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Scott Custis [SC] and Jeanne Gomoll [JG]

August 2019 for Turbo-Charged Parly Animal #398.



Summer wildflowers in the American Players Theater prairie

Hope Kiefer and Karl Hailman

[SC] Thanks for all your hard work turning out *Turbo* every month for the last many (how many?) years. I'm still a little amazed the apa has lasted so long. I really hope you are planning to remain as contributing members. I'm looking forward to reading your zines.

[JG] Ditto. Thank you, Hope and Karl.

Covers

[SC] Excellent work on the "*Time*" magazine *Turbo* cover, Steve. You even nailed all the little details. Your back cover proposed a theory of life I'd never heard about before. Life existing in the vacuum of space and subsisting on nourishment from electromagnetic waves and charged particles. Cool.

[JG] I also liked the cover very much. You must have had to print it on larger sheets of paper in order to trim it down so that the red margin bled off the edge. A lot of work, but a gorgeous result. I like images in which everything seems normal except for one bizarre element.

Marilyn Holt

[SC] I wish you the best of luck on your bee project. Keeping bees alive and well is a big boon for the community. I'm sorry to read about all the other challenges you, Cliff and Paul face on the farm. It was also sad to read about your loss of Cubbette. We always had dogs at home when I was a kid, but eventually my father refused to get any more dogs in his life because it was too painful to lose them, which always happened. It's one of the reasons I have never gotten a dog. I know how attached I'd become and how sad it would be to lose them.

Congratulations on the writing. You seem to have the persistent attitude one needs to succeed at this.

[JG] When thinking and planning for our future, which is not a huge amount of future at our age, apocalyptic thoughts nevertheless creep in. When I was younger, I thought that apocalypse, if it happened, would happen long after I died. It's clear now that we exist right in the middle of it. Survival is not certain.

Greg Rihn

[SC] I was blown away by APT's *The Man of Destiny* when we saw it. Next up for us on Labor Day weekend will be *A Doll's House*. So far, all our shows have been in the Touchstone Theater where weather has not been an issue. We are hoping for a long dry spell in September for our string of outside performances.

I did not know there was a Jewish museum in Milwaukee. Another interesting thing to check out in Milwaukee. Too bad we don't have a nice fast comfortable train or light rail we could use to get back and forth instead of the hassle of driving down I94 for 70 miles.

We have gone to very few movies lately. There has been a real shortage of interesting films coming to Madison. We last went to see *Once Upon a Time in...Hollywood* and we both really liked it. This movie was very character-focused

as we go on a wonderful, leisurely trip back in time to 1969. Tarantino creates a sense of slowly building tension and suspense with the appearance of the Manson family. The conclusion of the film is a bit violent, but the story does not go in the direction you might expect. Although I never miss a Tarantino movie, the last few have been somewhat disappointing. *Ljango* kind of fell flat for me, even though I'm a big fan of Westerns. I was far more impressed with the eye-popping 70 millimeter version of *The Hateful Eight* we managed to see in Milwaukee. It was beautiful and the performances were excellent, but the bloodbath at the end was excessive even for Tarantino.

Thanks also for the photos and cartoon.

Georgie Schnobrich

[SC] It's often fun to find out someone is a fan of something unusual. A lot of times, it can inspire an appreciation in me for something I would not otherwise have had. I've heard of Goethe, but I have never read or studied him. I knew next to nothing about him, but I know a lot more now. And it was fun reading your piece about him.

[JG] Nice! I loved how you were able to bridge the centuries and sense a kinship with Goethe and his times.

Interesting idea—that the big budget superhero movies might turn out to be the source material for future operas. Or maybe they will be remembered as models for all sorts of storytelling, like Grimm's Fairytales. I think we can already see this adaptive process happening with animated Disney films being recast as Broadway musicals and then re-made as live action films.

Walter Freitag

[SC] I was hoping you would follow up on your previous *Dark Phoenix* essay with some thoughts after you finally got to see the movie. It will be interesting to see if you are right and Marvel takes a stab at redoing the *Dark Phoenix* saga again.

I wonder if the bamboo I have been battling in my back yard is really knotweed. I should probably do myself a favor and strive to take on your wise attitude toward the fight. Less aggravation, more zen.

Steve Johnson

[SC] I liked your "More Personal Fallout From the Clovis Incident." I also have some curiosity about U.F.O. stories, particularly when professional military and commercial airline pilots report seeing, and sometimes filming U.F.O.s. I don't think there is anything wrong with your particular interest in this subject or your fondness for speculating on what it all might mean.

Regarding your comment to Lisa for #396, thanks for the reminder of the role she played in WisCon's notorious

Noro virus incident some years back. Add that to the list of services she provided the convention that seem to have been forgotten.

[JG] I have hung back from engaging you on your various writings about UFOs, etc. Your interest in conspiracy-heavy explanations for strange events, even if I consider them simply as weird fiction, leave me floundering for a cogent response. I wonder what you might think of the article in *The New York Times* by conservative Ross Douthat, "Jeffrey Epstein and When to Take Conspiracies Seriously." I thought it was surprisingly interesting, considering the conservative source.

https://www.nytimes.com/2019/08/13/opinion/jeffrey-epstein-suicide.html?searchResultPosition=I

It's not an attack on the consideration of conspiracy, but it makes some reasonable connections with the tsunami of "fake news" we are all having to cope with these days.

Jim Hudson and Diane Martin

[SC] Congratulations on becoming the new OE. Speech! I hope you guys have a great trip in August. Pictures!

[JG] Huzzah!

Catie Pfeifer

[SC] Congratulations on the new job. I used to work third shift quite a bit, years ago, and it was a relief to finally put that behind me for regular hours and a regular work week. As a postscript to my WisCon comments, we found out just a couple weeks ago that WisCon 44 succeeded in recruiting a couple convention chairs. So it looks like it will happen next year. I expect Jeanne and I will be going again.

[JG] It's interesting to hear that there is so much human quality control going on in the work of captioning TV shows. I have wondered whether it's done mostly by voice recognition software. I suppose that might eventually happen, but I can see (or rather, hear) that machines would be problematic for all but the most clearly spoken dialog.

I've noticed that there seem to be two different timing techniques to captions. Some captions appear at the same time or just after the lines are spoken. Other captions on other shows appear before they are spoken. Is there a general rule? Or is it just a result of some technical issue?

Jeannie Bergmann

[SC] I enjoyed your dark poem "A Backdrop of Black Velvet and Rhinestones."

[JG] If there is a "zombie website rule," it is not official, as demonstrated by an unsuccessful Google search for the term. (Amazing! I was not expecting that the term does not exist, according to Google.) I think that a lot of people have made a lot of private decisions about material whose author cannot

be found, and a lot of those decisions are rationalizations of their disinterest in doing more than a cursory search. The Graphic Arts Guild, together with a few other professional art and writing groups, offered legislation drafts to Congress a while back, which would have created a mechanism to allow folks to use uncredited material, but also to credit and in some cases, reimburse authors and artists when they were eventually found. I don't think that proposal was ever made into actual law.

OK, that's a creepy poem. What happens next? You really have to tell us. It reminds me of that classic, very short, story that goes something like "He was alone in a locked room and something touched his back."

Ruth and Jim Nichols

[SC] Jeanne and I were lucky that we never lost power the day of the power plant fires. The first time I realized the power was down elsewhere in town was when I took a walk out to Atwood Ave. and realized the businesses were closed and the streetlights weren't working.

I liked Ruth's travel story to Minnesota. Sounds like a perfect summer trip.

[JG] Yeah, we were lucky. The only problem we had related to the power outage happened on Saturday morning, when we stopped in at Madison Sourdough Company and discovered the dearth of pastries, a result of their ovens being down most of the day before. But we felt really bad about all the people whose air conditioning went down that day. It was so hot!

Good for you for putting up the plant watering sign-up sheet. And good for all the folks in your building who signed up!

Did the magnet screen successfully train Mercury to change his behavior and leave the screen door alone?

Lovely pictures and a lovely visit report.

Andy Hooper

[SC] When I was a kid we had moles in our large lawn out at the farm. For a time, I was in charge of getting rid of them. Dad bought some nasty looking kill traps and I got pretty good at setting them. That does not sound like the solution you are looking for. I remember being pleased when my traps were successful, but it was unpleasant disposing of the furry little bodies. I don't blame you for wanting to persuade them to leave instead. I'm certainly not poorer for your effort since it resulted in "Thots While Moleholing."

I hear you about the desire to complain and resist change while having to admit that some new things are awesome. I have been doing more walking around town for exercise lately and I have caught myself a few times straying off the planned route out of curiosity only to end up staring and scratching my head over the best way to get back on track.

A moment later I roll my eyes, pull my phone out of my pocket, click GPS map app and look for the friendly blue dot. Change is a complicated thing.

Thanks as always for the entertaining Entropy Department reprints.

[JG] I am wondering about what your neighbors imagined was the reason that nice young man next door was banging on concrete with a steel pipe. "So often I feel completely out of touch with modern music!"

Ah what a great idea for a fannish story, å la *It's A Wonderful Life*, showing WisCon and Madison if Pat Murphy and Karen Joy Fowler had never proposed the Tiptree Award! Hmmmm....

I'm glad to hear you think Turbo is doing well.

What an excellent essay on Third-Order Stories! I agree that a most satisfying SF story lies in the author's ability to see further than the most obvious ramifications of an invention or discovery-especially when the less obvious ramifications involve unexpected fields-culture or perception. You reminded me of something I heard about: Last week I was reading about shared jet travel, which is apparently common in Europe. It works something like Uber or Lyft: Private jet itineraties are posted and people who want to travel to the posted destinations can buy tickets using an app. The pilots and planes are all certified, but the seats are way more comfortable if not luxurious, and the ticket prices are significantly cheaper than those offered by big commercial airlines. Apparently, this used to be (maybe still is) legal in the U.S., when it was run via electronic bulletin boards. Not a lot of people knew how to access those bulletin boards and so there wasn't much threat to the big airlines. But a lot of people know how to use Uber, Lyft, Airbnb, etc. with their smart phones. In Europe, the idea caught on immediately. No one thinks it would be possible to un-roll this particular 3rd order technology in Europe...which is apparently why U.S. airlines are spending so much money on lobbyists to prevent it from being offered here.

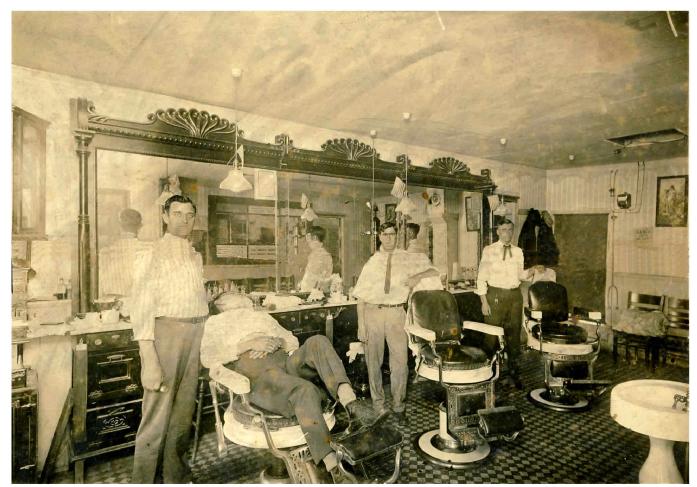
Re Robert Lichtman's comment about The Carl Brandon Society's choice of a name, perhaps I can cast a tiny bit of light on it: Both the Tiptree Award and CBS began their lives at WisCon. CBS was mirroring the Tiptree Award's nomenclature by choosing a hoax persona to name themselves. Tiptree was named after a woman pretending to be a man; CBS was named after a white guy pretending to be a person of color.

Thanks for the contact info for Cheryl Cline! But does her email address really contain @bershire or should it be @ berkshire?

I offer a little Entropy Department piece of my own this ish.

Patrick Ijima-Washburn

[SC] Congratulations on turning fifty, or maybe I should say making it to fifty. In true form you took a look back on your journey so far. I think for many people, fifty is one



of those look-back-at-life milestones. I remember taking stock of where I was at fifty and realized that I had set a course forward that I was comfortable with. We decided to stay in our old house on Union Street. I'd retire from the state of Wisconsin and we had started a retirement plan we were going to stick to. It should all work out fine. What I had not counted on was that the state of Wisconsin would turn out to be an unreliable and even abusive employer; the federal government would become mostly dysfunctional; and we would eventually elect the most dangerous President in history just as I am supposed to be settling into a quiet retirement when government is supposed to be something that works and can be counted on. It's good to feel confident about the future, but it pays to stay flexible.

[JG] Thanks for the introduction! Pleased to meet you.

What's New - Scott

[SC] Jeanne's organizational and graphic superpowers were very helpful as I reached into the two big boxes of old pictures I brought back from Iowa to begin the process of sorting and scanning. My brother, my sister and I spent a couple days sorting through the last ten plastic bins of loose odds and ends of my parents' property we never sorted out. The most valuable and sensitive stuff were the photos. My brother cannot part with the actual pictures, but my sister and I both wanted some copies.





I am only interested in getting digital scans of photos to have on a hard drive. I do not want boxes or drawers of old photos stored in our house. My sister wants physical copies of photos to show her grandkids or display in her house. She specifically is not interested in electronic scans of photos. My first priority was to pull out the pictures she specifically indicated she wanted copies of from the photo albums she paged through while the three of us were sorting. That involved removing pictures, in some cases painstakingly, from very old photo albums. Jeanne had steady nerves for this job. After entering any readable hand-written information written on the actual photo into a database and numbering the photos, I sorted them into piles based on what could go to a local camera store to be run through a scanner, and which ones Jeanne would need to scan at our house (because they were damaged or too big or small to send out.) My sister's total came to a little over a hundred images that we will print off here at home on good photo stock, once the scans come back. I decided I wanted all the pictures my sister chose plus a bunch more so the total we sent out was probably a couple hundred.

But that's just getting started. As we were sorting back in Iowa, loose photos were tossed in the boxes that my sister did not have a chance to look at. There turned out to be a lot more of those pictures than I remembered. I will have to give my sister a chance to see what she wants of those before I can be finished with her end of the project. Once she has what she wants, I will take some time to select photos I have scanned for myself and try to figure out when and where they were taken and who some of the people were.

I have included three example images in our zine this month.

First is a barbershop picture. The young dark-haired fellow in the middle, with the unibrow, is my grandfather William "Bill" Custis, who was a barber in my hometown of Anamosa. He had his own barbershop downtown for a long time, but this picture may have been taken before he got his own shop, possibly as far back as the 1920s. The photo was in pretty bad shape and had been folded in half at some point. Jeanne was able to do some magic with it so it's much

better now. This is an example of a picture I'd like some more information on.

Second is a very nice shot of my mom and dad, circa 1944. This looks like a shot probably taken before dad finished his training and shipped out to Europe. He was a P-38 reconnaissance pilot in the last year of the war. They met when they were both working in aircraft factories in California. My dad was the supervisor of a sheet metal crew during the war. He tried to enlist several times, but his employer declared him "essential personnel" and whenever he snuck out to enlist, they would go out after him and bring him back to the plant. He finally managed to get in and volunteered to be a pilot.

Third is a shot of my dad's plane, "My baby at rest." At 6 ft. 6 in., my dad was actually too tall to be a pilot, but that is what he wanted to do, so he slumped and scrunched down through his whole training. They decided to make him a reconnaissance pilot because in training they discovered he had a keen sense of direction and would not get lost if flying on his own even at night. His plane was stripped down, no armor, machine guns or bombs. Just a belly full of high speed and high altitude cameras. The only defensive weapon he had with him was the .45 handgun strapped under his arm. The good news was that his stripped down twin engine P-38 was about the fastest plane in the sky at that time.

Lots of good stories here. I just have to dust them off and hunt down the details.

What's New - Jeanne

[JG] Sorry for the skimpy comments from me. I have discovered a new project, er, projects, and I've been distracted.

I'm in the middle of setting up an **on-line Tiptree Auction** that will start on Alice Sheldon's birthday, August 24, and end September 9. I am crossing my fingers that this apa gets to you before the auction closes. See ad at the end of this zine and check out the very cool auction items.

My 50th New Berlin High School reunion has been taking up some of my time. Not only did I run yearbook scans through Photoshop and fix up the images, but I've also been helping Mike Casper (my former classmate) with the profiles. Many of us sent in profiles to Mike containing text ("what I've been up to since graduating") and photo evidence. Mike asked for pdfs, but received a wild array of differently formatted docs, some weighing in with rather massive amounts of megabites. I used Photoshop again, together with the professional version of Adobe Acrobat and saved everyone's profiles to less than one MB each. Mike has been sending those out to a mailing list of NBHS grads, 6 or 7 profiles at a time. I also helped set up a dropbox where people could look at all the year books and profiles, including one giant pdf containing all the profiles with bookmarks. Mike and I have been getting to know one another as we've been sending

files back and forth. Mike likes to tell funny stories, so I sent him one of mine, "Millenium Falcons, Ash Glaze and Dignity" (which you will find printed at the end of this apazine). Mike enjoyed it and asked me if he could forward it with the next set of profiles to my former classmates. I have to laugh when I think about how some of them may react to the story (I expect some bewilderment). I pretty much flew under the radar when I was in high school.

I've let go of Suzette Haden Elgin's Láadan Dictionary and Grammar for the moment. Susanna Sturgis has it now and has begun copyediting the manuscript. MUST AVOID SENDING EMAILS SAYING, "WELL...? WELL, WHAT DO YOU THINK?"

I've begun a **New Project** or a **Set of New Projects**. It all began with my decision to scan the seven issues of my old perzine, *Whimsey* and OCR the first six issues that had been laid out using pre-computer technology (Selectric typewriter and wax). I will eventually send all seven issues as pdfs to the fan History project. In the course of correcting the OCR translations I began reading and reminiscing, and thinking, "you know, that was a nicely written article."

Which got me to thinking about the fact that I have spent a lot of time in the last year, working to preserve publications that were on the verge of becoming lost because they were out of print and lacked electronic records—The Carl Brandon book and the Laadan Dictionary. It suddenly hit me that much of my own work falls into the category of out-of-print and in danger of becoming lost. And so, starting with material from issues of Whimsey, but also including stuff from Janus, Aurora, and contributions to other fanzines, I am collecting stories, articles and artwork of mine with the goal of offering them to David Langford to publish as free pdfs along with other TransAtlantic Fan Fund free ebooks (donations to TAFF optional). But I may also publish them in a collection as a print-on-demand book. Not a fanzine a fanbook? I don't know what to call it yet. And I have no ideas for the cover art yet, but I think I'm going to have fun doing this. (Any advice, Andy?)

But that's not all. In going through my files, I found the tapes I recorded during my TAFF trip. People have for the most part been kind enough to stop asking me if I've written my TAFF Trip Report, but I think it might be a very funny thing if I end up finally writing it, 30+ years after I took the trip. It won't be the devilishly complex piece of writing I had planned—a pastiche of Ursula K. Le Guin's Always Coming Home (my version: Always Leaving Town). But the very devilishly complicated nature of my plan was probably one of the reasons why I never actually finished writing the thing in the first place. My plans now are to transcribe the tapes, which modern technology has made into a much less onerous task, and then to put them together as a sort of verbal scrapbook alongside some of the many photos I took during my trip.

I figure this will all take me at least a year.

Here's one of the stories that will go into the collection and which I am sharing with my high school classmates.

Millenium Falcons, Ash Glaze and Dignity

By Jeanne Gomoll, *Harlot* 2, edited by Avedon Carol, Anne Laurie Logan and Ken Josenhans, 1981

My ten-year-old brother Danny and another little boy were sitting on the bleacher steps immediately in front of and below me. Much further below all of us was the New Berlin High School 1980 graduating class and their parents, arranged in long rows of chairs on the gymnasium floor. The scoreboard listed no time in the first quarter, there were over 400 graduates, it was very hot, and it looked like it was going to be a long, long evening.

Bobby was showing Danny how to fold a program book into a replica of Han Solo's ship, and Danny turned around to ask me if I would give him my program book so that he too could fold a *Millennium Falcon*. I handed Danny the program book, another graduate marched up to the stage, and I grinned at Bobby's guardian. Well, at least they won't be bored immediately, and start demanding when the ceremony would end. After all the program books in the near vicinity had been converted into pulp versions of the *Falcon*, Danny and Bobby started scavenging the school hallways and downstairs aisles for more spaceship material. I was beginning to feel slightly nervous about what they were planning to *do* with all the paper *Falcons*

"Wow! We've got eighty-four of them now! said Danny.

"And what are you going to do with them after you've finished building them?" I finally asked.

"Oh, we won't *do anything* with them!" said Bobby "No, they're a *deterrent* force," explained my little brother "Huh?" said his older sister.

"It's like the Russians and us, you know. You don't think we'd actually *use* our Air Force, do you?" Danny was practicing his condescending tone.

"Oh," I said, relieved that, after all, they weren't planning on bombing the friends and relatives of the class of '80.

Distracted from the task of building up an effective deterrent force, Danny craned his neck toward the blue-gowned rows below "Has Julie gone up yet?" Julie is our sister.

"No, they're not up to her row yet."

"Was graduation as boring as this when you graduated, Jeanne?"

I grinned, "Not the way I did it, no."

But not yet having learned the fine art of conversation, Danny missed his chance, said "mmm," instead of "Why not, oh sister Jeanne," and turned back to the construction of Millennium Falcon #86.

I leaned on the bleacher step behind me, propping my elbow upon it, and recalled my not-so-boring graduation ten years earlier. It was just as hot, if not hotter, than Julie's day, and like her's, a thundershower necessitated the scheduling of the ceremony in the gymnasium instead of outside in the football field. But, unlike Julie, I did not spend the day of graduation partying. I was a potter in high school, which didn't mean that. It meant that I made clay pots on a wheel in the art lab. My production was such that I was able to pay for most of two years of college with proceeds from ceramic pieces sold, and also that those last few days of school were spent feverishly attempting to finish a set of dishes and glaze a last batch of pots. That's where I was on that afternoon of my graduation.

I still had a lot to do at one point, but I knew that it was getting late and that I'd have to convince my teacher, Mr. Sauer, to let me come in one last time to finish up. I looked nervously at my wrist watch lying unclasped next to a jar of glaze. It was still only six o'clock and there was a half hour at least before I would have to shower and dress. Turning back to the piece of greenware (which is a pot that has been kilned once at low temperature), from which I was sponging off part of an application of ash glaze, and reaching for another half-finished pot in order to cut a foot into its base, it suddenly occurred to me that it had been six o'clock the last time I had checked my watch. Panicky feelings clutched at my stomach as I grasped my watch and squinted at it through glass lenses speckled with clay dust. The second hand did not move. I leapt up and stumbled around the corner to the other room, where there was a wall clock. "Damn," I said. It was 7:25pm. Graduation ceremonies were scheduled to begin at 7:30.

I looked from the clock down to the clothes I was wearing—clay spattered, ripped sweatshirt, baggy old paint slacks whose color was mostly hidden beneath dried patches of old clay. My skin was gray with clay dust and dry glazes, my toes stuck through the holes in red sneakers. If I hadn't been scared about my family's reaction to my absence. I would have skipped the whole thing.

Instead, I decided there was only one possible thing to do if I wanted to join my class in the five minutes that were left before the school band played the grand march.

I grabbed the plastic bag containing my good clothes, locked up the art lab, and ran as fast as I could down the waxed corridor past empty lockers and classrooms. The locker room was empty when I arrived; the women of my class had already gone upstairs to the gymnasium. I gulped as I hurried to my locker, opened the combination lock with shaking hands and started to undress. I crammed all my clay-encrusted clothing and the bag of good clothes into the locker, jammed a shower cap onto my head and showered all the dust and grime from my body. Dried, I stepped into platform shoes which rubbed painfully against my unstockinged feet, took a deep breath and threw my graduation gown over my head. I raced up the gym stairs and—with a very slow, dignified gait, walked to the section of chairs my class occupied and took my place.

During the ceremony, I was undoubtedly the coolest person of my class, but the advantage was outweighed by the dread I felt each time I had to rise and walk to the stage. This was long before the days that the braless look became acceptable (and the look would never be a comfortable one for me). So I walked up the stage stairs taking great care not to jiggle, and my heart did double time as I was sure that it was apparent to anyone that I had nothing on underneath the great billowing gown. I silently cursed each scholarship—especially the pottery award—which required me to make solo trips up to the podium on the stage. But I managed without incident.

After the ceremonies, when many of my classmates gleefully pulled open their gowns, tossed their hats and laughed as they ran down the aisle, I acted the part of the model student, walking in dignified, mature decorum, occasionally fluffing my gown out in front of me to make sure that it hadn't caught anyplace in a way that would betray me. My parents told me later that they had never been more proud of me than when they watched the "adult manner" in which I conducted myself. While I'll treasure that reaction, I'll savor even more the looks on my classmates' faces when I strode into the locker room, took off my gown, and proceeded to dress.

At the end of Julie's graduation, Danny's deterrent force went the way of all deterrent forces, as Danny and Bobby couldn't resist launching ten or fifteen *Millennium Falcons* into the unsuspecting and overheated audience. Julie did not conduct herself in the mature manner of her older sister, but picked up one of the preemptive strike vessels and shot it back up at the bleacher base.

