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SOCIAL CHANGE AND THE ARTS
PASSION FOR LAND, HISTORY, BOOKS

Wisconsin Academy Review

A JOURNAL OF WISCONSIN CULTURE

Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters

Fall 1997, Volume 43, Number 4

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Goldenrod. Photo by Thomas L. Eddy.

FRONT COVER: George Washington at the Battle of Princeton *by Charles Willson Peale (1741–1827). Oil on canvas, 40 x 29 inches, 1779, Philadelphia. Many copies of this work exist. Family history has this painting, called the Jennings copy, being given by Washington to Lafayette, but there is no proof. If there is a Lafayette connection it is more likely that Lafayette himself commissioned the work. The original painting was commissioned by the Pennsylvania Supreme Council in gratitude for the victories at Trenton and Princeton which resulted in the liberation of Philadelphia.*

BACK COVER: Reverend Joseph Sewall *by John Singleton Copley (1737–1815). Oil on canvas, 30 x 25 inches, 1766, Boston. Reverend Sewall, called "The Good," was the rector at Old South Church in Boston. This painting is a good example of Copley's later work, which was somewhat darker than his paintings of the late 1750s and early 1760s.*

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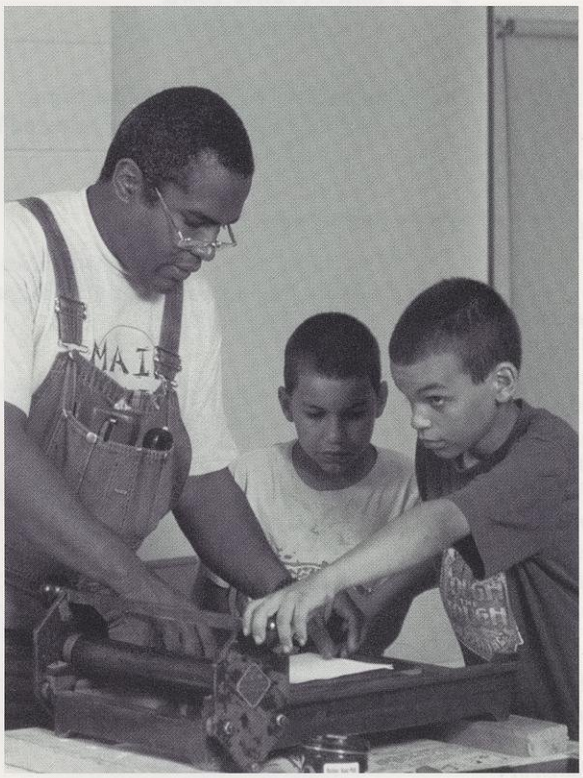
The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters was chartered by the State Legislature on March 16, 1870, as a membership organization serving the people of Wisconsin. Its mission is to encourage investigation in the sciences, arts, and letters and to disseminate information and share knowledge.

Editor's Notes

The rise of the Arts and Crafts movement in the late nineteenth century was, in part, an acutely human response to the impersonal nature of factory-produced goods and the desire to improve the lives of workers, including women and children as well as men. While this was true to a greater extent in Britain, there were proponents of the movement in the United States who believed that philosophical and healthful benefits could result from a close association with the design and production of both decorative and utilitarian objects.

Today the Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts in Racine is participating, in their own special way, in a kind of revival of this Arts and Crafts tradition which languished just before World War I and was further diminished by the Great Depression. And while the social changes that inspire the action today are quite different from the social ills that prompted that earlier movement, the basic philosophy is the similar: a belief that beauty and creativity have therapeutic effects, and a conviction that there is reason to celebrate the act of designing and the process of construction.



Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr., assists young bookmakers in Racine. The project is sponsored by the Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts. Photos courtesy the museum.

The recognition by the staff and board members at the Wustum museum, the Haggerty museum at Marquette University, and other art museums in the state of a need for change in the way art museums serve their publics has manifested itself in a number of community outreach projects. One highly successful example is a Wustum-sponsored program involving young people in the very personal art of bookmaking—handmade paper, design, letterpress printing and hand lettering, and bookbinding.

In choosing this path of service to the community, the Wustum echoes the great printing tradition of the Arts and Crafts movement: Doves, Kelmscott, Mosher, Roycroft presses, as well as the memorable though short-lived Auvergne Press in which Frank Lloyd Wright was a partner. Further, these fledgling student artists join an impressive group of bookmakers practicing their craft in Wisconsin today, including Walter Hamady, Caren Heft, JoAnna Poehlmann, and Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr.; also such art presses as the Silver Buckle, Arcadian, and Tiramisu. And we would be remiss not to mention the role of Woodland Pattern Book Center of Milwaukee, a nonprofit organization which, since it was founded in 1979, has offered appreciation, encouragement, exhibition space, and workshop opportunities for small presses and bookcrafters.

Thus enthusiasm for hands-on involvement in the making of books—the book as art—is playing a reformist role in at least one Wisconsin city as we enter a new period in our development as a society.

Evidence of passion for a special interest or cause seemed to surface again and again in the preparation of this issue: passion for specific tracts of land to which one became attached during childhood (Tom Eddy) or in young adulthood (Paul Hayes); passion for historic art and artifacts that provide clues to how our forebears lived (George Parker); passion for books whose pages and bindings divulge more than the words printed therein (Jack Stark); passion for a haunting photograph of a room which at first seemed "a place of sanctuary," then was perceived as not sanctifying, and in the end inspired a poem (Brent Dozier). In each case, these writers give us the benefit of their intellect and knowledge along with their fervor.

We complete this issue with a thoughtful commentary by Robert Siegfried on the discipline of science as it relates, or in some instances does not relate, to the history of science; an excerpt from a book by late Wisconsin author Edward Harris Heth, who deserves not to be forgotten; poetry and reviews; and an essay on the perceived value of the Wisconsin Academy as expressed by a long-time member and contributor, Arthur Hove.

Best wishes to our friends at the University of Wisconsin Press as they celebrate sixty years of publishing.

Wisconsin Academy Gallery schedule

September: Janica Yoder, photography
October: Bert Brouwer, paintings
November: Sara Belleau, photography

Faith B. Miracle

Note: Greg Anderson photographed the silver, pewter, and brass objects for "Lighting and Dining in the Eighteenth Century" by George Parker for the summer 1997 issue. Our apologies to the photographer for not crediting the photos at the time the article was published. *Editor.*

CONTRIBUTORS

- Brent Dozier is a Madison poet whose work appears from time to time in the *Wisconsin Academy Review*.
- Thomas L. Eddy is a past recipient of the National Association of Biology Teachers' Outstanding Biology Teacher Award and the Kohl Teaching Fellowship Award. He teaches for the Green Lake School District and Marian College, Fond du Lac. In addition to his involvement with natural areas preservation, he is currently preparing an inventory of vascular plants at Mitchell Glen in Green Lake County. His report cataloging 921 vascular plants in Green Lake County appeared in the 1996 Academy *Transactions*.
- Steve Ellis teaches for the Green Lake School District and recently coached Wisconsin's *Odyssey of the Mind* team at the world finals. At the University of Texas, El Paso, he "fell in love with" desert herptiles. When not teaching and illustrating, he conducts genealogical research.
- David George lived in Wisconsin for twenty years and attended the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. Widely published in Europe and America, he is currently completing his fourth book, *Things of the Sea Belong to the Sea*, based on his years in Surfside, California. He has received awards from the West Haven Connecticut Council of the Arts and was the grand prize award winner in the 1997 national poetry contest sponsored by the Pennsylvania Poetry Society. He lives and writes in Sacramento, California.
- S.D. Hardin tutors Southeast Asian refugees in English at Western Wisconsin Technical College in La Crosse. He is a storyteller and appears at regional arts centers, coffee houses, and book stores. His poems have appeared in *Lake Superior Review*, *North Coast Review*, and *Wisconsin Poets' Calendar.*
- Caren Heft has been associate curator at the Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts for more than eight years. She is a book artist whose work is included in collections throughout the world and in major universities. As publisher of the Arcadian Press, she has created multiple broadsides, artists' books, and other works in hand-set type on hand-made paper. She has written extensively in art publications, served on jury panels for regional and national competitive art exhibitions, and has been well received as visiting artist. She holds a master's degree in fine arts, with honors, from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.
- Edward Harris Heth (1909-1963) was born in Wisconsin and attended the University of Wisconsin. Writing became his career after his first short story was bought by H.L. Mencken in 1930. He produced seven novels, one of which, *Any Number Can Play*, was made into a film. He lived in New York City for a several years and eventually came back to Wisconsin and built a spacious home between Wales and Dousman. His experiences here inspired *My Life on Earth*, which is part autobiographical and part fiction. Heth was a superb cook and gardener, and in 1956 he published his last book, *The Wonderful World of Cooking*. He died suddenly in Milwaukee, leaving an unfinished novel.
- Pat Kardas is a graduate of Alverno College and has been with the Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts for more than six years, working as programming/administrative assistant to the director. She is a published writer and poet and was selected to participate in the poetry section at the Wisconsin Academy's 1997 conference. She is the author of *Cheap Shots: Videotaping for Nonprofits*, published by Scarecrow Press.
- Anne Landre's poems have been accepted by such journals as *Peninsula Review, North Stone Review,* and *High Plains Literary Review*. She lives in Milwaukee and works for the insurance industry.
- Norman J. Olson, writer and artist, was born in Baldwin and lived on a Wisconsin dairy farm until 1959 when the farm "went bust" and his family moved to St. Paul. He attended the University of Wisconsin–River Falls and now lives in Maplewood, Minnesota. He worked for years in the printing business and currently is employed by the State of Minnesota Department of Human Rights. His poems, short stories, essays, and drawings have been widely published.
- George Parker is chairman and chief executive officer of the Janesville Foundation and Caxambas Associates and former chairman of the board of The Parker Pen Company and Manpower, Inc. He holds degrees from Brown University and the University of Michigan and has honorary doctor of laws degrees from Milton College and Brown University. He is a member of the Archaeological Association of America and the National Institute of Maritime Archaeology and has a special interest in Early American furnishings. He lives in Janesville and Marco Island, Florida.
- Mara Ptacek lives in Franklin and is a lifelong resident of Wisconsin. Her poems have appeared in such publications as *The Writer's Block* and *Wisconsin Poets' Calendar* and she has participated in numerous poetry readings in the Milwaukee area.
- Robert Siegfried grew up in the small river city of Marietta, Ohio. He came to the University of Wisconsin to seek a Ph.D. in chemistry, but soon switched to a joint major with the history of science. Before returning to Madison in 1963 as a faculty member in the history of science department, he held positions with Boston University and the universities of Arkansas and Illinois. Since retiring in 1987, he has devoted much of his time to writing, and two books are in progress.
- Jack Stark is an attorney with the Legislative Reference Bureau in Madison. In addition to his law degree he holds a Ph.D. in English from the University of Wisconsin–Madison and, before enrolling in law school, taught at Kent State University and the University of Wisconsin–Eau Claire. He has published several books and numerous articles.
- Phyllis Wax lives in Milwaukee, where she has been a teacher, bookstore proprietor, and editor. Her poems have appeared in *Wisconsin Poets' Calendar* and such journals as *Dreams and Secrets, Windfall*, *Plainsong*, and *Wisconsin Academy Review*.

Art Museums at the Millennium

by Caren Heft and Pat Kardas

Art museums in this country have been handed a provocative challenge: Given the prediction that by the middle of the twenty-first century the majority population of this country will be of other than European descent, how can museums broaden their programs to include these populations? And what happens if they don't succeed?

Nationally and within the state of Wisconsin, museums curate special exhibitions and programs targeted toward the interests of African-American and Hispanic populations. Some hire vans to pick up children at their homes, bringing them in for special programming; some work through local school districts and transport entire grades for these programs. What is new is the intensity of effort involved.

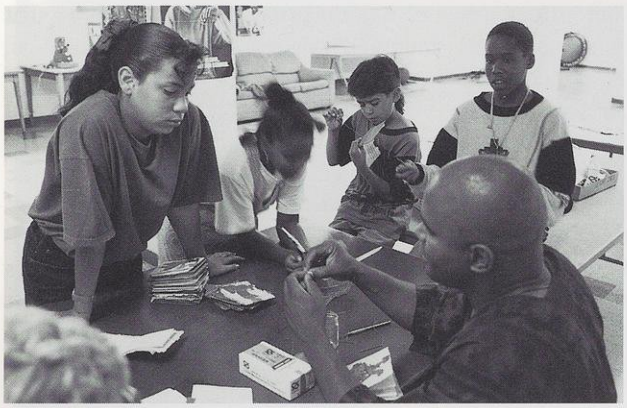
Visiting artist Munheer Buahadeen and a young bookmaker.

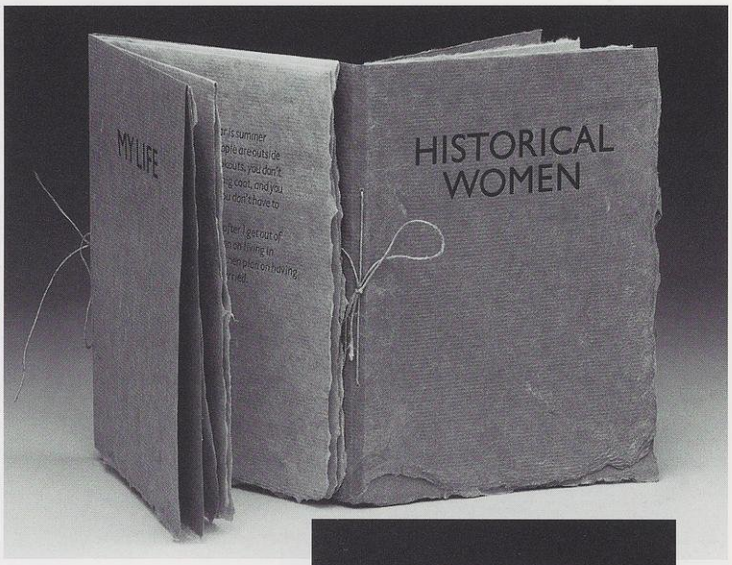
It is interesting to briefly compare the approaches of two Wisconsin museums, each trying to build a broader base of non-traditional members, viewers, and participants: the Haggerty Museum of Art at Marquette University in Milwaukee and the Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts in Racine.

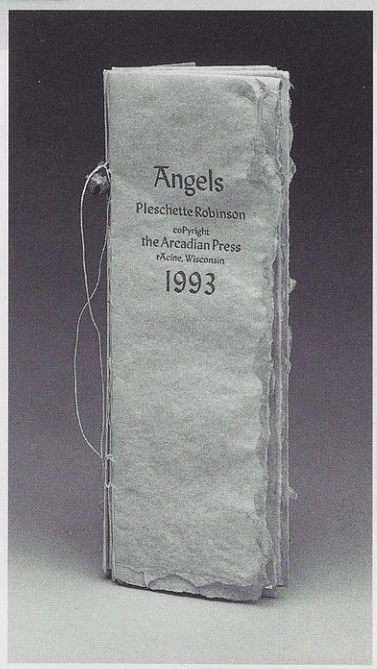
While one is a university-affiliated art museum in a large city, the other is a small community arts center. But they both share a deep desire to present the best in art to the widest possible audience. That means reaching out to the minority populations as well as to more traditional audiences.

Kit Basquin, curator of education and public programs at the Haggerty Museum, says it is important to create a welcoming atmosphere for visitors who do not regularly attend museum exhibitions. The Haggerty established a community-based, culturally diverse advisory committee and collaborated with the Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design, which underwrote a ten-week Saturday morning photography class as part of their pre-college programming. Interest among teachers from the Milwaukee Public Schools also helped greatly. In addition, the Haggerty developed outreach programs for specific exhibitions featuring minority-created artworks and crafts.

Wustum's efforts mirrored the Haggerty's, despite the difference between them in staff size and budget. Wustum exhibitions have centered on African-American artists and historical African art. Special receptions featuring well-known minority artists were designed to provide a comfortable atmosphere. Wustum has also sought to involve non-members, attracted rep-







ABOVE: Pleschette Robinson and Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr. RIGHT: Three finished products, created by bookmaker Robinson. She wrote the text, made the papers, printed, collated, and bound the books. Angels *hung on the Christmas tree at the White House in 1993.*

resentatives from a diverse population to serve on the board of directors, visited the Black Ministers' Council to encourage attendance at these special events, and established an advisory committee on minority involvement. In addition, each summer the museum grounds are filled to capacity with a free Family Arts Festival which incorporates a variety of arts, entertainment, and hands-on activities.

Wustum turned its attention to children on the premise that early exposure to museum activities might lead to greater involvement when these children become adults. Donna Newgord, Wustum's education curator, has been responsible for a number of innovative programs, including expansion of the Outreach 4 program begun in 1984. This program provides a docent-guided tour and hands-on art project related to the current exhibition for every fourth grader in Racine.About 2,000 young people are served annually in this program. Children who might never have a chance to experience art through their normal living patterns at least sample what a museum is and what it can offer them. But it became obvious that this program was not enough.

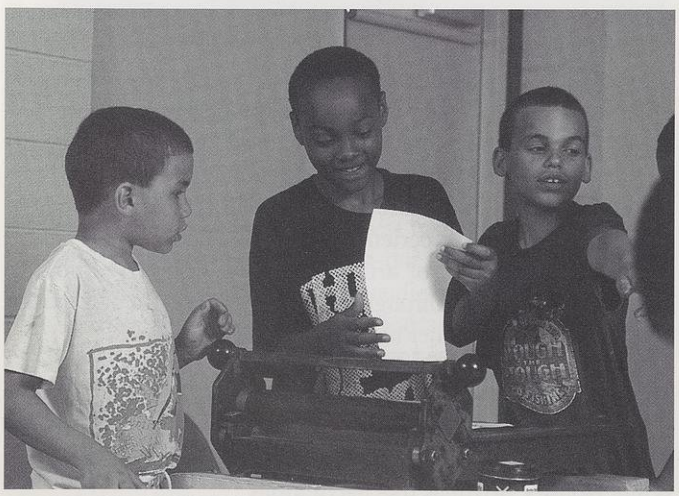
At this point Wustum's approach has departed from that of other museums; and this divergence has resulted in the greatest impact of all on both the museum and Racine's minority children. In 1992 Newgord developed a unique gang-intervention program called VIP: Victory in Peace.

Wustum, with four other social agencies in Racine—the Racine Urban League, the Racine Spanish Center, the Taylor Home and Education Center, and the Racine Council for the Prevention of Drug and Alcohol Abuse—began to work with children identified as at-risk for gang involvement. At Wustum, a teacher creates art projects to reinforce the lessons taught either in school or by social service agencies on such topics as self-esteem and good study/work habits. VIP offers children alternatives to gangs while broadening their horizons. From this program grew a smaller but nonetheless exciting project involving some of the young people participating in VIP.

A specialized workshop was set up in which students wrote and collaborated on the creation of limited-edition, hand-made books. Amos Paul Kennedy, Jr., an Illinois book artist now living in Wisconsin, worked with Wustum staff to develop this workshop. While their initial plan was to produce one collaborative project, it quickly moved to another phase when Kennedy discovered a twelve-year-old girl named Pleschette whose personal hero is Harriet Tubman. The act of creating books opened up a whole new world for all of these children, but it had a most pronounced effect on Pleschette's life: Through this process, Pleschette not only experienced the satisfaction which comes from creating a work of art, but she also discovered how to plan, patiently follow through, and complete a difficult piece of work, thus enhancing her self-esteem and confidence.

Additionally, this experience blossomed into a mentoring relationship between Pleschette and book artist Caren Heft, associate curator of the Wustum. Together, they collaborated on an artist's book about angels, which became part of the 1993 White House Christmas tree decorations.

Pleschette works with Heft on an ongoing basis, creating letterpress books; though Pleschette's home life remains diffi-



ABOVE AND OPPOSITE: Scenes from the VIP project sponsored by the Charles A. Wustum Museum of Fine Arts in Racine.

cult, her art has provided a stimulating outlet. She knows that the work of her hands and mind is prized by libraries, museums, and private collectors.

As for the other young people involved in VIP, annual books are produced as a group project. The children present copies of each edition produced by the VIP program to the Racine Public Library, making them part of the local authors' collection. Books are sold to major collectors of rare and handmade books and have been nationally reviewed in a fine-press publication. This success with bookmaking translated into other areas of personal success—each of the students improved school performance and attendance.

Amos Kennedy was so pleased with the results of the artist's book workshop that he created and presented Wustum with twenty copies of a tiny book of African aphorisms, bound with authentic Kente cloth. The proceeds from these books were used to underwrite a similar workshop the following year. Continuing plans for book production by workshop participants include larger editions so that copies sold can provide an endowment of sorts to fund the next group's work.

Like stones dropped in a pond, the effects of the program cast broad ripples. A magazine article about the program resulted in the spontaneous contribution of $10,000 from a reader who was impressed enough with the results of the workshop to want to augment its inadequate funding base.

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While the success of the bookmaking workshop and the VIP effort in general is satisfying to the Wustum, it doesn't address the question of how to serve minority groups who are not in special programs or not attracted to the museum's offerings. We particularly wanted to reach out to adults as well as children, traditionally a challenging objective.

In addition to free family activities, another method used to attract whole families has been to offer to sponsors of exhibitions a day of art activities for their employees. One such venture, for Olsten Staffing Services, drew over 200 employees and their families, a third of whom were minorities.

A surprising result emerged: The stations set up in the museum to provide hands-on activities for children found many adults every bit as excited about and drawn to the projects as the youngsters. Whole families made artists' books, designed their own jigsaw puzzles, made jewelry, and used rubber stamps to create their own murals.

Another sponsor, Ameritech, underwrote an exhibition of historic African art and organized an invitation list for the opening. The fact that the Ameritech name was a familiar one drew in a larger number than might have been attracted to the exhibition without this special effort. Due to the excellence of the exhibition, the special invitation list, and the familiar name of the sponsor, this event was successful in drawing minority adults as well as children to the museum. One African-American invitee on the list was a cub scout leader, and he brought his entire troop to the opening.

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CUBS
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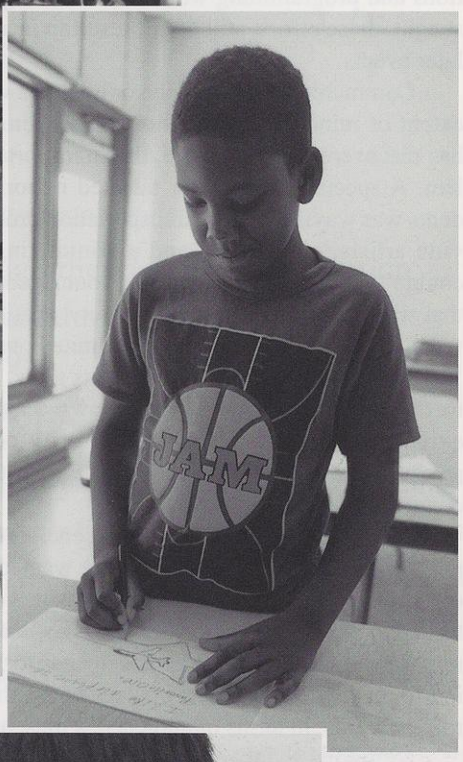
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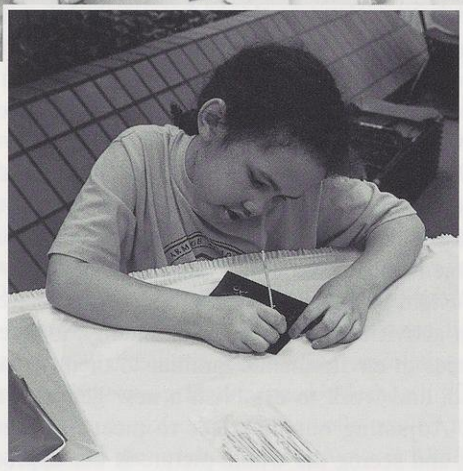

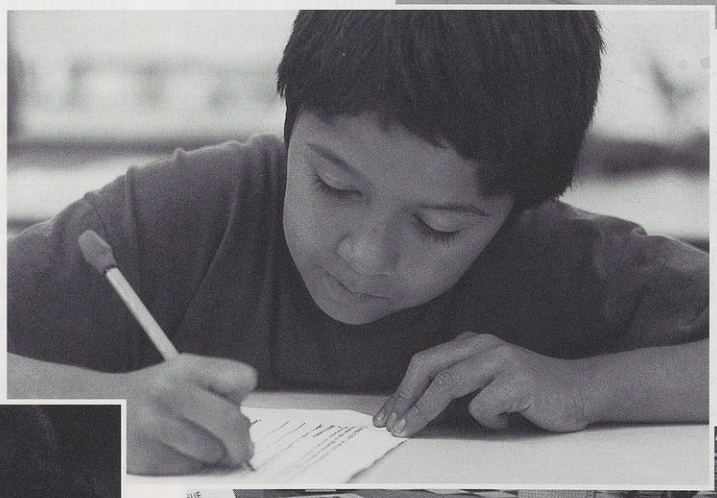

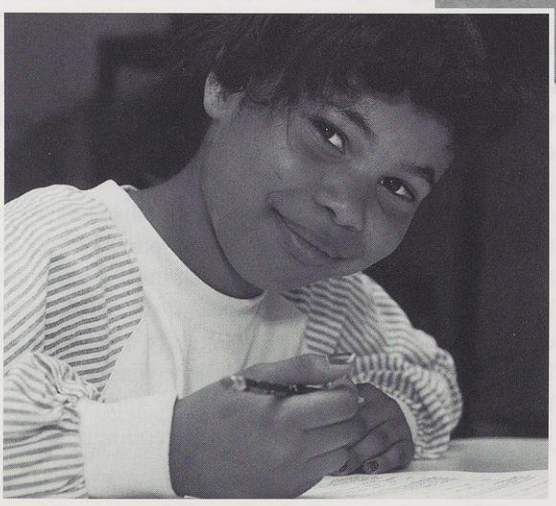

In reviewing our progress at both the Haggerty and the Wustum, it was clear that, while specifically targeted exhibitions and programming would indeed bring in the audience we sought, these efforts still didn't result in increased attendance at later events.

Communication is not the only factor which influences the extent of minority participation in museum offerings. Wustum has discovered, for example, that transportation is a real problem. A special program for talented minority high school students was waylaid by this transportation problem; we could provide artists, equipment, and a stimulating program, but we couldn't find a way to bring these young people into the museum that would satisfy the need for safety, cost, and accessibility. It was a crushing revelation of how limited our options could be.

If we couldn't bring the students to us, maybe we could go to them; and our studies had shown us where that was. To extend our program to more minority children and young adults, Wustum would have to go where these young people congregate—the local mall.

The mixture of young people at enclosed malls presented us with a microcosm of the audience we wanted to reach. On weekends Racine's Regency Mall teems with youngsters: preteens, teenagers, and young mothers. All ages and ethnic groups are represented in the mall's clientele, eager for diversion and looking for new ways to fill the hours spent in that specialized environment. It is, in terms of audience, a museum director's dream.

Newgord established the mall program, titled Super Saturdays, in cooperation with mall management. With a small grant from the Racine Arts Council, the program began with free art classes offered in donated space in the mall one Saturday a month. The objective was to provide these young people with art activities they might otherwise never encounter and to encourage them to come to us in the museum.

The mall management provided space and tables, as well as signage announcing the activities. There was an artist-in-residence each session, showing how he or she makes art. Several activities were offered, most of them keying off the artist-in-residence. For example, one Saturday a cartoonist was in residence, drawing and talking with the children. The art projects that day included a flip book as well as other paper and pen projects geared to a variety of ages.

Usually two members of the Wustum staff, two volunteers, and the artist-in-residence taught the converging audiences. On average, 150 to 200 youths attended each session. Moving the activities closer to the video arcade proved to be a sagacious choice.

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Finding creative solutions to problems and challenges in ways that reinforce but don't duplicate classroom experiences is a natural extension of museum activities; it's more important than ever that these opportunities be expanded to those who have been excluded in the past, for whatever reason. However, for art museums—many of whose full-time staff would not fill up a restaurant booth—these projects require careful planning and judicious allocation of staff and budget. At the Wustum, Donna Newgord has been at the forefront of these activities, as has Kit Basquin at the Haggerty. Some efforts are successful; others are not. Nevertheless, it is a challenge that must be accepted. As the century comes to a close, art museums in our society must reach out to include everyone. Whether these future patrons create art or appreciate it, their positive response to art is important for them and for those of us who are interested in seeing to it that our museums survive as vital participants in community culture.

The museum is expanding these programs to include women's prisons. A pilot project is underway at Southern Oaks Girls School, and three proposals are being considered for the coming year. Other ideas under consideration include day-care classes, combining safe child-care workshops with art lessons; classes for young mothers and their children; and expanding the mall programs. Wustum is seeking more ways to accommodate working parents who have scheduling difficulties. To make classes more accessible to low-income families, we offer grants and scholarships on a regular basis.

Using an art museum as a vehicle for social change may seem radical to some, but to the Wustum staff it's a natural extension of the business of sharing our love of art with the community. And it's also a way to keep us in the real world, conscious of what's going on outside our walls.

We at the Wustum don't know if what we are doing is the best approach to a complex problem. From the Haggerty perspective, working with the community to provide sponsorship for the involvement of diverse ethnic groups seems to work. But from the Wustum perspective, the method we've devised is to take museum activities out into the community, to interact with our audiences in environments familiar to them, develop common ground, and work to establish a new generation of museum-goers. Adjusting our practices to meet new needs, staying flexible, and seeing the whole picture is our approach. We're hoping it draws a twenty-first-century audience, young and old, minority and majority, rich and poor. The entire Wustum team, from director to part-time custodial staff, is personally and totally supportive of these efforts. Members of the museum's board of directors have set formal goals that not only encourage but mandate extending our services to the widest possible audiences.

As we move into a new century with changing populations, the involvement of these new participants will be important to the continuing viability of art museums throughout the country. And despite some frustrations and disappointments, experiences at the Wustum and the Haggerty have proven that directing arts activities to a greater audience has resulted in delightful bonuses—these new artists and new appreciators of art are a joyful addition to the traditional arts community. ❧

From a Prairie Town

by Thomas L. Eddy

In 1887 the Mason City and Fort Dodge Railroad was built through the township and a station possessing the euphonious name of "Swaledale" was established within the border of Pleasant Valley.
History of Cerro Gordo County, Iowa, 1910

Swaledale, the little town where I grew up in north central Iowa, is a prairie town—sown by speculative optimism and a railroad line that connects dozens of other small rural communities. At this place, where the state's first Farmers Co-operative Society was conceived, the rural landscape is figured by a gently rolling plain so fertile and dependable that no less than five generations of farmers and townspeople have been born, raised, and have died here. The surrounding township is rightly named Pleasant Valley.

Between the mid-to-late nineteenth century, eager settlers, spurred by the desire for land, consumed the north central Iowa prairies, in a way reminiscent of the fiery windswept conflagrations that had engulfed the grasslands throughout previous millennia. Except for broadly scattered oak groves, shrubby wetlands and stream banks, and timbered stretches along rivers, the dominant vegetation cover was tallgrass prairie. As far as the eye could see, beyond the distant horizons in all directions, shimmering, undulating grasslands predicated the sweeping landscape. Underneath all this billowing greenery, the deep fecund prairie soils proved irresistible. Upon completion of the original land surveys in 1853, the essentially treeless government lands were purchased and plowed under.

In 1887, thirty-four years after township section lines were surveyed in Pleasant Valley and bordering townships, a deed for a sixty-six-foot-wide railroad right-of-way (ROW) was granted through the townships to the Mason City and Fort Dodge Railroad Company (*History of Cerro Gordo County, Iowa*). In no time, locomotives steamed their way to and from dozens of budding prairie towns which sprang up alongside the railway. The railroad system aided land development and hastened the demise of the prairie ecosystem by transporting people, goods, and services; and, no less importantly, it served as a conduit for marketplaces near and far.

Lines of railway have brought excellent marketing facilities to the very doors of the producers, and agricultural pursuits are to-day pursued with pleasure and profit, where a few years ago the farmer met with hardships, uncertainty and deprivation.
History of Franklin and Cerro Gordo Counties, Iowa, 1883

Swaledale railroad right-of-way in autumn.

Artist's rendering of a tallgrass prairie, ca. 1850.

Even though the natural vegetation cover was destroyed where tracks were laid, the dividing of unbroken expanses of tallgrass prairie during early settlement was as much a psychological rending by the settlers and farmers as it was an actual partitioning executed by the railroad. In the minds of the pioneers, the land was "made to farm" (*The Mason City Times Herald*, 1894).

In 1897, the railroad company acquired an additional 6.18 acres of land bordering the ROW (Rice, 1986). The parcel, located on a sandy alluvial bench one mile north of Swaledale, enlarged an already established sand or borrow pit. The excavation furnished earthen fill to elevate the original railroad grade in low-lying areas. On the southwestern edge of the pit the method of excavation by wheel or skid scrappers was incomplete, resulting in preservation of two earthen knolls covered with mesic to dry-mesic prairie. Consequently, like the ROW ditches, portions of the abandoned borrow pit harbor original prairie vegetation. But it was fire that made sustained preservation of these prairie relicts near complete. Between 1915 and 1930, for example, two freight and two passenger trains daily pulled in and out of Swaledale (Leinhaas, 1987). During the spring and fall, the grass fires that were spawned by this recurrent railway traffic provided the necessary fire disturbance so crucial for maintaining open prairie habitat.

In less than two generations losses were sustained at all levels of plant and animal life

Whole vistas were transformed as a result of settlement and establishment of the railroad system. Open landscapes that had been awash in a sea of rank grasses, teeming with life, were hastily replaced by a monocropped patchwork of repetitious square-mile sections, bounded by dusty gravel roads, homesteads, and woven wire fences. An 1894 newspaper article titled "A Short Account of the Farmers of Cerro Gordo County" by J.H. Wheeler summarized the state of agricultural affairs near the turn of the century:

It was only a little over twenty years ago that they commenced to farm it [Pleasant Valley Township]. *Ten years ago it was practically a prairie. Now nearly every acre of it is fenced and under cultivation. Loaded with big crops this year—oats from 30 to 90 bushels and corn from 20 to 40 bushels—it is indeed a pleasant sight to look upon. Its farmers are making money, fast improving their condition, buying improved strains of stock and learning improved methods of farming. The next few years will see even greater changes. It is good to be a Pleasant Valley farmer.*

ABOVE: Soybean field bordering the railroad prairie.

LEFT: Railroad tracks with town of Swaledale in background.

The death of virgin prairie our great and great-great grandparents caused by plowing was profound in the enormity of its scope and sequence. In less than two generations losses were sustained at all levels of plant and animal life—from varieties to species to entire communities that comprised the Upper Midwest tallgrass prairie. While this reduction in biodiversity can be measured and tabulated to some degree, the near-complete destruction of original grasslands is apart from numbers and defies science's ability to accurately chronicle the evolution of the North American prairie ecosystem and its inhabitants. It is as if countless genealogies are unaccounted for—struck entirely from public record, save for the modern-day descendants.

Nonetheless, to the early settlers, breaking land was a matter of survival. To eke out a living by growing crops meant turning over the prairie sod and cultivating tamed grasses like corn, wheat, barley, and rye.

There is a satisfying irony to the human-inspired changes introduced by these settlers who permanently transformed the land from wild prairies to cultivated croplands. In spite of the wholesale ruin of prairie communities exacted by laying tracks for trains and breaking sod for crops, *railroad prairies endure*. The grassy swaths of native plants that occupy the railroad ditches are inadvertently preserved because the ROW is generally unavailable for other uses that would significantly alter the natural habitat. Periodic burning and the supervised cutting back or application of herbicide to shrubs and trees that invade the railroad ROW are requisite, for if allowed to grow, woody plants can shade prairie species to death. This interruption of woody succession guarantees, for now, a continuation of these remnant grass communities.

LEFT: Abandoned and overgrown borrow pit adjacent to Swaledale railroad prairie.

ABOVE: Big bluestem, a dominant prairie grass.

LOWER LEFT: Prairie plants blooming along railroad right-of-way near Swaledale.

It is this prairie legacy that accompanied me on countless walks up and down the railroad grade that runs north and south of our small town. They were pleasurable hours filled to the brim, sometimes with a hunt and a makeshift camp, or simply a walk. From the railroad fill came collections of flint and displaced iron spikes that my brothers and I transported back to town in the pockets of our jeans. Discarded feathers, abandoned nests, and sun-bleached teeth and bones were enthusiastically collected, carried home, and promptly cataloged. These collections occupied the drawers and shelves of our bedrooms, ready to be eagerly shared and re-examined with schoolmates and guests who showed even the slightest inclination.

The railroad ROW was a beeline to one of our favorite fishing spots. One and one-half miles south of town, beneath a twenty-five-foot-high railroad trestle, flows the West Branch of Beaver Dam Creek. On most of our trips to the creek we walked along the railroad tracks, toting our fishing rods and tackle, even though we could have bicycled there more quickly and with less effort. The relict prairies that clung to the land, like the last holdouts they were, regularly drew us near time and again, no matter what the prospects might hold for angling on the West Branch.

If the best fishing was south of town, then the best hunting was surely in the opposite direction. North of Swaledale flows a sluggish rivulet that drains beneath a railroad trestle and proceeds southeasterly near the place where I first learned to hunt.

By tracking the frozen creek bed across snowdrifted pastures and fields to the railroad prairie, the borders of the ROW appeared extended and the sea of tallgrass prairie, stretching well beyond the next quarter-mile section, had returned, at least for the winter.

The railroad prairie provided habitat for a variety of game and non-game species alike, in spite of its linear confinement. My dad observed prairie chickens when he hunted ring-neck pheasants on the railroad prairie in 1935, but alas, the prairie chicken had long been extirpated and thoroughly replaced by its Asian successor, the pheasant, when I took up the hunt. Also one could find small rafts of blue-winged teal and mallards on ponded sloughs within the ROW. Cottontail rabbits were abundant, and occasionally a fox squirrel would nest in one of the ancient cottonwood trees near the edge of the old borrow pit.

Some members of a local gardening club, among them my mother, harvested dried plants from the railroad prairie and adapted them for fall floral arrangements. The mature stems and seedheads from Indian grass, big bluestem, switchgrass, and Canada rye were top-picked and brought home, along with goldenrods, coneflowers, and milkweed pods. For several days in early autumn our dining room was in utter disarray—dried plant parts, wire, and glue were ingeniously melded into craft displays that graced the town hall or school gymnasium during the annual gardening club exhibition. Through their creative efforts, the daughters of the daughters of the pioneers kept the prairie tradition alive by invoking the individual names of plants that had helped to create the fertile prairie soils.

By analogy, a railroad ROW is all that stands between human communities which solemnly embrace their fellow prairie travelers, both intellectually and emotionally, and human communities which are at best oblivious to milkweeds, bumblebees, and black soil, and at worst, willfully indifferent.

❦

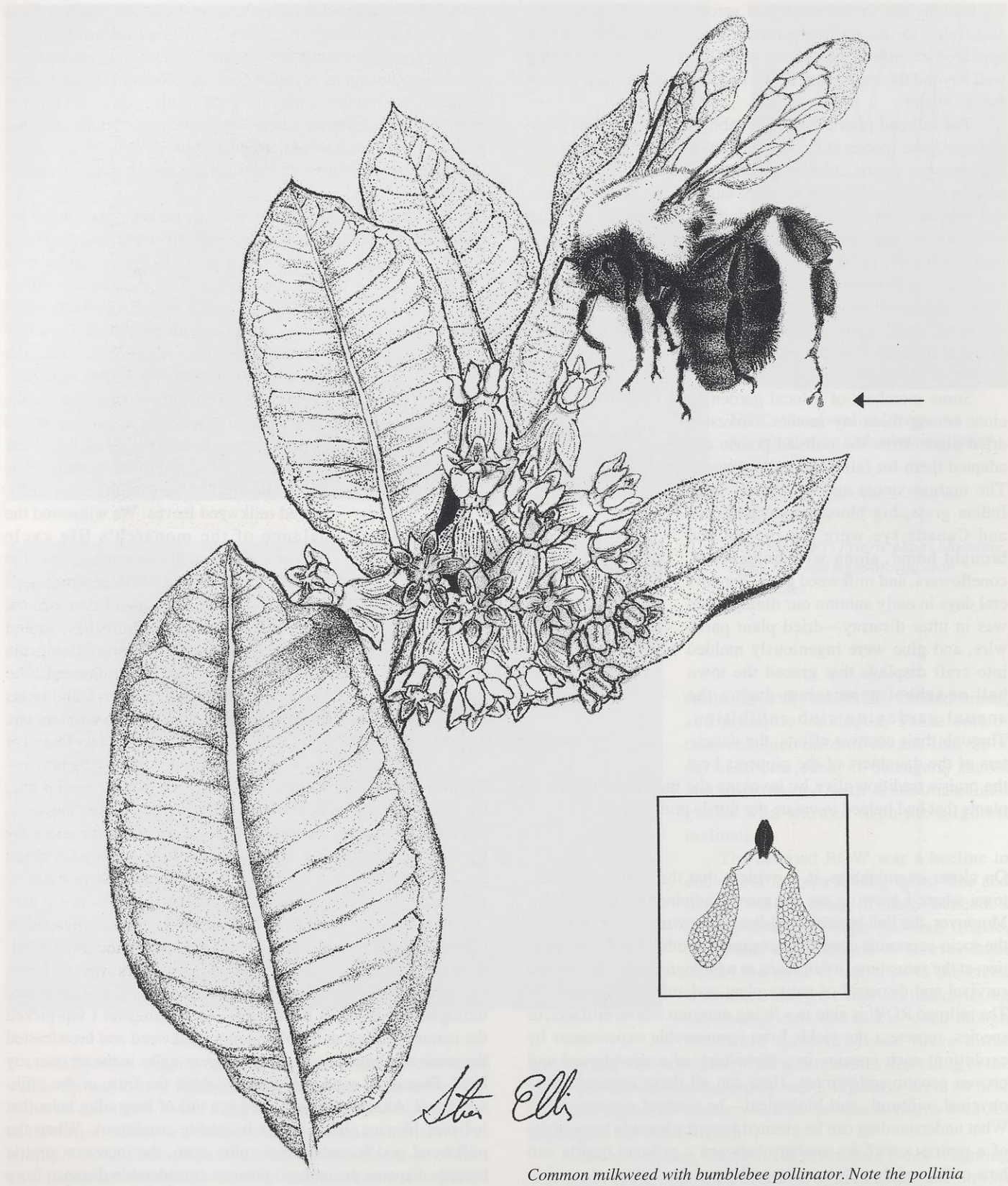
On closer examination, it is evident that the railroad and the town where I grew up are not merely adjoined geographically. Moreover, the link between rail line and town extends well past the socio-economic conditions common to other rural communities; at the same time, it functions as a *biological corridor* for the survival and dispersal of native plant and animal communities. The railroad ROW is akin to a living museum whose artifacts, or species, represent the yields from innumerable experiments by evolution; each species is a repository of a time-tested and proven genetic endowment. How can all these connections—physical, cultural, and biological—be viewed concurrently? What understanding can be gleaned from the humble beginnings of a prairie town? An analogy between a railroad prairie and how milkweed flowers become pollinated can help.

Milkweeds are New World plants that typify the prairie ecosystem—they're perennial, placing about two-thirds of their growth *below* ground while protecting their food reserves from above-ground liabilities. They're remarkably adapted to drought conditions and able to withstand punishing temperature extremes. The organs of milkweeds are chock-full of secondary compounds, notably poisonous alkaloids, which lessen the plant's chances of being eaten. But unlike most wind-pollinated prairie grasses, milkweeds are dependent on an intricate cross-pollinating mechanism whereby certain insects play an essential role.

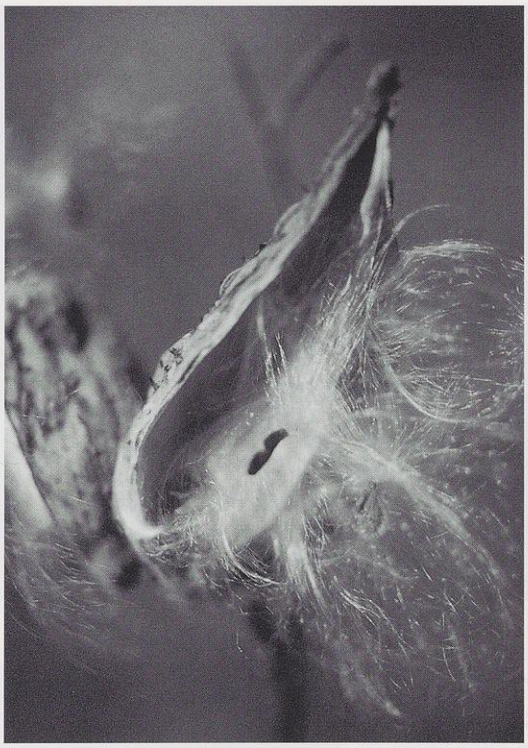
For all their biology, milkweeds are perhaps best known for their association with the monarch butterfly. Upon hatching from an egg that's glued to the underside of a milkweed leaf, the monarch larva grows rapidly, steadily devouring milkweed leaves, noxious alkaloids and all. By safely hoarding the alkaloids in its tissues, the monarch is rendered unpalatable to would-be predators who learn to heed the butterfly's colorful display as a warning.While growing up my brothers and I collected our fair share of these caterpillar beauties, fattening the brightly striped larvae on fresh-picked milkweed leaves. We witnessed the balance of the monarch's life cycle between summer thunderstorms and the butterfly's remarkable fall migration.

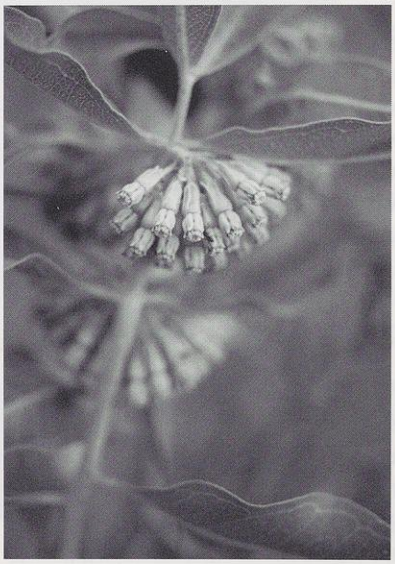
Less familiar are two other insects that, like the monarch butterfly, depend upon the milkweed for making a living: the milkweed beetle and the milkweed bug. Unlike the monarch, however, both insects do their best to avoid the milkweed's toxic alkaloids. Milkweed beetle larvae evade the plant's defensive chemistry by burrowing into the succulent pith of stem and root. The milkweed bug, by contrast, uses its beak-like mouthpiece to pierce the stem, judiciously tapping into the milkweed sugars while avoiding the harmful alkaloids. A healthy milkweed with stored reserves can support a monarch caterpillar, a couple of beetle grubs in its pith, and even a few milkweed bugs (Milne, 1975).

Four species of milkweed are known from the Swaledale railroad prairie: swamp milkweed (*Asclepias incarnata*), common milkweed (*A. syriaca*), whorled-leaved milkweed (*A. verticillata*), and green milkweed (*A. viridiflora*), a plant that is rare throughout most of its Iowa range. As a youngster I top-picked the mature fruiting stalks of common milkweed and broadcasted the seeds by vigorously waving the spent stalks in the air over my head. Dozens of seeds are packed within the fruit, or the milkweed pod. Attached to each seed is a tuft of long silky hairs that behaves like an airfoil under favorable conditions. When the milkweed pod is mature and splits open, the incessant prairie breezes disperse the embryo plants a considerable distance from the parent. A few of these progeny will germinate in the following spring, and fewer still will survive to grow into mature milk-



Common milkweed with bumblebee pollinator. Note the pollinia snagged on the bee's appendage via the translator (left of arrow). INSET: Common milkweed pollinia and translator.



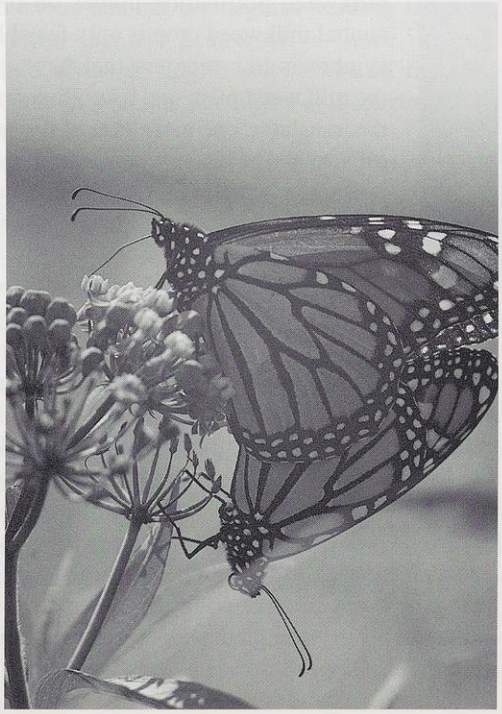


TOP: Switchgrass.

TOP RIGHT: Common milkweed plant seed pod.

LOWER RIGHT: Green milkweed (rare).

RIGHT: Monarch butterfly, mating pair on swamp milkweed.



weed plants that will flower and set seed. But to make seeds, pollen that carries the male sperm nuclei must be carried from one milkweed flower to the female organ of another by cross-pollination.

A milkweed flower is not your "typical" flower. In addition to its greatly modified floral structure, the form in which milkweed pollen becomes dispensed is conspicuously specialized as well. Each anther contains two pollen sacs, with the pollen from each gathered in a waxy mass called a *pollinium*. In a milkweed flower, the right-hand pollen sac of one anther and the left-hand pollen sac of another are attached by an ornate structure called the *translator*. Together, the two pollinia and translator appear like saddlebags—the "bags" being the pollen lumps. Since milkweed pollen is moved en masse, the role of the translator during pollination is indispensable.

Meanwhile, attached below each anther is a column-like filament fashioned into a prominent and colorful *hood* that rises

ABOVE: Marsh aster.

TOP RIGHT: Yellow coneflower.

RIGHT: Gayfeather.

above the petals. The appearance of five raised hoods with the same number of petals resembles a crown and is appropriately named the *corona*. It's here, inside the hood of the corona, where a visiting insect is rewarded a spot of highly sought after nectar for simply showing up to eat.

Guided by flower fragrance and visual cues, nectar-foraging insects alight on the milkweed flower and attempt to sip nectar. To better exploit the sugary mixture within the hood, a potential pollinator struggles for leverage by adjusting its foothold. In so doing, one of its hair-covered legs slips within the narrow groove between two half-anthers and the insect becomes trapped! A smaller insect's life, such as a bee fly, may end here—its leg held fast by the translator. But with a larger insect, such as a bumblebee, a violent tug and the insect's bristly appendage dislocates the translator and attached pollinia. Now the insect flies on to another milkweed flower for more forage, translator and pollinia in tow. Unwittingly, the bee delivers a pollen mass to the narrow groove like the one where the pollinator had been previously delayed. The pollen package brushes past the small slit between anthers, then fits into a minute pore, like lock-and-key, and only then is cross-pollination achieved.

While a multitude of variables must converge in cascading succession for pollination to be accomplished, and a near-equal number of pitfalls avoided, milkweed pollination hinges on the translator. An annual milkweed crop is only feasible because of the symbiosis-like mergers that have evolved between the milkweed plant and its pollinators. All because of the translator, one more year of fruition and prospects for survival of the species are realized. In the end, the milkweed translator is all that stands between producing another generation of milkweed and falling short of the mark.

By analogy, a railroad ROW is all that stands between human communities which solemnly embrace their fellow prairie travelers, both intellectually and emotionally, and human communities which are at best oblivious to milkweeds, bumblebees, and black soil, and at worst, willfully indifferent. A milkweed did not result *because* of the translator—the plant's evolution contrived one. Similarly, railroad prairies did not result because the railroad was established a century ago—their remnants have merely persevered intrusion by the iron rail. The resemblance between a railroad prairie and how milkweeds become pollinated offers a compelling account of natural history complete with tragedy and triumph. I can't *not* think of a milkweed flower when I walk along a railroad grade

any more than I can resist clutching a ripened seed pod, scattering a new generation of milkweed to the prairie breezes where it all begins anew.

❦

In 1988, one century and one year after my hometown was platted, I compiled and published a vascular flora of the Swaledale railroad prairie. Over the course of a decade-long study, an astonishing variety of plants was documented on the railroad remnant. In an area of approximately eight acres, 247 different plants, mostly prairie species, survive and flourish. On average, this is equivalent to thirty-four species per acre. Or, another way to view this—on average, for every six or seven theoretical paces you walk along the railroad prairie, a different plant can be anticipated.

This rich flora diversity is in stark contrast to the even rows of corn and soybeans that lie outside the ROW. The surrounding cultivated fields stand as virtual monocultures where all other species are rigorously excluded. While the croplands produce record bushels of harvest, at the same time they are biologically impoverished and exhibit a "pest and weed" ecology so typical of modern agricultural practices. Not a single shoot of big bluestem or a nesting pair of bobolinks will be found there!

There's good reason to have hope, though. Just a few years ago on the west edge of Swaledale, alongside a north-south traveled gravel road that was widened and paved with concrete, prairie seeds were planted in the ROW. Today, along the same road, there is no exotic smooth bromegrass flooding the roadside embankments—prairie grasses live there instead. Whenever possible, roadside prairie restorations of this kind have become common practice for highway departments in most midwestern states.

With some education and thoughtfully dispensed strategies and resources, people and dispositions are changing. In 1996, evidence of such change appeared, literally, in my backyard. Brought about by the grassroots efforts of a few local prairie and wildflower enthusiasts, the roadside ROW immediately behind the house I grew up in was seeded with prairie grasses and forbs. By securing a state grant that funds prairie restoration, some local residents are proactive in re-establishing the tallgrass prairie and all its living variety. County highway officials are equally pleased—fewer tax dollars will be necessary to maintain the roadside ROW.

Besides the biodiversity they sustain and their aesthetic appeal, prairies hold great promise for supplying food and medicine. Several plants are just now being examined for possible treatment of cancer, heart disease, and for their immunostimulant properties, which are especially needed for assaulting viruses such as HIV (Handel, 1997). Some prairie plants under cultivation demonstrate an ability to produce substantial food yields. These reports, coupled with the fact that prairie plants are adapted to climate extremes and many require little or no irrigation, are sound reasons for preserving and managing what we have and restoring parts of what we have lost.

Besides the biodiversity they sustain and their aesthetic appeal, prairies hold great promise for supplying food and medicine.

Hope. There's good reason to have some. So, here in Green Lake, for the past twenty years I've been living on the edge—living on the northeastern fringe of the tallgrass prairie range, and I remember. All these thoughts and memories hold me for a while, until it's time again to walk the abandoned railroad grade that connects this town and the neighboring town to the west. The asters and goldenrods on railroad prairies everywhere are in bloom, and the grasses with their swollen seedheads are as tall as they will be this season. I'm reminded that it's this prairie legacy that beckons me back there, to the place where I'll gaze on milkweed seeds drifting aloft from a withered stem held fast in my hand. ❧

Drawings by Steve Ellis. Photos courtesy the author, who dedicates this essay to "Mom and Dad."

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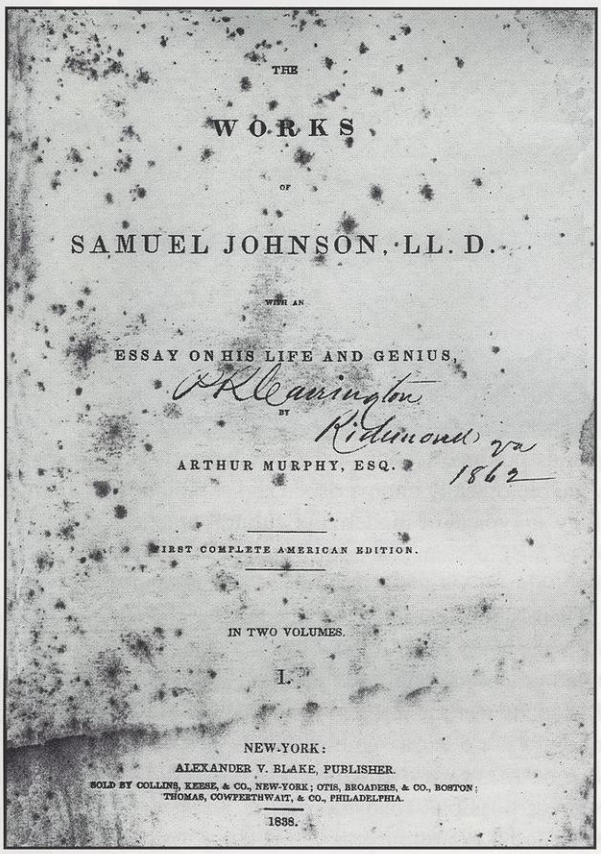
Adventures in Literary Sleuthing: An Old Edition of Samuel Johnson's Works

by Jack Stark

Several years ago I purchased a used, two-volume edition of the complete works of Samuel Johnson. I had several reasons for doing so, one of which was to obtain a few of his works that I had had trouble finding. Among them was his early satire on Robert Walpole titled "Marmor Norfolciense," Johnson's contribution to the literary war that major writers—such as he, Jonathan Swift, and John Gay—conducted against the man who was transforming England into a commercial society run on political patronage. Another was his essay on Hermann Boerhaave, a Dutch scientist. As to that essay, I knew about Johnson's encyclopedic range of knowledge—he had once astounded Boswell by delivering a long dissertation on the craft of butchering meat—and I thought that it would be interesting to read his comments on a subject that lay outside the mainstream of his interests. My list of reading projects included the complete Rambler *essays.*


THE

WORKS

OF

SAMUEL JOHNSON, LL. D.

WITH AN

ESSAY ON HIS LIFE AND GENIUS,

BY

ARTHUR MURPHY, ESQ.

FIRST COMPLETE AMERICAN EDITION.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

I.

NEW-YORK:

ALEXANDER V. BLAKE, PUBLISHER.

SOLD BY COLLINS, KEESE, & CO., NEW-YORK; OTIS, BROADERS, & CO., BOSTON; THOMAS, COWPERTHWAIT, & CO., PHILADELPHIA.

1838.

Aside from the contents, the faded grandeur of those books, when considered as physical objects, would make them visually interesting occupants of one of my bookshelves. The volumes are American first edition (1838) and leather-bound. Were they in mint condition, they would be very valuable; but their covers have deteriorated badly, some pages are torn, and all the pages are sere due to age.

After I took the books home, I discovered they had a third use, as a stimulus to meditation, because I was stunned to see the inscription of the likely first owner:

P.R. Carrington
Richmond, Va.
1862

I cannot identify P.R. Carrington for certain, but I think that I know who he was and some facts about him. The State Historical Society of Wisconsin's library contains a biography of Paul Carrington (1733–1818), who was a member of the first Supreme Court of Appeals of Virginia. In that book someone had placed a typewritten genealogy of the Carringtons which extends well into the nineteenth century. They were a prominent Richmond family, connected by marriage to other prominent Virginia families, such as the Peytons (this connection probably is the reason for P.R.'s first name) and the Randolphs. That family included many lawyers, judges, and elected public officials. According to the genealogy, Joseph Littleberry Carrington, who was born in 1810, had a son Peyton, whose date of birth is not given, but who probably was a fairly young man in 1862. The compiler of the genealogy acknowledges the help of Peyton Carrington, no doubt Joseph's son.

An interest in genealogy seems compatible with an interest in serious works of literature. In the genealogy I found no other Carringtons from that era whose initials could have been P.R. A book about a cemetery in Richmond states that Peyton R.

Carrington was ordered in 1892 to repair a wall at the Adams-Carrington burying ground but could not do so because of insufficient funds. (Those same grounds contained the remains of the brother of John Marshall, the first Chief Justice of the U.S. Supreme Court, and the remains of the grandfather of General Pickett of Pickett's Charge.) Peyton Carrington is identified in a 1904 social register as the husband of Sarah and the father of Peyton, Jr. The senior Peyton died in 1911. Those Peyton Carringtons seem to be the same person and very probably the former owner of the books I now possess.

❦

Let us examine the inscription. First, it is important to reflect on the fact that Carrington could write his name in a book—I cannot imagine the way in which someone could place a handwritten inscription on a CD-ROM. That is another, albeit a minor, reason to be concerned about the displacement of books in our culture. When one thinks of an autographed copy of a book, one almost always thinks of the *author's* autograph. Such autographs create a magical connection between the book's owner and the book's author; owning an autographed copy—and, more obviously, asking an author to autograph a copy of a book that he or she has written—are ways to pay homage to the writer. Some collectors of autographed books are further motivated by the resulting increase in a book's value. Unluckily for me, Samuel Johnson had not autographed my books; P.R. Carrington had. Like Carrington, I sign the books which I purchase—not to announce that it is merely one of my possessions, but that it is part of my identity. Perhaps P.R. Carrington felt the same way.

Next, Carrington wrote "Richmond, Va." On this practice he and I differ. Perhaps I should have adopted his practice; had I written in the place of purchase for those books which I bought in cities where I lived, I would have connected each of my books not only to a place, but also to a phase of my life. That would have allowed me to speculate later about the relationships between, on the one hand, my tastes in reading and, on the other hand, my age and the circumstances of my life when I bought each of my books. In addition, some of the books that I bought while traveling would remind me of the trip during which they were purchased or of a connection between the book and the place of purchase.

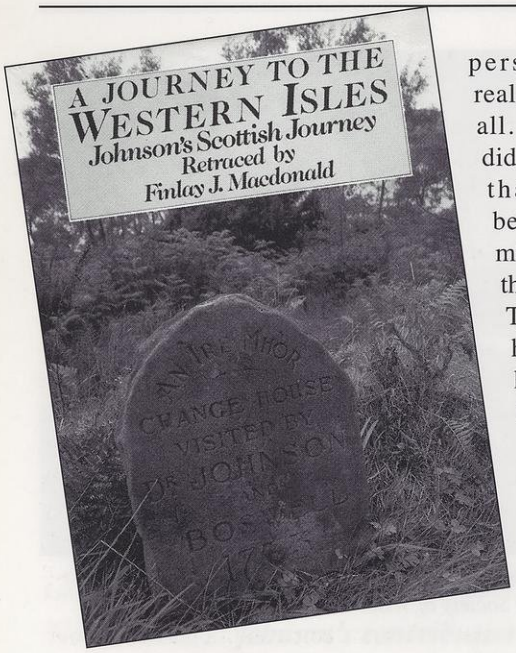
I suspect that Carrington lived all, or virtually all, of his life in Richmond. If so, the reason he chose to record the place of purchase was not one of the reasons I would have done so. Rather, he probably was asserting his pride in his city. His family's prominence—and long residence—in Richmond created some of that pride. He also might have been reacting to the Civil War: asserting his pride in Richmond and the cause that it, as the Confederacy's capital, exemplified. Perhaps he even thought that he was asserting that Richmond still existed; the Union army had not taken it during the Peninsula Campaign, although it had come close to doing so.

The Fall of Richmond, Va., on the night of April 2, 1865. *A Currier & Ives lithograph. Courtesy State Historical Society of Wisconsin.*

Finally, Carrington wrote down the year in which he bought those books. I do not do that. However, to facilitate shelving works of literature, I write in the year of publication on the first blank page of each book so that it is readily apparent. In my library, my American literature section, my British literature section, and my "other" literature section are arranged chronologically so that when I scan those shelves I learn a lesson in literary history. That "1862" in Carrington's copy astounded me, whereas, say, "1858" would not have done so. The "1862" indicated that for him life continued, and at a high intellectual level, despite the Civil War. For anyone who reads it now, that written representation of a year is a poignant reminder both of life's fragility and humankind's resilience. Writing it was a gesture, like those that thousands of others have made throughout the centuries, attesting that they not only will endure but also will prevail.

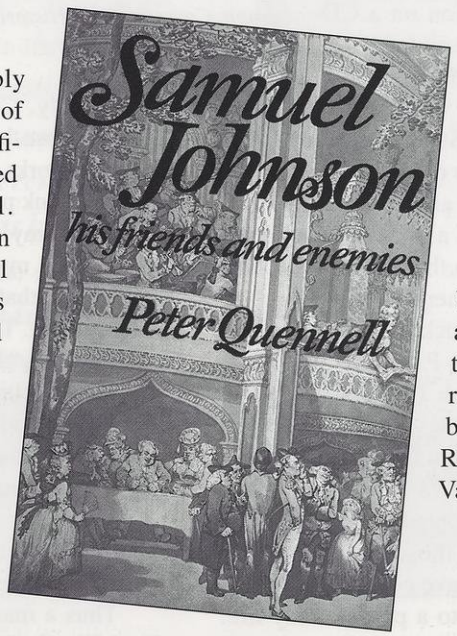
Thus a man who lived in Richmond, Virginia, during the Civil War had spent a substantial amount of money to buy books; those volumes at that time certainly were costly. In 1862 the South was holding its own and was not yet in the desperate financial straits that were to afflict it because of its weak economy and the war's length. Nevertheless, during that year the Peninsula Campaign and the war as a whole must have made it fairly difficult, even then, to find and pay for the necessities of life. Carrington apparently either had considerable wealth and could thus purchase food, clothing, fuel, etc., as well as books, or he considered Johnson's works to be among the necessities of life. Moreover, he purchased a fine edition, probably not for show, given the exigencies of the time and place, but more likely to reflect his esteem for the contents.

Carrington probably did not think of books in some of the ways that are now common. As his purchase of those books indicates, to him their purpose was not to reinforce his own beliefs. Someone who reads books for that purpose would not spend money in Carrington's situation for books; in fact, such a



person would not really need books at all. Carrington also did not reject books that opposed his beliefs. In fact, he might have known that in "Taxation no Tyranny" Johnson had written ". . . how is it that we hear the loudest *yelps* for liberty among the drivers of Negroes?"

Carrington also probably did not think that the great books—and some of Johnson's works lie on the fringe of that classification—were a monolithic block that oppressed the downtrodden and abetted the powerful. Johnson, whose household for years included an African American, whom he treated very well and looked after in his will, and for intervals included prostitutes, whom Johnson carried home on his back, and various down-and-out writers, was hardly an oppressor of the downtrodden. Moreover, his mind was too subtle and his intellectual integrity too great for him to write simplistic propaganda. No, like the other great writers, he debated himself; and the results of those self-debates join with those of other great writers to create a many-voiced commentary on the great human issues.

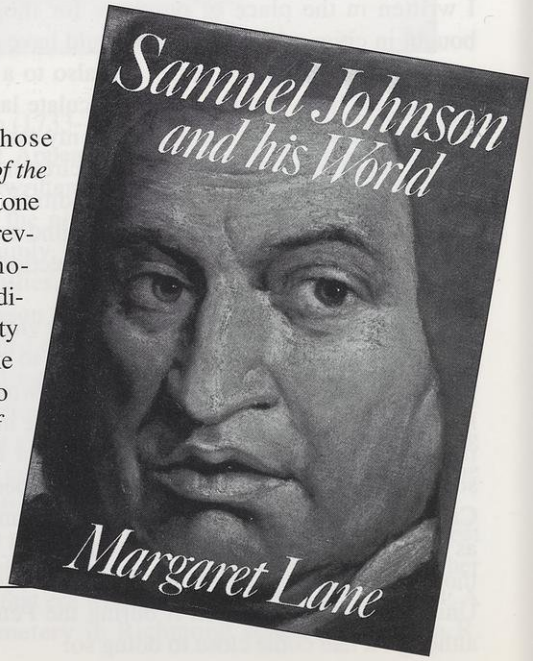


Because Johnson attracted him, Carrington probably read for wisdom, entertainment, and solace—Johnson's works are full of all three qualities. His moral philosophy, for example, as it is exhibited in the *Rambler* essays, is worth pondering. Some of those essays are playful, but most are incisive meditations on practical ethics. In their totality they present Johnson's views on the way in which one ought to conduct one's life.

If chronology were reversed and language were no barrier, Montaigne, who read in order to learn how to live, would have repeatedly read those essays. In his writing Johnson entertained but did so unconventionally. His books contain occasional flashes of wit—though not nearly as many as he exhibited in his conversation as recorded by Boswell—and a few diverting narratives. The entertainment is provided mainly by the prose style; it appeals to readers who have acquired a taste for good writing, particularly for eighteenth-century cadenced, elevated prose. More readers of that kind lived in Carrington's time than live in ours. Johnson provided solace by writing about the tribulations, large and small, that inhere in everyday life and by describing ways in which persons not only could cope with those tribulations, but also could improve themselves by withstanding them.

More specifically, why would Samuel Johnson's works be a good choice for a serious reader who lived in Richmond in 1862? Johnson's moral philosophy would have been one reason. War, like all major crises, raises and increases the complexity and importance of ethical issues. Johnson's wisdom—his understanding of the way one ought to live—and his willingness and ability to communicate that wisdom would have made him highly pertinent to a reader who was living through a war. Carrington might also have known that, regardless of the Civil War's outcome, that war would transform the South. In other words, during 1862 Carrington lived in a dying society and probably knew that he did.

Late in his life, Johnson recognized that he was living in a dying society, one in which commercial interests were displacing agrarian interests, persons were becoming less deferential to tradition and authority, and literature was moving toward the emphasis on self-expression, rather than craftsmanship, that would become full-blown during the ensuing Romantic era. In an early work titled "The Vanity of Human Wishes" he identified some of the forces that were effecting those changes. In *Lives of the Poets*, an elegiac tone prevails; Johnson reverently commemorates a literary tradition and the society that it suited as the lives faded into oblivion. (*Life of Savage*, a much earlier work than the other *Lives*, is an exception.)



Contemporary works about Samuel Johnson.

Most disturbingly, Johnson's frequently revealed obsession with death would have been relevant to Carrington.

Even if Carrington did not read all of the contents of the two volumes, by buying them he gained the opportunity to read all the works by Johnson then available. Even setting aside all the persons who do not read any books at all and those who do not read any serious books, most persons, I suspect, flit from book to book and author to author, as I usually do. Reading all the works of a difficult and prolific writer is a quite different form of intellectual labor. The degree of immersion in an author's works that Carrington could have experienced—and perhaps did experience—is the kind of reading adventure that today seems unusual. Even owning all the works of such a writer is probably unusual now. The advantages of a long-term engagement with a first-rate mind are obvious enough.

Johnson's complexity and the extent to which he developed his ideas make careful and sustained concentration necessary if a reader is to understand him. Today those qualities have become more difficult to acquire as brief bursts of information, many of them accompanied by distracting visual and auditory stimuli, more frequently assault us. A person who could sit down with a copy of Johnson's works during a war—perhaps while actually hearing the sounds of war—and comprehend what he was reading amazes one. As the percentage of persons in our society who are able and willing to concentrate that tenaciously dwindles, our society becomes at risk not of the disaster of military defeat, but of the disaster of cultural deprivation.

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On the basis of Carrington's books, it is also possible to make a few tentative broader generalizations. Despite his financial embarrassment in 1892, Carrington was an aristocrat in the sense that he was a member of a family that had a long record of public service in important positions, many of the members of which had probably been financially well-off and which, as his entry in the social register demonstrates, were considered socially prominent. We need to remind ourselves that during the middle of the nineteenth century—indeed, also for many centuries before that—many aristocrats were interested in intellectual matters. It is no surprise that Peyton Carrington bought, and probably read a good deal of, serious books. We need to remind ourselves of that fact also because one could plausibly argue that there are no aristocrats in this country now, and that whatever group is now a very rough equivalent of them—the rich, the powerful, or some other group—may contain few serious readers. Many members of that present group seem not to consider reading serious books to be a duty, a benefit, or even an adornment.

Carrington's books also remind us that there once was a common intellectual culture. The recent disputes about the canon and about great books annoy me not only because of the fatuity of some of the positions that have been taken during these discussions and the irrationality of some of the arguments that have been advanced, but also because they have so little relevance. Most of the participants in those disputes assume that there still is a common intellectual culture, that many persons bear it, and that it thus is important to make as satisfactory as possible the list of books that ought to be read. I think, however, that much of the common culture has dissipated. In contrast, during Carrington's time persons who considered themselves to be knowledgeable or well-read (neither of which was the same as being well-educated) knew many of the same things and had read many of the same authors. Among those authors was Samuel Johnson. It is not surprising that Carrington owned Johnson's works, just as it would not be surprising if he had owned *The Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* or *Paradise Lost*. It would be surprising, though, if those two works or the complete works of Samuel Johnson were selling well today. Although Carrington's edition of Johnson was expensive, it was affordable for at least some persons, and in 1862 there probably were less expensive complete editions of Johnson. In contrast, buying Johnson's complete works today would require a good deal of money.

Carrington's books, although their condition is now poor, have survived for 145 years. They have lasted physically because they were well-made, and they have lasted as a product in this stream of commerce, despite the reduced demand for such books, because some persons wanted them and no one discarded them. Books endure partly because they are not evanescent and intangible, like flickers on a television screen or on a computer monitor. Because they are tangible, their beauty can also be easily recognized and appreciated. It also has become more difficult to find, and more expensive to purchase, beautiful books. In mint condition Carrington's edition of Johnson must have been gorgeous to look at, and he no doubt also experienced pleasure from feeling the leather. Those secondary pleasures also are becoming rare. That, too, is unfortunate, because they add greatly to the experience of reading.

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Although P.R. Carrington has been dead for nearly a century, I think I know something about him because I know that he owned those books. If his library had been preserved intact and I had seen it, I would know very much about him, because I believe that a collection of books reveals a good deal about its owner. If the number of serious readers is decreasing (as seems to be the case), personal libraries will less frequently help others understand the owners of those libraries. I think that is unfortunate, not only because we will have fewer hints about persons, but because fewer persons will have been formed by books.

Despite the horrors of living in Richmond during 1862, life there and then must have been intellectually satisfying. I find that in a way I envy P.R. Carrington. I have written about him and his books in order to connect, across a time-span of more than a century, with a fellow admirer of the works of Samuel Johnson and to create one small continuity in a world in which many of the large and important continuities are becoming disturbingly tenuous. ❧

Merchants and Planters: American Portraits of the Colonial Period and the Early Republic

by George Parker

This is the last in a series of three articles addressing the lives of early Americans through artifacts held in Wisconsin collections. The first article had as its subject furniture of the seventeenth, eighteenth, and early nineteenth centuries; the second featured items of household use made of metal—primarily silver, pewter, and brass. Logically, then, we turn to the people who made and then used these items—their appearance, the manner in which they dressed, and the environment in which they lived.

Just as today, the English-speaking peoples of the New World included professionals and workers in many walks of life—lawyers, doctors, builders, soldiers, farmers. But those who had their portraits painted were primarily wealthy merchants in the north, located mainly in a belt from Philadelphia to north of Boston; and equally wealthy planters in the south, living and working in an area from Maryland to Georgia.

Society two hundred years ago was characterized by conspicuous consumption. If one had it, one displayed it. Community standing was measured by the quality of personal accessories and furnishings and the complexity and refinement of one's table, along with the pedigree conferred by both money and education.

But the most personal and the most significant way in which an individual said "I'm important, look at me" was to have a portrait painted. And that portrait had to depict the sitter accurately: warts, wens, scars, and all. Recognition of the individual depicted was paramount. Invariably the painter would garb his subject in the finest clothes available. John Singleton Copley is known to have had dress clothing on hand for use by the sitter. On several occasions the same dress appears in different portraits, in different colors. But the faces, hands, and general physiognomy had to look like the person being painted. If the person had blemishes such as blotchy skin or a too-large nose, then it was important that those characteristics be included. Only, as mentioned, in dress was cosmeticizing allowed.

The portraits, all of which are now housed in Wisconsin, help us to understand these early Americans and the world in which they lived.

Over 90 percent of the paintings done in the period from 1650 to 1820 were portraits, and virtually all of those were commissioned by the sitters. Landscapes, still lifes, and historical panoramas were painted, but principally as a labor of love or in hopes that the paintings ultimately could be sold. The fact that so few were sold is testimony to the rarity of their occurrence and the even rarer frequency in which they are found today.

In addition to the locally born artists such as Robert Feke of Long Island and Newport, John Singleton Copley of Boston, Benjamin West and Charles Willson Peale of Philadelphia, and Gilbert Stuart of Rhode Island, itinerant British painters came and traveled throughout the colonies. John Smibert, Joseph Blackburn, John Wollaston, and Charles Bridges are some of the better-known painters in this group. John Smibert was the first of the formally trained painters to come to America in 1729 and is represented by a pair of portraits in the illustrations accompanying this article.

In the north the mercantile preferences for materialism, pragmatism, and utilitarianism are evident in the paintings. Subjects are often shown at their work. Merchants are depicted with their ledgers or the products they sold. Lawyers were often depicted either with robes or open law books. Soldiers were always in dress uniform. The women were usually shown in a state of domesticity accompanied by birds, flowers, and pets as well as gardening baskets, and often they were clothed in light house dresses. If a child were included in the portrait, a rattle, toy, nursery book, or other symbols of youth invariably appeared. In a group portrait, convention dictated that at least the mother was shown to look endearingly at the child.

In the south a more aristocratic environment is usually present. English poses, clothing, and styles abound. The men are usually wearing perukes or wigs and are much more formally posed than their northern counterparts. The southern planter's contacts with London were more important to him

LEFT: ***John Smibert*** *(1688–1751),* A Lady with Pearls, *50 x 40 inches, ca. 1740, Boston.*

Smibert, the first formally trained portraitist to come from England, arrived in Newport in 1729. He was a protege of Sir Godfrey Kneller, court painter to George I, and many of Kneller's characteristics appear in Smibert's work. The women are usually holding an object—in this case it is a string of pearls. Sometimes it is a child's toy, a letter, or a book that is depicted.

BELOW: Attributed to ***John Smibert,*** Portrait of a Woman, *30 x 25 inches, ca. 1735–45, Boston.*

This almost certainly is Smibert's work, though it is a simpler, smaller, and less expensive commission than A Lady with Pearls; *had the subject posed with a prop, such as a toy or book, the painter would have charged an additional fee.*

A very sketchy provenance indicates that this woman could possibly have been related to the Lovells, whose family members have lived in the Boston area since the eighteenth century. The painting was owned until recently by a member of the Lovell family.

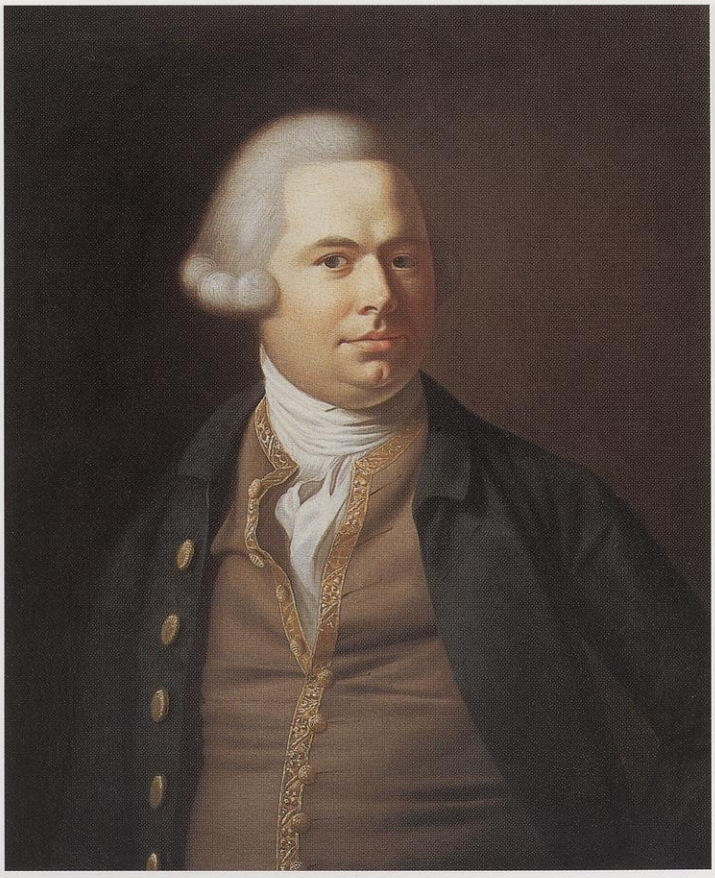
than contact with the colonial settlements to the north; and the English influence, augmented by regular trips across the Atlantic for business and pleasure, reinforced those ties.

The portraits, all of which are now housed in Wisconsin, help us to understand these early Americans and the world in which they lived. It is not a stretch of the imagination for those of us who live in Wisconsin to think of these people as our lineal antecedents.

Among the artists themselves, one stands out above the rest: John Singleton Copley (1737–1815), born in Boston, is the undisputed master of the American portrait painters as well as the English portrait painters who worked on this side of the Atlantic Ocean. His work in this country dates from the mid–1750s to June of 1774 when he left Boston for England, never to return. The primary reasons for his leaving were two-fold: his marriage into the Clarke family, who were prominent Tories, and the drying up of commissions in the 1770s due to political unrest in Boston and the onset of the American Revolution. Three of his works are included with the illustrations that accompany this article. All portraits are painted in oil on canvas.

John Wollaston *(in America 1748–1767),* Lady in a Gold Dress, *50 x 40 inches, ca. 1765–67, Charleston, South Carolina.*

Wollaston was another British artist who painted in the middle colonies and New York before leaving for six years to work in the West Indies. He returned to Charleston in 1765, where he did his best work, and left in 1767 for England, where he was still painting in the 1770s.



John Singleton Copley *(1737–1815),* Joshua Winslow, *30 x 25 inches, 1769, Boston.*

The Winslows and the Clarkes, Copley's in-laws, were prominent Tories and the consignees of the tea that was dumped overboard during the Boston Tea Party. The Winslows went to Canada and the Clarkes accompanied Copley to England in June of 1774. He became a success in London almost overnight and never returned to America.

John Singleton Copley *(1737–1815),* Man in Red Coat, *30 x 25 inches, ca. 1775–80, London.*

While it is conceded that Copley refined his talent in England, it is also true that his later English work loses its dramatic use of light and shadow along with the camera-like quality of his earlier American work. The painting is shown here next to Joshua Winslow so that a stylistic comparison can be made.

Charles Willson Peale *(1741–1827),* Mr. and Mrs. Thomas Russell, a pair of portraits, *1784, probably Philadelphia.*

Thomas Russell was an ironmaster who was born in England in 1741 and came to American in 1764. He was, along with George Washington's elder half-brother, Lawrence, one of the organizers of the Pricipio Iron Company and was a key contributor to the movement towards revolution and independence. Thomas died soon after this portrait was painted, and his widow, Ann, remarried.

Gilbert Stuart *(1755–1828)* Mr. and Mrs. Edward Tuckerman, *29 x 24 inches, before 1814, Boston.*

Edward Tuckerman (1775–1843) was a merchant in Boston as well as a banker. Hannah Parkman Tuckerman was born in Boston in 1777 and died in 1814; in 1817 Edward Tuckerman remarried.

Ralph Earl *(1751–1801)* Major James Fairlie, *26 x 22 inches, 1787, New York.*

Major Fairlie (1757–1830) was one of Major General Friedrich von Steuben's aides-de-camp. This portrait was painted by Ralph Earl when he was in debtor's prison in New York. Earl studied with Benjamin West in London, as did many other American painters, including Charles Willson Peale, John Singleton Copley, Gilbert Stuart, and Matthew Pratt.

The medal in Fairlie's lapel is the Order of the Society of the Cincinnati, awarded to the officers of the Continental Army after the Treaty of Paris. The reference is to Roman general and statesman Lucius Quinctius Cincinnatus, born about 519 B.C., who left his small farm and distinguished himself in battle in 458 B.C. and again in 439 B.C. He was looked upon as a model of competence and courage as well as virtue and simplicity, and he returned to farming after his battlefield victories.

Thomas Sully *(1783–1872)* Mrs. Mordecai Lewis, *27 x 20 inches, 1843, Philadelphia.*

Sully painted this portrait for the subject's daughter, Mrs. Fisher, in the autumn of 1843; it was begun on October 5 and completed on October 19. Sully was probably the most prolific portrait painter of this period. Over 2,000 portraits are definitely known to be from his hand, and he continued working almost to the time of his death. After 1850 his work declined seriously in quality, but his production did not decrease.

Thomas Sully is considered to be the bridge between the art of the colonies and the New Republic and what was to follow in the nineteenth century.

History of Science: A Half-Century's Perspective

by Robert Siegfried

Major technical advances made during World War II, most dramatically the development of radar and the atomic bomb, confirmed the need for a more sophisticated approach to education, particularly in the sciences. In recognition of this need, the American Association for the Advancement of Science formed a special committee on School Science and Mathematics, which began its report in 1946 with the following passage:

> The end of World War II has confronted American Education with two highly disturbing facts. The first fact is that the survival of modern civilization depends upon an understanding and control of scientific techniques whose power for good and evil dazes human imagination. The second fact is that our teaching and our equipment for teaching this understanding and control are woefully inadequate.
>
> Science teaching . . . [simply] is not ready for the responsibilities which it must nevertheless assume. Nor is education ready in other subject areas for its obligation in an atomic age. The time is short. The task is nothing less than to lift a whole generation of American citizens to a level of knowledge and human goodness which has hitherto been attained by only a small fraction of our people.

The universities of this country responded with a wide variety of general education programs. The University of Wisconsin—also inspired by its own tradition deriving from the famous Experimental College, which was based on reforms advocated by Alexander Meiklejohn in the 1920s and 1930s—inaugurated in 1948 its Integrated Liberal Studies program, dedicated to the concept of a general education in which the physical sciences were taught not as individual specialties, but as an integrated gathering of the fundamentals of several sciences. The ILS program continues its great educational contributions to the present time.

History of science was another area of rapid growth during the immediate post-war period, for it was seen by many as the most effective bridge between what Sir Charles P. Snow later characterized as "The Two Cultures." Again, Wisconsin had anticipated this new movement in 1941 when it became the first university to establish a separately administered history of science department. The new department had to be suspended during the war but was revived in 1947. The department is now a half-century old and continues to be prominent in the field and to serve education in general.

I was one of the first students to complete the department's graduate program and return a few years later as a member of its faculty, and I recall what life was like in those "good old days" of pioneer scholarship. I am also aware of how things have changed.

Although history of science was new as a recognized academic activity, scientists had been writing histories of their own fields since the beginning of modern science in the sixteenth century.

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When I entered the Department of History of Science at the University of Wisconsin in 1948, there were only two professors, Marshall Clagett and Robert Stauffer. Each taught a two-semester course for graduate students: Clagett a course in ancient and medieval science and Stauffer one in modern science since Newton. There were also seminars and pro-seminars in selected topics. Because the field was new, the faculty were still exploring the manner of how best to build a successful curriculum; also, because the field was new, I was informed I would have to complete a Ph.D. jointly with another department in order that the university be assured its academic standards were maintained. The chemistry department formed a special committee to determine their expectations and requirements; and so it was that I took courses and qualifying exams in both departments. In that same spring of 1948, I was invited by chemistry Professor Aaron Ihde to be his teaching assistant in the newly organized program of Integrated Liberal Studies.

There were only a half-dozen or so graduate students at that time, though their numbers slowly grew during the next four years of my stay. By the summer of 1952, Glenn

History of Science Institute, Madison, September 1957. The author is in the back row, identified by the circle. Aaron Ihde is in the back row, far right. Glenn Sonnedecker is identified by the arrow, and Marshall Clagett stands immediately behind him.

Sonnedecker and I finished our degree programs and were granted the first Ph.D.s given by this pioneer department.

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Although history of science was new as a recognized academic activity, scientists had been writing histories of their own fields since the beginning of modern science in the sixteenth century. As natural philosophers distinguished themselves from the idealistic philosophy from which they had sprung, they began to introduce their elementary textbooks with historical accounts of concepts and information from which their own works derived and differed. A.F. de Fourcroy, one of the outstanding chemistry textbook authors of the late eighteenth century, taught that the practitioner of every science ought to be familiar with its history:

> For such a history, being a relation of scientific facts, fixes the dates of discoveries, points out the errors of our predecessors, and indicates the path that leads to success.

Historical introductions in scientific textbooks continued to be common well into the twentieth century.

In addition to the educational motivation, scientists began to exhibit interest in enlarging the understanding of the basic concepts of their own science by writing separate histories of their sciences. This was particularly true of the science of chemistry, beginning with Thomas Thomson's *History of Chemistry*, which appeared in 1830. By the end of the nineteenth century, dozens of histories of that science had appeared in many different languages.

The histories written by scientists were chiefly focused on the ideas and concepts contemporary to the author's own time. Very little of the social circumstances of those concepts was included. M.M. Pattison Muir perhaps expressed the value of history of science best early in the twentieth century when he opened the preface to his *History of Chemical Theories and Laws* with the following phrase:

> The more I try to understand chemistry, the more I am convinced that the methods, achievements, and aims of the science can be realized only by him who has followed the gradual development of chemical ideas.

Scientists remained the chief writers of the history of science until the establishment of the field as a distinct academic activity in the twentieth century. Not surprisingly, scientists mostly were responsible for the founding of the department at Wisconsin. For

several years most of the graduate students, like myself, came with strong backgrounds in one or another of the sciences. This pattern was also duplicated among the subsequent faculty additions to the department. In view of the scientific background of those academics then interested in the history of science, it is not surprising that their dominant focus was on the development of scientific ideas. Thus scientists who formed the early beginnings of history of science naturally gave emphasis to its internal development. This once dominant pattern in the writings of the history of science has almost disappeared.

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The idea to write this memoir now came from seeing a group photo on the cover of *Osiris*, journal of the History of Science Society, vol. 10, 1995. That issue was devoted to a historical summary of how the discipline had changed since the gathering of historians of science in Madison in 1957 when the group picture was taken. The 1957 History of Science Institute was held in Madison, because at that time the university had the oldest established department and was best qualified to host the gathering of what were nearly all the active English-language researchers in the newly established academic field.

The presentations were impressive, and as an assistant professor of chemistry at the University of Arkansas, I felt a bit overwhelmed, though it increased my ambition to gain status in this young field. During one of the plenary sessions, the question was raised, "What is the principal effort that we historians of science should be making now?" The general answer was that we must develop our professional identity, escape from our subservience to science, and become a distinct and independent discipline. My immediate personal reaction, which regretfully I kept to myself, was "No!" For me the very essence of history of science is its interdisciplinary nature, a lesson I had learned as a graduate student teaching both history of science and general science in the Integrated Liberal Studies program, and which I was still practicing at Arkansas. I sensed that increased professionalism of history of science would inevitably lead its practitioners into ever deeper and narrower areas of investigation. Such changes have almost destroyed the interdisciplinary nature of history of science in the four decades since that meeting.

I am not alone in regretting this trend. In 1976 Clifford A. Truesdell, lamenting the over-professionalization of scholarship generally, spoke of the common definition of science as "that which scientists do," then added that

> soon the history of science will be defined as that which historians of science do and will likewise live a . . . life independent equally of science and of history. Just as books on political history are written now to be read by political historians alone, and works on mathematics to be read by none but professional mathematicians, soon we can expect that books on the history of science will be meaningless except to historians-of-science, dumb to scientists and to historians, serving only to produce more and more historians-of-science who are paid, if they can get jobs, to do nothing but indoctrinate more historians-of science.

In 1984 Colin Russell confirmed the pattern that history of science has increasingly abandoned its scientific audience:

> In the past 25 years or so, study of the history has changed out of all recognition. In a word it has been *professionalized*. . . . The history of science was once conceived as part of science. Quite rightly recent historians have come to see that it is also an important part of history . . . So far has our pendulum swung towards history that we often fail to communicate with the world from which our subject sprang: the world of science itself.

For me the very essence of history of science is its interdisciplinary nature

Not all historical ironies are sad, but the fact that the history of science has largely abandoned the scientific audience that gave it birth is nearly tragic. What possible consequences come from the abandonment of the scientific audience by historians of science? In view of the present high level of scientific illiteracy in this country, I see its most important loss in general science education. Teaching the nature of science used to be an assumed function of the introductory science courses. Elementary courses and textbooks no longer seem to attempt this educational function; they have become increasingly pre-professional in their focus, chiefly designed to identify those students with abilities to pursue the major in the particular science being taught and to eliminate those students without talent in the field. Thus the gap between the two cultures is widened.

In my opinion, the post-Sputnik infusion of National Science Foundation money to strengthen the teaching of technical science in secondary schools bears much responsibility for this change. Today, 90 percent of the general population is considered to be scientifically illiterate.

June Goodfield in her *Reflections on Science and the Media* summarized the way of general science education as follows:

> The public's right to know about science and its implications is paramount. It needs to know, first, the hard facts of scientific discovery and their relationship to past and changing ideas. Second, it needs to know what are the current scientific and trans-scientific issues, the areas of concern and debate, especially as they relate to the impact of scientific ideas on those social and political issues on which the public will be voting or on which citizens should make their opinions felt. And third, the public needs to know about the actual nature of the scientific

process, for this, as much as the content of science, should be comprehended.

The patterns, the limits, the nature of discovery, the balance of certainty and uncertainty must be made explicit. What one hopes for here is that the methodology of science and the spirit of science should also be conveyed along with their underlying relationship to the basic factual information.

Goodfield points out that the media have done well in bringing the hard facts to the public; moderately well in bringing the issues and concerns to the public; and not at all well in helping the public comprehend the nature of the scientific process.

It is this third task of conveying to the citizenry the methodology and spirit of science that historians of science are uniquely capable of achieving; for by tracing the historical development of scientific ideas, the nature of the scientific process is clearly illustrated in basic examples, and the tentative nature of scientific truths repeatedly is illustrated by the way in which these truths are determined—the way in which new evidences and ideas have led to their improvement.

The history of science illustrates the very essence of the scientific enterprise as the never-ending search for truths that have no ultimate finality. Without this attitude, people have a tendency to treat scientific truth as absolute knowledge and teach it as dogma. That only gets us into deeper trouble. The late Carl Sagan persuasively made this same point shortly before he died:

> Humans may crave absolute certainty; they may aspire to it; they may pretend, as partisans of certain religions do, to have attained it. But the history of science—by far the most successful claim to knowledge accessible to humans—teaches that the most we can hope for is successive improvements in our understanding, learning from our mistakes, an asymptotic approach to the Universe, but with the proviso that absolute certainty will always elude us.

As joint author of a physical science text, I expressed this view in the preface in 1965:

> Awareness of the nonfinality of knowledge does not lessen its usefulness in comprehending and predicting the behavior of the natural world. Rather the inherent uncertainty of our knowledge is the very basis of the human enterprise; it is the uncertainty that leads to growth and change, the enlargement of knowledge and understanding. There can be no willful end to this. He who claims to have not only the latest, but also the final knowledge, betrays both science and humanity.

Perhaps the simplest way of expressing this is to paraphrase the familiar quotation from the biblical book of John: "You shall know the truth and the truth shall make you free," so that it reads, "You shall *seek* the truth and the *search* shall make you free."

Epilogue

My regrets regarding the changes in the focus of history of science in the last half-century apply chiefly to the developments of history of science generally. The members of the department at the University of Wisconsin–Madison are still deeply involved with the general educational efforts of the Integrated Liberal Studies program.

But there is need for still more active participation of history of science in the scientific education of not only the general citizenry, but also to broaden the education of future scientists themselves. In the last few years an international organization has been developing whose dedication is obvious from its name: History and Philosophy of Science in Teaching. Thus there may be a growing recognition of the important role for the history of science in science education generally.❧

Notes and references

The passage which originally appeared in *School Science and Mathematics,* published by the American Association for the Advancement of Science, February 1946, was taken from *Science in General Education* edited by Earl McGrath, 1948, p. 185.

For an excellent and detailed account of "History of Science at the University of Wisconsin," see Victor Hilts in *Isis*. 1984, 75: 63–94.

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Reign's End

by Edward Harris Heth

Shag, or Armtemis Flanders, had arrived during that awakening summer of the year when Bud first drove me along the Willow Road. Often, watching the love of country life grow in him as he discovered a new field, a new clump of hazel thicket to rest under, a new pond to wade in, I longed to cry out to him, Go on, Shag, go it! Yip all you want. I know how you're feeling, boy . . . !

He was a city dog, a black cocker, nine years old when he came here. He had never before raced over hills or across meadows. All his life his black ears had dragged moodily along city sidewalks. He had always been leashbound, never free—like my fox!—but always city-confined like a factory worker or shop clerk, trapped to pad along airless streets, never to see trees or skies, never to yelp and race happily to freedom.

He belonged to a friend whose city-shriveled landlord ordered him either to move or get rid of Shag—Shag had once or twice had accidents on the hallway carpeting. It was the gas chamber for Shag, unless . . . And out here were forty acres of space and air and freedom.

He was a lonely, aloof dog, and yet affectingly dependent once he got used to you. But still independent—on going outside, he must stop at the door, to reflect on the day, but also to let you know that if he went out, he was going of his own free will. Both his former master and mistress had worked, and his nine years of days had been spent alone, locked up in an apartment, curled in a sofa corner. I don't think he had ever seen the country. He didn't want to come out here. But after the first few moody days, when he decided to explore the outside, he knew exactly what to do about a hazelnut thicket. He yipped, tore into it, sniffed a hundred fabulous smells he had never known existed to be sniffed, and reappeared a half hour later snagged and snarled and grinning. In an instant he had become a dog.

A cocker has much power and stamina in its small body (having originally been bred as a hunter, not pet) and once Shag took to the fields, these bloomed in him overnight. Only he never learned how to hunt. With eerie screams, he would race through the junipers and oaks, circling for an hour through the tearing underbrush of raspberries and young sumacs and the twin sisters birds have seeded through the woods. But he never caught anything nor even flushed a bird or chipmunk, until you wondered what he thought he was hunting. Final, humiliating proof of it came with a rabbit in the meadow. The startled rabbit hopped past Shag, heading south, while Shag marched past the rabbit, heading north, within two feet of each other. But Shag never saw the rabbit. He kept marching blithely home, no doubt wishing he had something to hunt.

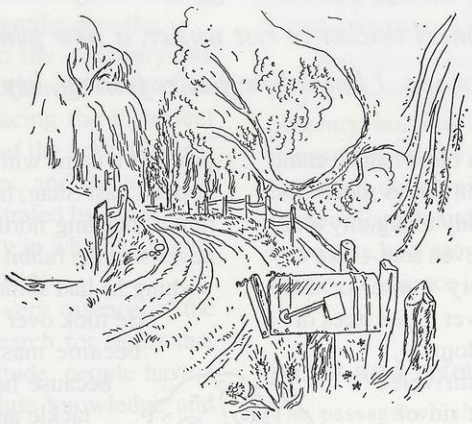
He took over the house, the woods and fields, of course; became master. He never liked other dogs, perhaps because he had never known any, and was game to tackle any dog, any size, that strayed onto his acres from a neighboring farm. There was such a frenzied viciousness in his attacks on these alien dogs twice his size, that I think there must have been some unknown terror in it—he seemed, plainly, to be fighting for survival, though I never learned what in his life had conditioned him to such desperation. But with men he was gentle, if indifferent. He quickly developed a one-man attachment that one would expect from a much bigger, more virile dog.

It was a blow, then, when Ida was introduced a year later into the house where Shag ruled. Suddenly the kitchen floor, the slopes of the hills, the meadow with its tall dry grasses, were not his alone any more. Ida, a two-year-old water spaniel, was the gift of another friend, who had found her on sale while driving through a nearby town, and she was penned in a six-foot pen, and she was such a frisky dog, and unhappy in her pen, etc., and here were these forty acres, etc., etc. . . .

But it was impossible not to love Ida at first sight, with her russet topknot, shaggy ears, and inquiring eyes. Irish spaniels, too, are great hunters, and the woods and marshes are their natural habitat. But she is also part clown. Though we gave her a rug in the back hallway, she sleeps only in the woodbin. She has a fondness for chewing doorknobs. She chases airplanes. As a watchdog she barks only at the absence of strangers; to strangers she wags a welcome.

She barks at trees, birds, Carrie and Millie, but never at tramps. A favorite sport, if undetected, is to drag smoldering logs from the fireplace and lay them on the carpets. She is a rich reddish brown, her coat tightly curled; she has long blowsy ears and wears the topknot with the style of a French poodle. It is a warm, keen, brown-eyed face. She looks a little like the not very ferocious lion in Rousseau's *Sleeping Gypsy*. She is a monument of kindly watchfulness like that lion—when you bathe, she hangs her head stone-still over the rim of the tub, watching to make certain you don't go under.

And, though eight years younger, Ida took it upon herself to be Shag's protector. Don't wander too near the railroad tracks. Don't stay out in the cold too long. Come on, let's get back inside the house. Run, beat it, here comes a car. (Though of late she has taken to sitting plumb in the middle of the driveway, yelping an eager but unbudgeable greeting to cars trying to get up the hill.) It was always Ida who issued these warnings, amiability and trustworthiness itself, and because she was a female Shag accepted them. In his way, he grew fond of Ida. He would lie still for an hour while Ida gently chewed burdock burs and the sticky pellets of viper's bugloss out of his dragging ears. They were usually together, though Shag rebuffed any attempt at play. That was far behind him. He'd tag after Ida to the woods, but with no display of affection or need. That he saved only for his master.



It was Shag and Ida who were destined to become parents. From their issue was to come the story of one dog's cruel, if unwitting, torment of another.

In his third year out here, another lazy summer was ending for Shag. The September mornings were deceitful with warmthless sunlight, and Ida was weaning her puppies. But much more was ending for Shag that I did not know. Certain marks of age had begun to show. He had grown a slight tumor, though not malignant, on his chest. His coat, despite brushing, was losing its glisten, a dull paintlike black replacing the once-ebony sheen. His ears, hopelessly matted and burred from treks in the woods, had needed repeated shearings, and they dangled now like frowzy tassels. His chin went hoary. In the past months, a black bald spot had spread on his shank.

Surely nothing more could be asked of him, who had already lived so fully—by human reckoning, he would be past seventy. So he was never asked to play dead again, by a kind of mute agreement between all who knew him, or was ordered to sit up or bark for his food, or retrieve his much-chewed rubber ball. Ida as much as possible kept out of his way. He was taken outside only when he asked for it (having begun to spend most of his time in his own bed in the kitchen corner), waddling then, not racing as before, to the door, seating himself on his bulky spaniel haunches and waiting with upraised head, tongue lopping sidewise through black lips, eyes blinking, until the door was opened. He would rise to his four feet then, turn about, hesitate with bowed head, step outside.

But he did not greet the meadows and hills with the noisy yelps of former days. I think now perhaps the attention showered on Ida during her pregnancy and motherhood had already begun to sour him. Outside, he greeted neither September rain nor amber sunshine with expectant yips. He went calmly, no longer even bristling at the sight of farmers' dogs on his land, and after plodding around the yard for a while simply looked up at whoever might be outside with him as if asking, Well, can I go back in? It was usually young Tom Dell, who will always take care of others, of anything that moves on wings or four feet and needs his help, who would be outside with him.

Tom tried to make him play. Shag never noticed him. A last none-too-interested survey of life outside, the trees, the dun-colored valley, even a dull glance toward his most mortal enemy, King, a sleek Doberman from the next farm, ferreting near the garbage heap, and Shag retraced his steps to the house, sniffing at places he had watered on the outward journey, halting stock-still and momentarily preoccupied with an autumn leaf on the terrace, but giving it no more than that moment's paralyzed glance. The last few feet he even quickened his pace, as though in haste to put the outside world behind him, padding inside with a rapid, thuddy step. A lap from his water basin, and one still-easy leap into his bed. Twirling himself around, scuffing up the rag blanket, sniffing—*the past days in the hills, the high sweet meadow grass, the warm flaky earth!*—until his snout settled on a feather, extended forepaw, all men, even his master, forgotten, eyes shut quick as a trigger, already sleeping, dreaming, sometimes twitching, uncurling abruptly and curling again, sometimes faintly yipping without opening his eyes, or more rarely panting, or even making a low whinnying sound. Were those dreams, then, of Ida and her new puppies?

The offspring were hard to part with as they grew older, though by then it mattered little to Ida. One of the brown males, promising to resemble its mother, had an appealing squeal. He grew strong, healthy, alert. This was the one we decided to keep. Tom named him Tim. This was the one, in the months that followed, who all unknowingly deposed Shag from his kingdom of house and hill and meadow. This one caused his end.

Shag hardly noticed him during the first few months. Tim lived outside, never allowed in the house until November grew cold, and outdoors Shag ignored him. In the woods Shag and

Ida ran too fast, so that Tim bounced and rolled after them, squealing just like a small boy whose elders won't wait for him. Shag always made it home ten minutes before Tim, crawling into his favorite hiding place under the Cotoneasters, where he had dug himself a cool, damp, fragrant hole. Tim could search all day and never find him.

We were glad we had chosen Tim to keep. We said he was not too frisky to bother Shag, nor too stubborn to learn from his elders. But he was playful, scampering in the yard after a blowing leaf, riding on hind legs like a brown, bobbing, rocking horse, yapping melodiously, pretending to pounce on the vicious leaf though never quite dropping on it.

The first freezing day, when he was let inside, he leapt through the doorway, missed his footing, rolled a few feet like a fat leggy barrel, righted himself, padded through the living room and bedrooms, tongue dripping. It seemed he had already gone through the house a thousand times before. It was his. He entered, possessor of all its rooms, and completed his survey of it with swift, short-legged gyrations around the edges of carpets, under chairs, into the fireplace, strewing ashes like a dervish in a windstorm. And abruptly, in the kitchen, confronted Shag in his bed.

Our quiet puppy lurched, rose to his hind legs, set up an uncouth barking, and danced and careened around Shag, and bounced against him and snapped at his paws and ears and tail. Then, nose to the delicious scents on the linoleum, swerved like lightning to Shag's water bowl and drained it.

But this was Shag's world. Shag rose in his bed, not too swiftly, stretching his small self as high as he could. He blinked and looked up to me questioningly. Then slowly he turned back to Tim and relentlessly stared, but with dignity and patience, merely waiting in his broken slumber until this disturbance should be removed. But once Tim had emptied the water bowl and sent it spinning like a top across the floor, he rolled into bed against Shag and nipped at the soft black fur of his throat, rat's-tail wagging like a wind-tossed reed, paying no heed to Shag's taut head, jerked away as he drew himself back and studied the puppy with polite, but impatient-growing, black eyes. Whereupon Tim, not knowing rebuff, bounced obliviously into the living room and the best chair. Curled up. Fell sound asleep.

Ida watched all of it with her bright, guiltless eyes. It was the weeks that followed that began the gradual undermining of Shag's ego, all that the years had given him vanishing like mist against his own desperate will. At the outset he hazarded indifference, but how be indifferent when Tim chose to lie wherever he lay, sniff where he sniffed? Even, outdoors, making friends with the loathed, stupid King? On the second evening at bedtime, Tim not only again drained and upset Shag's water bowl, but ended up with dank paws and drenched belly fur in bed beside Shag. Shag twitched, rose up aloof and glowering, but Tim wound up in a ball, buried nose under paw, and fell fast asleep. So was Shag to share his couch with this thin-tailed, lop-eared pup? He waited fully five minutes, his eyes flicking in outrage about the room, but the browbeaten look, too, coming into his gaze; then himself descended from the bed with slow step. And ever after slept on the floor.

Now Shag was lured outside into the November sunshine with the greatest difficulty. He never shed the dumb defeat. After much coaxing, he would drag himself to the door. Outside he blinked cravenly to left and right, then waddled like something half dead ten or fifteen feet around the yard. If by accident Tim got outside with Shag and pounced in play against him, Shag merely halted, jerked his head backward, waited for Tim to stop and go away, but no more with anger or impatience; instead, limitless resignation.

"*Shag! . . . Good Shag! . . .*" Not this, nor the hopeful snapping of fingers, nor conciliatory pats, could make him raise his eyes as he lay all day long in his corner. Ida came, sniffed, sat for a while beside him, then walked away. Finding himself forgotten, he seemed to forget everyone else—Tim, Ida, Tom, me. He refused food and water, and grew incredibly small.

But then on that last day, he got to his feet and began to roam from room to room, silently, though still ignoring Tom's encouraging laugh, Tim's playful yip as he rushed toward him, the toy mouse in his puppy teeth. Food was fixed—Shag would eat again! But he halted over the bowl of food. He stared at it for a full minute. Then he walked away.

Why did he flick his eyes about him with their curious, blank accusation and then go swiftly toward the door? He gave a faint bark and scratched against the door jamb. He was let out, lingered a moment on the terrace, looked to right and left, then made for the hills on padding, rapid feet.

It was Ida who found him, under the hazel thicket where he had sometimes liked to lie on hot days. Ida's barks brought Tim the Pretender to the thicket, to sniff with the glint of play in his puppy eyes. Tim's yips brought Tom and me (and Tom, of course, was the one who later buried him) and then even the despised King, wandering nearby, glided over on his sleek feet to see what was under the hazel thicket. Then King glided away and went to doze in the sun and Ida loped off after King and Tim wheeled after Ida to nip at her ankles; and none gave any more notice to Shag's, or Artemis Flanders', passing. ❧

From My Life on Earth *by Edward Harris Heth. Madison: Wisconsin Tales and Trails, 1973. Reprinted by kind permission of the Estate of Edward Harris Heth and Larry Sternig Literary Agency. Illustrations by Edwin Schmidt.*

Kitchen in Alabama, 1936
a Walker Evans photograph

I.

I said that it would fly away,
that white towel hanging on a nail,
on the door jamb of their rude cabin-home.
I said that they had better keep their eye on it.

Assuredly, it would fly away.

Like the dove at Beth-Abara,
that alit on Jesus' lachrymose shoulder—

I said that, like the signal white dove
which, after his ritual baptism,

flew down, and found a perch on his dripping,
naked shoulder—

it would be flying about,
spectrally, thru their Alabama room.

II

It is inaccessible,
that narrow room.
It is not to my liking.
I wonder what I saw in it.

I saw it as a sanctifying place,
a place of sanctuary.

It is not.

It is cramped.
There is no reading matter anywhere.

III

I said that that old hurricane lamp,
with its smoked-up, curved-lipped chimney,
on that rickety-looking pine table,
the oil-cloth
with its simple check design
and watermarked, faded, recessed rosettes—
and the great earthenware jug,
resting on the cabinet-top laid over
with a white, thick slab of processed stone,

the straight-backed, cane chair,
resting against the plank door,
on the other side—
and the tin wash basin, resting
on a mat of worn rattan,
the bare wall above their hand-washing arrangements,
where that fraying, lisle towel hangs,
that towel which would,
of its own accord, take wing,
and fly away—

They would all shatter and certainly crumble.

IV

Oh, that coal-oil lamp is never used for reading.
It illuminates their eating period
and their grooming motions—
their limited conversation
and their despairing eyes.

It is a place of bitterest contrition.
A place of bereavement.

Brent Dozier

Kitchen in Alabama, 1936 *by Walker Evans.*
Reproduced from the collections of the Library of Congress.

Burly Cobb's Barn

It's too remote to record, without a deed
Bringing it up to date. How many barns
Gave up their boards for fire-place mantels?
How many hard-wood floors became the walls

Of tiny, rustic estates? They're scattered about
Hither and yon, like a Christian martyr's bones—
Bits and pieces, that multiply in the shops
Of ikon-makers and antique-dealers, the men

Who covet them. But what a relic needs
Is restoration and peace, not sacrifice—
Not unlike the old man who prepares

By buying a casket big enough to breathe in—
At least until the tearing-apart is over,
The screech of nails, the sobbing of relatives.

David George

Wisconsin Corn in November

fields of women lean into the wind
side by side, but not so close
I can't make out
their bones, their brittle hair

they have clawed through the earth
from Auschwitz, broken the hard clods
with their stubs of fingers

they are women of Afghanistan, exiled
from the work of their lives,
banished from public view

huddled in camps
in Zaire, in hiding places
in Bosnia, their tongues
have been cut out

they are bleached husks
faceless stalks
waiting

Phyllis Wax

Memory of Rilla

Bulldozers took the trees, sparing a single hard maple. ("As soon as I'm gone," she says, "they'll take that one, too.") Creditors took the farm, sparing the house until she dies. Death took her son—her only surviving child—sparing her no one.

Nothing clothes the line. No one roosts. The hens have flown to warmer climates.

Rotting beams lie where the barn used to be.

And the house—recently remodeled by relative insistence. . . only its clutter is familiar: woolen balls of yarn, stacks of outdated *Good Housekeeping*s, shelves of yellowing novels with print that's become too small (mysteries that will never be solved).

Amid photographs of children and families, immortalized in youth; in a living room thick with dust of accumulated years and voices distanced only by time, she and I sit and share common interests: James Herriot stories; apocryphal bibles; Irish music. But I attend more closely to what goes unsaid:

"If only life were more like knitting," she will never say. "If only I could take my teeth to the yarn and extract it; make a new stitch. But I have so little control over the patterns anymore. These lye-soap-roughened hands don't mind the way they used to."

A Chieftain's reel plays on the stereo, yet I'm also aware of more personal rhythms. In the corner of an obsolete bedroom, a victrola wails, turning more slowly with each revolution—until the needle is embedded in the center of her grief: a scratchy absence of songs.

When she dies; when the needle is extracted, she will take with her all her memories of my father, my uncles, my grandfather, a farm, her self as a girl. She will take with her generations of skill and knowledge.

I picture in my mind a very large grave—a field the size of winter—with a mark as solid as a single, hard maple.

S.D. Hardin

My Thirteenth Year Understood As A Fractal

Like paired highway surveyors, you and I
mapped the landscape between us from multiple
points in space. A lawn ten feet below the bedroom
you shared with your sisters, extended one row
beyond an apple orchard outside the kitchen
window. Here began seven acres of timothy
grass rising straight-edged along the property
line, heads rolling, bobbing to the fence
of the neighboring farm. In spring we cut purple
lilac and pounded the wood stems against
concrete blocks with fists of rock from the quarry,
filling twenty buckets, ten each to set
around our beds at night. Two brothers fell
from a willow branched over the Root River.
One bloodied his nose and had to be driven
in the stationwagon to the same hospital
where machines shaped like cones sprayed cobalt
beams through your mother exactly seven times
every other month until November
when she died, holding my mother's hand,
with us still believing the sum of all parts could defy
the odds of meticulous calculation.

Anne Landre

Waves in an Electromagnetic Field

Light trickles across
the rippling water
and splashes on
the far shore.
If I could see
the electromagnetic
field, I suppose
its surface would
be fractured and
choppy like the wavelets
of water upon which
the light sparkles and
tiptoes.
But, all I can
see is light.

Norman J. Olson

MRI at CDI

On Thursday the appointment is set for the following
Wednesday. And the messages start coming and
keep coming, strong and insistent, without invitation.

Stay focused.
Recite your mantra before and during.
Keep off winding pathways that lead to dark forests.
Belly breathe. Count slowly.

She offers earplugs, I opt for head phones and
Wisconsin Public Radio. My breathing quickens,
and I tell her.
It's your knee, the machine is short, your head'll be out.
No sedative needed.

Chest muscles are now in the vise mode,
and I tell her.
Close your eyes, she advises. Adjusts the head phones.
Slides me into the tube.

First the one-minute test. The machine,
noisy as an air hammer, obliterates the answer to
the question Jean Feraca is asking.
Why did you choose life on the streets?

I answer, *Right at this moment, it would surely*
be better for me, living on the streets.

With hands resting on my stomach,
I say to the muscles in my chest,
Relax Relax Relax Relax Relax
The air hammer takes over again,
I open my eyes, my mind starts down dark labyrinths.

I concentrate hard, try to pick up more of
the interview, can hear nothing.
I begin to count. The counting must not end
before the machine ends. Finally 5 minutes are up.
The imaging machine repeats for another 7 minutes, then 3.
At last it's over.
Only then I remember to belly breathe.

Mara Ptacek

THE CONFETTI KID! by Robert Lane. Winnebago, WI: Serrill & Simons, 1997. 357 pages, $25.00. ISBN 0–943104–87–1.

by Richard Boudreau

It's a bird; it's a plane; it's . . . *The Confetti Kid!* But don't let the title fool you. This is a thoughtful fictional telling of a bizarre manifestation of psychosis—even to the costume worn by the Kid: a "CK" intertwined on the chest of a homemade outfit bespangled with shimmering sequins and bits of confetti, topped off with a resplendent cape.

Robert Lane, clinical psychologist and emeritus professor from the University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh, made his debut in fiction with the 1983 novel *A Solitary Dance*. That was the story of psychologist Pat McGarry's long-suffering but ultimately successful attempts to bring an autistic and schizophrenic young boy, Mike, into a productive life in the real world. Though self-published, it was an outstanding success, selling over 3,000,000 copies. In this, Lane's second novel, Dr. McGarry is back; but the scene has shifted from southern California to the coulee country of western Wisconsin and then to Madison. (As was the case with his first novel, *The Confetti Kid* was read over Wisconsin Public Radio's "Chapter a Day.")

The story opens with McGarry's first meeting with the Confetti Kid—and the confrontation immediately turns kinetic: the young man, still dressed in the glittery costume he wore when the police picked him up, tries to fly out McGarry's second-story office window at the Peace River Mental Health Institute. Finally grappled to the floor by McGarry, an intern, and assorted employees, the Confetti Kid is pinioned and hustled off to isolation in a padded cell. Given anti-psychotic dosages, the Kid languishes there for days, then weeks, during which his condition deteriorates even further, until he ends finally in catatonia. Then through that tiny pinpoint still open to the real world, McGarry tries to pull the young man out—battling against formidable defenses all along the way—from what really is another world into this.

The struggle proves monumental for both—and dangerous for both, for McGarry risks deep involvement in the case at a time he himself is most vulnerable. He faces some serious emotional difficulties in the aftermath of a broken marriage back in California. His relocation to the Middle West is an attempt to put all that behind him, and he too is involved in therapy sessions as a patient. So he is not the rock of normality and confidence he would like to be when challenged by a new and very perceptive patient. And his previous successes as a psychotherapist have been with children, quite different from the adults he now faces.

Since the Confetti Kid's real name is unknown, the first order of business is to establish who he is, where he's been, and what his past can tell them. Ultimately McGarry finds himself talking to a psychic who had had a session with the Kid and who had perceived the terrible pain and the darkening auras enveloping him. Finally the Kid begins to respond to McGarry, but the road to recovery is long for doctor and patient, and eventually the psychic takes on an important role in the lives of both.

This is a serious novel told in an upbeat manner. More involved than Lane's first novel, it dares more, and because of that, it is more diffuse, less concentrated. It falters in what its narrator, McGarry, tells about himself along the way. Though his emotional state is crucial, the reader never gets an adequate picture of his deeper difficulties. This criticism does not apply to the depiction of the Confetti Kid. That picture is real and absorbing. Lane knows the complex field of psychotherapy firsthand, and the reader feels his authority as he draws from that rich background throughout.

The Confetti Kid is a memorable character. And when you pick up your own copy of the book, look for the fallout—real confetti left over from the Kid's fantasy world.

Richard Boudreau is emeritus professor of English at the University of Wisconsin–La Crosse and a past vice president-letters of the Wisconsin Academy.

READING THE RIVER: A VOYAGE DOWN THE YUKON by John Hildebrand. The University of Wisconsin Press, 1997. 243 pages. $17.95 softcover. ISBN 0–299–15494–7.

by Marshall J. Cook

John Hildebrand chronicles his return to Alaska to canoe 1,800 miles of the Yukon River alone.

"This is so easy," he exalts as he begins his journey. "All I have to do is keep my eyes open."

The trip is, of course, anything but easy. Hildebrand encounters the river's subtle treacheries—squalls, sandbars, riffles, rapids, and boils—and his own internal snags as well. He seeks to reinvent himself and to find closure on his failed attempt at homesteading twenty years earlier and the subsequent dissolution of his marriage.

He had first come to Alaska, he notes, "convinced that it was the best of all possible places." He sought a simple, carefree life. Instead, he found isolation and silence. When a son was born three months prematurely and then died, grief flooded in to fill the emptiness.

"It wasn't enough—or maybe it was too much," he writes. "People went into the woods looking for themselves and found nothing more or less than that."

He has returned in part because "We need our dreams, even if we don't live up to them." He is "a little older, a little softer," perhaps a little better able to face what he calls "life's essential problem . . . how to live decently and keep one's head above the crapola."

Physical and emotional journey, past and present, merge, creating "the illusion of out-running time, at least the kind we're all swimming against." Hildebrand's descriptions of the river are clean, spare, and unromanticized.

A wake of seagulls trailed behind the canoe as I followed the river out of Whitehorse. Beyond the banks, a boatyard slid past, then the jumbled roofs of a shantytown and sagging power lines, until the last remnant of the city fell away.

The river was the color of jade, a fence of blue hills defining the valley's northward course.

As fine as the physical descriptions are, Hildebrand is at his best describing the people he meets—folks like Danny Roberts, the "sole proprietor" of abandoned Fort Selkirk; settlers Tim and James, "the people I had not become," who had "kept faith with their dreams, even if I hadn't"; Rick Lawrence, for whom divorce was the acceptable price to pay for living the subsistence life in the wilderness.

He encounters two legends, Claude Demientieff, the best riverman on the Yukon, and George Attla, "the greatest dog musher in the world." Even these larger-than-life characters never become caricature or cliché. The author describes people as he finds them. Sometimes even Hildebrand must look away, however. He declines to meet the woman who has been mauled by a bear because, "I knew my eyes would search out the pale webbing of scars, a secret map to the old fears."

A fundamental sadness pervades this journey, "a constant buzzing" that is "the music of entropy." Places like Dawson have survived only as a "recreation of itself," the gold rush having given it "a final two-year fling . . . before the century closed and modern times began."

Most people have abandoned the river for that other river, the highway. The few who remain have done so vowing to stay "until their health fails or they wash away."

Old timers are always telling him that he is "too late to see the 'real' North." Perhaps, but these stubborn survivors teach him "to see how I might live," because they have somehow managed to keep "a sense of drama and delight in just living."

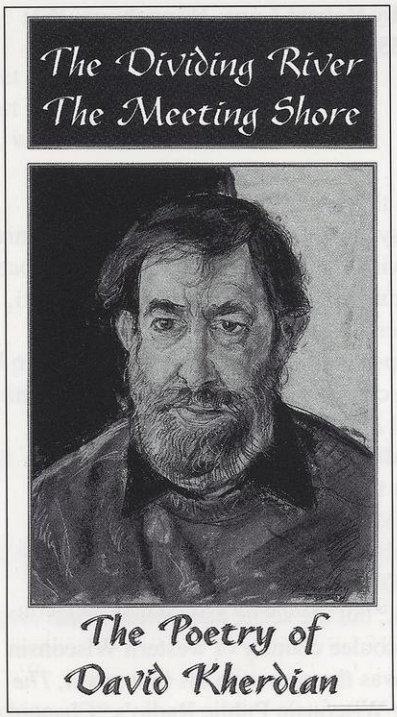
"These days we're encouraged to stay young," Hildebrand concludes, "when the real trick is to grow old without becoming apologetic or defeated."

Taking this river journey with John Hildebrand can help us do that. First published in 1988, this recent softcover edition contains a new Preface.

Marshall J. Cook, a professor at the University of Wisconsin–Madison Division of Continuing Studies, is the author of The Year of the Buffalo: a novel of love and minor league baseball. *Hildebrand also is the author of* Mapping the Farm: The Chronicle of a Family, *Knopf, 1995.*

THE DIVIDING RIVER, THE MEETING SHORE: THE POETRY OF DAVID KHERDIAN. Acorn Productions (1–888–432–2676), 1997. Video, 1 hour, 21 minutes.

by Faith B. Miracle



In an introspective mood, misty as the river which runs through his creative work, David Kherdian provides a profile of his life and the currents which shaped it. His voice still echoes his Wisconsin roots, though he has long since physically left his home town of Racine and just recently moved from New York to California. At times there is a note of sadness, such as when he talks about the "troubled lives binding us and holding us apart." There is a strong family focus—the central figure is the young David, who saw himself as a child apart and alone, always loved though not always understood.

As David Kherdian takes us back in time with still photos from his childhood, scenes of Racine as he knew it—ripples and reflections in water, crumbling sidewalks, glimpses of his Armenian family, Garfield school—one feels a strong sense of time and loss, motion and poetry. Always there is water, movement and water, which are "the beginning of poetry"; water which is transfixing, magical, profound; clouds, sunsets, mists, rainbows, all part of the "larger order" in which we are participants. "You can never know more than the step you are standing on . . . We have to accept the mystery and believe in it."

Kherdian mourns the loss of neighborhood and the breakdown of culture he knew as a child; the sense of loss makes memories worthy of poetry. He uses poetry to make order and sense out of life and to find beauty. "You write your way to your own understanding." He recalls preparing for adulthood by fully being who he was as a child, and recalls how important it was to feel that he was known.

Much of what Kherdian publishes is part of his ongoing "Root River Cycle," of which the most recent volume is *I Called It Home* (Blue Crane Books, 1997). His works include poetry, memoirs, novels, critical studies, and children's books as well as translations. He has edited nine contemporary poetry anthologies and has won numerous awards, including a Newbery Honor, the Jane Addams Peace Award, and the Friends of American Writers Award. He was nominated for the American Book Award.

All of this suggests it is worth our time to know David Kherdian better—this far-away writer whose deep roots keep him so closely bound to Wisconsin.

Faith B. Miracle is editorial director for the Wisconsin Academy and editor of the Wisconsin Academy Review.

Loving A Landscape

by Paul G. Hayes

I want to tell you about my love affair with the Kettle Moraine, a personal story. The reason I do so is that if the Kettle Moraine is to be saved, it will be accomplished by individuals who love it, cherish it, and who wish to share this wonderful place within an hour's drive of two million people and within two hours' drive of six million.

My first exposure to the Kettle Moraine was in March 1962 when my wife and I, then expecting our first child, drove a 1957 Volkswagen Beetle and a four-by-six-foot rented trailer containing all of our possessions from Des Moines to Milwaukee, where I had just been hired by *The Milwaukee Journal*. We drove through Madison, because one couldn't bypass the town in that simpler age of two-lane highways, and then we tooled eastward on old Highway 30, past Lake Mills. There we entered a landscape that I vaguely recognized from geology textbooks I had read at the University of Illinois in the early 1950s: the drumlins of the Watertown quadrangle, one of the most-studied maps in geology courses in the nation. Here they were, covered with snow, and looking from a distance like a herd of gigantic white buffalo, heading north.

Then we passed ridge after ridge, which culminated in Lapham Peak or Government Hill in Delafield, the highest elevation in our view. This put us among the glacial lakes, those gems of Waukesha County, a county that in 1962 still contained more Holsteins than humans. Finally, we crossed the subcontinental divide—stand on it and spit west, and you will eventually pollute the Gulf of Mexico via the Fox, Illinois, and Mississippi rivers; spit eastward and blemish the North Atlantic via Lake Michigan and the St. Lawrence River—and upon its descent, we were in metropolitan Milwaukee.

"This is an interesting place, and inviting," I thought then, "and a nice place to work and to live." I think that still, in spite of all that's happened to the land and in spite of the fabled high taxes in Wisconsin, which, when you think about it, buy us some special services.

❦

When I first saw the Kettle Moraine, it had been widely understood as a creation of ice for less than a century. The understanding first emerged in sophisticated form from the mind of Thomas Chrowder Chamberlin, chief state geologist, who wrote his description of the geology of eastern Wisconsin in Volume 11 of the four-volume *Geology of Wisconsin*, published in 1873. In describing the Kettle Moraine, he said:

> Among the features produced by the action of the ice are parallel ridges sometimes miles in length, having the same direction as the ice movement, hills of rounded flowing contour sometimes having a linear arrangement in the direction of glacial progress, mounds and hummocks of drift promiscuously arranged on an otherwise plane surface, oval domes of rock, sharp gravel ridges, often having a tortuous serpentine course, transverse to the drift movement, peculiar depressions known as 'kettles,' and half submerged rock gorges, known as fiords, . . .

We marveled that such solitude and beauty were so accessible to so many people.

This may be nineteenth-century scientific writing, but I think it sounds like an erotic poem. The Kettle Moraine does that to people. "Hills of rounded flowing contour." ". . . mounds and hummocks of drift promiscuously arranged on an otherwise plane surface." "A tortuous serpentine course, transverse to the drift movement." Pretty suspicious stuff, Chamberlin. Are we still talking about geology?

❦

Philia and I rented a walkup flat in northwestern Milwaukee, and I began breaking in as a reporter at *The Journal*. On weekends, we would pack picnics into our VW and head west into Waukesha or Washington County for a day in the hills of the Kettle Moraine. We marveled that such solitude and beauty were so accessible to so many people.

The last reporter out the door had covered transportation, and since I was the newest in the newsroom, that beat was given

Paul and Philia Hayes hiking in the Kettle Moraine.

to me. Construction on the Milwaukee freeways was just beginning, and the controversies the freeways were to generate—by destroying established neighborhoods in the city and by intersecting environmentally and agriculturally valuable lands in the countryside—had not yet begun, although these controversies were to keep me busy for several years.

As it happens, along with the transportation beat (which meant covering declining use of buses, the end of the old North Shore electric train between Chicago and Milwaukee, and the freeway controversies) came the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission, which had been formed in 1960. After a period of organization, the commission had announced in 1962 that its first major effort in the seven-county southeastern Wisconsin region would be a transportation and land-use plan, which was finished and published in 1967, thirty years ago this year.

Some pioneering concepts came out of that effort, including the radical idea—not accepted even today in Wisconsin—that unrestrained urban sprawl was expensive, inefficient, and environmentally destructive; and that wise public policy could be used to rein it in; that agricultural lands were irreplaceable, and that prudence dictated they should be conserved, even in times of low prices for the goods produced on farms.

Chief among the new ideas, however, was that of environmental corridors, an insight refined by Phillip H. Lewis, Jr., professor of landscape architecture at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, who realized that an area's best remaining natural features—including lakes, streams, wetlands, forests, and other biological habitats—often were concentrated in interconnected, irregular swatches and bands of land that could and should be conserved for the long-lasting cultural and biological health of the region

The finest of these corridors in southeastern Wisconsin was judged to be the Kettle Moraine. Actually the dream to protect the entire Kettle Moraine area as a green belt in the most populous corner of Wisconsin is seven decades old. Lewis's insight had been understood intuitively for at least forty years before the regional planning commission issued its report. The late Ray Zillmer proposed saving the Kettle Moraine as part of an immense forested belt that would roughly follow the terminal moraine of the Wisconsin glacier through the state. Leo Tiefenthaler, the grand old man, told me of day-long hikes in the Kettle Moraine, ending with an open fire over which a pot of soup was cooking. Approaching eighty in 1960, he was one of the forces that led to the law which enabled the Southeastern Wisconsin Regional Planning Commission to be created.

So the idea of saving the Kettle Moraine is at least seventy years old, and here we are in 1997, talking about our last chance to do it.

I covered these stories as environmental reporter, writing about the destructive effects of urban sprawl, stories that obviously had little effect on the region. Ah, but here I am talking about my professional relationship to the Kettle Moraine, when what I started to do was describe my love affair with this landscape, a story that, I repeat, is personal, but one I risk sharing with you.

❦

I have fished the Kettle Moraine's small lakes in summer from a wind-sheltered canoe, in winter through a hole in the ice, appearing, I'm certain, just as lumpy and sad as all ice fishermen do when they sit upon their upturned buckets. But I tell you that gazing into a circular hole in the ice on a brisk winter day on Mauthe Lake restores the soul more than daytime television.

Some twenty-three years ago, we introduced our seven-year-old son to cross-country skis and listened to his frustrated rage on the upside of a hill and his joyful shouts on the downside. Gravity dictated that he raged more than he whooped, because it takes longer and is harder to go up than down, but the quality of the downside experience carried the day. He was either going to hate skiing or become skilled. He became the latter, and we've skied together countless miles since, sometimes over the same trail and in conditions from powder to near slush.

Once, we spread an elegant picnic with dear friends in the southern Kettle Moraine—one of whom has since died, but her affectionate smile appears still in our memories, glowing against garnet-red sumac leaves in that everlasting Kettle Moraine autumn.

I have hiked the Kettle Moraine both alone and with other friends in each of its seasons. These shady trails are the right place for long and trusting talks or long and trusting silences, whichever form of communication fits the moment.

One floody spring I canoed the Milwaukee River from Mauthe Lake to Kewaskum, and two canoes shipped in icy water on one rocky run that nearly tipped us. Not a half hour later, we slipped wordlessly past beaver houses in an ice-rimmed, black-water marsh that looked like Belgian lace.

I have poked around old stone fences, doggedly built rock by rock by whole families clearing small patches for first wheat seven score years ago. When built, these fences were high and straight; today they're tumbled and grown over with wild grape and poison ivy, but they still yield Silurian coral fossils, jagged pieces of farm iron, and shards of Weber Brewery beer bottles.

I think we should preserve it if we can.

I have moseyed through pioneer cemeteries, taking note of the Irish, Yankee, and German names and reading into the lichen-covered dates of their births and deaths the patience with which these pioneer farmers of forty- and eighty-acre plots addressed their hard lives for the century that the limited fertility in these thin soils permitted the farms to survive.

I have joined weekend mushroom hunters in red pine plantations on dewy mornings to pick odd varieties and colors of fungi, some of them edible, all of them interesting, that had forced aside the woven pine-needle blanket to seize their moment of sensuous, fleshy fruition.

With county maps in hand and geology tracts within reach, I have driven from esker to kame to kettle, from drumlin to outwash plain, trying to imagine the two-mile-thick tongues of ice, one east, centered in Lake Michigan, one west, centered in Lake Winnebago, that lapped down from the north, picking up rock on the way, the ice destined to disintegrate under a warm sun into the watery violence that sculpted the rock into this glorious glacial gift.

I think we should preserve it if we can. ❦

Paul Hayes of Cedarburg is an award-winning writer, a fellow of the Wisconsin Academy, and a member of the Academy's Kettle Moraine task force, which first met in April 1996 to address concerns about the area. These remarks were presented during the Kettle Moraine Symposium at the 127th annual conference of the Wisconsin Academy held on May 10, 1997, on the University of Wisconsin–Whitewater campus.

So Much at So Little Cost: The Wisconsin Academy Approaches the Millennium

by Arthur Hove

It was a credulous age, perhaps the most credulous ever, and the more rational, the less gullible, the decade claimed to be, the less rational, the more gullible, it showed itself. Never was it easier to gain a reputation as a seer, never was a following so rapidly and readily acquired. Teachers, prophets, sibyls, oracles, mystagogues, avatars, haruspices and mullahs roamed the land, gathering flocks about them as easily as holy men in nineteenth-century Russia, and any philosophy, from Zen Buddhism to macrobiotics and from violence as an end in itself to total inactivity as an end in itself, could be sure of a respectful hearing and a group of adherents, however temporary their adherence might prove.

Bernard Levin

Taken from our current perspective, the infectious spoors that Bernard Levin identified a generation ago are still very much in the air as we approach the millennium. There does seem to be something in the water supply, something involving self-fulfilling prophecies so readily encouraged if not actively solicited by the mass media.

There is a temptation as one approaches significant anniversaries, such as the year 2000, to presume that with the dawning of a new century, we will suddenly be transformed; we will experience a significant and overnight change in the way we see and do things. It is the same impulse that has arbitrarily led us to segregate our waning century into decades, each of which must have a defining character. Each becomes a sign of the century's cultural zodiac and each of us superficially becomes identified as a child of the particular decade in which we came of age.

However, we know that history does not always work on a precise time clock. Events have a way of happening, regardless of what the calendar says. It therefore is probably most useful to approach the future with the assumption that it will be a variation of our present and our past. What is valuable will be carried forward. What does not work or is no longer relevant will be jettisoned.

❦

This quite naturally brings us to the question of "Whither the Wisconsin Academy?" The answer to such a question hinges on the determination of who we are and what we are. I note with interest that over the past couple of years the leadership has had a vision committee and also has produced a mission statement. I am confident that these efforts will generate further developments that will enhance the Academy's presence in the state.

Let me suggest some qualities that my reading of the Academy's history and record need to be part of any forward movement. I begin by trying to deal with a potential stumbling block reflected in the name of our organization. It is perhaps a minor concern, but something which can be blown out of proportion by the current fever of political correctness that regularly wracks our body politic. Faced with the present mindset, the word *academy* can be a loaded one. For some people, it connotes a self-chosen elite. Without getting into an extended semantical dissection of the word elitism, let me say that those who invoke it to discredit seem to imply that mediocrity should be the chosen norm and that striving for excellence is by its very nature exclusionary.

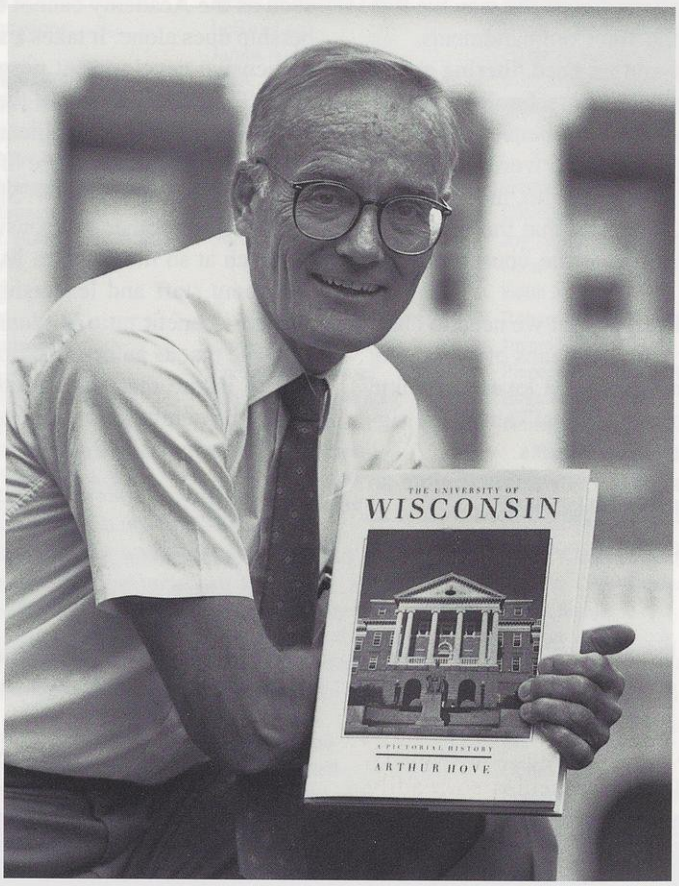
Such a fear, however, seems unfounded in this state. In our case, it is more constructive, more informative to place the emphasis on *Wisconsin* in the Academy name. Those who organized and have sustained the Academy throughout its history have consistently reflected the distinctive character we have come to identify with this state. In a general sense, this character is rooted in the belief that we derive our greatest strength from each other, from the plurality of our population. We all benefit from the accomplishments of individuals. As an organization, we pay tribute to those individuals through the

Wisconsin Academy Fellows program. While we celebrate individual achievement, we also recognize that each of us has a responsibility to the larger community.

Wisconsin has historically been known for its progressivism, its special efforts to include all levels of society in the crafting of public policy. From its very inception, the Academy has welcomed to its ranks all who are interested in pursuing its goals.

On a previous occasion, I commented that one of the most important roles the Academy can play is to promote discourse. Such discourse would help to minimize any reflexive reaction to the Academy as a seemingly exclusive organization. Such discourse can take many forms, from publications to public forums. Whatever the format, however, the purpose of the discourse must be to promote information and understanding.

At its founding, the declared purpose of the Academy was "to encourage investigations and disseminate correct views of the various departments of Science, Literature, and the Arts." I interpret the word *correct* in this context to mean *accurate*. Knowledge is the product of scholarship, and it is the responsibility of scholarship to pursue the truth rather than to attempt to reinforce a particular point of view.



Arthur Hove. Courtesy University of Wisconsin–Madison Office of News and Public Affairs.

The organizing principle of the Academy was born in the frontier realization that there is a pragmatic dimension to knowledge and that knowledge provides a means of dealing with a hostile world. The attitude of the Academy founders also reflects an innate sense of wonder, a curiosity about the world and its seemingly infinite aspects. The pursuit of knowledge consequently can be regarded as an act of pleasure at the same time it is a source of personal enlightenment. Even so, our Academy progenitors recognized that the euphoria which accompanies learning also must be governed by a rigorous sense of discipline. Knowledge, truth, must be able to withstand scrutiny.

Maintaining this standard is difficult in a time when there is so little inclination to discriminate between what is opinion and what is fact. We live in an age when there is a tendency to declare that perception is reality and that emotion is just as legitimate a determinant as intellect. We look over our shoulders and hear the ghost of Ernest Hemingway telling us that "I know only that what is moral is what you feel good after and what is immoral is what you feel bad after." Or we hear Peter Schickele quoting Duke Ellington: "If it sounds good, it is good."

The real question before us, however, is not to determine if our emotions or our intellect should guide our actions. Rather it is to determine what is true and what is false. Our recently adopted mission statement underscores the belief that the Wisconsin Academy can provide considerable leadership in sponsoring programs and activities which promote the kind of discourse that encourages a rigorous and non-partisan examination of those issues that are central to our time.

❦

In pursuing that mission, it is important to recognize that certain factors will have a substantial impact on events as we move into the next century. The most obvious is that the speed of technology will continue to dramatically alter our society, our culture, and our environment. Like it or not, we must understand and respond to this technology as it forms the primary basis for our interaction. The title of the Academy's scholarly journal—*Transactions*—is eminently significant in this regard; transactions invariably lead to transformations.

At the same time, I think it is premature to presume that each technological advance will generate a concomitant improvement in the human condition. I do not see that the proliferation of communication hardware or software has significantly raised the quality and depth of our discourse. I am not convinced that those messages sent out to personal pagers come from on high. Nor do I believe that all those people communicating across the internet or talking on their cellular phones have achieved a substantially higher level of understanding. In fact, transcripts downloaded from internet chat rooms or made from intercepted cellular phone conversations seem to point more toward the comparative banality of everyday life than to signal we have indeed achieved a more rarified means of viewing the world.

What technology has done is to break down what the political scientists refer to as hegemony. In our own country, much less the rest of the world, we have seen the erosion or complete washing away of once dominant ideologies. The result is that old orders founded on religion or philosophy have become fractionated or atrophied. If you were to look for a dominant theme in today's world, it is global capitalism. Regrettably, perhaps, free trade and joint venture are likely to dictate the way we live our lives as much as the Koran or the Ten Commandments.

There is a lot of noise out there and we need filtering mechanisms to dampen the sound. In spite of our technological wizardry, we need to be mindful of T.S. Eliot's Apeneck Sweeney, who made the observation that he's "gotta use words" when he talks to you, or of William Carlos Williams who, in his twentieth-century epic poem, *Patterson*, observed that those who do not know the words, or who do not have the courage to use them, die incommunicado.

It is language, both visual and verbal, that we need to cherish and continue to develop as our primary means of explaining our humanity. We live by signs and the media loves to remind us that certain acts amount to "sending a signal" and these signals can be expected to elicit Pavlovian reactions.

Alas, the signal is oftentimes garbled or unintelligible so that the sender is bewildered by the response, forced to say, as did one of Eliot's protagonists, that that is not what was meant at all.

❦

As we are poised on the cusp of the approaching millennium, the Wisconsin Academy will best serve its membership and the larger community if it continues to carry forward the focus and the purpose which have served it well throughout its history.

It must, however, recognize that its success depends on its ability to expand its membership and include as many as possible who are supportive of its mission. It also must generate the resources it needs to underwrite those programs which will enhance its mission. We know that the work of an organization such as the Academy cannot be advanced on the basis of membership dues alone. It takes a substantial endowment and a comprehensive development program to make a qualitative difference. The establishment of the Wisconsin Academy Foundation in 1989 represents a significant step forward in this regard.

Thus far, the influence of the Academy has risen far above its modest means. As A.W. Shorger noted in 1962, "It is doubtful [that] any other Wisconsin organization has accomplished so much at so little cost to its citizens." I am confident that the Academy staff and leadership will continue to be mindful of this cost-benefit ratio in planning for the future. Our challenge is to see that as an organization we make our age less credulous and to insure that we operate from a base of knowledge that raises the quality of our discourse, not just the frequency.

Let's get on with the task. ❧

Arthur Hove is special assistant emeritus at the University of Wisconsin–Madison administration. This essay is adapted from a presentation given at a joint retreat on May 22, 1997, attended by members of the Academy vision committee, the Academy council, the Foundation board of directors, and the Academy staff.

The epigraph is from The Pendulum Years: Britain and the Sixties *by Bernard Levin. London: Jonathan Cape, 1970, p.9.*

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