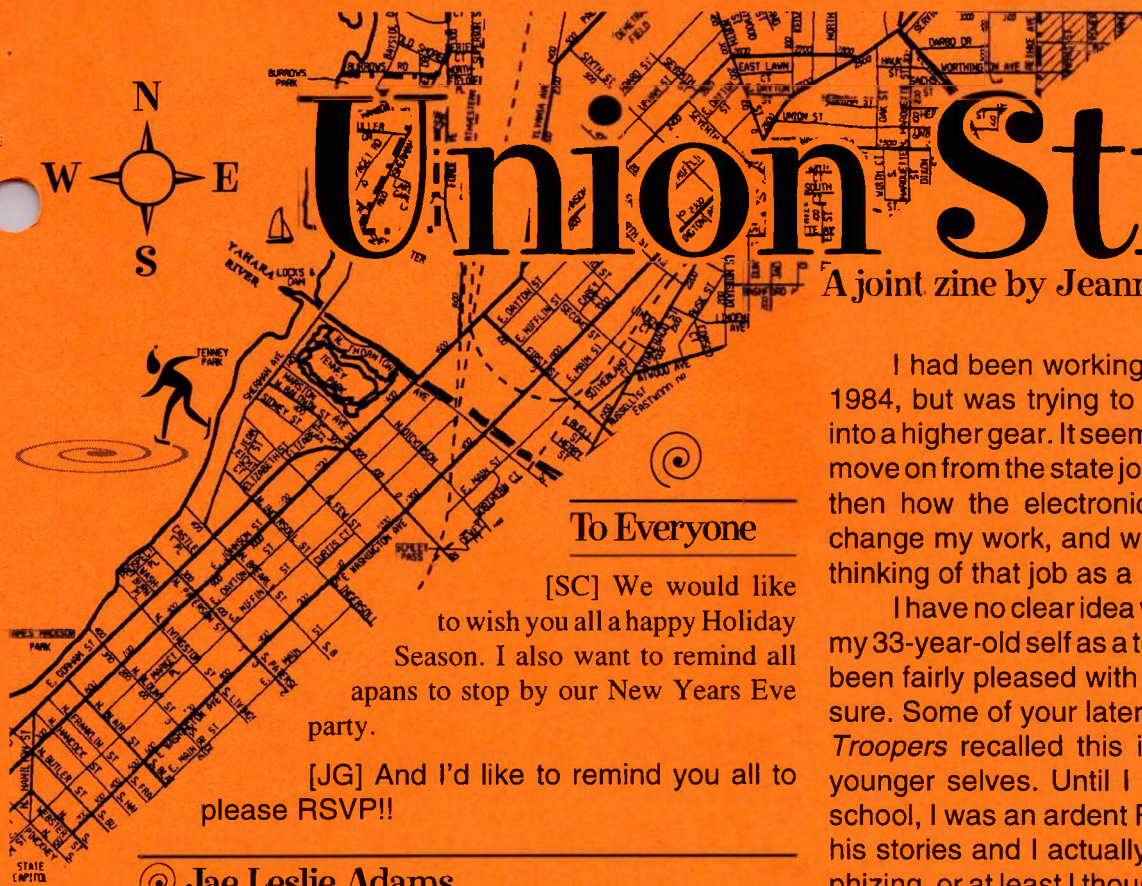


Union Street

A joint zine by Jeanne Gomoll & Scott Custis



To Everyone

[SC] We would like to wish you all a happy Holiday Season. I also want to remind all apans to stop by our New Years Eve party.

[JG] And I'd like to remind you all to please RSVP!!

© Jae Leslie Adams

[SC] "Sisters of the Page" (in *Turbo* #136) was a lovely story. Thanks for sharing it with us.

1984? I turned 28 in May of that year. A few months later I moved out of my Dad's house and took an apartment in Cedar Rapids. I was working as a correctional officer (for the second time already in my "career") in an odd facility outside Iowa City called the Iowa Medical and Classification Center. Late in the summer I wrangled a weekends-off schedule at work when I agreed to temporarily fill a vacant sergeant position without getting promoted or more money. On one of my weekends off in October my cousin Spike invited me to a party at a motel in Coralville where she was attending something called a "science fiction convention." I met Jeanne. My life changed.

I thought APT's *Cyrano de Bergerac* was one of the two or three very best things I've seen them do. I loved it.

Thanks also for the review of *Starship Troopers*. I appreciated all the reviews of this movie submitted by apans. Jeanne and I have not seen it and, judging by the comments we've seen, don't regret missing it.

[JG] In 1984, I was 33 years old. It was the year I met Scott, and it's the ironic unlikeliness of the conjunction of that ominous literary date and the wonderful event of falling in love, that keeps me from forgetting at least this particular number.

I had been working at the DNR for 5 years in 1984, but was trying to shift my free-lance career into a higher gear. It seemed to me that I'd eventually move on from the state job. I wouldn't have predicted then how the electronic revolution was going to change my work, and would eventually lead to my thinking of that job as a long-term commitment.

I have no clear idea what I might have fortold for my 33-year-old self as a teenager, but I think I'd have been fairly pleased with the reality. Maybe. I'm not sure. Some of your later comments about *Starship Troopers* recalled this idea of the "otherness" of younger selves. Until I was a sophomore in high school, I was an ardent Robert Heinlein fan. I loved his stories and I actually liked his political philosophizing, or at least I thought I did. Somewhere in my second or third year of high school, I convinced an English teacher to let me write a term paper on Heinlein, and the process of thinking and writing about his ideas turned my stomach. I was suddenly aghast that I'd liked him so much and for so long. I think, now, that what I liked then was the sense of competence with which he clothed his main characters, the ability they had of knowing how the world works and how to make lives for themselves like the ones they wanted to live. As a teenager I ached for such competence. But the process of writing out his ideas forced me to think about what Heinlein was saying about other, not-so-competent people, and for the first time I had to admit which group in which he would have classified me.

I read *Starship Troopers* once with complete absorption. It seemed like a fine ideal to recognize voting as a privilege — something not only worth dying for, but reserved for those who actually take that risk. When I read it again, I began thinking about all the other ways one can live for liberty and began wondering why Heinlein felt that no life—no matter how sacrificing, how inspiring or how difficult—was relevant if the person did not actually risk death in the process of killing others So many of his books can be interpreted as having the underlying theme that only few people are worthwhile.

So, while I heard that much of the movie made from *Starship Troopers* had departed from the text, I wasn't very eager to revisit that story. I was actually glad the reviews were mostly bad, which gave me another excuse to avoid it.

I think it's great that you and Matt read *Starship Troopers* before seeing the movie. I don't know how old I was before I realized how the process of making a movie from a book distorts most the original material. It seems to me that a lot of kids automatically think the movie version is more interesting than the book. But just being able to say "That wasn't in the book," might help Matt to keep wondering about what he might be missing in the written versions.

Seen from the customers' point of view, that rampaging robot-artist in the Art Fair on the Square T-shirt, might represent the whole monstrous event which involves walking several miles in little baby steps, shoulder to shoulder with a huge crowd of people, often in extreme heat or rain, around and around, hour after hour. The artwork I see in the first hour always gets me more excited than the stuff I shuffle past in the third or fourth hour. (Maybe this is related to apa collation order?) That t-shirt design hit a nerve with me; I liked it a lot, though I can see that, from an exhibitor's perspective the image might convey a different message.

What a distressing story about the street person and the Steep 'n' Brew manager. I really hate Madison's new anti-loitering law; basically it feels like we're saying: "We don't care about poor people's lives. We just don't want to see them."

© Tracy Benton

[SC] In your comment to Jeanne on *Contact*, I liked the focus on the political and moral issues. When it comes to science fiction, the technical and scientific stuff is never as interesting to me as the characters and moral/political issues.

In your comment to me on supervising, I agree that it can really suck but I may not be able to shut the door completely on that career avenue. At DOT, my options for improving my income are pretty limited if I elect to rule out management permanently (that is assuming, of course, that I would ever be selected for a promotion). I also have to admit that I can't personally complain about the supervisors I've had since I've been there. My bureau chief is kind of a dinosaur, but, other than him, I've been lucky.

[JG] Go ahead, ask more questions about type and layout. I think it's fun to talk about this stuff. By the way, I like your Art Nouveau quote boxes.

Lets do a pie and ice cream comparison after the holidays. Sounds fun. And sure, I'll make the pie.

Yeah, there were some logistic problems with *Contact*, I agree. For instance, I didn't believe that the protagonist would have failed to demand that she be allowed to listen to the recording of the "static" made during her voyage. She was the consummate scientist up to that point; there's no reason for her to have gone mystic until she had no more data to study. Nevertheless, this film stands in my mind as an outstanding, fine SF film, one of the best. *2001* had some logistic problems, too, but the ideas of the movie, never before dealt with on film, were so mind-blowing, that I didn't mind. The same thing happened for me with *Contact*. I was really thrilled that this movie was content to explore the astonishing sense of wonder catalyzed by the deceptively simple, single discovery that We Are Not Alone in the universe — when most SF movies figure they have to show us alien guts and weird high tech before we stop yawning. For the duration of the movie, I recaptured the sense of excitement with SF that I felt when I was just a kid, just discovering the field. I felt it again the second time I went to see it, and I suspect I will feel the urge to go back again eventually for more.

I loved "Catalog Facts" from the Mt. Horeb Mustard Museum! In fact, I'm tempted to outright steal it for the Potlatch program book that I've agreed to lay out. (changing it slightly to be relevant to a program book and giving proper credit to Mt Horeb's Mustard Museum, of course.) Will you promise not to report me to the MHMM?

© Vijay Bowen

[SC] Nice cover for #136, thanks.

I want to add my voice to those pleading for a chance to eventually read your fanzine article on the movie-making experience. Sounds fascinating.

© Jim Brooks

[SC] On your zine for #136, sorry to hear about the breakup. I hope you are coping with it and getting through the Holidays OK. Don't forget that you have a lot of friends.

I enjoyed the retrospective, particularly the part where you publicly re-enlisted for another 60 issues with us.

On your zine for #137, turtle? What's this all about?

On your comment to me on fashion and style, I'll have to get back to you and **Georgie** on this after I have

taken the time to look back over what I was originally blathering on about. Thanks also for your excellent comments on *Starship Troopers*.

[JG] OK, please, please, please tell us why you asked all of us whether or not we were turtles. I tried to figure out why you and **Georgie** were definitely turtles and the rest of us were questionable, and why **Heather** might want you to stop asking her. Hard shell, good soup ingredient, layer of eggs, amphibian, goofy faces . . . none of these characteristics seemed to explain your obsessive interest. But I suspect it involves a pun. So tell us, please.

What a great story of driving on the edge of storms. I don't know, but I suspect that if I did much of that kind of driving, I might lose my romantic feeling for the calm before and after storms.

I wonder if the death of Elvis and Marilyn can also be seen as a break in a shared cultural fantasy. If they had lived to old age, would their images be as powerful?

© Bill Dyer

[SC] You had me cheering a bit after I read your piece on the Egyptian exhibit. Your points about the importance we often place on preserving the memories of the rich and powerful to the exclusion of ordinary people, resounded strongly with me.

[JG] I was amused when I compared your comments about the ancient Egyptian museum exhibit and **Georgie's** later comments on historical fiction. You ponder the surprising similarities between ancient folks and ourselves. Georgie chastises us for assuming too often that characters in historical fiction should be just like us, only wearing funny clothes. Still, I think you both make interesting points.

© Jim Frenkel

[SC] I thought you pubbed one of your best zines last month. I really enjoyed it.

[JG] Great zine, Jim. I really enjoyed your description of Josh's and your bedtime reading ritual. What a wonderful thing to do. Most folks stop reading to their kids when the kids are able to read themselves, but it can be a very nice thing to have someone read out loud to us, no matter how old we are. Scott and I like to read to one another on road trips.

Thanks for explaining what Jewish New Year, the 10 days of Penitence, and Yom Kipur is about.

I agree, there's something very familiar about Jewish guilt traditions for me, as an ex-Catholic, even though I left the church before I really got into the confession thing. (I declared myself to be an atheist around 7th grade, and most 12-year-olds haven't done enough really bad things to find confession a psychological relief.) I remember dealing with confession like a homework assignment, preparing in advance so that I could present a respectable list of sins to the priest.

Thanks, too, for the fascinating description of the Frankfurt Book Fair.

© Hope Kiefer & Karl Hailman

[JG] You may not be giving Forrest the kind of vacation experiences you and Karl remember as kids. But Forrest will probably fondly remember his vacations at SF conventions (and perhaps with just as educational a result), not to mention his chances to visit Hawaii. While I was growing up, my dad never had more than 2 weeks of leave in any given year, and we were pretty poor until later in my high school years — so much so that there were months when making the mortgage payment was often problematic for my folks. But mom and dad always managed to do at least one week-long family vacation with us every year. We camped often because it was one of the cheapest ways to do a week-long vacation with a big family.

I've never seen an ad for a feminist or left-wing check design, but you can print your own checks out of Quicken, which allows you to place your own graphic or message in the corners of the check. They say you have to buy their checks which are pretty expensive I think, but there's nothing stopping anyone from printing checks on regular paper and cutting them apart with a scissors. They're just as legal that way.

© Pat Hario

[JG] Your comments to **Heather** about the respectful visits you'd like to make to Milton's, or other English author's grave sites, got me thinking about what a Graceland-like development might have been like if one had been constructed for Milton after his death. The image was just too weird, although **Georgie** and her Milwaukee friends might consider it for next year's Trick or Treat production.

Thanks for sharing with me your graphic trick for making uneven borders. That non-computer look jumped out at me, but I'm afraid it didn't even occur

to me that you were doing it with traditional cut and paste methods. I kept trying to think how you might have gotten such an effect electronically.

You mentioned to **Vicki** that you regularly carry over 5-10 days of vacation from one year to the next. For the last few years, I've been socking time away into a Sabbatical account. We're allowed to save a maximum of 40 hours a year, which — at year's end — I will have done for 4 years, for a total of 160 hours. I have no idea what I am going to do with that time, but it makes me feel very happy every time I think about the fact that I could take off a whole month any time I wanted to do so, and get paid.

© Bill Humphries

[JG] I enjoyed your zine a lot this month, Bill.

I've read about the studies that show positive health results when prayer is involved, though I've never felt that such studies said anything definitive about any supernatural forces. I'm completely convinced that positive thoughts, whether your own or possibly those of others around you, have some significant, positive effect on mental well-being. And I think it's pretty much a given to even the most traditional of the medical establishment that a positive attitude (or some form of visualization) can help some people's health. Suzette Haden Elgin writes about this phenomenon a lot in her zines. One of the things that I've been thinking about a lot lately, is her worry that breast self-examinations might be having a negative effect on some women's health. Think about it. Once a month we women are urged to carefully massage and probe our breasts, looking for . . . what? Cancer. Once a month we focus on our bodies, touching ourselves carefully and envision the possibility of a fatal disease. Not the best thing to do if one believes in the healthy properties of positive thought, and the corollary of unhealthy properties of negative thoughts. You've probably read the studies that suggest that people with bad tempers tend to be more susceptible to heart disease and other ailments than more mellow folks. I'm trying to think about being healthy, now, instead of tumors, as I examine myself.

I hope things go well for your mom, Bill, and am very glad to hear that her prognosis is good.

I was surprised to hear that your temper has gotten worse since moving to California. So, the mellow California atmosphere hasn't calmed you down, hmm?

Steve Swartz wasn't angry at you for offering condolences on his divorce. He was angry at how

you phrased those condolences, e.g., telling him that you felt your own strength in your marriage was partially derived from the continuation of the marriages around you. In effect, you were telling him that he was hurting *you* by divorcing. At that point in a relationship break-up, no one needs to be told they should feel guilty for *something more* . . . I'm sure he'd be a lot less touchy about hearing something like that now, but at the time I think it was not a surprising reaction from him.

© Barbara Jenson

[SC] "*I find myself thinking I should do it right or not do it, rather than continuing as the half-hearted member I have become.*" I want to encourage you to stay with us in *Turbo*. You are a valued contributor, but more than that, you are a good friend. There are a lot of busy people in the apa and most of us, at one time or another, have had to scale back our activity for a time while dealing with work demands or family issues or just burnout. You should give yourself some space too, and then come back to us with your full attention when the load is lighter. As long as you find yourself reading and caring about the apa and contributing what you can, what more can we ask?

[JG] Thanks for getting back to me on some of the conversation we were having on class and families. Maybe we can continue in person and in more depth the next time we get together. I've gotten quite a few requests for a panel on class at the next WisCon. Maybe we could develop this topic into something for WisCon 22?

I hope you don't drop out, Barb. I've really enjoyed your contributions so far, and would hate to lose you from the apa!

© carl juarez

[SC] My experience with house mice is that in order to really get rid of it, you have to kill it. The "humane" way means taking it for a very long drive away in order to insure that it won't find it's way back again, which will probably result in the animal's death (by slower or more gruesome means) anyway.

[JG] "Steel Beach, *John Varley* — *now this is a novel*," you wrote. Yes, a *bad* novel, says I. Want to talk about it?

 © Karen Karavanic

[SC] Apa as quilt, I like that.

Cool description of the Grace Hopper Conference. That sounds like a great idea and a good time. You seemed to be pretty upbeat about it. I assume that by the end you felt that things were improving in the CS field for women. How did you feel CS presentations differed when they were less male oriented?

[JG] I sure would like to hear more about how the mostly-women conference was different from the mostly-men conferences for you. Were the presentations themselves different? Did the audience members attack less? What . . . ?

 © Ruth Merrill

[SC] Congratulations on the new job. You work right across the street from me. I'm in the DOT building.

[JG] Though I still haven't seen an episode of *Zena*, I am thrilled to hear stories about little boys pretending to be Zena. It goes against the much more common phenomenon of boys not even wanting to read books or go to films in which the main character is a girl. I sure hope things are changing. Congratulations on the new job!

 © Lynne Ann Morse

[SC] Very interesting comments on Irish Presidential politics. This may be a dumb question, but I take it Mary Robinson must not be running for reelection? If not, that's probably a shame. She's even gained some notice in the US. Your analysis of the other candidates sounded sensible to me, if not to your local friends. I used to encourage Martin Smith to write about British politics when he was in *Turbo* and I extend the same invitation to you to keep us informed about Irish politics. We get such poor international news coverage over here that it is refreshing to read about what is happening elsewhere.

[JG] Thanks for the description of Irish politics; I really would like to continue hearing your perceptions. You may be considered a bit of a naive newcomer yet by the natives, but you've already added to my sad store of knowledge of current Irish politics (made up mostly of a couple newspaper articles and *All Things Considered* pieces about Mary Robinson, and a smattering of information about the IRA and Sinn Fein. I am fascinated by this idea that I've heard several times now — that Mary Robinson's term of office redefined the presidency as a "woman's job." I wonder if something like that could ever happen

here in the U.S., if a woman did a spectacularly good job at a high office; that her contribution would be subtly discounted and redefine the office as "women's work." Maybe if a woman was elected vice-president: that's a mostly ceremonial position, right? I could imagine the guys saying that it was best filled by a woman from now on. Right away, people are going to expect the VP to serve coffee, no doubt.

 © Jim Nichols

[SC] Your comments about *Starship Troopers* fit in well with the others I read by *Turbo* movie critics. Yet despite all the bad things you said about it, I think you still liked it. Right? Or were you saying that it was just a faithful adaptation of the book? My feeling about this movie is that it is nice that so many of you went to it so Jeanne and I don't have to.

How did the Christmas concert go?

 © Kim & Kathi Nash

[JG] I sympathize with Liana. I absolutely hated cooking while I lived at home and from your description, acted very much like Liana does whenever my mother tortured me by requiring me to fix dinner. I changed my mind when I got my own apartment, but until then, I had it firmly fixed in my mind that I wanted to be different from my mom and that meant not doing anything that she did well. (I've held firm with a refusal to sew, but that no longer has anything to do with mom.)

 © Mike Peterson

[SC] I like your Thurberesque illustrations.

Jeanne and I also prefer Northern climates, but I believe you are the first person I have ever met who actually prefers below zero weather. I like it warm inside, cool (but not too brutal) outside with lots of snow. And now that I no longer have to drive my car to work, there can be lots and lots of snow.

I work the day shift in a state office building. A spirited game of keep-away breaking out in our office would probably have witnesses fainting dead away from shock even before the supervisors had a chance to go ballistic.

Does Tracy really have to yell at you guys?

With all due respect to **Jim Brooks** and the **Nashes**, who are always very funny, the biggest laugh I had in the apa last month was your wonderful comparison of joining *Turbo* with starting mid-semester at new high school. That little piece was a hoot.

[JG] I loved your description of life in kindergarten, er, I mean at work. Also your comparison of joining an apa with the experience of starting in a new school. Don't worry too much about not fitting in; all you have to do is tell Iowa jokes and everyone will love you.

© Michael Rawdon

[SC] In your comment to Georgie about *The Full Monty*, I have a similar, though not as strong, reaction to embarrassing stories. I sometimes find it hard to sit still and watch sitcoms where the main character is humiliated and, at the movies, I am much more likely to close my eyes at the climax of an intensely embarrassing moment than during gory or scary scenes. But it's not a big enough thing to prompt me to walk out.

[JG] The guys in *The Full Monty* recovered their self-confidence with this risky project. The point of the movie is that as embarrassing a situation as they found themselves on the runway, being unemployed and not respected was much worse. A *great* movie.

© Vicki Rosenzweig

[SC] Regarding your comment to me about the military in a comment I made to Clay, I was being a bit sarcastic, but my sentiments were fairly expressed. I look at all the military scandals lately (there was a new one on *60 Minutes* last week about a hospital aide at an Air Force hospital who probably poisoned as many as 22 babies there, but he was never prosecuted or seriously investigated by the Air Force) and I see an embattled institution that is desperately flailing around trying to regain control at any cost. They certainly are willing to cast out homosexuals or sweep gross misconduct under the rug or overreact to violations of outdated policies if it means the institution as a whole survives. At a time when the actual need for our enormous military industrial complex is so questionable, the institution is desperate to insure its own survival. If that means steamrolling over a few good men or women to do it, that's not a problem.

© Georgie Schnobrich

[SC] Delightful description of your Halloween she-nigans at Lee Schneider's place.

[JG] You wrote, "*Me, I read history and historical fiction to get inside other world views.*" That's exactly the idea behind our panel last year, "Jane Austin is as Alien as Mars." It worked out really well, I think, to consider a period writer's fiction as a portal into another reality. It's my opinion that science

fiction readers can sometimes bring a stfnal attitude to other activities, including the reading of history or historical fiction. Maybe we should have another panel at next year's WisCon based on this idea. Fill in the blank with your favorite author/portal: "_____ is as Alien as Mars." Any suggestions?

Your comments about Barry Longyear's amusing fantasy — that his characters unionize against his will — remind me of a novel I just finished, called *Preternatural*, by Margaret Wander Bonanno. I highly recommend it. The Border's book discussion group will be talking about it in January. Don't mind the silly cover art or the ecstatic blurb from Lieutenant Ohura; it's a fine and extremely hilarious SF novel all *about* science fiction writing. And its main theme is the question of whether the author or her characters are actually writing the story. (Some of her characters are telepathic aliens from another planet who really are in contact with her and themselves think *they* are writing the novel, not her. In fact, they may have invented *her*.) What makes this novel even more delightful for SF fans is that the author is thoroughly familiar with SF conventions . . . and cons, as well. The author's send-ups of several very well known SF writers and actors are wildly funny. Oh, and there are lots of puns, too. I haven't mentioned that to Scott, yet, but he's already started to read it, and so I guess I can't keep it from him any longer.

A more authentic brain jello mold? How about using plain tapioca with extra gelatin?

I loved the code phrase, "At least the Packers won." Very useful.

No, I haven't read Vonda's new novel yet, but I will. Thanks for the recommendation.

What a great story of your Halloween production! I'd really like to see it in action some year. The kid who returned for more candy because he "forgot" he'd been there before, reminded me of the *Men in Black* TV ad that came out shortly after the re-release of the *Star Wars* trilogy. The *MiB* commercial featured the guys spraying that amnesiac light beam at the camera and then, like the *Star Wars* ad, a voice said, "See it again — for the first time."

© Michael Shannon

[SC] Congratulations on progress flying solo. I also enjoyed your adventures playing paintball. I think that sounds like fun.

[JG] Congratulations on your first solo, and best wishes to both you and Lorelle!

—Jeanne Gomoll & Scott Custis, 12/19/97