



Union Street

A joint zine by Jeanne Gomoll & Scott Custis

© Life

[JG] I'm really excited about a new project. I'm designing a book with John D. Berry! It's the new Tiptree Anthology (*Flying Cups and Saucers: Gender Explorations in Science Fiction and Fantasy*, edited by Debbie Notkin and the Secret Feminist Cabal — which will include stories shortlisted in the first five years of the Tiptree Award). I designed *Women En Large* for Books in Focus a few years ago, but the challenges of that book of photographs were much different than for this book of short stories. *Women En Large* had a long introduction and several dozen, full-page photographs, and 116 pages; *Flying Cups and Saucers* has about 400 pages of solid text. It is taking much more time than I would have imagined, and the attention to detail that is necessary is amazing, but I absolutely love doing it. Being able to work with John, an expert and well-known book designer is giving me the opportunities to learn quite a lot. One of the neatest things is getting a chance to use a so-called "Expert set" of fonts (which include special fonts for small caps). Possibly a more appreciated effect by those who have been getting tired of my obsession with Futura will be the fact that I have fallen in love with a lovely serif font, ITC Sabon. Anyway, I've sent the pages out to Debbie and John to look them over. They are being published now for a short run as "uncorrected proofs" to be sent out to reviewers. I should get corrections back soon to make changes. The book will be published on time for the World Fantasy Convention, and will definitely be available next year at WisCon 23. (This paragraph, by the way, is set in Sabon, the font I'm using in *Flying Cups and Saucers*.)

Scott and I went to Diversicon a couple weeks ago. Diversicon is a little convention — fewer than 150 people attending — held in Minneapolis and mostly run by Eric Heideman. All events take place on the two top floors of the Raddison (yes, Minicon's hotel): programming and parties on one floor, sleeping rooms for Diversicon members on the other. Despite its small size, it packs in a lot of programming — 2 panels each hour from 9 A.M. to 10 P.M., and much of it is very good indeed.

We weren't so much tempted by the programming, however, but by the fact that Pat Murphy and Karen Joy Fowler were guests of honor. Nor were we unhappy to learn that there would be no Tiptree auction and no Tiptree bake sale scheduled for the weekend. We looked forward to a lovely drive ("the long way") along the Mississippi River and maybe a dinner with Pat and Karen at the con. Beyond that, we had no expectations but to take it easy for the weekend. The weather was lovely; the views were fantastic, and we drove through a very pretty little town called Red Wing that we've decided we'd like to return to some day. I'd especially like to visit some of the potteries there. Anyway, by 8 P.M., when we arrived at the Raddison, programming had been under way for 4 hours, and we discovered that I'd already missed a panel on which Eric had scheduled me. It was the Tiptree Award panel, but later on folks told me that my co-panelists had introduced me anyway and had inserted comments that they assured the audience I would have made had I been there. What a fine way to begin a convention — to hear praise for one's performance on a panel one didn't even attend! The rest of the weekend was full of lots of great conversations and Scott and I were delighted to be able to spend so much time with Pat and Karen talking about other things than Tiptree business. On Saturday afternoon we visited Dreamhaven with Lisa Frietag, Pat and Karen, and ate at a fairly good Greek restaurant. And here's some gossip: If you haven't heard already, you might be

This issue of *Union Street* is brought to you by Jeanne Gomoll and Scott Custis, who live at 2825 Union Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53704. 608-246-8857. ArtBrau@globaldialog.com. *Union Street* #98, Obsessive Press #209, Peerless Press #100. *Union Street* was created using a Power Macintosh G3, Pagemaker 6.5, Illustrator 7.0, Photoshop 5.0, and a Laserwriter Select 360. Display font is Elroy. All contents copyright ©1998 by Scott Custis and Jeanne Gomoll, August 1998 for the Turbo-Charged Party Animal #146.

interested to know that Pat Murphy has fallen in love with a San Francisco cop and will be marrying him in the Spring. She's really happy.

We frequently had to leave Diversicon's two floors because we had made our hotel reservations too late to secure rooms at the Raddison, and had to stay at another hotel — the Wyndam — down the road. On our way out of the hotel or down to the bar or restaurant, we frequently ran into the *other* fans populating the Raddison that weekend. The Coca-Cola fans had been enjoying their convention for the whole week, in fact, and were finishing up the same weekend as Diversicon. These folks were not employees of Coca-Cola, you understand, they were *fans* of Coca-Cola products. Friday night, one could stroll through the cabana area (where Minicon parties used to be held) and see one room after another full of Coke artifacts for sale and on display. The parking lots were full of cars decorated with Coke bumper stickers and paint jobs. People were wearing a vast array of Coca-Cola t-shirts, buttons and decoration. I had the amazing experience one afternoon — the first time this has ever happened to me at an SF convention — of feeling like the “mundane,” in an encounter with another hotel guest. I asked a person who got on the elevator with us what exactly was going on at the hotel and was treated to a long, enthusiastic description of the convention. The woman even invited us to their hucksters room and the all-day auction to be held on Saturday afternoon.

We had a good time at Diversicon and will consider going again next year. I am getting to be quite a fan of small, focused conventions (as opposed to the big, sprawling worldcon types). Diversicon has asked to host the Tiptree Award ceremony in 2000, and we will certainly attend that year.

© Michael Shannon

[JG] Congratulations on your new dog. Great name, Gromit, by the way. He must need a lot of exercise. Do you have space for him to run a lot?

[SC] Congratulations on the acquisition of Gromit. It will be nice to have yet another source of dog stories in the apa. Why did you have your heart set on a brindle? What is special about them?

© Steve Swartz

[JG] Hope your July 27 deadline for NT5.0 didn't have to be extended again and that you've got another, even tighter deadline for a new project. “Leakmeister.” I like that. Sounds like a CIA job description. The

Vancouver Folk Festival sounds like it was fun; I'm glad you were able to take a break from your job.

Men's groups which seem to believe that feminists are the problem, but masquerade as a group interested in thinking about “new” ways to think about gender, make me nervous. They admit that they wouldn't exist if it weren't for feminism; to me that means that they are basically campaigning to return to a former state of affairs, not a new one. It seems to me that they are reacting to perceived attack. I am glad however, for the men's groups that see themselves as partners in the explorations with feminists — possibly in a different realm, but on the same map.

[SC] Nice piece on your trip to the Vancouver Folk Festival, and a belated happy birthday. What brought Ian Sorensen and the Brit fen to town and how did the visit go? Did you make it away from work long enough to hang out with them at all?

© Tom Havighurst

[JG] Welcome back, Tom. We missed you. I've thought on and off about reading *The Satanic Verses*, or something else by Rushdie. Thanks for the comments. I'll be interested to hear what you think of it after you're finished.

[SC] Welcome back.

“I have gained a kind of distanced look at the APA, not having to write for it for about a year . . .” I thought your comments in this paragraph about the apa were wise. What brought you back to *Turbo*? What is your writing goal in the apa?

One of the functions *Turbo* serves for me, is to require me to exercise my writing muscles once a month or so at minimum. If I didn't have *Turbo* to deal with, I probably would do almost no recreational writing for months on end. The only other writing commitment I have is a letter via email to my dad every week. I don't make very much time in my life to do writing for pleasure, though I like doing it. There always seems to be more pressing matters to deal with, or backed up reading that I want to do. Writing always ends up a low priority. The apa makes me do a little writing on a regular basis which is good for me. I can't make any judgments on how good the writing I produce is for any of my readers; that is another matter. But the practice, the exercise, is good for me.

© Heatherayne Brooks

[JG] I gulped when I read that you'd “gotten used to [A.J.'s] arrogance . . .” Be careful, Heather. Unless

you love the whole person — including all his or her faults — the things you decide you might be able to tolerate just keep getting bigger and more irritating, the longer you know the person. (He'll *always* be older than you, y'know. Imagine him biting his tongue about something you say or do when you're 30. Not a pleasant thought. Be careful.)

[SC] You wrote, "...*someone once told me that you need a good fight every now and then just to make sure that you still care about what the outcome will be.*" In my opinion, that attitude is balderdash. I don't think that in a healthy relationship, couples "need" to fight now and then. It sounds to me like your friend is either rationalizing their own relationship problems or giving you bad advice because they think it is what you want to hear.

I am glad that Nedrebo's is working out for you. How long have you been there? Any time you want to alert us to some deals on tuxes for sale or discounts on rentals, put it in the apa. Folks here have use for tuxes from time to time (right Tom?)

© Jim Brooks

[JG] Your philosophical questions about the effects of excessive button-pushing on an elevator started me thinking about an elevator that was actually programmed to respond to a greater variety of input.

Like maybe if only one person is in the elevator and that person pushes all the buttons for all the floors and then tries to get off, a parental voice would boom out, "Oh, no, you don't! You pushed all the buttons, you just stay for the whole ride."

Or maybe if someone repeatedly pushes a single floor button, the speaker would emit a whooping alarm and a big, neon sign would start blinking "EXPRESS SPEED! HOLD ON!"...

The open/close door buttons might elicit some *Hitchhiker* robot comments. You know, long sighs, complaints about never being able to do enough for you, "is there never any *end* to your demands?" or "Will you please make up your mind!?"

[SC] Nice little Genesis piece. I was also very entertained by your con report, especially your hilarious interaction with the waifs at the elevator. Too bad you couldn't be at the con the whole weekend.

"*The last Bison Mistress doing double duty as the Key Queen.*" Mmmm, maybe next year if I get a demand for early access to a suite by an obnoxious party-giver I should send them on a Quest to find the last Bison Mistress.

Karen Karavanic

[JG] What a harrowing escape you made in that almost-awful car accident! A couple years ago, a friend of mine had an accident on I-90, going south to Chicago in rush hour traffic. One of her wheels went out and she began careening back and forth across the lanes of traffic. The trucker behind her slowed down and purposely swerved back and forth across lanes too, to prevent any other cars from trying to pass. He created space for her and gave her the time to slow down and go off the road without hitting anyone along the way. (The trucker ended up nicking her right bumper at the end, but it was a lot less serious than it might have been.) There's road rage, but there's also a surprising number of good Samaritans, too. I'm glad you're OK.

You know, though, that none of this — the accident or the storm — would have happened if you'd attended WisCon like you should have...

[SC] Quite a harrowing driving experience you had out there on I-90. I have been in car-out-of-control situations a few times and I know what it feels like. You were fortunate not to be injured or suffer damage to your car. You followed that close call by driving into a storm with 60 mph winds. I think that would have been quite enough for me for one day if it was my trip. I would have pulled over at the next decent motel, downed a beer and elected to try my travel luck the next day.

"*I'm going to have to rethink this whole reading thing...*" yeah, Sheri Tepper's work shouldn't be ingested in large doses along with the newspaper. She can bring out those annoying paranoid delusional tendencies if you have them.

© Mike Peterson

[JG] It's interesting to think about what films, not on the American Film Association list, might be on a similar list compiled in 20 years or so. I agree with you that the currently defined classics will not correspond with a list of 90s films compiled in the future. And I'd be willing to bet that I will probably agree more with the future list than most lists available today. The choice of currently popular films is influenced too much by studio hype and accidents of screening schedules (thus whether a lot of people have had the chance to see them or not). A decade or two will allow enough time for films to achieve popularity through word-of-mouth and endurance after the advertising campaigns have long been forgotten.

[SC] Regarding your comment to **Pat** on the 100 best movies, I have seen 76 of the movies on the list. I have problems with the list similar to the ones you and Pat mentioned. It is focused too much on modern films and too much on commercial successes. The modern films I thought least deserving of a place on this list were *The Graduate*, *Forrest Gump* and *Butch Cassidy and the Sundance Kid*. A couple films I thought were missing from the list were *The Producers*, *A Man For All Seasons*, *The General* and *Do The Right Thing*.

© Tracy Benton

[JG] The TV-movie version of Stephen King's *The Stand* didn't change King's book ending. It would have been better, in fact, if the film-makers had tried. In this case, I wouldn't have minded at all if they'd decided to completely change the ending. King's endings are frequently problematic ... as if he loses interest or energy or something and can't find a way to relieve the tension that he's created in the first part of the of the novel. The build-up of *The Stand*, is by far the best part of that novel, and the same was true of the movie. Of course there are exceptions — like *Misery*, *Dolorous Claibourne*, and a few others. Still, I find myself fascinated by the evolution of King's writing. I'm fascinated especially by how his monsters have been changing from the fantastical to the all-too-human, and at his growing tendency to make comments on politics and society.

I've got a collection of so-called "grunge fonts" too. I agree, it is amusing how these typestyles attempt a "handmade" look. I find it even more amusing that the more "handmade" a font looks, the more technically challenging was its creation. (For instance, some grunge fonts actually have multiple versions for each letter which are deployed randomly, so that — at first glance — one can't immediately figure out whether or not one is looking at an electronic font or Xeroxed, smudged typewriter characters.) It's ironic: the more we use high tech to approximate low tech, the more we need higher and higher tech to do so convincingly. I very seldom use these fonts; I don't like them much. On the other hand I have a great appreciation for the kind of art that depends upon the random brush stroke, the unexpected line, the unplanned shadow... (I am thinking of **Jae's** work here.) But the broken character that looks as if it had been typed upon an old typewriter is no accident; it has been carefully created. That letter will look that way every time it is imaged. There is no sense of surprise and appreciation when one looks at the skewed letter form; it is masquerade. It is like a smiley face saying I'm not really serious about this;

don't be intimidated. Nevertheless the style has its uses for precisely that reason. In a world of media that is so slick, so endlessly perfect, the imperfect stands out and signals "I'm different." This will work ... for a while.

[SC] On *The Stand*, we have read the book and seen the TV miniseries. They are both strong on buildup and weak on payoff. This is often a problem with King's larger works. He does a great job of getting you caught up in a suspenseful buildup, but the ending often feels like a letdown. I recommend about 90% of the novel.

We have been spending a lot of evenings this summer watching *Babylon 5* reruns, the whole series from the beginning. It's great not having to wait a week or more for the next episode. We saw *Thirdspace* and I have to agree that it was not one of their better efforts. I agree that we have seen much of this story before and I didn't think it connected particularly well to the series arching storyline.

© Cathy Gilligan

[JG] Welcome back, Cathy.

Transporter technology stories... I can't remember the title but it was by John Patrick Kelley (it was in one of Gardner Dozois' collections), and I read aloud to Scott during a car trip a while ago and it really got to me. It was an amazing story, and I can't forget the idea. Teleportation supposedly involves the copying of ones atomic composition and the reconstruction of it someplace else. Well, this author wrote their story with the idea that once the traveler is reconstructed in the place they want to go to, they must be *destroyed* in the place they began — to avoid duplicating themselves every time they beam somewhere. Of course, the technician has to wait for confirmation that the traveler was successfully reconstructed *there* before killing the person *here*, and therein lies the story. Teleportation is not real popular in this world.

© Michael Rawdon

[JG] It sounds like you had a great time in the Bay Area.

So tell me, how do you recognize a "hacker-minded person"?

[SC] Great description of your trip to the San Francisco Bay Area. It is one of my favorite cities in one of my favorite sections of the country. I am always ready to take a trip out there. I don't think I could be convinced to live there unless I got filthy rich. I think San Francisco will always be a great vacation spot for me.

We have occasionally returned from wonderful trips visiting friends who have tried hard to convince us to chuck it here in the Midwest and move out where they are. It's always tempting. Are you still thinking about it? The cost of living out there is very high, but the rewards might be worth it. We'd hate to lose another Madisonian to the West Coast, but I know how tempting the idea of such a change can be.

© **Jim Frenkel**

[JG] Interesting, wide-ranging, essay, Jim, though I kept getting lost among your digressions (which were interesting in themselves). I firmly believe that feminist SF has had an enormous effect on those who read it in the same way you suppose that SF has readied us all for the weirdness of today's society. I guess I'm not as worried about a specific technology like TV causing folks to isolate themselves from one another, as I am worried about powerful interests who use the TV medium to convince us that the "big issues" are too boring or that individuals have no real power to affect change. (In other words, I worry more about the message than the medium.)

[SC] I think I agree with you that SF readers are better prepared to anticipate and adapt to changing technology. I think that we are living in a world of accelerating technological change, the world is actually changing at a faster and faster pace. It feels like we are on a treadmill that someone keeps kicking the speed up on all the time. I am not sure we are better prepared to deal with the "weirdness" you described of poor political leadership and a more senselessly violent society. I don't think those things are connected to technology or the millennium change. I am coming around to the belief that America has two unofficial religions, consumerism and violence. The acquisition of stuff is what we all lust after, money and the things it can buy us. We fawn over the wealthy and worship at shopping malls. Violence is what we most fear but also what we are most fascinated by. It is the choice for entertainment and almost the only subject of the news that can grab any audience's attention. With these two obsessions, it is easy to see why violence is so common and why politicians are so weak and corruptible. Technology doesn't enter into it only so far as to bring us closer to our obsessions and intensify them.

© **Georgie Schnobrich**

[JG] Another great zine, Georgie! I loved "Apres moi le deluge" or The Librarians who Run with Rottweillers." And I loved imagining you, dressed as Mother Goose fleeing toward shelter in the rain, crying "Auntie Em! Auntie Em!" with Captain Hook at your side and Rottweillers as far as you can see, and a tornado bearing down on you all. (What an apocalyptic image ... like something out of a Stephen King novel!) Then I wondered how many costumes you and Greg must have by now, and how many closets must you have to store them all?

A beignet-dusted t-shirt design would sell well in New Orleans, I bet. Great idea. It reminds me of the t-shirt I saw at the micro-beer festival here in Madison last week. On it were various brown splash spots left, apparently, by beer: each was labeled according to variety and bottler.

Thanks for printing that overhead view of the Concert on the Square. Knowing the general location I used to put out our blanket (usually around 2 P.M.), it was easy for me to find Scott and me in the picture, but still, it was surprising to see this photo. The concert has

obviously not started yet; there are lots of empty blankets holding spaces for their owners who have not yet arrived. There are lots of green spots left that — as the time for the concert grows near — will fill up with late-comers. Many people

have turned their backs on the stage area and are talking with one another, people-watching, or — in my case — reading. There's my bike pack right next to me on the blanket, and the cooler Scott brought from home with sodas and beers to accompany the reserved supper we will eventually pick up from one of the vendors on the street. We may be waiting for Ellen Franklin and Jim Hudson, or we may be attending the concert alone. Scott and I haven't gone to the concerts on the square for several years now, but for a few years we hardly missed any of them. I think I've seen this photo published in a calendar, though I don't think I realized that Scott and I were actually in it. I remember glancing at a photograph, admiring the abstract quality of its colorful composition, and saying to Scott that I thought it was the same area in which we usually parked our blanket. But the photo was so small (printed as it was on mini-calendar as a sample freebie given out at an industry show), that I never noticed that we were in the picture.

"I'm not a fan!"

—Scott Custis,
who this month published his
100th apazine

[SC] I loved *The Librarians Who Run With Rottweillers* piece.

On cars, I have found myself in the position of having to buy a car in desperate circumstances on several occasions. I have usually regretted it. Isn't that how it so often happens, your car is diagnosed with some fatal problem and suddenly you need another vehicle right away? Salespeople can smell that need on people I think. That is why I no longer drive cars to the grave. I also believe that trading in a car is nearly always a bad idea. So I prefer to sell my old car myself and buy another car without a trade-in deal.

I remember one time I drove my car to the nearest Ford dealer about 30 miles from my home because I suspected it had a serious problem. I was right. It was not worth it to fix it. At that time I was alone with no one I could call for help or another vehicle I could borrow. I had to be back home to go to work in a couple more hours. So I strolled out of the service area and started looking at cars in the lot. I had to buy one in the next hour or so. That was a tough day for me and I don't recommend buying a car that way.

Where did you find that *Concerts on the Square* photo? How did you think to look for us in it? We haven't gone to *Concerts* in a couple years.

© Diane Martin

[JG] Did I tell you that I spoke to Ellen Asher at Readercon? She's still interested in publishing the *Tiptree* cookbooks as an SF Bookclub selection. She asked me to send her an official letter indicating our interest in this idea, which I've done. (I sent her a letter on *Tiptree* stationary with copies of the cookbooks.) She'd like to wait for the third cookbook, if that happens in a reasonable amount of time, and I think I'd like to start collecting recipes this year. But anyway, the reason I bring it up here, is to suggest that we consider dedicating it "In Memory of Laura Spiess, who reminds us to always wash our hands first." What do you think?

© Hope Kiefer & Karl Hailman

[JG] I might be able to help you out once in a while if you have a question about PageMaker while you're working on a layout. Give me a call if you're stuck.

[SC] Good luck with the job search, Hope. Keep us posted on how it goes.

© Lisa Freitag

[JG] It was great to see you at Diversicon. Thanks again for acting as our native guide to Dreamhaven and the Greek restaurant.

There are too many people dying. Too many funerals. The thought becomes even more depressing when I realize that probably the same number of people are dying as ever, but that as I get older, I know more of them (or I know people who are directly affected). I remember my parents exclaiming in a very similar way about how many people they knew who seemed to be dying. (One year, most of the men my dad golfed with died, one after another. He quit golf that year.) Mom and dad stopped talking about the phenomenon in a while — not, I think, because fewer friends and relatives were dying — but because they got used to it. Which is even more depressing. Still, it's hard to think of this as something that will continue, though our generation has gotten an earlier taste of it (along with generations that grew up during wars), as a result of the AIDS epidemic. Laura Spiess. Greg's dad. **Whump's** mom. Liz Carlin. **Hope's** aunt. Bill Dyer's sisters-in-law.

Scott and I saw Laura Spiess a few days before she died. At the time, she was doing comparatively well. She was out of intensive care; she was off most of the sedatives; she was aware and awake. She still couldn't talk because of the ventilator, but we enjoyed a few goofy moments when I tried to read her lips and completely misunderstood what she was trying to say. It was good to see her smile and try to laugh. So it was quite a shock that weekend when we heard that Laura had died as a result of a new infection. Many of us went to the funeral in Milwaukee. Diane and Barb Gilligan say that there will be a memorial for her friends later in the fall, probably here in Madison.

[SC] You have our sympathy on your father's stroke and the death of Greg's mother.

© Vicki Rosenzweig

[JG] Your story of the friend who mistook you for a Wisconsinite, made me wonder whether there were any defining characteristics of a resident of our state. What do you think? I can accept the idea that Americans are identifiable abroad. There are certainly some stereotypical characteristics that I might recognize as being associated with a Southern Californian or a New Yorker, but I'm curious about whether there are characteristics that — as a New Yorker, for instance — you might identify as being recognizable as belonging to

someone from Wisconsin (or maybe the Midwest). Your description, later in your zine, about the security features of your bag (zipper and flap with snaps), is — for me — a “big city” identifier. I’ve never been concerned with the security aspects of my backpack or pockets, and laughed at the remarkable recognition of this lack of paranoia in the film *Fargo*, when the criminals “break into” the home by simply opening the front door. It’s not locked. Once I was visiting Stu Shiffman in New York and on our way home from a movie, as we sat in the subway, I got my wallet out to pay one of our party back for the ticket he’d purchased for me. Several people in the group simultaneously slapped my hand. They were shocked that I was about to actually show money in a public place. It’s something I would never give a second thought to here in Madison.

There are a few other areas in which a fondness for numbers is acceptable in American culture. Many of them, in fact, are connected with so-called Guy Interests. Tools, for instance, in which the expert knows the difference between a 3/4" and 5/8" wrench. Or fishing, in which the high tech anglers use depth radar to locate the perfect spot for fishing for certain kinds of fish and knows the depths at which each fish species can be found at any given time of day and season.

Since WisCon programming letters never ask people to list their qualifications, I don’t think that’s what is keeping folks from volunteering for programming. We do, in fact, put lots of fans on programming along with pros; it’s just the *Madison fans* that have opted out of WisCon programming.

Thanks for the compliment on the WisCon 22 t-shirt. I was very pleased with how it turned out, too.

© Pat Hario

[JG] There must be a certain age when kids suddenly look around them and notice that there are people who are different with respect to the family structure to which they’ve grown accustomed. My niece, Sara has quizzed both my sister Julie and myself about the fact that we don’t have kids and whether and why we didn’t plan to marry. Of equal importance in those interrogations was her curiosity as to why neither of us shave our legs. It all seemed to go together. Once, I was shopping at Kohls and met a little girl who had some questions. She looked like she was about 3 or 4 years old. She’d gotten separated from her mom and I reassured her that mom was probably right around the corner. As we went to look, she took my hand and asked me if I had a child. No, I said. Why not,

she asked, Don’t you *like* children?, as if I couldn’t like her if I didn’t want to have a child. I answered “because I don’t want to be a mommy.” She looked up at me with this completely stunned expression, as if the concept of choosing or not choosing to be a mother completely stunned her. Certainly it stunned her into silence. But mom was right around the corner, which delighted the little girl and relieved a very worried-looking mom, suddenly suspicious of this stranger who was holding her daughter’s hand. I went back to the produce aisle to pick out a pepper.

I sympathize with you about those names we grow up with that end in “y.” I was “Jeann-ie” for many years and have mostly put a stop to it. Even my folks call me Jeanne in one syllable now. I occasionally get arguments from folks who accuse me of mispronouncing a name that is clearly spelled in two syllables but I glare at them and they come around. I point out that the French spelling, familiar to all in “Jeanne d’Arc” is who I was named after and glare again if they persist in using two syllables. My brother Rick was much more tolerant of the folks who had known him as a child as “Ricky,” and as a teenaged “Rick” who could never get used to his adult name “Eric.” He allowed all three. Julie is pretty much stuck with the ending to her name as she detests the nickname “Jules.” Steve was never Stevie, no matter how much of a baby he was as a kid and Dan is still fighting to out-grow Danny.

[SC] Thanks for the warning on *Drinking, Smoking and Screwing*, it has been on my to-read shelf for a couple years. I picked up a copy in Door County in a little shop that wanted to cater to a more “hip” crowd.

Regarding your comment to **Julie** on going from Patty to Pat, I have a cousin who had exactly the same problem. She was called Patty, and many in my family still tend to call her that even though she is in her mid-forties. Her solution was to start calling herself Spike. And that is how y’all know her today. Maybe if you ever get fed up you could follow her lead. I am sure we could come up with a similar striking new moniker for you.

© Kim & Kathi Nash

[JG] I hope you’re planning to publish photographs of this mythical cat creature you’ve created with a shaver. Perhaps you could go into business giving creative hair designs to other Madison cats. I believe there’s even a book publishing opportunity here. If a book on cat art can sell so well, certainly there’s a market for cat sculptures...

[SC] Sure, I’d love to see some pictures of the

shaved cat. Run them next month please.

"Cat shaving is Fun!" has to be a quote of the month.

© **Angie Moore**

[JG] I enjoyed the family reunion stories, especially Captain Keith's about the visiting Russian officers. Members of my family also enjoy telling stories about one another at our gatherings. Many of these stories end up being told again and again, until we've forgotten who actually told the original story or who was actually a witness to the event. After a few years of re-telling, the story becomes a family myth that we all feel we've experienced.

I'm glad you emerged from the car accident without any injuries and wish you luck with your dis-

agreements with Evelyn's insurance company. It would seem to me that the fact that she admitted to seeing the doll hit your windshield would weigh against her claiming that you were far enough behind her to have been able to have stopped in time.

[SC] I enjoyed your description of your trip, but I was alarmed to read about yet another close call on the highway (see comment to **Karen**.) I hope this is the end of this trend and we don't have any more apa members finding themselves in danger on the road. Jeanne and I are about to leave on another long road trip in early September and we don't need any unplanned excitement on the highway. I wish you luck getting that final \$253 out of the insurance company.

Scott Custis & Jeanne Gomoll
16 August 1998