

Union Street

A joint zine by Jeanne Gomoll & Scott Custis

Official Business

[JG & SC] Scott and I don't care how you organize the contents of the apa, **Kim**, but we have a strong preference for a table of contents that actually reflects the order of the zines within, otherwise it's fairly useless as an index.

© Scott-Free

[JG] It's a solo zine this issue. I've got a little news, a few catch-up comments from *Turbo* #134, as well as some comments from the most recent, but extremely thin, *Turbo* #136. But first, the good news:

Scott has switched to the day shift (Yea!), and he's adjusting well to his new schedule. Turns out he doesn't need to sleep in that coffin full of Iowa loam during daylight hours after all. He's enjoying bussing rather than driving to work, since there's a direct, nearly door-to-door route between our house and the Department of Transportation where he toils daily, checking to see if you've been naughty or not, and if so—rescinds your driver's license. The round-trip bus commute gives him two good chunks of time each day to read and he gleefully started a new novel during this, his first week of work during "normal" hours. I've been paying attention—for the first time in a long while—to the clock as the afternoon winds down. There's someone waiting for me at home now, and I have to call if I work late. I'm very happy to have Scott home nights.

Another piece of good news is that things turned out well for me personally at the end of a recent medical crisis. Early in October, after a mammogram, a lump was discovered in my left breast.

(This was, if you recall, "Breast Cancer Awareness Month." There were pink ribbons everywhere. Murphy Brown mimicked my life for a few weeks.) The ultrasound didn't provide good news and so the next step was a biopsy. But because the lump was so deep, it was decided to remove it completely; so basically I had a lumpectomy. As I said, this turned out to be good news: the lump was identified as a fibroid etynoma (which I don't think I am spelling correctly, but I can't find it in the dictionary, so this is what you get). I stayed in fairly good spirits all through the time of uncertainty. Early on I decided that if it turned out I had cancer, then I'd probably wish I could go back to the time before I knew for sure, and so I was damned well going to enjoy that time. And if it turned out I didn't have cancer, well then, it would be a waste to spend it worrying. The self-hypnosis seemed to work; in fact I was almost entirely convinced that the lump was going to turn out to be benign, so much so that on the day before my surgery, Scott and I went to a party (Vagabond at Barb Gilligan's) and I had a great time. But I didn't tell anyone except Scott and a co-worker, who I thought deserved some warning in case I ended up dumping a whole lot of unexpected work on her. I didn't want people to worry; but more importantly, I didn't want their worry to infect *me*. So I was determined not to say anything until I knew for sure what was what.

Anyway, the surgery was easy, even though we had to get up before dawn to get to the hospital on time. I've got a mild allergy to latex and so my surgery was scheduled first because they had to set up a "latex-free" operating room. Local anesthesia was used and I was given a sedative intravenously. The sedative turned out to have an amnesiac factor, and so as the day wore on, I progressively forgot most of the earlier bits. I do recall the doctor telling me the good news while I was still on the operating table, however, and my saying in response, "Oh, you already started?" And I remember asking to see the lump before they rolled me out of the room. It was

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about the size of my thumb above the last joint. Then it gets very blurry; but apparently Scott and I left the hospital by 10:30 am. My breast pinched a bit when I got home and I took a couple of extra-strength Tylenol, but the mild discomfort didn't seem to call for the percoset the doctor had prescribed. And in fact I never even took another Tylenol. The whole experience turned out to be one of the most painless encounters with doctors I've ever had.

Scott announced his good news later in the same week as my operation. It was a wonderful week.

Mailing Comments No. Turbo 134

© Bill Bodden

Sorry to hear about your medical encounter. Sounds like it was quite a lot more painful than mine and certainly more expensive. It's been some time since I originally read your zine, Bill, but scribbled into the margin next to your tale of dental woes, is a single word, "drugs," and I can't for the life of me recall where I meant to go with that concept. I guess I'll just say I hope you had them.

© Vijay Bowen

Thanks for seconding John Bluedorn's nomination. John is working toward a Ph.D. in economics at UC Berkeley, and his ascendance to the top of the *Turbo* waiting list turned out to coincide with his realization that his schoolwork was going to consume his life for the next couple years. He wrote to Scott and I to say that he'd really enjoyed the issues of *Turbo* he'd read so far and was very sorry not to be able to join us, but that he hopes many of us will still be around and publishing when he comes up for air.

© Clay Colwell

"...re www.alexlit.com—note that you can help refine the recommendations algorithm by rating the selections provided by alexlit that you've read already." I don't know about that. Alexlit seems to operate with a weird positive-only algorithm. When the first batch of my recommendations included several novels by Tolkien, I tried to cut that detour off at the pass by declaring myself to passionately hate *The Hobbit* and *Lord of the Rings*. I gave both of these books the worst possible rating. The next list of recommendations included *other* books by Tolkien.

I think I prefer www.Amazon.com's method of providing a short list of books that other people have bought who also bought the same book you are in the process of ordering.

© Bill Dyer

I see your point about not wanting to give churches a formal role in government through taxation. On the other hand, any organization which is able to accumulate money and assets without getting taxed will most certainly be able to accumulate a big pot of money with the potential of using it to become hugely influential in government anyway. The religious far right has maintained its influence using exactly this mechanism. Until campaign finances are reformed so that big money doesn't play such a significant role in elections, the religious far right will continue to play a very important, albeit informal, role in US government. I say tax 'em.

© Pat Hario

The story of your garage door and its hole and the swarm of bees that attacked you, made me feel incredibly guilty. I was the one, after all, who scraped paint a little too enthusiastically and created that large gap in the lower part of your garage door. I am very sorry for my part in your swollen, bee-stung foot. And a lovely visual aid you provided, too; it made me feel even more guilty.

In fact, your zine was full of highly instructive graphics. I am looking forward to your diagram of the October fire in the lumberyard across the street from your house.

© Andy Hooper

Thanks for the update on Howard Waldrop. Your account of finding him in the wilderness was fun to read. I sure do hope Howard gets rich soon.

© Karen Karavanic

Hope you're feeling at home these days in Madison. Have you begun to accumulate Dick Russell stories yet?

© Hope Kiefer & Karl Hailman

I knew that kids tend to make a huge difference in the lives of those who have them as opposed to those who don't, but I'd never have believed that a sign of the gap would be a thing so mundane (and

incomprehensible) as Beanie Babies. But then why does **Sandy** collect them? Life is so mysterious.

© Diane Martin

Don't worry about boring *me* with your house building tales. I love it. I love to imagine, step-by-step, how Scott and I might improve our own house. I have frequently daydreamed in installments that stretched out through months of time, building my own dream house plank by plank. So it's really really cool to see a good friend actually being able to do it for real. By the way, I like the maps.

Arthur Hlavaty says that "a house is a machine to keep your books dry."

© Lynn Ann Morse

I keep meaning to hold on to one of our grocery receipts to send you so that you can give us a sense of how much things cost in Ireland. Maybe if I write this here, I'll remember next time Scott and I go to Woodman's. Hope you're happily settling into your new home in Dublin. Do you think your accent will change a bit to accommodate what you hear around you?

© Michael Rawdon

Scott's already said most of what I would have said in response to your skeptical paragraphs about downtown Madison. Like Scott, I really disagree with your assessment that the downtown is declining. In the years since I began working a block off the square (1979), the area has improved dramatically. The King-Main Streets area is no longer scary (though too bad that it's gotten too expensive for Hank's 20th Century Books). Restaurants, coffee shops, bookstores and other new businesses have made the downtown night life much more lively with every year—for people who live in town *and* out of town. Nowadays, when I head home late, downtown is not dead; there's a lot of life on the streets. That's a sign that the area no longer loses all its population at the end of the business day. Things are hopping! I wouldn't mind at all eventually buying a condo downtown and retiring close to the busses, libraries, and the University. I sure wouldn't want to grow old and isolated in a suburb. And I suspect that I'm not alone; the downtown condos now in construction already have long waiting lists.

© Vicki Rosenzweig

I'm not trying to scare you with copyright challenges to your tattoo. As **Bill Dyer** says, no one is trying to enforce copyrights in this area. However, your comments about assuming that the use of one illustration out of Peterson's book is "fair use," is *not* correct. Artists can and do get in trouble copying drawings from Peterson books (and others). "Borrowing" an illustration is never considered "fair use," no matter how many other drawings there are in a given book. In fact, I don't think that the doctrine of fair use even applies to graphic art, except for the purpose of reviews (not use). And the fact that the author is dead does not provide you with any assurance that the copyright has lapsed. Heirs of the owner of a copyright can themselves renew that copyright, and in the case of Peterson's drawings, his heirs have done just that. We use Peterson's books all the time at the DNR—but only as sources (how is that bird's neck colored?), not as clip art. (It makes me a bit nervous about how you make a distinction between using a fan's artwork and a professional's artwork. I am both in different forums, and would hate to think that anyone would feel I have fewer rights in one forum than in another.)

© Georgie Schnobrich

I loved your musing fantasy of the mounts of the Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse. The State Fair will never be the same again.

I agree with you about the distasteful use of violence against the courageous spy/adventurer who was also Sharpe's wife. And yes, "*for women, particularly, a supporting character is a dangerous person to be.*" That reminds me of the novel *Crash Course* by Wilhemina Baird (who attended WisCon 20), in which the main characters sign up to be in a movie that gets filmed during the course of a year in their lives. The life-or-death challenge for them is to figure out what kind of movie the director is creating around them (nobody dies in a comedy; everyone except the hero dies in an action/adventure); and the identity of the protagonist, since one can act stupidly if you know you're the protagonist.

The idea that illustrated literature must be for kids, comes—I suppose—from the same assumption that has spurred attempts to censor the Internet. If a kid is *able* to access the information, then some people think that it should be controlled as if all kids are in fact accessing it, and that they should be protected from various, so-called "adult" themes. The

various electronic access-blockers are like adult's attempts to shield kids from reality by talking piglatin....

My imagination held me spellbound for a moment when you confessed that you and Greg had experimented with body calligraphy after seeing *The Pillow Book*. What did you write?

Comments on No. Turbo 136

© Jim Brooks

Scott and I were really sorry to hear about your break-up. Indeed, you are having to cope with all too many stresses in your life right now and you deserve a break. I appreciate your determination to avoid the dark side.

I liked the story—set in what you later identified as a seraglio. On first reading it, I wondered whether the heroine's future involved a human sacrifice or royalty. I guess that's the point.

And thanks for the stroll down memory lane. We're sure glad you joined the apa. You're one of our favorite contributors.

I was amazed that you were actually positive about my tendency to slow down on curves while driving. One of the things I remember most about learning to drive from my father was his insistence that I not slow down on curves (unless of course I was exceeding the speed limit) or on my approach to off-ramps. So whenever I find myself in the grip of a compulsion to tap the breaks, I imagine my dad driving behind me, growling.

© Heather Aynne Brooks

You wrote that "*Most children at some point leave home only to realize that their departure was premature, and return to living with their parents. . .*" Not always. My three brothers and one sister and I all left home and were never tempted to return. I was probably the latest to leave because I enrolled in a college within driving distance of my folks' home for my Freshman and Sophomore years, and so didn't leave until my Junior year of college, for which I moved out to Madison. But once I was gone, there was no returning. On my first visit home for a visit, I discovered that mom had converted my bedroom into a sewing room for herself and it was clear that the only place for me to sleep was the living room couch.

© Vicki Rosenzweig

(*A Pileated Intellectual* 20)

I tend to agree with your point of view (in response to **Georgie Schnobrich's** comments on clothing styles). I've never supported dress codes of any kind, and have aggressively sought out environments where high heels, panty hose, dresses or suits are not compulsory.

(Digression. Just to show how successful I was in finding a laid back place to work, I found out recently that the DNR, where I work, has a reputation among other state departments for encouraging its employees to dress in a less than professional manner. Most men wear chinos and button down shirts. Women wear a vast array of dresses to jeans. A woman at the DNR who tends to dress "up" most of the time, with lots of very expensive suits and dresses, etc., went for an interview at the Department of Administration. She did very well and was told that she was the top choice for the job. **But**, they said. But, remember. . . you will be expected to dress *nice*, not like people are used to dressing at the DNR.)

It seems to me that women who have resisted high heels, for instance — for whatever reason: that they can be unhealthy if worn constantly or dangerous if worn too infrequently, that they are uncomfortable, that they are expensive, that they look ugly for the unfashionably sized woman — these women are not so much supporting a puritanical definition of the "modest woman" (as Georgie put it), as reacting *against* other philosophies like the one that labels as lesbians any woman who fails to dress "womanly" enough, whatever that means. As a matter of fact, I suspect it's nearly impossible to imagine a style of clothing that would be deemed perfectly unobjectionable to every point of view. The problem for women is that there are so many definitions out there of what is objectionable and what is not, and so many moral judgments associated with different clothing choices, that it's difficult for any woman to form a purely personal preference in clothing.

On the other hand I feel I have to adopt a practical attitude toward the existence of those judgments and definitions of clothing styles. You argue that business decisions and moral judgments should be not be influenced by, for instance, a person's hair style. But I think that we all get involved in situations, long term or short term, where the local clothing expectations are clear, and we must choose whether or not to sacrifice our own preferences to

ease our interactions with others who have other preferences. For instance, if a person wanted very much to work in a bank, they would need to think very carefully about whether or not their green Mohawk styled hair was more important to them than achieving their employment goal. If the hair-style was more important, they might do well to consider avenues of employment in which their nonconformity wasn't seen as such a problem. That's a fairly exaggerated example. But we all encounter it to some extent on a day-to-day basis. There are some interactions that are made easier by removing the factor of nonconforming dress styles, so that the business can be transacted without having to be dealt with first.

I will be presenting a talk on electronic graphics to a professional communicators' workshop next month. If I decide to dress casually, which I will probably do, I will first have to overcome some of my audience's assumptions that I am an amateur. On the other hand, if I attended wearing a suit, which I probably won't do (because in this case, I was asked to participate as a resource to the members; if they discount what I say because I'm wearing slacks, it's their loss.), I would earn instant credibility with some people there, as soon as I walked up to the podium in so-called "professional clothing." My point is that clothing style should be a choice, but that it's useful to understand the nonverbal signals that we send by our choices.

Roger Black comments on making up his own pull-quotes were made in the context of a book or magazine that has an established pull-quotes format. He's certainly designed many spiffy publications with other sorts of ornamentation, but he was talking about what to do when you have to use a pull-quote and there don't seem to be good enough, available quotations.

Your comments about long-range planning for nuclear waste dumps made me wonder if the planners are also taking into account violent climate changes. I understand that the Nevada site is actually quite permeable, and that its security depends upon the continuation of dry climate in the region.

The tendency for kitchens to be located in the center of the house seems to have to do with the increasing number of rooms that are supposed to connect to the kitchen according to popular architectural fashion. To avoid isolating the cook, the family room popularly flows without walls into the kitchen. And of course, both the informal and formal dining areas have to be adjacent to the kitchen. Large expensive homes often have grandiose breakfast

"nooks," too, and have to connect to the kitchen, of course. And, as Scott and I have begun to see in some of the newer homes, the master bedroom "wing" is often located next to the kitchen too. That way the owners' space is well separated from kids and visitors' bedrooms. Plus the arrangement allows for easy access to snacks, I suspect. Well, with all those spaces connected to the kitchen, it's no wonder that the kitchen seems to be found more and more often in the center of the house. It's the only way to manage the geometry! I think if I designed a home under the current popular design restrictions, I might try to design a house in the Spanish fashion—with a courtyard in the middle of the house.

Yes, convention programming can be done remotely. Essentially WisCon 21's program was designed remotely, because more than half of the program planners lived outside of Madison. I think the problem facing program planning is less a question of *where* it is centered, than how widely its members are spread across the country. I spent an awful lot of time last year, and expect that I will have to do the same this year, in just keeping the members of my programming staff informed on progress and involved in the discussion.... Whenever I had an in-town meeting, I had to let the out-of-town people know what had happened and to invite their input. And when conversation happened via email, I had to struggle to keep in-town members up-to-date who do not have email. It gets really complicated, but unless the work is done, those who feel uninformed lose interest and commitment.

I suspect that the 20 Madisonians who claimed to commute by subway, actually commuted to Chicago. Or else they were just goofs.

I envy your bottomless toner cartridge. I go through laser cartridges all too quickly. The best way to abuse a laser printer and use up its cartridges is to print large areas of solid black. Don't buy a used laser printer owned by a graphic artist; it will be older than it looks.

© Vicki Rosenzweig

(*A Pileated Intellectual 21*)

Good point about the success of a musical based on gory material, like *Sweeny Todd*. Somehow, I don't think the potential problem with a musical version of *Anastasia* is its subject matter; mostly it's Disneyesque animation style which typically guts legends and reality to match its saccharine view of life. (Though, perhaps since it's not a Disney film. . . is it Warner Bros.? . . . it won't be so

bad.) Judging from the previews, it looks to me like this version of *Anastasia* is based on the old movie, *Anastasia*, with Yul Brenner and Ingrid Bergman — in which Brenner plays a con man trying to find a “fake” *Anastasia* to sell to Russian Royalty. Accidentally, he stumbles on the real thing. The story ends with *Anastasia* forsaking the family she no longer remembers clearly for the con man she loves. I can just imagine Disney going for that story. The old movie, however, did not include a part for Rasputin.

No kidding, the Chinese aren't taking the long view right now. Isn't it the Yangtze River (oops, no, the Ch'ang Chiang) on which they're planning to build the largest dam in the world—against all advice from engineers who say the lake behind the dam will silt up within one generation?

© Pat Hario

I admire your determination to get more comfortable with public speaking. I understand that Octavia Butler took a Dale Carnegie course. When she attended WisCon 2, her speech was fascinating but a little painful because it was so obvious she was struggling with shyness. Since then I am told that she's metamorphosed into an incredibly dynamic speaker. These courses do work. Good luck with yours!

© Jae Leslie Adams

I thought “Sisters of the Page” was wonderful. Thank you. I would never have thought of comparing a nun illuminating manuscripts with a word processor! But now that I've read your story, I always will. Is the Pat in your dedication *our Pat*?

© Georgie Schnobrich

I also wish that American cinema would pay more attention to less fashionable classes of people.

© Lisa Freitag

This year's story of your adventures with Kurt and Scott was great fun to read. Thanks!

© Clay Colwell

How do we write our zines? Well, I start out by reading the current issue of *Turbo* and drawing little “x” marks in the columns whenever I feel the urge to comment. Sometimes I add a few key words to remind myself where I wanted to take a response. I

may or may not write my own comments directly after having left these cryptic reminders, but I don't re-read the apa, and sometimes, if too much time has passed, those little “x”s and cryptic comments utterly defeat me and my comments are shorter that month because I've skipped some of the more confusing marked passages.

I usually look for ways to work personal “news” into my comments, rather than writing introductory essays. Once I start writing I tend to write in one rush. I sit down at the computer and don't get up until I'm done. It's mostly first draft. This is typical for me: I like to finish things once I've begun. Scott, on the other hand, tends to write his comments over a week's time. At that point, we have two computer files, which I collate on the computer. I try to vary the order of our comments from month to month. We used this same method in writing our trip report two months ago. We drew up a list of topics, divided them between ourselves, and brought the two files together a day before deadline. (That's when we realized that we'd written too much....) Then, I lay the out the text and Scott proofreads. Then it's off to press.

I actually like the kind of quasi-fictional historical writing like *And the Band Played On*, and *Midnight in the Garden of Good and Evil*, or the very fine novel on which Spielberg's movie was based: *Schindler's List*. If it's done well, it breathes life into an account of historical events. Of course, one never forgets that this is only one person's view of how it *might* have happened, but you know, I think that is true for all historical accounts, including those that don't include fictional dialog in which it's easier to forget the role that authorial assumptions and biases play.

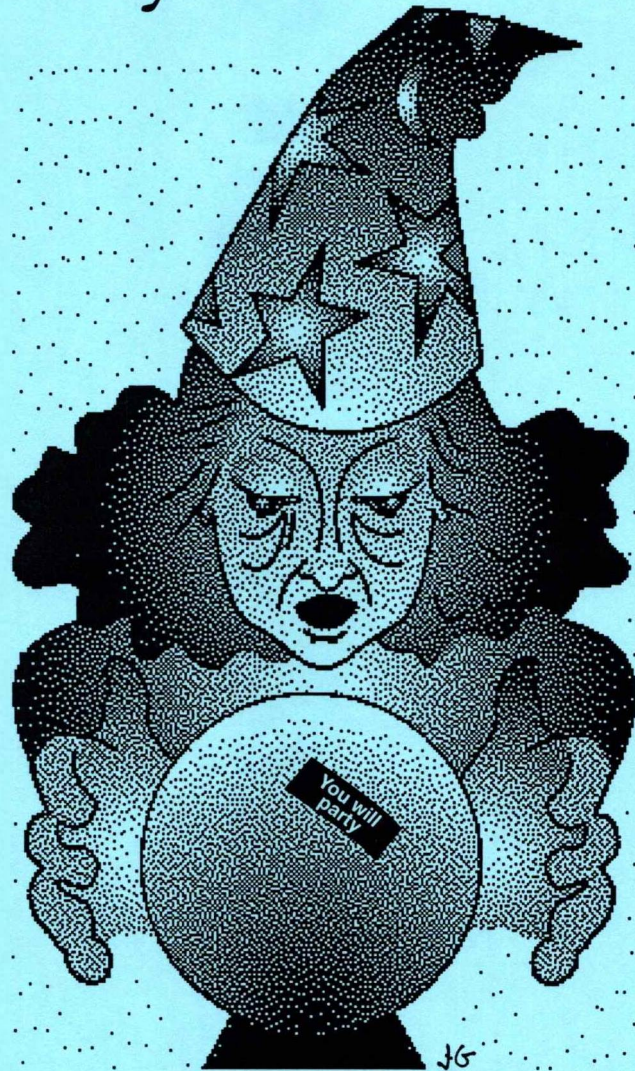
© Andy Hooper

Thanks for the great comments on our trip report, Andy. Sorry for all the negative material about rain, but I still prefer to stay dry when I'm camping.

Did you see the episode of *Nova*, in which the new scientific discoveries you referred to (about the role CO₂ has had in the ice ages), are connected to the Himalayan uplift by the Indian subcontinent? What a fascinating show that was. That's exactly the sort of stuff I *lived* for when I was taking geography classes at the UW.

Jeanne Gomoll
14 November 1997
(Scott will be back next month)

I predict . . .



*You will party till dawn at
Scott & Jeanne's Annual New Year's Bash
8:00 pm*

Wednesday, December 31

There will be champagne, beer, cider & root beer.

If you prefer another beverage, bring it along!

There will be snacks, too.

Please call us if you'd like to bring food.

Fancy dress encouraged, not required.



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