



Union Street

A joint zine by Jeanne Gomoll & Scott Custis

© Scott Free

I haven't even begun writing comments but I can already predict that this issue of *Union Street* is going to be a big one. That's because I've seen how many pages my WisCon 22 conreport fills, having published it in another apa earlier this month. On top of that, I've recently caught up on my reading of *Turbo* back issues that I put aside during the pre-WisCon programming round-up that coincided horribly with an extremely busy season in the DNR publishing and design section. Whether I manage to do mailing comments on those *Turbo* back issues remains to be seen. I'll do what I can, but won't try again if I fail this issue.

Scott saved our *Turbo* membership through the last four issues. This time, it's my turn. This issue is "Scott Free;" written solely by me, Jeanne Gomoll

© Official Business

Scott and I enthusiastically endorse **Jae Adam's** nomination of herself for Turbo OE. Whoohoo! Time for good times and calligraphed business pages.

Turbo No. 143

© Steve Swartz

Is it my imagination, or have *Turbo* apans been talking about morality these past months more often than usual? Here you are writing about the moral ambiguities of lying. At the same time, **Lisa Freitag** purposely tries to tempt me into participation in another abortion debate (on the flimsy excuse that she'd enjoy more exciting debates filling *Turbo* pages), using personally defined moralities

as the bait. **Karen Karavanic** considers what she/we owe to homeless people. And **Georgie** raises the subject of moralistic relativity with respect to feminist principles as applied to left vs. right wing responses to President Clinton's problems. And a first-season episode of *Babylon 5* has everyone talking about the relativity of moral judgments implicit in the refusal of medical intervention when one's religious convictions forbid such intervention. **Vicki Rosenzweig** has had some interesting things to say on that subject. And that doesn't even touch on the subject of computer platforms!

First of all, I have to say, that it feels weird to be writing *this* mailing comment to you, here in *this* apa, rather than in a certain *other* apa in which your essay would summon up a great deal more recognized context than it does here. Rather like discussing one person's perspective of one tiny piece of Minicon politics with an on-line group of non-Minneapolis people who, for the most part, have missed all the fireworks.

Shall we consider lying in a relativistic setting or an absolutist one? That depends, I guess. On the one hand, I have lied in situations which have not made me feel guilty; on the other hand there are situations, for myself, where I believe it would be absolutely wrong to lie.

The Rilke quotation was indeed lovely. I think there's a great deal of truth to the idea that no matter how close two human beings are to each other, that there is still an essential, unavoidable distance between them. But I can't think of any situations right now where I believe as you say you do, that dishonesty between very close friends or lovers preserves or honors the essential distances that Rilke describes. In fact, I think the substance of that distance can be defined mainly as trust. The "muddying" of that distance, as you call it, translates to me a diminishment of trust.

For me . . . and if I forget to write this phrase often enough, please feel free to fill it in for yourself. In this matter, I don't feel comfortable about making global statements. Anyway, *for me*, lying is permissible when there is little or nothing at stake. For instance, I most frequently lie to tighten up a story I am telling or writing, or to make a story more funny. Often times, a story comes together in my head after I've noticed some parallels or amusing ironies about a number of real experiences that—if I were to tell them in their actual sequence or

This issue of *Union Street* is brought to you by Jeanne Gomoll and Scott Custis, who live at 2825 Union Street, Madison, Wisconsin 53704. 608-246-8857. ArtBrau@globaldialog.com. *Union Street* #96, Obsessive Press #207, Peerless Press #98. *Union Street* was created using a Macintosh Quadra 840av, Pagemaker 6.0, Illustrator 7.0, Photoshop 3.5, and a Laserwriter Select 360. Display font is Elroy. All contents copyright ©1998 by Scott Custis and Jeanne Gomoll, June 1998 for the *Turbo-Charged Party Animal* #144.

without exaggeration, would not convey the insight or humor that my mental rearrangement sparked. Garrison Keiller calls such re-sequencing and exaggeration "art," and I must confess I agree with him, though I can certainly conceive of situations when such seemingly harmless "art" might lead to hurt feelings or even genuine damage.

I have lied to avoid social situations or a day or two at work that I wanted to miss. I have lied to avoid what I anticipated would be an unfair and angry (often parental) response to my honesty. In these examples, the stakes are higher than just telling well-made stories, and thus I often feel a bit guilty and attempt to make amends later. I do not, however, feel that such lies have preserved or honored something good between me and the person to whom I have lied. Rather, I think that I have not valued the trust between us and have not cared much if I damaged that trust. And in all cases, some damage was incurred.

On the other end of the scale, however, when I think about lying to Scott, with whom I hope to spend the rest of my life and care to an enormous extent about the quality of the space between us, i.e., of his trust of me and visa versa, lies cease being tricky or useful. That's not to say that I haven't told Scott more rearranged stories than practically anyone else on the planet because I like to entertain him. But I can think of no lie I might tell him about the substance of our relationship that would not feel like a monstrous violation. It's hard for me even to fantasize about being attracted to someone else because my daydream gets immediately overwhelmed with a mental plot digression (Does Scott know? What would happen if I told him?) and any fleeting seconds of erotic pleasure are completely drowned in sharp feelings of loss and pain. It's not worth it.

For me, lies might disguise the fact that trust has in fact been violated in that Rilke-described distance between couples, but it doesn't change the fact that trust has been violated. The person who lies might feel it is worthwhile to lie in order not to lose their friend or lover altogether (thinking that the other person will react unfairly to the truth and withdraw altogether), but if it happens that the truth would have led to exactly that loss, then the liar maintains their relationship under false pretenses. A lie protects the liar's status quo, and makes (to me) the unreasonable assumption that the status quo would be valued more than the truth by the person to whom they are lying if that person were able to make a choice.

Amazingly, this ties into the discussion of the *Babylon 5* episode that people are still talking about in *Turbo*. The issue that bothered me about that story and about the analogous stories in the real world has a lot to do with making moral decisions for *other people* based on assumptions about what those other people would feel. I have no objections, for instance, if a person refuses medical treatment for themselves on whatever philosophical ground they choose—Christian Science or right-to-die or anything else. My problem with most of these

stories is that they always seem to be about situations in which one person is drawing a philosophical line in the ground that affects *someone else*. The parents who declare their faith in god, but want to demonstrate it with the life of their daughter or son, for instance. I feel similarly about the justification of a lie on the basis that *someone else* will supposedly be better off if they are deceived than if they are told the truth. I'm not saying that this isn't actually the case in some instances. Indeed, I'm sure that some people would actually choose not to know the truth about a partner's adultery, for instance. But I would not trust my own judgment if I stood to gain security or avoid pain by a lie. On the other hand, I might feel all right about a lie that actually diminished my life and protected the life of someone I cared for. (But maybe that's just my Catholic upbringing.)

In the last paragraphs of your essay, you asked about people who are absolutist about the immorality of lying, "Do they believe that talk is so central to communication that no lie can be balanced by other kinds of communication? My question back at you is, do you believe that talking is the only way to lie?"

Welcome back, Steve.

© Michael Shannon

Thanks for the description of a trivia tournament. I've been piecing together an image for years based on stuff **Pat Hario** or **Jim Brooks** have mentioned about the tournament, but this gave me a more complete picture. It made me wonder: Do you have a computer down there in the basement to run Internet searches? I would imagine that many contestants make use of the web as a major reference. If you don't have web access, do you feel handicapped by the groups that are using the Internet?

© Bill Humphries

I'm sorry to hear that your mom is back in the hospital. There have been too many friends and friends of friends recently, in the hospital.

There have certainly been other male singers who were heartthrobs well before Sinatra and Elvis. In the early 20th century, opera singer, Enrico Caruso, caused women to swoon in the street as they waited outside theaters to catch a glimpse of him as he left. Well, agreed, Caruso isn't a pop singer, but he certainly wrote some of the code for the other singer/heartthrobs to follow.

© Clay Colwell

What a horrible interaction you and Sean had with the police (described in a comment to **Georgie**)! Did anything come of your complaint? Here in Madison, there is a lot of criticism of how official complaints get officially buried in official police files.

No, sorry, I don't think I've seen or even heard of the movie, *Switch*. I'll look for it.

 © Jim Brooks

I don't say this often, as I seem to have an unreasonable resistance to poetry . . . but I like your poetry. Thanks, Jim.

And you're dating again! Congratulations! Have fun! But, Ahem!: you wrote that the "review [of the date] will have to wait..." and then at the end of your zine when you wrote the reviews for several other things that had to wait, you didn't tell us anything about that date with the New Richmond woman. That's false advertising.

Have you never noticed pockets on women's dressy clothes, Jim? Often they're purposely sewn shut, or they're fake, or they're too teeny tiny for anything but a child's hands, or they're sewn partway shut so that one can only fit ones hands in up to the first knuckles. Apparently fashion designers don't want to take a chance on women actually using their pockets and ruining the lines of the garment with a bunch of keys or a hand. When **Vicki Rosenzweig** refers to the right size pockets, I assume she means hand-size pockets.

 © Karen Karavanic

What an excellent piece on how you react to homeless people and your notions of safety on Madison streets vs. New York City streets! Thank you. I would hate to live in a place where I felt constantly unsafe. If that's the cost of living in a large city like New York, I would prefer not to live there. But I wonder how much of our feelings of being safe in urban areas have more to do with media coverage and exploitation of rare incidents, than it has to do with realistic assessments. I think the Madison papers did a fairly good job in covering the bus fire, for instance, and didn't attempt to demonize a whole class of people, but talked specifically about the situation that may have led this one person to act as he did. (I happened to ride the bus the very next day and there were, if anything, *more* people riding the bus than usual. One man was stopped when he tried to take aboard a McDonald's cup (of soda, I assume, since it had a straw sticking out of it) by the bus driver who was no doubt abiding by his supervisors' demand that all drivers strictly enforce the no-food or drink rule on busses. The man made a joke, obviously clueless as to why it might be that he was being treated differently than usual. In contrast, I remember reading about the rape and assault of the woman in Central Park as part of a generalized comment on the "kind" of people out there. The media even created a word, "wilding," which sounds as if there were an elaborate sport with teams and rules and tournaments

 © Heatherayne Brooks

So, you say you accepted a new job offer that's the best paying job you've ever had with benefits galore, but you don't say *what* the job is. Do tell!

 © Georgie Schnobrich

You captured a lot of the ambivalence I also feel, in your essay about the right wing call for feminist outrage against Clinton. My first thought when the attacks on feminists began to be made by various religious right wing nuts that feminists had inconsistently and unfairly supported Anita Hill but not Paula Jones, was that all this sounded curiously familiar. For a long time, we've cringed at phrases like "the feminist line," or "the feminist agenda." (The WisCon 22 t-shirt proclaims WisCon the home of "the feminist cabal," which—in part—represents a joking response to expectations that there is a monolithic set of opinions and behaviors upon which all feminists agree.) The right wing has always been frustrated by the feminist movement when it fails to be predictable, when individual voices are respected as much as representatives of its various groups. But that's one of the great strengths of feminism, in my opinion, its diversity of people and ideas. The right wing would like to orchestrate women's response and then laugh at us like your professor did ("Obedient little bitches, aren't you?"). But I'm still waiting to be convinced that Clinton's escapades were not consensual, that they were in fact harassment that injured the careers of the women involved. The fact that Paula Jones turned down several opportunities to talk to representatives of N.O.W., my feeling that Monica Lewinsky's charges, if true, only described a very sleazy but nevertheless consensual relationship that did not damage her career, as well as other things, keep me from being outraged as I was when Anita Hill testified. If Clinton hangs himself by lying to the grand jury, that's another thing, and I won't have too much sympathy for him in that case, except that I really really dislike the free reign Kenneth Starr has to peer into anyone and everyones private life if it might help to uncover more dirt about Clinton. And I really dislike it when people compare the Clinton's scandals to Watergate. Watergate was about the Constitution, about the Bill of Rights and nothing in any of this mess approaches the seriousness of Nixon's attack on the Constitution.

On the other hand, I've lost a lot of respect for Clinton, not only as a result of the sex scandals that (at best) show him too arrogant to even bother about being discreet, but in the sleazy, slippery way he's turned his back on so many other political ideals. The latter more than the former, in fact.

It's hard to believe this discussion about clothing and fashion and choice is still going on! I only have a little more to add to it. I would like to live in a world in which what one wore was interpreted by everyone as a reflection of one's own individual style. Period. In this ideal world, some people would be applauded for the artistic or dramatic sense revealed by their garb. Everyone would

wear whatever they liked and would be judged not by the cost or fashionableness of those clothes, but by their skills, personality and behavior. But I suspect that such a world would be a world without class divisions, and it's unlikely we will ever achieve such a state. My grandfather was quite dogmatic about his feelings that only farmers should wear blue jeans; for anyone else to wear them in any other setting but a cultivated field was an act of extreme disrespect. Well things move on. Jeans are still considered a fairly casual form of dress, but jeans no longer connote a specific line of work. **Tracy's** description of her workplace, where fairly standard definitions of "dressy" and "informal" do not seem to hold, suggests a chaos that I would actually like to see spread. It's not that I do not accept and understand your (and **Vijay's**) pleasures in wearing corsets and fancy costumes; I certainly enjoy seeing the results as I would a fine piece of art. And I certainly accept the notion of using formal fashions as a way to communicate authority or legitimacy in some circumstances. (Of course! As long as it's a tool one can pick up and put down again.) But I am definitely afraid of a return to the days of my youth when clothing styles were so much more strictly enforced than they are now—by schools, employers and religion—and to a time when clothing styles were defined with overtones of moral judgment by the establishment. My dislike of fashions which hark back to restrictive and confining styles has much less to do with actual disapproval of those styles, than with the fear that we will let go of our freedom so recently won, and allow institutions to bully us into conformity again.

I liked your comparison of mailing comments to a Flying Karamazov Brothers juggling act. I agree with you, it's sometimes thrilling to find a "yct Jeanne" referring to a comment made months and months ago that still lives, still flies through *Turbo* space. I felt something similar when I picked up a copy of Joanna Russ's new book, *What Are We Fighting For? : Sex, Race, Class, and the Future of Feminism*, and discovered my name in the index. It turns out that Russ quoted a chunk of an article of mine, written many years ago, in the last chapter of her book. Wow!

Speaking of long-lived topics, I see we're still discussing borrowing artwork, too. It's ironic that you chose Disney as your example of an artist who you speculate might have wanted his work perpetuated, possibly even more than he might have desired to profit from his images. Disney, in fact, was not much of an artist at all. His sense of *story* is acclaimed by everyone, as well as his business acumen, but not his ability to draw. I seem to recall that he might have had something to do with the artwork in the very earliest black and white cartoons in which Micky Mouse made his debut, but I'm not even certain of that. Disney is known in the business as one of the most arrogant art buyers there ever was. It wasn't until near the end of his life that he finally agreed to give credit to the animators who worked on his films. For

years, Disney Studios perpetuated the myth that Walt himself was the main artist of Disney movies. Animators were refused credit, in part, so no one would try to hire them away from Disney and also so none of them could attain star status and demand better pay and working conditions. (The early studio was a real sweat shop.) You know the Disney signature that Tinkerbell writes in magic dust across the screen on the old *Walt Disney Presents* TV show, and is a part of the older Disney logos? It's not actually Walt Disney's signature. Disney hired an artist to design it for him. To this day, the corporation does not publicize individual animators, no matter how important any one artist's work is on any one film. The idea conveyed to the public is that each film is the product of a team of mostly anonymous animators, and that the most important ingredient in any film is the Disney ambience. When animators like Pixel's John Lasseter (director of *Tin Toy* and *Toy Story*) and Tim Burton (of *The Nightmare Before Christmas* fame) left Disney, they finally started getting the credit for their work they deserved. That's what I mean when I used the word "ironic." Talking about whether or not to ask permission to use work is the other side of the coin of whether artists should be given credit for their work. Disney himself was abominable about refusing credit to the artists who worked for him. You borrow a drawing of Ariel from Disney movies, but you might not even know the artist who actually created her. Disney films still don't make it easy to figure out who the primary artists are, and if Disney were alive I would be willing to bet that he would prefer to be paid for use even if it meant that a character from his movies might not be as widely seen. (The character, "Prisney," with his imprisoned artist, in *Allegro non Tropo* is actually a pretty good satire of how Disney made his movies.)

Last year, my niece Sara asked to watch a video while she and her family were visiting with us. I own quite a few animated videos, most of them Disney, and she picked out *Snow White*. I sat with her for a while watching the movie. After a while she turned to me and asked me a question that was obviously troubling her. "How come," she asked me, "how come you have Walt Disney movies when you don't have any kids?!" Actually it was more of an accusation than a question. I smiled and pointed to the screen where a worn patch of wood was at that moment shown, in intricate detail and complex shadows. "Because I like to look at the artwork," I said. "Look at those shadows! You know, this movie is made up of thousands and thousands of pieces of artwork. And each one of those pieces of artwork was drawn by an artist." Sara looked at me with a completely stunned expression. She had never considered the idea that a person had actually drawn the movies she loved. She knows that I am an artist and suddenly cartoons were personified in a very new way. Sarah was pretty young and I imagined her imagining someone hunched over the table with a big box of Crayolas. She crawled real close to the TV and watched the movie for the next half hour like she'd never seen a

movie before. I think we've all learned to think of the images on the TV and movies, in magazines and billboards as anonymous works of art. Big corporations encourage this perspective for the same reason that Disney hid his animators. But the sad thing to me is that there are individual artists whose names are never known in spite of the fact that their work has become so important to so many people.

There is today a move to actually extend the life of a copyright so that the descendants of an artist can continue to profit by its licensing for 25 years longer than is currently allowed. The specific court case is being led by the survivors and lawyers of George Gershwin's estate. Gershwin's music is due to enter the public domain in a couple years. Recording companies stand to make big profits re-releasing this music without having to pay royalties anymore. But the big financial backers defending artists' rights are big corporations, especially Walt Disney, who wants to keep charging for use of its cultural icons. Artists (and corporations) who back this, argue that it's unfair for a person who builds a house to be able to pass it down to their kids, but not allow an artist who creates an image to be able to do the same thing. Usually, however, it is not the artists' descendants who enjoy posthumous profit, but the corporations who purchased all rights from the artist before that artist knew the worth of their work. *sigh*

In the 1960s, Andy Warhol managed to convince the Campbell's Soup company that his artwork was actually an homage to their line of soups, his favorite food. Recently, Campbell's soup paid Warhol a huge licensing fee to use his images of Campbell's soup cans and boxes for a new line of sheets, towels, and decorations. They've begun a campaign to find the "new Andy Warhol," e.g. someone to translate their logo into a cultural icon again. Talk about irony.

© Cathy Gilligan

Welcome back to the apa, Cathy. It seems that the mechanical world is set against you: You can't leave home but on the other hand, can't trust your home, either. Funny stuff.

© Michael Rawdon

Sorry to hear about all your computer woes. I have had some minor computer woes too, though not on the scale you describe. I'd been saving up a bunch of repairs I wanted to have done till after WisCon. (and praying that none of those problems blew up and took all my WisCon files before the con! I was backing up frequently.) I figured I'd have the repairs done and would then inquire about how far I could have my current computer upgraded. Well, it seems that for the money I would have spent on an upgrade, I'd get only a minor increase in speed and capacity compared to what is now possible in the new G3.

So, I've decided to sell my old 840av and move up to a G3 Mac. Like you, I found the AppleStore on line to be a really convenient way to mix and match system elements that I wanted. With all the Photoshop work I tend to do, I wanted A LOT of Ram, but I didn't much care if I had the av capacity. I certainly never used it with my current machine. So now we're waiting for the new computer to arrive. It's quite exciting.

It was nice to run into you at Minicon. You're right, we don't normally go to that convention. I haven't been there for years. I'm sorry now that we didn't drag you into the performance of *Midwestside Story* with us. You really *should* have seen it. Did you get to see/hear any of the excerpts at WisCon? I know what you mean about how the hugeness of Minicon can put one off, especially during the night at parties. We went to Minicon mainly to see Barb and David's wonderful version of *Midwestside Story*, but also so that Scott could see what a Minicon was like. He's never been to one. We lucked out in that Barb and David made lots of time for us on the evening after the play's premier, and even invited us to a private party hosted by the Firesign Theater guys in which they played a tape from the uncut version of the new Firesign Theater recording! I didn't actually go to much programming; in fact we went back to our hotel at one point on Saturday afternoon and zoned out for a while. One of the programs we did get to see was a bit embarrassing. Gardner Dozois, who was Minicon's guest of honor, was left high and dry in a program in which he was supposed to be interviewed. The interviewer never showed up, and it later turned out there never had been an interviewer assigned. What a mess. Gardner was a good sport about it, but it was rather sad to see him dealing with "how-do-I-get-published?" questions from the audience for a whole hour.

Let me know what you think of Nisus Writer as a Microsoft Word substitute.

And congratulations on becoming a regular bike commuter. I also use panniers on my bike. Bicycle sidepacks reduce strain (as compared to a backpack) and also don't cause one's back to sweat as a backpack will. I hope you bought a really good pair. Commuting is harder on panniers than recreational touring and I wore out several before I finally bit the bullet and bought a really tough pair. I've had mine (made by Robert Beckman) for more than 12 years now, and they're still in good shape. As for repairing flat tires, I let the nice folks at Yellow Jersey do it for me. I've been a regular customer since 1980 and have purchased all three of the bikes I owned in that time from them. I get a discount on labor costs, and *extremely* good service. I love those guys.

Scott and I are just now getting around to watching the episodes of *Babylon 5* that we began taping on a daily basis back in January. We've only seen the first seasons at this point. I was amused to find myself watching "Believers," (the episode about the religious couple who don't want their child to have surgery), at the same time

I was reading back issues of *Turbo* in which it was debated. It's actually kind of fun to watch those earlier episodes and already know what happens in the 4th and 5th year. Subtle references don't get by us! And it's so obvious how tightly the plot of this series was written with so many tiny references that eventually get picked up again later in the series. I figure that getting caught up will take us through much of TV rerun season.

You say you find England's Stonehenge boring because you can't walk up to the stones? Maybe you should try the replicated version in Texas (somewhere near Austin). Sorry I don't recall which way my sister drove us. It's certainly not boring, not when you can see replications of Easter Island stones in the same field...

Your story idea involving someone cloned as the opposite gender has been done, sort of, by Sheri Tepper in her novel *Sideshow*.

© Hope Kiefer & Karl Hailman

I hope you like PageMaker. Your new layout looks fabulous; I especially like the mismatched screen and outline boxes on your title page.

© Julie Clare Zachman

Congratulations on having done the solo. It sounds as if it was a good experience for you. Will you be performing again soon? I wouldn't mind the opportunity to hear you play sometime.

Your description of finding it hard to accept your sister's name change is familiar. My brother Rick was christened "Eric," but was known as a young child as "Ricky." Later on, when he was a teenager, we all called him "Rick." He went off to college and came back asking us to call him "Eric," but I could never remember to do it; and it never felt right. He didn't seem too upset that his family called him one name and friends made as an adult called him something else.

"Sand and Grass" is a short story, not an (underlined) novel. Vonda later expanded it into the novel, *Dreamsnake*.

As for remembering which brand of Asti you voted for at our New Year's party, it's not surprising that you can't recall. Scott and I used acetone to remove all the labels and marked the bottles with colored stickers to differentiate one from the other. If you remember what color label (black, red, blue or green) was on the bottle of champagne you liked best, I could tell you what it was.

Re your comment to **Georgie**, I certainly don't think that Fashion alone *causes* social change, but I can't believe it doesn't have some effect. The brief hiatus in pressure on women to wear only dresses during the 1940s was partly caused by the need for more women in the labor force in decidedly unladylike positions. But I can't believe that the sudden freedom that women felt getting rid of their girdles and skirts didn't have *some* effect on them and upon society.

© Tracy Benton

Did you know that your zine almost always provides me with an average of 8.7 laughs per issue?

I think I'll delay my response on this packet stuffing discussion until I comment on the back issue in which you attempted to start the feud about hobnobbing folks who avoid the drudgery of packet stuffing sessions. Just you wait!

© Vijay Bowen

It seems to me that you and I make similar judgments about when honesty feels most necessary. **Vicki Rosenzweig's** analogy of shopping in the neighborhood also seems to me like a good metaphor for staying honest with those with whom one is most intimate. Your comments, in fact, made me think about what a common perception it is: that the further away a person or institution, the more "excusable" it is to be dishonest toward them. "Robbing the man," long range missile bombing, along with any crime that victimizes a stranger, are always easier to justify than those which penalize a loved one or even the owner the corner grocery store that one always stops at on the way home from work. Your comment to **Bill Dyer** about the immorality of long range weapons ties in with this too. Maybe it's too late at night, but it feels to me as if we are both groping toward the same statement, you here, and me back there trying to answer **Steve Swartz's** questions about lying.

I know what you mean about listening to songs when you're "aware that what is actually playing is not what [you're] hearing." I went to a Joan Baez concert last month and heard all the music but none of the words. The music accompanied images from a novel I'd just read by Suzy Charnas, *The Conqueror's Child* (not yet published). Both Baez's music and the Charnas book refer to changes taking place over a 30-year period of time. For Baez those changes involve her personal and political life. For Charnas the changes are those in a future world which parallel and allegorize the personal and political changes of feminism since the late 60s. Its a powerful, wonderful novel, and my mind chose that darkened theater as the perfect time to process it, and so I spent the whole concert quietly weeping, with images of the Holdfast series (*The Conqueror's Child* is the fourth book in that series) playing before my eyes. I felt completely rung out after the concert

Take care. I hope you and Mark survive and thrive whether you continue on alone or together.

© Diane Martin

Thanks for the rabbi's synopsis of Ariel's bat mitzvah. It certainly clarified a couple things about the ceremony. You know, neither Scott nor I were expecting that bit where they pass out candy to the audience. I guess I was

thinking of Catholic communion and wondering if or when I was supposed to eat it. But mostly I was wondering about the old lady sitting in the pew just in front of us who kept grabbing more candy every time the kid came around with the basket. Boy, *she* must be hungry, I thought. I was completely stunned when everyone pelted Ariel with handfuls of candy. . . and even more surprised when the little kids rushed up to gather it all up again!

© Mike Peterson

I'm growing to really like your layout, Mike, though I can't imagine using anything like it for our zine. I'm just too verbose. Our text in your layout would create a 20 page zine. I like the font too. Really cool. I've had an ad in my in-basket for a while now from a firm that will do all the Fontography for anyone who wants a font made of their own handwriting. I've been thinking about doing it.

I hadn't heard that you were house-hunting, so your zine provided me with the news. Congratulations on finding one you like! I am awestruck that you were able to choose so early in the process of looking. (I can tell you don't think it was all that early, but Scott and I must have looked at 50 or 60 houses before we made a decision. I've got the feeling that even if I'd found my dreamhouse in the first house we looked at, I wouldn't have believed it and would have wanted to look at others.

© Recess

Well, here it is only June 11. I finished commenting on *Turbo* 143 very late last night, and I've got only three issues left. Scott's family canceled their visit to Madison this weekend, and I may very well have time to catch up. Let's start with the earliest one. I probably won't do more than respond to a few zines in these older apas that still feel "urgent" to me (after all, I've already joined some discussions in their *Turbo* 143 stages), but I am determined to go back to the issue where **Lisa Freitag** threw down the gauntlet. I've had *months* to think about a response. I think that happened in *Turbo* #140. . . .

Turbo No. 140

© Lisa Freitag

On the pretext that too many people were dropping out of *Turbo*, you decided what we needed was a good argument and so you went for an inflammatory statement. You suggested that for people who absolutely believe that abortion is murder, everything they do to put a stop to it is justified. Including terrorism and murder of abortion clinic staff. My first response was to say that I agree with you. If I thought many murders were taking place in a certain business, I would probably also endorse plenty of extreme measures to stop it.

But after lots of thinking, I find I actually don't agree with you at all. This is why. I asked myself another question. If I knew that someone was having an abortion, and honestly believed that she was committing murder by that act, would my support of abortion rights change...

Imagine a sincere antiabortionist who believes that abortion is murder. She becomes pregnant and for various reasons, she comes to believe that giving birth will be an awful thing for her. Let's pretend she has a heart condition and her doctor tells her that she will very probably die before the end of her pregnancy. She decides that it's a matter of her own life or her child's. She still believes it's murder, but she has an abortion anyway.

But what if her reasons don't resemble self-defense at all? What if, still believing that abortion is murder, she decides that she does not want to have a child? Her husband threatens to leave her if she has a child, she will become dependent upon welfare and will be unable to complete her education. She envisions a long, long period of poverty and privation for her other children. She decides to abort in spite of the fact that she believes she is committing murder.

Or maybe, when it comes down to it, she simply finds it easier to condemn others for making the choice of abortion. When she becomes pregnant, she realizes she does not want to continue the pregnancy, and opts for an abortion.

I support the choice of these women, even though they consider themselves to be committing murder when they opt for abortion.

I find that I support a woman's choice of abortion even if there seemed to be no life-threatening results to her child's birth, whether she thinks that abortion is an act of murder or not.

(I am not talking here about what my own decision would be if I discovered myself to be pregnant; I'm talking about whether or not I support a woman's choice to choose abortion *even if she believes it to be murder.*)

And so, even if I believed abortion absolutely to be murder, I think it's up to the woman who is about to share her body with a growing fetus to decide whether or not she wishes to continue this process. Allowing anyone else to be part of this decision comes down to letting other people practice their morality on someone else's body. In my mind, a fetus—whether a person or not—is actually a *part* of the woman's body, and she has the right to decide whether or not to continue that life.

I think all pro-choice people are aware of the conundrum that by supporting women's choice, we are in fact supporting some women's choices to commit what they consider to be murder. Other women who choose abortion do not consider their action murder, but unlike **Julie Zachman**, who wrote in *Turbo* 143 that she thought the motivation was of primary importance in judging whether a woman had the right to choose abortion or not, I support all choices people make about their own bodies, whether it is to have an abortion, whether it is to keep a child,

whether it is to refuse medical treatment for whatever reason, or whether it is to have their skin tattooed and pierced. Even if some of these choices cause a death.

I don't know, Lisa. This line of discussion may actually drive people away from the apa.

© Pat Hario

You asked about how Potlatch turned out. Wow! that feels like it was a loooooong time ago. Yeah, I seem to remember that it turned out just fine. I was showered with praise for the quick turnaround on the pubs and Scott and I had a great time. It was fun strolling into the consuite that first night wearing Green Bay Packer regalia. Remember, Potlatch happened on the weekend in between the game the Packers won against the San Francisco team and the final disastrous Super Bowl. Karen Fowler scowled and lectured us sternly on the "nerve we had, walking into the Bay Area, wearing . . . *that!*" We had had some initial problems getting our room at the hotel which seemed to have lost our reservations for a while. Karen said, "well, what did you expect, dressed like . . . *that!*?" But the most memorable part of the weekend, I think, was our expedition down into the warehouse district of San Francisco, where we saw Ellen Klages doing impromptu with a troupe of other comedians. It was so funny, I completely lost my voice laughing and coughed every time I tried to croak a word. Potlatch programming was great. There is definitely something to be said for a single track of programming which most members of a smallish (200-250) convention attend. The result is a wonderful sort of cohesiveness and community. Scott and I stayed in the Bay Area for an extra day, visiting with Spike, Tom, and my sister Julie who was there on business, and a whole passel of people who joined us at a brew pub on Monday night.

© Jae Adams

"Buryin' Bill at Forest Hill" is a remarkable story that I hope gets wider circulation eventually. It's really funny and marvelously written, and more than that, I even remember it quite clearly now, 4 months after it was first published!

Turbo No. 141

© Tracy Benton

You're the other person (besides **Lisa Freitag**, I mean) who decided that the best way to encourage more apa participation was to instigate a feud, and the best way to do that was to bait me. Am I really *that* easy??! I guess I must be, because here I am, three months after the fact, still eager to set the record straight. First of all, I apologize for the insane numbering of that insert, "True Facts about

WisCon." What can I say? "My name is Jeanne Gomoll. I have a problem with numbers. It has been two weeks since the last time I really goofed up a number badly." There is no 12-step program for people like us number dyslexics. We always lose count on the way to 12.

But on to the thing that really irritated you. . . . "True Facts about WisCon" encouraged folks to check out the packet stuffing session on Thursday night before the con. "It will be fun, really!" I wrote. You slammed this as an outright lie. You wrote, "For one thing, Jeanne, you don't go to this anymore. You're always hobnobbing with the authors down at ROOO." Wait one minute! I helped with the packet stuffing for the past four years. (I don't recall how active I was in the years before WisCon 19, which you listed in *Turbo* 143 as the years you were involved, but certainly there was no ROOO reception before W20 to give me an excuse to hobnob rather than stuff packets.) Admittedly I only *tried* to help at WisCon 20 because the program books were temporarily lost and the packet stuffing ended up getting delayed for hours. But I was there for a while! And I was there at W21 and this year at W22. Both times I collated till 10 minutes before the ROOO reception started, and by the time I left, the work was practically finished. Both last year and this year there were so many people helping that we were actually getting in each other's way. Both years, before I left to go hobnob, we had run out of stuffing materials, and there was only the stuffing of particulars into the packets left to do. AND, both last year and this year, the packet stuffers finished up long before the ROOO reception had ended and callously passed up on the chance to hobnob and went directly to the Angelic Brew Pub for sustenance. By the time the hobnobbers finished hobnobbing and wandered across the street, everyone was well into dinner and their second beers. But more to the point, I thought the partial packet stuffing sessions that I helped out on *were* fun. I got to meet Roz Kaveney wandering around the collating tables this year. **Karen Karavanic** sputtered out her excuses for leaving the city the next morning and tried to convince us all that she wasn't a FakeFan. We chided her mercilessly. There was much making fun of DickLogic, but contrary to all expectations, his methods worked just fine with a little fine-tuning. Really, people were laughing a *lot*. It sure seemed like a fun time to me. So in the spirit of support for an invigorating feud, I demand that everyone in the apa take a position on whether or not packet stuffing sessions are fun. People who have never attended one are encouraged to be especially vigorous in your arguments. Let the feud begin!

I have asked Gerald Schoenherr to give me his homemade pretzel recipe, which I hope to publish here. If you don't see a recipe following this paragraph, assume that he didn't get it to me on time, but I will probably end up emailing it to you when he does.

 © Julie Zachman

You asked me why I thought Robert Heinlein would have considered me incompetent. Well, first of all, here's what I remember of his concept. Heinlein defined his competent men (and later in his writing career, competent women) as people who could zero in on a problem, diagnose it quickly and know precisely the best method needed to solve the problem. If the problem required a mere physical response, they could put the solution into action immediately. If the problem required money or political influence, they would often need to go off in search for the wise, old, competent man (no women in this category that I know about), who understood the problem even better, but who had lost the capacity to engage in effective physical action. The older, wiser competent men all have access to political strings and/or money, however, so the alliance between older and younger competent people was often a good one. In any case, all problems could be quantified by one or more of these characters, and solved with the right action. These characters' understanding of the world was seductive, especially to a teenager like me who idolized Heinlein for a few years and badly wanted the world and its problems to be simple. His vision of the world now reminds me of Conan Doyle's Holmes, who knew that all the really bad problems in the world could be directly traced to one villain, Moriarity. If one could kill the villain the problems would go away. So too with Heinlein's competent men. Problems and their solutions were all gratifyingly quantifiable. Competent characters became aware of the problem, they studied it, and they discovered (or knew) the solution, and then they solved the problem. End of story. (Heinlein even wrote a novel in which the mystery of an afterlife was solved and the main character discovered a bona fide Reason for Living in the face of mortality. Any person who believes that studying a problem means becoming aware of more and more complexity and gray areas, would have failed Heinlein's competency test in Heinlein's world. And besides that, I'm a woman, and women just barely make it into the competent category in Heinlein's fiction, and then only when they're not having their periods, pregnant or in love. (Maybe it's those "spronging" nipples.) I don't know what Heinlein would have made of a woman going through menopause, but it's sure obvious that he didn't think they metamorphosed into competent, wise, old people. (Actually, I think they simply disappeared. Another simple, direct solution to a problem.)

I still yearn for that feeling of competency, but the feeling is never quite possible to maintain for long because it requires a universe where simple solutions actually work. The world is just too complicated. Just when I think I've got an understanding of even a small part of it, I discover that my understanding doesn't quite stretch to cover everything I thought it covered. But you know, I'm sort of glad I wasn't able to figure out everything

when I was a teenager. The decades since then would have been really boring if I had.

Why don't you like the *Illuminations* catalog (besides the "s" ending, I mean)? All the candles we put out at our New Year's Eve party come from that catalog.

 © Jae Adams

Great con report, Jae. I especially enjoyed the paragraph of KTF (Kill the Fuckers) in which you described the handsome drunk that so rudely interrupted your conversation with Martin Tudor. I'm assuming that most people who attended Corflu will know exactly who you're talking about, and that it's possible that you've even sent that person a copy of your zine. The Brits must love you.

Turbo No. 142

 © Barb Jenson

Scott and I had so much fun with you and David at MiniCon! Thank you again for seating us up in front at the play, and for those long conversations afterwards up in the Minicon in '73 Party/Cast party room. With all the stories you told about your experiences directing *Midwestside Story*, my appreciation of the play was deepened considerably. However, I hope you've made up for having had to give up sex while you were getting working on the production! I don't think Scott and I let WisCon intrude on our life quite *that* much, though there were certainly plenty of nights where I (the night owl of our partnership) stayed up late working at the computer long after Scott went to bed and was unconscious when Scott rose at dawn. You wrote, "we obsessed together on this creative project which became a kind of progeny to us." Now, *that's* familiar. It seems like almost all our conversations in the three or four months before WisCon intentionally or accidentally devolved to WisCon-related talk. We couldn't get away from it and didn't try hard.

Great comments about how the process of doing *Midwestside Story* interwove with the ideas and arguments raging in Minneapolis about the future fate of Minicon. I wish you all the best of luck resolving things. We here in Madison will all be watching closely to see what works and what doesn't.

I really appreciate how quickly you changed gears from Minicon to WisCon, and how much work you put into our Variety Show. (Not to mention that fantastic panel on class you moderated!) I was so glad that you brought part of *Midwestside Story's* cast down to Madison with you. And it was fun noticing the slightly different responses to the songs by the Madison audiences than by Minneapolis audiences. It seemed that the extremely fannish references got much bigger laughs in Minneapolis, but that clever reflections and changes from the original *Westside Story* songs incited more applause in Madison.

© Vicki Rosenzweig

As you noticed, we didn't do a scavenger hunt at WisCon. Whenever I thought about it, my imagination kept focusing on the pile of *stuff* we would have ended up with after the convention and would need to have disposed of. Looking back, I don't see how we would have had time to manage a hunt. But maybe someone will take a fresh look at the idea in some future year and we'll do it.

Thanks for the great job you did on WisCon's newsletter, Vicki. Did you have fun doing it?

© Georgie Schnobrich

It sounds like you had a wonderful time in New Orleans. I did too, on my one trip there for Nolacon. My memories are of restaurants that were all unbelievably great. It was inconceivable, some of us at last concluded, for there to be a bad New Orleans restaurant. My favorite was one in the French Quarter, up on the second floor. Our table was placed halfway onto the porch. The warm air blew across our table as I ate one of the most delicious meals in my life—duck made with black cherries and some sort of amazing liquored sauce. Our group arrived at the restaurant rather late in the evening; most diners had already left, and I suspect that many menu items had run out. Rather than stand there and tell us "We're all out of that, sorry," when we gave the waiter our choices, this delightful young man sat down with us, got to know us, told us stories about working in a restaurant during Mardi Gras, (You don't go home. You sleep on a cot in the back.), and finally suggested (in this gorgeous Creole accent of his) that we let him surprise us all with a wonderful meal. Of course we agreed, and of course we had a lovely dinner. Every night of the convention I joined some group or another very late at night and wandered through the French Quarter listening to the jazz flowing out the doors and windows, and eventually we'd settle ourselves around a table outside the Café du Monde and eat beignets and sip on coffees or tea. Not having the relationship with powdered sugar that you have, I would inevitably return to the hotel with powdered sugar deco-

rating my clothes and friends would brush me off and ask me how the Café du Monde was that night. I would love to go back to New Orleans with Scott sometime and see more of it.

My parents went to New Orleans, too, on their honeymoon. Unfortunately my father (then an aspiring photographer) took no photos of the city. The rumor (told to me by my aunt, my mom's sister) is that dad made a scrapbook of all the photos he took on their trip down to New Orleans and back again, and they were all of the beds in the hotels they slept in along the way.

Pat Hario asked you whether or not you were going to do a cake based on the Tiptree winning book this year for WisCon. I notice you didn't, and can well understand why you might not have been eager to do a version of that mostly black on black design. Think of the tongues! The horror, oh the horror!

© Jae Adams

Great colophon, reminding us all of the advantages *apas* still have over email or telephone relationships.

I really enjoy your openness to accidental images, Jae. Your description of the color bleed between two colors on a computer monitor and your obvious enjoyment of its unreproducibility, its essential ephemeral nature, reminds me of the aesthetics necessary for appreciation of Japanese brush strokes or layouts pieced together with found art. I admire how you take the time to see and accept the thing that happens when you touch ink to paper, or glue paper to layout. You don't remain fixated on what you intended the thing to look like, but appreciate and join with what the moment creates. This must explain the very Zen feeling I get sometimes when I look at your zine.

I'm Sure you will be a Wonderful OE. You have My Vote.

The scribble in the margin besides your comments to **Vicki** indicate that I was thinking of directing some of my comments about Walt Disney and copyrights to you. They ended up in a comment to **Georgie**. Feel free to black out Georgie's name on your copy of the *apa* and read some of those comments as if they were made to you.

WisCon Report, by Jeanne Gomoll

WisCon is over, but it still occupies my mind. I haven't seen the questionnaires filled out by WisCon attendees yet, but from all other reports, WisCon 22 was a great success. The weather was glorious, foiling the gloomy predictions of local meteorologists and hotel staff smiled happily at how we filled up their sleeping rooms. One very enthusiastic young woman told me that WisCon was the best convention in the whole world. Hoping to preserve the moment, I avoided asking her if she'd actually ever attended any other conventions. Someone

else suggested that I bid to do the program book for the next AMA conference.

The main reason I keep coming back and working on WisCon, is that it is such a singular event. There is no other event that does what WisCon does and no other occasion that brings together the community that WisCon brings together. I think the feminist SF community really needs this event, and right now I doubt that any other convention would spring up in its place quickly if WisCon went away. I actually wish that another convention or two

would compete with WisCon for its “niche.”* Premature extinction of the world’s only feminist SF convention would seem less of a danger. These are the kinds of thoughts that drew me back to WisCon planning (in spite of my vow to stay out of it last year). Three months after planning for WisCon 22 had begun, no one had yet volunteered to do programming. Even though there were (and are) other things in my life I’d like to get busy on, I couldn’t let this go. Scott offered to help and so we signed up for the duration.

Having completed most of my work before the con in the planning stages, I was free to attend quite a few programs in between exciting interludes of trouble-shooting. Several people commented that I maintained a happy expression throughout the convention, and since it felt like I was “done” the moment the registration desk opened, I’m not surprised I looked like I was having a good time. It wasn’t an act. After all, I had the imperturbable and ever-competent Spike Parsons running Program Ops. Everything that came up was handled. I had a great time and hope that those of you who were able to attend did too.

As expected Sheri Tepper was a delightful Guest of Honor, friendly and approachable. Unexpectedly she also turned out to be a very controversial guest too, with some heartfelt and radical opinions about what the human race must do if it is to survive the havoc that overpopulation is wrecking upon the world. Her early life experiences and work with the Planned Parenthood Association have given her a dark perspective on the future of humankind. Overpopulation, male violence, and ecological stress are not merely philosophical notions to her; they are deeply-felt personal issues for which she can see only drastic and harsh remedies. Her GoH speech was riveting, though I found myself disagreeing with her in my head about the personal freedoms she argued were expendable in the face of crisis. I also thought I detected an undercurrent of disillusionment in her speech, and imagined that she might have been deeply wounded sometime in her past. I wonder if she was once very optimistic about her own abilities and those of the people with whom she worked at Planned Parenthood and if—through personal experiences or simply an awareness of world events—she lost that optimism. I think anyone who has read Tepper’s fiction can point to problems with her digressive plotting, and style, but the core of her writing is the ideas she shoe-horns through the plot (cutting gaping holes wherever necessary in order to say what she wants to say). I used to think she needed a better editor or that she should have written her books more slowly, taking more time for re-writes, but now I also think she sees herself as a Woman on a Mission. It’s my impression that she thinks it is of life-and-death importance that she get as many of her ideas out into the world as possible. (Which was quite a contrast to our Guests of Honor, Delia Sherman and Ellen Kushner, who are excited about a new literary

movement—the Young Trollopes—which rallies for character-driven fiction.) During her Guest of Honor speech, Tepper said that she believes that only feminist science fiction has a chance of effecting the change in world opinion and behaviors necessary to stave off disaster. And, you know, I’ve got a similarly high opinion of the world-changing potential for feminist fiction, but at the same time, I feel far away from Sheri in expectations that the literature can provide to the world’s problems. I am much more enthused about feminist SF’s capability of offering really good questions, and a wide range of possibilities and/or roles for people who want to strike off on less frequently chosen paths. It’s the people exploring and testing the new paths who will and do now offer us answers. In my mind, fiction can only illuminate the possibilities, not define the one right path. Illumination is an impressive enough contribution, though, I think.

Sheri Tepper has never before attended an SF convention, and says she never will attend any other except WisCon. So it seems we’ve got an exclusive. That will certainly make the signed first editions of her novels that we’ll be bringing to Readercon’s Tiptree auction all the more valuable. She says she had a good time, and I was glad that WisCon was able to give a platform to this influential, much-read writer. I will never forget the amazing image and unexpected discussion that resulted from seating Sheri next to Roz Kaveney at the “Alternative Sexualities” panel.

Ellen Kushner and Delia Sherman—our other Guests of Honor—delighted us all with non-stop discussion, singing, performing, and laughter. Sheri may not have been familiar with cons, but she was wisely moderate in her panel choices, and so was scheduled for only a couple programs a day. Ellen and Delia, on the other hand, wanted to be on EVERYTHING. When Scott and I started working on the schedule, the first thing we did was to pencil in panels on which Ellen and/or Delia were to participate. We built the rest of the program around them. The one thing I was really unhappy about was that it turned out to be necessary to schedule a panel Ellen and Delia’s work (“The Double-Edged Sword,” on which they were not participants) against their own reading. Ellen complained. I apologized. Indeed, I sympathized, it is awful to split up an audience that is the same for both events. I told her that if she wanted to move the reading I would advertise its change to whenever she and Delia wanted to move it. A little while later, Ellen came back to me with a sad face: “There isn’t to move it!” And indeed there wasn’t. Ellen or Delia or both were scheduled practically non-stop throughout the convention. (In addition, recordings of Ellen’s radio show, were playing during all daytime programming in a parlor up on the 6th floor.) So they came up with the brilliant idea (in one of those exciting troubleshooting interludes) to the reading and “The Double-Edged Sword.” We started the mutant panel a half hour early, during the lunch break. Still, they moved. They also sang beautiful ballads during the

Saturday night Variety show. For their GoH presentation, they told a wildly funny story about the time they each wrote a similar story about the same idea, unbeknownst to each other. And then they read us the stories. Part of my laughter was from the recognition of how Scott and I tell stories to our friends about our lives in a way that is sometimes like a verbal duet. The rest of my laughter was in appreciation of Delia and Ellen's amazing wit and talent. Oh, and Ellen and Delia finally got to do their long-planned-for panel, "The Young Trollopes," which proclaimed a new literary movement, and may—if they get the notes transcribed and distributed—have created its own manifesto. What an amazing weekend!

One of the new things we did this year was to schedule a Variety Show. It started out being my idea because I was struck by the musical talent (especially Ellen and Delia, but also Barb Jenson and David Emerson) that would be present at this year's convention, and I thought, hey, we should put on a show! But Barb Jenson and David Emerson did most of the work. I lined up Terry Garey to perform some of her wonderful poetry (I Terry's poetry) and cajoled Eileen Gunn to do some stand up comedy. Jim Frenkel was talking about doing a short play based on Delia Sherman's short story, "Granny and the Feathery Bride," so we added that to the playbill. It seemed that there might be time for one more act, and in the last couple weeks, we were delighted to learn that some of the cast from Minicon's were interested in coming down to Madison to reprise some songs from their wildly acclaimed revival of that classic, fannish, musical parody (directed at this year's Minicon by Barb Jenson; orchestrated by David Emerson). So, we set aside the Madison Ballroom on Saturday night, asked the hotel to set up lots of chairs and round tables with candles on them, dimmed the lights and focused a spotlight on the stage, and we had a Variety Show . . . ! Actually, it wasn't that easy at all. I didn't realize all the behind-the-scenes work that goes into such a production. WisCon is hugely in debt to Barb and David's skills (not to mention their sound equipment), without which the show would not have been a success. If we ever do something like this again, we're going to have to do much more preparation with the hotel staff (lessons on how to program the lights will be a high priority), and we will have to have someone work with the Variety Show as liaison. But the end product, though a half-hour late in starting, was a huge success. Ellen and Delia's voices soared; Terry and Eileen convulsed us all in laughter, Barb and David sang beautifully and with amazing energy; the actors in "Granny" held us spellbound and were more polished than I could believe possible for the small amount of rehearsals they were able to fit into the weekend.

Speaking of great performances Directly following the Guest of Honor speeches, WisCon audiences were treated to a performance of Susanna Sturgis' play, directed by Donna Simone and starring Pam Hodgson, Laurel Winter, Ariel Franklin-Hudson, Tracy

Benton, Bill Humphries, Alan Bostick, Scott Custis and Geri Balter. As with the Sherman play of the previous night, I was amazed that the volunteer actors were able to master their parts with so little time for rehearsing. (Rehearsals were scheduled—with difficulty—against ongoing programs earlier in the weekend.) But the result was hilarious and very well done. The play turned on the idea of what would have happened in Shakespeare's story if the characters drugged with love potions saw persons of the same gender when they woke up.

When speaking of performances, I can't leave out the Tiptree auction which was run by—or rather, starred—Ellen Klages, and drew people who didn't want to miss the show but ended up emptying their pockets for the Tiptree Award. The Award raised a little over \$5,000 at this year's WisCon (which included donations from Terry Garey's and Laurel Winter's boffo entertainment, the "Gaud Party," Bakesale proceeds, and direct sales of Freddie Baer's gorgeous Tiptree t-shirts, plus other items sold in the Art Show/Tiptree Display Room run by Jim Hudson and Scott Custis.) The auction itself raised over half of the total proceeds. The Tiptree Motherboard strives to find appropriate ways to spend the money, but it seems that donations continually outstrip all attempts. It's amazing. We give big cash awards, plus prizes and travel expenses to the winners of the Award; we're publishing an anthology of shortlisted fiction from the first 5 years of the award; we'll soon hand out a Fairy Godmother Award to some struggling writer; and still we're in the black! This alone makes it hard for anyone to say that there isn't any real interest in feminist and/or gender-bending fiction.

All-in-all, programming went very smoothly, which gratifies me personally, of course, since I've worked hard to create a system that retains the elements Steve Swartz fashioned for WisCon 20 programming and that Meg Hamel documented with her fine WisCon Last year we published the and this year the In future years—assuming we manage to complete program planning in time to continue publishing this pocket program using Meg's design—I hope to see and or even, The thing I was most glad to have been able to do with programming this year was to get the final schedule done early enough so that we could send all panelists a list of their programs and fellow panelists, plus contact information, well before WisCon. We were able to send out letters (mostly via email, thank goodness) to everyone about three weeks before the convention, along with a directory of names, addresses, phone numbers and email addresses of other panelists. Many program participants told me that they were able to discuss some ideas beforehand with others on their panel and that this really improved the quality of the discussions. I heard the same thing from quite a few audience members who said they noticed a distinct improvement in the amount of preparation the panelists seemed to bring to the panels. Laurie Marks had written us a really useful letter which I forwarded to all program

participants about how to make use of the full 75 minutes of WisCon programs, and I credit that letter with much of the improvement. Certainly there were exceptions. I heard of a few panels which spun off in directions completely uncharted by their program book descriptions. But I didn't hear from any panelists who felt stranded by the long panel lengths, as I did last year. This year I reminded all moderators that they were welcome to close their panels whenever they felt their panels had ended, whether the 75 minutes was up or not. But I heard of no panels that ended prematurely and at least one that in fact overflowed and continued on past its time in the overflow program room (Ellen and Delia's "The Young Trollopes").

And most happily, although I'm sure some did say this, no one told that there was "too much programming." I heard that sentiment quite often at WisCon 20 and 21. I think we may have found the right number and right density of programming for the 550-600 person convention that Wiscon was this year. All of the panels I attended were well attended. Some were standing-room-only, but none were sparsely attended. So, it seems we weren't spreading the audience too thin. Although everyone probably missed one or two panels that they would have liked to have seen, (and given the 5-6 program density in any given time slot, one could hardly some hard choices), several people told me that the choices weren't nearly as impossible as they have been in the past two years. I am delighted to think that maybe we've found our happy medium. What do you think, those of you who were here?

The first program I attended was Suzy Charnas' and Mary Doria Russell's reading. What a great way to start off a convention, is all I can say! And I got to see quite a few more programs, including "Rushwash tea," which I'd been happily anticipating with visions of Ellen and Delia, Joan Vinge (who substituted for the ailing Katharine Kerr), Pat Murphy and Mary Russell speaking "in character" through their fictional counterparts. Not enough "in character" speaking, I thought, but still a really good panel. But I sure wish I'd managed to look into "Costuming for the real world, or: your leather jacket will find you." Freddie Baer and Ellen Kushner apparently directed people to garb that suited them. People streamed into the parties afterward wearing wonderful costumes that did indeed transform them and they all seemed to have had lots of fun. I'm really curious about what happened in the panel, "Humility garden: why do male authors stay away from WisCon?" It was scheduled opposite a panel I was moderating (Who's responsible for that??!), and I haven't heard anything about it yet.

WisCon scheduled two programs on the subject of class, one of which was directly suggested by Dorothy Allison in the course of an online discussion. I attended Barb Jensen's panel on class, "Every move you make: the persuasiveness of class in the 'classless' American Society," which began its life as a lively political discussion in an apa. In spite of a very insistent audience that wanted to participate at every discussion point, the panel

stayed focused and made some remarkable comments on the persuasiveness of class awareness, the wide disparity of definitions of American class structure, and personal testimony. Very good panel; and Barb is an extraordinary moderator. I tried to borrow some of her techniques for my own (also enjoyable) panel "Maintaining fringe societies," which began life in a book discussion lead by Gerald Schoenherr many months ago. The panel talked about the fringe societies portrayed in Pat Murphy's and then went on to a discussion of how frequently fringe societies are portrayed in SF, but the discussion really got going when we argued about whether or not fringe societies were by nature ephemeral. The time zipped past and we never did get into the last points I'd planned to cover in the program. Other panels had their own origins in passionate discussions in other forums. "SF tropes: attractors or 'keep out' signs," for instance, was a standing-room only panel I always thought of as Timmi Du Champ's panel while it was in the planning stages, because it was her post to an online discussion group that generated a lengthy conversation which eventually led to the WisCon panel. I'm not sure whether so many subscribers recalled and were still interested in that panel idea, or whether the idea itself, honed by the online group, was intrinsically fascinating (probably it was both)—but that panel managed to attract the all-time record number of prospective panelists asking to join it: 42 people! No wonder the attendance swelled.

Many other panels were inspired directly or indirectly by online discussions, apa comments, book group discussions, and panels at other conventions. I mention the origin of these panels because it illuminates something interesting about WisCon programming . . .

I remember early WisCons—numbers 1 through 6—as having programs that mostly reflected the interests and subject matter of the Madison SF group's discussions during the previous year. Many were based entirely on what Jan Bogstad and I were reading, discussing and publishing for and in . Other panels were actually rehearsed by the group as programs for the Madison SF group's meetings. The panel/game show, "Will the Real James Tiptree, Jr. Please Stand Up!", for instance, was performed first in one of these meetings and produced again at an early Wiscon. Things have changed since then, though. The local group is far less active in WisCon programming. Only a few people from the concomm asked to join a panel and several stated that they felt they were "unqualified." Considering that several people joined panels this year that were unknown to anyone on the program committee, simply because they expressed interest, I had a hard time dealing with this response, but nonetheless, there it is. The sparks for most WisCon programs now originate outside the Madison group. In some ways this is a good thing. The topics are less likely to become stale since they are drawn from on-going discussions from a very wide variety of sources. And those sources keep the subject matter of Wiscon pro-

grams dynamic and on the cutting edge; WisCon truly feels like it reflects the interests and passions of an international community. On the other hand, I worry about the growing disconnection of concom members from the program. WisCon still needs its local infrastructure.

But back to the conreport . . . There was more than programming, of course, but that's the part of the convention I focused upon. There was the almost-around-the-clock consuite (run by Hope Kiefer, Pat Hario and Dan Dexter), and some great night-time parties up on the sixth floor in which Scott and I had far too much fun, far too late into the night. I'm really pleased by how our "experiment" at WisCon 20 has transformed into a WisCon institution. (The Hotel gives the convention all the 6th floor parlors for free and we in turn use the parlors for child care and programming during the day, and lend them each night to groups or individuals who want to throw open parties.) There was a tea party hosted by Janet Lafler and Karen Schaeffer which I regret having missed and a Tiptree Bakesale run by Julie Humphries that I was only able to visit for a moment. Ooops, and I almost forgot the quirky Opening Ceremonies devised by Tom Becker that started WisCon off on a properly light-hearted note. Rebecca Holden, for the third year in a row, accepted papers for and ran a fascinating track of Academic programs. (I wish I hadn't missed Heather Whipple's paper, "Who wins Tiptree, what are they?: a look at Tiptree winners." I would like to read her paper someday, however, and hope we can persuade Heather to let us post it on the Tiptree web site.) Mary Pearlman ran (also for the third year in a row) the kids programming room, which was hopping and bubbling with laughter every time I passed by its door. With the kids room and the child care room right across the hall, WisCon has (since #20) finally gotten parent- and kid-friendly, as a feminist convention

be. Andy Hooper led a 4-mile walking tour of parts of eastside Madison on Saturday afternoon. Hank Luttrell ran the Dealers Room (for the 22nd year in a row!) and Jim Hudson and Scott Custis ran an entertaining and efficient Art Show/Tiptree Display Room. Scott, I think, feels like he is getting closer to managing the extremely profitable chaos that is the Tiptree auction. (This year, for instance, there were no mystery checks to puzzle over after the convention!) My t-shirt design seemed to be rather popular; I kept noticing the laser-toting space babe on royal blue shirts ("WisCon: Home of the Feminist Cabal") all over the con. And lastly (at least it's the last thing I can think to mention at the moment), the second annual Writers Workshop, managed by Amy Axt Hanson, was a huge success and attracted about 25 workshoppers and 5 professionals as critiquers. We're hoping to run it next year early on Friday afternoon to avoid the myriad number of conflicts that arise when it is put up against prime time programming. (Just imagine having to keep track of not only the panelist names, but also audience names in a multi-track program!)

Thank you, all of you who attended WisCon and continue to make it such an excellent convention, and thank you, also, those of you who volunteered to participate on programming, work in the Green Room, threw parties, performed, or volunteered in some other capacity at the convention. You all did a marvelous job!

Mary Doria Russell has accepted our invitation to be Guest of Honor at Wiscon 23 and the concom's post-mortum has been scheduled for the end of June. Tom Havighurst, WisCon 22's laid back and momentarily dapper and tuxedoed chair, says he will not be running for chair for next year. I've heard no rumors of anyone in the group talking about running for his position.

—Jeanne Gomoll
19 June 1998

* And who knows, I may get my wish soon. . . .

The Floating Tiptree Ceremony Convention

Established conventions as well as groups who have never before thought of putting on a convention are encouraged by the Tiptree Motherboard to bid on the Floating Tiptree Ceremony convention. Your convention will need to be scheduled sometime after March 1 and before September 1 in any given year, but (just like the award itself does) it can break most other conventional convention conventions. Your group will need to plan for the ceremony itself, of course, and for an auction and a track of programming supportive of gender-bending themes. But other than that, it's up to your group. Your convention can be as elaborate or simple as you choose. The Award itself will pay for the Tiptree winner's travel and hotel expenses which saves you from needing to raise money for a GoH if your con is going to be a "one-shot." Don't know anything about running a convention? Watch for Floating Tiptree Convention workshops at WisCon and other Tiptree-supporting conventions. Mailing lists and expertise will be shared. Consider running a bid party at Readercon this year, or at another Tiptree-supporting convention. The Motherboard will accept bids up to 5 years in the future.