

Union St

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SOME OPENING REMARKS

(SC) A couple new developments at Union Street. Jeanne and I are the proud owners of a new Mitsubishi 26" TV. We have been saving for, searching for and studying TVs since Christmas and finally made a decision. Unfortunately, we were again compelled to buy from American TV due to price. The nice part is that we can retire the old 13" set to the upstairs bedroom. Up to now we had the old set hooked into our Hi-Fi system for big booming sound as we squinted across the living room at the tiny picture. Now we have a picture that compliments the "big sound."

Many Turbo members will be amused to discover that Union Street has a pet. A cat, no less. A friend of ours is staying here for a couple weeks while she searches for an affordable apartment in town (something akin to searching for the Holy Grail). She has a cat named 'Stache. Short for Moustache, approx. 2 years old and, well, rather pleasant. You could say we are test driving this pet. We both remain committed to dogs, but I have to confess that this cat is fairly low maintenance. More on that next month.

(JG) My god, Scott, you sound almost as if you were considering. . . No, I can't even say the word! Stiff upper lip, man. Brace that backbone! We'll get through this without any more weakening on the cat front. Don't you realize how many people in this town (and in this very apa) are waiting for only the slightest hint of ambivalence? We could wake up one morning with a basket of kittens on our doorstep.

No cats. We will have **no cats**.

Well, except for Anne's. Until she leaves.

Other news: This weekend Diane and I will be laying out the last *Aurora*. An era ends and I think it's OK. It's amazing though how easy this issue is to produce. It's funny, all the other issues of *Janus* and *Aurora* were punctuated with a good week and a half of obsessive production work at the end of the process (not to say there weren't hundreds of hours of work before that stage!). But those last days were mostly my work, and I remember that best. For a week or two, my apartment would be cluttered with dozens of pages of galleys, tiny little scraps of waxed

paper and artwork, type, and chart tape. I risked slashes daily from all the exacto knives left lying on every available surface, and generally got only a minimal 3 or 4 hours of sleep a night for that period of time. It was a combination of panic and passionate absorption. It was great. It was hell. And I'm still proud of the zines I worked on. But the funny thing is, that this time, the production stage is the least of the job of putting the magazine together. I expect that Diane and I will meet at my office and flow it into the layout in three or four hours, with maybe an iced-tea break in between. And we'll end up with cleaner, more elegant camera copy than we were ever capable of producing in the old days. Strange how fast things changed.

DON HELLEY

(JG) I know you didn't contribute a zine this time, but in the month since last issue, I got to thinking more about your complaint about there being not enough political discussions by fans. "Don needs to see a copy of *Fuck the Tories*," I said to myself. Next time I see you I'll give you a copy. It's funny, well written, and very politically correct. Reading it may put you in touch with other fans and zines and reassure you about our community.

KATHI SCHELLER

(JG) I like the Superpaint *sumie* orchid. And yes, I'm still planning to visit you and your Mac at work someday. You might like to try out a program called *Calligraphy*—the results are very much like Japanese brush strokes. In fact you get a whole palette of Japanese brush strokes. A friend lent me a copy to try. I don't currently have it installed and finally decided not to purchase it, but you might like to give it a try. Interested?

KIM NASH

(SC) Good to have you back writing again, finally. I hope your rant about drinking opens the topic up for discussion. It has been my experience that there are about as many definitions of what constitutes an "alcoholic" as there are approaches to treatment. One source even suggested that if you have a beer or drink at the same time every day and you look forward to it, then

you are an "alcoholic." Well, I think it's a bit extreme to confuse simple habit or routine for an out-of-control addiction. I prefer to look for signs of drinking causing problems in one's life. Troubles at work, at home, with social activities, etc. all traceable to the same source are more reliable indicators of problem drinking. Maybe Dyer can expand on this. I'm not trying to put you on the spot, or diagnose you, but there has been a lot of alcoholism in my family and I pay attention to this issue. Certainly one thing that stands out is that drinking is not a big priority in the SF group, or with fans in general. Perhaps you are attracting attention because you have an unusually enthusiastic attitude toward drinking than most folks in the group are used to (which attitude I share with you).

I'm probably too late, but I'm still going to recommend to you and anyone else in the group contemplating a car purchase (new or used) to check out Consumer Reports annual car buyer's issue first. This year it is the April issue. It contains great buying advice and information. Just the short article "The Thompsons Buy a Taurus" is worth the read. I will loan out my copy for a suitable bribe.

HOPE KIEFER

(JG) Sorry to hear that your mom's chemotherapy isn't working. I try to imagine how it must feel to have one's options disappear, but find it impossible to put myself in you mother's place. But it must be terrifying. All you can do is offer moral support... I think about her a lot.

(SC) Does your mom have a support system where she is? It sounds as if she needs a group of people to help her fight depression and work out decisions. Surely 20% shrinkage is better than nothing and should encourage her to search for other treatments. She needs family, friends, or a knowledgeable cancer support group to help her now. It would be tough for anyone to face this crisis alone.

Sorry I missed seeing *The Cook, The Thief, His Wife and Her Lover* with the your group, but I did see it later. I agree with you that it was a good movie. I was riveted to my seat. I could have spent an hour talking about it with someone; trouble was Jeanne did not go with me because we weren't sure what to expect with the "X" rating. I imagined some really nasty rape scene. In fact the only thing about the movie that could have earned the "X" rating was the total male nudity. The violence was not extraordinary, certainly nothing compared to a *RoboCop* or *Rambo* movie. Even the sex scenes were pretty tame. So I guess we know what shocks the sensibilities of America's movie raters, a man's penis (which doesn't even have to be erect). What a pack of sexist prudes they must be.

JULIE SHIVERS

(JG) I write this as Scott, Spike and I sit in the midst of our garage sale (in Scott's and my garage). Your brief aside about costume ideas made me wonder if you'd like a dozen or so small, white, sheer curtains. They'd make a dynamite, sexy costume, I bet, if draped and sewn together just right. They're your's if you want: they didn't sell.

(SC) I liked the cat cartoon. See my comment to Hope on *The Cook, The Thief*.

DIANE MARTIN

(JG) Congratulations on the raise!

"Permanent White Water" Hmm, sounds like a good fanzine title. But an interesting idea, too, that it's the chaos that's normal, not order. I've been reminded of it frequently this past week. Work was unusually hectic because I'd put compacted versions of a huge publication with 25 computer-created illustrations onto some diskettes with bad sectors. Worse, I put back-ups on some other diskettes which also contained bad sectors. Anyway, besides my normal, huge workload, I had to redo some of those 25 illustrations. One of them was a cross-section of a house, with an assortment of house objects visible, all individually drawn and placed in appropriate perspective. Pretty frustrating. Thinking about "permanent white water" helped, though. You don't go rafting for the still water and you don't remember the boring, slow bits of life either. And a good rafter looks ahead and makes use of the constricted spots, zooming along *with* the currents, not fighting against it.

(SC) Excellent comment zine. After being in Turbo this long, I know that my writing style is not original, but that I have been influenced by others. In fact, I think I am unconsciously trying to emulate your style of short, pointed, often funny comments. Unfortunately I'm too opinionated and long-winded to succeed. Still, I keep trying because your writing voice is so clear and your humor is so relaxed and effortless.

Escorts are made by Ford and Encores were made by Renault. I think the Alliance has replaced the Encore. I only do typos of people's names in boldface.

ALGERNON STEWART

(JG) "The Man Who Used to be a Beggar," is a fine piece of writing, quite moving. Thank you. On the other hand, your opinions on the impact of sexist language on society is fairly ugly and dead wrong, in my opinion. Language is powerful: What we choose to name a thing (or ourselves!) tends to define it in our own minds and in those of people who hear those names—as you especially should be quite aware. Reinventing our language can be a giant step toward reinventing our society.

CATHY GILLIGAN

(JG) I hate meetings too, but they're certainly not a characteristic of unstructured work places alone. I know—I avoid several meetings a week at the Department of Natural Resources. To *my* mind, the difference between a hierarchical and nonhierarchical group isn't found in the number of meetings but in what happens in those meetings. A non-hierarchical group would have the person who knows the subject best report. A hierarchical group would have the person "in charge" report, and that person may or may not know what they're talking about.

Scott found a wonderful example of the phenomenon of hierarchical communication. . . and we've reproduced it on the next page:

- 1 Workers find the PLAN posted. "What a crock of shit," they say to one another.
- 2 "It's all a pail of dung and we can't stand the odor," the Workers tell their Supervisor.
- 3 "It's a container of excrement so strong that no one can tolerate it," says the Supervisor to the Manager.
- 4 "It's a vessel of fertilizer and no one can abide its strength," says the Manager to the Directors.
- 5 "It contains stuff which aids the growth of plants and it is very strong," says the Directors to themselves.
- 6 It promotes growth, and is very powerful," say the Directors to the Vice President.
- 7 "The new plan will actively promote growth and efficiency," says the Vice President to the President.
- 8 And the PLAN becomes POLICY and that's how shit happens.

I suppose it's a hassle to do all the legal paperwork surrounding a name change, but from what I've read, it's considered legal to simply start calling oneself by a different name, make the change in licenses, etc., without the court order. As long as you don't intend fraud (like if you do it in order to get out of paying debts or support dependants), you don't really need to go through the courts.

(SC) What great news that you'll be travelling to Hawaii to see Greg. Of course I'm being selfish. I'm assuming you'll come back with another harrowing travel story. I think the promise of such a story for the benefit of Turbo should be justification for our OE to contribute toward your ticket. All in favor, say aye.

(JG) Sure, why not, I'll vote for *that*.

STEVE JOHNSON

(JG) I'm so sorry to hear that your dad too, now has been diagnosed with cancer. Thinking about future years and how my parents will cope with old age and how we kids will deal with them scares me too.

(SC) Actually, Steve, the "vicious rumor" about you that I heard (from Hope) was not that you *caught* the garter, but that you've been *wearing* it.

JAMES BRON

(SC) I don't think you made it quite clear what you were going to use your new boat for. I can only assume you plan to spend the summer earning money by fishing for lobster, or is this part of your research? Anyway it sounds terrific.

KAREN BABICH

(JG) Really liked the covers. My first thought was that the back cover was an electron microscope shot of incredibly regimented DNA.

(SC) There seems to be a trend in Turbo these days of talking about older parents with problems and the effect this is having on members. We are showing our age. Ten or fifteen years ago a discussion of the problems we were having with our parents would sound very different.

You gave us some great comments. Thanks. I apologize if I came down hard on you on the union thing. All I wanted was a clarification. I agree that unions are not always the answer, but anti-union sentiment is so common these days that I tend to respond harshly.

BILL DYER

(JG) I've seen both versions of *Henry V* and reacted much as you did: I found myself emotionally involved with Branagh and simply admiring (and distant from) Olivier. Not putting down Branagh's acting a bit (I think he's fantastic and I'm really looking forward to his upcoming filmed version of *Hamlet*), but I think part of the way *Henry V* evoked emotion was with music. In combination with the high quality of the film in general and Branagh's skill, the St. Crispin speech momentarily seemed to make sense of the juxtaposition of the words "glorious" and "war." But only momentarily.

(SC) Turbo #47 was a thin Apa, but I think I will remember it as one of the most pleasantly conversational issues ever put together. We really had the benefit of some fine comment zines from you, Hope, Diane, Cathy, James, and Karen.

Thanks for the sympathetic comments on my job. I have been looking to leave this job from the day I started (two years ago this month) and I'm still trying. This looks to be a rough summer. We have a number of vacancies just as the vacation season is getting under way. Some of the vacancies are due to people getting other jobs, but half a dozen of them can be attributed to job-related injuries. All from confrontations with patients. A couple of those may wind up as permanent disabilities. Ten bucks an hour isn't worth the risk, so I stay sharp on the job.

PAT HARIO

(SC) You do have a friendly face. Want to solve that? Grow a beard. It really cuts down the number of strangers coming out of nowhere to ask inane questions. Your rant about birth control is right on target. America will wind up looking overseas for new birth control developments. Hell, we can't even handle *sex education* in this country without controversy.

STEVE SWARTZ

(JG) One of my favorite literary scenes is in the middle of John Barth's *Chimera*. The author suddenly appears in front of a class (we readers are the students) and with blackboard and chalk, outlines the underlying themes and symbolism of the book (*Chimera*). It's as if he's saying "You think you've discovered something do

you? Ha! I'm the author and I'm the one that created it all. Look here—here's some stuff you haven't even noticed yet...!" And with that the book returns to the story of Scherezade's little sister and the story of story-telling. Megalit at its best. Loved it.

In short, I share your literary perspective. I don't often read to "get lost" in a book. I enjoy the patterns, the opportunities to make connections between the author's points and my own experiences and other ideas. Literary Epiphanies, hmmm. When films or video provide that opportunity, I can enjoy them in the same way. (2001: A Space Odyssey for one) I certainly don't draw a line between books and film and often make connections back and forth between mediums.

However, you're right, it's easy to sink into a film and lose oneself in them, and I *do* look forward to that sensation, especially in a good tear-jerker. I think I see some films as potential outlets for emotional releases—tear-jerkers, adrenalin-drainers, laugh-till-my-sides-hurt fests—something which I rarely seek out or find in books. I'm too analytical: I get impatient when I see the structures of manipulation in hack novels, but happily get involved with the structure/themes/interwoven ideas in good books.

Maybe it's the music. I've read that music directly affects emotional centers in the brain, going right past the higher functions. Luckily books don't come with sound tracks.

I've read and loved Delany's short fiction and essays. I know him, admire him, and have talked with him quite a few times long and enjoyably. I call him Chip, and hey! he's even quoted *me* in a recent essay. But somehow I've missed reading the famous books you want to discuss and somehow doubt I'll get to them in time to contribute to this discussion. I'm sure I'd be bowled over and love them and one day I will definitely read them. However, I'm more tempted to read my own favorite book for re-reading, *Moby Dick*.

(SC) Jeanne and I have hit on a plan to drive you bonkers. We've decided to participate in your book discussion without reading the book. Actually, that wasn't a plan. It's just that your comments were so interesting we thought we'd throw in our four cents anyway. If we accept your division of art into realism and artifice forms, then I have to express a preference for realism, as opposed to you and Jeanne. I enjoy the sensation of being drawn completely into a story. I like movies, particularly at the theaters as it maximizes the effect of losing touch with real life and accepting the director's world. Perhaps I place too great an emphasis on fiction as entertainment and less as a source of new insight or learning. I read a fair amount of non-fiction when I feel an urge to learn. When I read, I tend to read slowly and recreate a vision of the action in my mind. I rarely read fiction in short bursts on the bus or in a waiting room. I wait until I have time to finish whole chapters before breaking out of the story. I prefer to examine a story when I'm finished with it. It seems like too much work to be constantly questioning a work as I'm trying to absorb it. I guess this means I probably wouldn't like *Dhalgren*. But I'm not sure all fiction fits so neatly into these categories. A simple example might be mystery stories. They are often set up as a puzzle that the reader has a choice of trying

to figure out as the plot unfolds, or surrendering to the author and letting the story just carry you along. Or Twain. A book such as *Huckleberry Finn* works as a straight story for young readers, but is also a classic for adults because they can see Twain's subtler themes. Or maybe I haven't got a clear enough handle on where you draw the line. I object to Jeanne's comment above. She seems to think the categories are; 1) what Jeanne likes and 2) Junk. I don't read hack novels. Since I spend a lot of time with a book when I choose one, I tend to choose carefully.

(JG) You're right, I was being a little arrogant with my categories. I *have* enjoyed some emotionally tugging novels, ones that wouldn't let me put them down once I'd started reading them. ("Oh what the heck, just one more chapter."..."Hell, it's 4:30 am, I may as well just finish it.") I just have less tolerance for written stories as opposed to cinematic ones when it comes to clichéd plots. And I guess I'll hold on to my bias against the clichés of bodice-rippers and that sort of thing.

That word "escape" comes up so often when people defend their affection for entertainment that other people turn up their noses up at. But I suppose that one could say that whatever base, enlightened, fancy, or bored reasons one seeks out art, one does so essentially to "escape" the humdrum perspective of everyday life. Personally, I want that detour from "reality" to give me something I can bring back with me. And so, for that reason, I'll continue to hold on to my snobbery when it comes to not understanding people who read a book or see a film and then completely forget it. (You know, they're the ones who claim they can see a movie or read a book again a year after they saw/read it the first time, and they will have completely forgotten it.) And, considering the great conversations we've had after movies or about books we've both read, I would hardly classify you with that sort of escapee, Scott.

Re/Search Magazine had a "Modern Primitives" issue on tattooing, piercing and other voluntary mutilation. "Whatever it is, if you think 'No one would pierce *that*,' there's a photo of someone who has done so."—

Arthur Hlavaty.

That's all folks! See you next month.

Jeanne and Scott