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WISCONSIN ACADEMY REVIEW

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March, 1976
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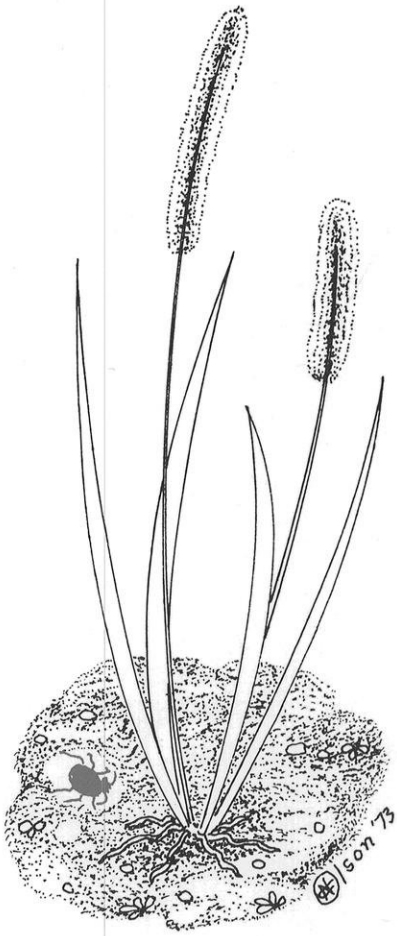
—Annual Report Issue



The first article in this month's Wisconsin Academy Review *is the 1975 Annual Report. It contains a summary of the past year's programs and innovations of the Academy and of the Junior Academy, and the financial statement of the Academy income and expenditures.*

As the youngest member of the Academy staff (in terms of age and period of employment), I look not necessarily upon the past year's accomplishments, but look forward to the possibilities to which this Annual Report points. Eight months ago, my first impressions of the Academy upon employment were: what a beautiful place in which to work; what friendly people make up its staff, but what exactly does the Academy do*? I'm still working on this question: the activities of the Academy are so varied and so much involved in the network of other people's needs and interests. I try to explain to people asking this same question that the Wisconsin Academy is like a "mini-university" in the best sense of the word.*

One year from now, the 1976 Annual Report will be printed in the Academy Review. *I hope that instead of reading in the financial section: "If the Academy is not to jeopardize its future financial stability . . . new and additional income will be required . . . ," I read: "Because of the generous gifts from friends, members, business, foundations, etc., and a marked increase in membership, the Academy has not only been able to maintain its present level of involvement in 1976, but has been able to offer to the membership and to the state-at-large new programs of continuing value."*

—Pat Dorman

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YOUR MEMBERSHIP will encourage research, discussion and publication in the various areas of the sciences, arts and letters for the benefit of all the citizens of Wisconsin.

Academy members receive the annual TRANSACTIONS, the REVIEW, and periodic monographs offering profiles on special subjects; and have the opportunity to participate by submitting articles or papers to these publications and by delivering papers at the Academy meetings.

Member, Educational Press Association of America
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THE WISCONSIN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, ARTS AND LETTERS

The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters was chartered by the State Legislature on March 16, 1870 as an incorporated society serving the people of the State of Wisconsin by encouraging investigation and dissemination of knowledge in the sciences, arts and letters.

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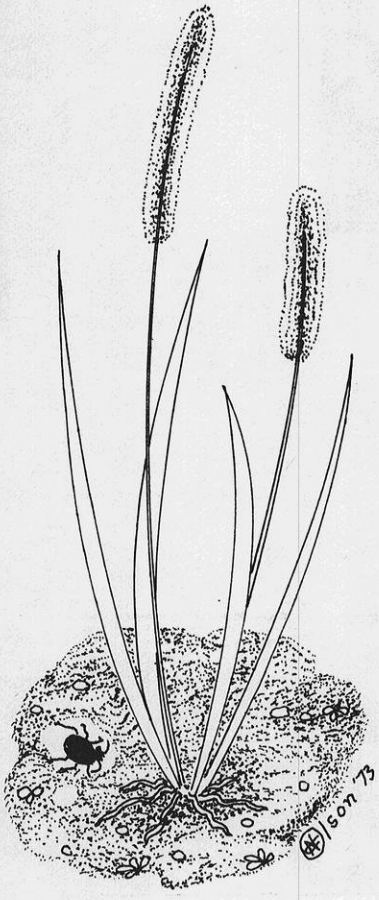
The date of this issue is March, 1976.

WISCONSIN ACADEMY REVIEW

Volume 22, Number 2
March, 1976

Norman C. Olson combines the observant eye of a naturalist with the imaginative eye of the artist in this month's cover drawing. A past president and treasurer of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, Mr. Olson is currently a market research officer.



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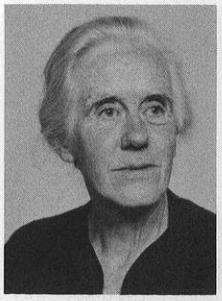

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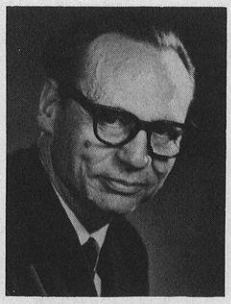

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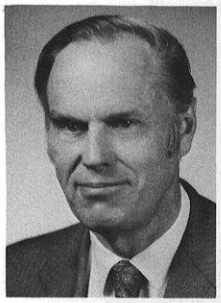

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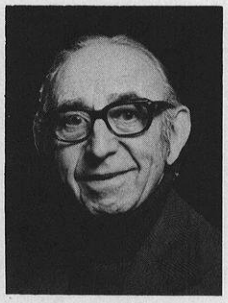

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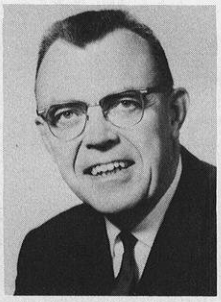

F. Chandler Young

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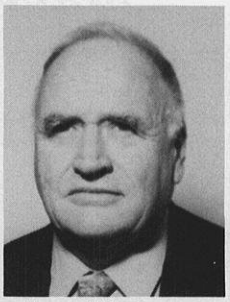
Cyril Kabat



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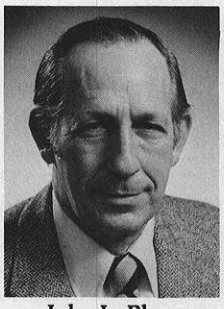

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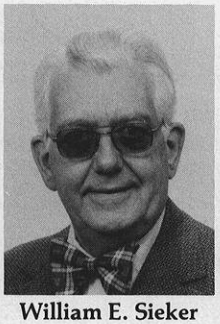

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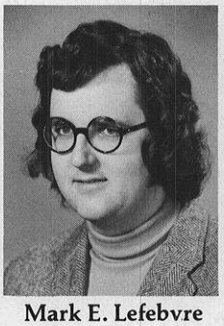

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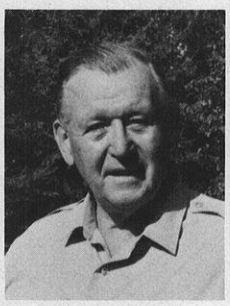

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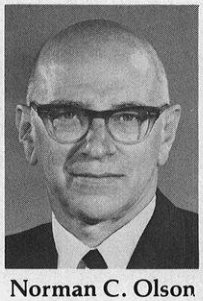
John W. Thomson

Adolph A. Suppan



Norman C. Olson

Louis Busse

Annual Report of The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters to the Governor and Legislature

The year 1975 marked a turning point in the life of the Wisconsin Academy, the result of a change beginning several years ago with receipt of endowment funds, provided in the will of Dr. Harry Steenbock, which permitted establishment of a permanent headquarters and full-time secretariat, and climaxed this past year by a reorganization of the Academy's system of governance. Constitutional changes allowed for a mail ballot election of the governing Council, changed the size and makeup of the Council to a fifteen-member body with fixed terms of office, and incorporated authority granted in the Charter to allow for affiliation of organizations "... having objects embraced by the Academy." These changes in turn have led to modest increases in staff, publication of a new monthly house organ, institution of several new programs, and affiliation of three new kindred organizations.

Administrative Developments

In addition to several lesser changes which included placing the staff under Social Security and making improvements in accounting and budgeting procedures, two administrative advances merit separate mention:

Manual of Administrative Procedures

As a means of informing new officers and staff about the inner workings of the Academy under the new Constitution, the staff has developed a Manual of Administrative Procedures which spells out such matters as nomination procedures, times of meetings, and proper uses of the Steenbock Center, the Academy headquarters. There are sections dealing with membership fees, preparation of meeting agendas, staff responsibilities, election procedures, publications, types of awards, personnel policies, budgeting and other fiscal procedures, and a dozen other aspects of organizational routines that require both structuring and consistency in handling. The Manual is being published in loose-leaf form after nearly a year of informal use.

Job Specifications for Staff

One immediate need revealed by the transformation of the Academy from an elitist society of a few hundred members to a substantial open-membership organization with a permanent home, full-time secretariat and more than 1500 active members, had been that of defining duties and responsibilities of the staff. This process is now underway with the preparation of position specifications for each of the six staff positions now filled.

Academy Programs

Winter Workshop

The Winter Workshop, held at the same time as the winter meeting of the Council, was initiated January 25, 1975 as a device for familiarizing the officers of the Academy, its affiliated organizations and potential affiliates with the new Constitution, old traditions and working procedures of a going organization. As part of the review of its historic purposes and more immediate goals, the Delphi technique (involving a series of inquiries to the membership as a means of reaching consensus) was used and the findings reported at the Workshop. It was agreed that the Academy should:

- Maintain the present basic structure and operations as a foundation;
- Focus directly on Wisconsin people and problems;
- Generate a larger endowment and more sources of income;
- Maintain the highest intellectual quality in programs and publications;
- Capitalize the unique interdisciplinary capabilities of the Academy in its undertakings.

Representatives of thirteen statewide organizations, including four then affiliated with the Academy, were present and shared in the discussions. Three of the nine unrelated organizations have since affiliated during 1975, and two others have voted to affiliate.

Annual Meeting

Faced with financial stringency, the 1975 Annual Meeting of the Academy was a one-day affair April 19, 1975, held on a pay-as-you-go basis at the Waukesha Campus of the University of Wisconsin. The meeting included the usual general sessions, presentation of scholarly papers and a dinner at which the presidential address and Academy awards were presented. Honored at the meeting were Emma Toft, conservationist of

Baileys Harbor, Wisconsin; Harold McCarty, long-time director of state radio station WHA, Madison; and the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation. Walter E. Scott and Fred R. Zimmerman, both retired officials of the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources and long active in the Academy, were presented awards.

Fall Gathering

The 1975 Fall Gathering was a joint meeting with the Iowa and Minnesota Academies of Science at Luther College, Decorah, Iowa, October 3–5, 1975. The site is in the Driftless (unglaciated) Area shared by the three states, this phenomenon providing the basis for programming. Tours were arranged to nearby points of geological, biological and archeological interest with the three-day meeting climaxed by a Norwegian dinner and entertainment indigenous to this center of Norwegian culture in the United States.

Evenings At The Academy

Conceived in 1974 as a series of informal presentations on scholarly topics for Academy members and their guests, the 1975 program of "Evenings" was carried on in Madison and in Milwaukee. The topics of these popular lectures were "Mime: The Silent Language" and "Russia Through the Eyes of a Botanist" in Madison; and "Edible and Poisonous Mushrooms of Wisconsin," "Wild Things That Fly,"—with joint sponsorship of the First Unitarian Church, and "The Cemetery as a Landmark" in Milwaukee. Attendance varied from fifty to 200 people on these occasions.

Critical Issues

In reaffirmation of its Charter obligations first expressed in 1870, the Academy Council has recently sought to identify ways of rendering greater service to the State of Wisconsin. The conclusion was that the Academy should once again address itself to the resolution of broad issues of critical importance to the citizens of Wisconsin in the same manner as it had undertaken studies of the mineral resources of southwestern Wisconsin and of other aspects of the natural history of this state a hundred years ago. This current effort is patterned after the services rendered to the federal government by the National Academy of Sciences. The hope is that the Academy can take a bird's-eye view of an issue as it applies to Wisconsin and interpret the full social and cultural, as well as scientific implications of alternative solutions that may be found.

During the summer a letter requesting recommendations of broad issues for Academy study was addressed to Academy members; legislators; heads of state agencies and of federal agencies having offices in Madison; principal officers of scientific, cultural, labor, farmers and industrial associations; and heads of institutions of higher education throughout the state. Eighty thoughtful responses were received, many of them carefully presented with documentation. From the eighty responses, forty issues of greater or lesser urgency to the people of Wisconsin were identified and three were eventually selected for initial study: *Responsiveness in Government, Highest and Best Use of Land,* and *Energy Production Systems.*

At this writing, the last mentioned issue is being refined in discussions with experts preparatory to the seeking of funds and employment of a task force to undertake the assembling of data. Experience with this first issue will determine how quickly and in what manner the other issues can be attacked.

Poetry Seminars

Responding to the request of poets in the Madison area, the Academy arranged an initial seminar in October with readings from Ted Hughes and Lawrence Ferlinghetti and a presentation of the work of Marianne Moore by Sister Mary Cecilia Carey of Edgewood College. At this seminar, monthly gatherings were arranged for the sharing of poems by participants and for discussions. Several meetings have been held to date with attendance of some fifteen to twenty-five individuals on each occasion.

Prospective Collegiate Academy

Efforts to establish a division of the Academy at the collegiate level began this year with an inquiry from honors students at the UW-Madison College of Letters and Science as to where they might find a forum for the presentation of papers based on their senior honors theses. Conferences of Academy staff with representatives of the students and the College of Letters and Science Dean's office resulted in the planning of three instructional seminars and a Spring Forum for the presentation of papers from which the three best will be presented at the Annual Meeting. The first seminar, October 30, focused on reference sources for research, with generous help from the Memorial Library staff. The second, November 20, was devoted to the ethics of scholarly research and involved three distinguished UW-Madison scientists and a journalist. The third seminar, February 19, 1976, was a practical workshop on the presentation of scholarly papers. The Spring Forum, April 8, 1976, offered critical appraisals of the papers by teams of faculty and advanced graduate students.

Art Exhibits at the Steenbock Center

As a means of encouraging the plastic and graphic arts, a series of month-long exhibits in the lobby of the Steenbock Center was initiated early in 1975. During April an exhibit of weathered wood frames was displayed by John W. Tibbitts using oil paintings, needlework, and dried flower arrangement and other art forms to show off the frames. Academy vice-president for sciences C.L.R. (Lee) Holt displayed his sandcast candles and lamps, many incorporating pieces of driftwood, in late May and June.

In September, Ronald L. Daggett, mechanical

engineer and specialist in bioengineering with plastics, exhibited his watercolors of picturesque structures, many of local historic interest. Marilyn Jordahl's display of creative stitcheries was exhibited during October and was followed by past president Norman C. Olson's "Little Pictures," all original pen-and-ink drawings. The year closed with Eleanor Gard's collages titled, "Insights in Paper and Cloth."

Affiliated Organizations

Academy outreach was reflected in the affiliation of three organizations with kindred interests during 1975; the Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers, The Nature Conservancy, Wisconsin Chapter; and the Wisconsin Regional Writers Association. These three were added to the four earlier affiliates: the Badger Folklore Society (now dormant), the Botanical Club of Wisconsin, the Wisconsin Phenological Society, and the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets. The Academy offers space for organization files and consultative assistance to these affiliates with the expectation of gaining new members of its own from the association.

Financial Status

A summary of the operating income and expenses of the Academy for 1975 (January 1 through December 31) is published below. As indicated, the Academy found it necessary to rely more heavily than it had anticipated on the income from the Steenbock Endowment.

If the Academy is not to jeopardize its future financial stability, it is essential that additional income must be generated through such means as increased membership (and the revenue thereby produced through dues); gifts and grants from members, friends, business, industry, foundations and governmental sources; and through possible further support by the State of Wisconsin.

Despite the fact that the Academy has reduced its base budget in each of the last two fiscal years, it has, through judicious planning and allocation of its resources, actually been able to enhance and expand its programming and publications. It is clear, however, that new and additional income will be required if we are to effectively counter inflationary costs and if we are to accept the exciting new programming challenges and opportunities which await us, now and in future years.

Wisconsin Junior Academy

The Wisconsin Junior Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters (WJA) is the high school programming division of the Academy. It has as its general goal the development of programs which will provide students with experiences they typically would not receive in their high schools. To accomplish this, a variety of programs are conducted throughout the state with the assistance of a network of students, teachers, and administrators. During 1975 the following programs were held:

Spring Festivals

Spring Festivals, the major program activity of the WJA, are designed to provide recognition and encouragement of creative work by high school students. Over 1,200 students representing 24 percent of the Wisconsin public and private high schools participated in the regional one-day Festivals, where they presented their creative efforts in the areas of dance, art, creative writing, science, photography, music, drama, film and multimedia and participated in related workshops. Certificates were given for creative excellence, and the best student photography and creative writing was published and distributed to all state high schools. Festivals were held during March and April of 1975 in Chetek, Stevens Point, Milwaukee, Neenah, LaCrosse, Racine and Madison.

Summer Institutes

The WJA Summer Institutes again proved to be a popular program in 1975, with six held for students in grades 9–12.

The Institutes, each approximately two weeks in length, are designed to expose students to the geology and ecology of areas outside Wisconsin. They have as one of their major goals the development of attitudes and skills, which will enable a participant to live comfortably and confidently in a natural setting without abusing the environment. While generally science-oriented, the range of discussion and travel included such topics as art, history, anthropology and architecture.

Travel by car and canoe took students to areas in Canada, Maine, Montana and Colorado—to provide a mixture of experiences which gives an understanding of the land and its people.

An Institute for teachers was also held in cooperation with the Wisconsin Society of Science Teachers and the UW-Superior. This two-week Institute (Plains and Mountains) was an interpretive field trip for teachers and was centered around on-site observations in traveling to and from the central Rocky mountains. Lectures, readings and seminars supplemented observations and stressed practical classroom application.

WORDWORKS '75

WORDWORKS '75, a one-week creative writing workshop, was held again on the campus of Edgewood College. Guest writers (published poets, novelists, short story writers, journalists and editors) and teachers volunteered their time to provide an opportunity for twenty selected students to grow in their ability to write. *WORDWORKS '75*, a publication of work produced by students while at the workshop, was distributed to schools around the state.

Workshops

In response to requests from teachers, the WJA conducted an aquatic ecology workshop for students and

teachers last fall. Held at Chetek, the one-day workshop provided area students with the opportunity to learn the techniques used in studying an aquatic environment while participating in a "hands-on" study of a lake.

In addition to the above, the WJA also assisted with other programs during 1975.

At the request of Governor Patrick Lucey, the WJA initiated a search for two high school seniors to attend the National Youth Science Camp. Stephen Damiani, Greendale High School, and Dorothy Jung, Wayland Academy, were selected based on their outstanding scholastic achievement, science-oriented accomplishments and leadership ability to attend the three-week summer camp in West Virginia. The WJA has been involved in the selection process since the camp was initiated in 1963.

The WJA worked in cooperation with UW-Platteville for the third year in conducting the tri-state World Affairs Conference. This year the topic was World Population and Food. The WJA also assisted the UW-Madison in its annual Science, Engineering and Humanities Symposium.

OPERATING BUDGET —INCOME—

ACCOUNTS	1975 BUDGET	1975 ACTUAL	1976 BUDGET
DONATIONS	19,000.00	4,476.75	3,000.00
DUES	20,103.00	13,969.50	16,000.00
GRANTS	13,486.25	5,916.14	6,322.00
MEETINGS	180.00	1,222.16	2,200.00
SALES	100.00	637.85	600.00
WISCONSIN JUNIOR ACADEMY	20,020.00	18,076.20	16,920.00
ATLAS OF WISCONSIN	7,114.63	3,898.54	3,221.44
MISCELLANEOUS	1,503.25	1,668.84	5,038.21
SOCIAL SECURITY REFUND	—0—	12,241.46	—0—
OTHER INVESTMENTS	4,930.12	5,088.25	1,100.00
STEENBOCK ENDOWMENT—Interest & Dividends	47,940.50	63,000.00	53,600.00
OTHER REVENUE REQUIRED	—0—	—0—	22,664.50
TOTAL INCOME	**134,377.75**	**130,195.69**	**130,666.15**

OPERATING BUDGET —EXPENSES—

ACCOUNTS	1975 BUDGET	1975 ACTUAL	1976 BUDGET
PERSONNEL EXPENSES Includes: Payroll, Professional Services, Social Security, Travel	61,420.50	67,534.58	65,768.15
OCCUPANCY EXPENSES Includes: Bldg. Maintenance, Bldg. Insurance, Electricity, Gas, Water, Telephone, Snow Removal	5,971.00	5,725.62	6,163.00
OFFICE EXPENSES Includes: Office Equipment, Equipment Maintenance, Office Supplies, Duplicating, Postage, Miscellaneous	5,250.00	5,350.40	5,490.00
PUBLICATIONS AND PRINTING EXPENSES Includes: TRANSACTIONS, Wisconsin Academy Review, Triforium	15,075.00	*10,558.39	17,800.00
PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT EXPENSES Includes: Meetings, Dues-Other Organizations, Subscriptions, Affiliated Organizations, Grants, Development	18,631.25	9,310.14	10,617.00
WISCONSIN JUNIOR ACADEMY	25,630.00	23,148.21	23,328.00
MISCELLANEOUS	600.00	713.64	—0—
CONTINGENCY	1,800.00	1,130.15	1,500.00
TOTAL EXPENSES	**134,377.75**	**123,471.13**	**130,666.15**

**At the time of completion of this preliminary report, the total billing for the printing of TRANSACTIONS had not been received. A final audit of the 1975 accounts of the Academy will be available for reference at the time of the Annual Meeting, May 7–9, 1976. A copy will also be available at the Academy office, 1922 University Avenue, Madison, Wisconsin 53705.*

Milwaukee Marble Mastery, "Mibs" and Kids

Text and Photos by Robert A. McCabe

It is a long way in time, place, and historical awareness between the mud side streets of Rome in the period of Caesar Augustus and the playgrounds of the Eighteenth Avenue School on South Eighteenth and Mitchell Streets in Milwaukee in the 1920s. But somehow the fascination for colored spheres in the play of children was passed from one generation and culture to another down through time almost to the present. In the passing, old games changed and new ones were added. The steady dynamic state was the product of excited, spontaneous, unorganized and uninhibited children. Rules were made to suit the particular game, and instruction in the art of marble play was passed from child to child without formal regulation.

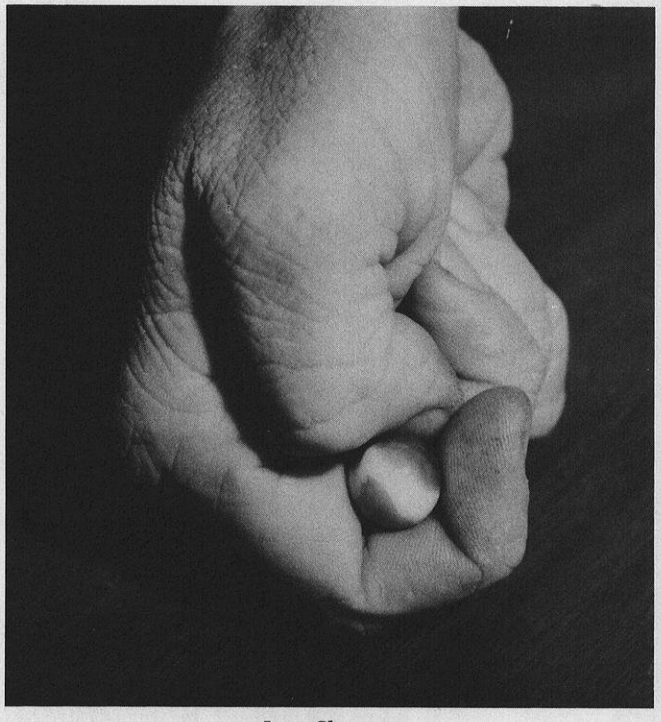
There is evidence that games with marbles were played in neolithic times, in pre-Christian Egypt, and brought to continental Europe, and Britain and Ireland by the Roman legions. The earliest marbles were doubtless stones worn round by the action of water in rivers, streams or along shorelines. The first manufactured marbles were perhaps made of marble itself or of alabaster.

As early as the seventeenth century, the water mills along the Alpine streams of Germany produced calcareous stone marbles. Agate marbles were also produced in Germany in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. The most common marble, however, was produced by firing (heating) clay spheres about one-fourth inch in diameter formed in revolving drums. The dull gray globes were then painted with bright colors. These were the most numerous marbles, or "mibs," used in Milwaukee. Another type in common use was a crockery marble called a "coffee" that came in blue and in light brown (hence "coffee"). The color was glazed on the clay surface. Those parts of the marble that touched the firing-tray surface or other marbles developed an "eye" or spot: a ring in which there was very little or no glaze at all. A"coffee" might have two to five such eyes.

Agates, sometimes called "aggies," and glass marbles called "shooters" were the most expensive and colorful of marbles. Almost all colors and color combinations were to be found. The predominantly red glass marbles were called "keneels." The name is a distortion of *carnelian*—which is red chalcedony, a form of quartz, and a close geological relative of the agate, which is also quartz, and regarded as a semi-precious stone.

It is doubtful that South Side playgrounds were ever graced with genuine carnelian marbles or even real agate. Imitation glass agates, opaque red, brown or orange, banded in varying degrees with white or gray, were occasionally used by the older players, and were also called "keneels."

The fancy stone marbles—foreign made, clear-glass types with ribbon, solid or latticinio core, onion skins or sulphides (sought after today by collectors)—were unheard of and, if present, were unrecognized by the knee-pants-ankle-shoed boys of Eighteenth Avenue School.



Low Shooter

At a recent antique sale I saw painted clay marbles of a type that once scattered on collision with a well-placed shooter, selling for ten cents apiece. The original marble prices, as I remember them, were: clay mibs ten for a penny; coffees (blue or brown) varied with size and were priced at two for a penny to five for a penny; glass shooters were one cent each and fancy shooters five cents to ten cents each. Any marble over that amount was not sold in the family stores catering to school playgrounds on the South Side.

Marble play occurred when two or more boys decided on a particular game and its rules. Almost without exception the play was "for keeps." Before school, recess, after school, and on weekends were times to try one's luck or skill with marbles, often on Milwaukee's "free lots" (unused and unattended real estate).

The most common game was simply called *Mibs*. To have a game of Mibs meant having a flat dirt surface on which was drawn with stick or finger a circle about eight to ten inches in diameter. About ten to twelve feet away a straight line was marked as the place from which the first shots were to be taken. This line was called "talls." This may have been a distortion of the word "taws" which meant marbles, but that is merely conjecture. Each player put two clay marbles in the ring and as he did so shouted "first," or "second," and so on. When each player's position was accepted by the others, the game began.

The game went like this: each player in turn shot his glass shooter at the mibs in the circle from talls. If you knocked a clay marble from the circle and your shooter did not remain in the circle, you got to keep the marble and had additional chances until you missed. If your shooter remained in the circle you retrieved it by adding two clay marbles to the circle and returned to talls to await your next turn. If you missed the marbles in the circle your next shot came from where your shooter rested. After all the players had shot from talls, you were in your turn, at liberty to hit another player's shooter, and if successful, he forfeited two clay mibs to you. A second shot at the ring or other shooters was allowed, but not a repeat chance at the recent victim. If you wanted a position advantage at the marbles in the ring and shouted "rounds" a (shortened version of "roundings"), you could then move your shooter from one side of the ring to another, but no closer than your original position. Should an opponent shout "fernanz" (a possible distortion of "defense") before you shouted "rounds," your shooter could not be moved. If an opponent shouted "knuckles down" before you shouted "fernanz," you had to shoot with the knuckles of the ring and little finger on the ground. Rules varied as to when a player was forced to knuckle down.

If a player moved his arm forward toward the ring as he shot, he was "hunching" and usually drew from his

High Shooter

opponents a series of shouts of "no hunching!" as he was about to shoot. When the last marble was knocked out of the ring the game began again.

Besides a constant chatter of ecstasy or complaint, the clatter of marbles in pocket or bag and the shouting of game words made the play both physical and vocal. The glass shooters were propelled by the action of the thumb, with the marble held *high* between the tip of the index finger and the edge of the thumb knuckle, or held *low* in the "U" of the bent index finger and the flat of the thumb knuckle just behind the nail. The high shooters were usually more powerful and more accurate. Most shots were taken from a squatting or kneeling position. Many a South Side mother despaired over the holes worn in the knees of black cotton stockings or the marble player's dirty legs at bedtime.

The game called *Ringer* is the official tournament marble game sponsored by the National Recreation Association. Its rules, too long and cumbersome to relate here, concern an exercise only vaguely associated with any marble game played on Milwaukee's South Side.

Another game similar to Mibs was called *Shooters*, in which only glass marbles were used. One or more players shot from talls after properly calling the order of play backwards: there was an advantage in shooting last with opponents' shooters on the field. No ring was used, and only one shooter per player entered the game. The object of this game was to hit another player's shooter with yours. If successful, you kept the hit shooter and received another turn. The loser returned

to talls to enter the game again with a new shooter. As many as five or six players made this game not only exciting but challenging as considerable skill was required. It was usually a game for older boys.

Snip in the Hole was played by two to five players. A hole three to four inches in diameter was dug in the dirt about ten feet from talls. After an order of play was determined, each player tossed or shot a predetermined number of clay marbles at the hole. When all marbles were on the ground, players in rotation tried to snip the marbles into the hole. The thumb, index or middle finger was the snipping equipment. If a player missed, the next player tried. The person who snipped the last marble in the hole claimed the pot. The last marble, particularly if it were a substantial distance from the hole, was snipped toward the cup in very short shots until a bold player tried a long shot. A miss would put the player following in a position to win easily. This game was played by both girls and boys.

A similar game was *Shoot to the Line.* Players using clay marbles, often as many as five per contestant, shot or tossed the spheres to a line drawn ten to twelve feet from talls. Shots or tosses were taken one marble at a time in rotation until all marbles were on the field. The player whose marble (one only) was closest to or on the line claimed all marbles on the field.

In some games, marbles were used as objects of exchange and not for their intrinsic qualities. *Guessing* was such a game, and it was played by only two people. A player put his hand into his marble bag (usually made of blue and white-striped ticking with a drawstring) or marble box (usually an old cigar box) and drew out one to five mibs in a closed fist. The opponent then guessed how many were concealed in the fist. If he guessed correctly, he claimed the lot; if the player misguessed, he paid the difference in marbles and took his turn at confounding his opponent. All kinds of deceptive fist maneuvers and rattling of marbles were employed to confuse the guesser. Only clay mibs were used in this game because of their small size and the small hands that tried to conceal them.

Nail-board, another game in which marbles were exchanged, was based strictly on chance. A board about ten by sixteen inches was embossed with a pattern of brads or finishing nails arranged in rows, the nails in the consecutive rows being offset by one-space intervals. A funnel of close-set nails at the top of the board ushered a marble to the center of the maze created by the offset nails. The spacing allowed a marble to pass freely down the board, which was set on an angle. The marble rolled zigzag to the bottom where it rested in a small bin also constructed of close-set nails. If by chance a marble made its way to the bins on either end at the bottom, the player received five marbles; the bins second to the end three marbles and bins third from the end returned the marble put into play. All marbles falling in the six to ten bins in the center of the board belonged to the casino operator. This simple normal curve device paid only on extremes, and the obvious advantage did not rest with the player. The appeal was the gambling, and the fascination of watching the marble bounce from nail to nail on its way down the board to the bins at the bottom. The shrewd setting of nails also enhanced the board owner's winning percentages. The angle at which the board was placed during play influenced the chances of winning: a board set at an angle where the marble moved slowly appeared to favor the board.

Drop Box, a game of skill, relied on a steady hand and on good concentration. A drop box was a wooden cigar box with the top removed and a square or rectangular hole cut in the bottom. The size or apparent size of the hole was very important. The hole had to be large enough to allow a clay marble to pass through The larger the hole, the greater the attraction for the player. A drop-box owner would shout, "Drop box! Drop box!" to entice players. Often the potential player would check the hole to see if it was too small. When a player agreed to try, the box was held bottom up between his feet and he tried to drop a marble through the hole. The marble was held at bellybutton level. All marbles that did not go through the hole rolled off the box and were kept by the owner of the box. All marbles going through the hole produced three to five additional marbles for the player, depending on the amount agreed upon before the drop began. The bottoms of the boxes were slightly arched so that marbles missing the hole rolled off the box and not into the hole. Rectangular holes always looked bigger, but entry was a function of the narrowest sides of the opening. The smallest of the clay marbles were selected from a player's collection if he planned to compete with a drop box. A boy who practiced was hard to beat.

The last game, if indeed it could be called a game, used marbles as legal tender. It was called the *Look Box,* and usually two mibs were enough to buy a "look." The box was usually a cardboard shoe box where most of the cover was cut away and replaced by white tissue paper. A small peephole was cut into one end of the shorter side of the box. Thus, by looking through the peephole, the content of the box was illuminated by light coming through the thin white tissue paper. On such a stage, where scenic backgrounds were pasted on the sides and back of the box, a set was made with paper figures of trees, stones, farm animals, birds, wildlife of all kinds, people, and brownies and fairies cut from papers and old magazines. On occasion skillfully drawn figures were part of these interesting tableaux. The combinations and motifs were endless. A staggering of props from front to back created, stage-

like, the illusion of depth. The colorful settings were best done by girls, but not exclusively so.

Another type of look box did not use stationary third dimension. Instead a week's collection of a given comic strip was pasted end-to-end and rolled onto two sticks or dowels. These rollers were inserted into the back of a look box; the shoe box cover was not used so that natural lighting illuminated the show. The viewer held the box to his eye while the operator twisted the bottom dowel, thus bringing the individual pictures to the viewer's eye as they unwound from the upper spool. The scroll of comic segments was rewound after each showing. It was always best to use a comic strip not available in Milwaukee. Moon Mullins or Little Orphan Annie of the Chicago papers were often used.

Marbles, like tops and kites, were games of ingenuity and skill and in no small measure exercised the mind through doing. There was great pride in constructing the game equipment as well as in the innovative development of new and better ways to test one's skill. No school system was needed to encourage or foster participation. Top-spinning and marble-play, for the most part, have disappeared. Most of today's city school grounds are asphalt. TV steals many hours of physical and mental exercise from unsuspecting juvenile program addicts.

The love of outdoor games that children could play as individuals regardless of size, age or sex has diminished with altered mores of society and the advances associated with technological change. Thus, these dying arts of growing up are social vitamins not easily replaced by synthetic substitutions via the air waves and playground hardware.

It is, of course, impossible to measure the extent that growing up on Milwaukee's South Side in a community of two overlapping ethnic groups (the Poles and the Germans) might have affected the game styles, the game language, and the zest for marbles.

Equally immeasurable are the subtle effects of childhood attempts to play with, communicate with, and adjust to children of one's own age in the games of youth.

If speech in the young, that is the words and manner of speech, is colored by ethnic influences, so are all manner of play-values. Without regret I have lost most of my South Side American Polish-German accent, but the lessons of marbles and the rememberances of those who shared the joy will not easily fade.

The way of growing up in Wisconsin has changed through time. We can only hope that the quality of the experience has not.

Author's Note: This paper does not claim that these are the only games of marbles played in Milwaukee in the 1920s or that they were the most prevalent everywhere. Instead, they are those best remembered.

Robert A. McCabe is chairman of the Department of Wildlife Ecology at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The Faustian Bargain

by Robert E. Najem

"The eternal silence of these infinite spaces frightens me," wrote Pascal, the seventeenth century philosopher and mathematician. While our knowledge of the physical universe has expanded tremendously since Pascal's time, our capacity to face an unknown perhaps bordering on the catastrophic has not improved. French Jansenist that he was, Pascal took an existential leap and placed his trust in God to save his soul. Our concern is to save a planet as well as our souls.

And being a nation brought up on do-it-yourself, we are inclined to tinker, to learn by doing, to experiment. All well and good if we are working on an old table, a piece of machinery, or the non-functioning clock. But the questions facing us are global in implications. They involve all peoples living on finite resources in a polluted environment and increasingly prone to violence. Johann Faust, sixteenth century German magician and astrologer and the principal of works by Marlowe, Goethe and Gounod, supposedly sold his soul to the devil in exchange for worldly experience and power. To entice Faust, Mephistopheles promised his constant servitude:

> "I am not one of the greatest
> Yet, wilt thou to me entrust
> Thy steps through life,
> I'll guide thee,—
> Will willing walk beside thee,—
> Will serve thee at once and forever
> With best endeavor,
> And, if thou art satisfied,
> Will as servant, slave with thee abide."
>
> (Goethe's *Faust* Act 1, Scene IV)

Yet we, not unlike Faust, are also faced with the dilemma of sacrificing long-range humanistic values for the sake of immediate desires. We strike our own Faustian bargains. Witness, for example, the clash between environmentalists and energy advocates. The issue of strip mining in Montana has mobilized a small number of ranchers against those who see the energy resources of coal in those hills. A blanket of banned DDT was laid—with government permission—over vast stretches of northwest timberland in May of 1974 to avert devastation by the tree-eating tussock moth. Now the moth is gone, but a new problem has cropped up: DDT contaminated some 18,000 cattle and 900 sheep. We can harness the sea's captured solar energy, but we would also require expensive electricity to transfer it to shore. There is oil on the outer continental shelf. Should industry or government explore? But what of New Jersey's tourist trade and the whole issue of states' rights versus those of the federal government?

No doubt in this dilemma of immediate gain as opposed to long-range goals, there will be many trade-offs dictated by a variety of interests and circumstances. Two voices speak out—one like the prophetic voice from the wilderness in Yeats' poem, "The Second Coming," predicting social disaster, but perhaps spiritual rebirth. The first voice is that of Arnold Toynbee in much of his later work. The second, that of Professor Robert L. Heilbroner, heard throughout his *Inquiry Into the Human Prospect*, insisting that there is no hope that we can escape a period of harsh adjustment to dwindling resources, the possibility of nuclear holocaust, and the ominous burden of the burgeoning population. There is *no hope* for an easy out, but there is *hope*. There is always *hope*. And it is at this point that the humanities step to the stage.

What do the humanities have to say about our concerns of ecology, population explosion, oil embargoes, and what have you? On the surface, perhaps very little. But we all know that most of the iceberg is below the surface. The value structure which controls our thoughts and dictates our actions is deeply imbedded in our conscience and in our subconscious. In many instances our present values are a reflection of old institutions, old ideologies, old technologies. Now

we have to heed Teilhard de Chardin's advice:

"The age of nations
is past.
The task
before us now
if we
would not perish,
is to
build the earth."

But how can the humanities help us rebuild the earth? How can the humanities, as a method or way of looking at reality and as a body of knowledge, help us in the Faustian struggle between the *here* and *now* and the *enduring* and *long-range*.

In any culture, the humanities suggest the possible and leave the probable to the social sciences. They do not predict the future on the basis of statistical analyses and variables. Consequently there is much of mythology and science fiction in the humanities. Prometheus stole fire from the gods—the first application of solar energy to the human condition. Icarus dared to soar. Pandora opened the box. In satisfying her curiosity she let out all the evils, according to Greek legend, and became their Eve, their female scapegoat. In each myth, courage and curiosity characterize these greater than human, but still human figures. History and literature abound in examples of others who dared to dream and achieved their dreams, and some who did not

Someone is always predicting the end of the world. The New Testament was written in an eschatological fervor. The Germanic tribes of the time of Julius Caesar believed the end imminent and had their contingency plan: everyone, at the first sign of the sky falling, was to grab a spear and rush out to support the upper regions. After that we are not sure what they were to do. By the seventeenth century, Cyrano de Bergerac was winging his way to the moon, propelled by rockets and vials of beef marrow. In our time we have, in fact, landed on the moon. We need the humanities to inspire us with new dreams that embody human curiosity, test our imagination, and convert the fantastic to the everyday.

History divides the Middle Ages into two periods—the one earthly, the other mystical. Architecturally, into the Mont-Saint-Michel and Chartres: the Romanesque and the Gothic. The Romanesque churches of France employed the Roman barrel vault which, in its circular movement, ties the eye to the earth. The church is usually in the country, solid and stable in appearance with few windows. It reflects the church militant, fearful of attack, and protected by Saint Michael. The Gothic cathedral of Chartres, nestled in the city and dedicated to Mary, soars on its spires to mystical heights. It is imaginative and daring and links the human with the divine. In a brief span of time, architecture—the humanities in stone—reflected a change of spirit, a surge of confidence. This example is not buried in the past, but remains to inspire the present.

In addition to its vertical thrust, or inspirational role, the humanities present a horizontal view, a sweeping perspective of the human condition which makes us more aware of the values of other cultures and more conscious of our own. As we begin the painful process of re-evaluating our uses of land, the perspective of the humanities can be helpful. In her well-known book, *Death Comes To The Archbishop*, Willa Cather introduces us to the American Indian's reverence for the land. The young Indian guide very carefully left each campsite as he had found it, suggesting that the so-called primitive cultures profoundly respected nature. History documents, however, that not all Indians were so careful. In this same novel, there is, too, an attempt on the part of the Spanish and French priests to introduce fruit trees, to implant in the New World such careful acts of Old World husbandry as the espalier technique of training a tree against a wall or trellis, so that pruning permits maximum energy to go into the fruit. Voltaire's famous advice of *Candide*—to cultivate our garden figuratively and literally—is deeply embedded in Western culture.

In his thought-provoking book, *A God Within*, Rene Dubos tells how Greece lost her trees and Lebanon her cedars centuries before Christ. He goes on to develop the theme of Franciscan love of nature and the Benedictine husbandry of nature. The one stressed an emotional state; the other built monasteries, cleared marshes, established a concerned attitude which cared for and cultivated the land. We can still visit the Benedictine monasteries throughout Europe and marvel at the ecological balance they nourished.

If heeded, the humanities can sharpen our sense of criticism. Among the variety of value choices possible, the critical mind must study, explore, explode, define, eliminate, and finally decide.

Faced with the exterior ecological nightmare on a variety of fronts, modern men and women sometimes retire or retreat to an interior spiritual wasteland to wallow in defeat and bide their time. Three great writers, all Nobel Prize winners, have confronted this problem. In each case there is no yielding to *the immediate, the expedient, the short-range view* but rather an emphasis on the enduring human value.

The future, in the following references, is not consistently sacrificed for the present. In his novel *The Old Man*, William Faulkner focuses the full fury of the Mississippi River on a prisoner in a small boat. It is a time of raging storm and great flooding. The prisoner, released to build the levees, suddenly must pick up a female very much pregnant and very stranded. This he does, but he is then swept up by the storm. After days of struggle, he reaches land and eventually settles in the bayous and turns his back on civilization. He opts for struggle, hard labor, the simple but hard life. He is critical of

the whole civilization which led him to prison.

Leni, the lady in Heinrich Boll's, *Group Portrait with Lady*, survives the horrors of World War II as well as the materialistic and economic nightmare following the war, a so-called prosperity which has contributed extensively to the ecological problems of the Rhine, Germany, and Western Europe. She survives her aggressive, cutthroat, and competitive environment by remaining human on every level. She shares her food, her home, herself. Boll creates beautiful women and ugly men. His female characters appear at just the right moment to share coffee and bread with needy victims. They are *critical* of the rush for profit at the expense of the human.

Solzhenitsyn writes of prisons, symbols of Russia in miniature, of political prisons, of the incarceration of the human spirit. Such is the case in most of his novels, particularly in *First Circle*. In spite of every effort on the part of the system to crush the human spirit, some prisoners survive and with dignity. Some refuse to knuckle under.

In spite of environmental upheaval, economic grasping and pillaging, and political shortsightedness, three great and critical authors of Nobel Prize dimensions have stressed the ability of the human spirit to survive and even transcend. To all of us today the humanities suggest and portray, in literature as well as history, the human ability to come to terms with, but perhaps not necessarily to solve, the problems of the human condition.

The humanistic method also addresses itself to the clarification of values. The humanities can help us in making value choices; in fact they are a study in making moral choices. However, they present moral dilemmas in fictional setting. We can learn of the moral consequences of value choices without paying the price of error. I cannot relate Saul Bellow's *Seize the Day* specifically to solar energy, catalytic converters, or strip mining, but I can certainly suggest that Wilhelm, the central character, forever sells his soul for immediate and material gain. Only in the funeral scene at the end of the novel does he realize in existential despair the spiritual poverty of his life. He is the fast-buck artist dealing in lard speculation on the stock market, or seeking the quick road to fame via Hollywood. In the meantime, he has become separated from his family, estranged from his father, and parks on the right side of the street in New York City on alternate days. Wilhelm is almost a symbol of modern men and women—alienated, rootless, lonely and on the verge of bottomless despair. His short-range view leads to failure and perhaps defeat. Like Willy Loman of Arthur Miller's *Death of A Salesman*, he is a social tragedy of our time. He captures the mood of the moment as we approach the energy crunch, the depletion of resources, and the often just demands of the Third World. We seem all too ready to man the lifeboat and abandon the ship.

Has there ever been a quiet and idyllic moment in history? Philosophers have forever been distilling a definition of the good life. But can we ever know the good life? Will there ever be a Camelot? At the end of *The Plague*, Camus warns that the bacillus of the dreaded disease lies deeply hidden all around us, ready to reappear unexpectedly. Physical and moral evil are constants of the human condition. "The more it changes," to quote the French proverb, "the more it is the same thing."

The humanities, therefore, cannot present a hard and fast answer to our problems. They simply clarify in the maze of choices available the moral issues and the values inherent in each choice.

Although the humanities cannot offer the final answers to human dilemmas, they do give *meaning* to life. Philosophy leads us from Plato's idealism to Sartre's existentialism. History chronicles the past from the caves of Lascaux to the residential caves of modern China. Literature conveys every nuance of human feeling from the great expectations at birth to the finality of death. What a reservoir to draw upon!

One of the foremost ecologists of our times is a Jesuit paleontologist-philosopher-physicist-archeologist-anthropologist, the late Teilhard de Chardin. His name causes some scientists to bristle; from others it evinces awe and reverence. For many, he asks the big questions and stresses the concept that we are a part of nature—rising out of nature, converging on our odyssey to an omega point at which the finite and infinite will meet. His *Phenomenon of Man* forces us to review our origins as well as our directions. The eternal silence of infinite spaces do not frighten him.

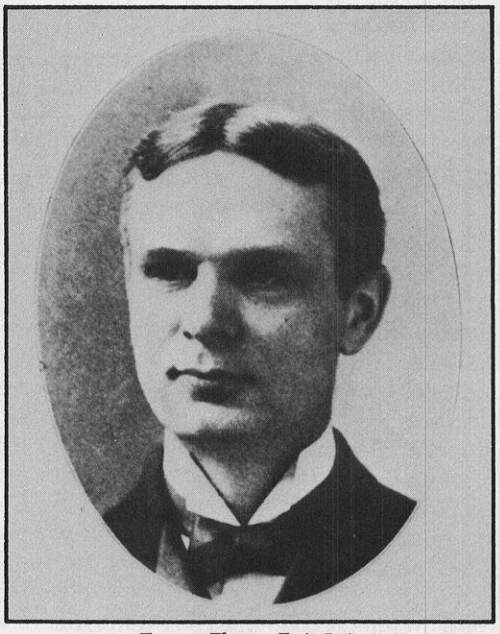
Existentialism, for many, has reached an impasse. Perhaps it was essential at the end of World War II to renew a sense of self-confidence in Western Europe, but existentialism cultivated the personal at the expense of a sense of community and commitment. The center is no longer holding. Ecology itself may be caught up in the Faustian bargain when we blindly dash on a mindless excursion back into a Thoreau-like lifestyle as a reaction to our structured bureaucratic existence. If each person re-invents the wheel to regain a primative lifestyle, we are setting up an ecological waste of human energy, time, and inventiveness. There are those who would sacrifice the future for the moment. There are those who would deplete energy resources now and forget future needs.

Can we save the ship? The humanities may suggest some ways. Atlas may be tired, but he is not necessarily down and out. The eternal silence of infinite spaces need not frighten us. Let us get on with rebuilding the earth. And let us try in the bargaining not to sell our souls for a mess of pottage.

Robert E. Najem is director of the National Humanities Series: Midwestern Center–University Extension in Madison.

Up From Eclecticism: The Latter-Day Architecture of Ernest Flagg

Photos and Text
by Richard W.E. Perrin, F.A.I.A.



Ernest Flagg, F.A.I.A.

The opening decades of the present century are one of the most fascinating epochs in the history of American architecture. Many-faceted and often contradictory, the events of these years had their origins in the preceding century, particularly the *fin-de-siecle*, and came to an end with the tumultuous Twenties and the Depression.

Architectural thought in the early twentieth century was dominated by eclecticism, but of a substantially different order than was that of the nineteenth century. Numerous revivals including, but not limited to, Greek, Gothic, Romanesque, Renaissance, Moorish and Egyptian themes characterized the architectural thinking of the nineteenth century. Revival styles generally moved across the country from east to west, lasting for a given period of time and being more or less self-terminating. Motivation was simple and not nearly as discriminating as the connoisseur-like choosing of style which became part of later architectural eclecticism.

The term "eclecticism," in philosophy, may be taken to mean a system of thought which has borrowed various elements from existing known philosophies to create something new. In architecture, at least in theory, eclecticism would describe a similar process in which elements from different architectural periods or styles have been combined to create a new building or a new style. The essential difference between nineteenth and twentieth century architectural eclecticism is the degree of discrimination exercised in the

borrowing process. Nineteenth century mixtures were often incongruous and sometimes actually preposterous. A new approach that began shortly after the World's Columbian Exposition of 1893, and extended well into the present century, stood in sharp contrast: only one borrowed style was usually adapted to a given building, and that with high fidelity and studied regard for the style being borrowed. If there was mixing it was often done with great ingenuity.

The eclecticism of both centuries, however, had one thing in common: neither one showed any particular concern for the relationship between appearance and construction. Both were facadism pure and simple. Most nineteenth century apologists echoed John Ruskin's definition of architecture: "The art which so adorns the edifices raised by man, for whatever use, that the sight of them may contribute to his mental health, power and pleasure," in other words, a purely artistic and even emotional apprehension. A popular attitude of twentieth century eclectics was that the relationship between aesthetics and structure might at best be relative rather than absolute. The function of science in construction is to verify the stability of the structural combinations which must first be created by the art of the designer. Art and imagination, it was maintained, are the forces that move one to create; science does not create.

The well-springs of latter-day eclecticism were the world's two most influential architectural schools at the time: the American Academy in Rome and the Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. The latter produced a free but sophisticated version of Classic and Renaissance architecture, while Rome taught a purer classicism for which a scholarly knowledge of the Orders was a primary requirement. In the long run, however, it was the influence of the Paris school that was more far-reaching, and many schools in the United States came under its sway. It was no accident that prominent eastern architects, mostly European trained, prevailed in dictating the uniform classicism of the major buildings at the 1893 Chicago Fair; western architects, led by Daniel H. Burnham, closed ranks against the intrusive dissidence of Louis Henri Sullivan and others of the liberal Chicago school who felt themselves emancipated from preconceived ideas and from the need to borrow from past cultures. The Chicago school believed that each problem had to be approached as though it were completely new, and that the design program rested solely on the terms of its requirements. The day of recognition for these men was not yet at hand; the architects of the classic tradition prevailed for the time being.

As stated, the architectural effects produced with historical forms were essentially a surface treatment—a veneer. Below their archaeological skins most buildings were efficiently planned and well constructed, embodying heating, ventilating, plumbing and electrical systems of such scope and complexity that architects were hard-pressed to accommodate them without making their presence known. All of this required great skill and considerable ingenuity derived from a level of education and training for architects hitherto reserved, in the popular mind, for time-honored careers in law, medicine and business. The Ecole des Beaux Arts, a rigorous institution of architectural learning, played a very significant role in this training, setting the highest standards not only for itself but also for the schools for which it was the prototype. The stiff entrance examination alone turned away about as many prospective *eleves* as were admitted.

Whatever else may be said about this sometimes creative, sometimes regressive eclecticism, it gave the architect, now fully recognized as a professional practitioner, a working basis from which to proceed. Although not generally conducive to great innovation, eclectic architects were assimilative, deriving their approach almost invariably from precedent adapted to meet a new set of conditions.

It is within this context that the early twentieth century in American architecture produced an impressive number of genuinely talented and even brilliant practitioners which the country had never seen before and which would be difficult to match even at the present time—not, however, as historic figures or, necessarily, public or eccentric figures, but as men who made a difference.

Among these men was Ernest Flagg. He was born in Brooklyn, New York, in 1857. Following preparatory studies he obtained his architectural education at the Atelier Paul Blondel, Ecole des Beaux Arts in Paris. He died in 1947. His ninety-year lifetime spanned the entire age of eclecticism from Victorianism to the advent of *les Arts Decoratifs* and beyond. He began his practice in New York City in 1891. In 1897, he won the competition for the Singer Building in that city, and in 1907, completed the tower, all in Beaux Arts eclectic style. At the time, the Singer Tower with its forty-five stories and 612 feet of elevation was the tallest office building in the world. Assessing his work in *New York Landmarks,* Allan Burnham remarked that the influence of French intellect was not lost on Ernest Flagg, and in his bold deployment of glass and steel as in French Beaux Arts buildings, the mark of his genius as a designer was evident. His practice as an architect was eminently successful. The United States Naval Academy buildings at Annapolis, the Corcoran Art Gallery in Washington, D.C. and St. Luke's Hospital in New York City rank among his many commissions.

Toward the end of his career he designed a number of housing projects for low-income families, although his interest in the problems of providing good, reasonably priced homes for working people had started some years earlier. About the time of World War I, he began expounding his ideas and theories and in 1922, at the

age of sixty-five, he wrote a definitive work on the subject: *Small Houses: Their Economic Design and Construction (Essays on the Fundamental Principles of Design and Descriptive Articles on Construction).* All of the diagrams and other illustrations were drawn by Flagg himself—in pen-and-ink—except for human figures which were supplied by his daughter Betsy, to animate the many perspectives.

Improve Design, Lower Cost

All of Flagg's statements—oral, written and graphic—hammer away at a single objective: to improve the design and construction of small houses while reducing their cost.

Cost reductions were to be achieved primarily through use of the module system and standardization of parts and methods, saving time, trouble and money. By these means, all dimensioning of plans and preparation of most detail drawings were to be avoided; ease and speed in planning were greatly increased; plans were simplified; pleasing proportions were obtained more readily; and the work, both in design and execution, was greatly improved.

Saving of space was to be attained by utilization of the large volume of space usually found under the slopes of roofs which use of his special ridge-dormers would permit; by reduction of floor thickness from twelve inches to three inches; by utilization of space, as on shipboard, for lockers, closets and cupboards which had been commonly furred off and wasted; by use of thin partitions made of solid plaster; and by the elimination of corridors in use of living rooms, and otherwise planning, so that the least possible area might be required for communication.

Saving of material was to be accomplished by greatly decreasing the average height of outside walls; by using frost walls to reduce the size and cost of basements; by eliminating practically all trim, baseboards, moldings and applied ornament—depending on other means for beauty; by omitting stone sills as well as expensive, conventional hardware; by shortening all stairs, pipes, ducts, drains and wires; avoiding waste by designing for use without cutting, of standard lengths and sizes of materials, such as beams and glass; by avoiding the use of things requiring paint; and by using wax for the finish of interior woodwork.

Savings in labor were to be achieved primarily by using unskilled help in building the walls; by simplifying woodwork and hardware application throughout—doing much of the fitting in the shop; by standardizing parts and using similar members which permit their being made in quantity; and by using a prefabricated plumbing system, cutting out about half the labor used to install it.

Module System

Perhaps the most basic of Flagg's many innovations was the module system. All of his designs were based on a modulus, or fixed unit of measure, running through all parts. His drawing sheets were ruled into squares of uniform size. The elevations were grouped about the ground floor plan so as to bring each one opposite that side to which it belonged. The module line ran on the inside of the outside walls and most partitions, doors, windows and other openings centered on it. The module used was three feet nine inches, or forty-five inches. On the working drawings this was divided into five parts each nine inches, and the sheets were ruled accordingly. Forty-five inches was considered a convenient dimension: its multiples fit eight-, ten-, twelve- and fourteen-foot lumber and, allowing for bearing, did not have to be cut. It was also suitable for masonry forms. Beams and rafters could be spaced on the module or half-module; one-quarter module would be an appropriate width for treads of important stairs, while one-fifth of a module would serve the others. The full module was a good width for corridors and most windows, permitting the use of standard panes without cutting. Two modules, or seven foot six inches, sufficed for most story heights while three modules, or eleven feet three inches, served for the higher stories.

Standardization, both of parts and workmanship, played an important part in the envisioned economies, and standardizing implied quantity. It was not intended, however, that the outcome would in any way suggest monotony or a mechanized appearance. On the contrary, each house was an original composition, in which due consideration was given to space requirements, site, topography and other factors without inhibiting the design process at all. Modular dimensioning and interchangeable, standardized parts were only the essential working components of the system. As a matter of fact, in developing and applying his module, Flagg anticipated by some twenty-five years a national program of "modular coordination" espoused by the American Institute of Architects, the General Contractors Association and the manufacturers of most building materials. This modular coordination would make for uniform dimensional building components to the end that all waste resulting from trimming, clipping, chipping and sawing-off might be eliminated.

It is important to note that Flagg's module was applied not only to his floor plans but to elevations, sections and details as well. Longitudinal modules were shown in figures, lateral ones by letters and heights in Roman numerals. Thus, it was simple to designate any part accurately; if one referred to 9,d,III, there could be no doubt as to the exact point indicated.

It was almost by accident that Flagg's attention was first called to the desirability of this method. Working on a design problem while still a student at the Ecole des Beaux Arts, it occurred to him that he might save

4601 North Murray Avenue, Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin

4600 North Cramer Street, Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin

7707 Stickney Avenue, Wauwatosa, Wisconsin

739 East Beaumont Avenue, Whitefish Bay, Wisconsin

time by drawing in the axial lines all at once. The Beaux Arts system stressed very much according to Roman planning order, the "parti"—the appropriate disposition of all parts of the composition, with particular emphasis on the floor plans which were developed on the lines of principal and subordinate axes. When Flagg had drawn in his axial lines they appeared so nearly of uniform spacing that he determined to make them exactly so and see what would happen. This necessitated a number of minor changes in the design which, much to his surprise, seemed to improve it; and the thought suggested itself that perhaps this uniform measure, pervading all parts of the composition and simplifying it, if properly used would give that harmony for which he felt he had been blindly groping.

Convinced that the principle was right and that guesswork and resultant dissonance would be minimized by use of a fixed unit or combination of it, he was determined to use it as soon as the occasion arose. The opportunity came with the very first building he designed—St. Luke's Hospital in New York City. The whole design depended upon the module chosen, from its layout on the ground to the spacing of the modillions of the cornice. Virtually all of the succeeding commissions awarded to his office were similarly handled and, eventually, his small houses epitomized his modular concepts.

To prove his design theories and to demonstrate his construction techniques Flagg, at his own expense, built a number of houses at Flegg Ridge, his prestigious Dongan Hills estate on Staten Island. Thereupon, houses following these first models were built elsewhere in the New York area and in other parts of the country. To provide competent architectural service at modest cost, Flagg devised a sort of extension service in which a cooperative relationship was set up between himself and individual builders. The clients' requirements including data on the site were forwarded to Flagg, who responded by sending drawings prepared in accordance with his own streamlined system of projection. Since all components were standard, the same detail sheets were applicable to all jobs and could be furnished to the local builder in quantities desired. These sheets were so complete that no separate specifications were needed, except to satisfy local building inspection requirements.

Just what the financial arrangements were between Flagg, the local builder and the client is not certain, but it may be assumed that these fees, also, were well standardized. (This practice was not unique, since there were a number of other home-building design services available at the time. Even the American Institute of Architects offered such services, which, under the aegis of a bureau set up by various local chapters, sought to upgrade the quality of house design.) Flagg's approach was different to the extent that concepts were innovative and his designs apparently covered by patent rights. Working with selected builders who had become conversant with his techniques became important to assure the best possible results.

Flagg System Houses in Milwaukee

"Flagg System Houses," as they came to be known, also made their appearance in Wisconsin, notably in the Milwaukee area, especially in suburban Shorewood, Whitefish Bay and Wauwatosa. No exact count has been made to date, but there are at least a dozen excellent specimens still in existence in the named communities. Inquiries regarding examples elsewhere are still pending. All of these houses around Milwaukee were built from 1924 to 1926. Almost all were built by a single firm, Arnold F. Meyer and Company, located at 4401 North Avenue in Milwaukee. Meyer had been in the building business for many years, both as an independent contractor and earlier as vice-president and manager of Rath Construction Company, also of Milwaukee, specializing in reinforced concrete engineering and construction. Evidently, Meyer's interest in Flagg's ideas stemmed from his long-time involvement with concrete and its uses. At that time it was not nearly the sophisticated field it was to become twenty years later, especially in the design and control of concrete mixtures. During the 1920s the role of water content was not completely understood and, for ease of placement, "sloppy" concrete was in common use.

It seems that Meyer set up his firm in 1925 with A. Hilmer Backe and Otto H. Fiebing as partners. The enterprise, apparently, was not long-lived, probably because Flagg System Houses did not become overwhelmingly popular as had been hoped. It may be safely surmised that there were two closely related reasons for this situation: local building trades' mechanics unfamiliar with Flagg techniques may have resisted them, and the anticipated cost economies were, therefore, not achieved. An examination of building permits, to the extent they are available and factual in value rating, seems to support the view that Flagg houses were not really cheap. The estimated costs as recorded were not substantially below those of conventional dwellings of about the same layout and cubic content.

Actually, Flagg had foreseen this possibility when he started, trenchantly observing that, "In the application of these innovations in building one may safely count on the opposition of that unimaginative class which calls itself practical. The 'practical' mechanic or builder is generally a man of limited education and outlook who hates innovation. He has learned to do certain things in certain ways, any departure from which frightens him. His attitude is almost always one of instinctive opposition. Very often, as soon as the ordinary workman leaves the beaten path, he is at sea; he hesitates, balks, loses time, and the saving which ought to result from the new method is more than swallowed up in the loss of efficiency which novelty envolves. [sic] In actual practice it has been found that many of these difficulties may be overcome by painstaking direction at the start, and that after the men get used to the better methods they like them. To begin with, a certain amount of brain work must be supplied, and it is foolish to expect that commodity where it does not exist. The

kind of brain power in innovation is not the kind with which the average 'practical man' is very fully supplied. He has, as a rule, little imagination and no desire to involve himself in unaccustomed difficulties."

Additionally, Flagg's suggestion that much of the work could be done by unskilled labor, or even by the owner on a do-it-yourself basis, could hardly be calculated as endearing to organized labor. Interesting to note, also, is the fact that almost without exception the original owners—the individuals who commissioned the work—were business and professional people, willing to invest their time and money in something that was clearly "different."

Flagg's diagrams, themselves, may have become snagged by local resistance both from the trade and building authorities. While certainly the quintessence of directness and simplicity, these projections were not the kind of "blueprint" generally produced by architectural draftsmen. The first Flagg System House in the Milwaukee area seems to have been built in 1924 for Erwin Cords at 409 (now 1913 East) Olive Street, Shorewood. If Flagg furnished any plans for this house at all, they were definitely redrawn by the Federal Engineering Corporation of Milwaukee which, at the time, was headed by Walter Hirschberg, a structural engineer. These working drawings were based on the Flagg module concept and embodied all the standard features, but additional information beyond that suggested by Flagg was provided in conventional graphic form. It is known that Arnold Meyer himself had drafting facilities in his building operation, and that Rufus Arndt was one draftsman who prepared working drawings for a number of other Flagg System Houses.

All of these houses, now about fifty years old, are still in excellent condition, having survived numerous ownerships and occupancies with relatively few major alterations. In only a few instances have radical changes been made affecting the original design concept. The houses, by and large, have retained their charm and livability to a remarkable degree.

The principal hallmarks of Flagg System Houses—modular design, ridge-dormers, low eave lines, ground-hugging profile, steep roofs, casement windows, multiple chimneys, open and beamed ceilings, thin partitions, small scale and intimate proportions—are so distinctive that it would be difficult to mistake the houses for any other kind.

Another characteristic of the Flagg System House was use of stone on the outside walls. Stone walls, of course, are no novelty in Wisconsin. Since earliest days the state's dolomite, sandstone, quartzite and granite have been used originally for massive walls and more recently as veneer—the latter when laid random ashlar imitating a solid stone wall. Flagg's walls were massive but stones which were of the irregular type normally used for paving were laid on edge to literally proclaim their being veneer. The flatter sides of the stone having been laid flush against the outside wood form, concrete sixteen inches to twenty inches thick was poured in back. No mortar was placed between the stones as they were laid in the forms, but put in dry like *tesserae* in a mosaic. Mortar was squeezed in afterward when the forms had been removed. Pointing with a trowel followed. The joints, however, were not struck or tooled; instead, fine stone chips were pressed into the joints giving the wall a handsome, aged look. Flagg claimed that, as far as he knew, the method was original. Certainly, it had many imitators, but close inspection usually discloses a more mechanical disposition and, in any event, just another form of shell-veneering against a wooden frame.

The stone provided by Arnold Meyer for the Milwaukee houses, very likely with Flagg's approval, was most often buff and gray Waukesha County dolomite and, sometimes, Tennessee quartzite running in shades of russet, pink and mauve. Two good examples of the latter are a double house built for Alfred Hoelz at 1013-1015 (now 3449-3451 North) Frederick Avenue, Milwaukee, and a single family house built for Willis Hopkins at 41 (now 7707 West) Stickney Avenue, Wauwatosa. The house is now owned and occupied by the Drexel Hansen family. It was built in 1925, and at one time was in such bad condition that it was called "haunted" by the neighbors. Now in sympathetic hands, it is in excellent shape.

Three houses in a row, forming an interesting ensemble on the north side of East Glendale Avenue from North Cramer Street to North Murray Avenue, Whitefish Bay, were built for George Gabel, William Van Altena, and B.G. Van Devan. The year again was 1925. This group of houses demonstrates Flagg's contention that similarity of materials and repetition of component parts need not lead to monotony. On the contrary, a feeling of repose is achieved without conscious effort. These houses, too, have had excellent care. Originally roofed with asphalt shingles, which was standard for Flagg houses, the two end houses have been very tastefully reroofed with tile-colored asbestos shingles, and the middle house reroofed with unfading green slate.

All of Flagg's houses are small in scale. In contrast, neighboring homes of the same period often appear to loom up boxlike and bulky. The low profile contributes somewhat to this impression but there are other factors, deliberately introduced, which actually make the houses smaller than their contemporaries. For one thing, all rooms are of lesser dimension than found in most houses of the time. Door and window openings were scaled down just enough to keep them in key with the smaller mass of the house. Small scale was not only a way to save space and, hence, material, labor and money, but also to create a feeling of intimacy and charm, so difficult to achieve in a larger building. Furniture placement was also considered with care, but sometimes difficulties were encountered with

furniture sizes popular at the time, thereby necessitating special pieces.

Of all Milwaukee Flagg houses, the one at 739 East Beaumont (old 199 Lawndale) Avenue in Whitefish Bay, is very probably the most diminutive. Built in 1925 for H.W. Hatch, the house is now owned and occupied by the Paul Casey family. There are three main rooms on the first floor—living room, kitchen-dining room and bedroom—plus a lavatory, utility room and porch. Tucked away under the sloping roof on the second floor is a second bedroom and the bathroom. As in all Flagg houses the bathroom floor is eight inches higher than the adjoining floor level because of the prefabricated plumbing pipes which were installed without any cutting of the floor beams. A small winding staircase is housed in an octagonal turret of half-timber appearance. This form of construction was a favorite of Ernest Flagg for architectural counterpoint, and in situations where light weight was essential or where obtuse angles rendered the use of mosaic rubble uneconomical.

Flagg referred to his "half-timber" work by that name although it was not really that at all; but he was quick to point out, the wooden strips, generally one and one-half inches by three and one-half inches, were truly structural and hence, neither sham nor counterfeit. Between the strips, Bishopric Board—a very popular patented insulating lath-board at the time—was applied with trowelled stucco on the outside. On the inside, furring strips to provide an airspace, and plaster over metal lath were added to complete the wall—the whole of it only three inches thick.

Another Milwaukee Flagg house with a "half-timber" tower is located at 1016 East Lexington (old 220 Bellevue) Boulevard, Whitefish Bay. A larger building, by far, than the Beaumont Avenue house, it nevertheless has the characteristic quaintness of all Flagg houses. This house was built in 1924 for A.F. Sperling by the Arnold Meyer firm. Tennessee stone in mosaic rubble, and of exceptionally good color, was used to particularly good advantage in this structure.

For all of his pragmatism, Flagg remained incurably romantic. An obvious Francophile, he admitted being enamored of the French countryside, especially the small villages in Normandy which he particularly admired. While abjuring the use of all "archaeological" precedent, as he called it, his little houses do have a sixteenth century provincial French reminiscence about them. Perhaps it is a situation similar to Frank Lloyd Wright being asked by the writer many years ago why his buildings had a Japanese look about them, and he, with perfect *sang-froid*, responding that since the Japanese were using the same principles of organic design as he had used, their buildings were bound to look like his.

Certainly, much more could be said about Ernest Flagg and his houses. Flagg was progressive and his ideas—modular coordination, standardization of components, prefabrication, human scale in design and the objective of an individual, low-priced house for every American family—were all well ahead of their time. Actually, none of these goals has been fully realized even today, a half century later, despite enormous strides in virtually every other human endeavor. Some of the lessons Flagg sought to teach seem as valid in 1976 as they were in 1925.

Richard W.E. Perrin is a Milwaukee architect and past president of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters.

Wisconsin Spring
by W.M. Boyer

Orion the hunter
Strides down the western sky
With dogs at heel.
Seeking a glowing fire,
They hurry homeward.
The deathhead drifts,
With one last glance,
Count the winter kill.

A stumbling buck
Beyond the deeryard track,
Ears raised for the crumble of ice,
Senses downwind the green spoor.
For life we pay a death,
But as the first lamb comes
And night gives way to Aries
Old men forget the debit.

The Good Oak Gavel

by George C. Becker

There are two spiritual dangers in not owning a farm. One is the danger of supposing that breakfast comes from the grocery, and the other that heat comes from the furnace.

To avoid the first danger, one should plant a garden, preferably where there is no grocer to confuse the issue.

To avoid the second, he should lay a split of good oak on the andirons, preferably where there is no furnace, and let it warm his shins while a February blizzard tosses the trees outside. If one has cut, split, hauled, and piled his own good oak . . .

—From *A Sand County Almanac* by Aldo Leopold

To many of us who have read *A Sand County Almanac* from cover to cover, the "good oak" is *the* happening in Leopold's famous book. We who have feasted at Leopold's beautiful words have come away with the thought that the good oak deserved and had been subject to cremation.

The fact is that not all of it met a fiery end. As each annual ring was severed by the saw, Leopold eloquently traced backward the history of the lightening-split oak that started its life at the end of the Civil War and crashed earthward in the mid-forties. But there is more to the story.

In September, 1972, when I assumed the presidency of the Citizens Natural Resources of Wisconsin, Incorporated (CNRA), outgoing president Al Berkman of Wausau passed on to me a small, rather ordinary gavel.

The head of the gavel had been turned from a block of wood down to a length of three and five-eighths and a diameter of one and seven-eighths inches. Fitting snugly into this head was a handle eight and one-fourth inches long tapering from nine-sixteenths inch near the head to seven-eighths inch near the end of the handle. Fixed to the head was a plate with the simple inscription:

C.N.R.A.
1 9 5 5

It appeared that the contriver of the gavel had not been too choosy as to the quality of the wood. It was oak, of course, but very coarse-grained—and the oak borers had been busy, both head and handle being riddled with openings of various sizes.

After accepting the gavel, I tossed it in a cardboard box file, along with the constitution and other historical effects of the CNRA, including folders related to the DDT fight which CNRA had spearheaded.

CNRA editor, Carla Kruse, who was watching me, said,

"Take good care of that gavel—it comes from the good oak."

"Are you talking about Leopold's good oak?" I asked.

"Yup, Phil Sander made it and gave it to CNRA years ago."

I carefully replaced the gavel in the file, and a week later wrote Sander, a Kenosha geologist, environmentalist and artist, inquiring as to the origin of the wooden mallet.

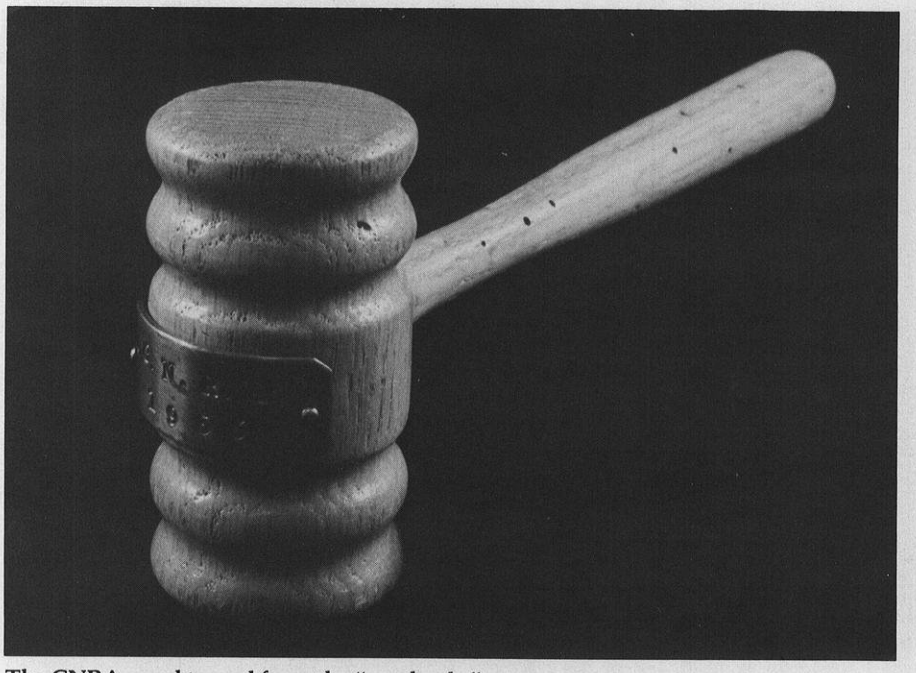
In a hand-printed letter dated 21 October 1972, I learned:

"Your inquiry about the mystery of the gavel brought back some pleasant memories of my friend Aldo Leopold and early days of the C.N.R.A.

"I first met Leopold in the late 1940s when I attended the Sportsmens Conservation Congress at Madison. He was the first to discuss Wisconsin's deer herd eruption, and his work at the Kaibab Forest.

"He later served on a committee for the Wisconsin Society for Ornithology to work out the wording for a plaque for the passenger pigeon monument that I designed. The monument is now at the Wyalusing State Park overlooking the Mississippi River. Others on the committee besides Leopold were Dr. A.W. Schorger and Owen Gromme—we had some good talks and meetings.

"I had some interesting talks on my visits with Leopold and several times visited him at his



The CNRA gavel turned from the "good oak." Photo by Nancy Ratner

shack—remembering how we exchanged tobacco and smoked our pipes while we sat and talked on an old log seat.

"He told me of the history of the area—treeplanting, floods of the Wisconsin River, deer, birds, and a host of outdoor nature talk. This was the first time I heard the word *ecology*. This was in the late 40s and early 50s. Each year I manage to reread his *A Sand County Almanac*. And his passing brings back the memories of our pleasant talks.

"About 1952-53 the C.N.R.A. presented the silver acorn to Mrs. Estella Leopold in behalf of her husband, Aldo. We had our lunch at the shack and William Aberg made the presentation. As we talked on the trail to the shack with Walter Scott and Owen Gromme, I asked if they knew where the good oak stump was located. Gromme found the old stump just to the left of the trail. A picture is enclosed.

"While we were enjoying the outdoor lunch I asked Mrs. Leopold if I could have a split log from the good oak and she gladly consented.

"The following year our meeting was at Lake Delton Resort and Alvin Throne was president or chairman—but anyway at this meeting I presented him with the oak gavel that I had made, from the good oak log . . . .

"I had almost forgotten about the oak gavel but was glad Carla Kruse remembers the occasion. I plan to carve a small shore bird, and the base will be a piece of wood from the good oak. I will send it to you for your exhibit of Leopold's memorabilia."

—Phil Sander

The following March I received in the mail the above-mentioned shorebird on the good oak base. I discussed with Dr. Charles Long, director of the Museum of Natural History at the University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, the possibility of preparing a Leopold exhibit featuring these items. Ed Marks, curator of education, prepared the display highlighting the "good oak" items, photos and correspondence, along with a 1949 edition of *A Sand County Almanac* opened to page six: *"February—* Good Oak." This has become a popular attraction in the museum.

Aldo Leopold died April 21, 1948, fighting a grass fire on a neighbor's farm. He never saw a published copy of the *Almanac*. But the thousands who have seen it and who, with him have cut through the annual rings of the good oak, can rejoice in the knowledge that all of that tree was not reduced to ashes.

And what of the gavel? Since March, 1973, it has been on public display except for September and October, 1974, when I turned it over to Dr. Marguerite Baumgartner, then president of CNRA. She kept it briefly and consented to return it to the museum. We can only hope that succeeding CNRA presidents will make it a permanent part of the exhibit.

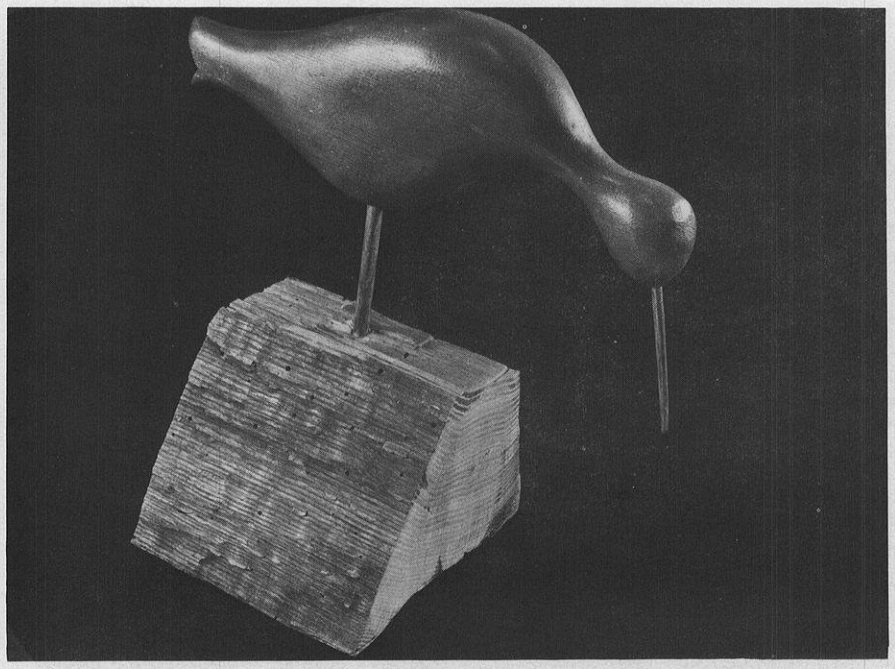
It seems appropriate that the official gavel of a prestigious environmental organization, dedicated to the "preservation, wise management, or restoration of the State's natural resources," has roots in what is probably Wisconsin's most famous tree.

Today the stump of the good oak has been reduced almost to ground level by weather and souvenir-seekers.

But the good oak will continue to live as long as man can read:

These things I ponder as the kettle sings, and the good oak burns to red coals on white ashes. Those ashes, come spring, I will return to the orchard at the foot of the sandhill. They will come back to me again, perhaps as red apples, or perhaps as a spirit of enterprise in some fat October squirrel, who for reasons unknown to himself, is bent on planting acorns.

—Aldo Leopold



Shorebird on a base, four and seven-eights inches square on bottom, three and one-fourth inches high, made from a split log of the "good oak." Designed and carved by Phil Sander of Kenosha. Photo by Nancy Ratner

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George C. Becker is curator of fishes at the Museum of Natural History, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point.

SENDING & RECEIVING
A COLUMN ABOUT COMMUNICATION

by Arthur Hove

Letters From the Wad

"Dear Reader:
During the past fifty years, busy readers in every corner of the country have enjoyed the economies and conveniences of shopping in America's bookstore . . . . "

"Dear Mr. Hove:
Living in Casper, Wyoming . . . right now . . . is a man named Vernon Mecham."

"Dear Reader:
As President of . . . I'd like you to join me for the premiere of a remarkable new animal series we're producing."

"Dear Friend:
You've had a busy day, and there's barely time to prepare dinner."

"Dear Fellow Citizen:
You can do something about the problems facing this nation—the problems that worry you."

These are the first sentences of letters which appeared in our mailbox one day shortly after the New Year. Although the letters were familiar in their tone, alas, they were signed by people I had never met before. After reading their lead sentences, I was instinctively moved to consign them to what the *New Yorker* calls its "Letters We Never Finished Reading" file.

Nevertheless, I did hesitate. My curiosity was piqued by Vernon Mecham—until, in the following sentence, I discovered he was being used as a shill to entice me into buying a subscription to a magazine under the premise that I had an excellent chance of hitting the jackpot in a lucrative sweepstakes.

These were the only letters I received that day—chummy messages from strangers, strangers trying to get me to buy something or support some cause. No personal messages from someone I knew. Even so, I was momentarily flattered. My new-found correspondents were telling me that the political and economic future of the republic was dependent on my participation in their particular program.

Faced with this responsibility, I reflected on the role that letters play in our society. The word letters, in the Wisconsin Academy sense, has its most common association with literature. Yet, the majority of people seem to take it for granted that the word refers to what the postman puts in the mailbox. These kinds of letters have assumed many forms during their extensive history. The most familiar to us, of course, is the folded up piece of paper we

are accustomed to receiving in a stamped envelope. But letters have been written on pieces of bark, clay tablets, sheepskin, parchment, and, in World War II, V-mail letters were transmitted as photographs.

Letters, whatever their format, serve different functions. There are letters of introduction, letters of credit, letters-to-the-editor, fan letters, chain letters, love letters, letters of advice, letters of administration, letters of credence, letters of marque, letters of intent, letters patent, letters testamentary, dead letters, and *lettres de cachet* (not a *billet doux*, but an ominous notification of imprisonment or exile).

Or, consider that most pathetic communication of all—the suicide note, that summing up of a life which tries to explain in a few brief sentences why the person writing it has been driven to such an extreme. It is that last primal scream, that final and ironic affirmation of life that occurs moments before it is voluntarily extinguished.

The more commonplace letters are intimate communications, those written messages that people exchange as a means of reporting on the health and well-being of the sender, to inquire about the welfare of the receiver, and to pass along a chronicle of the latest happenings in the life of the writer.

Until the emergence of a form of universal literacy, letters were generally exchanged by members of the upper classes. A rewarding example can be found in the Paston Letters, an extensive collection of correspondence written by or to members of the Paston family in Norfolk, England between 1424 and 1509.

The evolution of the letter as a means of personal communication can be seen in its growing use as a literary convention. Two of the more notable novels of the eighteenth century—Richardson's *Pamela* and Smollett's *Humphry Clinker*—use the letter exclusively as their basis for revealing plot and character.

A recent popular example of the tradition was the Alexander Botts stories by William Hazlitt Upson. The quixotic adventures of the intrepid salesman for the Earthworm Tractor Company were a regular feature in the *Saturday Evening Post* during the 1930s and 1940s.

The once familiar discursive letter has come on hard times in recent years because of the supposed exigencies of modern life. People claim they are so rushed they don't have time to sit down and compose a letter. This situation has led to a greater reliance on the telephone to do the things that letters used to do. It's more convenient to pick up the telephone and contract business or share intimacies with a loved one or close friend. "It's the next best thing to being there," as Ma Bell reminds us.

Technology has provided a further assist where the telephone is too costly or the distances too remote. Talking letters, recorded on cassettes, can be mailed off with both the messages and the voices of the senders inscribed on tape.

Certainly, however, one of the appealing qualities of a letter is its ambience. A good letter both literally and figuratively unfolds for the reader—from the moment you slit open the envelope to the point when you reach the closing. The pace of the letter should be casual, but too few of us confess to having the time or the inclination to follow the course of the popular song and "sit right down and write myself a letter."

This is not to say that letter writing has been completely abandoned. On the contrary, it is flourishing in some sectors. Ann Landers and her counterparts receive bushel baskets full of mail each day. Movie and television personalities or sports personalities measure the impact of their careers by the volume of mail they receive. One has to conclude then that there is a subculture of citizens in this country who sit poised, ballpoint in hand and tablet before them. They are the compulsive letter writers, those eager to set words to paper in an effort to establish a connection between themselves and the current celebrity.

Norman Mailer, in one of his more biting infelicities, has characterized them as a "damp dull *wad* of the electorate." Nathanael West's Miss Lonelyhearts sees them as representatives of something more tragic, perhaps because each day he writes his column, he receives "more than thirty letters, all of them alike, stamped from the dough of suffering with a heart-shaped cookie knife."

These letters from "the wad" pack a punch we do not fully appreciate. One very natural contemporary instinct seems to be to sit down and dash off a letter of indignation whenever we are peeved about something. Politicians keep detailed box scores of this kind of mail. The letters comprise an important indication of the sentiments their constituents have toward sensitive issues. In a similar context, television producers realize that the fate of programs generally rises and falls on the tenor and volume of mail that comes into the network front office.

And then there are the letters that appear in the newspaper each day. Television personality Steve Allen used to do a routine which featured the reading of letters to the editor written to the *New York Daily News*. Allen would try his best to imbue his reading with the emotion the writer intended to express. (It was usually high dudgeon.) The inflection in Allen's voice would rise as he read. His eyebrows would knit in a show of indignation and he would stab frantically at the air with his hand. When he finished, you felt relaxed—and relieved. Someone out there had done something and bared his soul in the process. Someone had emerged momentarily from the anonymity of the wad.

Future historians will do well to remember that if they want to achieve a comprehensive understanding of those deeply personal and mysterious forces that are shaping our times, they should read a few letters from the wad.

BOOKMARKS/WISCONSIN

Midwesterners are certainly not alone when it comes to that winter phenomenon called "cabin fever," or the psychological experience of feeling "shack happy." But after a certain point during the bleak and blowing months, many of us feel druid doubts about the end of the eternal snows. One is nearly always assured of sarcastic chortles when quoting Shelley's "If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?" I've heard people saying that in December . . . .

Well, now that we are at a peak of the winter doldrums and life is not yet "mudluscious," it is time to think of vernal things of light and warmth. Naturally, in this corner of the *Review*, that means books, works by Wisconsin writers.

"Bookmarks/Wisconsin" for the spring issue is hereby dedicated to the proposition that there is light to be seen at the end of the tunnel of ice; sunlight, green light, the light of open windows and spring breezes. We've endured the tomes of Christmas, the novels of the New Year, and the unending Agatha Christie mysteries.

A number of Wisconsin-written novels have recently emerged from the cocoons of Eastern publishers. Nothing spectacular and destined for the ranks of greatness, but at least feats worthy of some consideration. And, since the rivers are beginning to thaw and bike trails are softening, it is time to examine some relatively new titles to be used in conjunction with flights upcoming.

We also now have a guide to gardening in Wisconsin, and this is certainly the right time for all good men and women to begin pouring over seed catalogs and looking at the "back 40 (square feet)" with some tenderness. And what would the approaching summer be like if there were no circuses to see?

Reviewing books has never been a chore or a bore, even through some dull and lackluster books. At work in each book is the writer's arsenal: energy, imagination, memory, and the need/desire to communicate. Bronowski once said that the printing press brought about "the democratization of the intellect," an assertion hard to dispute. The mass-printed Word was also a gift of the highest magnitude, for a book, a poem, a play, an essay are all offerings by writers to the unknown reader. No writer knows how many lives will be touched by his/her personal commitment to communication.

To be a critic or a reviewer is to distill many words into a few. It is to be an interpreter of another's intended or unexpected meanings. To read someone's well-intentioned labors is also to act as a reader-surrogate, to become a communal critical eye.

Most important is the fundamental sincerity of the work. For as long as I have acted the role of reader-surrogate, *sincerity* has been my watchword.

I have always enjoyed the etymological history of that word, for although the dictionaries all say *sincere* is derived from the Latin *sincerus*, "clean, pure, genuine, honest," I learned in Italy many years ago that in Roman times, the word was used to describe buildings and monuments—coming from the necessity of determining those walls and columns which were genuine marble or granite and those which were veneered with stone and being filled with a mixture of gravel and wax. Hence, I was told, *sin*, "to be without," and *cerus* or *cerotum*, "wax." When a work is solid, without something holding it together or filling it out, it is a moment of great satisfaction. Since the moments are so rare, it is therefore necessary to consider the degrees of sincerity of each work.

With that in mind, let us sally forth into the varied air of "Bookmarks/Wisconsin."

Hayward Allen

A WISCONSIN GARDEN GUIDE by Jerry Minnich; Wisconsin House, Ltd., Madison, Wisconsin, 1974. $6.95.

"The Garden has been a favorite theme of philosophers, from Bacon to Alcott, but we doubt if it ever has been treated with such rare humor as in the charming book . . . ." Although those are the words of a literary critic on the *Boston Transcript*, they could be applied to Jerry Minnich's *Wisconsin Garden Guide* as easily as to Charles Dudley Warner's *My Summer in a Garden* (1871). The two books are at opposite ends of the gardening spectrum, for one is concerned largely with the society of gardens and the other is the physical contact with the soil.

Minnich has written a very busy book, chock-full of details and points of interest for the Wisconsin gardener. It begins, naturally, with the earth found in the Badger state. His chapters are literally fecund, ranging from composting and mulching to specific kinds of growing things—vegetables, fruits, berries, and nuts, flowers, lawns, trees, and ornamental plantings—and an extensive consideration of insects and diseases and how to control them without the use of poisons. Minnich has a special section that deals with the broad range of "tools and sources," referring gardeners to clubs, organic products, UWEX county representatives, mail-order nurseries, and a suggested reading list. There is so much packed into the 347-page book, that it would probably have been better to begin

studying two months ago.

There are books about gardening and "Books about Gardening." One is a basic textbook about tilling and planting and weeding and harvesting. "Books about Gardening" treat the subject with a special reverence and familiarity, while telling the reader how to care for growing things. Minnich's *A Wisconsin Garden Guide* belongs to the latter class.

"Go to a poet and he will fill your imagination with pictures of the soil as the giver of life: Mother Earth, the patient, forgiving, and generous bearer of us all. Choosing a favorite poetic passage about the earth is as difficult as choosing the most perfect flower in the world," he writes, thereby revealing his own sensitivities about his subject and its own aesthetics. As counterpoint, however, Minnich shifts to the practical side of things: "Go to a Wisconsin geologist and you will get a different picture. He will talk of residual soils and transported soils, and bowldery sand, and glacial gravel, and stratified clay . . . . Go to a soil scientist . . . . Ask a farmer . . . . "

If there is a particular axe Minnich wishes to grind it is opposition to use of chemical fertilizers and advocacy of organic nutrients. While he is fair about his point of view and does spend time on "the other side," it is obvious that one is to opt for organic fertilizers. He even encourages gardeners to "wean" their soils, plants, and lawns of the "dependency" upon the hyped-up chemical applications.

One of the most delightful aspects of the book is Minnich's respect for natural growth. For example, concerning lawn care and weed control: "Use herbicides if you absolutely cannot stand the sight of weeds. But first, try this: Simply mow the lawn carefully, then stand back and ask yourself, 'Are the weeds *really* that horrible looking?' If the answer is yes, then stand back a little farther. Eventually, you will get far enough away to be unable to distinguish the weeds from the grass. And that, after all, is how most people see your lawn."

Let's hear one for the weeds.

THE BIGGEST, THE SMALLEST, THE LONGEST, THE SHORTEST by Dean Jensen; Wisconsin House, Ltd., Madison, Wisconsin, 1975. $15.

No spring or summer should be without a circus. No child of any age should be denied the awesome and delightful experience of clowns, acrobats, equestrians, pachyderms, jugglers, high-wire artistry, lions and their tamers, and peanuts, popcorn, soda, and cotton candy. For the child in us all should not be perpetually denied, and the circus is one of the most joyous ways to rekindle those youthful embers. Thankfully, the event, whether it is in three rings or one, in a great domed building or under a tattered and flapping tent, cannot be captured on video tape or film. The essential ingredient is "being there."

Since 1847, Wisconsin can lay claim to being the birthplace, if not the home, of the American Circus. It began when Edmund and Jeremiah Mabie brought to a halt the wagons of the Grand Olympic Arena and United States Circus on the shores of the great lake near Delavan, Wisconsin. It was far from being the first travelling show, which historically is traced to the day in 1815 when Hackaliah Bailey trotted his $1000 African elephant down New England streets, but the Mabie brothers' circus was one of the few travelling the roads of the nearly virginal Midwest.

Milwaukee journalist Dean Jensen has created one of the most enjoyable history books on the shelves, *The Biggest, the Smallest, the Longest, the Shortest*, which could be subtitled "all you've wanted to know about circuses in and out of Wisconsin, and more." The story is fascinating, especially since we have the Circus World Museum at Baraboo where Jensen gathered most of his information and sense of time and place.

Although the writing style is occasionally convoluted, and there is definitely a problem of organization in the book, the reader is faced with a problem described by the electronic media as "content override." The facts, pictures, chronologies, and insights are far more entertaining than the faults are distracting. How many people notice the warts on the clowns, the cracked patent leather boots on the lion tamer, or the stains on the aerialist's spangled costume?

WISCONSIN BIKE TRIPS by Phil Van Valkenberg; Wisconsin Tales and Trails, Incorporated, Madison, Wisconsin, 1975. $3.95.

CANOE TRAILS by Michael E. Duncanson; Wisconsin Tales and Trails, Incorporated, Madison, Wisconsin, 1975. $4.95.

WHITEWATER; QUIETWATER by Bob and Jody Palzer; Evergreen Paddleways, Two Rivers, Wisconsin, 1974. Cloth $12.95. Paper $7.95.

There are a number of Wisconsinites who are champing at the bit right about now. Canoeists and bicyclists are hard-pressed to hit the rivers and paths after having been denied their contact with Mother Nature for the past few months. Many have enjoyed cross-country skiing and downhill runs, but the devout practitioners find no substitutes for their sports.

For those who are just plain sick and tired of seasonal sedentariness and yearn for clear, warm breezes on summer days and nights, there is also no relief in sight, or so it seems. The days seem mired in cold mud, mixed with freezing rain and clumsy flakes. When will summer come?

Both the devout and the bored may find some surcease in several books that have been written to help outdoors people find new and exciting experiences. Bike riders who seek more than a ride around the block will find Phil Van Valkenberg's "twenty tours for young and old" to be a welcome addition to summer plans. The author is appreciative of the variety

of understanding of the craft of propelling a two-wheeled, ten-speed vehicle across the countryside, so he takes time to write "a few words about you, the motor," how to buy a bicycle, how to ride it, and how to survive the hostile enemies of bike riders—cars, roads, dogs, and equipment failures. Each of the twenty trips is accompanied by a map, a description of the territory to be covered, and places to look for. He also writes in a way which will either inspire one to try a longer trip someday or will make one want to get out the bike today and just ride for the sake of riding.

Canoe Trails is similar to *Wisconsin Bike Trips* in its approach to the subject. For people who would like to see southern Wisconsin from a different point of view, Michael Duncanson's book will provide the opportunity. So will Jody and Bob Palzer's *Whitewater; Quietwater*, which not only covers all of Wisconsin but some sidetrips to northern Michigan and Illinois.

It is difficult to provide a comparison between the two books. It might be begging the issue to say that both should be in any canoeist's library, but both do present information that is valuable to those who want to put a boat in a river and move from one point to another downstream. Each book has its weak points which are often covered by the other. Where one wants for detailed descriptions about particular stretches of water, the other will have it. Where one tends to be turgid and overly instructive, the other glides easily over the needed information.

Whichever is used, both are substantial enough to merit saying that one would be up a creek without one or both of them in the rucksack or paddle bag.

THE DUCHESS OF GLOVER by Herbert Kubly; Doubleday and Co., New York, 1975. $8.95.

The Duchess of Glover is divided into four "books," each of which examines the facets of one Minnesota-born Calysta Blaine Glover beginning at the *fin-de-seicle*, the era of America's adolescence, and ending seventy-odd years later. I enjoyed most of the first three sections. The last part very nearly spoiled the experience.

Herbert Kubly, UW-Parkside English professor, has a national reputation for his European travel books, beginning with his 1956 National Book Award for *American in Italy*. Since then he has written about Sicily, Switzerland, and more on the Italian mainland. This prolificacy is both useful and apparent in the first two books of *The Duchess of Glover*, as Cally is given a world tour by her lover, Duke Glover. Kubly is more at home with European descriptions than with those of other places on the globe, so when the couple settle in Switzerland, the reader is afforded elaborate pictures of places and things European. Diet and details, palazzos and piazzas, peopled by phantasms well-dressed and urbanely wealthy, decadent to a fault—the Duke and Duchess of Glover wallow in a veritable garden of dreams, careless to distraction.

It is a fine portrait of the idle rich, the benefactors to huge fortunes which require spending, which is the closest thing to work known by the aristocracy. Duke begins to collect art for a museum dedicated to his insane wife's good name and obscure memory. Cally begins to clutter her life with bric-a-brac and lovers.

Thereby hangs the tale. When Kubly is doing the Tour, he makes a very good guide to the opulent life. When he begins to lead the reader down the path to Eden and the palace of fleshy delights, he falters in his steps or goes round and round in circles.

It is one thing to be better than Baedeker, it is another to try to equal Lawrence. *Lady Chatterley's Lover* is treated like the Bible by Cally and some of her adolescent lovers, and Kubly's attempts at emulation are embarrassingly obvious. Even if inspired by wry wit, the joke falls flat. The result is third-rate, Olympia Press, soft-core imagery and a vocabulary of two four-letter words.

The concluding chapter or book, which transforms the somewhat formless but still appealing Calysta into a caricature of a geriatric Candy, defeats the other parts ultimately. What one is left with, at the end, is not a worthwhile puzzle of trying to relate the last page with the first, which is a creative literary exercise, but with a sense of futility after having spent so much time with the project.

TWISTER by David Hagberg; Dell Publishing Co., New York, 1975. $1.25.

FOREST FIRE by David James (pseud.); Belmont Tower Books, New York, 1975. $1.50.

BLIZZARD by David James (pseud.); Belmont Tower Books, New York, 1975. $1.50.

What does Shakespeare of Stratford-on-Avon have to do with David Hagberg of Cambridge, Wisconsin? Or with Mickey Spillane, Zane Grey, Agatha Christie, or Frederick Forsyth? The answer, please? They all wrote according to their own formulas, and they all staked out special literary territories, from tragedy to thrillers to mysteries, cowboys or spies, and disasters.

Hagberg literally caused a publishing avalanche this past year as he had three novels released almost simultaneously. Obviously, the Dell folks believed that if the American consumer went for films like *The Posiedon Adventure, Jaws, Airport '75, The Towering Inferno*, and all those other disasters that made millions of dollars, then novels about similar human dilemmas would catch fire, too.

Taken separately, the three works might serve as entertainment. Read together, they very nearly come off like identical siblings in different clothing. The major theme is how a natural phenomenon, which could have been either averted or

predicted, wreaks havoc and destruction in a short time, during which individuals discover their true identities. Cowards become heroes, heroes cowards, men and women become leaders of others, and authorities become followers, etc.

Midwesterners are no strangers to the horror of fire: Chicago, and Peshtigo, Wisconsin, 1871; Hinckley, Minnesota, 1894; Cloquet, Minnesota, 1918; and countless towns perished in flames. Hagberg (pseud. James) was a newsman in Duluth, so it was no accident that he came to know the area devastated by America's last great flaming killer which left 400 dead. His Duluth experience also created the environment for *Blizzard*, which smothers the community in snow and cold.

Twister is Hagberg's latest contribution to natural chaos. Set in southcentral Wisconsin, the novel portrays the effects that a monstrous series of tornados has on the populace. One spring day, a number of whirling winds descend from the clouds on the quaint community of Cambridge and eventually kill 437 of the town's 600 plus citizens.

In *Forest Fire*, *Blizzard*, and *Twister* one finds basically the same elements: one person alone against the elements; a leader who goes against the odds; a coward or two; and some sex. Of the three novels, *Blizzard* is the easiest to dismiss, for it is too simplistic, unrealistic, and powerless. *Forest Fire* is the strongest work, possibly because it is based more firmly in fact. The other two are based on probability shaded by reality. *Twister* has the most convincing characters, although they do not speak as well as B-film mannequins.

The three novels reveal Hagberg's journalistic past. He is better able to recreate the present moment than the distant past, so his flashbacks are weak and his forecasts fictional. It appears that he is growing as a novelist, that he is learning the medium as he uses it, and that, it is hoped, he will continue to find disasters. (Editor's note: it is hoped, too, that Hagberg will impress upon the cover artists to read the works before providing illustrations—the survivors of the 1918 Cloquet fire would have died of fright had they seen the cover's helicopter descending from the clouds of smoke and flame.)

HISTORY OF THE ATCHISON, TOPEKA, AND SANTA FE RAILWAY by Keith L. Bryant, Jr.; MacMillan Publishing Co., New York, 1975. $12.95.

Keith Bryant, professor of history at UW-Milwaukee, has written one of the eight volumes of the series *Railroads of America*. An impressive study of a facet of American history and national development. Detailed but not tedious, well-illustrated and containing many old photographs, Bryant's work is a significant one. And there's an entire chapter about Fred Harvey, the restaurant king whose role in the settling of the West has been too long unheralded.

POLITICAL MONEY by David W. Adamany and George E. Agree; Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore, Maryland, 1975. $11.95.

Political scientist David Adamany of the UW-Madison (and head of the State Department of Revenue) has joined forces with campaign finance strategist George Agree to create what will undoubtedly become a required textbook for politicians during this election year. The study comes at a time when the financing of campaigns is not only working under fire but also under new laws. Neither Adamany nor Agree support the present Federal Election Campaign Act, and they think it is "inconsistent with democratic ideals" to not help those who seek office with public financing.

ICEBERGS AND THEIR VOYAGES by Gwen Schultz; William Morrow and Co., New York, 1975. $5.95.

UW-Madison geography Professor Gwen Schultz is no newcomer to icebergs, having already written *Glaciers and the Ice Age* and *Ice Age Lost*. Nor is she new to children's stories, with *The Blue Valentine* as an example. It is fitting that she should marry these two experiences by writing a book about icebergs for younger readers. Full of pictures which have captions that say a great deal in a few words, the book tells the "history" of those great islands of ice which flow from our frigid seas. The most fascinating part is the prediction that one day ships will tow, push, or attach propelling gear to icebergs to send them to places needing water.

Reviews by Hayward Allen

THE LIFE OF BIRDS (2nd ed.) by Joel Carl Welty; W.B. Saunders Co., Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, 1975. $18.50.

It is difficult to become lost in the world of birds indoors on a dark winter day . . . but one way to quickly become engrossed is by dipping into Dr. Welty's book that focusses on Aristophanes' question: "What sort of life is it among the birds?"

The author's answer is a fascinating mixture of the scientific and popular, resulting in 623 pages of factual information presented in a lively literary style: "In no other vertebrate to the fires of metabolism burn more furiously than in a tiny hummingbird." And it is a style that includes frequent references to ancient literature: "Pliny says that the Greek poet Aeschylus met his death because an eagle, carrying a tortoise, mistook his bald head for a smooth rock."

The book has been called by one professional ornithologist "the best and broadest coverage of bird biology." This second edition updates the already acclaimed first edition. After a short but thorough resume of the bird families of the world, Dr. Welty deals with various aspects of biology, habits, ecology, geography, evolution, and relationships with man in a series of

definitive chapters. He shows a monumental grasp of his subject as he expertly weaves into his own background of knowledge concepts and examples from around the world, gleaned from study of 14,000 literature references.

The Life of Birds is directed toward the general student of birds, not necessarily the specialist. To this end, the photographs, excellent sketches, and easily comprehensible tables and figures are particularly appropriate. One can gain quite an education just browsing through the illustrations and explanatory captions. Suggested readings at the end of each chapter, as well as the extensive bibliography, add to its usefulness.

It is a delightful book to read and a valuable reference source. Anyone interested in birds will be stimulated by it.

—Ruth L. Hine

Photograph of Grant Wood with "Arbor Day," 1932. Viking Press Photo

GRANT WOOD: A STUDY IN AMERICAN ART AND CULTURE by James M. Dennis; The Viking Press, New York, 1975. $35.

It is obviously time for a reappraisal of Grant Wood. Accorded initial lavish praise in the 1930s, Grant Wood has not had a good press since. A. James Speyer of the Art Institute of Chicago believes Wood's "qualities as a painter have been quite exaggerated." John Canaday, in his *Mainstreams of Modern Art*, assigns Wood to a backwater pool, seeing him as an artist who was afflicted with "the virus that attacked American regionalism and drained it of significant content." The most cruel cut of all has come recently from *New York Times* senior art critic Hilton Kramer who, when asked if a resurgence of popular interest didn't give cause for a second look at the artist, commented that he saw "no need to disinter that corpse."

UW-Madison art historian James M. Dennis has taken a more scholarly attitude and given us a thorough analysis of the self-taught Iowa artist and his place in American art and culture. The Dennis book is timely. Wood has too long and too simplistically been dismissed on the basis that his self-proclaimed regionalist painting represents a dead end in the evolution of American art.

The 1930s was a time for manifestoes, tracts, and polemics. The squabble that flared up during the Depression years over the virtues or shortcomings of regionalism—and more particularly the intrinsic qualities of its three major proponents: Wood, Thomas Hart Benton, and the first University of Wisconsin artist-in-residence, John Steuart Curry—has served to obscure our understanding of this short-lived and ultimately closed chapter in American cultural history. It is more useful today to search for the truth in the artists' works rather than to argue about how persuasive their public pronouncements might be when scrutinized in the light of contemporary realities.

The works of Grant Wood the artist should be examined on three levels—his success as a satirist, his skill as a designer, and his faithfulness to the concept of the regionalism that he and his colleagues articulated.

Wood was bitingly effective as a satirist. His most famous painting, "American Gothic," utilizes the convention of medieval formalism to point up the intellectual and material barrenness of Midwest farm life in the thirties. His "Daughters of Revolution" permanently captures the snooty dishonesty of those who would use their lineage to uphold their empty morality. And the trenchant commentary reflected in the character portraits he did for a Limited Editions publication of *Main Street*, by Sinclair Lewis, in many ways surpasses the prose sketches that form a major part of the novel.

Although it has been noted in previous considerations of Wood's art, Professor Dennis calls attention to the artist's strengths as a designer. Most of his works are extremely well composed. A large number of his landscapes become more notable for the integrity of their abstract design than for their verisimilitude to nature.

But any final evaluation of Wood's achievement must deal with his passionate preoccupation with

regionalism, a movement he saw as an antidote to the inhumanities that had come to be associated with urban growth, and something he used as a refutation of the once popular notion that "it was practically impossible for a painter to be recognized in America without having behind him the prestige of training either in Paris or Munich."

The final judgment of Grant Wood rests not with the fact that his regionalist approach failed to extend an artistic tradition, but on the realization that what Wood said about the virtues of regionalism was too often compromised or contradicted by the statements he made in his pictures. As Dennis notes, Wood's crucial failing was that he transformed his beloved Iowa landscape "into a world of well-being, a metamorphosis of nature that gave no hint of the hardships of tilling the land, no sense of the arbitrary catastrophes of nature or the inconsistencies of human institutions. This rural paradise is occupied by innocent farm folk, anonymous providers immunized from the harsh, impersonal realities of bad weather, pests, disease, fluctuating mortgages, and mortgages."

The result is that Wood's artistic truth becomes one of abstract design rather than a faithfulness to basic human and natural realities. We therefore find it difficult to accept the majority of his regionalist paintings as much more than appealing decoration.

This study by Professor Dennis provides a firmly documented argument that Grant Wood is nevertheless worthy of analysis and comment. He was not simply a parochial anomaly, but an artist who evoked "a pastoral longing to escape modern civilization by fleeing the city into a fanciful countryside," and thereby "reiterated the impulse of generations of Americans concerned about the social and cultural consequences of industrialization."

Here is a book which provides sumptuous color reproductions of every Grant Wood painting that merits serious consideration. It also contains a substantial number of reproductions of Wood's drawings and lithographs as well as works by other artists which place the Iowa artist in a larger context.

It is interesting to note that this book represents the first full-scale study of Grant Wood. It is probably safe to presume that there will be no supplementary efforts for quite a while. Professor Dennis has, simultaneously, provided a needed reinterpretation and adequately established the extent of Grant Wood's place in American social and intellectual history.

—Arthur Hove

THE UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN: ONE HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FIVE YEARS
edited by Allan G. Bogue and Robert Taylor; University of Wisconsin Press, Madison Wisconsin, 1975. (illust.) $7.50.

For the alumnus and burdened Wisconsin taxpayer who wonders what his dollars for the University have gone for all these years, here are the answers. He will find a detailed report, not always interesting but never dull reading, of the inner workings of a great University written by people who have lived through the events described, including many who have helped shape them. This very fact may be a flaw in the carefully reported history of a period, in that less subjective observers might have provided a more impartial narrative, for example, in the chapters detailing results of research in the physical, biological, and social sciences, and the humanities. But one seldom questions accomplishments that lead to a Nobel Prize or a Pulitzer Prize—of which there have been several.

The title of this book is misleading. Apart from two chapters covering seventy-eight pages that review the University's years up to 1925 and then from 1925 to 1950, the book deals explicitly with the years 1949 to 1974. It is not to be confused with another recent volume entitled *A Resourceful University, The University of Wisconsin-Madison In Its 125th Year*, (see *Wisconsin Academy Review*, Winter, 1975 issue), which is organized differently and intended to serve a different purpose. In addition to the historical chapters mentioned, this book deals in separate chapters with financial support in recent years from the State of Wisconsin and other major sources; the tremendous expansion of physical resources; the system of faculty governance of academic affairs which is probably not matched in extent by any other university; and the vicissitudes of merger during which a first-rank research University was amalgamated with a dozen other degree-granting institutions plus University Center and Extension systems. Other chapters deal with the changing character of the students; the almost unbelievable changes in curriculum offerings at undergraduate and graduate levels in little more than two decades; the research accomplishments among the major divisions of the faculty mentioned earlier; advances in the performing arts; and finally with University outreach through continued growth of the "Wisconsin Idea."

Some of the chapters are wholly descriptive in character and valuable principally for the factual detail they provide: "The University's Supporting Resources," "The Growth of the University's Physical Resources," "The University and the Arts," and "The 'Wisconsin Idea' Expanded." Others are distinguished for sprightliness and readability, exemplified by Emeritus Dean Ingraham's review of the years from 1925 to 1950; for depth of insight as well as coverage in F. Chandler Young's analysis of student attitudes throughout the 1960s and early 1970s; for the perceptive analysis by David Fellman of the influence on the University's academic distinction of its legally established and long-

nurtured system of faculty governance.

Perhaps the story tells more about the way things happen in a university community than most people want to know. As a history, however, it may be significant to someone that departmental relationships in this University permit a professor of philosophy to develop a course in the philosophy of art for art majors; and that distinguished scholars in the liberal arts, agriculture, business, engineering, law and medicine will subordinate their department loyalties to undertake interdisciplinary studies under the aegis of an Institute for Environmental Studies.

Although relatively brief, this is a carefully documented history that probes intensively into a dozen different academic and administrative functions where the distinctions between a good and a not-so-good university become clearly revealed. The University of Wisconsin-Madison, due at least in part to its first century heritage, shows up reasonably well over the last twenty-five years.

—H. Clifton Hutchins

SONG OF AN EARTH-MAN
by Reid Bryson

I'm an earth-man who knows
the song of the wind.
The land is my lover,
the sun is my friend.

I roar with the tempest,
I chat with the breeze.
I dance with the flowers,
Commune with the trees.

I awake with the springtime.
I grow with the rain.
I'm a mountain-giant,
a dwarf on the plain.

I laugh with the burble
of fresh mountain rill.
I sigh with the beauty
of cool waters still.

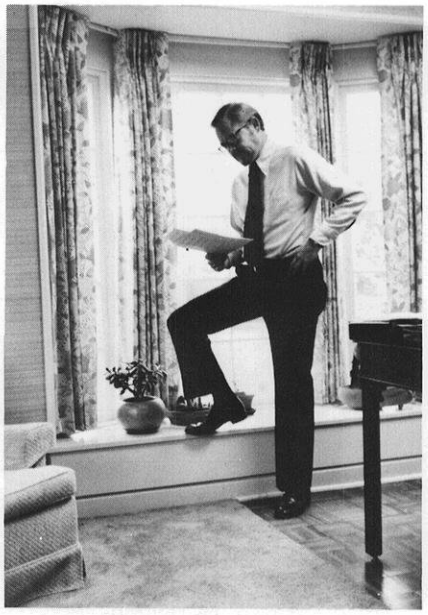
I soar with the eagle,
I dive with the loon.
I brave with the headland
and drift with the dune.

Among all my peers
I'm a very strange man,
for an eon to me
is a very short span.

I follow a flute
from a faraway time
and open my heart
in stanzas of rhyme.

DREAM SONG TO THE BUFFALO SPIRIT
by Gerti Sennett

Old shaggy-headed one with dark horns,
Curved smooth and sharp as obsidian, I sing for you.
My song came in a dream and you were there.
In my dream, I saw and heard
A vision of your migration across the plains
And the rumble of your beating hoofs on the prairie.
My older brother, are you content in the place
Of the Silent One, when you range over the plains
Of the high happy hunting grounds?
I sing of Sioux, Arapaho, Paiute: Hunters of you,
The Chief of all animals that walk.
I sing my song, Old shaggy-head, when your spirit crosses
The blue night skies where our spirits meet,
Where white buffalo clouds pass in herds
And you look upon me with brown velvet eyes.
I sing that you, Great One, tipped the bowl of stars,
As long ago, you tipped the ground.
This is my song; I sing in a dream of your nobility,
Oh, mighty shaggy-headed one, wait for me, I will come.



Inside the Academy

By James R. Batt
Executive Director

It seems hardly possible, but it was just about five years ago this month that I was called to the University Club in Madison to meet, and be interviewed by, the Wisconsin Academy Council.

Louis Busse was chairman of a search committee which had been set up to identify likely prospects for the position of first full-time executive director of the Academy. At the time I met him, he was carrying around a large brown briefcase which he was unable to buckle, crammed as it was with the papers of other applicants. The effect was unnerving.

Louis had asked that I have lunch with him and "a few other people." That we did, following which we adjourned to a nearby meeting room. To my surprise, the remainder of the Council was awaiting us, grouped in a kind of semicircle about a chair which I was invited to occupy. For better or for worse—and I guess it has been a bit of both—my application was not consigned to that large brown briefcase; I was placed in the employ of the Academy.

Much has happened since that time. Several of the Council members then present are now deceased. This occurred with such frequency following my appointment that there were gentle jibes to the effect that the impact of my service was something other than that which had been anticipated.

Many, indeed most, of those members of the Academy governing board present for the interview that day are, fortunately, still very much among the quick, and, until recent months, held Council office. Prior to the amendment of our Constitution and Bylaws last spring, all past presidents of the Academy who resided in Wisconsin remained on the Council following completion of their term of office. Consequently, some of the past president members of the Council had been active in Academy governance for up to thirty years.

Revisions of the governing documents of the Academy, recommended by the Council itself (the majority of which were past presidents) and approved overwhelmingly by the membership, resulted in a restructuring of the Council. The election in the fall of 1975 thus introduced the new positions (eight in all) of councilors-at-large, who were to serve along with the seven elected officers and those persons who were past presidents at the time of the adoption of the amended Constitution and Bylaws and who exercised the option to remain on the Council. Henceforth, Academy presidents would serve only a one-year term as immediate past president beyond their one-year terms as president-elect and president.

Continuity of leadership in a period of organizational transition was assured by the decision of five past presidents to retain their Council membership. Those persons and the dates of their presidencies are: Louis W. Busse (1972-73) and John W. Thomson (1967-68) of Madison, and Katherine G. Nelson (1952-53), Norman C. Olson (1970-71) and Adolph A. Suppan (1968-69 of Milwaukee. F. Chandler Young of Madison chose not to exercise the option available to him as past president (1971-72), but was, however, elected to a four-year term as a councilor-at-large. In addition, Robert P. Hanson of Madison is now serving a one-year term of office as immediate past president.

Past presidents who elected to give up their Council seats include: J. Martin Klotsche (1962-63) and Richard W.E. Perrin (1973-74), Milwaukee; Ralph N. Buckstaff (1954-55), Oshkosh; Stephen F. Darling (1956-57), Appleton; Henry A. Meyer (1959-60), Whitewater; Carl Welty (1961-62), Beloit; and Robert J. Dicke (1958-59), Aaron J. Ihde (1963-64), Otto L. Kowalke (1948-49), William B. Sarles (1969-70), Henry A. Schuette (1944-45), and Walter E. Scott (1964-65) of Madison.

In recent years, some of the past presidents—whether because of other interests, advancing years, or illness—were not as active in Academy governance as they once had been. Such was certainly not the case for others, especially Bob Dicke, Aaron Ihde, Dick Perrin, Walter Scott, and Joseph G. Baier (Milwaukee, 1955-56), who gave up his Council post last summer when he moved to Arizona. But all of the retired past presidents, like their five colleagues who remain on the Council, had a turn at the highest office of Academy responsibility, and all gave of themselves unstintingly.

It is upon this foundation of service and accomplishment that we now move forward with the building of the Academy of the future. And there is no way that Louis Busse's old brown briefcase could ever begin to accommodate all the debts of thanks due the many men and women who have lighted our pathway to tomorrow.

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