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WISCONSIN ACADEMY REVIEW

Published Quarterly by the Wisconsin
Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters



Shakespeare in Wisconsin

Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters

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**On the Cover: Randall Duk Kim as Falstaff in the 1984 production of
The Merry Wives of Windsor. Photo by Zane Williams.**

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CONTENTS

Shakespeare in Wisconsin

Wisconsin Letters

Artist-in-Residence

Features

- 4 Shakespeare's Allegorical Life**
Robert Kimbrough
- 6 American Players Theatre**
Patricia Powell
- 14 Young Shakespeare Players**
Patricia Powell
- 16 Shakespeare in the Twentieth Century**
Patricia Powell
- 17 Wisconsin Shakespeare Festival**
Margot L. King
- 22 The Owl in the Kitchen**
Ronald Wallace
- 26 Morels (poem)**
Ronald Wallace
- 27 Magazine Clipping (fiction)**
Daniel F. Cooper
- 32 Poems by Randall Colaizzi**
- 34 Kindling (fiction)**
Joan Ritty
- 37 Wisconsin Photographers' Showcase**
Alan Luft
- 41 On the Reopening of the Dig at Aztalan (poem)**
Victoria Ford
- 41 Bird Mound at Devil's Lake Park (poem)**
Credo James Enriquez
- 42 Poems by Susan Faust Casper**
- 44 Poems by George Gott**
- 45 The Pro Arte Quartet**
Ruth Gustafson
- 49 A Visionary Heritage**
Lucy Mathiak
- 53 The Wisconsin Years of John Steuart Curry**
Lucy Mathiak
- 57 Aaron Bohrod: Artist-in-Residence**
Donna Scott Thomas

Departments

- 64 Windfalls: The Stuff of Life**
Arthur Hove
- 66 Galleria: Tom Uttech**
Warrington Colescott
- 68 Bookmarks/Wisconsin**

Academy Affairs

As an editor for the Academy I enjoy something many editors miss—an annual opportunity to meet our readers and hear what they liked and what they wished they'd seen. The 1985 conference, which was held this year in La Crosse on the University of Wisconsin campus the last weekend in April, offered fine papers and talks and an unparalleled source of ideas for future issues, from readers, from authors, from Academy council members.

An Academy program we look forward to is the traveling exhibit of "Wisconsin Survey: Three-Dimension Art Today," composed of the sixty-five artists featured in the March 1985 art issue. This exhibit begins this month at the UW-Madison Union Gallery, travels to the Bergstrom Mahler in Neenah in August, the West Bend Gallery in September, the Pump House Regional Arts Center in La Crosse October 7 to November 10, the UW-Platteville Harry Nohr Gallery November 17 to December 20, the Neville Public Museum in Green Bay January 19 to February 24, and the Rahr West in Manitowoc in April 1986. While the photographs in the *Review* are lovely, you need to see all three dimensions in a gallery to feel the full impact. Don't miss the show when it's in your area.

This June issue, too, had special pleasures for me—visiting the always charming Aaron Bohrod in his incredible studio, talking with the fascinating people at American Players Theatre, writing about the Young Shakespeare Players after admiring them for two years. Even working on manuscript revisions with authors for this issue was agreeable.

Coming up in the *Review* in the next year will be a December special issue exploring water in Wisconsin: Is our ground water becoming polluted and endangering our wells? Is acid rain a threat to the forests, lakes, buildings of Wisconsin? How serious is the industrial pollution of rivers and lakes; is it reversible? The DNR periodically issues warnings against eating contaminated fish from polluted waters; how safe is it to eat fish of unlabeled origin from groceries and restaurants? Are reports about deformities in birds who nest near polluted waters exaggerated? Should the Great Lakes states share their abundant supply of water with states who need it? Water is the source of much of the good life we enjoy; are we protecting it properly?

The March 1986 issue will focus on Wisconsin art history from about 1840 to 1940. We'll look at the various schools and styles which flourished here and well-known artists who spent some portion of their careers in Wisconsin.

Both of those issues have room for relevant articles. I will be pleased to read article proposals on either topic.

The Wisconsin Academy has operated a noncommercial art gallery open to Wisconsin artists in the Steenbock Center since 1974. Vice President for Arts Warrington Colescott formed a committee to raise funds to renovate the gallery this year. The committee's first project is to offer an etching by John Wilde, printed by Mantegna Press in an edition of fifty signed and numbered prints. The first twenty-five will be available from the Academy in July for \$200 each. We can take orders now. For December the committee has planned an exhibit by a dozen prominent Wisconsin artists such as Don Reitz, John Wilde, Warrington Colescott. Academy members and friends will have a chance to own these works of art for a minimal investment. Sound mysterious? We'll provide the details about artists, art, and your opportunities in the September *Review*.

Patricia Powell

Authors

Robert Kimbrough joined the English department of the UW-Madison in 1959. Although he teaches a broad range of courses, from freshman composition and introductory literature to graduate seminars, as a student of sixteenth-century humanism, he learns most from teaching Shakespeare.

Patricia Powell has edited the *Wisconsin Academy Review* since 1980. As an English major at the University of Texas at Austin and a graduate student at the University of California at Berkeley, she concentrated in Renaissance studies and poetry. Writing about Shakespeare in Wisconsin was a particular pleasure. Her fourteen-year-old son, Adam, will return for his third summer with the Young Shakespeare Players, an experience that has brought satisfaction to the whole family.

Margot L. King is publicity director for the Wisconsin Shakespeare Festival in Platteville. She received a Bachelor of Music degree from Western Michigan University and a Master's in counseling and guidance from UW-Platteville. She has received grants for research in giftedness and delinquency from the American Association for Gifted Children and has published and given papers on this work. Margot King has written and directed six plays with the help of the children of Platteville and, of course, her two daughters.

Ronald Wallace, whose poems have been published in *The New Yorker*, *Atlantic*, *The Nation*, *Poetry*, and other magazines, is director of creative writing at UW-Madison. He has published three books of criticism and two books of poetry, *Plums, Stones, Kisses & Hooks* and *Tunes For Bears To Dance To*.

Daniel F. Cooper is twenty-four and works for the *Fond du Lac Reporter* as a correspondent in Mayville. He received his B.A. from UW-Eau Claire, where he studied journalism, Spanish, and English, and will attend Iowa State University this fall to pursue studies in creative writing. "Magazine Clipping" is his first published work of fiction.

A native of Salem, Ohio, **Randall Colaizzi** was educated at UW-Madison and the University of California at Berkeley. In 1983 he excavated with the Berkeley dig at Nemea, Greece. He was awarded the Eisner Prize for Poetry and the Galbraith Memorial Prize of the Academy of American Poets in 1979. He has published poems in *Poetry Northwest*, *Dragonfly: A Journal of Haiku*, *The Connecticut Fireside and Review of Books, Occident*, and *Anthology of Magazine Verse & Yearbook of American Poetry 1981*. He teaches in the UW-Madison Department of Classics.

Joan Ritty teaches Shakespeare, creative writing, and Irish literature part time at Avila College in Kansas City, Missouri. She has published fiction, poetry, and articles in *Kansas Quarterly*, *Cottonwood*, *Commonweal*, *Negative Capability*, and others. The background for "Kindling" was found in the account of the fire by Father Pernin, pastor of the Pestigo parish.

Alan Luft photographed the anti-Pershing II and Cruise missile rally in Bonn, West Germany, on October 22, 1983. These photographs were exhibited at the Steenbock Center Gallery of the Wisconsin Academy in August 1984. Alan has a B.S. from UW-Madison in art with emphasis in drawing and photography.

Credo James Enriquez received his early education from the Jesuits. He had wanted to be a priest but instead attended the creative writing program at UW-Madison and the summer workshop at Columbia. After working in Tokyo and New York, Credo James Enriquez returned to Madison in 1983. He works as an independent video producer.

Victoria Ford received her B.A. from Ohio Wesleyan University in 1975 and M.A. in English with emphasis in creative writing from Indiana University in 1978. After two years in the Puget Sound area, she returned to the Midwest. Her poems have appeared in *The Feminist Connection* and in *Totem Tidings* of Olympia, Washington.

Susan Faust Casper works half time in the UW-Stevens Point writing lab as a writing specialist and half time in the English department teaching freshman English. Each summer she works as assistant director of the Central Wisconsin Writing Project. She lives in Wisconsin Rapids with her husband and two children.

George Gott teaches composition, creative writing, and contemporary poetry at UW-Superior. His poetry has been published in numerous magazines and anthologies.

Sally Behr and **Marylu Raushenbush** have contributed special photographs for this issue.

Ruth Gustafson lives in Madison with her husband and three children. She holds degrees in English literature and music, having studied violin with Norman Paulu, first violinist of the Pro Arte Quartet, at UW-Madison. Continuing her interests in dance and music history of the early twentieth century, she contributes articles to *Isthmus* as a dance critic and feature writer. She also teaches violin, is a member of Musicians Forum of Madison, and participates in a research seminar in violin pedagogy at UW-Madison.

Lucy Mathiak is a Ph.D. candidate in the UW-Madison Department of History. For the past two years she has headed the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences projects to conserve John Steuart Curry's biochemistry murals and to document the artist-in-residence and rural art programs.

Donna Scott Thomas is education coordinator at the UW-Madison arboretum and a graduate student in the continuing and vocational education department at UW-Madison. She received an M.A. in the history of art from the University of California at Davis in 1973. She directed the Triton Museum of Art in Santa Clara, California, and worked with UC-Davis Extension, where for two years she was in charge of the liberal arts department. She has lived in Wisconsin since June 1983.

Arthur Hove is assistant to the chancellor at UW-Madison and director of information services. He has been writing a "Windfalls" column for the *Review* since 1973.

Warrington Colescott is Leo Stepat Professor of Art at UW-Madison and is vice president for art of the Academy. His prints and paintings are in collections throughout this country and abroad.

Comments on

Shakespeare's Allegorical Life

By Robert Kimbrough

"A man's life, of any worth, is a continual allegory—and very few eyes can see the mystery of his life—a life like the scriptures, figurative. . . . Lord Byron cuts a figure—but he is not figurative. Shakespeare led a life of allegory: his works are the comments on it."

John Keats

Some two hundred years ago, Samuel Johnson remarked that William Shakespeare has pleased many and pleased long because of his just representations of general nature. Johnson was praising Shakespeare's classical ability to classify the vast variety of classes (types and kinds) that form the human parade. Shakespeare captured in his art all the categories of human nature.

Two generations later, John Keats responded more to the unique characteristics of each character in Shakespeare than to how each represented a type to be found in life. Keats was fascinated by Shakespeare's ability to get inside his creations, his capability of so negating his own sense of person that he dwelled in what he created. (Keats called it Shakespeare's "negative capability.") Keats reveled in the gusto and fire that he experienced in Shakespeare, who, he said, took as much joy in creating an innocent heroine such as Imogen in *Cymbeline* as he did in a paranoid, destructive Iago in *Othello*.

Taken together, the remarks of Johnson and Keats suggest the range and depth of Shakespeare, his neoclassical ability to limn the outlines of every type and his romantic ability to suggest the private, distinguishing characteristics of each human within each type.

The same might be said of Chaucer, and Dickens, and many others, but what separates Shakespeare from other great writers (and them from Shakespeare, for they all *are* great writers) is Shakespeare's way of writing: his knowledge of words, his uses of language, his sense of construction, his ear for rhythms and music (contrasting and harmonious), his precision of meaning, his richness of suggestion. Every writer has a signature and Shakespeare's signature is on all of his works. They are his works; they belong to no one else.

As a teacher of Shakespeare I am routinely asked, "Didn't someone else write the plays of Shakespeare?" My answer usually is, "Yes, someone wrote the plays of Shakespeare—but if it wasn't Shakespeare, it was someone else with the same name." My questioners tend to be ill-at-ease in the company of a "teacher of English" ("I'd better watch my grammar") and specifically do not want to say, "Well, I've never really read Shakespeare." What they don't know is that I already know from their question that, indeed, they have not

read Shakespeare, for those who read the thirty-seven plays, the sonnets, and the two long poems discover the voice of Shakespeare. No one else sounds like him, especially the candidates brought forth as the "true" or "real" author of "Shakespeare."

This is the overriding fact in the so-called authorship question: no one else sounds like Shakespeare—not the Earl of Oxford, not Bacon, not Marlowe, not the Dark Lady. Add to this fact two others: we know many more facts about Shakespeare than any other writer of his day, and we have the clear testimony of his colleagues and rivals, both writers and players, to affirm his special genius and achievement. So, we're left having proved a circle is round. Some will still stubbornly say, "No, it isn't." So be it.

But Keats was one who responded instinctively to the integrity of Shakespeare's work (the real things of this world, he said, are the "Sun, Moon, and Stars, and passages of Shakespeare"), and in so responding Keats sensed the uniqueness of Shakespeare. I use the word unique *not* as a colloquial term of adulation (that, too), but as a term for isolation (that hope each of us harbors that each of us is unique). When Keats said that "Shakespeare led a life of Allegory: his works are the comments on it" he implies that the works of Shakespeare are primarily private, that they are inventions of the mind,

that they are fore-conceits, that they were conceived in the zodiac of Shakespeare's wit, that they are conceptions of a far-from-idle brain, that they are metaphor, parts of "a continual allegory." In short, Keats implies that Shakespeare was, in the best and fullest sense, a dreamer: one who internalizes life. But he also recognized the obvious: Shakespeare wrote down his dreams—for himself, and for a few others.

Those few others were the members of the companies for which he created scripts. The intended audience of Shakespeare's texts were, then, players who translated Shakespeare's letters into spoken words to be digested aurally by the public. Shakespeare was "published" (made public) by the players over a number of years during which culture was still dominantly oral-aural. Only after Shakespeare's death in 1616, perhaps anticipating the recession of a reliance on the oral-aural as a mode of transmission of tradition, did the players publish Shakespeare through the printing press and Shakespeare's oral comments on his life became ours in 1623. But during his lifetime, Shakespeare's publication was primarily through performance.

It is often remarked that Shakespeare did not have to write so fully, so multidimensionally in order to have been a successful playwright. Such as observation misses an essential point: Shakespeare had no choice, so to speak, in the matter of writing as he did, for he was not first of all a playwright, but a writer, albeit a writer whose work took the form of scripts of public performance. This is natural enough. We tend to forget that the sixteenth-century emphasis on literacy (*bonae litterae*) took place within not what was predominantly a print-culture, but within what was still predominantly an oral-culture. Words were written to be spoken. (The wide-ranging works of Sir Philip Sidney spring to mind.) The transitional nature of Renaissance culture, that crossing of the threshold from medieval to early modern, is perfectly captured in the fact that the finest

achievement in art in England was by a writer of plays. Literacy and orality in league.

Shakespeare's plays are so fine not because he was a player and a playwright but because he was a writer. He loved words, he mastered language and syntax, he sensed that writing is a turning in before it is a turning out. Writing is a playing-out, both in the sense of spontaneous delight and in the sense of lines going gradually through your hands as much under their own force and control as yours. Lines of writing run courses that cross back on themselves, leave signs and posts, develop linkages and feedback loops to inform, reform, and reinforce what is being discovered by the writer during the act of writing. Because writing has a preserved beginning, one can go back, change, and adjust; because writing is durational, one can point ahead, refer back, plant signals.

This is the basis of Shakespeare's art: writing. Not playing—but playing with writing. Shakespeare is a meeting point of orality and literacy because in making scripts he created pieces of literature, those detached, self-contained comments on life with lives of their own. He took from and built on oral tradition of all kinds, yet he rendered those traditions into literature, through literate analysis, through the scrutiny of literacy, through the act of writing itself. Ben Jonson and others wrote drama according to the classically oriented rules of their age. Shakespeare was of all time because he was the first modern writer. He wrote freely for himself, limited only by the demands of the stage. His plays are extensions of him; they are the allegory of his life, his figurative life. We may never "see the mystery of his life," but we can always study "the comments on it," the works themselves. First of all, when we read or hear Shakespeare, we are struck by his style, his sound. Shakespeare is open to us today because he so successfully wrote for the ear that he added more words to the English language than any writer before or after, he set the

standards of rhythm and phrase for the translators of the King James Bible (1611), and he showed Milton the way he should write *Paradise Lost*—in English blank verse. Shakespeare, the Bible, and *Paradise Lost* are the primary shapers of modern English. And Shakespeare not only came first, but has survived the other two as a lasting cultural presence, for Shakespeare has never been out of print, has never been unproduced, is the most translated author in history, and today is the most often staged playwright in the world.

What makes Shakespeare so constantly accessible, so easily translated, so widely performed is that he tells a good story. His plays have shape, form, and meaning. He paints on a big canvas with great precision. (Back to Johnson and Keats, again.) He holds a mirror up to nature, to human nature, to our own human nature. No wonder he entertains; who can resist looking into a looking glass? We are fascinated by ourselves, curious concerning what we look like, hopeful of removing doubt and confusion through careful examination, and, when we are doubly sure no one else is looking, just a little bit pleased by what we see. Thank you, William Shakespeare.

* * * *

A postscript for Wisconsinites: if you want to test for yourself what I have been saying, go this summer to Spring Green to see any performance of Shakespeare by American Players Theatre. Do two things: open yourself to the world of the play and you'll discover how "easy" (why do we turn play into work?) Shakespeare is, and watch the audience around you—you will see children and young people, the middle-aged and older ones, from every walk of life, with a variety of educational background, and a diversity of prior exposure to drama and to Shakespeare, all, all fully responding to and thoroughly enjoying "Shakespeare." It is not only "easy"; it is fun. Go—enjoy. □



American Players Theatre

By Patricia Powell

The 1985 American Players Theatre season previews Shakespeare's *The Comedy of Errors* June 25 in Spring Green. Two new productions for the company will be *Julius Caesar* (opening June 29) and *The Merchant of Venice* (opening August 16). Last season's highly successful *The Merry Wives of Windsor* will be recast and brought forward. On August 30 three one-act plays by the great Russian Anton Chekhov will open: "The Bear," "The Proposal," and "On the Harmfulness of Tobacco." The summer schedule runs for sixteen weeks with over 100 performances. This marks the sixth season of this remarkable company, the only professional, solely classical repertory theatre in America.

From the first 1980 season the company has drawn rave reviews from theatre critics from the *Wall Street Journal*, the *Minneapolis Tribune*, the *Chicago Tribune* as well as from the local press.

In the beginning

In 1971 Randall Duk Kim, Anne Occhiogrosso, and Charles Bright were in New York City. Randall, a native of Hawaii, had performed at Joseph Papp's New York Shakespeare Festival and the Champlain Shakespeare Festival and in New York with the American Place Theatre and the Direct Theatre. He had worked across the country with the Yale Repertory Theatre in New Haven, the American Conservatory Theatre in San Francisco, and the Guthrie Theatre

**That it's in Wisconsin is our good fortune, for it is clearly
in its artistic intentions and its artistic powers a national
theatre for the classics.**

in Minneapolis to establish a national reputation as a classical actor. Anne, a native New Yorker, had directed and conducted acting workshops in New York and San Francisco. Charles, a native of Minnesota, had cofounded with Kim the Ensemble of Theatrical Artists in Honolulu in the sixties. What these three had in common was a feeling of discouragement about the state of the American theatre and a desire to form their own version of a classics repertory company.

Discussions continued as Charles Bright joined the Kennedy Center and became director of sales and promotion in the early seventies. Anne Occhiogrosso was manager of Instant Charge at the Kennedy Center and directed American Players Theatre's first production at the Chautauqua Tent, the bicentennial celebration area of the Kennedy Center. In 1977 these three incorporated as the nonprofit American Players Theatre (APT). Their intention was to create a full-time, year-round home for artists committed to classical research, training, and production. They first conceived of a Washington, D.C. based company which would tour medium-sized cities around the country, then later searched for a rural setting "away from the distracting influences of city life." They considered 221 sites, visited 47, and finally decided on the 71 acres near Spring Green where the rolling hills offered several choice areas for an outdoor theatre.

In 1979 the company began operating out of the farmhouse and barn on the site. To raise money

for construction and hiring personnel, APT produced and toured "What Should Such Fellows As I Do?" a one-man show featuring Randall Duk Kim, hosted workshops on an approach to acting Shakespeare, and sponsored two major fundraising events. Finally, the founders were able to assemble a company of seventy-three artists and administrators, build a theatre and support facilities, initiate an apprentice academy, and present *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Titus Andronicus* for its first season, 1980.

Shakespeare, the foremost master of the English language, is the obvious choice for a classical company to present to an English-speaking audience. The founders wanted to produce the plays "with respect, by performing them complete, unabridged, without updating or textual manipulation." They would begin with the early plays, so that the company could mature along with the playwright.

In the past five years APT has performed nine Shakespeare plays: in addition to the first season's offerings, *King John*, *Love's Labour's Lost*, *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, *The Comedy of Errors*, *Romeo and Juliet*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, and *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. *King John* was staged only in the 1981 season and the theatre's most popular production *A Midsummer Night's Dream* appeared all five seasons, but the other plays have been kept in the repertory for two or three seasons.

Although Shakespeare is the mainstay of APT, the theatre is devoted to the classics and has pre-

sented William Wainwright's 1592 translation of Plautus' 2,200 year old play *The Twin Menaechmi*, Christopher Marlowe's *Tamburlaine the Great, Part I*, and in this season will present three of Chekhov's one-act comedies. Long-range plans include such classic playwrights as Aeschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, Moliere, Racine, Schiller, Goethe.

Directors and directions

The theatre's approach to directing is unusual. The company speaks of the primary director of each play as the script; for Shakespeare plays this is the Folio of 1623, which was gathered by two members of his acting company, John Heminge and Henry Condell, and published after his death (1616). Each play has more than one director, and all are present at every rehearsal and every production. The collaboration permits directors to view each play from different sections of the house simultaneously and thus reduce staging problems posed by the theatre's thrust stage. No one director's concept is allowed to take precedence. Their continued presence allows them to question the meaning of the text, to research and explore new ideas even to the end of the season. Director and actors must research the plays from such basics as using the *Oxford English Dictionary* to determine the sixteenth-century word meanings to immersing themselves in the historical period by learning the dress, customs, concurrent events, flora, and fauna, by looking up historical references and literary sources.



David Cecsarini and Lee Ernst participate in the fencing workshop at APT.
Photo by Zane Williams

Acting academy

More than a production company, the American Players Theatre has always intended to be a major training and research theatre. In the first season twelve non-Equity (nonunion) apprentices were hired. The academy, unlike most training programs, paid the students to learn so they could devote all their time to the training. The rationale of this apprenticeship was to develop repertory actors for APT, not for the general stage, so that the investment would eventually benefit the theatre.

The training was meant to provide clear understanding of the text and the knowledge necessary to embody the range of humanity created by the playwright. Classes have varied in the attempt to discover what leads the company to this un-

derstanding and knowledge. Work with the Folio, of course, is a necessity. It is a difficult text to read initially because of printing techniques, use of capital letters, punctuation, and inconsistent spellings. The company feels, however, that the acknowledgement of these capital letters and punctuation, while not now grammatically correct, aids the actor "by letting the words do the work they were intended to do." Modern editions force the actor into unnecessary pauses, often eliminating the cohesiveness of the ideas. When problems arise from the Folio, actors refer to the Quartos.

Physical training for the apprentices include Tai Chi and Pilates and voice and speech work. Research time to define words, probe questions raised by the text, and study the period in which the play is set is also scheduled.

At various times classes have been offered in drawing, make-up, instrumental and vocal music, scene study and characterization, mask building, theatre history, stage combat. For the 1984 production of *The Taming of the Shrew* classes in mask and mime and commedia dell'arte were held.

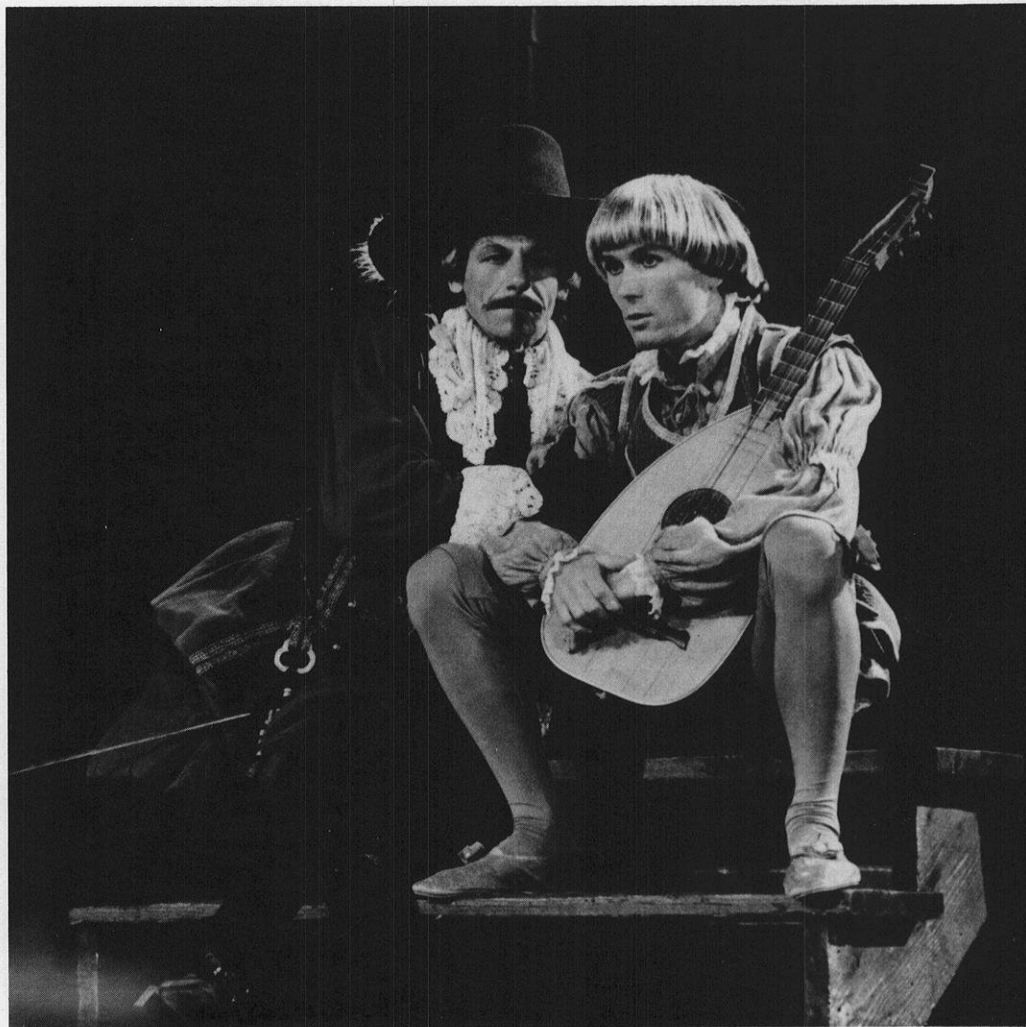
These actors were to serve four years as apprentices and, if qualified, join the company as fully professional Equity members. In 1984 four actors became Equity; in 1985 two more and in 1986 the last four will join. This means that while the theatre has paid to train seventeen apprentices for the one to four years they remained with the company, ten will fulfill the financial bargain. However, this has caused APT to rethink the original concept of paid training, and no acting apprentices have been signed on for the last two years. APT may begin to charge tuition for the apprentices to set the academy on a sound financial basis.

Researching the plays

The 7,000 volume library is a necessary adjunct to the academy but useful to all APT employees. This specialized collection is augmented by the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Shakespeare collection. Students of Shakespeare can explore his world: What did King John look like? What does the family name Plantagenet mean? How do you build a trap structure like those in Elizabethan stages? What does a thirteenth century Franciscan monk's habit look like? Where can we learn about sixteenth century hawking? These questions and hundreds more must be answered by an actor before he understands the world of the play. In addition to many editions of the plays and criticism, the collection includes stage history, biographies of performers, books on scenery, lighting, stage design, and the history, art, literature of Shakespeare's world.

Company members

Where does American Players Theatre find apprentices or company members? The 1984 company had twenty-eight members; fifteen of these had a Wisconsin background before joining APT. Others were veterans of Shakespeare festivals—New York's Shakespeare in the Park, Champlain Shakespeare, D.C. Summer Shakespeare, Illinois Shakespeare. Sixteen of the actors have returned for at least three seasons to APT. Half were members of Actor's Equity Association. They came from Stevens Point and Milwaukee, from New England, New York, and Minneapolis. But two-thirds of the Equity company and all the apprentices, as well as many of the technical and administrative staffs, have made Spring Green their permanent home.



Leonard Kelly-Young played Don Armado and Thomas Winslow played Moth in this 1984 production of *Love's Labour Lost*.

Stage, sets, and costumes

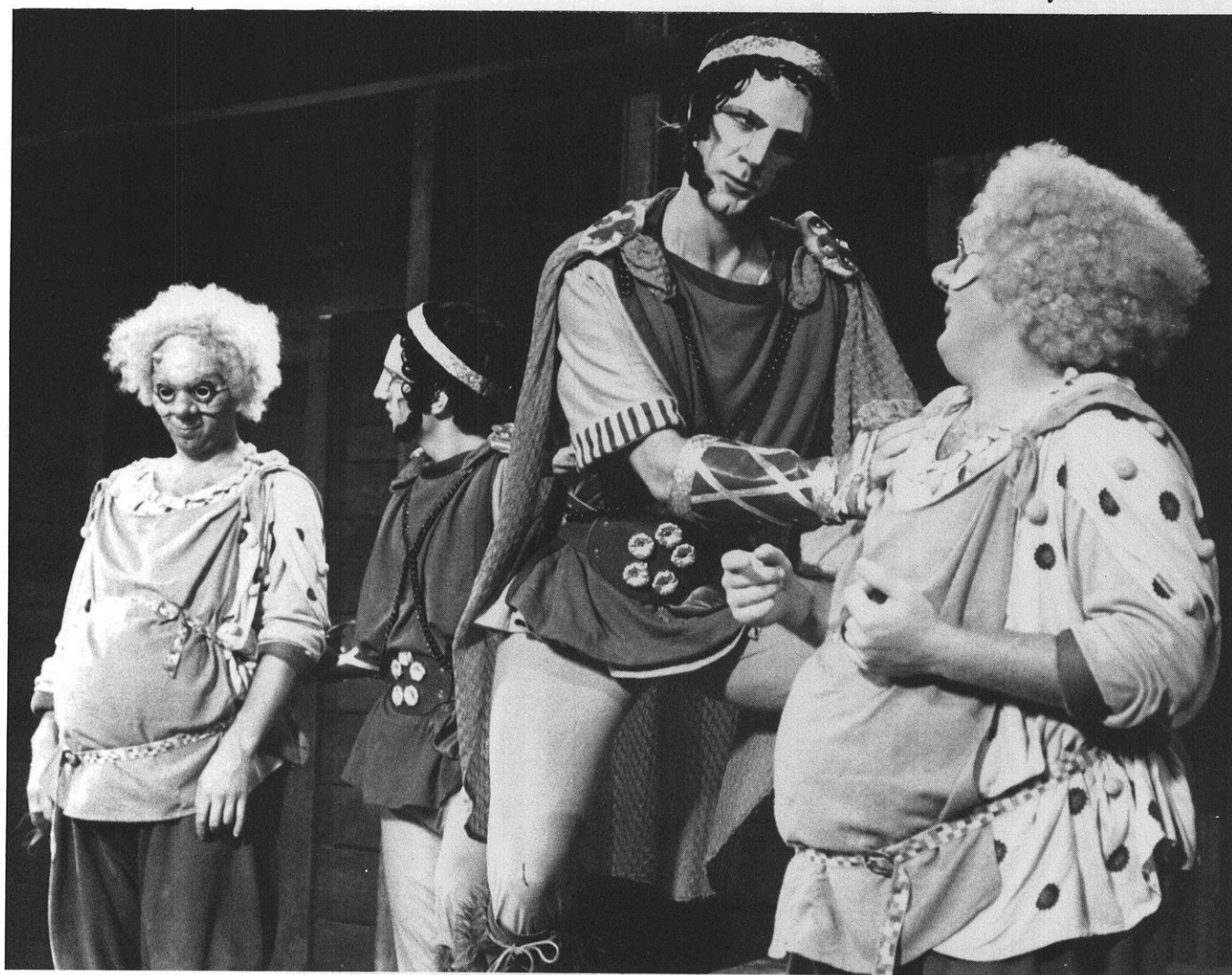
This outdoor amphitheatre, built by volunteers in 1980, was designed by Edward Kuharski in collaboration with stage designer Sam Kirkpatrick. The design synthesizes an Elizabethan stage with an extension into the audience used in Japanese theatre with a Greek semicircular, tiered seating arrangement for 704. The eclectic design is effective. The permanent set has a balcony on stage right reached by a stairs and a platform which gives acting space between the main stage and the balcony. The actors enter from left, right, and center and frequently from the aisles through the audience. The low stage even permits an actor to leap on it, as the company demonstrated in *A Midsummer Night's Dream*.

The costumes are thoroughly researched for each play to recreate the historic period in which the play is set as authentically as possible. Paintings by Peter Bruegel inspired the designs for *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Ted Boerner created "clothes, not costumes" to capture ordinary middle-class life in this small country town in the fifteenth century. Props for the production included period-type stoneware by actor Laurie Shaman and a woven willow laundry basket. Seen on the severe wooden stage, the luscious costumes provide all the "spectacle" an audience could need.



1981 performance of *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*: left Randall Duk Kim as Launce, right Theodore Swetz as Speed. Photo by Robert Wood

1982 production of *The Comedy of Errors*. Photo by Robert Wood



1984 production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*: Randall Duk Kim as Sir John Falstaff, Arleigh Richards as Mrs. Ford. Photo by Zane Williams



Future

Each year that the theatre exists helps to ensure its future. But in the dark winter of 1983 the theatre's debts had grown to \$750,000. There was talk of canceling the 1984 season. There was talk of getting rid of the board. There was talk of getting rid of the founders. Everyone was tired of the constant financial pressure, and everyone agreed that something had to be done.

The board hired an off-off-Broadway producer, Frank Tobin, as general manager and gave him expanded duties. He had plenty of experience with dismal theatre finances and was undaunted. He also had seen Randall Duk Kim act Richard III more than ten years before in San Francisco and admired what APT was trying to do. In December of 1983 the Kohler Foundation had awarded APT a \$100,000 challenge grant to start an endowment. Too, by March of 1984 APT had raised \$345,000 through mail and phone solicitation, individual, corporate, and foundation donations and proceeds from the Winter Classic, a raffle, and a \$100 per plate reception. The 1984 season was assured, although it was four weeks shorter than planned and the fall tour was canceled. Ticket sales rose for the 1984 productions of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Taming of the Shrew*, *Romeo and Juliet*, and *Love's Labour's Lost*. Money raised through contributions in 1984 was 52 percent greater than in 1983.

Following the 1984 season the director, general manager, and some of the administrative staff remained on payroll to prepare for the 1985 season, one step toward the year-round company the founders envisioned. They hope soon to maintain a year-round artistic staff as well. Thus far the training, rehearsal, and performance cycle begins in April and ends in late October. During the off season, the momentum of working together is lost; the company would like to continue its artistic growth by using the winter months to tour.

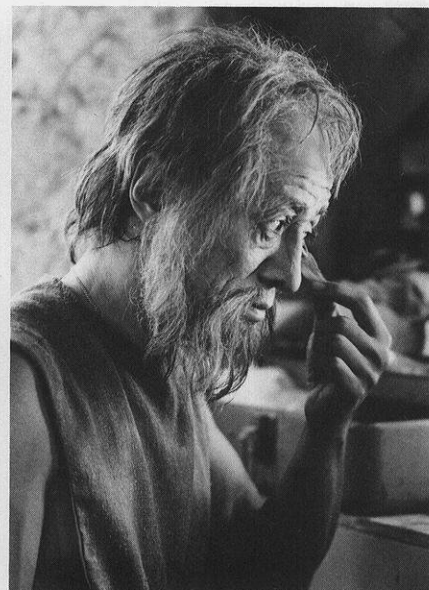
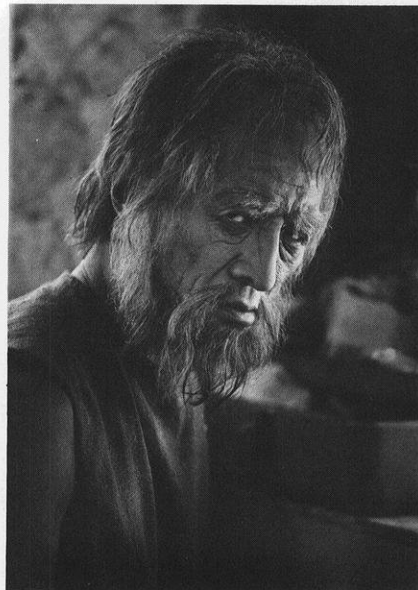
The company first toured in fall 1981 to three colleges in Wisconsin. In fall 1982 they expanded the tour to five weeks with five plays to eight Wisconsin communities. In early 1983 the apprentices took *The Twin Menaechmi* on the road; that fall

the company extended the tour into Minnesota and Illinois. American Players Theatre has always considered touring as a major part of its purpose. Plans are underway for a fall 1985 tour of a five-state area, with seven or eight actors and a small technical staff. The company is preparing to go on the road with five repertory productions for the spring of 1986. These ambitious plans are possible, Tobin asserts, only by having a year-round staff.

Although the financial stress is somewhat relieved, the effort to secure the company's future is unrelenting. Frank Tobin: "The immediate problem is the declining physical plant. Not enough money was available to put into the structures in the first five seasons, and those five years of wear and weather have taken their toll. But the company only leases the land, and we are reluctant to make capital investments in land we don't own. And as idyllic as the countryside is at Spring Green, I believe, contrary to the founders, there is a real problem with locating a major theatre here. To reach beyond last season's 60 percent audience capacity, we must draw people from Chicago and Minneapolis who require overnight accommodations. Spring Green's limited hotel capacity thus limits audience attendance." Tobin is attempting to set up theatre weekend packages with Madison hotels to entice metropolitan audiences.

The company has long planned an indoor facility on the property to operate year round. While this is out of the question now, Tobin suggests that the winter facility might better serve the company if built in the Sunbelt. An indoor facility away from the Spring Green amphitheatre would bring the company one step nearer to becoming the national company it originally intended.

American Players Theatre is a Wisconsin treasure in 1985. But future tours and winter facilities will expand their audiences beyond the state and the region. As soon as their financial success equals their artistic success, this Wisconsin-based institution will influence the nation.



Interview with Randall Duk Kim

PP: You have often noted that APT presents Shakespeare for American audiences. How does this differ from a British production?

RDK: Our mode of speaking is American, which to my mind, is more direct and more directly connected to emotion without the stiffness and affectation of a British stage production.

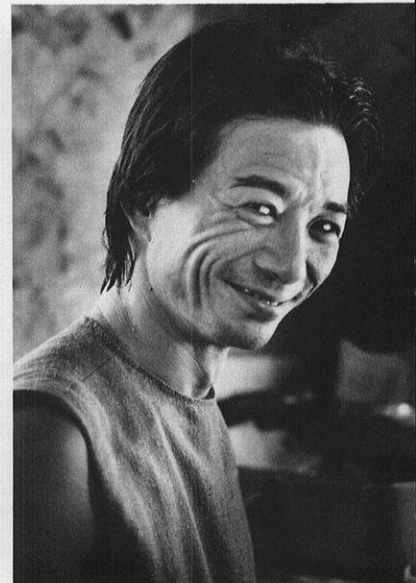
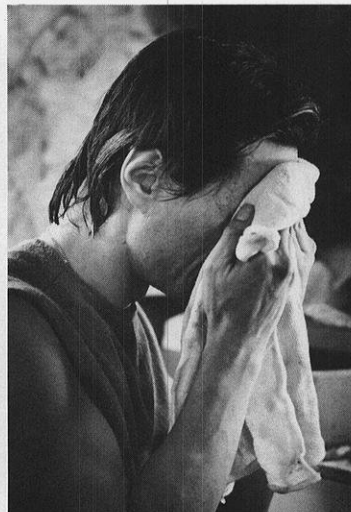
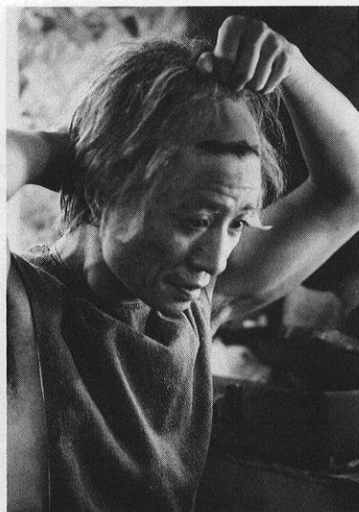
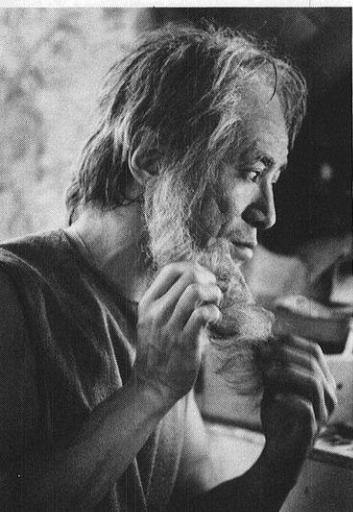
Moreover, our American audience has not been brought up memorizing lines from the Bard in school; they are not as familiar with the plays. This gives us an unexpected advantage in evoking a fresh response from the audience. They don't always know the turns and twists of plot and characters, so they readily follow our lead. But if some members lack intimate knowledge of Shakespeare, the American audience does not lack intelligence. We never feel we need to play down to a crowd or modernize the language or beat the audience over the head with political interpretations. We simply tell the story and permit the theatre goers to draw their own conclusions.

PP: What do you think about how Shakespeare is taught in the American schools?

RDK: The Shakespeare taught in schools has not usually possessed the vitality so obvious in a production. I think to appreciate Shakespeare we need to see plays. The theatre should do more classics. To grow to love Shakespeare you need to see the plays performed by people who hold him in respect but are not intimidated by the language.

PP: Are the schools around Spring Green taking advantage of the marvelous opportunity to see Shakespeare performed by the finest classical theatre company working today in America? Are English classes and drama classes flocking to American Players Theatre performances?

RDK: The response has been slow but gradual. Remember, we chose to do classical theatre in a rural setting; we understood the difficulties of gaining a wide audience here. However, every year is a vast improvement over previous years. The word is getting out to area



Randall Duk Kim removes his makeup for the part of Titus Andronicus. Photos by Robert Wood

teachers that students enjoy the productions, that they're not confused by the language, that they're not too young or too intellectually unprepared to appreciate classical drama. Once students see a production, they completely lose their fear of Shakespeare; they realize they can understand the plays.

PP: Have the recent Public Television productions of Shakespeare affected your audience or brought in new people?

RDK: If anything, the TV productions have turned people off. They minimize the play, pull all the liveliness out. There is no way to translate Shakespeare in the TV medium. These productions were not, for one thing, performed before a live audience, and to miss audience response is to miss much that goes on in a play.

PP: Reading a history of the Stratford Festival (Ontario, Canada), I noticed pictures of Alec Guinness as Richard III and more surprisingly of William Shatner of "Star Trek" fame in various productions in 1953. Your 1984 program shows a photograph of Vivien Leigh in *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Laurence Olivier in *The Merry Wives of Windsor*. Are young actors still trained in Shakespeare?

RDK: There are schools which still train actors in classical plays,

but there is no commercial demand for actors to have classical theatre training. The young actors don't feel part of the long tradition of stage acting. The acting profession has become too fast and frantic; art is simply not discussed. Most actors are on the market to be bought and sold.

PP: What new pleasures can we expect from the 1985 season?

RDK: In addition to two new Shakespeare plays, *Julius Caesar* and *The Merchant of Venice* we are doing three one-act Chekhov plays. I'm discovering in dealing with the Chekhov script that I must learn a more natural way of speaking. I feel I'm being artificial. Unlike the elevated soaring poetry of Shakespeare, Chekhov is dealing with ordinary people who—though eccentric—talk about ordinary things in ordinary language. We will take the Chekhov on tour this fall around the Midwest. Then in spring of 1986 we will take the entire company on tour with Shakespeare.

A new actor is coming in to play Caesar. I'm playing Brutus, David Caccarini is Mark Anthony, Theodore Swetz is Casca, and Jonathan Smoots is Cassius. In *Merchant* I'm playing Shylock and Alexandra Mitchell (who played Katherine in *The Taming of the Shrew*) will play Portia. We did the casting in early

winter, although the company arrived the first of April for training. The year-round staff permits us to plan much further ahead; we cast for 1986 in spring of 1985.

PP: Both *The Taming of the Shrew* and *The Merchant of Venice* incorporate unpopular traditions, anti-feminist and anti-Semitic. Do you expect adverse criticism for doing these plays and how do you respond?

RDK: I think we're in the hands of a master playwright. Anti-Semitism was part of his culture, but Shakespeare was compassionate with a much broader sense of humanity. Theatre should be courageous. It gives us a glimpse of where we came from; if we don't look at where we've been as a people, we cannot make progress. If the day ever comes when theatre begins to censor classical plays because we're afraid to look at the past—however ugly—then the theatre should close.

PP: What would you most like for people to know about American Players Theatre?

RDK: I'd like to rid people of the fear of classics and Shakespeare. I'd like for those who have never attended a performance to overcome their reservations and discover what a wonderful time they can have enjoying Shakespeare and how easily they can understand him. □

In a pleasantly wooded, secluded backyard in Madison last summer I watched students perform a full-length, unmodernized version of *Macbeth*. The costumes were simple shifts and tunics for the most part. The stage props consisted of four square black boxes clumped to be rocks on the heath, spread to be tables and chairs for the banquet—objects that clearly could be used for any play. The staging was simple; actors sometimes moved awkwardly. But if the spectacle for the audience was simple, this merely underscored the amazing performance. The incredible fact is that in four weeks twenty-one kids aged eight to sixteen with little or no acting experience had learned and understood some of the

most difficult of Shakespeare's lines. Many of them had never memorized a line of poetry before being cast in a part that might require memorizing a hundred lines. Yet they were doing Shakespeare with a fervor and understanding that would do justice to graduate students in English.

There are no auditions for these productions, no evidence of talent or special interest is required. These students are not child prodigies; they're not selected on the basis of academic excellence or acting ability. They are admitted as they sign up until the quota for the play is filled. Everyone who signs up gets a speaking part. Of course, kids who choose to spend one month of the summer vacation in an intensive

learning experience are motivated.

After reading through the play at their first meeting, the students decide which part they want to read for, and at the next meeting participants vote to cast the play on the basis of that reading. They have only three and a half weeks to understand the play, learn their lines, block the scenes, prepare for the first performance.

The man who has held this program together since 1980 volunteers a month each summer. Richard DiPrima, a Madison publisher of educational material, describes himself as "an educator with a love of Shakespeare." Richard became involved in the program's predecessor when his two children participated in the Shakespeare in the

The Young Shakespeare Players

By Patricia Powell



Young Shakespeare Players' performance of *Othello*, 1981.

Shakespeare in Wisconsin

Backyard's abbreviated version of *The Tempest*. The director asked him to help the kids understand their parts. When the director accepted a teaching position out of state, the Shakespeare students suggested that Richard become director for the next year. They also told him they thought they could do entire plays, not just abridged versions.

Richard has long felt that students are not sufficiently challenged in the normal mode of education. He believes that teachers too often have a negative attitude, one that sets limits and decides what students can *not* do at each age level, i.e. students are not ready for Shakespeare until high school and then only some and only partially. Richard believes and demonstrates that no idea is too complex for young people if it is presented adequately. What normally limits young people's responses to subjects like Shakespeare, he believes, is the way the schools present poetry and the classics. They are conceived and presented negatively—as turgid and forbidding obstacle courses. If, instead, they were presented positively, he says, young people could learn to love them before they learned they are supposed to fear them.

Thus in 1980 he decided to direct *Hamlet* because he wanted to “go right to the heart of Shakespeare and work with something extremely challenging but equally rewarding.” He knew it would be a difficult play for kids with a median age of eleven to comprehend, but he believed that once they understood it they would find it quite appealing. After the first performance, one parent commented to him, “From college on I’ve seen countless productions of *Hamlet*, but this is the first time I’ve understood everything in the play.” Richard knew the actors had succeeded, for only through their own understanding could they project something the audience could understand.

In 1981 the Young Shakespeare Players learned and performed — for the learning is more important

than the performing—*Othello*, in 1982, *Julius Caesar*, in 1983 *The Winter's Tale*, in 1984 *Macbeth*. This summer in August students between the ages of seven and seventeen will perform *Romeo and Juliet*. Nearly 90 percent of students who perform in a play return for at least one more production; many have acted in three plays. Parents begin calling the director in November to plan the family vacation around Shakespeare rehearsals.

What qualifies a person to teach and direct Shakespeare to children? Degrees in education? in drama? in literature? Such criteria are important only to a bureaucracy, a school system. Richard's long love of Shakespeare makes him a perfect person to share that love with young people, that and his belief that students can do far more than most teachers and parents expect. He studied Shakespeare at Harvard College with Harry Levin and Reuben Brower, whose course he says was the “most rewarding single educational experience” he had, with an emphasis on the text and the unity of the whole work rather than on psychological analysis of characters. Richard finds this approach works very well with his young students.

DiPrima starts off the first class by saying “Nobody ever went to *see* a play in Shakespeare's time; he went to *hear* it. You must understand every word, every line, every theme. You must see how every character and every action contributes to the unity of the play.” He might play a record of Beethoven's Fifth to illustrate themes and the recurrences and the variations, then show how sleep and blood work this way in *Macbeth*.

How does he get the kids to do the enormous work required to master a difficult play in a short time? Richard makes a cassette for each character, keeping in mind the age and experience of the actor. The cassette begins with a discussion of the character based on the text and goes on to important words and themes. He reads every line assigned to the character and explains

the words, discussing which need to be emphasized and the rhythm and flow of each speech. Actors are asked to read aloud as they memorize lines.

Richard's strong emphasis is on the spoken word. He's concerned with the students learning and loving the words, the poetry. He is less concerned with developing actors, and very little with putting on a spectacle for an audience. He must, I think, have unlimited patience to coach these undisciplined, inexperienced players to performance; he must also communicate his faith in them. “I put together two incredibly limitless resources—Shakespeare and kids.”

Every year, Richard says, kids come to him after learning their speeches to point out to him some particularly beautiful or moving lines. One eleven-year-old explained the satisfaction in acting Shakespeare this way: “We don't want to think the only thing we're smart enough to do is *Peter Pan*, and we proved it.” A friend chimes in, “This proves we can do anything.”

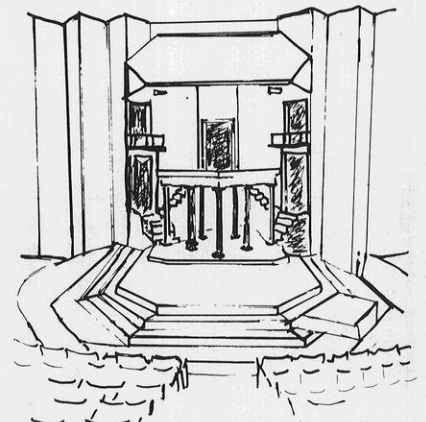
If the kids feel satisfaction in a transitory achievement, the parents know that the value of this intimate understanding of a great mind from another time and the fascination with his words will last their lifetimes.

A parent expressed astonishment after last summer's performance of *Macbeth*: When I came I thought “This will be cute but boring.” Ten minutes into the play I forgot they were kids: I saw the aggressive Lady Macbeth torn apart by her ambition; I saw Macbeth suffer hope and fear, pushed beyond his own capabilities; I saw loyal Scots seeking justice in a climate of fear and suspicion. I heard Shakespeare.

“To me,” says Richard DiPrima, “the value of the whole experience was expressed by one young actor right after a performance, when she told me in triumph: ‘You're right. Young people are as smart as anyone else.’ Such is the power of Shakespeare and of properly motivated young people.” □

Shakespeare in the Twentieth Century

By Patricia Powell



Stratford Festival stage

That this century has witnessed a transformation of cultural and aesthetic values is obvious. That we've also witnessed a revolution in the production of Shakespeare's plays may be a logical extension but is certainly less obvious to playgoers.

Shakespeare's plays have been produced for four centuries; what is there to revolutionize? The answer might be everything—the acting, directing, staging, costumes, the physical surroundings. It might also be that every age interprets Shakespeare in light of its aesthetic values.

At the end of the nineteenth century Shakespearean productions were uninhibited spectacles. First priority was given to the lavish sets which forced lengthy waits between scene changes, causing the plays to be too long to perform uncut. Thus lines were routinely cut or transferred from one character to another; the plays were produced as song-and-dance routines. Shakespeare's play was often little more than a title and background for a producer's imagination.

Several important theatre figures changed all that. In the 1870s William Poel had formed the Elizabethan Stage Society, dedicated to discovering the conditions under which Shakespeare and the Lord Chamberlain's players performed—from the shape of the stage to the style of line delivery. By the turn of the century Poel aggressively deplored the manipulated texts and the theatre of illusion which required the picture frame stage. Although he made little headway against the Edwardian spectacles, he did convince those who would eventually transform Shakespearean

production as well as academic criticism. He fostered the recognition of Shakespeare's skill as a playwright and the reading of the plays as performance pieces, which we take for granted today. Today everyone accepts that Shakespeare was not only a wonderful wordsmith but a consummate popular entertainer.

Harley Granville-Barker accepted Poel's ideas of the necessity to turn to Elizabethan stagecraft to discover the best way to stage Shakespeare, and his visionary performances paved the way for Tyrone Guthrie to bring us the Shakespeare we see performed today, with emphasis on original text and stage directions. In the thirties when Guthrie worked with the Old Vic in London, he realized that—as Poel and Granville-Barker had—a new stage was necessary to serve Shakespeare's sense of timing. The picture frame stage with elaborate scenery changes destroyed the actors' momentum and the audience's involvement in the play. In the 1933-34 season he directed Shakespeare on an architecturally designed permanent set. After the war he wanted not merely a new set but a new theatre designed like an Elizabethan playhouse.

We know quite a bit about theatres in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth century from contemporary engravings, drawings, builders' contracts, and careful reading of stage directions from the Quartos and the Folio of 1623. The Elizabethan playhouse was open to the sky and was square, hexagonal, or round. (Shakespeare's "This wooden O" at the beginning of *Henry V* probably refers to the Globe.) Tiers of galleries around the

walls provided expensive seating with standing room on the floor. The main stage was a platform jutting out into the audience which provided proximity and intimacy with the actors. There was an inner stage, a balcony, and a space behind the main stage to which the trap door connected. There was no front curtain to be raised and lowered. The set was permanent; the properties were sparse and symbolic: a potted shrub to indicate a forest, a bench with pewter cups to indicate a tavern.

Costumes were elaborate, a most expensive outlay for a company. Of course, most of Shakespeare's plays were played in modern dress, that is, Elizabethan or Jacobean costume with only occasional effort at historical appropriateness.

In 1953 Tyrone Guthrie took charge of the fledgling Stratford Festival in Ontario, Canada, and had a new amphitheatre designed which seated spectators 220 degrees around the platform. The success of the stage changed stage design on both sides of the Atlantic. Guthrie's influence on the way Shakespeare is presented today cannot be overestimated. We see his influence in the stage design and presentations at American Players Theatre and at Wisconsin Shakespeare Festival.

But the Shakespeare we see today, though closer to the original productions than any in 350 years, should not be considered the final word on Shakespearean production. Every age reinterprets Shakespeare, argues about the shape of the stage, the decorative setting, the costumes, the method of speech. And however dissimilar these interpretations may be, Shakespeare speaks to every age. □

By Margot L. King

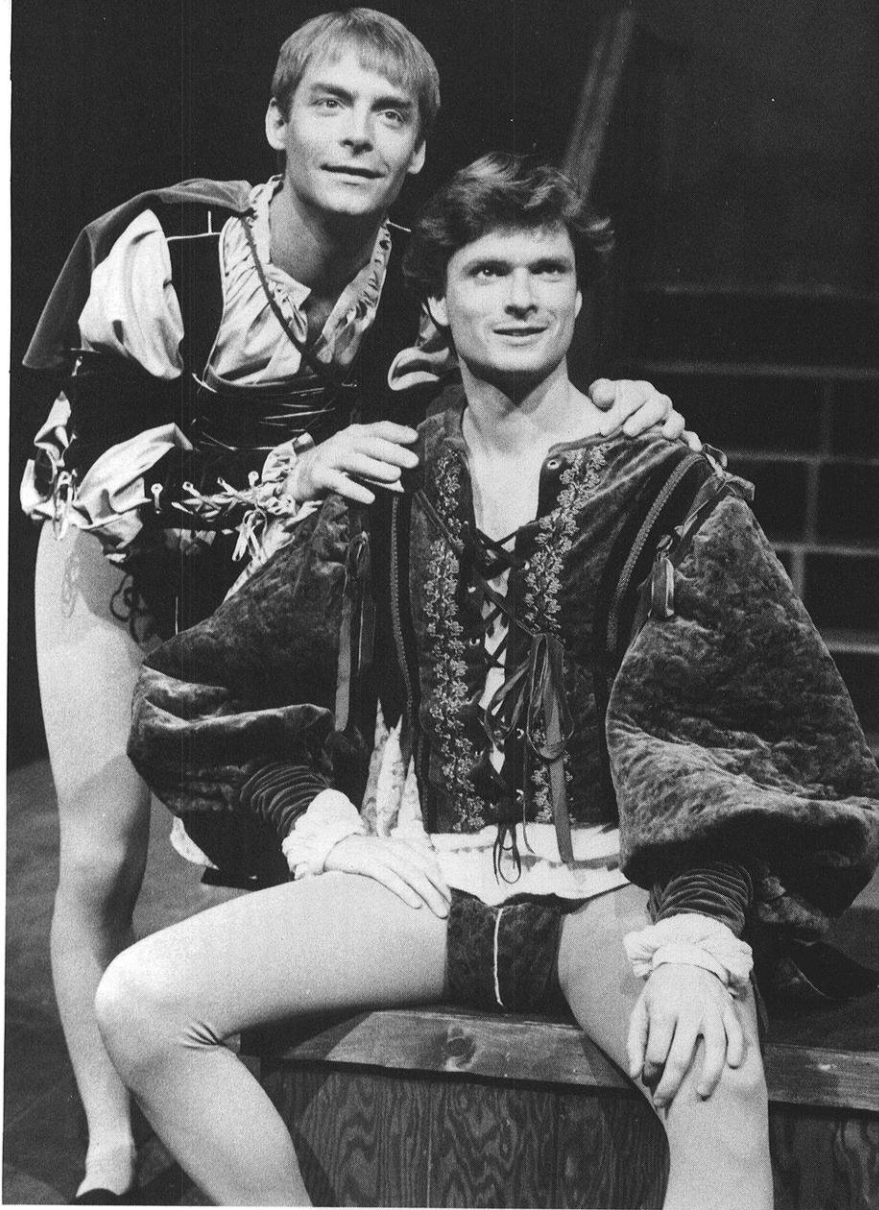
Platteville is the home of one of the oldest Shakespeare summer festivals in the Midwest. It has grown in nine years from a summer university repertory to a superb Shakespeare festival. Reviewers have praised its past three seasons. Robert Kimbrough reviewed the 1983 season in the *Shakespeare Quarterly*: "*Lear* was done with taste and intelligence. . . . [Michael] Duncan knew his *Lear*, felt the beats of his life, and never let the demands of parts of the part destroy his overall sense of the part. . . . The WSF, with its *Lear* won the best Shakespeare production overall." The 1984 season was described by Jay Joslyn of the *Milwaukee Sentinel*: "The WSF is mining gold here in the old lead fields. The feeling that remains after a weekend of playgoing is admiration for the consistently high quality in the diverse program. . . . Although the festival has won wide recognition among young actors, it has still been kept something of a secret from potential audiences. The secret ought to be revealed."

For artistic director Thomas P. Collins, the dream of producing Shakespeare started when he was young. "I have been a Shakespeare buff since I was in the eighth grade and my sister came home from high school one day reciting 'Double double, toil and trouble' from *Macbeth*. I was entranced by the sound of the words. When I went to Stanford University, I had the privilege to act with John Kerr in *Hamlet*. I've been hooked on Shakespeare ever since.

Collins notes that many of the WSF performers have moved on to work in renowned repertory theatre companies, television, and film. Mark Waters, who played Puck in the first season, recently completed a season at the Royal Shakespeare Theatre in Stratford-on-Avon, where he played Ariel to Derek Jacoby's Prospero in *The Tempest*. Kathleen Kelly, the shrewish Kate



Wisconsin Shakespeare Festival



Authentic and intricate costumes by Wendy Collins enhance *The Two Gentlemen of Verona*, 1984 season.



of the 1978 season, appeared as a regular in TV's "Search for Tomorrow," and Barbara Hooyman, who played Emilia in *Othello*, is now occasionally seen on "All My Children."

How can he produce such fine theatre in such a short season? Collins explains: "We work ourselves to death. We rehearse each of the three shows for three hours a day, six days a week. Everyone in the company puts in a nine-hour day, even more with the hours the actors put in outside of rehearsal learning their lines. When not on stage, the actors help out with set and prop construction, and many take pride in a cuff or ruff they have sewn for their costumes."

"Not everything, of course, can be accomplished in five short weeks. The directorial staff holds conferences on the organization of the company and the day-to-day schedule months in advance of the company's arrival. The artistic staff studies Shakespeare's scripts, using both the first Folio of 1623 and the earlier Quarto editions to make sure that we have an authentic and clear text. These editions are often more helpful to the actors and directors than modern paperback editions in which the spelling and punctuation have been updated. I examine acting editions and prompt books published by the leading interpreters of Shakespeare over the past four centuries. It is interesting to see how many pieces of stage business have become tradition, handed down from one actor to another since Shakespeare's time."

Thomas Goltry has been the set designer since the beginning of the festival. He designed the new, more flexible setting for the new theatre, which is similar in basic features to the Globe but is asymmetric and contemporary in style. The set can serve all three productions beautifully each summer.

The stage is similar to the Globe but asymmetric and contemporary.

Nine years pass fast

In the summer of 1976 Thomas Collins and Thomas Goltry created the first Shakespeare festival in Wisconsin. Many were skeptical when they first proposed that the summer theatre program at the university be expanded to a full season of Shakespeare with a repertory company drawn from all over the Midwest. Nowhere in Wisconsin, Illinois, or Iowa was there such a precedent. Summer theatres in Wisconsin traditionally offered American musical comedies. But in 1973 Collins and Goltry had squeezed *The Two Gentlemen of Verona* into a season with *The Streets of New York* and *Stop the World, I Want to Get Off*. The audiences were surprised and enthusiastic. The next three summers they tested three more of Shakespeare's plays with equal success, and in the fall of 1976 the directors proposed the Platteville Summer Shakespeare Festival, a nonprofit educational theatre, which would provide room-and-board scholarships for the nucleus of a company.

The festival was housed for six years in the small Doudna theatre on the UW-Platteville campus, until in 1983 the new Center for the Arts provided a theatre for the Shakespeare productions. These new facilities hold 300 persons in a tiered theatre where sound and viewing are at a maximum. The lighting and sound are computerized on a state-of-the-art system. The festival now has a complex of rehearsal rooms, a costume shop, and dressing rooms to handle the large company.

Theseus and Hippolyta's wedding celebration is the frame for *A Midsummer Night's Dream*. Photo by Andrew Baumann



Summer 1985

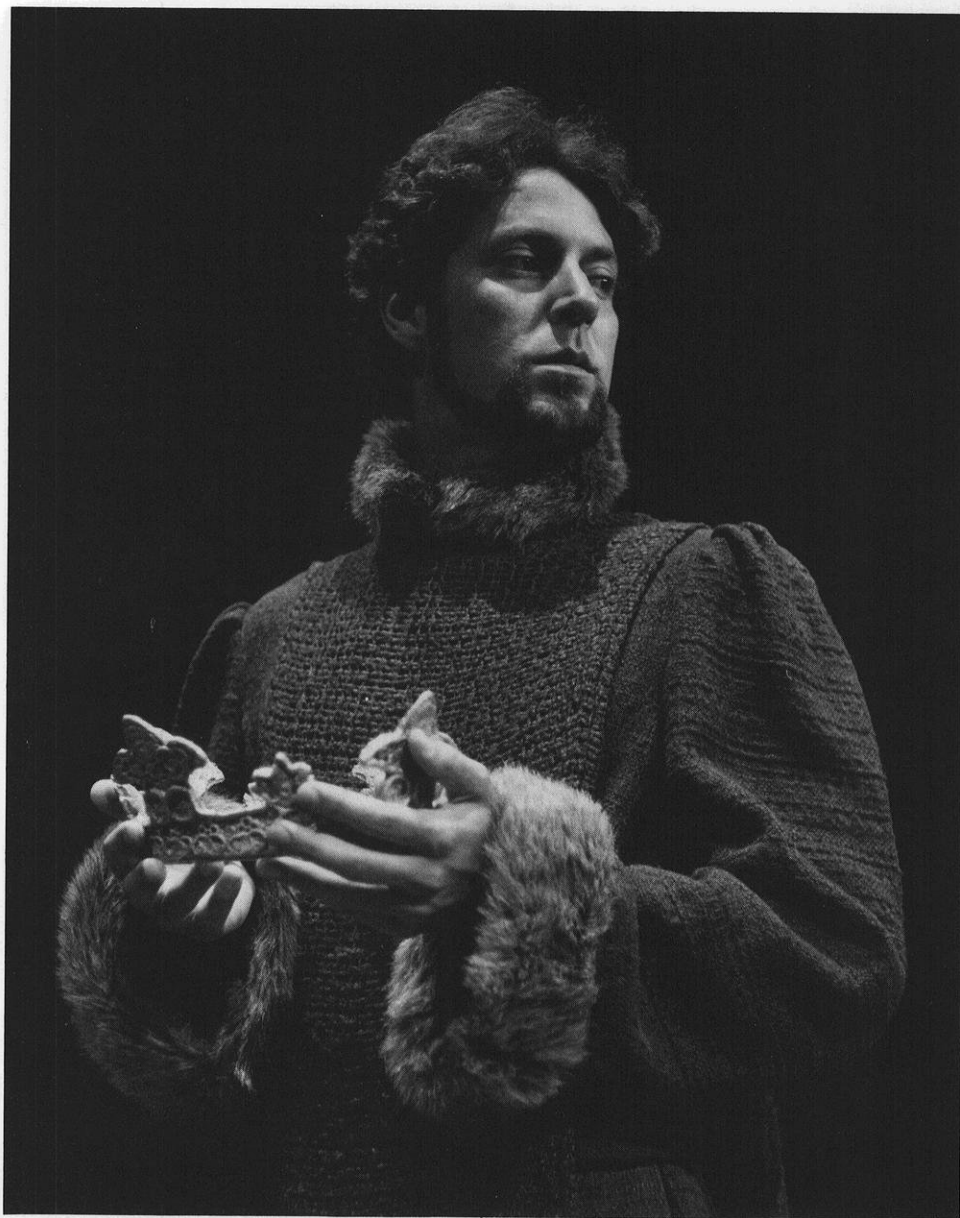
The 1985 season, the Wisconsin Shakespeare Festival's ninth, offers Shakespeare's most popular tragedy *Hamlet*, and the hilarious *Taming of the Shrew*. Molière's delightful comedy *Tartuffe* will also be staged. Many of the past festival company members will be performing again. Each summer the festival lures talented actors, designers, and technicians from across the United States with the opportunity to work on the classics in a repertory company. They bring their skills to bear on three productions in a relatively short time. Although a few University of Wisconsin drama students are involved in the productions, the festival is primarily composed of actors and technicians with extensive experience and professional training.

Costumes

The visual impact of the festival's productions each season owes much to the costumes designed by Wendy Collins, invited guest designers, and members of the costume shop.

Research and preliminary design work on the costumes begin long before the arrival of the festival company in early June. Wendy describes the process: "First I draw what I think the director wants and what I'd like to do for a particular production after reading the script. I may look at a video or old movie, depending on the production, to get ideas. Once the sketches have been approved by the director, I watercolor them and shop for fabric. The historically accurate designs reflect and support the director's interpretation of the play and help establish the mood and style of each production."

Fabrics for the costumes are purchased all over the Midwest and at times on the East Coast. Wendy Collins prefers working with natural fabrics such as wool, velvets, velveteen, and suede for trim, rather than synthetics.



Richard Perloff portrays King Richard II in his third season with the WSF, after a successful tour with the National Shakespeare Company.

**"Many pieces of stage business have been handed down
from actor to actor since Shakespeare's time."**

Plotting daughters Goneril and Regan and their husbands surround King Lear in this 1983 production. Photo by Andrew Baumann



Production changes city

The southwestern Wisconsin community of Platteville has come to appreciate fine drama and has taken great pride in the Wisconsin Shakespeare Festival. Each summer local youth volunteer many hours to be ushers and, as a result, become more involved in the Bard's great works.

The adults of the community, too, volunteer time to sell food, Shakespeare memorabilia, and to entertain the company in their homes. The costume shop depends on local seamstresses for last minute hems to be sewn, buttons to be attached, and other finishing touches which the busy costume shop cannot handle.

Area attractions

Travel to Platteville; enjoy dinner at a local restaurant; see a play or two one day in July or August. Adjacent to the fine arts center is the Harry Nohr Art Gallery with changing exhibits during the festival. Local restaurants and motels can accommodate theatre goers. Galena, Illinois, the antique lover's paradise, is only a half hour away and can be visited between the matinee and evening performances. In Platteville is the renovated Bevan mine, a zinc mine with dioramas and an above-ground museum. Next door is the Rollo Jamison museum which offers a train ride as a special treat for children. Visit the festival on a weekend; attend all three plays and take in other area attractions. □

The Owl in the Kitchen:

Inside the University of Wisconsin Press Poetry Series

By Ronald Wallace
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I am sitting in my old farmhouse in the hills of Richland County, Wisconsin. Outside, the waxwings are thrumming in the cedar tree, getting drunk on fermented berries. Across the road, on the south slope among the burr oaks and hickories, heifers are grazing, beige against the gray day's rain. In the yard, the last few crickets of October are chirring in grass too green for autumn.

Inside, I am surrounded by poetry manuscripts, many of which celebrate that world outside—the birds, the cows, the trees, the insects, the pleasures of country life. These are manuscripts by poets who know the burdock and chickory and Queen Anne's lace and rosinweed, the flicker and grouse and red-tailed hawk and nuthatch intimately. I like this poetry. I myself write this poetry. I am happy on this rainy day sitting inside my secluded farmhouse surrounded by such poetry. I am also troubled. Somehow we have to select a single volume for publication from among the seven hundred manuscripts submitted in the first annual Brittingham Prize competition, cosponsored by the University of Wisconsin English Department and the University of Wisconsin Press.

Five years ago, when I first proposed the idea of a new poetry series to the university press, I knew what I was getting into. The university presses that publish poetry (among them, Pittsburgh, Missouri, Georgia, Wesleyan, Princeton, Yale, Massachusetts, L.S.U., Illinois, and the consortium of presses represented by the Associated Writing Programs) get up to a thousand submissions annually. The New York presses, now in the hands of conglomerates which, understandably, want to make money, have pretty much stopped publishing poetry altogether, and the pressure on the small and university presses is enormous. Although nearly two hundred of my own poems had been published in such magazines as *The New Yorker*, *The Nation*, *Poetry*, *Poetry Northwest*,

Prairie Schooner and others, versions of my first full-length collection, *Plums, Stones, Kisses & Hooks*, were rejected exactly ninety-nine times before the University of Missouri Press accepted it as part of their Breakthrough Books Series in 1979. My own experience thus persuaded me that many other good manuscripts must go unpublished and that the theory that cream always rises to the top may only apply with any certainty in the dairy industry.

I took my story to the University of Wisconsin Press. I argued that a university press was peculiarly suited to publishing poetry. Unfettered by the marketplace mentality that controlled the commercial houses and possessing resources no small press could hope to muster, the university press, with its commitment to publishing important but economically marginal books, was the natural home for the poet. I proposed a plan for subsidizing a series through a reading fee, state arts board funding, and volunteer labor from colleagues and friends to minimize risk for the press. Although individual editors were sympathetic, the press was finally unpersuaded.

I filed the proposal, but didn't forget about it. In 1982 a turnover in personnel at the press prompted me to raise the issue again, and this time I encountered Peter Givler, an energetic new acquisitions editor, Allen Fitchen, a forward-looking new press director, and several editors, Don Anderson, Gordon Lester-Massman, and Steve Miller, who were themselves poets. At a lunch meeting in the dark back room of a local pizza parlor we decided to go ahead with plans for a series.

The main problem was funding. I had had a tentative commitment from the Wisconsin Arts Board to help with a series three years earlier. But there had been personnel changes at the arts board as well. Our request for funding was denied with virtually no explanation. Once again, the series was delayed while

we searched for other funding sources. Then, last year, five years after my initial proposal to the press, the Brittingham Trust (established by Thomas E. Brittingham to benefit the university community) committed start-up funding, and the series was born. We would begin modestly, publishing one volume per year, and expand if the series was successful. The book would be chosen from among manuscripts submitted in an open national competition, and the winner would receive a prize of \$500 in addition to royalties.

We did minimum advertising, placing notices in *Coda*, *The AWP Newsletter*, *The Writer*, and *Writer's Digest*, relying partly on word-of-mouth to help spread the news. Because it was the first year of the competition, and because our publicity was limited, I expected to receive about four hundred submissions. I planned to enlist six of my English Department colleagues (Jay Clayton, Annis Pratt, Lynn Keller, Michael Wilkerson, Cyrena Pondrom, and Lorrie Moore) and the four editors at the press as screening readers, each to read forty manuscripts. In addition, I would read all four hundred manuscripts, thus ensuring that every manuscript got two readings. An outside judge would make the final selection. I assured my readers that they would be able to read the forty manuscripts quickly, since at least half would be obviously inferior and would not have to be read in their entirety.

I was wrong about both the number and quality of the manuscripts. The submission period extended from September 15 to October 15. Manuscripts, however, began arriving in June, and by September 15 we already had approximately fifty submissions. From September 15 to October 15 manuscripts arrived at the rate of about fifteen per day, and by October 15 we had nearly five hundred manuscripts, from all over the United States, from India, Switzerland, Mexico, Egypt, Canada, England, and others. Even with

the extra submissions, my system was working well. As the manuscripts arrived, they were logged in at the press, placed in their return envelopes with a rejection letter, boxed up, and sent on to me. As I amassed groups of forty manuscripts, I distributed them to my readers. By October 15 I had given each reader submissions. Then, on the last permissible submission day, two hundred additional manuscripts arrived. I had the flu. My readers were already protesting the burden of additional work. The method that had been suggested to me by other editors, of reading only the first, last, and middle poems in a manuscript, was proving inadequate. My readers were finding that the high quality of submissions in most cases required a much fuller and more careful reading than I had anticipated. I pushed the additional two hundred manuscripts down the hall to my office, and shut the door.

For a while I just stared at the obstacle course in my office. How could we read, carefully and fairly, another two hundred manuscripts? How could I personally read all seven hundred manuscripts? I began calculating. Seven hundred manuscripts. Thirty thousand poems. Four hundred pounds of poetry. A leaning tower of poetry thirty feet high. Laid end to end the poems would extend seven and three-fifths miles. Throughout the process so far I had gone through large mood swings, from exhilaration at the success of the series, at the high quality of the submissions, at the privilege of seeing new work by some of America's best poets, to depression at the physical fact of the piles of poems, poems I wanted to cherish but instead had to haul around the halls like so much dead weight.

When I was submitting my own manuscript years ago to similar competitions, I knew that it was something like entering a sweepstakes. I knew that my submission was one of hundreds. But somehow the physical fact of the manuscripts, boxed up, stacked from floor

**Eleven readers eventually narrowed the 700 submissions to
14 finalists and sent them to C. K. Williams to chose the
first Brittingham Poetry Prize winner.**

to ceiling, heaped in piles like so much debris, had eluded me. I had somehow envisioned my manuscript in the hands of a sympathetic reader with all the time in the world. The hundreds of other submissions were insubstantial phantasms.

With the reality of the situation now weighing on me, I wondered again how anyone could read so many pounds, feet, and miles of poetry. But we did read them, at least twice, and occasionally three times. Readers agreed to take on more manuscripts and commit more time. I carried manuscripts everywhere, reading poems in my office, on the bus, over lunch and dinner, at the doctor's, in the bathroom, in bed, and in my farmhouse in Richland County. Any manuscript that received two enthusiastic readings became a finalist. Any manuscript that received one enthusiastic reading was read by a third reader who decided that manuscript's fate.

In this way, the seven hundred manuscripts were eventually cut to fourteen which were sent to C. K. Williams, this year's outside judge. All fourteen manuscripts deserved publication. All were unique and original and compelling, and any one of them would have been a good choice. But these fourteen were not the only exciting collections. At least half of the seven hundred submissions were quite good, were in fact publishable. This seemed to me astonishing. And at least fifty were absolutely first-rate. Other readers would have chosen other finalists. As it turned out, friends and acquaintances and poets I had long admired were rejected.

There had been some debate about how to handle friends' manuscripts. Some colleagues advised me to use my editorial power to make a friend's manuscript a finalist. If several manuscripts seemed equally good, they argued, why not publish a friend? I had suspicions, probably unfounded, that this hap-

pened at other contests, and I didn't want it to happen here. Other colleagues insisted that we should reject all friends' manuscripts, arguing that no matter how careful we were, if a friend won the contest, people would believe it was fixed. I decided that friends' manuscripts would be handled like anyone else's. The primary screening reader would read only manuscripts by poets he or she didn't know, and I would try to be as objective as possible in my reading. The outside judge would be a final check on our objectivity.

Although it was not easy to be objective or to be at all sure that I was selecting *the* right manuscripts, I did develop some criteria as I read through dozens and then hundreds of submissions. And I found later that these criteria were in large part shared, although arrived at independently, by the other readers. I include them here as observations on what seem to be some strengths and weaknesses in contemporary American poetry.

Most of the manuscripts took as subject matter the natural world, and many celebrated the rural life. While this in itself was not bad, we did find ourselves drawn to the very few manuscripts that were not set in the country, that celebrated city life and work. The choice of subject matter set these few collections apart, and made them seem unique and original.

The language of many of the submissions was similar—a pure, clear, bell-like language reminiscent, perhaps, of James Wright, one of my own favorite poets and most important influences. After hundreds of poems, however, that language sometimes began to seem too limpid, too clean, too spare, and, as with the rural subject matter, words like “light,” and “breath,” and “moon,” and “bone,” began to pale. I began to long for the chuff and blabb and swagger of a Whitman or a Stevens. I was drawn to poems

with an infusion of unpredictable diction; words like “skimpy,” and “guff,” and “reticulate” were refreshing. In the mass of Seurat and Monet, I searched for the Munch and Van Gogh with their harder edges, their sharper line, their bolder stroke, or the Wesselman and Pollock with their playfulness and whimsy. Language that sings, yes, but language that bites and antics as well.

Because so many of the lovely small pieces blurred together, the occasionally outrageous stood out. I began to think about the major American poets, most of whom had been outrageous in one way or another: Dickinson with her quirky linguistic twists; Whitman with his barbaric yawp; Stevens with his “essential gaudiness”; Berryman with his surprising minstrelsy; Plath with her razors and pain. All of these poets boasted a unique, original voice, and I found myself looking for something in the language or subject matter or attitude of a poem that set the poet apart.

One element that set a few manuscripts apart was humor, rare in the seven hundred submissions. The tone was earnest in much of the poetry, a solemnity that could have been enriched and enlivened by occasional (serious) humor.

Another element that set some manuscripts apart was technical range and variety. I had expected to find more formal verse. Although rhymed and metered poetry was abandoned several decades ago in favor of free verse and although formal verse was for some time after that the retreat of the amateur poet, I had thought that there was renewed interest in traditional forms. Phil Dacey and Miller Williams, for example, have both recently edited anthologies of contemporary poetry in traditional forms, and the little magazines have recently been publishing more ses-tinas and sonnets, and even villa-

nelles and couplets. Manuscripts that revealed a full technical range, poets who handled traditional forms so deftly and invisibly that they read as fluidly as free verse caught my attention and compelled my admiration.

With free verse poems, a strong sense of closure set some manuscripts apart. When William Carlos Williams insisted that a poem shouldn't click shut like a box at the end, he didn't mean that the poem shouldn't end at all. Many of the submitted poems were uniformly good, controlled, and nicely paced up to the end, which just drifted off or stopped, denying the reader the little rise in temperature that a good poem provides. I would agree with Maxine Kumin who observes that "some lapses can be forgiven the poet if he finishes well, just as they can be forgiven the lover." One thinks of Frost's "or just some human sleep," or "if design govern in a thing so small," or Wright's "I have wasted my life," lines that leap at the end, that cause a small intake of breath, that make the reader put the poem down and meditate a bit before going on to the next page and the next. I found myself skipping to the last few lines of many poems to see whether where I was going was worth the effort of getting there.

One major hallmark of contemporary poetry has been its accessibility. After the difficulties and complexities of Eliot and Pound, the street talk of the Beats and the personal voice of the confessional poets seemed a relief. Most of the poems we received were extremely accessible, reflecting Wordsworth's notion of the poet as "a man speaking to men," or as we might better phrase it today, a person speaking to people. But accessibility can itself be a limitation. Stevens boasted that he wanted to "elude the intelligence almost successfully," and there is something to be said for a sense of mystery, an elusiveness that will tease the reader into thought, prompting a second or third or fiftieth reading. I had, in fact, worried that the sheer number of manuscripts entered in competitions like

ours must favor the easily accessible manuscript over the linguistically or philosophically complex one. Faced with seven hundred manuscripts, would a reader be prepared to give a Marianne Moore or an Ezra Pound the kind of attention their work required? As it turned out, mystery or elusiveness worked for the poet, setting his or her work apart.

I have been focusing so far on individual poems, emphasizing a language that bites and antics as well as sings, an originality or even an outrageousness of voice, the use of humor, a technical range and formal variety, a strong sense of closure, an elusiveness or mysteriousness of intent. All of my readers, however, insisted that even more important than the individual poem, was the sense of the book as a whole. As one reader put it, there wasn't a single manuscript that didn't have at least some good poems in it, poems that reflected these criteria. But, he argued, a book should be more than the sum of its parts. He was looking, finally, for a large, generous vision. Individual poems should gain meaning from the context of the whole. The poet should have something to say which required a book, something which could not be said in an individual poem. Indeed, one way of overcoming the limitations of the lyric (our primary mode) is to construct a book in such a way that individual lyrics become parts almost of a single long poem. The best manuscripts achieved this, and did so with a compelling urgency, an urgency which suggested that a poet was not just writing another poem about a cedar waxwing or a cricket or a cow, but was inhabiting a landscape, or an idea, or a life so fully and completely that we could experience it in a surprising new way.

And yet, for all the criteria we developed to justify our choices, it wasn't finally any descriptive list that moved us. It was, instead, a kind of magic. How one group of words gets inside you, comes alive, starts up a chemical reaction, sets the nerves singing and the body hair atingle, and how another group of

similar words does not, remains a mystery.

C. K. Williams selected Jim Daniels's *Places/Everyone* as the winner of the first annual Brittingham Prize in Poetry. Jim Daniels grew up in Detroit and is assistant professor at Carnegie-Mellon University in Pittsburgh, where he teaches creative writing. His poetry has appeared in numerous magazines, and he received an NEA Fellowship for 1985. *Places/Everyone*, his first full-length collection of poems, will be published by the University of Wisconsin Press in fall 1985.

I am back now in my old farmhouse in Richland County, Wisconsin. Too warm for December, the grass is still strangely green, the trees black and wet, the woods across the road bare now, cleaned out. I walk out to the kitchen, start toward the refrigerator, and stop. There is an owl perched on top of the refrigerator. I don't know how he got there, but he is there. And he is beautiful. I stare at him, stunned for a moment, and then move slowly about the kitchen, opening the doors and windows, letting December inside. He doesn't move. I put on leather gloves, and reach up toward him, in order to guide him back outside. And then the whole kitchen's a bluster, a windstorm of feathers and wings. And then he's gone, leaving me alone in the cold morning kitchen which will forever be slightly altered for his presence. I think that's what I was looking for in the poetry. The startle, the magic, the inexplicable mystery that blesses us in the most unexpected places, that alters the way we see our world. I was looking for the owl in the kitchen.

The competition is over now. The manuscripts are stuffed into their eight huge canvas mail bags and are on their way to the post office. I'm thinking about what I got out of all of this, what was in it for me. For one thing, I had the opportunity of seeing the immediate future of American poetry. There is no question that many of the manuscripts we rejected will be published eventually, and I will have had the priv-

ilege of previewing this new work by poets both unknown and established. Further, my own work will clearly benefit from contact with the poets I've read, and from the many discussions about contemporary poetry that were generated in the halls of the English department as a result of the competition. I think I gained a clearer sense of where American poetry is, or should be, going. Finally, perhaps some of the rejected poets will pick up one of my own books to find out what kind of writer that son-of-a-bitch who rejected them is.

I open my mail. I've been getting letters from poets whose manuscripts were returned several weeks ago and to whom I have written personal notes. The letters are mostly friendly, expressing gratitude at my taking the time to give the work my personal attention when other editors haven't or couldn't. One letter, however, is angry. It reads:

I wish I had two bits for every time an editor has so generously supplied me with two bits worth of praise on what is still and always a rejection. "Sorry—strong work here?!" What does *that* mean? . . . except nothing. Such comments are not in the least way beneficial. I already know the work is strong.

The letter angers, and then depresses me. I have worked for five years to make this series a reality. I have devoted hundreds of hours of my time with no monetary compensation. I have administered the fairest and most conscientious reading system I could devise. My friends and colleagues have volunteered their time and expertise to make it all work. I have agonized over every manuscript that had to be sent back. I contemplate writing an elaborate invective in reply. But I don't. I look outside at the day, the rain, the silence of mid-December. I reach in my pocket. I take out a quarter. □

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Morels

Ten years of abuse and neglect—
the pastures gone to boulders and weeds,
a fury of dandelions and wild mustard,
the sheds and pole barn wrecked,
the farm house filled with old postcards and feces—
has brought us here in this dry heat,
hoping to change our lives.

I complain there is too much to do,
there is simply nothing for us
in this unfamiliar country
we've grown so apart from.
But you are off in a clatter of crows,
scavenging the scrub woods,

and I follow, lashed by brambles and prickly ash,
past oak stumps and sumac,
the hot sun ablister with poison ivy and ticks,
until, lost now, seeing nothing,
I scree down the deep gully and out,
stone-cut and root-torn, to reach

this cool knoll, rich with hackberry,
aspen, and walnut, the moist understory
matted with leaves, where I see,
popping up from the dark earth as I watch them,
columbine, wood violets, bellwort, morels,
and you, your arms full of strange
penises, champagne corks, found money.

Ronald Wallace

Academy Review Fiction

Magazine Clipping

By Daniel F. Cooper © 1985

I sat swatting flies away from me outside the Hotel Morelos. They were attracted by the sugar granules that lay scattered about the worn, checked tablecloth. The afternoon sun beat down on me, and the more I sweated, the angrier I was with the waiter who had told me the unoccupied table on the veranda was reserved.

To take my mind off the heat, I watched the people passing by the main square across the street, many of them criados. I turned on my small tape recorder and made an entry: *Sunday, March 20th. The servants and the poor put on their Sunday best and make the pilgrimage to the zócalo, or main square, the mecca of all Mexican communities. Not to dress up on the Sabbath is unthinkable in this Catholic country.*

I turned off the recorder and played with the condensation on my glass. The beer was strong, bitter-sweet—I liked it. A man approached the cafe, and as he came nearer I saw that although he had the dark brown color of a Mexican,

he had blond hair and Anglo features. A dirt-splattered shirt hung over his equally dirty trousers, and he needed a shave, yet his face was attractive. I found myself compelled to watch him.

As he seated himself casually at the reserved table, my slight admiration vanished, replaced by indignation as my waiter hurried over to take his order. Before the waiter could turn to go, I walked over and caught him by the arm.

"Is it customary to make your guests sit in the hot sun while you cater to vagrants?" I asked.

The ferocity of my complaint confused the waiter. He looked helplessly at the man. I, too, turned to look at him. His head was bent over while I spoke, but now he slowly raised his eyes and regarded me indifferently.

Turning to the waiter, he said, "Andale." Relieved, the waiter left. Appearing to study his mud-en-crusted fingernails, the man said, "Would you care to hear my definition of a vagrant, Miss?" The voice was calm and even and made me a little nervous, yet the perfect English and trace of British accent intrigued me.

"I know the definition," I said.

"A vagrant is anyone who races through a country, stealing from its people, taking advantage of them, and all the while ridiculing and criticizing what he doesn't understand. A vagrant is simply a tourist."

"Are you implying . . ."

"That you, Miss, are a tourist of the worst sort. Now, kindly get the bloody hell out of here."

Infuriated, I pivoted sharply and hurried inside the hotel. In the dim privacy of my room I gratefully kicked off my uncomfortable shoes and lay on the bed, mentally running over tomorrow's agenda. I turned on the recorder and propped it on the night table.

Met a most insulting man today, an Englishman, who, regrettably, has picked up the Mexican male's most disgusting habit. In Mexico, chivalry is dead, but its poor cousin, machismo, lives on. Tomorrow, I travel to Patzcuaro, forty miles southwest, for my first look at what the Mexican government hopes will be its next major tourist attraction. I think it's too isolated to succeed. I just hope the agency hired me a capable guide who speaks good English.

"You're going too fast, slow down."

"Mande?" asked Rubén.

"Too fast! Rápido!" I shouted over the noisy motor.

"Sí, señorita," he said, nodding with approval. "Rápido!"

With a grin, he jammed his right foot down. Pushed back, I fumbled for the seatbelt for a few seconds before I realized there was none and settled for grasping the dash with both hands. Each mountain curve gave me a dizzying glimpse of the green valley far below.

After fifteen minutes, satisfied that he had sufficiently impressed me with his driving, Rubén slowed the old Buick. He removed a cigarette from the breast pocket of his shirt. I picked up the lighter that had been dancing across the dash and held it lit for him.

"Gracias, señorita," he said. He tapped his pocket. "Fuma, usted?"

"No thanks, Rubén. Are we near Patzcuaro yet?"

In answer, he pointed ahead and to the right. Coming into view was a vast, turquoise-colored lake, marshy near its boundaries, and plying its way into the mountain elbows.

"It's very beautiful, Rubén. And so big! What can you tell me about it?"

Rubén cleared his throat and assumed his guide voice: *Lake Patzcuaro is the second largest lake in all of Mexico. . . only Lake Chapala is larger. El lago Patzcuaro is located in the state of Michoacán, near the state capital of Morelia.*

I struggled with the obstinate window, hung my camera out the side and ran off three frames. The scent of wildflowers and horses was powerful, carried on the breeze that played over my face—I enjoyed the way it tousled my hair.

Patzcuaro has been very important historically for the Mexican people. The Tarascan Indians settled in this mountain valley ten centuries ago, along the shores of Patzcuaro, and made their living fishing

its waters. Today, it is still possible to see the Indians fishing as their ancestors did: in hollowed-out canoes with a big net on each side. These nets are known as las alas de la mariposa, or the wings of the butterfly.

We came out of the mountains onto a large tree-lined road near the lake, bordered by small cottages and boathouses.

The developers have their work cut out for them.

Sí and no, señorita. The government knows it cannot compete with Acapulco and Cancun. Instead, it wants to create a sportman's playground, with boating, fishing, hiking—that kind of thing.

What is the name of this village we're approaching?

It is called Tzintzuntzan. It is a Tarascan name.

"I'll never be learning the Tarascan language," I said, switching off the recorder in my bag. "Can you park the car someplace? I'd like to walk around a little."

"Of course, señorita."

We parked along the main road of the village. It consisted of two rows of small, unseparated tourist shops, and small farms terracing their way up the mountains that surrounded Patzcuaro. We walked past the shops as I took an occasional photo. Shirtless children kicked up dust for amusement while old women wrapped in traditional dark-blue rebozos offered straw replicas of the butterfly canoes for sale. The interior of the shops seemed black as oil because of the sun reflecting off the brilliant, white stucco walls. As I waited for my eyes to adjust, something grabbed my leg. Startled, I looked down to see a legless man holding out a bony hand in supplication. Rubén said something to the beggar in Spanish and ushered me across the street.

"You must be careful here, señorita. The people are very poor and are not afraid to steal or beg if they think you have money. You must stay close to me."

"Thank you, Rubén—I'll be more careful. Do you think we could see some of the farms up along the hills

there? I'd like to see how the Tarascans really live—not this tourist front."

"It would be a long walk, señorita. But I have a friend here who might be willing to rent us two horses for the afternoon. Would you like me to try?"

"Sí, don Rubén, that sounds perfecto. Vámonos!"

"Muy bien, señorita. Follow me, please."

The horses and burros, drugged by the heat, huddled in the scarce shade by the straw lean-to. Their tails swung rhythmically in a futile effort to hinder the black swarm attracted by the piles of wet dung. The stable owner caught me wrinkling my nose and laughed heartily, rattling off something to Rubén in Spanish, who joined his merriment. I smiled at this bent, old man with a dark face like a walnut. I would have to get a photo when we returned—my readers would eat it up.

He hobbled over to the lean-to and untied two horses, and then spoke again with Rubén.

Rubén turned to me and said, "My friend says that because you are so beautiful, he is going to let us have the horses today for 1500 pesos. A very good price, señorita."

"You're sure you two aren't taking advantage of a silly gringa?"

Rubén's brow furrowed and the smile vanished from his face. Instantly, I felt ashamed at having made such a poor joke.

"May I remind the señorita that the exchange rate is 200 pesos for every American dollar . . ."

"I'm very sorry, Rubén. Here," I said, handing over 2,000 pesos, "Tell your friend to keep the extra because he is so handsome."

Rubén translated and the walnut cracked into another smile.

"Gracias, señorita. Que te vaya bien."

"Adios, muchas gracias."

Rubén boosted me into my saddle and then mounted the other horse. Relaxed and confident, Rubén made a chirping sound and the horses started off, jerking and bouncing. Suddenly, I felt a twinge

of fear for the awful package of muscle and sinew that rippled beneath me, power I could not have guessed lay behind the fly-ridden, mud-spattered coat. Tentatively, I rubbed the firm neck and the steel wool mane, and the horse whinnied in response. What a wonderful, timeless spot this was. In a way, I thought, it was too bad that it would soon be developed and modernized.

It took us two hours to get well up into the hills that cordon Lake Patzcuaro. I pulled my horse up and Rubén did the same.

The sun glistens off of Lake Patzcuaro like it would off of a sapphire in this spectacular view. Picturesque fishermen using antiquated canoes and nets bob happily on its glassy, calm face. A small island dots its center. This is Mexico's latest pleasure paradise.

I exchanged the recorder for my camera and took some shots.

"That was very well said, señorita."

"It was mucho garbaje, Rubén. But, that's the sad lot of a travel journalist."

I scanned the hillside below and noticed a farmer out in a small, cultivated plot.

"Wait here, Rubén. I want to get a photo of that campesino down there." I handed him my reins and dismounted, my legs unsteady after the long ride.

Approaching the farmer as quietly as I could, I halted on the edge of his plot, about fifty yards away. Through the telephoto it was an entirely different scene: the expanse of hillside was cut into a prison of withered gray stalks enclosing the Indian who sagged on his crutches while checking his sickly crop. His white shirt was dazzling in the sunlight and set off his jet-black hair. Slowly, he pivoted on his crutches and the breeze picked up, flapping his clothes. I focused on the white, prickly whiskers that covered the leathery face and squeezed the release gently. Then I turned the camera and took a vertical frame. Satisfied, I walked back to Rubén.

"Did you get some good pictures, señorita?"

"Oh, yes, Rubén. I think one of them may be good enough for a magazine cover."

I mounted and we rode in silence for a moment.

"What are the Indians like, Rubén?"

"The Tarascans are a proud people, señorita. Many Mexicans are driven by hunger to beg or steal, but not the Tarascan. Even when they were conquered by the Aztecs, centuries ago, they were so rebellious that they accepted torture and death rather than slavery. They were of little use to the Aztecs."

"Rubén, are you Tarascan?"

"Yes, I am Tarascan on my mother's side. How did you know?"

"The pride shows through," I said, smiling.

He smiled back and we directed the horses down the soft, dirt trail toward the village.

It was evening when I checked into my hotel. I told Rubén I wouldn't need him until Wednesday and thanked him. Then I went up to my room. I was surprised that the lights were on.

"Hello, Miss Tobin."

"Who . . . You! What are you doing here?"

It was the Englishman I had encountered Sunday in Morelia. He was sitting at the room's only table and raised his hand, motioning me to sit down.

"Calm down, Miss Tobin, I just want to talk with you."

"How did you get in here?"

"I bribed the desk clerk."

"Oh, fine. And what makes you think I'd have anything more to say to you after our last conversation?"

"I'm sorry about that. You found me at a bad time. But now I need your help, and I think I can help you in return."

"That kind of help I can do without."

"Miss Tobin, will you listen to what I have to say?"

"Make it brief. I'm very tired."

I sat down in a chair by the balcony and got out the tape recorder. "You don't mind if I tape this?"

Do I have any choice?

No.

Miss Tobin, I know you're a syndicated columnist who reaches a lot of powerful, influential readers.

"I'm flattered you think a tourist could be so well respected.

Please, you're making this very difficult.

Okay, I'm sorry. Continue.

I know this region very well and I can give you a lot of insight to it. I can help you get a good story.

I've already got a guide.

He leaned forward in his chair. Miss Tobin, Janet, I want you to write an article showing the way things really are here. I want you to show the wealthy and the complacent, the conditions, the poverty and filth these people live in . . . the hardships they endure.

I really don't see the need. This development project is going to bring a lot of money into the area—the Indians will benefit.

No! This project won't help the Indians at all. The developers are taking their land, forcing them to move, using them as laborers at laughable wages and then they'll abandon them. All of the money being poured into that project should be used to help them instead.

Wait, let's slow down a minute. What I want to know is why you're so concerned about these Indians. What's your stake in all this? Who are you, anyway?

He sat back and sighed, and lit a cigarette. Does the name Lowry mean anything to you?

Wealthy family in England?

Quite. George Lowry made collecting art his particular hobby. He had a fortune invested in it, and it's worth much more now than what he paid for it. George Lowry was my father.

Don't try to put one over on me. The gossip column used to be my beat: Paul Lowry was a playboy, jet-setter, and he is dead. Without comment on the first two points, you are very much alive.

Then you know that Paul Lowry died in a barroom brawl in a small, Mexican town. Money can arrange many things in Mexico, Miss Tobin, and since my untimely death here, I've adopted an alias and a new life.

That doesn't make sense. Why would Paul Lowry give up that glamorous lifestyle for this?

Precisely because after seeing these Indians, I couldn't go back to that kind of wasteful life. I've been using my inheritance to help the people here, but it's almost gone and so little was accomplished. We've made some fragile advances in medicine and education, but I'm afraid this project will disrupt them. With your help, by letting others know of the plight of the Tarascans, we can pressure the developers for a share of their profits. We can make sure the Indians benefit.

Okay, Lowry, if that's who you are, suppose I write this article condemning the developers and sympathizing with the Indians. Chances are all that will do is convince tourists they don't want to come here and the project will fail and then everybody loses. Nobody gets any money. How's that going to help your Indians? They'll be back where they started from. At least this project gives them a chance.

If I knew this project was going to help them, I'd be its biggest supporter. C'mon, Janet! Let's put these financiers in the public eye. Let's make sure they have to help!

I looked at the weathered face and felt the intense idealism behind it and suddenly felt sorry for this man.

Gently, I said, Look, Mr. Lowry, Paul, I appreciate your concern, but I think you're overestimating my influence. I'm just a small factor in this project's success or failure. If I don't write a glowing review, someone else will. It seems to me the best thing I can do is write a favorable article and hope that the project will benefit the Tarascans. The machinery is in motion and neither you nor I can stop it. Try to accept that.

Hurt and dejected, he looked away from me.

I don't mean to be rude, Mr. Lowry, but it's really quite late.

He stood up quickly and ground out the cigarette in the clay ashtray. Yes. It's too late, isn't it? I'm sorry I took up so much of your time, Miss Tobin. Goodnight.

Goodnight.

It was Wednesday morning. My plan was to go out on Lake Patzcuaro and get some good photos, and Rubén had hired a small speedboat for that purpose. I stood on the dock and the restless water sprayed up between the slats and lapped at my canvas shoes. It was still cold, especially near the lake, and I shivered, pressing the orange lifejacket against my breasts with my bare arms.

"Señorita."

One foot in the boat, the other on the dock, Rubén steadied the boat and brought its nose toward me. I stepped carefully in, and then Rubén sent us moving with a shove of his foot.

"Perdon, señorita," he said, picking up an oar. "The most difficult part will be clearing this marshy area."

"Can't you use the motor?"

"The weeds would only clog the engine. We must clear them first."

Rubén was right—the lake was very marshy near its rim.

"Cabron!"

Rubén was struggling with the oar. It was bending toward us as we continued to drift backward and looked as though it would snap. He stepped over the tiny windshield and onto the small nose of the boat. Spread-eagled there, he grabbed the oar at the waterline and yanked upward, loosening it. As he hauled it out of the water, I could see that its fin was covered with mud.

Rubén looked concerned. "It is very dangerous here because of el lodo. Small children have drowned in one meter of water because of it. I always feel better when we are in open water."

The water gradually became deeper, and the prow cleaved swiftly through the obedient lakegrass. A black snake wove its way between.

"The butterfly nets . . . will we see any today?"

"Sí, I will take you to the island of Janitzio. There you will see many."

Rubén's small, nimble hands secured the oar along the inside of the

hull. He worked his way past me to the stern and picked off the weeds necklaced about the propellor. Satisfied, he lowered the outboard into the water. He set the choke, drew a long breath and began working the starter. His muscles defined themselves with each pull. For a moment, he looked like some modern Aztec warrior. I reached for my camera, but it was too late—the engine coughed and then gurgled, and the sharp smell of gasoline was thick about us.

"Your camera, it may get wet."

"Don't worry, it's waterproof."

"Entonces, vámonos."

The skiff jumped forward, the hull slapping the water, the wind hitting me with the ponytail I had fashioned that morning. I smiled as we made a wide arc. Across the lake I could see a small group of fishing boats, which Rubén gave a wide berth because of our wake. My camera was useless with the motion of the boat. A wave came over the side, soaking me with icy water and I began shivering again. I turned and smiled as Rubén let out a loud cry of enjoyment. Already we had moved so far out on the lake that I had become disoriented, yet, despite our speed, the cottages along the shore seemed to creep by slowly. I began to realize that Patzcuaro must be several miles long.

We were closer to the other side now, and I could see a small group of people silhouetted on the shore. I motoned and Rubén slowed the launch. Through the telephoto lens, I could see that it was a group of Indians and a tall, blond man. I took a sharp breath—it was Lowry. He and the others looked concerned, and one of the men was pointing to something moving erratically in the foreground. I refocused and could see a burro, baying and struggling in the muddy shallows.

"Can you get in closer, Rubén?"

In answer, the skiff jumped forward. Rubén pulled up 100 yards from shore.

"Can't we help them?"

"No, señorita. It is too muddy—we would get stuck like the burro."

I raised the telephoto again: the animal was panicking, and its

struggles only worked it deeper into the mud. Lowry, a rope about his waist, waded into the shallows while the others anchored him. He took a few steps and suddenly dropped to his armpits in the water. Each time he would reach for the bridle, the burro would toss its head in terror. I set the camera for autowind and held down the release: Lowry lunged forward and disappeared underwater.

"My God! Pull him out! Rubén, tell them to pull him out!"

"Sacálo!"

The bodies on shore strained at the rope and Lowry's face, spitting water and covered with black mud, broke the surface. With the help of the rope he came back to shore. Then one of the Tarascans stepped forward, rifle in hand. The shot echoed within the chambered lake, and the burro crashed sidelong into the water.

Guillermo Morelos and I sat on the patio of my hotel. He was the president of Desarrollo Azteca, the company developing the Patzcuaro area. Today was our third meeting.

Señorita Tobin, I would like to talk frankly. Could you please turn that off for a moment?

"All right, if it makes you more comfortable."

"Thank you. Now, Miss Tobin, I really don't understand all of these questions about the Indians. At our first two meetings you were very enthusiastic about our project. Now, suddenly, you seem troubled and suspicious. Why?"

"I just had some experiences that made me wonder if anything is being done to help these people."

"Let me hasten to assure you I'm going to do all I can to help the Indians. Surely, you can see the economic benefits this project will bring to the area. Everyone will benefit."

"Give me some specific examples."

"All right. Jobs. I anticipate that the new hotels will be hiring about 400 unskilled workers."

"But, I'm sure you know there are over 6,000 Tarascans in the

Patzcuaro area. What about those who are not hired?"

"Miss Tobin, I said I was going to help the Indians, I didn't say I was a savior. There are two groups of people in this world, Janet, the fortunate and the unfortunate. If this project helps a few of the unfortunate join our ranks, I will be happy. That's the best we can expect."

"Not to mention a sizeable profit for yourself."

"Don't be naive! Of course, I'm going to make a lot of money. That's why I head this company. I'm a businessman, not a social worker, but I'm trying to make you realize that I'm not a monster either. No soy santo, ni diablo tampoco—I'm not a saint, but I'm not a devil."

"I'm sorry, Señor Morelos. I didn't mean it like that."

"That's all right, Janet. I understand. I have some Tarascan blood in my veins, and I, too, am sometimes sickened by what I see them endure. Write your article anyway you want, Janet. There's no conspiracy here to make you write a favorable one. But to be perfectly honest with you, the most scathing article in the world won't stop this project, while a complimentary one will help us and indirectly help the Tarascans."

He smiled. "There, I've had my say, and now I must get back to work." He signaled the waiter for our check.

"It's been a pleasure meeting you, Janet. And good luck with your article."

It was dusk when I went up to my room. I drew the curtains back from the balcony and looked out. The mountains' shadows fell across the lake, giving the water the appearance of liquid obsidian. Somewhere down the street I could hear the clomp-clomp of a burro's hooves.

I turned aside and heaved the old manual typewriter onto the table. I took a long time getting the paper out, shuffling it, and readjusting it in the machine. I stared at the milky-blue blank sheet and a fly buzzed about the light overhead. With a sigh, I started to type. □

Letter From Rome

(for Christia)

I got your letter with the lovely stamps,
all color and line drawings from the Vatican.
Any Italian artist would have been proud
of these bright miniatures, this my envelope
gallery of unlimited editions.

I see you writing at a sunny desk
at a window. You always set up so,
always with the day framed over your work,
a scene, a daily sketch for your study.
Trasteverini yell from their balconies,
new in their old nests, their porches
and bathrooms added to ancient walls.
like wasp or swallow mudwork. Courtyard
talk strays up from below while you read,
words like occasional wasps through the window
to slap the walls around you, insist on
your attention.

Words like a handful of strange coins:
you are counting them. How to spend
your careful thoughts best, what exchange
best bargains you. Your days are undeliberate though,
"sono contenta," you begin; I have bought
your letter too eagerly, I have not been so measured
in my reading. Too soon I have spent it.

Your few suitcased words won't do for you;
you've gone shopping, a walk in markets
here and there smelling a phrase and turning it,
tasting it before choosing. "Calm nights
in Rome, trains through darkened vineyards, wintry
streets in Florence, overcome," you say,
with the "mixture in my mind: blood oranges and spring
artichokes, *polpi* oiled in a hot pan . . ."

Poems by

Yes, things taste, smell, sound, feel,
please differently now, and you know well
before I read them that your few new words
won't do. The page is torn badly
from a corner; tape and your handwritten note
blame the typewriter. Were you anxious
to finish that one, try quick for a clean sheet
and good words?

In some places
I see your thought needs the machine, needs
the sure click and rhythm, the order
of print. Some places show strain; the keys
won't grin like your handwriting can.
You try for subtlety; the keys merely spell,
so pen must open and close this print.
You can't seem to start your thoughts,
can't keep from several last tries
in smeared ink, your writing like blue vines
finding flaws and cracks in your words' wall.

What may I do with this, a particular Rome
chaotic on my table here? You bid me
find my way, drink the crisp bottled water
and sharp warm coffee in the easy *piazze*
of your paragraphs. Which do I wander through
now? Which save for an evening walk?
Your days speak Etruscan with you,
strangely, lovely, which you don't understand.
Some pleasures are private, like one sliced tomato
bleeding with cheese onto good bread, or the fresh
and ancient sun on the Palatine. Some
must be shared: a communal decision on eel
for fish soup, communally served.

Later, I read you drinking in a perfect square,
the night a ruined arch over you. You are sketching
pilasters restored to you again, and Lombard windows
from two weeks before. One moment the wine holds
and you are lost in a bottle's label, fond for the art
they waste there even on water jugs. Bread
is a seminar and soon you're lecturing friends
on how exactly this bread is different
from what you bought yesterday in—
you all laugh together at your sweet silliness.

Randall Colaizzi

Randall Colaizzi

The Study of Lamps

The night of the power cut
from Athens down into the mountains
here at our archaeological site,
at first we suspected a junta
but finally the radio ended the blackout,
described just a technical problem,
light failing all throughout Greece.

We ate that night in our Sunday taverna
outside without the strung lights,
grilled meat and potatoes with wine,
tomatoes with oil and too much salt,
and they brought us a kerosene lamp.
I thought of the ancient lamps
we find broken all week, red Roman,
and Greek with their documented
black glazes, shapes and known
decoration. We guess from their curves
and pieces their dates; their sherds
are an aid for knowing our layers
here of timely soils: sometimes our lamps
light the dark spots in our histories.

No lights here in our village,
even the dogs think it odd
and are quiet. Constellations
like we haven't seen them in years
here, done the archaic way,
clearly mythology at night
though the bright scrapes of satellites
tell us the date of the sky.

To recover antiquity is first
to find real darkness, the late
limits of light which then burst
at the edges, at sunsets, at the brightening
moons, the starhung dawns.

What a joy and a treasure
a lamp is, humble and functional:
our conservator likes the low
flat ones with narrow rims,
the rounder ones, more complete
somehow she thinks, and lovely,
shiny in perfect black paint
on their clay, as we find them.
Yet the artist's grin in the smooth
curve of the rim, the incised lines,
and the nozzle, always comical
somehow to study, squat with a fat
wickhole, or slenderer snout
with a narrower one. Nothing so grand
as a simple thread taking oil
smoking the while in a yellow light
necessarily soft, if inadequate.

A cheap flashlight here for the moderns
by the bed, help you find the bathroom
on a night like this, do your night things.
Candles always humorously
self-conscious somehow, got a big date
for dinner or add a cute quaintness
to our farmhouse here. But the cars
still have their headlights and find
the road still on the ridge, unamused.

I undressed in the dark, and late,
looked out the window at the unlit
candles of our temple, its columns
without moonlight, only the stars
and its fresh reclaiming dark.
How fine to lose the lights
when the moon is gone,
I thought, when the hills
lose their shapes, when the dark spears
of the cypresses lose their edge
on the sky, and nothing distracts
from the patterns scratched on the black
curved clay of the sky, a fine lamp.

Randall Colaizzi

Academy Review Fiction

Kindling

By Joan Ritty

I have a score to settle with God, or He with me. Maybe we are already even, and my sufferings are punishment from Him. If there is some way to get revenge on God, I have not discovered it. I withheld my love from Carter Morgan and married his brother out of spite, and while I do not deliberately withhold my love from God, neither have I any to offer Him. I, Felicity Ann Wells Morgan, widow, (murderer perhaps), versus God Almighty, the Son, and the Holy Ghost.

Well, God, how many weeks have I lain here since You smote me down, so that I see only dim figures through my heat-hazed eyes, unable to speak except to You, because of the searing air which scorched my lungs, my throat, my tongue? How long have I been here in the house of my husband's brother—is the year still 1871, or have I drifted unconsciously into a new year?

Your gift of idleness during recuperation allows me too much time to remember that fiery day when Peshtigo burned. Evenings when Carter comes to my beside with his Indian wife, Quiet Fawn,

I listen to his voice, treasure it the more because I cannot see him plainly. Ten years ago I loved Carter to distraction, and we were promised in marriage. Then he spoke admiringly of Quiet Fawn, and I jealously turned aside from him and married his brother Frank as soon as the banns could be announced.

I might have made a worse choice. Frank was a dutiful husband and father, but he did not have the flash and fire to ignite me as Carter did. How ironic, God, that I even dare think those words after the devastation of our town by fire.

When Carter married Quiet Fawn, I hated them both. Hatred comes easily to me, like the sun to my red hair. I persuaded Frank to move from Green Bay and take land at Peshtigo. Now my daughter Catherine and I are back in Green Bay in the merciful hands of Carter and Quiet Fawn. Gratitude does not always beget love in me, but in this case, it has. I mourn for Frank and our baby boy only six weeks old and my daughter Dorothy, eight, two years older than Catherine.

Yea, God! Where were You that day? October 8th was a Sunday and we went to church as usual, though the day itself was not usual. For

some weeks You had hung a pall of gray smoke around Peshtigo, and sporadic flames ranged in the timberlands, sometimes burning roots, sometimes winding like the serpent into treetops and exploding like fireworks in the crowns. You had imposed a drought upon us since May, yet crews of railroad men came through the land burning out tree stumps as they laid the rails. Farmers clearing their acreage chopped down trees and they, too, burned out stumps. Hunters, travelers, Indians, all made campfires.

Peshtigo had built nine churches in your honor; You had given us a prosperous woodenware factory, a sawmill, foundry, and blacksmith shop. Stores, hotels, a boarding house. Schools, good people. But everything is gone now, disintegrated into ashes in one night, and nearly twelve hundred good souls consumed. Catherine and I were among the survivors. What are You saving us for, God? Testing me with Carter?

No, that day was not usual, for there was mystery in the air that made us uneasy. Birds flew erratically and the wind rose and fell strangely. There were fire scares in the weeks before, but the factory

men had always fought off the insurgent flames and sparks. Perhaps those near-misses made us careless that Sunday, the Lord's Day. Possibly we trusted You too much and were lazy. I recall that I felt restless all day and wandered in and out of the house watching the angry sky. To the west was a dark smoky cloud formation, and above it an eerie red that tinted the haze. A sound like the distant roar of a waterfall disturbed me.

"Frank," I said in late afternoon, "I'm afraid. I feel as if something bad is going to happen."

"I don't like the looks of things either, Felicity," he admitted. "Keep the girls close to home in case we have to make a run for it."

"A run for it?"

"To the river," he said. "Most likely the fire won't cross the river."

"Oh, I see," I said, not seeing. "We'll just go down and stand in the water?"

"That's about it," he said, his jaw more square than usual.

"But what about the house? The barn and animals? The furniture—the chickens. Frank?"

"Felicity," he said sternly, "if the town burns, life is all that counts."

So I knew he was more worried than he let on, and I began to sort through blankets and cloaks. I filled several buckets from the well, and kept my eyes on the children. I watched the ominous sky and saw fingers of flame darting closer, occasionally leaping from treetop to treetop. And there were small puffs of fire that burst in the hot air as if pockets of gas had lit up, and showers of red twigs and singed greenery that fell in sudden gusts of wind.

We ate a silent supper, staring at the rising patch of crimson glare to our west. Dark had fallen sullenly and the wind became sustained, while the fearsome murmur rumbled more thunderously. I thought about You, God, when I saw the lanterns of some of our neighbors moving towards the river singing hymns, people with wagons and animals, some walking, many carrying young children. Were You walking with them? As I stared through the window, I was seized

with panic. What if I never saw Carter again?

"Frank, should we go?"

"Maybe we should," he said hesitantly. "Help me let the animals out so they can run, and then we'll go."

"Dorothy can help you," I countered, rushing frantically about. I was thinking of the long distances between the house and barn, the pens and chicken houses, and I was frightened at the thought of how long it would take to release all the stock. Besides, secretly, I wanted to get a trinket Carter had given me the night he asked me to marry him; I could not leave it behind. Though I was ashamed that I continued to harbor this feeling for Frank's brother, I could not seem to overcome it.

"I'll take Catherine and the baby," I told Frank, and then I dug the trinket out of its hiding place in my sewing basket and fastened the chain around my neck. Quickly, I soaked the blankets in water, I bound the baby in wet cloths and covered his face lightly. Then I draped a damp blanket over Catherine's head and another over my own, picked up the screaming infant, took Catherine by the hand, and ran. I did not even look back at my lovely home with its brave pink brick fireplace and chimney. I scarcely gave a thought to Frank or Dorothy; I had to stay alive for Carter.

At the end of the lane we got caught in a rush of people, dogs, wagons, wind, fire, fear, and were borne along in the maelstrom. Cinders rained down on us and the air burned our noses and throats. Squinting our eyes against the hot dust, we let ourselves be carried along. The baby squirmed in my arms and the wet blankets grew dry with heat that enveloped us closely, intensely. I was fearful we would smother.

The crowd was not pushing us to the river but to the bridge that crossed to the east side. We were shoved and dragged, and midway across the bridge I could see it was on fire, that the town on the east side was burning too, and the peo-

ple were racing towards us. We were carried backwards and I clung to the children and tried to keep my feet. There was a mighty surge of bodies, and we were thrust off at the end of the bridge and down towards the water. All of a sudden I realized that the blankets around the baby were empty. He was no longer there. He must have slipped out of his wrappings in the mad crush of people.

"My baby, my baby!" I screamed. I tried to go back but there was too much confusion in the weird darkness, too many people pushing. Nobody heard my screams. Catherine and I were edged forcibly towards the river. It was impossible to see clearly or identify anybody. I was reminded of Frank and Dorothy by the painful heat of the chain around my neck, astounded that the metal was melting, etching my skin like a brand. I felt someone lurch against me, and Catherine and I were launched into the water. Steam rose around us and we dodged burning trash falling from the factory. A log struck me painfully at the shoulder and I lifted Catherine with the last of my strength and laid her over it.

"Hang on, honey," I said. "Let your legs dangle on each side. Press your face to the log."

I covered her head with a wet baby blanket and splashed water all over my face and hair. Catherine seemed to be sleeping. I kept one hand on her back and clung tightly to the log with the other arm. It must have been nine or ten o'clock by then.

Fire was everywhere around us. People kept jamming into the water. There were cows and horses too, and dogs, wagons. Sometimes people slipped and went under. Grimly, I hung on to Catherine and waited, scooping water over us from time to time. Breathing became more difficult as the fire neared the riverbank. We stayed like that an eternity, and finally the wind turned cold.

"It's chilly," someone near me complained. "The fire must have passed by."

I nodded in the darkness, watching as people began to drag themselves out of the water.

"It's three o'clock in the morning," a man's voice said, and I wondered how he knew. I pushed Catherine's log towards the bank and some dark figure helped me lift her to shore. The sand was hot but we spread blankets and laid her down. I think I fainted.

I wakened in afternoon light. Catherine and I had been carried to a large tent erected somehow by the factory men for women and children. Catherine was still asleep, but around me there was great activity. Much moaning and crying. Some women were on their feet trying to help the injured. Children wailed in pain, looking for missing parents. I could hardly see, but I began to crawl around hunting for my baby and Dorothy. They were not there.

I needed to find Frank. I had trouble standing erect, but I managed to stagger back to Catherine. I could not talk; my tongue was swollen, and deep down in my throat lodged a terrible pain. Each breath caught between my ribs. I touched Catherine's forehead. She was feverish and coughing as if with croup. Using my hands I tried to explain to a woman lying next to her that I had to leave, and she nodded her understanding. Though my vision blurred increasingly, I started out.

I was glad I could see no better—there was only carnage outside. I roamed the riverbank looking for Frank. There were bodies scattered everywhere, humans and animals. Most of them were mere burned bones and the stench was stifling. The farther I went, the more terrible the destruction became. Even kegs of nails were melted. Here and there I thought I could make out what appeared to be liquid shoe buckles and harness rings. I muffled my face against the ash in the air and stumbled on. The old streets were indiscernible. Debris covered everything. I moved in the direction I thought our house used to be, numbed with the horror on every side.

Presently I peered at a pile of bricks which I thought came from our chimney, the pink color being

distinctive in our area. What further I found sickened me to a new bout with faintness. A large burnt skeleton lay over fragments of smaller bones, as if in protection.

"Frank," I kept saying over and over. "Frank, I'm so sorry." I knew that he had tried his best to save the daughter I had selfishly left behind. Guilt swam over me, stays with me as I lie here blinded but seeing constantly the grisly scene marking the death of my husband and oldest child.

Eventually help reached Peshtigo from the outside. Carter and Quiet Fawn were among the early arrivals. They found Catherine and me still in the tent, listless and grieving. Carter buried the bones of our loved ones, except for the baby boy, whom we could not find.

The way Carter looks at Quiet Fawn, I know he has forgotten his old feeling for me, and I mourn for his brother to whom I gave so little of myself. I never touched Frank that I didn't think of Carter; sometimes in fantasy the children were fathered by Carter.

As Catherine and I lay in his wagon going back to Green Bay, he told us there was a great fire in Chicago as well as in Peshtigo. The world was quick to respond to Chicago's emergency, but it took longer to hear about Peshtigo's inferno, where only about a thousand people survived and my questioning of God began.

Strange stories had reached my ears while I lay in the tent. The most curious of these was the story of the Catholic priest, Father Pernin, who had loaded his church tabernacle containing the sacred vessels onto his wagon, and lacking a horse, had pulled the wagon to the river himself. There it had blown over and in the dark wind no one saw when the tabernacle was lifted and deposited safely on one of the floating beams or logs. Though everything in range was blackened, the tabernacle was untouched. Even the silken lining was unstained, the ciborium and monstrance unmelted, waterless. The Catholics considered it a miracle.

I consider it a betrayal on your part, God! Why should the lives of children be snuffed out and material things survive—even though they be the sacred vessels designed to hold your body? Were You not there among your people in that time of trial? Why did You ignore the cries of the innocent? Where is my baby? I lie here and let the old, old query torture me: if You are all-good, where does evil come from? If Carter knew my thoughts, he would say I blaspheme, yet who can hide thoughts from God?

The doctor visits frequently and offers me encouragement.

"Your sight will improve," he says. "One day your voice will return too." The scar burned into my neck by the trinket chain will be a permanent reminder of my actions. I am lovingly trapped here in the home of the man I should have married, being cared for by his wife. I am grateful for the love I hear in their voices, their love for Catherine, and I know she will be sheltered whether I live or die. The love in this house is palpable, it moves in all directions, from person to person, and even embraces me in my guilt. Quiet Fawn loves Carter, she loves Catherine, so I love Quiet Fawn. In loving I am powerless to hate. Will I reach such accommodation with You, God?

I hold Catherine in my arms when she comes to my room, and she strokes my crisped hair. I have no voice to tell her I love her, but I stroke her hair in return, feeling the singed ends renewing to softness, like the new softness within me. She seems to have forgotten the terror that divided her family. She has accepted Carter as her father but often asks for Dorothy. I wonder if she remembers the baby brother.

I tremble on the raw edge of doubt, perceive the beginning of trust. I have discovered that forgiveness begins inside oneself and grows outward. Thus I begin to accept it. The world I inhabit is as shadowy as the questions I contemplate. I have not worked out their meanings. God's joke . . . justice. . . His love? □

Wisconsin Photographer's Showcase

Alan Luft

Anti-missile demonstration
Bonn, West Germany
October 22, 1983







Photographs by Alan Luft





On The Reopening of the Dig at Aztalan

Lake Mills, Wisconsin

Up on the marker mounds, whispered to loom
Over bones, wind bends the prairie grass
To the temple mounds, to the stockade
Where clay huts squat like clouds.
Up on the marker mounds
Wind swells with the whispers
Of warrior and scout, of virgin
Priest and grandmother singing
On the Crawfish River banks.

The water pump clangs,
Spears river into unearthed soil
As we sift for pottery shards, flint, bone.
Calipers worm into holes
Trowels scrape arrowhead and rib
Where we slice open the land's chest.
Patient hands hunt the heart,
Vivisect earth, whispers dying
To lie mute in still-buried bones.

It is only a song
Before this land, river-sweet,
Yields to the appetite of shovel or plow.
Eight hundred years ago the tribe of Aztalan
Dug omens from sand, sifted gods from the wind
And sacrificed women.
Legend says they ate them. Mounds stand over bones.
To us, the mounds sit as road signs, watch towers.

The wind is chanting in the prairie.

Victoria Ford

Bird Mound at Devil's Lake Park

Someone who came before us
Gouged this ground and scraped the mud off
The ice-pick on the bluffs leaving behind
This parapet, this cascade of stones
This Devil's Lake that glitters
As one iris of ruin.

Menominees call
This valley holy place and home. Hills
Seen as elders, warrior clouds, birch
Wisdom, and a gooseberry-kissed lake named
Waters of the malignant.

A skeleton
Was found here. They say, the shaman's.
The mound, a grass-feathered swallow-tail kite
Poised to fly west but earth
Holds it, hugs it down
To the shore.

Some of us enter clattering
Into history, and some desire oblivion
But one will speak with the language
Of his own bones, divination rods
That summon the people who lived
Died and worshipped here.

Credo James Enriquez

Poems by

Dowry

Daughter, I would give you my poems
on ivory parchment bound in leather.

Or perhaps take you back to the circle,
stand on a smooth, flat stone,

shout poems until the mountains ached.
Or, throw them like homely potatoes

so hot you'd bounce them from hand to hand
before they'd sizzle and crack true

with words that clattered from typewriter
to page to poem. I would give you

poems that float, slip, and pull us under
like the creamy lotus we hunt in the creek.

Instead, I gather Mason jars
from our shadowy cellar, fold each poem three

times, squeeze them into the jars warmed
by my breath and clamp the lids tight.

The first I throw into the Wisconsin,
then back to the Thames. Now I must hurry

to the Ganges, the Ottawa, the Amazon,
the Nile, knowing, darling, that when you

discover the last blue jar dripping green
with algae, you'll be bloody and wet.

A Fairy Tale

Hyde Park

I never asked a glass,
who is the fairest, or sulked
over your skin, soft
as the inside of a lamb's ear,
hair the color of twilight.
Or cared when whistles
were for your legs
not mine.

Nor did I send you
into the forest with only
a slice of stale white bread
when your lashes grew thick,
cheekbones emerged,
and firm, high breasts.

But when the bobbies thought us
coeds, and picked us nosegays,
you scattered your blossoms
from Speakers Corner to Kensington
and teased, "Isn't it funny,
how you're losing your looks,
just when I'm coming into mine."

So I turn toward the Thames,
and let my flowers soak
full of ancient spells.
Tonight while you sleep,
I will steep a potion of petals,
and in it soak an apple red
as your cheek's blush.

Susan Faust Casper

Lady of the Lake

You are so sure of your words:
they tumble out

like marbles from a bag
into my lap.

We turn them over,
hold them to the light,

and marvel over the blues and golds,
swirls and splotches.

Each round, smooth, perfect.
You stare at me

through one great catseye,
a wave of green edged in red,

rotate it between your fingers
until I am distorted

beyond your recognition.
I show you how

to pack them carefully
back into the bag,

to hang the bag
by a leather string

around your neck, let it rest
silently between your breasts,

to bring it out
only for the two of us.

The Journey

It is, of course, only a test
to be passed or failed
like any other.
I set the apple

on your head, aim carefully.
This passage out of motherhood
is more difficult
than the journey in.

Yes, the beginning was
dramatic: the glare of lights,
your struggle to find my breast
until we settled (like a retiree

with his new gold watch)
into a rocking chair.
Now I breathe deeply
steady my trembling wrists,

and wipe the sweat from my eyes.
Come now, daughter,
hold your chin steady,
pace your breath with mine.

I must breathe deeply,
hold a wet finger to the wind,
and chart angles in the sand,
before I let the arrow fly.

Tribute to Gesell

I visit my friend Silvio,
we talk of monetary concerns;
I say I hear you are rich
and probably famous.

He says All I have
is a dog and a piece
of paper in the bank.

Then I say
Is it true
the idea of money
is not money itself?

He smiles.

We move into the garden.

We talk of other matters:

Leopaldi,

Delphina,

De Beauschere.

We embrace and stand
more or less in the sunlight.

His dark
olive-green
eyes
probing
the silence.

We remember
the day we sat
on the Dogana
di Mare.

Not far from the custom-house.

We move in and out
of ourselves
praising whatever
we find to praise:
Beauty is rage
rage is beauty.

They die together
and are reborn
in the clear dawn
of existence.

Remembering
the wasted years
we looked for the mystery
in abstraction.

Now we return
to look to the miracle
of one young blackberry
vine
trailing its thorns
unto heaven.

Carta Da Visita

I came down from the mountain
looking for you and no one else,
I had my clothes in a box
and a smile on my face.

I was looking for you.

I have since that day
looked in the windows
of apothecaries and pawn shops
refusing to be swayed
by the cantankerous thunder.

I was only a child,
I was looking for you,
I had my clothes in a box
and a mule at my side.

Il vento e l'acqua.

You gave me your smile
and you gave me too
yes water girls
and water boys
yielding upon the water.

I lived in Saint Fixx,
I visited the houses
of maenads and peignoirs
and dealt with the darkness.

I learned in Saint Fixx
if you open the book
to a different page
you will find a different
picture.

Now I will tell you
I am not as old as I look
and I carry in my body
a piece of the moon
that hangs over the water.

La luna e la luna.

I came from a place
where knowledge was risky,
I have come to a place
where knowledge is a threat,
let there therefore be
no knowledge between us.

Let there be rather
the wind and the water.
La luna e la luna.

Poems by

George Gott

Artists-in-Residence

By Ruth Gustafson

The Pro Arte Quartet occupies a unique place among the artist-in-residencies at the University of Wisconsin. Through its recordings and concert tours, the Pro Arte functions as a musical ambassador bringing its interpretation of the art of the string quartet to audiences all over the world and carrying back to Wisconsin news of the musical life in those countries. As the Pro Arte's reputation grows so does the university's. Less visible to the quartet's Wisconsin constituency is the day-to-day teaching of chamber music

at the UW-Madison School of Music and their on-going investigation into new music written for the string quartet. This article describes some of the connections between the Pro Arte's commitment to performance and its teaching role. It also explores the reasons why the Pro Arte places contemporary composition for string quartet among its most important artistic concerns.

The Pro Arte's residence at the University of Wisconsin started in 1940 when Hitler's invasion of Belgium prevented their return to that country. The longest surviving en-

semble of its kind in the world, the Pro Arte traces its history back seventy-three years to four Belgian musicians who earned the quartet an international reputation for adventurous programs of new works as well as for refined performances of the classic repertoire. Between the two world wars the Pro Arte introduced the Debussy Quartet to audiences in Latin and South America. The Pro Arte was also the first string quartet to program works by Honnegger, Milhaud, and Bartók, now part of the standard contemporary repertoire.

The Pro Arte Quartet



The Pro Arte Quartet: Norman Paulu, first violin; Martha Blum, second violin; Parry Karp, cello; Richard Blum, viola.

ARTISTS OF THE PRO ARTE QUARTET 1912-PRESENT

Brussels		U.S.A.									
FIRST VIOLIN	1912 A. Onnou	1914-18 World War I	1940 A. Brosa		1944 R. Kolisch			1967 N. Paulu			
SECOND VIOLIN	1912 L. Halleux		1943 A. Rahier				1961 R. Basso	1967 T. Moore	1973 J. McLeod	1974 M. Francis Blum	
VIOLA	1912 G. Prevost		1947 B. Milofsky				1957 R. Blum				
CELLO	1912 Lemaire		1918 F. Quinet	1921 R. Maas	1940 W. Evans	1941 V. Gottlieb	1941 G. Sopkin	1943 E. Friedlander	1955 L. Creitz		1976 P. Karp

The challenge of a string quartet

Norman Paulu, first violinist of the Pro Arte Quartet, carried a cardboard box filled with music manuscripts up the five flights of stairs to his studio in the Humanities Building on the Madison campus. This stack of scores was only a small portion of new music solicited by the Pro Arte last fall under a grant from the University of Wisconsin-Madison Graduate School. The other three members of the Pro Arte, Martha Francis Blum, second violin, Richard Blum, viola, and Parry Karp, cello, were similarly occupied, selecting from among more than 150 submissions the best scores to be performed during the first annual symposium for chamber music to be held in late May in 1986 at the UW-Madison School of Music.

In keeping with the Pro Arte Quartet's long tradition of championing new music, several compositions to be performed during the symposium will be world premieres, some Wisconsin premieres, and a few, such as the 1984 string quartet by Stephen Dembski, will be repeat performances. Highlights of the event will be the participation of Karel Husa, winner of the Pulitzer Prize in composition in 1969 and Andrew Imbrie, recipient of the Prix de Rome and Naumburg Recording Prize, as well as performances of quartets by each of these two laureate composers.

In the last few years the Pro Arte has had professional concert management. They have been one of the few ensembles not based in New York to perform in the International Society for Contemporary Music (ISCM) series held annually in New York City. Recently they completed the first European concert tour of the group in thirty-nine years.

Playing in a string quartet, without the support of a keyboard instrument or doubling on parts as in an orchestra, has been referred to as "the musical equivalent of riding a horse bareback." The four individual parts, while intended to blend, are nonetheless highly exposed as solo lines. "An error can be fatal to a particular passage," remarks Paulu. Citing the unison notes in first and second violin parts in a Bloch quartet, he adds, "The sonority depends on achieving the exact pitch in the two instruments." Karp cites a passage in this same work as an example of the difficulty of achieving balance. "When the viola has double notes, and we have just single notes to play, we must all adjust so that the passage is clear."

Playing in a quartet is also, at times, the emotional equivalent of riding bareback, requiring the ability, under the pressure of the moment, to give and take criticism that will keep the music on the right track. "We seem to be going through a calm period now," says Richard Blum who has been with the group for almost thirty years. "There are, naturally, disagreements, but I'd say this is the smoothest nine-year period we've had." Martha Blum observes, "There are strong musical personalities in our group. I think you would expect that in a professional quartet. Some of us are more forceful in expressing ideas than others, but in music the authority of the score prevails. Naturally, Norman, as first violin, often takes the leadership. He also represents us very well in negotiations for tours and programs, etc."

Commitment to contemporary chamber music

Articles on the Pro Arte must recognize their concert and re-

cording success. In 1983, when the present Pro Arte, which has played together nine years, recorded on the Laurel label two of the neglected string quartets of Ernest Bloch and two of Karol Szymanowski's masterpieces, the string quartets nos. 1 and 2, their reputation as a recording ensemble took a leap forward. *Fanfare*, a stereo review magazine, described their interpretation of the Bloch Quartet No. 1 as "extraordinarily impressive . . . a milestone recording." Similar plaudits from the *New York Times* have met their other recordings. The large sweep of sound and the expressive coloring in the Bloch heightens the emotional intensity of the composer's ideas which Karp describes this way: "You can feel the musical inspiration all through the quartet." "Musically," Paulu adds, "I think we all feel an affinity for the Bloch and Szymanowski quartets. Because of our residency here at the UW we don't have to worry about recording music that will sell a lot of records. Some groups under contract for the bigger record companies are told they cannot record contemporary music."

The Karp family was the catalyst for the Pro Arte's interest in the infrequently heard Szymanowski quartets nos. 1 and 2. Karol Szymanowski was born into a noble Polish family in the Ukraine in 1882 and died in 1937. He composed the Quartet No. 1 in 1917 and No. 2 in 1927. "My father [Howard Karp is on the UW-Madison music faculty] was doing some research on Szymanowski's piano work," explains Parry Karp. "I thought it would be interesting to play the string quartets. Since my grandmother happened to be in Poland at the time, she bought us the latest editions of the quartets which were not yet available in Madison."

The Pro Arte's capacity for impressive performances of Bloch, Szymanowski, and Beethoven (their recording of the first version of the String Quartet Op. 18, No.1 received high praise) has by no means been put ahead of what might best be described as a freedom to 'range' in the literature. In their playing Ravel, Bartok, or Beethoven one hears the wealth of technique available to them, yet these massive, synchronized possibilities are as often serving an emerging expression, one as yet still strange to most audiences.

Although the quartets of twentieth-century composers such as Szymanowski, Bloch, and even the more avant-garde works by Berg and Webern appeal to chamber music enthusiasts, these people make up a small part of the concert-going public. This does not concern performers, says former cellist of the Pro Arte, Lowell Creitz, professor in the UW-Madison School of Music. "Music audiences are, by and large, the most resistant to change of any of the arts audiences. New forms of visual art are readily accepted compared to the reaction to new music." Creitz recalls an incident at a performance of Stockhausen's music in Madison in the fifties. "Stockhausen had just finished some concerts in Europe, where he was berated for being a 'capitalist bourgeois composer.' Then he came here only to have someone in the audience remark on his 'communist' music. I think he was very amused."

Not only is much new music an enigma to many audiences, but it often causes musicians substantial difficulties in preparing for performance. The Pro Arte spent over one-hundred hours learning a quartet they premiered last year in New York City for the International Society of Contemporary Music. Since grappling with new music has become part of the Pro Arte's job in the same way a scientist keeps up with discoveries in his field, the quartet takes such assignments in stride. Creitz says that learning new music can be similar to understanding a language. "If the work is



well written, it has a language, a syntax. It's the performer's task to understand the linguistic use of the notes so it can be communicated. For instance, during the rehearsals of Andrew Imbrie's Quartet No. 4 (commissioned by the Pro Arte in 1969 and premiered that year in Madison), we became so familiar with its musical language that we could perform it with conviction."

The hard work of explicating the language in a new piece of music requires a lot of patience with detail, but sometimes difficult notation is an unnecessary and time-consuming obstacle. Richard Blum notes, "Some composers have such complicated notation that they almost defy musicians to perform their work."

Balancing personal tastes and the performer's role

The members of the Pro Arte know that not every contemporary work they choose to perform has a future with an audience. Why then do they spend time and energy on scores that will be forgotten altogether or remain on the shelf for a long time? They are quick to respond to this question with statements like "time is the ultimate judge" or "the generations will sift through these works." They know that value judgments are perilous territory. Take the flamboyant example of the music critic in 1843 who commented on Chopin: "Cunning must be the connoisseur, indeed, who, while listening to his

music, can form the slightest idea when wrong notes are played." (quoted by Nicolas Slonimsky in *The Lexicon of Musical Invective*, New York: Coleman Ross, 1953.)

The Pro Arte does have deeply held personal opinions about performing contemporary music which touch on issues of musical pride and loyalty to the string quartet-in-residence as an institution. "Putting new music together is like figuring out a puzzle," explains Martha Blum. "It's tremendously exciting to see the pieces fall into place." All four members of the quartet assert that twentieth-century composers such as Bartok, Berg, and Schoenberg have written some of the outstanding masterpieces in the entire chamber music repertoire. When they select their contemporary programs, such as for next year's symposium, coming to a consensus is not difficult, but their criteria are not easily verbalized: "We rule out mediocre composition right away. The subtler distinctions among good compositions are harder to define, even on scoring sheets. But really fine music, and this seems obvious to us, shows unique musical imagination."

Each member of the Pro Arte has a favorite era or composer in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as well as in the twentieth. Martha Blum feels closest to Schubert's idiom, Paulu to Beethoven's. Karp leans toward the classical era's major composer Mozart as well. Richard Blum enjoys a challenging viola part such as the Brahms' Third

Quartet or the Ravel Quartet in F. In the twentieth-century repertoire both Karp and Paulu gravitate toward the musical minds of the first decades of the century. Among quartets by very recent composers Imbrie's music elicits the most excitement from the Pro Arte. "He's well known in composers' circles, but his work isn't performed as much as the eastern establishment composers such as Carter or Babbitt," says Paulu. "Despite some of the difficulties and intricacies of Andy's music, it wears very well," offers Martha Blum. "It's fresh no matter how many times I play it." The quartet respects the talent and craftsmanship that his music reflects. "There's always a musical line," says Creitz. "The movement is carried forward by related melodic ideas, but not by the development of motifs which you hear in Bartok or his imitators."

Exploring new music and polishing the old is exciting, but it is also a duty. Norman Paulu feels that the professional musician must be able to interpret music from every era of composition. "I'm not in favor of exclusive specialization in one period. A convincing performance sums up a whole tradition. To play Bartok with authority, you need to know how to interpret a Haydn or a Mozart quartet."

Sections of Beethoven's late quartets were inscrutable to the quartet which first performed them. Mahler, while he defended Arnold Schoenberg's First String Quartet from a hostile Viennese audience, later admitted he did not understand the work either. The Pro Arte accepts the fact that they may not empathize with all works they perform, but they intend to give them the best performance possible.

"We played a quartet in New York for the ISCM series which we did not choose and felt was a pure Bartok imitation. We did the best we could with it, and we premiered it in Wisconsin as well," says Paulu. Creitz feels that an historical perspective enables performers to be somewhat objective about what they are playing at the moment. "Schoenberg is an example of a

much misunderstood composer. I think people are just now beginning to comprehend his music. Of course it's complex, integrating, as it does, the nineteenth and twentieth centuries." He notes that increasingly more accurate performances of contemporary music aid audience understanding. "Schoenberg was often badly performed, leaving the impression that his music was rather dry and lacking in expression. When older music such as a Mozart quartet is performed badly, the musicians are blamed. But if a performance of new music turns out to be uninteresting, we assume the composer is at fault."

Touring and teaching

The Pro Arte's Latin American, South American, and European concerts of 1984 renewed the quartet's connections to audiences in Spain, France, Portugal, Chile, Peru and Colombia. The Blums speak of the personal satisfaction that comes from performing in such cities as Santiago and Lima where there are few teachers of classical music and where many musicians lack the money to buy printed scores of standard works. "The audiences are extremely attentive," say the Blums. "Some people in the audience could remember the old Pro Arte's South American premieres of pieces like the Debussy Quartet." They believe that economic and political hardships force many musicians to emigrate. Parry Karp had strong reactions to the conditions he observed on the concert tours. "Universities and government could do more to aid musicians who want to study in the U.S. The Soviets provide full scholarships for those accepted at a conservatory in the USSR provided they learn Russian. I think we should be doing similar things. It's a much better way to influence people than sending weapons."

Teaching is integral to the Pro Arte's role at the university. But at times scheduling tours, studio lessons of university students, and performance in academic courses is a tough balancing act. It requires the ability to hold several projects

in abeyance to concentrate on one. Touring, for example their three-week series of concerts in South America last fall, requires dealing with an enormous backlog of work at the university.

Paulu's favorite teaching sessions, related to his quartet role, are those he has spent coaching chamber ensembles at the university and high school levels. "Our main contribution, though, may be in the *model* of discipline that we try to represent here and around the state. We give ten Madison concerts a year, six of which are broadcast statewide. We travel to ten communities outside Madison, such as Green Bay, Manitowoc, Milwaukee, and Richland Center, performing the same programs that we give in Madison," says Paulu.

Richard Blum feels that one of the best uses of the Pro Arte as a teaching instrument has been its performances in a course given in the school of music called "Music in Performance." The course has been offered for decades now and is open to the entire student body. Blum recalls that when Gunnar Johansen lectured, the course was a mixture of philosophical and musical ideas. "Johansen could pull out concepts from astronomy, religion, art to illustrate something he had to say about music. The Pro Arte in those years was heard by about 150 undergraduates a semester. Now the course enrolls nearly 600 students per semester. For some of these students, the course is their first exposure to live chamber music."

The Pro Arte Quartet has, among the large audiences they draw, devotees who follow their development as an ensemble. One retired language professor, who vividly remembers the concerts of the Belgian Pro Arte, underlines the contribution of the quartet to the national standing of the UW-Madison School of Music: "Their performances over the past forty-four years have been outstanding. One can hardly overestimate the value of their teaching, by way of example, to students and audiences throughout Wisconsin. □

A Visionary Heritage

By Lucy Mathiak

Almost fifty years have passed since the College of Agriculture at the University of Wisconsin (Madison) enacted a bold new program to encourage development of the visual arts in rural areas of the state. The inspiration for the rural art program can be traced to John Rector Barton, who had been brought to Madison by Dean Chris Christensen to develop the social and cultural aspects of the farm short course. Barton's seven years of participation in the Danish folk school movement and contacts with the families of short course students convinced him that there was a major unmet need for arts and humanities activities in Wisconsin's rural areas. These convictions led Barton to work with Dean Christensen to establish the artist-in-residence program in 1936, and to develop the College of Agriculture's outreach work during the months that followed. Christensen convinced Thomas Brittingham, Jr. to assist in funding the experimental project for a trial period of five years.

In retrospect the accomplishments of the rural art program are quite remarkable. The potential audience for the program activities was not obvious in 1936, when John Steuart Curry arrived in Madison to serve as the College of Agriculture's artist-in-residence. And although John Barton, Christensen, and the county agents were aware of isolated artists throughout the state, they had no clear vision of what might happen if those artists were systematically offered opportunities to develop their artistic skills. Nor was there any obvious approach to outreach during the initial years of project development.

Barton continued his visits with farm families around the state, and Curry gave presentations to the short course students and made himself available to anyone who wished to see him.

The program assumed different dimensions following the 1939 American Country Life Conference, to which Christensen, Barton, and rural sociologist John Kolb were delegates. After viewing a conference exhibition of professional art on rural subjects, the Wisconsin representatives wondered what type of original art might be shown by nonprofessional rural artists. They decided to hold such an exhibition at the 1940 Farm and Home Week in Madison, and with only three months to organize the exhibit Barton, Curry, and Christensen began to search for exhibition pieces which fit these criteria: 1) the artist should be of rural origin, 2) the work should be original rather than copies, and 3) the artist should not have significant amounts of formal art education. Using personal contacts, the local media, and county extension agents, exhibit organizers brought together the work of thirty artists from seventeen counties in time for the scheduled opening in Memorial Union.

Although the work that appeared in 1940 and in the exhibitions that followed demonstrates artists' efforts to interpret their lives and their worlds, it does not lend itself to easy categories outside of the general rubric of "rural art."

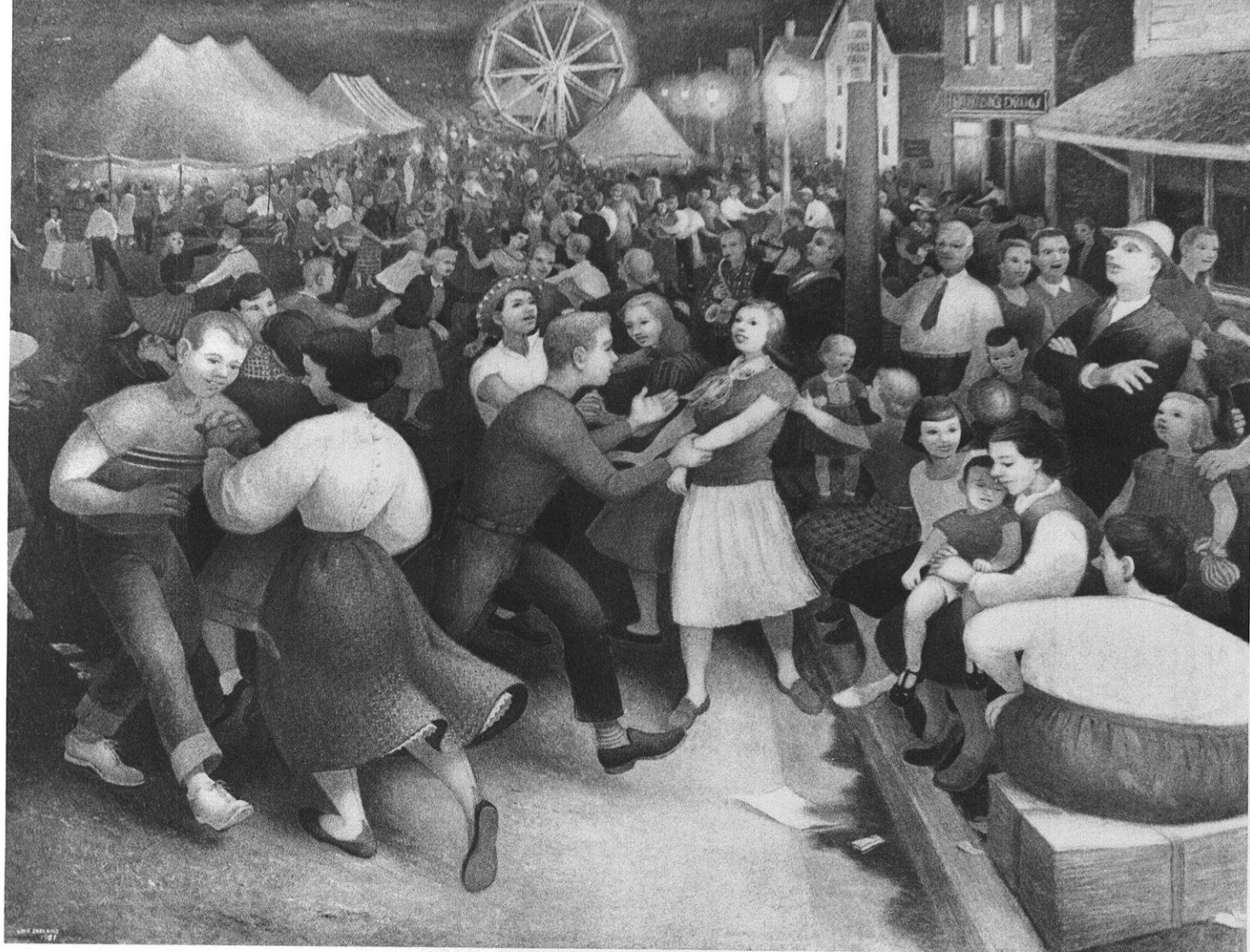
Despite the program's Depression era origins, very few of the artists had participated in Works Progress Administration (WPA) projects. Chris Olson, a strawberry farmer from the Berlin area, had received commissions through the

Oshkosh Public Museum to produce a series of easel paintings depicting historic scenes and still-life themes. And women from Lancaster and the neighboring areas had participated in a WPA art class organized by one woman's relative. In most cases, however, the democratizing WPA programs do not seem to have affected rural artists in Wisconsin.

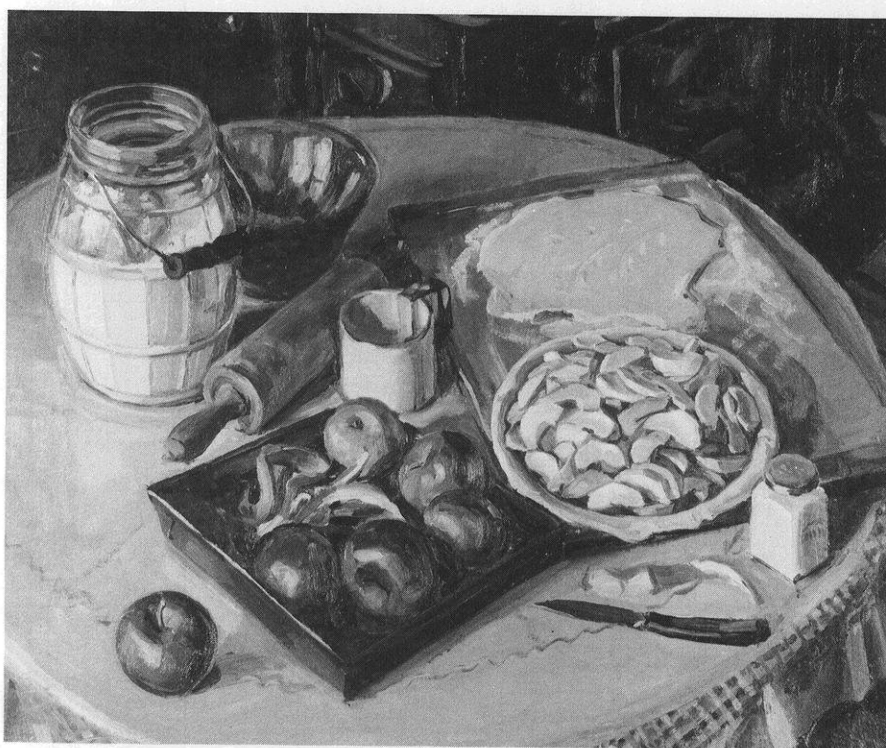
Many of the artists were self-taught, for the arts were not routinely included in rural curricula before the 1950s. Art education depended on the inclinations of the individual teachers and school boards. Many country schools viewed instruction in art appreciation or the visual arts as a wasteful frill. But it was not uncommon for rural teachers to develop creative responses by using the artistically inclined students to illustrate stories on the blackboard or by giving private lessons after school hours. However, few children growing up in rural Wisconsin before the fifties were given a systematic sustained art education.

Yet, some of the rural artists had studied at the Layton School of Art, the Chicago Art Institute, the Cranbrook Academy (Michigan), and in one case, the Art Students League in New York City. In most cases, however, the artists studied there at night, during the summer months, or as part-time endeavors. Although four young women involved in the rural art program did enroll as full-time students in one of the programs, they eventually returned to Wisconsin due to family or other considerations.

Although most rural artists worked without conventional art training, not all of their art brought forward by the rural art program



Lois Ireland, Waunakee
Street Dance, 1951, 47½" × 31¾", oil
 on canvas. Photos by Glen Trudell



Chris Olson, Berlin
Apple Pie, n.d., 35" × 30", oil on
 canvas. Photo by Maurice Thaler



Frances Burt, Albany
Village Blizzard, 1947, 24½" × 21", watercolor

could be considered folk, primitive, or naive art. While Stoughton homemaker Ethel Kvalheim was skilled at rosemaling, and Washburn area resident Agnar Oie and other rural artists displayed woodcarvings, direct derivations represented only a portion of the work discovered through the rural art program. And not all woodworkers were influenced by folk art; noted Mineral Point bowlmaker Harry Nohr developed his craft as a leisure activity during the 1950s.

Certainly works such as those of Galesville farmer Lloyd Scarseth, and Waldo homemaker Carrie Ubbelohde and her daughter Marguerite could accurately be described as primitive. However, other self-taught artists produced paintings that were remarkably sophisticated in composition, detail, and perspective. Outdoorsmen like Clarence Monegar painted intricate wildlife scenes based on long hours of observing nature. For Pipe Vil-

lage farmer Ambrose Ammel direct observation of nature was supplemented by a knowledge of anatomy obtained through his work as a taxidermist, allowing him to use his oils to portray animal figures with an accuracy that was almost three-dimensional in effect.

The observation which Monegar and Ammel used to create intricate wildlife scenes was used by other rural artists to detail home and community life. Lancaster milliner Lela Smith studied books and experimented in order to capture the daily activities of her beloved cats, turning to landscapes at John Steuart Curry's suggestion that she "try something different." Lois Ireland developed finely detailed portraits of family members, poetic landscapes, and carefully organized scenes of social events from the time that she was an adolescent through her young adult years.

Just as each artist's immediate environment affected the choice of

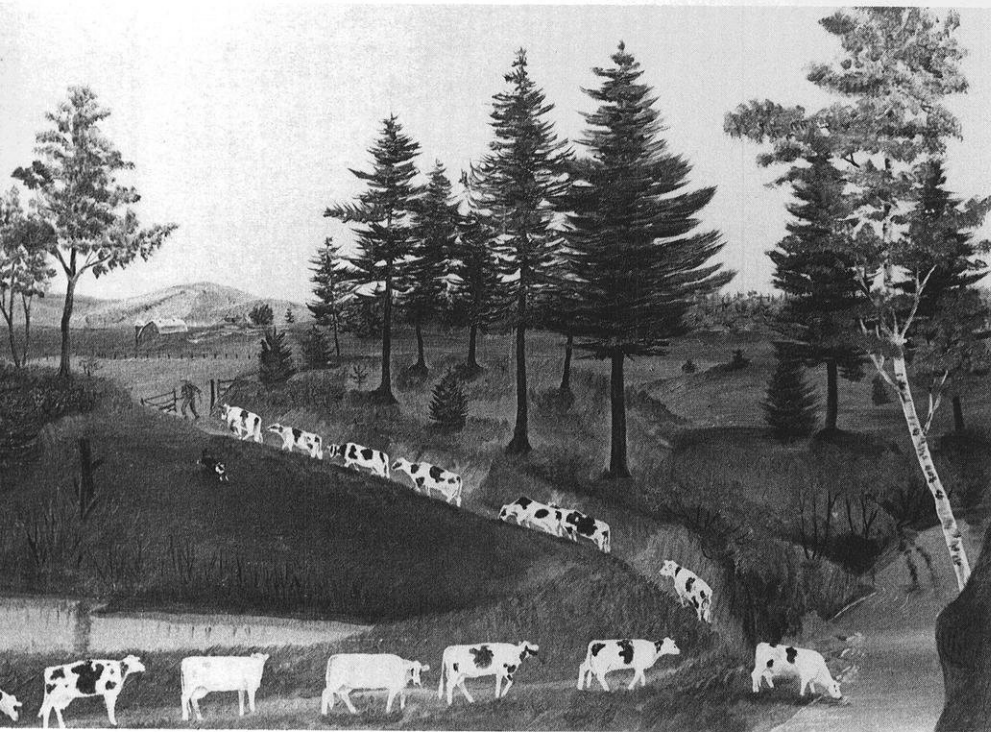
subject matter and access to education affected style, availability of materials and knowledge of technique often determined the media. Although most paintings exhibited during the early years were created with oil on canvas, other works were created on surfaces as diverse as wallboard, cardboard, cereal boxes, and window shades. The artists used the materials at hand, from crayons and pencils to household enamels and barn paints. The most versatile of all the rural artists, Richland Center sage Earl Sugden, developed his images by etching in fresh fungus, positioning painted sand in empty whiskey bottles, and experimenting with vegetable dyes and other natural colors on paper.

For most artists the information and advice on technique the rural art program offered was a welcome change from trial and error. Within a few years of the first rural art show, the demand for exhibits, workshops, and other activities was great

Walter Thorp, Baraboo
Covey of Quail, 1941, 43" × 31½",
pencil and crayon. Photo by Maurice
Thaler



Lloyd Scarseth, Galesville, *Milking Time*, n.d., oil on canvas, 36¼" × 28"



enough to add another staff person to work with individuals and organizations in the outlying areas of the state. John Barton again approached the Brittingham Fund to secure the resources to hire James Schwalbach. Schwalbach's experience in rejuvenating the educational radio program "Let's Draw" and his enthusiastic, outgoing personality provided the right combination to achieve rapid success in his new position.

Many communities developed local or regional shows and organizations with the assistance of the rural art program's new staff member. By 1954 some rural artists were ready to go beyond the loose organization of regional and state exhibits. Several long-time exhibitors proposed to Jim Schwalbach formation of the Wisconsin Rural Artists' Association (WRAA). Founded that same year, the WRAA became an active force in developing art activities throughout the state. With staff members John Barton and Jim Schwalbach and artist-in-residence Aaron Bohrod serving in advisory capacities, the WRAA provided important links between artists, organized meetings and workshops, and published a quarterly newsletter, *Contour Notes*, beginning in 1956.

The legacy of the rural art program endures. The WRAA, which changed its name to the Wisconsin Regional Artists' Association during the 1960s, observed its thirtieth anniversary in 1984, having matured into a solid organization for state artists. The permanent collection of art purchased for the College of Agriculture beginning in 1940 was consolidated and permanently displayed in the Wisconsin Center in the 1980s. And the worn and cherished scrapbooks kept by the rural artists themselves provide lasting documentation of the importance of the program in the lives of the people it touched. Newspaper clippings, programs from exhibits, Christmas cards, letters, and souvenirs of visits with the artists-in-residence, all record events that transformed isolated artists into an organized rural art movement. □

The Wisconsin Years of John Steuart Curry

By Lucy Mathiak



Courtesy State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

The 1936 appointment of John Steuart Curry to the newly created position of artist-in-residence at the University of Wisconsin marked the beginning of a unique faculty position. Although some institutions had poet-in-residence positions and others hired renowned artists to teach or to create specific works of art, Curry was the first artist named to such a position with no requirement other than that he continue his work as an artist while in Madison. The position carried with it the honorary title of professor within the rural sociology department, in which John Rector Barton and John Kolb provided much of the organizational impetus and support for the experiment. Previous work in rural theater and writing projects combined with organizer John Barton's position in the department, made rural sociology the logical department for Curry's appointment, for the Wisconsin position was the only instance where a recognized artist was installed as a resource for the rural people of the state rather than for art students, professionals, or patrons.

Funded through a five-year grant from the Brittingham Trust Fund, the position had a guaranteed annual salary of \$4,000 with no restrictions on the artist's acceptance of commissions and sales. The promise of economic security was no small matter, either, for the arts were not immune to the hardships of the Depression. Thus, the security of the \$4,000 annual salary coupled with the freedom to expand energies without obligation or restriction were indeed enviable conditions of employment.

John Steuart Curry was a natural choice for this unique position. At the time of his appointment, the thirty-nine year-old Curry had attained national recognition as a painter of the rural scenes that he had witnessed during his Kansas childhood. Although over two decades had passed since Curry had left his family farm to pursue his development as an artist, he had maintained a strong affection for the

Photo by Sally Behr

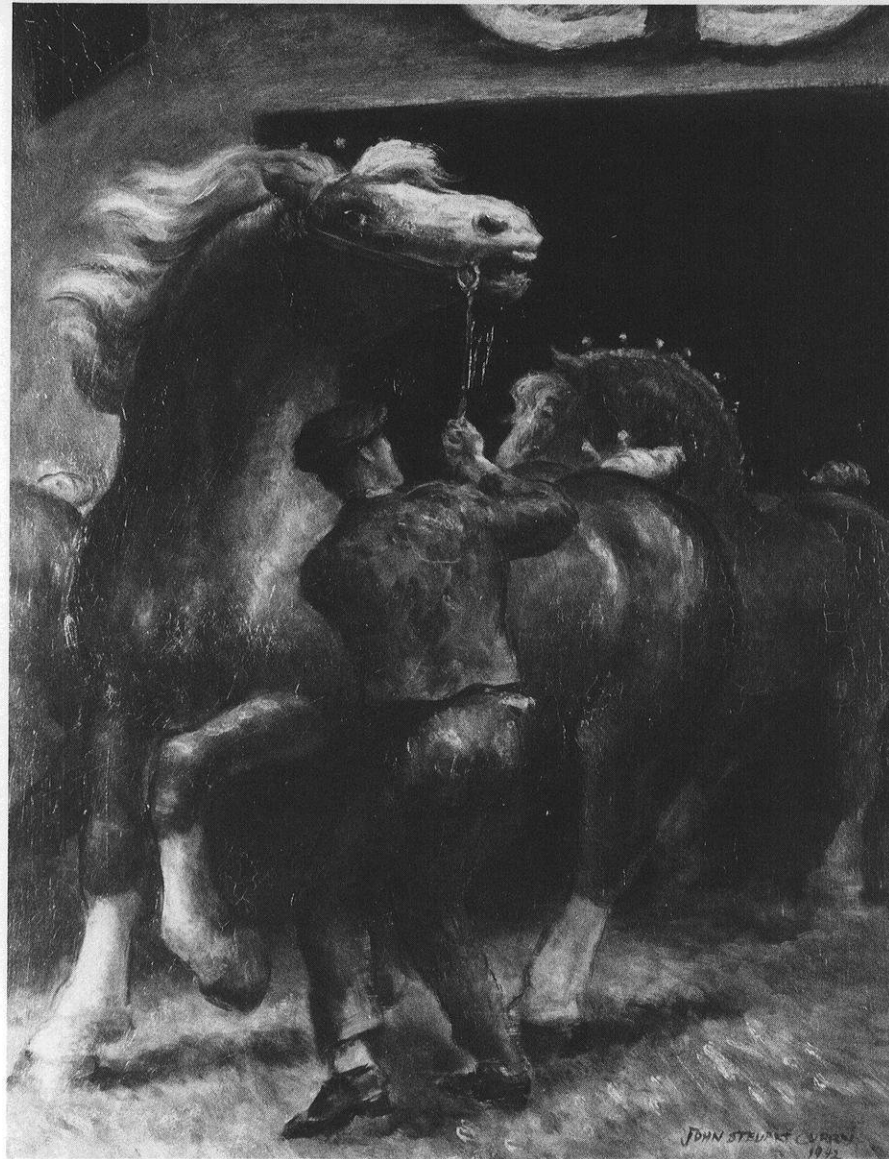
land and culture that were so integral to his personality. While Curry's intervening years in New York, Paris, Westport, Connecticut, and his travels with a circus may have heightened the sophistication of Curry's artistic and personal style, the artist always maintained an appreciation of the land and the farmers.

Curry was a strong believer that "the artist must paint the thing that is most alive to him." His ties to rural life formed the basis for some of his most famous creations. Working from memory and observation, Curry was a regionalist painter long before writers and critics began lumping him with Thomas Hart Benton and Grant Wood as the triumverate of a regionalist school of art. In fact, the concept of a school of art was disquieting to Curry, who found labels confining and who preferred that expression be allowed to develop freely. Writing in 1936, Curry summarized one of the basic elements of his philosophy of art:

The use of life as an excuse for clever arrangements of color or other pictorial elements ends where it begins . . . If you feel the significance of the life, the design builds itself. The feeling inherent in the life of the world cannot be ignored or trifled with for the sake of theory.

Understanding that art must flow from a "lively interest in the subject," Curry believed that the artist must draw on "the dramatic and spiritual side of the subject" to capture that which is "beyond the power of the camera eye to report."

It was precisely Curry's vision of the drama and spirituality of the life force that led him to devote so much of his energy to the landscape, Civil War, and circus themes on which his artistic reputation was based. Considered to be overly sentimental, corny, and even inappropriate subject matter by some critics, Curry's canvases emerged from his roots in rural America. His ability to stir the emotions of his audience and to provoke reaction with



The Belgian Stallions, 1942, 27" × 33", oil on canvas. Photo by Maurice Thaler

his depictions of American scenes were significant factors in his professional ascendancy beginning with his one-man show with the Whitney studio club in 1930.

The upsurge of interest in American scene painting propelled Curry into the national spotlight during the years between World War I and II. The paintings, lithographs, and murals produced between the artist's arrival in Madison in December 1936 and his death in 1946 reflected his continuing drive to portray what his biographer termed the "pageant of America." Indeed, the Wisconsin environment appears to have supplemented the themes that had emerged from Curry's Kansas origins.

The rolling hills of the Seminole Highway farm that he shared with his family appear in several of his

works, including his famous easel painting, *Wisconsin Landscape*. Although Curry varied the elements of the theme, the same pastoral scenes may also be discerned in his biochemistry murals (1941-43) and the murals commissioned by the First (National Bank of) Wisconsin (1941). Curry also incorporated the appeal of the Wisconsin River in his paintings and lithographs, and in 1941 embarked on a canoe trip with August Derleth that resulted in a collaborative publication, *The Wisconsin*, in 1943.

Scenes from campus life provided new subject matter for the artist. The barnlike studio that had been built to his specifications gave the artist easy access to diverse facets of campus life, resulting in a flood of designs that are now considered to be "classic Curry"

themes. The Little International shows at the stock pavilion resulted in several studies of *The Belgian Stallions*, which were submitted as an easel painting to the National Academy of Design upon his election to membership in 1938 and reproduced as lithographs at a later date.

The larger campus also offered several opportunities to experiment with design and composition. Curry, who had played college football, frequently attended the UW football team's practices at Camp Randall Stadium. His absorption in the action led to physical involvement in the scrimmages at times and also resulted in paintings *The End Run* and *The All-American* in addition to other works based on his observations. The players depicted in the football studies included local sports figures Elroy Hirsch and Otto Breitenbach, who in 1983 placed Curry's painting of teammate Dave Schreiner on permanent display in the UW Stadium.

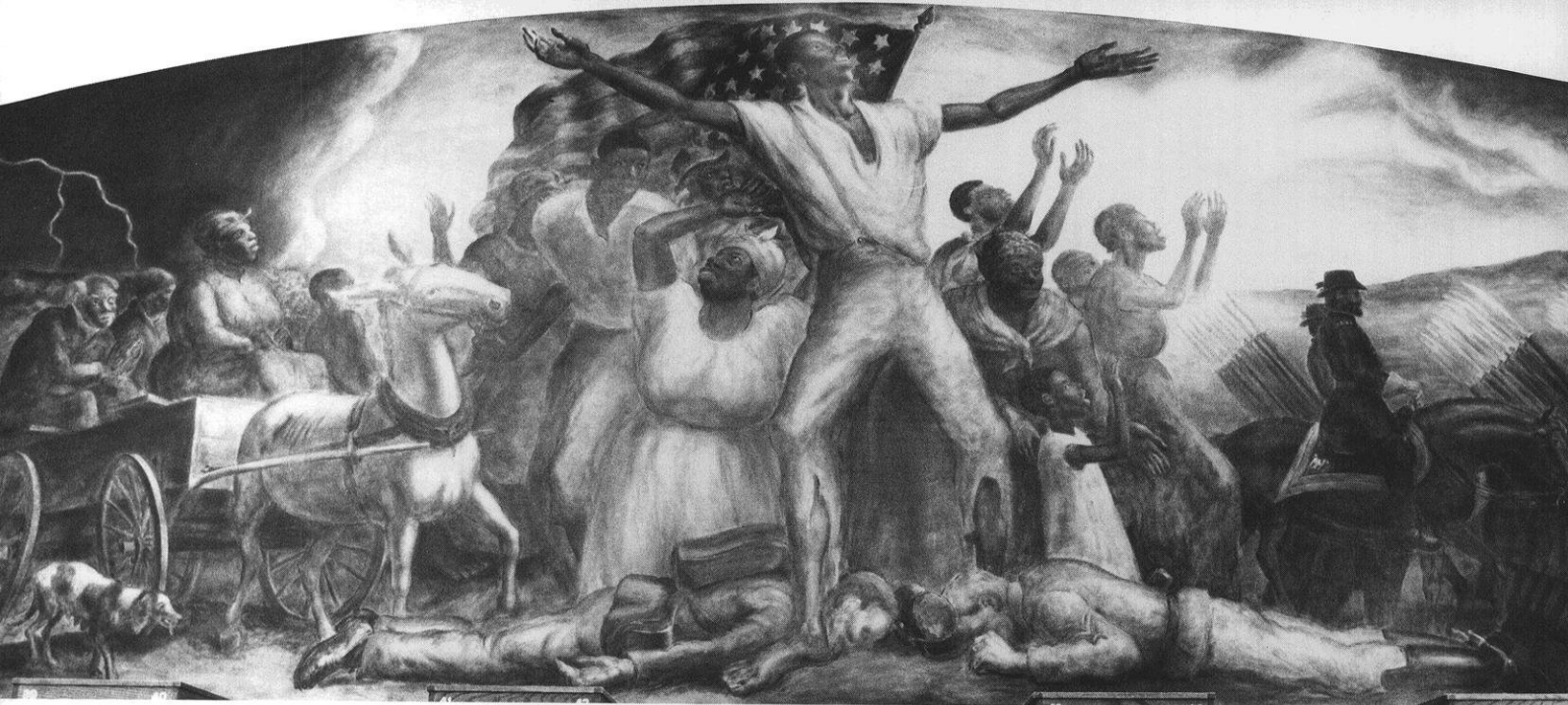
A compassionate man, Curry also devoted time and energy to the human struggle for survival against the forces of nature. *Our Good Earth* is a poignant oil painting of a farmer resolutely clutching wheat from the field in which he is standing. Hanging in the College of Agricultural and Life Sciences, it remains a timeless statement on the constant struggle of the family farm for survival. His recurring use of dramatic weather served as a reminder of the fragility of human life and endeavor in the face of the forces of nature. The power of the elements is evident in his gouache of *The Flood*, which shows a family huddled on the roof of a house with threatening waters swirling at their feet or his lithograph of the *Sanctuary* which portrays animals seeking refuge from a flood. The same concepts also appear in his paintings of *The Tornado*, in which a family is fleeing to the storm cellar, and *The Line Storm* in which a farmer is rushing to get his hay to shelter as a violent storm looms in the background.

The notable exception to Curry's preoccupation with nature's de-



Social Benefits of Biochemical Research, 1941, oil and tempera on canvas, 108" × 172", Biochemistry Building, UW-Madison. Photos by Sally Behr.





Freeing the Slaves, 1942, oil and tempera on canvas, 168" × 444", Library of the Law School, UW-Madison. Photo by Sally Behr.

structive potential may be found in the murals that he painted in the conference room of the biochemistry building, which he devoted to the benefits of solar radiation. This segment of the biochemistry murals, which clearly derives from Harry Steenbock's research on Vitamin D, depicts the role of the sun in agricultural production and human well-being by weaving a rainbow through a series of scenes ranging from pastoral landscapes to a scientist irradiating milk.

Curry's use of drama and pageantry extended to his paintings and murals devoted to examination of the human condition. Just as the stairwell portions of the biochemistry murals depict Babcock, Steenbock, Elvehjem, and other scientists helping to eradicate the devastating effects of malnutrition, his almost life-size portrait of Chris Christensen shows the stately dean striding through a cornfield, leading the way to human progress. His smaller, more abstract oil sketch of *The First National Rally Of The Progressive Party* also captures the excitement of the speakers and crowds that filled the stock pavilion for that event in 1938.

The artist's concern for social justice inspired two of his most spectacular murals: the statehouse murals in Topeka, Kansas, and the large mural which dominates the

library at the UW-Madison Law School. The Kansas murals, which are best known for their treatment of John Brown's role in the Civil War, resulted in a related series of sketches and lithographs which rank among Curry's most vital creations. The law school mural, on the other hand, is based on designs which Curry originally submitted as part of the WPA murals that he painted for the Justice Department in 1936. The mural, a dramatic representation of *The Freeing Of The Slaves*, was rejected by the review panels as too controversial for the racial and political climate of Washington, D.C., of the time. Curry replaced this panel with the more moderate *Justice Defeating Mob Violence* and did not resurrect his plan to produce the original piece until law school professor Lloyd Garrison saw Curry's sketches and secured the funding to underwrite the painting that hangs in the law school today.

Much of Curry's career was marked by the radically different responses and debate evoked by his art. *The Freeing of the Slaves* was not the first nor the last of his creations to be denounced by one group of viewers only to be praised by others. Indeed, the controversy over his Kansas statehouse murals was so great that he refused to finish the project or sign the com-

pleted segments. Similarly, *Wisconsin Landscape* was originally commissioned as a gift to a member of the Legge family, but when the work was completed, the committee refused to pay for anything but the supplies used in production. Curry declined the offer and kept the painting until it was purchased by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York a few years later.

The controversy that accompanied Curry's career during his lifetime was only temporarily abated by his premature death caused by complications from chronic hypertension in 1946. Indeed, the changes in the art world since that time have added fuel to the debates, as art critics, historians, and scholars attempt to assess the significance of the New Deal, regional, American scene, and other twentieth century American works of art. In retrospect, it may well be that Benton presented the most durable evaluation of Curry's work when he wrote in 1941:

Art is something beyond painting . . . the fact remains that the ability to put Life into a series of paint films is a gift beyond the mechanical details of craft . . . John Curry, under that bald pate of his, has the creator's mind. He has the drive of those who love the world better than art and who will risk innovation for the sake of that love. □



Photo by Sally Behr

Aaron Bohrod: Artist-in-Residence

By Donna Scott Thomas

Aaron Bohrod's studio is jammed with objects. Plastic, wood, metal, and glass, decorative and utilitarian, they crowd and jostle and balance on shelves from floor to ceiling. Interspersed are books, ceramic pieces covered with Bohrod's distinctive stylized decorations, and row upon row of finished

paintings. Several easels with works in various stages of completion hug the wall of windows that lets northern light into the room. Close by a few things—clay animals, a scrap of paper, a child's chalk board—cluster in a tentative group that awaits final arrangement for the translation into a painterly pun. The crowding, the potential for ideas

and activity that suggests itself, the ironically juxtaposed images that abound, all bespeak the energy, the involvement, and the wit of the individual who works here. This highly charged milieu grants insight into the character of the man who for twenty-five years chose as the framework for his career a very public way of life—that of artist-in-residence at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

It takes a special kind of person to work successfully under public scrutiny, with demands on time made in often unexpected ways. Serving as artist-in-residence was good for Bohrod; for many others it would not have been an ideal position. Indeed, Bohrod's fellow artists voiced skepticism when they learned of his decision in 1948 to accept the position at Madison. By this time Bohrod was a nationally recognized artist, noted for his studies of the American scene. Called a social realist, in line with his tendency not to seek the attractive and pleasing to the eye but rather to depict life as he found it, the images of his paintings were often desolate, stark, ramshackle, or worn, yet were also depicted with an honesty and directness that gave them a compelling strength. Until 1936, Bohrod's primary focus was on the street scenes of urban and small town America, particularly those in and around his native Chicago, but a Guggenheim grant in that year enabled him to travel and focus on rural life in the West. From then on, rural America was a regular part of his studies. During World War II, he served as a war artist and channeled his interest in life around him into studies of scenes of war in both the Pacific and Europe. With this work he solidified his position as a major contemporary artist.

Why, at this critical juncture in his career, did he not feel the pull of the New York art world—which then, as now, exerts a powerful influence on aspiring artists? Why did he opt for life in what surely in the minds of some seemed to be a cultural backwater? Although a young artist, Bohrod felt confident in his

ability to solve problems and visualize his material; further, he believed that ultimately he must rely on himself and that place is incidental in the development of the honest feelings, perceptions, and insights of the artist. In addition, Madison itself was hardly a provincial town and the university's support for the arts was strong. In 1936, it had pioneered the position of artist-in-residence when Bohrod's predecessor John Stuart Curry was hired, and by the late 1940s, the campus offered innovative programs in music, drama, and literature as well as in the visual arts. The climate was ripe for exchange among artists, and Bohrod's experimentation with art forms other than painting, including ceramic decoration and textiles, as well as his participation in programs that brought together artists in both the visual and performing arts is evidence of the encouragement that he found in Madison.

Some of what could be expected of the artist-in-residence was already known to Bohrod by 1948. Six years earlier in his career, he had been invited by the Southern Illinois Normal School at Carbondale to accept a residency which, like several other schools, was modeled on the Madison position. Bohrod was at Carbondale six months, during which he held weekly open house at his studio on campus and taught on a limited basis. The open house sessions were attended by students and people from the community and afforded Bohrod the opportunity to articulate his feelings as an artist; he found them "invaluable in formulating self-knowledge and establishing a maturity of attitude" toward his own work.

But the major attraction of the Madison position for Bohrod was the opportunity to work unencumbered by formal teaching duties and the financial pressures so often experienced by artists. He had been well aware of the enviable quality of security inherent in Curry's situation at Madison, and he sought a chance to experiment and to follow his impulses. The subsequent



Bohrod working in the studio built on campus for Curry

richness of his art in the variety of media in which he has worked justifies his anticipation of that freedom in security. The artist-in-residence position afforded arts outreach to the population of a region and the opportunity for artists to develop professionally.

If his friends at the time did not understand why the move to Madison was a logical step in Bohrod's career, it is far easier to discern why Bohrod was a logical choice for the position. The committee that conducted the lengthy and meticulous search for the new artist-in-residence sought an artist of national reputation, young, and devoted to the study of life in America. An experimenter or a modernist, they had clearly stated, would not be an appropriate choice. In Aaron Bohrod they found an artist committed to the study of the American scene, as well as someone sympathetic to life in small towns and rural areas.

After his accepting the position at Madison, he did not eschew this commitment to depicting life around him. In his early years at Madison he focused on the Wisconsin countryside with its char-

acteristic barns, silos, and rolling hills. In 1954, he moved from painting landscapes and people in these landscapes to the still life which would bring him international acclaim and recognition. But this new mode should not be perceived as a departure from the spirit of his earlier work. It was simply an ironic commentary on people's lives, the environments they create, and the objects with which they identify; it was—as it continues to be today—a way of putting in sharper focus some of the components and qualities of this country's complex culture.

As artist-in-residence, Bohrod found his life busy and the demands on his time many and extremely varied. He maintained a studio on campus and gave support to the rural arts program, primarily through his work with individuals upon their request. Bohrod judged both the state rural art show and various regional exhibitions and conducted gallery tours in which he critiqued the works on display at these events; he was considered an excellent and effective public speaker. In all of this, he was diplomatic and witty, with his special brand of humor serving as the hallmark of his work. Through his open studio he was extremely effective in reaching people. Individuals as well as groups of all ages visited him there; his door was always open. Occasionally, he was joined in drawing sessions by artists wishing to work closely with him. He did not treat the process of creating a work of art as a mysterious one and endeavored to make it comprehensible to people through discussions, demonstrations, and films.

As a student, Bohrod studied for two years at the Art Students League in New York City with, among others, the noted American artist John Sloan. It is frequently noted that Sloan was a major influence in the development of Bohrod's personal style and his direction as a social realist painter. But Sloan also influenced the way Bohrod related to those with whom he came in contact as artist-in-residence. As a teacher, Bohrod remembers, Sloan



Bohrod collaborated with ceramic artist Carlton Ball in the early fifties

Bohrod visits Lodi rural artist Andrew Clark in his barn studio



focused on the strengths and special qualities in the work of his students. In doing so, he was able to make art a satisfying form of personal expression for each individual, whether or not they eventually achieved professional status. Bohrod embraced this approach and through it made his role as artist-in-residence a positive, vital one. He explains that he was opposed to focusing on the marketability of a person's work. He emphasized Dean Chris Christensen's original idea of fostering expression through the arts as a meaningful way to enhance the quality of rural life, rather than of creating a program that would enable individuals to become professional artists.

Some of the flavor of Aaron Bohrod's work as artist-in-residence was captured in a description by Robert Gard, founder of the Wisconsin Idea Theater. In a special meeting, the artists of Grant County had gathered to see a movie that the State Department in Washington had made of their art program; following the movie, Bohrod critiqued the many works of art they had brought with them that day. In a crowded room, the scene unfolded:

A passage opened before Aaron Bohrod as he went to the far end of the room. He was greeted with enthusiastic and friendly calls from every side. The people were not embarrassed. The fact that he was an outstanding American artist made no difference in their attitude toward him. He was one of their group. He believed in them and what they had been doing. He set up an easel and called for the first painting.

An elderly farm woman brought the first one. It was of a barn and cattle and a tree. Bohrod set it on the easel and commented with respect. He called attention to good points and bad, making his criticism always constructive and helpful. Then came a bachelor who had turned a corn bin into a studio; then came a high school girl, a feed store operator, more housewives, and a

school teacher, a country doctor. More and more.

It is difficult to compare the position of artist-in-residence held by Bohrod to that held by Curry, although each artist had a similar commitment to the people of the state, to convey and encourage expression in the arts. There were many changes in the overall program as well as in the climate for art as time went on. By 1948, new facets had been added to the visual arts program and the audience was much expanded. The Wisconsin regional arts program, with its annual exhibition in Madison and its workshops throughout the state, was well established and was beginning to attract participants from urban as well as rural areas. Through such programs as Jim Schwalbach's "Let's Draw" radio series, a generation of school children had been encouraged to incorporate art into their daily lives. The growing popularity of television was beginning to dispel the isolation of people in rural communities. And in the fifties the Wisconsin Rural Artists Association would further encourage people to participate in the arts at the local level.

For Bohrod and others involved in arts outreach at the university, the 1950s began the process of integrating various programs into the University Extension Arts program in 1964. As artist-in-residence, Bohrod was active in this process of integration, but more than simply a participant, Bohrod was an important symbol during this time of unification.

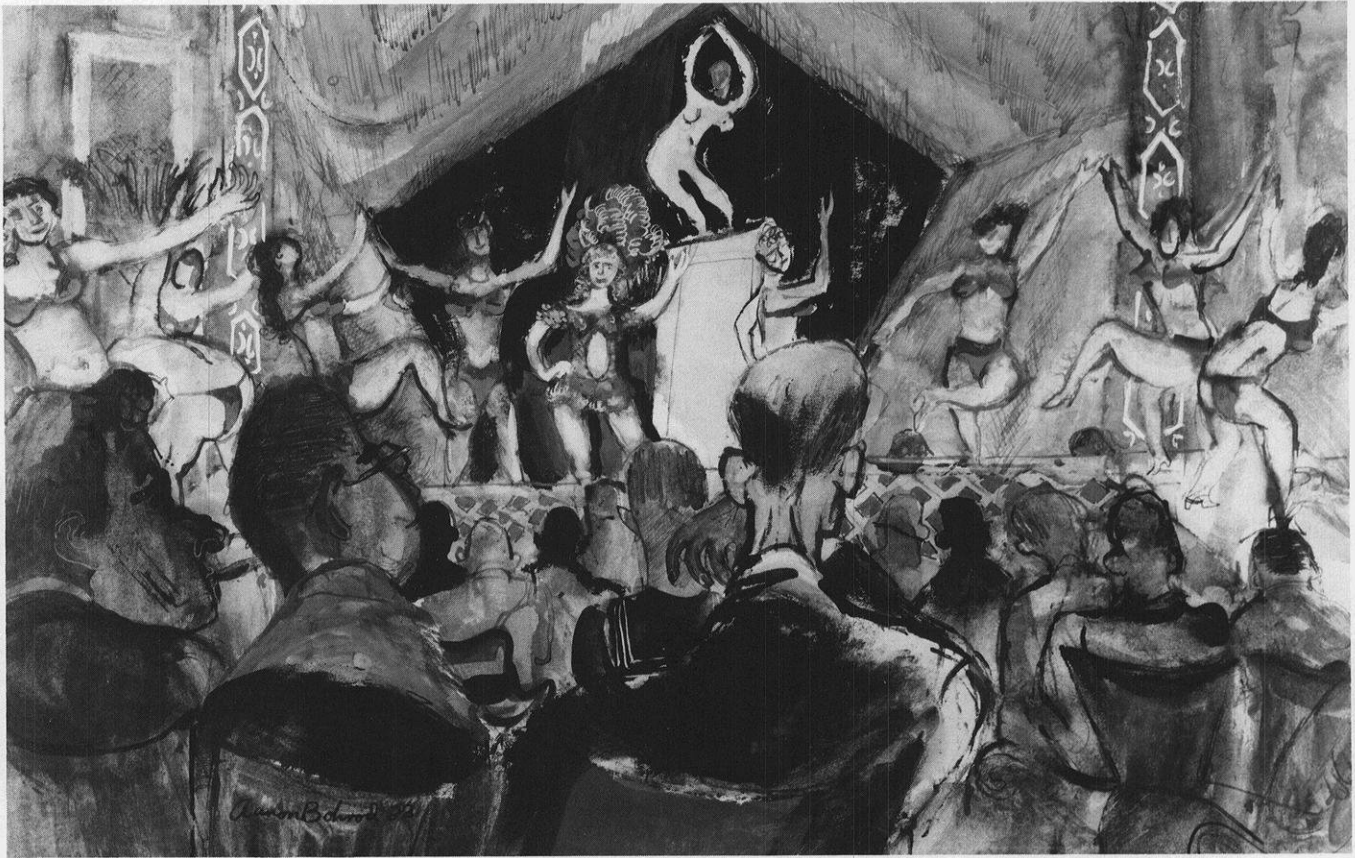
In a typical expression of lively humor, Bohrod used the phrase "there's still life in the old boy" to underscore his dedication to a specific genre as well as his continuing activity as an artist. This phrase takes on significance beyond its reference to the subject matter of his post-1954 paintings when viewed in the context of his life as the University of Wisconsin-Madison's artist-in-residence. Today, as one sees the cards and notes that program participants continue to send,

as one talks with artists who have been involved with the program and learns of visits to Bohrod's studio by classes whose teachers once visited him when they themselves were students, it becomes clear that Bohrod's work with the Wisconsin regional arts program over twenty-five years, his interest in fostering self-expression in the arts, his open studio and involvement with people of all ages, and his contributions to education throughout the state of Wisconsin have enabled him to touch the lives of many people in positive, even profound ways. These lasting contributions stand as a testament to the vision of the founders of the program who foresaw the far-reaching potential inherent in the concept of artist-in-residence. And, further, they stand as testament to Aaron Bohrod himself, who was able to bring this potential to fruition.

At seventy-seven Aaron Bohrod works daily in his studio. His work is shown as part of the Wisconsin Union/State Historical Society exhibit, "The Art of Rural Wisconsin, 1936-60. He has a show at the River Edge Gallery in Mishicot in July 1985. In February this year he had a solo show in New York City at the Sid Deutsch Gallery. In the summer of 1984 the Charles Allis Art Museum in Milwaukee exhibited recent works with a sampling from the thirties. In April and May of 1982 the Milwaukee Art Museum showed Curry, Bohrod, and John Wilde: "Leaders in Wisconsin Art, 1936-1981." The Madison Art Center offered a major display of Bohrod works for its grand opening in the Madison Civic Center in 1980.

*Two books by Aaron Bohrod on his work may be of interest. A **Decade of Still Life** was published by the University of Wisconsin Press in 1966 and illustrated with 254 still-life paintings, including 32 color plates, and 77 examples of early work. (Available from the UW Press, 114 N. Murray St, Madison, 53715 for \$45.00.) The University of Wisconsin Press also published **A Pottery Sketchbook** in 1959, which offers quite a different perspective from the still lifes. □*

Aaron Bohrod Gallery—1930–1980



Burlesque, 1933, gouache, 14" × 20"

Maxwell Street Antiques, 1938, oil



Local Station, ca. 1940, gouache, about 14" × 20"



Rendova Rendezvous, 1943, oil on panel, 16" × 20"



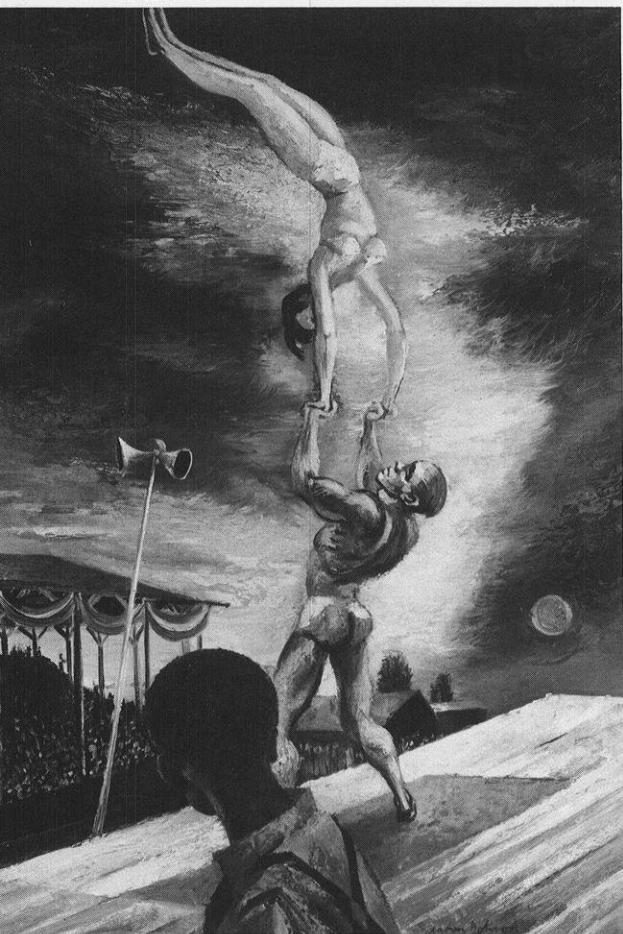
Gypsy Mother and Children, 1947, oil

Paris Book Shop, 1946, oil, 16" × 20"



Old Windmill, 1949, oil



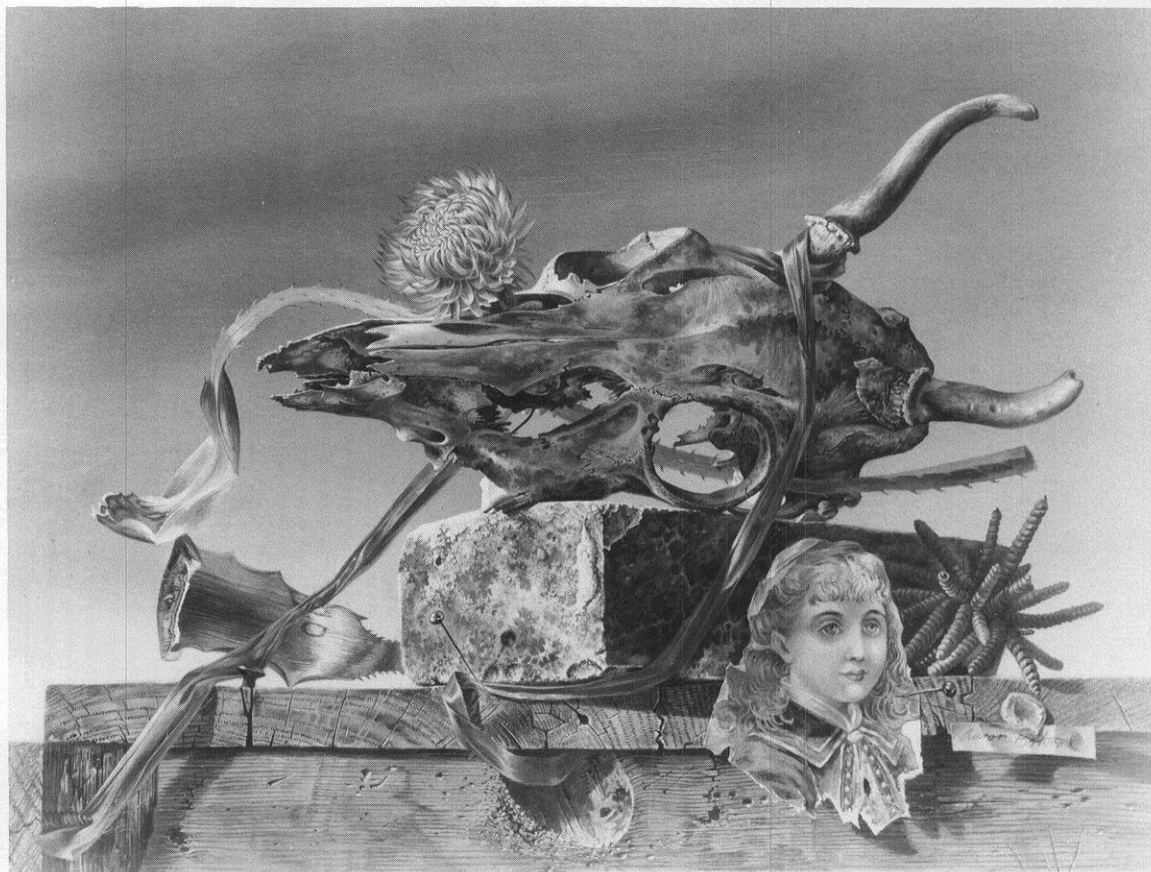


County Fair, 1950, oil



Rocks, Lake Superior, 1953, oil, about 14'' × 18''

The Golden West, 1957, oil, 12'' × 16''





The Stuff of Life

By Arthur Hove

We enter this life with nothing, and we take nothing with us when we leave. Some of us accumulate a lot of stuff in between, however.

There is a fancy word for it, detritus—the debris that gathers in various places—but most people simply call it stuff. Those who collect or accumulate stuff are very possessive about it. Stuff is not just anything; it is something with purpose. It is often sacred to the person who owns it.

Compulsive people are usually uncomfortable about stuff. They throw it out before it ever gets a chance to gather. The sight of it usually makes them nervous. Stuff is seldom tidy. If you take a look at the amazing range of stuff, you can understand why.

Stuff can be categorized. There is the stuff which has been temporarily discarded rather than deliberately thrown away because it is presumed to have some ultimate value. It tends to accumulate in desks or

bureau drawers, closets, basements, garages, backyards, or behind out-buildings on farms. It can be transformed from its inert state into a useful element should the proper occasion arise. While no immediate use is anticipated for such stuff, it is considered important to have around, just in case.

It also is important to understand that, in spite of what most dictionaries say, genuine stuff is not junk. Junk, like pornography, has no redeeming social value, or anticipated use. Stuff on the other hand has just been temporarily set aside. The fact that its specific use may not occur for twenty years or more in the future is of no particular concern so long as the stuff is there when needed. Realizing that is reassuring. The stuff stashed behind the garage becomes a security blanket of sorts.

Another kind of stuff also accumulates with frightening regularity, the stuff needed to perform specific tasks at appropriate moments—like snow shovels, chain saws, seam rip-

pers, shoe horns, plungers, Q-tips, meat grinders, ladders.

And then there is the stuff we find essential to get us through the day, personal stuff that becomes an extension of our mind and body: wallets, purses and their contents, eyeglasses, keys, writing instruments, jewelry. This stuff becomes a conspicuous part of our identity. It is a part of our life style. It is essential to assist us in doing things. Emilie Tari, writing about Old World Wisconsin in the *Academy Review* last year, made this related observation: "We know the relative value and significance of our stuff, and we can walk into the homes of total strangers and assess pretty accurately their social standing, economic level, working habits. Those are the rough, pigeon-holing judgments which help place ourselves and them in the proper social roles."

Not everyone carries the same stuff with them. As children go off to school, their backpacks are crammed with the stuff they need to absorb the education that will be

thrust at them. Athletes often carry around bags filled with the stuff they need to practice their particular physical skills. Tradespeople are similarly equipped with the tools of their craft—items collected in special holders or pouches, or found littering the back deck of station wagons, or kept in boxes and bins in a special truck or van.

The magazine *Vanity Fair*, in an article on art museum shops, noted the proliferation of “Tut stuff” for sale in conjunction with the “Treasures of Tutankhamen” art exhibition shown in this country from 1976 to 1979. Beyond Tut, we find that stuff often reflects the ambiguities, incongruities, and uncertainties of life. It accumulates in relation to the tasks to be performed. Farm yards are filled with farm stuff. Construction sites become the temporary gathering places for the stuff needed to put buildings together. Desk drawers become the place where office-related stuff accumulates.

In the fall of 1983, a story in *Time* magazine pointed out how stuff can be useful and profitable. Ed Grothus, *Time* reported, is the proprietor of “junkyard of high-tech effluvia. . . 7,500 ft. above sea level, occupying three acres of the Pajarito Plateau in northern New Mexico” near Los Alamos Proving Grounds. “Nobody on earth has as much stuff as I do,” boasted Ed, who has been in the salvage business for twenty-five years.

Stuff has a way of increasing in volume without our being conscious of it. Bit by bit it is acquired or set aside so that the stuff begins to assume an independent identity. Such a conglomeration is seldom symmetrical. Those collections out behind the barn or garage are not arranged in orderly piles. In fact, it is often difficult to find the precise stuff you’re looking for at a crucial moment.

Only in the homes of the most compulsive are there no corners, nooks, or crannies that harbor collections of stuff waiting its proper disposition.

Waste not want not.

Stuff is not only a noun, it also has significance as a verb. Attics, closets, and dresser drawers are often stuffed with random items we intend to do something about, eventually. Ill-mannered or voraciously hungry people can be seen stuffing their faces. Those who are annoyed or defiant will often tell others to go “stuff it.” Many a promising political career has been launched through the simple process of stuffing envelopes with campaign literature.

Stuffing is a common culinary technique. Thanksgiving dinner would not seem the same without a proper serving of turkey stuffing. Other foods regularly stuffed include tomatoes, pork chops, olives, anchovies, cabbages, and artichokes. If you eat too much, you wind up being stuffed yourself.

As basketball players have grown taller and gained a greater propensity for soaring through the air, stuff as a verb has taken on a new meaning. The stuff shot is an essential maneuver for any player who wants to impress the fans at the same time he is scoring points. There are fewer and fewer graceful arcs of the ball through the air in the form of hook shots or jump shots. The stuff has taken their place. This maneuver involves a player leaping high enough so that hands and ball are above the basket rim. The move is often accompanied by a midair arabesque as the player glides toward the basket. The ball does not fall gracefully into the net as it passes through the hoop, but is propelled with a powerful downward thrust. This makes the cords of the net involuntarily gulp as they expand like the esophagus of someone who has swallowed something unexpectedly large.

As the art of stuffing has evolved, so has the language. The stuff shot has given way to the Alley-Oop, the slam dunk, and the jam. The names may be different, but it’s still stuffing. In fact, syndicated *Chicago Tribune* columnist Bob Green recently asked his readers to help him “out with one of life’s cosmic questions: ‘Why are Americans fascinated with the slam dunk—that brutal, powerful basketball shot that has emerged as the public’s favorite part of the sport?’” The headline to his column which contained the response was “Slam-dunks: Stuff dreams are made of.” A little cribbing from Shakespeare’s *The Tempest*, but you get the idea.

Comedians have a field day with stuff. George Carlin does a routine about the subject, pointing out, as he does that “Everybody’s gotta have a little place to put their stuff.” You can have a lot of stuff, or discipline yourself and collect only as much as you can conveniently carry around with you. Of course, the more you collect, the more space you need. Then, as Carlin points out, “A house is just a cover to pile on top of your stuff.”

In its idiomatic sense the truth is referred to as the straight stuff. Excellence is called good stuff, a category which embraces everything from food to cocaine or heroin. And, as chronicled in Tom Wolfe’s account of the selection and training of the original Mercury astronauts, those who possess courage and extreme physical and mental toughness have the right stuff.

Now we are getting into the metaphysical dimension of stuff. Here things become less specific. “Everything is made of one hidden stuff,” says Ralph Waldo Emerson.

One could conclude from this that stuff, not bread, is the staff of life. □



Lookback Portage, Buckingham Lake, 1985, oil on canvas, 66" × 72".

Courtesy of Frumkin & Struve Gallery, Chicago.

By Warrington Colescott

Galleria: Tom Uttech

The door opens, you cross a threshold, and leave the Milwaukee neighborhood of aging frame houses. You are in the North country; you are in the home of Tom Uttech. The lean, affable man leads you through the foyer (watched by antlered heads), down a dim paneled hall (the keel of a long canoe hanging from the ceiling grazes your hair), up the stairway (a ruffed grouse in display, red squirrel in mid-leap,

pelt of lynx, dried cluster of *polyporus sulphureus*), and into the studio (stream-sculpted granite stones heaped in a corner, small savage-toothed skulls, primeval beer cans, and paintings.)

It is a large room, low ceilinged, and Tom is faintly apologetic about the light, as if he realizes it would be inadequate for someone else. The small finished oils on the wall make his case, for they are luminous, lighted in strange ways, showing re-

flections from dark waters, shimmering backlit forests, lush bogs of tamarack and black spruce, alder swamps flickering with woodcock. It is the fantastic landscape of Wisconsin North.

Tom Uttech was born in Merrill in 1942 and grew up as an intimate of his home region, living an outdoor life of camping, hunting, and fishing in the wilderness of lake chains and flowage that begins where the cleared land ends. Today

Photograph by Marylu Raushenbush

he rarely hunts or fishes, although he has a home on Lake Tomahawk and spends time in the Canadian back country. He is aware that the attraction for him is not sport, but the experiencing of a visual bounty, a maximum reading of countless, unique life-cycles, in myriad variations, moving and adapting to drastic seasonal alterations. "I love the North," he says simply.

His early inclinations toward art matured and brought him to Milwaukee in 1961 to study at the Layton School of Art. After receiving his BFA he went on to graduate work in art at the University of Cincinnati. There was a brief teaching assignment and then in 1968 an opportunity to join the art faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee. Uttech is now an associate professor, teaching painting, drawing, and photography.

His work in photography is notable and in many ways is a parallel career to his painting. The subject matter is the same, organized by the same eye and sensibility. Uttech believes in keeping the two media separate. His photographs are never background studies or preliminaries for his painting. They are an end product in themselves. The paintings are commenced directly with line drawing on the canvas, without even a preparatory sketch, then fleshed out and finished in oil paint. His work in both media has been widely exhibited: paintings at the Whitney Museum in New York, the Milwaukee Art Museum, the Art Institute of Chicago, the Museum of South Texas, to name a few; and photographs at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, the Milwaukee Art Museum, the Arkansas Art Center, and in magazines published by the Audubon society and the Sierra club.

It is in painting that this talented artist communicates with the greatest intensity, however, for his obsessive subject comes alive with skillful brushwork, building tactile fields of opaque or translucent pigment, creating a glow of light out of dark, and darkness contrasted



against light. With a calculated sensuality he draws you into his theater of landscape. Several years ago that theater contained actresses, symbolic female totems, apparitions that shared human and bestial characteristics. Eventually Uttech felt they became a device, and now they are gone and the landscape remains.

When asked about his artistic roots, Uttech remarked: "I feel a kinship with the artists of northern Europe, with all of them." Remove the frontal humanity of northern

Europe's painting tradition and one makes the connection. The shrouded backgrounds come into focus as Tom Uttech fills in his design. Where are the forest gods, where are the woodland nymphs, the ritual hermaphrodites, the trolls and satyrs boiling magic amanitas? They are all there if you look close enough, just under the mirrored water, behind the bright fronds glowing out of the shadows, within the obscuring mantle of forest growth, disguised and caught in Uttech's visionary and chilling world. □



BOOK MARKS/WISCONSIN

THE PATHLESS WAY: JOHN MUIR AND THE AMERICAN WILDERNESS by Michael P. Cohen. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984. 408 pp. \$25.

By Dennis Ribbens

Michael Cohen is incredibly well informed about John Muir. *The Pathless Way* provides ample evidence of the scope of Cohen's reading, of the long and careful attention he has given to Muir's thinking, of the whole question of man-land relationships, and of the Muir-inspired life experiences over several decades Cohen himself acquired in the Sierras. I know of no more thorough analysis of the life and thought of John Muir than this work, nor do I know of any more subjective. The considerable virtue and the occasional danger of this work derive from its character as a disciple's account of his master.

It is essential for a reader of this book to reckon with the author's initial warning: "This book about Muir is also a book about my own thinking." Although the focus of the work is on what Cohen calls "Muir's spiritual journey" and specifically on the developing Muir ethic regarding the right relation between man and land, his treatment is biased and close. Cohen's thinking is driven more by his own personal response to nature and to Muir's ideas about nature than it is by a desire to provide an objective analysis of the Muir text. Cohen, an English teacher at Southern Utah State College, acknowledges the need he

felt in the writing of this book for the complementary and competing influences of nature itself and those books which address the place of man in nature. The epilogue which describes the vast experience that Cohen has in the Sierra setting where so much of Muir's thinking developed might better be used as a prologue. Clearly, Cohen himself is equally committed to what he considers Muir's most important contribution, articulating "how important it was for men to live in and through a loving relationship to nature."

For those with a serious interest in John Muir, this book provides a rich and careful though hardly disinterested analysis of Muir's thought and craft, of his ethics and aesthetics. By focusing primarily on the texts rather than on the events of Muir's life, Cohen probes deeply in his attempt to understand both the texture and the development of Muir's environmental thinking. Cohen's sources include not only Muir's published texts, but also his notebooks, drafts, and letters. Additionally, Cohen introduces into his analysis contemporary intellectual currents associated with people like Darwin, George Perkins Marsh, and Gifford Pinchot. Following the chronological order of the Muir texts, Cohen tried to uncover what lay at the heart of Muir's thinking about the place of wilderness in this country. "The truly pathless way is a spiritual journey and an un-mapped landscape." Wilderness came to be for Muir a means of personal salvation—physical, spiritual, and emotional. Cohen traces Muir's growing lifelong desire to

implement that discovery not just for his own personal benefit, but for the benefit of others as well through popular and political activity.

But frequently it is hard to distinguish Muir's voice from Cohen's. In spite of Cohen's thorough and impressive analysis of Muir, at times one can only with difficulty separate what is verifiable from what is speculation. Placing the footnotes at the end of the book, summarized by text paragraphs, further makes it difficult for the reader to follow some of the arguments. A bias to note is Cohen's tendency to parallel Muir's thinking with Zen thought while minimizing the Christian influence of the first thirty years of his life. At one point Cohen compares Muir's deferential political style with a passage from Tao Te Ching rather than with its much more likely New Testament source.

No serious reading of Muir's works, no investigation of Muir's contribution to this country's environmental thinking can afford to ignore Cohen's work.

JOHN MUIR SUMMERING IN THE SIERRA edited by Robert Engberg. Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1984. 160 pp. Softbound \$12.95

By Dennis Ribbens

This work which collects the articles written by John Muir for the San Francisco Daily *Evening-Bulletin* in the years 1874-1875 should not be confused with Muir's late life recall, *My First Summer in the*

Sierra. Indeed, the two writings are as different as they are far apart in Muir's life. The fifteen "letters" or unrevised articles commissioned for publication in the *Evening-Bulletin* contain the early, exuberant, spontaneous Muir who was only just beginning to come to terms with his place within the Sierra. These fifteen articles, not readily available since their original publication, contain that wonderful Muir mix of scientific savvy and spiritual joy which has had so much influence during the past two decades on the rebirth of environmental thinking. Once again the University of Wisconsin Press is to be thanked for making these articles commonly available.

These articles comprise some of Muir's earliest efforts to articulate for the general public the value of wilderness. Taken together, they provide more evidence for Muir's developing wilderness ethic. By 1874 the Sierra recluse had consciously become the spokesmen for the wilderness. Written from the field along loose narrative lines, the articles recount Muir's experiences in several California settings: from Mount Shasta to the Tule Lake lava beds, from King's Canyon and Mount Whitney to the Yosemite Valley, from the foothill meadows to the sequoia groves. The tone of the articles ranges from travel guide to geological exposition to unrestrained ecstasy. As is always true with the younger Muir, the language is fresh and immediate. Snow falling over Mount Shasta is described as "weaving and felting its lavish cross of snow crystals . . . every mountain and valley seemed exhilarated with their magnificent storm-bath." But the essays also contain teaching and invitation. Muir teaches the need to love a waterfall not just for its picturesque value. He introduces readers to the destructive impact of man on the wilderness environment, to the dangers of logging, burning, pasturing, and building. He also invites his readers to come to the wilderness to learn and be renewed. "There is no daylight in towns, and the weary public ought to know that

there is light here, and I for one clear my skirts from the responsibility of silence by shouting a cordial *come*. . . . Come all who need rest and light, bending and breaking with over work . . . take a baptism and a honey-bath and get some sweetness into your lives."

These delightful articles are helpfully accompanied by an introduction and notes written by the editor Robert Engberg, a California junior high school teacher. His earlier contribution to an understanding of John Muir's early California years appeared in the title he co-edited, *John Muir to Yosemite and Beyond: Writings from the Years 1863-1875*. Both of these works deserve a place on any Muir bookshelf.

Dennis Ribbens is librarian at Lawrence University.

BIRDING WITH A PURPOSE: OF RAPTORS, GABBOONS AND OTHER CREATURES by Frances Hamerstrom. Ames: Iowa State Press, 1984. 130 pp. \$13.95.

By Wendel J. Johnson

This is one of those books you enjoy putting down, but only because you know at a future time you will want to return to it. For us armchair "gabboons" (apprentices) these experiences of the first lady of Wisconsin birding are a delight to share. Dr. Frances Hamerstrom or "Fran" as Dr. Joseph Hickey who wrote the foreword, knowingly refers to her, takes the reader through numerous episodes both at her Plainfield "aviary" and in such distant places as the Northwest Territories of Canada. A careful reading of the biographical sketch in the foreword will set the stage for greater understanding and appreciation of this volume.

The book takes the form of thirty-two glimpses during the golden era of wildlife biology at a time when there began to be a general awakening to the need for more information and a better understanding

about our fellow inhabitants of the biosphere. People mentioned as colleagues, such as Aldo Leopold and Konrad Lorenz, are indicative of the intensity and dedication of the Hamerstrom operation centered in northwestern Waushara County. One would wish that all young scientists could cohabit an old farmhouse with such mentors.

Much of what is valuable here is almost found between the lines or left partially unsaid; for example, the parenthetical reflection that their voluntary effort "is the kind of thing that the federal government pays people to do nowadays." Certainly, the virtues of humility and singleness of purpose are brought out by the humorous gabboons portrayed in the banding program called "Operation Snowy Owl" and the "Rockford [Illinois] Bunch" in their eagle-trapping endeavors. A sense of adventure is quickly picked up by the reader in each vignette, and this enthusiasm is contagious for the subject and the country. Dr. Hamerstrom's contributions to ornithology are also noteworthy because of her gender; birders alone are often considered unusual, but a female, at a Pow Wow no less! Her episode in a "peach" tree in the woods of Pennsylvania made firm believers of some biologists of the right of women to the field of wildlife biology.

For the uninitiated, or those who have never known the passionate intensity naturalists can generate for their subjects, this book may seem bizarre: the road-kill cafeteria available to traveling biologists revealed in "One yellow-bellied porcupine"; or the bait-bird catching at night in barns with and without permission of farmers, a humorous adventure entitled "Have you seen a little girl?" To insiders who know the Hamerstoms, this volume will be a treasure of shared times with these unique people from the land of prairie chickens. Young readers coming along (or their parents) should not assume the characters portrayed herein are necessarily the only role models for serious ornithologists. But there is no question

that out of the Hamerstrom hack-site have come many fine ecologists and naturalists.

For the practicing avian field biologist, Hamerstrom's description of the development of the bal-chatri (a unique baited live-trap) will be of interest, as will various handling and baiting techniques. Save your ten-ounce cans for kestrels is a quick summary of the quest for research equipment in the remembrance entitled "I'll eat whatever's in it." For psychologists, the sky is the limit! And for other Academy members, Hamerstrom's book provides another reason to be proud of our state, its people and its institutions (UW-Madison and the old Wisconsin Conservation Department) which directly or indirectly supported some of the activities (antics) described.

There are few critical things to say about this volume once one realizes what it is and what it isn't. Essentially, it is a series of recollections often all too brief for readers. Occasionally, we are left with an unanswered question (What are fault bars on a snowy owl?) or the resolution of a project (Whatever did become of the eagle trapping effort by the dam?). A summation of the data obtained and the next step, its use, might have increased the understanding of those readers who are unfamiliar with the processes of evaluating wildlife populations. The revelations of chickadee banding in "A bird in the hand" evolved through gold bands (from recycled necklaces), glued on colorful feathers to actual bird bands from the Biological Survey. Hamerstrom completed this story and gave results—a better understanding of dominance patterns and chickadees' biting behavior.

A concise glossary would have been a useful tool for nonspecialist readers, and indexes are always helpful. The book has the typically pleasing presentation of Iowa State University publications; and its simple sketches and photographs aid in the portrayal of situations and conditions.

Frances Hamerstrom has written five other books that have chroni-

cled her life as and with a wildlife biologist. Throughout this one, the reader realizes the freedom the author had to pursue her interests, i.e. dropping everything to trap hawk owls in Ontario. The joys of a supportive spouse! Periodically, it unfolds however, that birds although close, are still second to the other Dr. Hamerstrom to Fran. We are left with the refreshing awareness of a couple of biologists who are in touch with nature and themselves. Most of us could only hope for some of these experiences and opportunities, but through her book we can all be gabboons.

Wendel J. Johnson, associate professor of biology at UW Center-Marinette, is a vertebrate ecologist.

DAYLIGHT IN THE SWAMP!

by Robert W. Wells. Madison: Northword, 1984. 240 pp. \$11.95.

By Robert Hillebrand

The heyday of lumbering in the Great Lakes states of Wisconsin, Michigan, and Minnesota, when the towering pines that blocked out the stars were rapidly harvested lasted only from 1850 to the turn of the century. During that period the loggers accomplished what seemed even to them the impossible; they staked out, brought down, and dispatched the enormous Midwest pinneries, providing lumber to house the citizens of a new nation and leaving behind great stretches of ravaged acreage. Human greed and wishful thinking, the exploitation of human and natural resources, and the false belief that what was so immense could never end were hallmarks of this time of use and misuse.

In *Daylight in the Swamp!* Robert W. Wells, recently retired book editor of *The Milwaukee Journal*, deals out pictures of the era from two tall stacks that he accumulated during ten years of planning, research, and interviews that preceded the writing of the book. From one hand come the facts, the sta-

tistics, the major events that constitute a formal history; from the other come anecdotes, folklore, and tall tales gleaned from conversations and written recollections of men who were there when "Daylight in the swamp!" was still being shouted through bunkhouse doors in the dark of northwoods winter mornings.

The cry, which often came as early as three or four in the morning, was the signal to the shanty boys, as the lumberjacks were first called, to march out to the cuttings and begin a workday that lasted until dark. Trees were cut in the winter, when the logs could be moved more easily on sleds; and stretches of subzero weather were frequent, but competition was so fierce that there were no letups. When spring arrived, rivers were used to transport the cut logs to the sawmills which operated throughout the summer or until the supply of logs ran out. For the sawyers and the skidders a dollar a day, less what they spent in the company store, three hearty but dull meals, and Sundays off were what the work season offered. That and the adventure and the occasional carouse and the tales they'd have to tell when the season was over.

In assembling his materials Wells has taken a risk or two. He might have written two separate volumes, one a formal history, the other an oral history; or he might have concentrated on one or the other, giving us a formal history occasionally lightened by anecdote or an anecdotal history with the formal elements used more sparingly as background. What he has chosen to do is to alternate between the two, and there are moments when the change in focus from the broadly historical to the anecdotal jars. When, for instance, he summarizes the great Peshtigo fire (which he chronicled in detail in a fine book, *Fire at Peshtigo*) in two pages, he devotes half a page to the story of a man terribly disappointed at the loss of a red petticoat he treasured as a souvenir. The juxtaposition of this mildly amusing incident against the events of the deadliest forest fire in the

United States' history throws the narrative momentarily out of balance.

Similarly, there are occasional anecdotes about death or prostitution that are narrated in an inappropriately arch manner. After describing in detail the negotiations between a lumber boss, who'd decided his men deserved "a treat," and a camp-following prostitute, who offered to take on all forty of them for eighteen dollars, Wells tells us: "The deal was, you might say, consummated there in the woods."

Funny things have certainly happened in whorehouses and taverns, and Wells frequently entertains the reader with such tales, but the actual business of body-selling is never anything but sad. The truth is not to be avoided, but the manner in which it is told is more than a matter of taste.

The second to the last chapter is announced by its title ("Some Colorful Characters") as a catch-all. Some of the least lively of the lumberjack yarns are bagged together there, apparently because they didn't fit in anywhere else. One of the most vivid sections of the book occurs in an early chapter, when Wells turns the narration over to Osborn Strahl, an Ohioan who had taken part in the beginnings of Wisconsin logging and who, as an old man, wrote down his reminiscences. Strahl was a natural writer, and the immediacy of his words brilliantly transmits a sense of the time and the places he describes. Wells occasionally reverts to this device of letting his sources speak for themselves, but too briefly and too infrequently.

Still the book works, and anyone traveling in the Midwest after reading *Daylight in the Swamp!* will find the sightseeing enormously enriched. In his "Rivers of Pine" chapter the author describes the sounds and sights and excitement of the spring log drives and notes that Mosinee's Little Bull Falls deserved its reputation as the most hazardous passage on the Wisconsin River.

Little Bull Falls consisted of a

sixteen-foot ledge over which the Wisconsin plunged, then a narrow gorge a quarter mile long. Above the gorge was a huge rock, partly above the water. Below the gorge was a submerged rock, which sent the current swirling in unpredictable patterns. And beyond that rock was what was called a bottomless eddy, a maelstrom that could keep its grip on a massive timber for several days or rip apart a crib of lumber.

That kind of writing seems to me exactly right. It makes you see what you might otherwise have missed, another time, a different place. I lived for three years in Mosinee and missed a lot. As soon as I can, I'm heading back for a fresh look at Little Bull Falls and the gorge. That's what a good patch of writing can do for you, and *Daylight in the Swamp!* has its share. It's on the shelves in most Wisconsin bookstores or available from the publisher for \$13.50.

An Oconomowoc novelist and poet, Robert Hillebrand teaches freshman composition at WCTI, where he wrote the text for the course "The Tip of the Iceberg."

ERNEST HEMINGWAY ON WRITING edited by Larry W. Phillips. New York: Scribner's, 1984. 140 pp. \$12.95.

By Peter A. Fritzell

In this little book from Hemingway's publisher, Monroe, Wisconsin's Larry Phillips—writer, journalist, and devotee of Hemingway—has collected and loosely classified what might be called the sayings of Papa on the subject of writing, very broadly defined. The selections range from one-sentence morsels to page-long ramblings—from plain pronouncements to pompous reactions—from pithy reflections to insightful ponderings—all in ways that reflect the several selves, private and public, of Ernest Hemingway.

Each selection is extracted or ex-

cerpted from Hemingway's "works"—from stories and book-length nonfiction; from books or essays about Hemingway by others (from Mary Hemingway's *How It Was*, for example, or Malcolm Cowley's "A Portrait of Papa"); from interviews (George Plimpton's in *The Paris Review*, for example); from Hemingway's journalistic prose; from letters, personal and impersonal, to friends, family members, publishers, and scholars; from one unpublished manuscript; and even from a previously published telegram. Each of these excerpts Phillips has classified, in turn, under one of thirteen headings that make up the "chapters" of the book—chapters that range from "What Writing Is and Does" through "What to Write About" and "Advice to Writers" to the likes of "Obscenity," "Titles," "Other Writers," "Politics," and "The Writer's Life."

Within each of these topical "chapters," Hemingway's thoughts and jottings on writing, writers, and related matters are organized in what is, at best, a rambling, apparently thematic, fashion. Chapter eight, for example—"Knowing What to Leave Out"—moves from an elaboration of Hemingway's famous iceberg theory of literature and art, an elaboration that appeared in Plimpton's 1958 interview, through two citations from *A Moveable Feast* (1964) and one from *Death in the Afternoon* (1932) to six brief excerpts from personal letters—to Max Perkins (1945 and 1940), Lillian Ross (1948), Charles Scribner, Jr. (1960), Horace Liveright (1925), and Perkins again (1932)—and, finally, to a second paragraph from *Death in the Afternoon* and yet another entry from a 1940 letter to Perkins.

The difficulties and dangers of such an arrangement are, of course, several, especially for the casual or amateur reader. For not only are the excerpts presented in a non-chronological order—thus eliminating the most conventional frame a nonprofessional reader might instinctively construct to relate the several voices, genres, times, places,

and occasions represented—but the presentation as a whole is basically contextless (no notes, no chronology of Hemingway's life and works, and only a most infrequent bit of explanatory information in brackets or parentheses). Excerpts from *The Nick Adams Stories* are presented alongside excerpts from journalistic dispatches and formal nonfiction. Entries from what were originally warm, personal letters are presented side by contextless side with bits of what were coldly personal communications, or even half-ironic manipulations—as if, somehow, all of Hemingway's statements about writing and related matters were of equal value and significance. Original distinctions in tone, mood, and even genre dissipate—as original meaning dissipates—except for the well-versed professional reader, who can readily supply the missing historical, biographical, and textual information needed to discriminate significant statement from insignificant statement, irony from bitterness, or public pose from personal conviction.

Who but a scholarly reader, while thinking about what writers leave out, or about what Hemingway thought writers should leave out, will not be sidetracked by the *second* entry of the same chapter?

I sat in a corner with the afternoon light coming in over my shoulder and wrote in the notebook. The waiter brought me a *café crème* and I drank half of it when it cooled and left it on the table while I wrote. When I stopped writing I did not want to leave the river where I could see the trout in the pool, its surface pushing and swelling smooth against the resistance of the log-driven piles of the bridge. The story was about coming back from the war but there was no mention of the war in it.

A Moveable Feast, p. 76

The professional student of Hemingway will immediately recognize in this entry a narrative remembrance of things past, a written memory of sitting in Paris writing the

story that would become "Big Two-Hearted River." The casual reader, at least two steps removed from "Big Two-Hearted River," may well wonder what the first three sentences of the excerpt have to do with the announced topic of the chapter, "Knowing What to Leave Out,"—may well think that the *café crème* was sipped near the log-driven piles of a bridge over a trout-filled Seine. And well the casual reader may wonder, for a good deal is left out.

This excerpt, like so many others Phillips has extracted from Hemingway's serious nonfiction, is significant *not* because it says anything about leaving things out of one's writing, but because of its dramatization of a human psyche, a human soul writing in Cuba, Idaho, and Spain about sitting in Paris writing, while "being" in upper Michigan, trying not to *be* again in Italy. Indeed, even the final sentence of the excerpt—because of its immediate context—is much less a statement about writing than it is about that state of mind in which we would rather not face those things, including memories, that are otherwise all too present.

To present bits of personal letters or journalistic dispatches as if they are to be read with the same assumptions or expectations one brings to parts of a formal memoir—or, worse, a short story—is to make or encourage fundamental errors in judgment, both about the works and about their author. To present statements from letters to intimate friends in the same indiscriminating format as statements from letters to distantly cool acquaintances, or even adversaries, is to make or encourage similar errors. Unfortunately, Phillips's collections, classifications, and arrangements tend to encourage just such errors, so that one wonders whom this book may best serve.

The well-versed professional, who can readily discriminate among the two hundred and forty-odd excerpts in its one hundred and forty pages, may well find some occasional use for it as a handy source of quotable quotes. It will serve better, however, the completely casual

reader whose conceptions of Hemingway will not be formed or misguided by its potentially misleading arrangements and juxtapositions—the casual reader of Hemingway's own generation, the reader who grew up with Hemingway, or the enthusiastic, youthful, neophytic writer whose primary interest is to read or learn about writers and writing in general.

Peter A. Fritzell, professor of English and American literature at Lawrence University, is a published critic and historian of American literature.

FOR THE GOOD OF OTHERS: THE LIFE AND TIMES OF FREDERICK LAYTON by May Murphy Thibaudeau. River Falls: University of Wisconsin-River Falls Press, 1984. 115 pp.

By Helen Ouimette

Who was Frederick Layton? If you are an art lover, you know that he was the founder of the Layton Art Gallery in Milwaukee in 1888.

May Murphy Thibaudeau, a retired teacher who has written several books, gives us some insights into his life and what motivated him to become such a generous patron of the arts.

She presents the material in story form, combining history, fact, and fiction. Unfortunately, the result is a hodge-podge. A problem with the fictionalization is the stilted dialogue used to depict the feelings and thoughts of the Laytons and occasionally other people. There is no conflict. Everyone is polite, thoughtful, and concerned with the welfare of others.

The first half of the book—which tells of the arrival in America of seventeen-year-old Frederick and his father, the later arrival of his mother Mary, Frederick's marriage to Elizabeth Hayman, and the subsequent rise of this immigrant family to one of wealth and prominence—tends to be humdrum. The family had some hard times when

they first arrived in America, but nothing to match the struggles of immigrants such as depicted in books like *Ellis Island*.

The book contains interesting sidelights into the social life that Frederick and his wife Elizabeth were a part of, starting with their marriage in 1847. This includes humorous incidents related to their determination not to be thought of as "those wild people from America."

Layton learns, in the spring of 1884 that a group of Chicago businessmen plans to bring well-known German artists to Milwaukee to paint panoramas. Thibaudeau skillfully writes descriptive scenes so that we can visualize the artists painting a panorama titled *The Storming of Missionary Ridge*.

Younger artists worked on uniforms or painted vast stretches of sky. They put guns and batteries where they had been lightly sketched. Some days they painted buttons all day long; Confederate buttons were real copies, others just a bright touch. In a battle with fifteen hundred figures, all in uniform, the canvas seemed covered with buttons.

This was one of the Civil War series which was shown in Milwaukee.

Frederick, at that time, was already working on plans for the Layton Art Gallery. The dream became a reality on April 5, 1888, when the gallery opened. The story continues with the further development of the art gallery, Frederick's continued art travels, and his other philanthropic concerns.

The inclusion of newspaper articles, such as one about an elegant banquet held for Frederick, adds a touch of reality. We see him through the eyes of the public, who read about his activities.

If you like history spiced with imagination, you'll enjoy this story of a Wisconsinite who pioneered in promotion of the arts.

Helen Ouimette is a free lance writer living in Neillsville.

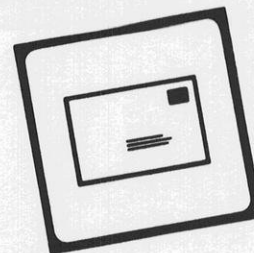
Letters

Comments on the December issue

Dear Ms. White:

I am sorry that you disliked my novel (*The Lost Traveller's Dream*) and sorrier that your dislike is based on ideology and misreading. The details you felt a lack of are there, but you didn't read them: for example, Lindy returns from Amsterdam, not Rotterdam, and Kate does not keep a journal. The ending is not no-ending; it is an affirmation of Aristotle's concept of creation as the *process* of self-knowledge. Such an affirmation is hardly a "cheap trick"; it is instead a kind of courage, the kind of creative courage, whether exercised in art or personal relationships, that is beyond critical ken, as your review once again proves.

Kelly Cherry
UW-Madison



Dear Editor:

I want to let you know how outstanding I think the December *Review* is. It's packed full of useful information that I hope to use to raise issues for discussion with our pre-med students.

Brock Spencer
Beloit College

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