

Tracy and the Turbochargers



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**TURBO-
CHARGED
PARTY
ANIMAL
#73**

Tracy and the Turbochargers

O U T O F I O W A

1	Blue Plate Special with a Side of Bacon Blues (<i>Karen Babich</i>)	4:58
2	Do Not Let Your Hayfields Catch Fire (<i>James Bron</i>)	4:06
3	Cornborers'n Beetles or The Farmer's Bug Stomp (<i>Alison Dawson</i>)	4:30
4	Flash but No Soybeans (<i>Mike DuCharme</i>)	4:26
5	Jung Bill from Dyersville (<i>Bill Dyer</i>)	3:40
6	Lost in Iowa (<i>Cathy Gilligan</i>)	3:12
7	Chatter, Vibrations and Objectionable Pulsations—An Ode to Farm Equipment (<i>Pat Hario</i>)	5:16
8	Trends in Dubuque or Trouble in River City (<i>Bill Hoffman</i>)	5:01
9	Breakdancing in James T. Kirk's Future Hometown (<i>Andy Hooper</i>)	3:12
10	Oskaloosa Broadcasting (<i>Bill Humphries</i>)	3:17
11	The Little Piglet that Thought It Could (<i>Steven Vincent Johnson</i>)	4:01
12	Harvest in Progress (<i>Lynn Anne Morse</i>)	4:37
13	Avenging Aardvark in Altoona (<i>Ross Pavlac</i>)	3:56
14	Tom Harkin Will Travel (<i>Laura Spiess</i>)	4:02
15	Where Bowling is the National Pastime (<i>Julie Humphries</i>)	4:15
16	Holy Hawkeys , the Terror of the Buckeyes! (<i>Steve Swartz</i>)	3:13
17	Mystery Wind across the Feedlot, the Hold-Your-Nose Hoedown (<i>Kathryn Beth Willig</i>)	4:27
18	Mostly Too Flat (<i>Diane Martin</i>)	3:11
19	Des Moines, Des Moines, If You Can Make It There—You Can Make It There (<i>Vijay Bowen/Mark Richards</i>)	5:05
20	My Little Town (<i>Scott Custis/Jeanne Gomol</i>)	3:52
21	Medley: Gyre and Grain Silos/Tornado Two-Step (<i>Tracy & Michael Shannon</i>)	5:45
22	Cap'n Crunch and the Brown Oatmeal Plowboy (<i>Kim & Pete Winz</i>)	4:03
23	Is this Heaven?/No, It's Iowa (<i>Kim & Kathi Nash</i>)	3:21
24	An Egg with my Ham (<i>Arbuthnott & Wheatly</i>)	3:57
25	Leaving on a Jet Plane for Iowa (<i>Hope Kiefer</i>)	3:36
26	Country Roads Take Me Home (<i>Bill Bodden</i>)	3:44
27	The Heartland Strikes Back (<i>David Burgess</i>)	4:07
28	Alfalfa Obsession (<i>Jae Adams</i>)	3:49
29	Those Amazing Farm Finances, the Subsidy Swing (<i>Jeanne Bowman</i>)	3:51
30	Hallelujah Hayden Fry! (<i>Karl Hailman</i>)	4:50



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Welcome to *Union Street* (issue #31 and *Obsessive Press* #130), the zine with the transmutating masthead (this month celebrates a surprising and wonderful nomination for *The Bakery Men Don't See*). It is published by Jeanne Gomoll and Scott Custis, who reside in their home at 2825 Union Street, Madison, WI 53704-5136. Phone 608-246-8857. *Union Street* was created on a Macintosh computer—a IIx or an SE at various points in its lifetime—and hardcopy was printed on a Laserwriter IINTX printer. Text was created with Microsoft Word 5.0 and laid out with Aldus Pagemaker 4.2. The *Union Street* Logo was designed with Adobe Illustrator 3.2 and Adobe Photoshop 2.0. All contents are copyrighted © by Scott Custis and Jeanne Gomoll, 1992. June 1992 for Turbo-Charged Party Animal APA #72. Members FWA.

OFFICIAL BUSINESS

(SC) I vote NO on Karen Babich's proposal #7. The Apa membership now stands at 30. As Karen pointed out, a minimum of 11 people means that about a third of the membership could decide an issue. A simple majority of 11 votes cast is only 6. That means a fifth of the membership could pass motions affecting everyone. The Madison people would really control the Apa with those numbers. I think a motion should die if it can't muster support from at least a simple majority of the total membership. (Now 16; Tracy, you should change rule #9 to reflect this.) We should concentrate on encouraging people to participate rather than reducing the number of votes required.

(JG) I agree. I also vote NO on proposal #7.

NOTE

(JG) This is the first issue that Scott and I have done in which both of us have written our comments totally without the knowledge of what the other person had written or would write. We both wrote our own comments on different computers and merged the two sets together later. So, you will find a bit more overlap of commenting than we usually allow ourselves...

JEANNE BOWMAN

(SC) I have not met you yet, but I have heard enough good things to have cast my TAFF vote for you. So I would like to extend an especially warm welcome to Turbo. I can't think of a better way to start than by giving us a taste of your TAFF trip (more to come, I hope.) Your zine took me right back to the wonderful pubs and superb beer I remember from our trip in 1987. Contrary to what D. West says, a few of us *do* drink more than 2 pints. Welcome again.

(JG) Welcome to the apa, Jeanne! And what a great TAFF chapter. I'd like to say something like "the comparison between our two trips provides for a dramatic contrast." But not having any solid (published) thing to compare yours to, that would be an exercise in fantasy at the moment. I'm planning on taking a short sabbatical from the apa for the summer—Scott and I will be doing a cover and skipping issues of *Union Street* and I will be using the time to do an

issue of *Whimsey* to bring to Worldcon and Reinconation. One of the things I hope to publish in *Whimsey* is a TAFF chapter. We'll see. It will be strange to listen to those old tapes again after all these years...

MICHAEL SHANNON

(JG) You say that you "do not believe that any sort of legal action will solve, or even help this problem" of sexual harassment in the workplace. I wonder if this issue might not lie at the core of our disagreement, Michael. I do very much believe that legal action is a necessary and useful first step in changing people's behavior and prejudices. During the early years of the modern US civil rights movement, for example, some of the first, necessary steps aimed at fighting racism was the enactment of laws against Jim Crow laws. Granted, the laws by themselves did not entirely change the minds of racist individuals, but the laws did create a very different environment in which people got used to seeing other races in professional positions and peer groups. Minds did gradually change *because* the laws had changed. A law accepted by the majority of the people becomes a reminder that the world has changed and that prejudice is no longer tolerated.

I firmly believe that laws (like the Equal Rights Amendment) could have a positive impact first upon the outward, public behavior of individuals, and eventually upon their opinions. I think that laws in the workplace, making it illegal for sexual behavior to be used as professional currency would, first of all, drive that sort of behavior underground, and would eventually make it an abhorrent practice for all.

HOPE KIEFER

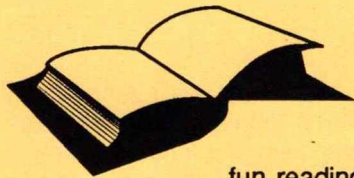
(SC) I found myself sighing and shaking my head at the sad story of your co-worker Janet. What a classic example of the abortion conundrum, "I don't believe in abortion, but..." But, of course, it's always different when it is you or your daughter that needs one. At least she still has a choice. It may be a tough one for her, she may be under all sorts of pressure, but if she decides to end it at least that option is still safe and available. It's very possible that it won't always be so. By the way, I think it is OK for you to say that most child abusers were abused themselves as children, but I would not say that most children who are abused grow up to



be child abusers. Many do not. However the risk is certainly something to be concerned about.

The Player was terrific. *Howards End* comes to Madison at the end of June and I plan to catch it.

(JG) I found your story about Janet fascinatingly horrible, especially the parts in which you quoted Janet and then her mother as saying that they didn't "believe in abortion, but..." I've got the feeling that Janet is going to have a pretty bad few years ahead. From your account, it seemed as though Janet wanted you to *order* her to do something, not give her options—that she was more used to taking orders from others than she was to making choices based on her own needs and situation. But since you weren't forceful enough, she probably bent to the person—her husband—who was telling her what to do. (You did the right thing, Hope. Don't think that I'm saying that you should have strong-armed her over to Planned Parenthood. You suggested options; you suggested that she think over her situation. That's all you could do.) I hate to think what's likely to happen to her though... Are you going to keep in touch with Janet?



I loved *He, She and It* too; in fact I think I would have voted for it over both the actual Tip-tree winners. Not quite in that category was *Jurassic Park*, though it was

fun reading it. Did you know that it's being made into a movie by Spielberg, and the technology being developed to make the movie will be used to create several Jurassic Theme Parks to compete with Disney Parks?

KIM WINZ

(SC) Rich people running for office, such as Kohl and Perot, seems to be a fad. We have another race like that brewing up here in Wisconsin. A Milwaukee millionaire, Joe Checota, is trying to buy the Democratic nomination for US Senate from two deserving progressive candidates, Jim Moody and Russ Feingold. Either of these two guys would be far superior to a middle of the road businessman like Checota. The winner will try to unseat conservative, wacko, Senator Bob Kasten. Kasten, a right wing nut and a dirty campaigner, who desperately needs to be thrown out. But we deserve better than Checota. Nevertheless, he has the bucks and may well pull it off. As Molly Ivans put it, wasn't it better back in the days when millionaires, bored with making boodle, bought yachts instead of running for office?

Many interesting comments this month. I particularly liked your comments to Steve Swartz and Tracy.

(JG) I heard Ross Perot on National Public Radio several years ago (During the Reagan administration), speaking to the Press Club. It was a fascinating, very entertaining speech, and I really enjoyed his jabs at the government. I liked him quite a lot, though I couldn't have told you much about what he stood for after the speech. And that wouldn't have seemed to be important to me either, since he wasn't running for office at the time. But I think I can understand his appeal to people who listen to him: he's the guy who always thinks of the right, witty, biting response, at the moment. The come-back doesn't occur to

him an hour later: he speaks without script writers (it seems). And now, as probable candidate, his vagueness about issues is working in his favor because people hear him, enjoy his sharp critiques, and identify with him before they know what he stands for. At that point, Perot becomes a mirror: People already identify with him and so impose their own beliefs on him. I don't know how long this infatuation will last, and although I won't vote for him, there is the added excitement about him when one speculates about what it might be like to have a president that can't call on party loyalties to pass or block legislative bills. Maybe they'd all actually have to learn to work with one another out there in DC.

Pretty horrifying stuff about the government wanting to purposely sabotage computer security technology so as to make eavesdropping easier. I don't believe that's going to happen, what with international industrial espionage striking paranoia into the hearts of the business world. But I am worried about the restriction of personal freedoms in computer bulletin boards, etc.

PAT HARIO

(SC) There are a number of reasons why I am not interested in having kids and pessimism over the state of the nation and the world is a significant one. I have seen retrenchment on vital issues affecting our future on almost every front (environmental, political, economic, social). I can't understand how anyone who is aware of the state of the world can muster the optimism to have kids and turn this mess over to them. We have been making decisions that not will not only affect these kids, but in some cases, they may be powerless to change.

(JG) Interesting question about whether parents care more about environmental issues than single folks. The opposite question occurs to me then: Do people without children tend to abuse the environment with less guilt than parents because they only have to consider their own lifetime?

This notion reminds me a lot of arguments I used to have with Father Mehan, the pastor of the Roman Catholic parochial grade school I used to attend. His position, basically, was that without belief in God people would have no reason to be good, i.e., without fear of hell and love of God, they would behave like animals here on earth. My position was that atheists (which I was beginning to feel like) could behave morally for other reasons: that they loved humanity, that they believed in a set of ethics that had nothing to do with the existence of God or the possibility of immortality. My youth prevented me from coming out very well in those arguments, but I remained unconvinced of the necessity of God.

In a similar way, I think that we all feel some responsibility to our species and our world that has nothing to do with whether our very own eggs/sperm grow up to be live human beings. Certainly that might add a one or two generational "edge" to thinking about the earth's future, but in terms of whether I (as a non-parent) am more likely to act or vote morally with respect to the earth's survival, I don't think there is a great difference between me and my brother who has two children. After all, I care about my niece and nephew, and about some of my friends who themselves are young enough to be my children.

Re your comment on authors who kill off their characters: have you read Dan Simmons' *Summer of Nights* or *Carrion Comfort*? It seems that he killed off the same character—my favorite in both books—twice. The *Summer of Nights* character who died seemed to me simply a younger version of the character who died in the other book.

I loved Bradbury when I was young too; I loved the poetry of his descriptions. In a way, his love of the Midwest reminds me of Garrison Kieler. But, some of his books are difficult to read again as an adult feminist. He's been criticized quite a bit for some blatant misogyny.

I still think that Steve's use of artwork in his zine that was done by the same artist (or at least in the same style) as the artwork on the "nice" cover was a dead giveaway, and I stand by my opinion.

MIKE DUCHARME

(SC) My limit is two films in a day and I rarely do that. I like to savor a good movie or book. Think about it and talk about it for awhile afterward. The talk afterward is sometimes the best part. I have changed my opinion of a film after it's over when a discussion has brought out new angles I didn't consider. On the other hand, after seeing a bad movie I usually don't want to see another movie right away. It leaves a bad taste in my mouth for movies in general and I feel like doing something else. A film festival such as the one you attended would be wasted on me. I would not want to see enough movies, even if I thought I would only pick winners, to make it worthwhile.

(JG) What an amazing week at the movies you had! I remember one day of obsessive movie-going soon after I moved to Madison...

I hadn't seen many movies when I lived with my parents: movie-going was a sort of once-a-month extravagance with friends. But Madison in those days (early 70s) was movie-fan paradise. Dollar movies, dozens of movie societies (and only a couple of them interested in showing recent releases), four or five movies every weeknight, dozens every weekend night. The availability of video rentals really changed that, didn't it? Anyway, I was trying to catch up on classic movies during those first couple years in Madison, and one Saturday caught four movies in one day—the two earlier ones being cheaper matinees at State Street theaters, the later ones being campus films. What an exciting day, I thought, four films that I really wanted to see. I no longer remember what the current movies were (I think one was an SF film, but I can't remember anymore), but the last two were *Garden of the Finzi Continis* and *The Pawnbroker*, both excellent films. It was during *The Pawnbroker*, however, that I realized something was wrong. Gone was the normal feeling I used to experience during a movie, of being entirely immersed in the film, of being entirely unaware of myself. I was checking my watch, my mind was wandering, and at one point I realized that I'd lost track of the plot. I'd found my limit and lost my sense of wonder that used to automatically kick in for me during a film. As I dragged myself back to my room at the Cochrane House, I knew I would never again subject myself to such a film marathon. And that I would someday have to see *The Pawnbroker* again.

Becoming Collette sounded intriguing. Did they mention whether or not it was a biography of the French writer, Collette? Did they include anything in the plot about her husband keeping her locked in a closet and passing off her writing as his own?

TRACY SHANNON

(SC) Congratulations on you and Michael's 3rd Anniversary.

Great reprint.

You mean to say you don't thrive on STRESS, yet you took the job of OE? Are you crazy? Having the power to make such a decision such as the final say on permitting someone to join, does not mean you have to use it. But having it is nice, don't you think? Besides, I'll bet even you won't be able to completely avoid making a few enemies during your reign.

About the house. The Madison real estate market has been strong for some time now and will likely remain that way, so just tell yourself that you can always sell if you have to. You probably won't lose much, may even clear a few bucks. Jump in there and enjoy it. It's only debt after all.

Does a Woman's Only Space at WisCon have to only be about escaping harassment? How about just a private space where women can talk openly about whatever (like the feminist programming) without a bunch of guys hanging around whining about being misunderstood or unfairly stereotyped? We males already have a largely exclusive space—the bar.

(JG) I was struck by your paragraph to Steve Swartz in which you wrote that you "often choose something 'sub-optimal' in order to make things as good as possible for everybody involved. Lately that can mean making things less-than-ideal for [you], but [you'd] rather do that than make [yourself] feel fantastic and somebody else feel horrible." I'm wondering if you are talking about short term sorts of politeness (like disguising a glum mood at a party so others won't have their celebration spoiled, or going along with a restaurant choice that you dislike but that others all seem enthusiastic about) or whether you're talking about lifetime choices. I hope you're not talking about compromising your long-term happiness for that of others. I think that such sacrifices can only make those others suffer in the long run anyway, when eventually, inevitably, bad choices warp one's personality or burst out in anger and rebellion.

Did you know that Jerry Kaufman and Suzle Tompkins (now of Seattle and the publishers of the fanzine, *Mainstream*) used to publish a zine called *The Spanish Inquisition*, figuring—of course—that they could never be held to a strict publishing schedule because, "Nobody expects the Spanish Inquisition!"

I don't see the Women's Space as an attempt to be elitist. I think that the need for separate space at a con stems from the same wounds that urges some women to become separatist in philosophy, to be as separate from men as they can. For some women, for some time (and for me too, for a while), it seems impossible to find positive things about oneself in the company of men. One step in the healing process for women, one step in the learning and growth of self esteem is to learn from other women, without men. And then, strengthened by the experience and self confident in her strength she can deal with the whole world



as a whole individual. WisCon is better than other cons, yes. Madison is better than a lot of other places, yes. But I don't think anyone on a WisCon committee has ever promised a totally sexist-free, totally wonderful pro-women experience in every aspect of our convention. Given the world that exists today, that's not possible. There are still many women who want and need the refuge of an all-women space at public functions. One woman who says that she does not need or want women-only space does not invalidate its usefulness for other women, and I support those women's wish to claim a small corner of our convention for themselves.

JULIE HUMPHRIES

(SC) Congratulations to you and Bill on a lovely wedding. It was wonderful and, as far as I could tell, came off without a hitch. A tribute I'm sure to your careful planning. Good luck to you both.

(JG) I'm sorry that you disliked my comments to you, but I did promise you that your honest statements would elicit equally blunt statements from me. If you remember, you claimed that you knew what I was thinking (by the evidence of my expression) when you announced that you would take Bill's last name. I corrected you and told you what I was really thinking. I said that I thought this was more evidence of your low self-esteem. I never said that I thought you hated yourself. I wrote that I wished you liked yourself better. If you don't want to hear what others think of you, you should stop speculating on what others think of you. I won't allow false speculations to stand uncontested. You should know that.

In any case, expressing my opinion that you have low self-esteem has far less of an impact on others than your own frequent self-criticisms. After all, I was *quoting* you in support of my opinions. People hear what you say about yourself and figure that you're the expert and will mostly believe you unless you behave in a clearly contradictory manner.

So, if Bill is "WHump," are you now "JHump?"

KAREN BABICH

(JG) I'm never going to hear the end of the "designed by Jeanne Gomoll" bit, am I? It's a strange thing, but my reputation in the Madison SF group *used* to be something like "If it's not signed, it must be Jeanne's," because I always used to forget. Well that reputation was second to, "If it's misspelled, it must be Jeanne's," but that one still hangs on.

I liked the character blurbs in the "cast of characters." You and Bill Dyer are capable of quite dramatic self-portraits of your lives. And fun too.

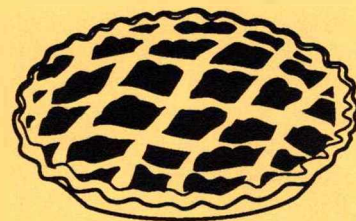
I agree with you that it would be nice if face-to-face discussions about the apa were reported back to the apa in print so that people didn't feel too left out of the discussion. But I did notice that none of us, including you, really did a good job of reporting the discussion held at WisCon. Tracy has been magnificent in detailing the status of proposals and voting in the official pages, and that to me is the most important thing. But none of us really went into detail on the discussion itself. Describing that contorted,

many-focused discussion would be an arduous task anyway. I think we might have to content ourselves with merely reporting the conclusions of the extra-apa discussions.

Thanks for the compliment on the trial. No, I never did find those "Friends don't let friends go to Iowa" T-shirts. After the perfunctory search the day we ran into you, I blanked it out. Thanks for reminding me; the search continues.

Yes, another Tiptree cookbook is in the works. (First of all, though, we're reprinting *The Bakery Men Don't See* because of the Hugo, and we assume lots of people will be interested.) A letter on the

next cookbook, *Her Smoke Rose Up From Supper* (from the Tiptree story, "Her Smoke Rose Up Forever") will be out soon. You, of course, are on the mailing list. Deadline will be mid-November 1992. We're going to be asking for one recipe (only) per person, and will be imposing a character count limit on the anecdotes. I'm expecting lots more people to want to get recipes into this one than were in the first cookbook, and expect that we'll even have sections (vegetarian, beef, poultry, fish, etc.). The cookbook will contain main course and side dish recipes only, things you would eat for *supper*, you know. We'll be a little pickier this year in that we won't allow duplicate recipes (and may ask the second submitter, or the writer of the less interesting accompanying anecdote to send us a different recipe), but otherwise we're again looking for recipes that are important to the author for some personal reason, and will be especially looking for anecdotes that relate to female friends or relatives.



PETE WINZ

(JG) Sorry about the misunderstanding, Pete. The problem may have stemmed from the fact that Scott and I hardly ever have the most recent two or three back issues around to consult about who originally wrote what when. We lend our back issues to Lucy Rhonor as soon as we've finished making mailing comments. (So, when her turn comes up for an apa slot, she's going to be up-to-date on our conversation.)

I'm looking forward to reading the account of the WHump's Wild Bachelor Party. It's a classic already, and it hasn't even seen print yet.

ANDY HOOPER

(SC) The CD reviews were great. I may be picking up a couple of these based on your recommendations. I don't know if you have heard or care (I don't know what radio stations you listened to out here) but WMAD 92.1 FM is no longer on the air. Its departure was rather dramatic. The Bank of Sun Prairie literally pulled the plug on them in the middle of the day. Without prior warning to the staff, they handed the DJ a note that instructed him to announce that they were going off the air at once. He basically said "...so I guess this is it. Have a wonderful life." Followed by dead air.

Congratulations on the Hugo nomination. I think you can count on us all being in your corner.

Good luck at Clarion. I hope you will tell us a little about the experience in Turbo. Maybe even share a some of your work.

I was relieved to see someone was put out by David Burgess' initial contribution as I was.

(JG) Scott and I are going to find Phil Ochs' *There but for Fortune*. Thanks for the reviews.

I haven't decided yet what to blame on mass consumption of Diet Coke. I'm sure something convenient will occur to me...

BILL DYER

(SC) I enjoyed your Minimalist Minac. No, I cannot name the item in your picture. Is it something we're likely to eat at Vagabond Cafe (the low-fat food group?)

(JG) You almost make me forget that you're doing minac, Bill, it's so very entertaining. The proper response to your life as a stage metaphor would be another metaphor, but I would tend to use a novel for mine, and thus would end up being far too long-winded for this space. I sure enjoyed your images though. By the way, is the "tall woman wearing a green surgical outfit and carrying a CO₂ extinguisher" supposed to be Barb?

LYNNE ANN MORSE

(JG) Another interesting, dense zine, Lynne. As for your "putting words in my mouth" (in your comment to Cathy Gilligan), I may not have meant exactly that men rely on other women to smooth over emotional rough spots, but I have meant exactly that on other occasions, so it's OK. (What I was referring to in my comment to Cathy was my dislike of the notion that sexism is a problem that affects only women, and that all discussion—and work related to it—can be deferred to them, that men don't have to deal with the issue, but when they do, that they expect any available woman to brief them. As a privileged white person in the US, I know that racism affects me and that I must work against my socialization that taught me to view Blacks, Hispanics and Asians as "other." I do not feel that it is the responsibility of any individual minority person to teach me how not to be a racist. Yet I often hear that this is exactly what is expected by men of women vis-a-vis sexism.)

The *Union Street* idea was both Scott's and my idea: we were rambling around in conversation trying to think of an apazine title, and as we circled around the idea of using our house or our address as the title, we both came out with it simultaneously. The graphic was just a logical extension of the idea. And yes, I create it, using the computer program, Adobe Photoshop to do the perspectivization of the street names, and Adobe Illustrator to draw the sign. Scott and I talk about the cross-street name a few days before the deadline, and sometimes the choice comes as an obvious inspiration; sometimes it's like pulling teeth.

You asked... Hosts, to me, stand for Catholicism's contention that it is the one, true church. According to a practicing Roman Catholic, every other Christ-rooted religion that uses the symbol of bread-as-Christ in its services fails to actually complete the "Transubstantiation," i.e. literally—not figuratively—changing a wafer of bread into

the body of God. And anyone who fails to accept the fact that the Roman Catholic Church is the one true church, is doomed to be condemned to hell. Thus, not only do hosts represent a rigid intolerance that I detest in many religions, but hosts also represent the institutionalization of superstitions that we should have chucked a long, long time ago. Instead, children are being brought up studying math and science one hour, and told that they have guardian angels the next. I personally resent the time I wasted learning (and then untangling and rejecting) religious concepts during my education. For eight years, half of all the history lessons I learned concerned the activities of the Catholic Church. (So when we learned about the settling of the North American west, we went into detail learning the—cleaned up version—of the Jesuit's role in colonizing California.) I have no personal interest anymore in participating in an organized religion.

Good comments to Owen. And kudos for your public responses to Sally Quinn's article.

MARK RICHARDS

(JG) Did you miss the conversation that bubbled up here in the apa about the Orson Scott Card homophobic article several months ago?

ARBUTHNOTT & WHEATLY

(SC) [Owen:] I don't have any special problem with your Four Principals of Life, or whatever. But I think your making a lot of unwarranted assumptions and generalizations when you say that the family is the basis of all societies and that the family has to consist of a male father, female mother and children.

Many animals form family units for reproductive purposes, but don't go on to construct "societies." I would say that the classic family unit has more to do with reproduction and social groups have more to do with survival strategies like food gathering and hunting and protection from predators, etc. The family unit does not have to be the basis of society, and these days, I wonder if it is even necessary for survival of the human species.

You make no provision for alternative families such as single parents of either sex, gay couples, reverse role couples (male as care-giver and female as breadwinner), extended families (as in divorce situations where kids have more than one family unit, for example.) I mean to say that I don't accept the idea that a mother/child unit has to be this special relationship. Just because a woman is equipped to give birth, does not mean she has to be best suited to be a mother. I don't think the father has to be limited to providing a "suitable environment for the mother/child unit." You are basing your whole theory on forcing people into roles based on their sex that simply may not be true. Furthermore, a family has to fit your narrow definition. As stated above, these days, families can function with all sorts of arrangements and society as we know it will not collapse.

(JG) I don't think that any of us just "miss" being affected by sexism. It isn't as if there's a mad terrorist out there, randomly shooting some folks with the sexism virus and missing others. Sexism is embedded into the institutions and the very fabric of our culture. We absorb it whether we know the terminology or not. We grow up and gradually we start examining our beliefs and behaviors and accept (or don't accept) their cultural catalysts. I figure that



even the most critical and conscientious of us will be viewed as being mired in sexist muck by those who live after us and begin with fewer sexist assumptions.

I definitely don't see myself as belonging to "a generation that has grown up in a society that publicly states that women should have equal rights and opportunities." (your words) *I wish* that it was true, but we're not there by a long shot. If we were, the Equal Rights Amendment would have been passed without comment here in the US. Pay inequity between women and men would not be endemic. Violence against women would not be a world-wide, everyday tragedy. So, I agree with Cathy that "until such time as men and women really do have equality of opportunity, I'm a Feminist."

Although I would agree with you that society only "works" to the extent that all its members are physically and mentally healthy, I seriously disagree with you about the methods we as society should go about assuring that. You assume that "the family unit is the basis of society, and the core of the family is the mother/child unit, which is held together by maternal love—the primal love. The father's role is important in, but not central to this.... The role of the father is to help provide a suitable environment for the mother/child unit." How we assure that children are raised in a healthy environment is exactly one of the areas that is completely unknown today. Having begun to question gender roles, we have discovered that we do not know if the traditional nuclear family needs to be the basis of a healthy society. We do not know if the mother-child relationship is defined biologically or socially. We do not know if every woman can or should be a good mother. (I think that I would make a bad mother, for example, and have chosen not to reproduce.) We do not know if the talent of parenting is any better performed by women than men, given an ideal, egalitarian society. We do not know if the task of providing economically for the child is a task that should be primarily assigned to one gender, and in fact that assumption would receive loud hoots of derision from most randomly chosen audiences. What will individual women choose to do and be if they actually have the same range of choices that most men have at their command? We don't know yet. We're just now beginning to find out that women might choose as wide a range of lifestyles, careers, and behaviors as men have traditionally been able to choose. It's reasonable to assume that choices within family units might be as equally varied, and as unconnected with gender as career choice.

We're not finished yet. We're not near enough clear on what will remain after the habits of sexism wear off, to be making ironclad statements about women's and men's proscribed roles.

And on another subject... I define the word, "politics" more widely than you, Owen ("interaction of systems of government"). To me, there is only one kind of politics (or Politics) and it is the manipulation of power. Power is manipulated in government, yes, but also in the streets, in the home, in schools, anywhere there is more than one person. Thus the phrase, "the personal is political."

BILL HOFFMAN

(SC) Terrific comment to Steve Johnson.

"Fuck Buddies Forever?!" Ha, Ha, thanks anyway Bill. I know you're a busy guy and, after all, it's the thought that counts.

There's a limit to my curiosity about what might be swirling around the "dark corners" of *your* mind.

(JG) Hmmm.

Excellent comments to Steve Johnson. I especially liked the stuff about the biases against brain damage explanations. But we all seem to come to the same question with Steve, don't we, about why it seems to be necessary for him to find extraordinary causes for unexplained events.

A Solstice Turkey is full of shit? Remind me to refuse your dinner invitations around the Solstice.

BILL HUMPHRIES

(SC) Around the time we bought our house, I saw a short article in *Time* magazine on corn furnaces. Shortly after, we found a dealer out in Middleton and looked them over. We haven't had the money to invest in one yet, but I hope to be able to in a year or two. A corn furnace is a good idea because it uses a cheap (\$1.50 a day estimated cost) renewable resource for power. It burns very hot, no pollution, no odor and no creosote. It does not have to be vented up a chimney. It has a self-feeding system that can be loaded with enough corn to last ten days. It can heat a house as big as 3500 sq. feet and generate as much as 60,000 to 100,000 BTU's. There is relatively little ash residue.

The city will not permit you to remove a gas, electric or oil furnace in order to run completely on wood or corn. So the corn furnace would have to be in addition to our gas furnace. That is actually good, because the gas furnace would then act as a reliable back-up. It would cost us around \$2,000 to change over, and it would take up a significant amount of basement space. We need to get the money together and organize our basement to handle it before we jump in. One problem is that our current gas furnace is in good shape but it is old and very big. That adds to the space issue. But we are already mostly sold on the idea of a corn furnace and expect to pursue it.

I am glad you asked about it, Bill. Being a transplanted Texan, I can at least hold your attention. As an Iowan I find that whenever I happen to use "corn" in a sentence around here, my listener usually erupts in snorts and chuckles. I'm looking forward to having the last laugh on these milksop Wisconsinites. The best they can hope for is a furnace that runs on cow shit...

Jeanne & Scott, 17 June 1992

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