



Union Street

A joint zine by Jeanne Gomoll & Scott Custis

© Business

[SC] I second **Pat's** friend **Stacey** for membership in *Turbo*.

For what it's worth, I support the OE's decision not to drop herself from the membership. It would have made management of the apa tricky to say the least. Arrrr.

© Georgie Schnobrich

[SC] I like the Doctor of Fandom idea.

I also was impressed with **Lisa's** piece on fandom a few issues back and I am glad the discussion is continuing. Lisa concluded that if we old farts don't start being nicer and more welcoming to the younger fans than we are going to wind up broken down and forgotten in a "garret" room with our worn paperbacks. I'm not sure I agree with that assessment.

For one thing, Lisa makes the error of assuming that only younger people are interested in media stuff and only old farts care about books. I don't agree with that, so I can't equate media conventions with literary conventions as being only about fans of different age groups. Media and literary cons are about different things altogether. It is false to assume that media fans of any age will start flocking to literary cons if we treat them with more respect. They will come to literary cons (such as WisCon or Readercon) if those cons start doing more media oriented programming. The real reason WisCon and Readercon don't do more media stuff is because we don't need to, both cons are very successful just as they are. Neither con desires to attract hordes of media fans (of any age.)

The real problem conventions face these days has to do with volunteers. Most of the major conventions around the country are dealing with a problem of shrinking pools of volunteers. WisCon, Readercon, MiniCon, Worldcon, everybody needs more people to work. The thing is, media conventions unless they are for profit, are having as much trouble getting help as the smaller old fart literary cons. Mad Media here in Madison is closing its doors partly because they are having severe manpower shortages. There just aren't enough people to do the work. And I am not just talking about scut work either. WisCon needs department heads even more than it needs gofers.

The problem with volunteers cuts across generational lines. I think kids are having as much trouble finding time to volunteer as adults do. And I worry that as a society we tend not to put much value on time spent doing work for free. I think the wild kids at the media cons and the sedate older crowd at the literary cons can co-exist very comfortably, but in both places the question these days is, who is going to run the con suite?

[JG] You pointed out to **Vicki** that quality has meant "excellence" (one end of the spectrum, rather than the spectrum itself) for a long time. It seems to me there are a growing number of words that originally indicated some kind of spectrum, but have come to mean the top or bottom, the highest or lowest, the best or the worst. "Art," as we've talked about before is one of those words; for some people, the word "art" equates with "good art." There is no longer such a thing as bad art with this meaning. When I first read your zine, I was able to compile a long list of similarly mis-used words, but now that I'm writing on deadline I can only recall a couple....

Weather "We're getting some weather today!"

Speed "David got a ticket for speeding."

I'd forgotten all about "Momism"! Wasn't it Philip Wylie who coined that phrase? A virulently anti-woman philosophy that attracted me a bit in my high school days simply because it critiqued traditional assump-

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tions of female/male values, it nonetheless bothered me because it didn't seem to allow ME anyplace else to go. I agreed with Wylie's disgust with so-called feminine values, but it didn't seem that I could switch to male values in his world. Things changed.

It's true — Disney moms are "so sacred they have to die and be replaced by surrogates." Maybe one reason for this familial re-org in Disney films is that in order to orphan the protagonist — a prerequisite for fantastical kid adventures — the mom (the responsible one, of course) must either have died or be revealed as evil. Allowing a child freedom from motherly supervision inevitably reflects very badly on the mom. The single exception to that rule is if the mom died in her attempt to protect her child. Any lesser reason for failure to rescue the kid is the mom's *fault*.

I suspect that a little more time would do wonders for most people having problems communicating with their doctors. HMOs require doctors to speed through the day, spending mere moments with each patient. I'd rather have longer appointments in which I could be sure I was being understood than an ombudsman accompanying me to my appointments.

Please tell me what you think of *Oscar and Lucinda* if you rent the video.

© Pat Hario

[SC] I am looking forward to your stories about Australia. I know I spent a whole evening looking at pictures and that was really fun. I'd like to read about it too. After your entertaining tales of trivia, you can count on an attentive audience here.

[JG] With regard to your comment to **Lisa**, I also think it would be a fine goal for society to try to prevent psychological damage to kids, long before those damaged kids grow up into damaged adults. But I'm not as frustrated as you seem to be with social and medical establishments' skills for healing childhood psyches. It's not that I don't agree with you that we're a long way from competence in this area; it's just that I think it's incredibly complicated. I don't think we even understand yet what constitutes a universally *good* environment for kids: what kind of environment always encourages integrity or self-esteem or intelligence (or all of the above). We have a good grasp of the extremes of the spectrum, but not much understanding of the middle ground. We think that if a kid is badly abused, they will have problems as an adult (but not always), and we think that if a kid is loved and is given all the physical advantages, they will have fewer psychological problems (but not always).

Years ago, my brother Rick was enrolled in a national study of very smart children. Based on IQ test scores, the kids in this study were followed from grade school through their early adult years. Rick was regularly tested, interviewed, and physically examined at regular intervals. His family, me included, were also interviewed and tested at less regular intervals. The people in charge of the study were trying to discover what environmental factors would tend to encourage or discourage development of intelligence, self-esteem and other psychological measurements. No mind-shaking conclusions emerged from the study. In my opinion, there are too many variables that interact in so many bizarre ways, that it is impossible to take any one or two of them and say "if these conditions exist there will always be this result." Lots of people try to make general, sweeping statements, (like "children need two parents," or "kids do better with an at-home mom.") but they are usually disproved by the next study.

I mailed you a lasercopy of a brochure I just updated at the DNR for the Nevin Fish Hatchery, one of several dozen fish hatcheries in Wisconsin. Thought you might be interested.

Scott and I would like to see the WisCon 23 evaluation forms too. I think Dan Dexter still has them. If you get them, would you let us see them after you?

You and I *both* feel like we missed August. You, because you were visiting another hemisphere, and me because I was housebound.

© Diane Martin

[SC] Jeanne and I were both amused with the saga of Ariel's new fish. We think it would be fun to watch the ramifications develop over at Swarthmore Court if we got Ariel a pony or a baby alligator.

[JG] Was that character in *Mystery Men* really named Ms. Furious? I thought she was Ms. PMS. (There was also a guy who was named Mr. Furious.)

Thanks for working on the Laura Spiess Memorial Book Swap. I like that idea of institutionalizing this event. It was lots of fun, though our group may need more than a year's time to accumulate enough books for a really good swap.

Congratulations on the new job, Diane! Now that you're downtown, I hope to see you every once in a while during work hours.

© Clay Colwell

[SC] I hope you enjoyed great success at the Scrabble tournament. I am terrible at Scrabble and avoid the game at all costs, but that is neither here nor there.

I hope that Sean is completely recovered from the hepatitis. Very good news about your domestic partnership coverage.

On Whining, I hope you elect to stay in *Turbo*. You have always been careful to write comments to others, which leads me to think that you probably highly value feedback on your own stuff. My guess is that you are having difficulty making time to do *Turbo* because it is hard to work up the enthusiasm to do it if you don't feel you are getting the feedback you feel you deserve. I think there are few of us in the apa who believe we are getting the feedback we really deserve on our golden prose. I am not sure why we continue to do the apa except that we are all friends and, now and then, someone will hit a discussion topic that flies out of the ballpark (like Lisa did a couple months ago with her piece on fandom.)

Steve Swartz once told me that writing in the apa hoping to get the feedback you deserve is a losing prospect. You should view your writing in the apa as a gift you give to your friends. You are our friend, Clay, and we'd like you to stay in *Turbo* and remain in touch with us.

[JG] Congratulations on working for a company that offers domestic-partner benefits. I've never really understood the non-religious objections to programs like this. I can understand but not sympathize with individuals who feel that sinful behavior should not be rewarded, though I think those folks should voluntarily give up their benefits if they get divorced. On the other hand, I've heard lots of folks argue against domestic partner benefits merely on an economic basis — that it will add more individuals to their insurance/benefit groups and thus decrease the benefits for others. One may as well argue that we should limit access to benefits by making it harder for so many people to get married, or by restricting spousal benefits to couples who have maintained their legal bonds for more than 5 years, or something like that.

I hadn't heard that Hasbro bought out Wizards. Was it a hostile takeover?

My sister met Austin's mayor because Austin is her hometown. Didn't I mention that before? She owned Go Media, a locally well-known design company in the early 90s. A couple years ago, she sold Go Media to Excite.com, and worked for them for a while. During the course of this career change, she gained a lot of expertise on web technology and was invited by Austin's mayor (Sorry, forgot his name) to join a group of his technology advisors. Currently, she is retired — a direct result of Excite's buy-out by AT&T.

© Carrie Root

[SC] So how was the cruise?

"*The Union Terrace on Friday afternoons, with pitchers of Point, now, that I miss.*" I do too. I have been to the Terrace all of once this whole year. And this was the year I finally paid off my Union membership. To be honest I have avoided the Terrace on Fridays. It is way too crazy down there to be a relaxing place on Fridays unless you can get there by noon so you can find a seat. I miss the WisCon 20 meetings we used to have on Monday nights on the Terrace. There was plenty of room, it was quiet and I didn't have to stand in line for an hour to get a beer.

[JG] In retrospect, my recuperation from hip surgery seems lightning quick. I was frustrated not to be able to get rid of my crutches after three weeks, but now it seems to me like my recovery proceeded smoothly and with a perceptible improvement every day. The choice they give to older folks nowadays isn't between permanent fusion (like your father had, Carrie) and a hip replacement. They always put in a new hip now, but offer patients the option of gluing the new hip joint into place. They only use the glue for very old people who are unlikely to live long enough to need the artificial hip replaced again, because these artificial joints still have a life expectancy of only 20 years or so. I expect that I will have to have mine replaced eventually. The benefit of the glued joint, however, is that the person can walk on it within days after their surgery. The artificial hip is made out of metal (I don't think I ever asked what kind), but it will set off the alarms in airport terminals. The knob and cup are coated with Teflon to reduce friction and extend the life of the joint.

© Andy Hooper

[SC] Congratulations on your continuing success at ChannelSpace. I believe you have contributed another milestone zine for *Turbo* by being the first to publish a more or less open job offer in the apa. Cool. You may have passed up a unique apa cover idea. You could have just had the apas sent out with an application form on the front.

I remember A.P. McQuiddy from Luke McGuff's Men's Apa. How's he doing these days?

[JG] We'll be seeing you in Seattle next year for Corflatch. Scott and I just bought plane tickets for the trip and have accepted an invitation from Steve Swartz to stay in his spare room during the week between Potlatch and Corflu.

 © **Jim Nichols**

[JG] I also thought my current job would be a temporary one, and like you, I am also amazed at how many years I've had this job. When I started, I expected to quit in a few years after I'd learned what I could and the work got boring. I expected that I would go freelance. But the job kept changing and never really got boring, and I came to the realization that freelance work would never fit my temperament. There have been a few episodes in my DNR career comparable to your frustrating experiences in your job. I'm glad you've been able to make some headway in doing something about the job stress you've been feeling. Some of the most beaten-down state employees I know are those who have real problems with a boss or some other aspect of their work, but are convinced that there is nothing they can do to change things. It's been my experience that I may not be able to change *all* the things that sometimes drive me crazy at work, but my attitude improves enormously when I make an effort to do something about it. And most of the time, I've been able to make major changes by sticking to my guns. I hope you are also successful.

Congratulations on the new relationship with **Ruth**. I hope things work out joyously well for both of you.

 © **Ruth Merrill**

[SC] That was very pleasant news that both you and **Jim Nichols** pubbed in your zines regarding your recent romance. The "cute" comments are annoying, I agree. But they will die down in time.

[JG] I hope things work out happily ever after for both of you. Ah yes, you're in the "cute" stage, when everyone seems to be using the word "cute" to describe your PDA. It's inevitable. Enjoy it.

 © **Jim Frenkel**

[SC] I am glad y'all had a good time at Armadillocon. It has been years since I've been there and I would like to go again sometime. I hope Jessi's camping trip ended well, too.

You say you used to earn half your living by making music? I didn't know that. Care to expound on your professional music days?

[JG] I'd never heard about the 10 days of Penitence. The image of everyone confessing out loud really amazed me. Do some people only pretend to confess and try to eavesdrop on their neighbor's

recital? Is this the only chance in the year to confess? There's got to be some significant repercussions to the difference between the Catholic weekly, secret confessions and the Jewish annual public confessions....

 © **Tom Havighurst**

[SC] What do you suppose will happen to the Mad Media organizers? Will they just fade away or go to work on other media conventions? What do you think went wrong for them?

Regarding catcallers, the difference between howling at the moon or caterwauling in the dark and saying "hey baby" on the street is that the moon and the dark don't react. For the catcallers, reaction is the point of the behavior. They cannot reasonably expect a positive reaction so what is the purpose? The purpose is to harass, intimidate and exert power. These guys aren't badly behaved because they have a low grade education, they are badly behaved because they are miserable assholes with a bad attitude toward women.

Your comments about the animals in us are interesting from a more general viewpoint. I am interested in seeing the new film "Fight Club" because it is supposedly about male aggression in a civilized society.

[JG] Your comment on "catcallers" reminded me of a really funny bit in the play, "A My Name is Still Alice." In that vignette, a woman talks back to the construction worker, who is astonished and mortified by a woman who treats him in the same meat-market manner as he treated her. In my opinion, the catcalling phenomenon results from a situation in which the catcaller feels confident that he will not be confronted for his rude manners. As the "Alice" skit dramatized, the moment someone *does* confront him, the catcaller runs away. I've seen this happen. The guys sit on the steps eating their lunch, loudly commenting on the women who pass by, but the moment one of those women stops and makes angry eye contact, it's as if a one-way mirror collapsed. The guys suddenly act outraged that their privacy has been invaded. The negative discussion you say you are coming to dislike comes from women mostly (I assume) who resent the assumption of their own powerlessness. Have you ever been in a situation in which a group of people critique your body as if you weren't capable of hearing them? I bet the closest most men get to this is a childhood experience with adults talking about them in their presence. I can't think of it simply as a way for a guy to ask for sex.

 © **Vijay Bowen**

[JG] I thought it was ironic that in the same issue that **Georgie** talked about not liking to have people watch her decorate cakes, you mentioned your desire to do just that. It's certainly not an uncommon thing, for visual artists to prefer to work alone. But that's not possible for all artforms — especially the ones that involve performance. There have been some musicians who preferred to record but avoided concerts. But I think this is much more rare than a writer or artist who works as a hermit until their novel or painting is done. I wonder, has there ever been a well known dancer who avoided performance? Well, they wouldn't be well-known then, I guess.

I give up. What does "JWRTFM" stand for?

 © **carl juarez**

[JG] But how can you stand to wait for a new book when all your friends are talking about it? To me, one of the best parts of reading a good book is finding folks who also read it (recently, if possible) and discussing it with them.

 © **Hope Kiefer and Karl Hailman**

[SC] Great first Australian pieces for *Turbo*. Thanks. I liked the juxtaposition of subjects from Karl's emphasis on hazards and dangerous creatures to Hope's close, and amusing, observations on language. Do I still sound envious of your travels? I am.

Regarding Karl's comment to Jeanne, I am polite with other people's cats. I don't wrap them, though I admit to being an enthusiastic spectator at past cat wrapping events. I appreciate why people like and choose cats as pets, just like I understand why people buy station wagons, but personally they don't do much for me.

[JG] Great trip report, you two. Thank you.

Karl — Apparently, the genetic component to osteoarthritis (and the necessary hip replacement surgery) is the only proven factor they've got. Other than that, no one knows who will get osteoarthritis or why. Did your aunts get their hips replaced because they broke their hips or because they have osteoarthritis? That would be the \$1000 question.

 © **Jae Adams**

[SC] You also gave us some fascinating Australia details. You have been the source for most of the information I have heard about the Worldcon, and your comments about living within the social system of the Lemmings

were very interesting. I patiently await more installments on your adventures.

Mad Media's end comes as a disappointment to me. I only attended the convention briefly once or twice, but I think it was a noble project and a good thing for the Madison community. The idea of putting on a not-for-profit, media-oriented convention operated by and for fans is a very ambitious and wonderfully democratic goal. There is so much money in big media stuff like Star Wars these days that it is hard to figure how any group of average fans, outside of a Worldcon committee, can come up with the money to bring in big stars or mount flashy events. But Mad Media tried anyway.

The last couple years, Mad Media has thrown a party at WisCon to promote themselves and sell memberships. It has been my pleasure to work with them and I will miss them if they don't come back to WisCon 24. It gave me a chance to meet a few of the Mad Media folks and, I hope, smooth over some of the past unpleasantness that existed between our respective SF groups.

I still think that the broad definition of SF does not mean that WisCon is a logical place for displaced Mad Media energy to go. Our two groups are about very different things and I don't think we would be happy back together again. I wish them well, however, and I would support them if, sometime in the future, they wanted to give it another try.

[JG] Wonderful trip report, Jae. I loved the human drama and sly pokes at "the boys." Thank you for the con report, too. I'm intrigued by Frances Papworth and Renaldo the Party Sheep. I hope I get to meet them someday. Interesting too, that Lemming behavior. Is it the same sort of thing we sometimes see when a group of Madisonians travels to another city for a con?

Re "Those poor kids" (who would be explicitly labeled if they were members of any group other than white boys) in your comment to **Lisa**: I think the stress and problems of high schoolers are not hugely different from what they ever were. The main difference and reason for the recent violence is that our culture increasingly stresses violence, specifically guns, as the best male response. The appallingly easy availability of guns makes the result all the more gruesome.

And continuing to another of your comments to **Lisa**, I agree with you that victims, such as those of the Holocaust, have never been allowed much choice in the matter of whether or not they will be victimized. As part of an incredibly privileged group of people, white Americans, however, we *do* have a little more choice in the matter of our own role as potential victimizers.

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