night, thanks for the details, it sounded like a great time, and congratulations on "Turn to Gold."

Re YCT **Barb** on Potentially Ridiculous Project for the Apa, the idea is only ridiculous in the sense that a similar idea has been suggested before with little success. That was quite a while ago, however, and we have an almost completely new cast of contributors these days so what the hell? I'll send something if everyone else does.

Re YCT **Vicki** on sex and anonymity, excellent point. I think a crucial element of any form of exploitation is the need to render the victim anonymous, or even to relegate them to non-person status. That is what the naked slave boys are experiencing (probably for the first time) and find so objectionable. Hooters waitresses and the naked dancing women on tabletops are not thought of as working people we might know, but as cute interchangeable bodies for which there is an endless supply.

© Jim Brooks

[JG] Sorry for not picking up on your comment hook on the Universal Quality of Beauty. I meant to do it. I put a check mark in the margin. I don't think there is a universal quality of beauty. There is a test offered to prospective artists by guidance counselors, placement agencies, and other human resource type offices. What a crass thing to think that artistic talent can be measured, don't you think? I

thought so when I heard about this test. And in fact, when it comes to truly ground-breaking, paradigm-smashing geniuses, I think it's totally impossible to measure something that cannot even be conceived of by anyone because it does not yet exist.

But what this test measures is interesting. The prospective artist completes a number of sections. In one section, for instance, a multiple-choice section, we pick out the composition we like the best in each example. We're given 4 choices, each image containing the same objects and lines and shades. But each choice is arranged differently. We must pick the most pleasing composition.

The test is "graded" not upon some universal definition of aesthetic quality or even upon skills, but upon a scale created by the cumulative aesthetic judgments of a huge sample of other people. In other words, the test will tell the prospective artist whether their particular taste will be appreciated by a small or large percentage of other people. If one's particular aesthetic is unique and would not appeal to most people, this is a good thing to know, especially if one is about to embark on a career that will require the ability to create artwork that is judged as pleasing by many other people.

I discovered that my particular aesthetic would be pleasing to some percentage of people over 95%. What a relief, since I took the test long after I'd chosen a career in graphics.



Ah, but did you predict that Disney's *Hercules* would describe Zeus, Hera and Hercules as a nuclear family? (Those right wing religious nuts are crazy to turn their backs such a supportive propaganda machine.)

You wrote about *Cliffhanger*, "If this movie had to live on plot development it would have never made it out of the can." It seems to me that the plots of most of the big-budget special effects of the last several years have had as their major goals: to keep the protagonist(s) in a very stupid and dangerous place, so that we can see them endangered by special effects. And so we follow tornado-chasers, the only possible characters who can be counted upon *not* to run away from the tornado until it is too late. And we watch the family on the volcano who had to go back for the kids, who had to go back for grandma, so that they could all experience every kind of volcanic ejecta.

VERY nice description of yourself as a "pave-ment pounding cowboy" who also unloads Cheetos. Bravo.

By the way, I think you were the apaan who tried to calm my more paranoid reaction to anti-abortionists. Remember, I mentioned something about thinking that anti-abortionists were sometimes most concerned with the fact that male fetuses were being killed? Well, I recently came across this paragraph in a Philip K. Dick story, "The Pre-Persons," from the collection, *The Golden Man*.

The name of all this is, kill me. Kill them when they're the size of a fingernail, or a baseball, or later on... It's a certain kind of woman advocating this all. They used to call them 'castrating females.' Maybe that was once the right term, except that these women, these hard cold women, didn't just want to—well, they want to do in the whole boy or man, make all of them dead, not just the part that makes him a man. Do you see?

I still agree with you that my paranoia is mostly unfounded. But not altogether.

[SC] Thanks for the tip about the Twins. I hadn't heard. Fuck Bud, fuck Pohlard and the Twins.

YCT Michael R. re: "Iowa-You make me smile" so what's wrong with that? You gotta problem with that?

© Barb Jensen

[JG] Your comments were all "repeats" for us from an earlier issue of *Turbo*. Perhaps what happened was that **Kim** sent you a collated copy that was missing your zine; and you thought that nobody had received your zine, when in fact, everyone *except* you had received it.

[SC] I would love to hear more about the Youngstown Working Class Studies Center. It is the first I have heard of it and it sounds like a great idea.

I feel I must apologize to you for responding so sharply to you on the abortion subject some issues back. I think I was reading a lot into what you were saying that wasn't actually there. Last month Jeanne wrote about abortion in a comment to you that I felt was a very clear expression of how we both see the situation.

YCT Tracy for #129 "wholymoley did I flip your switch on the working class thing or what?" Please, Barb, DO NOT stop writing as you have been about subjects that you care about in this apa. You have NOT "broken some sort of custom or more in apa writing." I have found your writing to be interesting as well as passionate and we could always use more of both here. I have a very limited interest in cats and baseball, but I would never discourage the folks who care from writing about them. It is true that

comments are really written to everyone. That is the bedrock assumption Jeanne and I rely on as we fill our zine with almost solid comments. That is our style. It need not be everyones style.

© Clay Colwell

[SC] YCT me on #129, "Yes, beer helps too, but that's just to open the floodgates. Too often, what comes splashing through isn't terribly refreshing." Ain't it the truth. I always think of sitting down and having a beer with someone to be a more relaxed, informal and casually intimate conversational experience than, say, going out for coffee or a dinner conversation over wine. Socializing over shots of tequila is also a different sort of thing. Maybe it is just my working class background that I am revealing here. I guess I am saying that using the beer to get drunk enough to spill one's guts is not the point I was trying to make. Even if you and friend(s) only have one or two beers, it still brings to my mind a nice blend of relaxation and closeness.

Your comments about enjoying performing on stage as long as it is not extemporaneous are completely understandable to me. When I was in high school I did some acting and participated in a state speech contest, but everything I ever did in front of an audience was carefully scripted in advance. Over the years, I have stepped in front of an audience less and less often and gotten more and more afraid of it, even when I have prepared text (feels to me like suddenly jumping on a roller coaster after avoiding them for a decade or so, it takes a period of re-acclimating before I can enjoy the experience again.) I have always been scared of getting up in front of people without a detailed speech or memorized lines. That is why I hate being on panels at conventions. I could give a speech at a con, or be in a play or reading, but just getting up in front of a room full of people and shooting my

mouth off on the spur of the moment is just not my idea of a good time.

© Bill Dyer

[SC] After spouting off above to Jae about how I imagine most people write comments, I really should back myself up by telling you that I am too tired and burned out to comment on your zine, since you are the unfortunate sap at the back of the apa this month. But I couldn't bring myself to do that. Besides I actually read your zine first since we copied it for you.

Congratulations on getting the contract settled. I admit that at first I was less then sympathetic with your problems dealing with the "non-degreed" staff and the takeover of SEIU, but it has become clear that you were indeed embroiled in some

nasty, no-win union politics. You deserve a pat on the back for sticking it out and helping turn a bitter situation into a success. Even in my limited experience as a union steward years ago, I know that you can't ever hope to satisfy everyone.

On tattoos, I remember being put off of the idea of tattoos for years, back when I worked in the Iowa prison system. It was common for inmates to get tattoos in prison, rough homemade jobs using dirty needles and ink from ball-point pens. This activity was, of course, not allowed but I occasionally got to examine homemade tattoo stuff when we found it on a shakedown. The tattoos were very bad. Yes, I saw many guys with "LOVE" or "FEAR" and "HATE" on their fingers. Pretty stupid. I think in those days, inmates got tattoos in prison because they didn't already have them and they wanted to fit in. Today tattoos in prison are frequently about gangs.

I like this new fashion for tattoos. I'm not sure yet if I will get one, but I like the fact that fashion has rehabilitated and expanded their appeal for me.

—Jeanne and Scott, 16 July 1997

Birthday of the Month

Steve Swartz turned 40 on July 19, 1997.

