



## **Wisconsin people & ideas. Volume 52, Number 4 Fall 2006**

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# wisconsin people & ideas

WISCONSIN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, ARTS AND LETTERS

## **A Beautiful Mind**

Walter Sava's community vision

### **HIP-HOP GOES TO COLLEGE**

Spoken Word Program  
Engages Students of Color

### **ARTS FOR EVERYONE**

Robert E. Gard's Wisconsin Idea,  
Then and Now

### **ENTER THE FRAY**

Fiction, Poetry, and Play Contests

### **MEET SEVEN BRILLIANT CITIZENS WHO IMPROVE OUR LIVES**

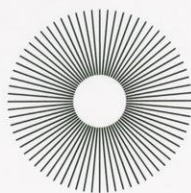
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## ACADEMY EVENINGS

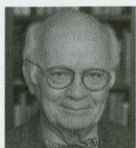
wisconsin academy of sciences, arts and letters

### UNDERSTANDING THE MIDDLE EAST

The cradle of civilization is now the world's biggest tinderbox. On the fifth anniversary of 9/11, a special series of Academy Evenings sheds light on problems in the Middle East and examines possible solutions. Three talks remain!

#### **The Dilemma of Fundamentalism—Martin E. Marty**

**Wed. Sept. 27, Capitol Theater, 7–8:30 pm**



Martin E. Marty

Professor and ordained minister Martin E. Marty (professor emeritus, University of Chicago Divinity School, and the recipient of a National Humanities Medal), one of the world's most prominent theologians, on the dilemma of fundamentalism as opposed to constructive religious practice, with an emphasis on how this problem pertains to the Middle East.

#### **Beyond the U.S. Veil: Women in the Middle East—Mary Layoun**

**Wed. Oct. 4, Promenade Hall, 7–8:30 pm**



Mary Layoun

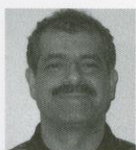
How do women in the Middle East live or imagine their roles in society? What does “democracy” mean for them? UW–Madison’s Mary Layoun, a professor of comparative literature with an emphasis on the history and culture of the Middle East, will draw upon recent works of nonfiction, fiction, film, and history to discuss the status and promise of women in the Middle East.

#### **Paths to Peace—Nadav Shelef and Ali Abootalebi**

**Wed. Oct. 11, Overture Lobby, 7–8:30 pm**



Nadav Shelef



Ali Abootalebi

Nadav Shelef, a UW–Madison professor of Israel studies, and Ali Abootalebi, a political science professor at UW–Eau Claire, present their views on possible paths to peace in this embattled region.

**Admission is free.** \$2 suggested donation. All presentations are at the Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State Street, Madison. Free tickets are recommended to ensure seating and are available at the James Watrous Gallery, third floor.\* Please note: The Capitol Theater (Martin Marty presentation) offers ample seating; walk-ins likely seated.

**More information at [www.wisconsinacademy.org](http://www.wisconsinacademy.org)**

\* James Watrous Gallery hours: Tues/Wed/Thurs 11–5, Fri/Sat 11–9, Sun 1–5. We regret that tickets cannot be mailed or reserved by phone. Exception: Attendees who reside outside of Dane County may order tickets from Barbara Sanford, [bsanford@wisconsinacademy.org](mailto:bsanford@wisconsinacademy.org), 608/263-1692 ext. 13 (e-mail preferred).

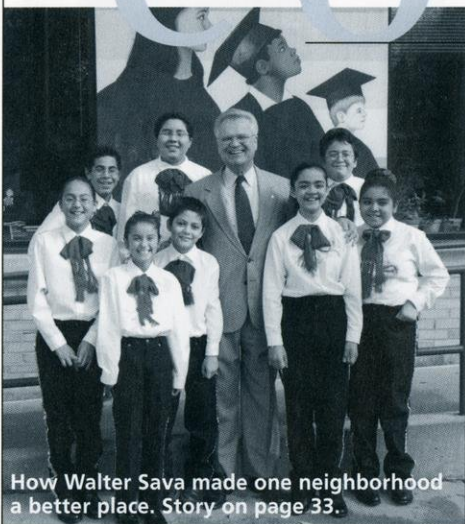
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## fall 2006

### features



How Walter Sava made one neighborhood a better place. Story on page 33.

*Wisconsin People & Ideas* (formerly the *Wisconsin Academy Review*) (ISSN 1558-9633) is published quarterly by the nonprofit Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters and is distributed **free of charge** to Wisconsin Academy members. For information about joining, see the enclosed membership card or refer to the contact information below.

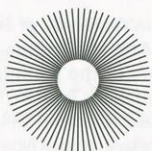
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#### Wisconsin People & Ideas

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#### WRITING CONTESTS—CALLS FOR ENTRY

Short Story Contest, page 11. Lead judge: Charles Baxter. Deadline: Dec. 4.

Poetry Contest, page 12.

This year, a theme: farming and rural life in Wisconsin.

Lead judge: Bruce Taylor. Deadline: Dec. 4.

**NEW!** "Wisconsin Wrights" New Play Contest, page 32.

Lead judge: Bradley Whitford. Deadline: Jan. 15. *Note:* This contest is run by Playwrights Ink.

#### 14 HIP-HOP GOES TO COLLEGE

A national spoken word program called Youth Speaks builds a bridge between poetry and hip-hop. And in Wisconsin, it's igniting an interest in education and social change in kids across the color spectrum.

By Susan Kepecs.

#### 21 THE ARTS IN THE SMALL COMMUNITY (PART I)

The arts are for everybody, not just city folk. With this vision, community arts pioneer Robert E. Gard set out in the 1960s to plant the seeds for arts programs in several small Wisconsin towns. Learn how he did it and what grew in a two-part story by his daughter, Maryo Gard Ewell, and his right-hand man in the field, Michael Warlum.

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Is there an afterlife, and can we prove it through science? In her new book, *Ghost Hunters*, author Deborah Blum looks back at one prestigious group's attempt to do so. Interview by Joan Fischer.

#### 30 REMEMBERING ZEIDLER

He was the last Socialist mayor of any major American city, and during three terms leading Milwaukee made it "so honest and well run that it became a joke in Chicago," writes veteran journalist Paul G. Hayes. A remembrance of Frank P. Zeidler.

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Walter Sava has been the visionary force behind a one-stop shop that turned around a troubled Latino neighborhood in Milwaukee and serves as a national model. By Joan Fischer. Cover photo by John Urban.

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Roland L. Berns writes science entries for the *Dictionary of American Regional English*, an occupation that offers as much insight into human beings as into the animals and plants we name. And Denise Maddox describes how the Odyssey Project, a UW-based humanities program for adults living close to the poverty line, enriched and transformed her life. **A special section by the Wisconsin Humanities Council.**

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We spend more waking time at work than anywhere else. How can we draw from the workplace as a well of creativity? By John Lehman.

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The Wisconsin Academy has a bright future—and with your help, it will be even brighter. By Michael Strigel, executive director.

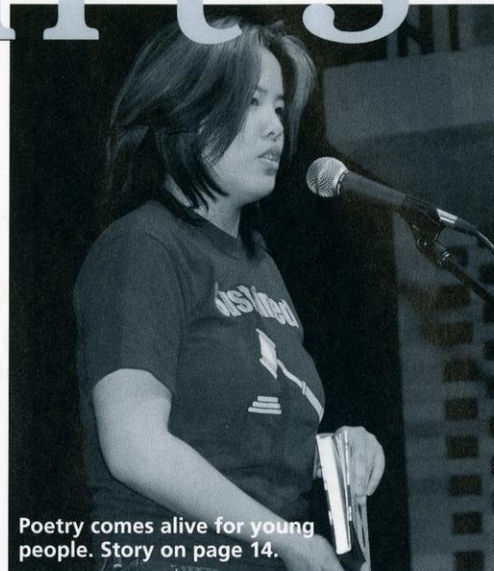
### ENLIGHTEN YOUR LIFE!

The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters connects people and ideas from all areas of knowledge and all walks of life to learn about the latest achievements in thought and culture in our state and explore how we can best address our problems. It is a place where all people can come for reliable, unbiased information and interaction with Wisconsin's most innovative thinkers.

The Wisconsin Academy was founded in 1870 as an independent, nonprofit membership organization separate from the state and the university. For financial support we rely on grants, donors, and our members.

Enrich your life (and receive this magazine regularly) by becoming a member! Fill out the enclosed membership card or visit [www.wisconsinacademy.org](http://www.wisconsinacademy.org).

The Wisconsin Humanities Council is a proud sponsor of *Wisconsin People & Ideas* and provides content for a special section in each edition.



Poetry comes alive for young people. Story on page 14.

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## Changing lives

One of the pleasures of being an editor is the occasional surprise at how well stories fit together. I would love to claim that this is the result of meticulous planning, but in the name of honesty I admit that serendipity plays a role. It's like putting together a puzzle knowing the pieces will fit, but still being pleasantly surprised by the whole picture that emerges.

In the case of this edition, I didn't realize that such a strong theme would come through. The thread concerns the power of education and creative expression to give our lives meaning and direction, even to "save us" in profound ways. As our cover subject, Walter Sava, puts it: "So much of the stuff that you can do in rebuilding a neighborhood you can do through education, because once you have young people who go to college, who buy homes, who become middle class, all of those other things that cause society to disintegrate can be taken care of a lot easier."

His words are echoed on a more personal note in stories about Youth Speaks, the Odyssey Project (provided by our sponsor and partner, the Wisconsin Humanities Council), and the rural arts programs started by Robert E. Gard.

"Youth Speaks really did change my life," says teenage spoken word artist Moira Pirsch. "It's given me a lot of opportunities to do what I love. I see how much it's improved my life as a writer and as a person."

Denise Maddox says her humanities classes with the Odyssey Project changed her life forever. "Writing, art history, American history, literature, and philosophy transported me into a new world, where written words came alive and made magic inside my heart," she says.

And then there were the seeds of creativity planted all over the state by Gard, who believed that through art we

find "a new view of hope for mankind and an elevation of man." Decades ago Gard took seriously a rural woman's words that, given encouragement and some guidance, there "would be such a rising of creative expression as is yet unheard of in Wisconsin."

I found these stories quite moving, and hope you do, too. I am guessing that most of our readers already believe in the transforming power of education and the arts. It is heartening to have such compelling reminders from caring communities all over our state.

There's another theme in this edition: Wisconsin Academy Fellows, who can be spotted like Waldo all over this issue. You can find the newly ordained on page 67; they include cover subject Walter Sava and Odyssey Project leader Emily Auerbach. You can find Paul Hayes' remembrance of fellow Fellow Frank Zeidler on page 30. And you can meet many Fellows in person at our Fellows induction ceremony on Sunday, Oct. 22, 2:30 p.m., at Monona Terrace in Madison. Read more about it on page 68.

I'm afraid I have disappointing news for fans of the reader anecdote section, "In My Words." In our summer issue, we noted we were receiving so few submissions that we were thinking of ending the section. As much as we all enjoy reading it, too few readers are willing to contribute, even after our urgent plea.

I think it's time to say that while we had a great three-year run, we have no choice now but to give it a rest. We remain open to suggestions for reviving the department some time in the future. In the meantime, I look forward to your comments.

*Joan*

Joan Fischer, editor  
jfischer@wisconsinacademy.org

## UP AND COMING

A glance at gallery exhibitions this fall. For the Wisconsin Academy's Future of Farming forums, see page 41. For our Book Festival events, see page 7. More information at [www.wisconsinacademy.org](http://www.wisconsinacademy.org).

### JAMES WATROUS GALLERY

Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State St.  
Tues/Wed/Thurs 11-5; Fri/Sat 11-9; Sun 1-5  
Admission free of charge

### ARISTOTLE GEORGIADES KAREN GUNDERMAN Through October 15



Aristotle Georgiades, *Recall (Wheelbarrow)*, 2006



Karen Gunderman, *Radiolaria*, detail, 2006

### JEAN ROBERTS GUEQUIERRE DIANE SHEEHAN

October 24-December 3

Opening reception Friday, Oct. 27, 5-7 pm  
Artists' talks begin at 5:30 pm



Jean Roberts Guequierre, *The Year of the Leapfrog*, 2005



Diane Sheehan, *The Invention of Truth*, detail, 2003-2004

### CAROL EMMONS December 12-January 19

Opening reception Friday, Dec. 15, 5-7 pm  
Artist talk begins at 5:30 pm



Carol Emmons, *Surveying Desire X: Quest*, 2003

## HEARTLAND/FATHERLAND

## Sisterhood through soccer

This past June was a wonderful time to be in Germany. The 2006 FIFA World Cup soccer games took place in an atmosphere of goodwill, peace, and exuberance. And it was a perfect moment for Wisconsin and Germany to celebrate its first-ever sports exchange with a visit by the University of Wisconsin women's soccer team. The visit also deepened Wisconsin's sister state relationship with Hessen, which celebrates a 30th anniversary this year.

During a 12-day trip the team visited the Hessen cities of Frankfurt, Darmstadt, Dieburg, Offenbach, and the state capital of Wiesbaden. There were several receptions with sports and government officials.



The Badgers competed in five matches, posting a 4-1 record against the German competition. The games gave the coaching staff a great chance to see how much some of the younger players, including nine redshirt freshmen from last season, have improved since the season ended in November.

"We played matches, but the trip went beyond the games themselves," says head coach Dean Duerst. "It was more about the education, the culture, and the ability to bond as a group and see many different things. But it was also special because it was a World Cup, and I think that added a deeper meaning in terms of education for our team in the sport of soccer."

Upon arriving in Frankfurt, the Badger student-athletes and their coaches headed to nearby Seeheim, site of a residential training and meeting complex owned by Lufthansa German Airlines. This would be their home during their stay in Germany. The squad was greeted by Seeheim mayor Olaf Kuehn and Dr. Klaus Schormann, an advisor for international affairs in Hessen and an executive member of the International Olympic Committee.

Off the playing field, the players had a chance to do some sightseeing. Favorite destinations included a behind-the-scenes tour of Frankfurt Airport, including a recently closed U.S. military airbase, and tours of a winery and brewery.

But because of the World Cup, even most of the sightseeing revolved around soccer. A few coaches had a chance to attend some World Cup matches. And team members watched the Germany vs. Poland game in downtown Frankfurt among 50,000 other spectators sitting in bleachers set up along the banks of the Main River, with paramedics and police on hand to keep the peace. In the middle of the river was an enormous double-sided TV monitor placed so that tens of thousands could



**(Left)** Badger soccer women arrive in the "land of ideas"—and **(above)** an idea in action. An enormous double-sided TV monitor placed in the Main River in Frankfurt allowed tens of thousands to view the games from both shorelines.

watch. There were two additional huge-screen TVs on the east and west sides of downtown for more spectators, plus plenty of game-watching ops in numerous restaurants and pubs.

"The game was even until Germany scored in the 91st minute. Everyone went crazy! On our walk back to the bus people were partying in the streets," reports player Kara Kabellis in an online diary team members took turns writing each day.

The trip gave the players a chance to experience soccer in a part of the world that values the sport more highly than their own. They were given new insights into another culture, a chance to bond with each other, and an opportunity to get in some early practice for their upcoming season.

And, just as important, the Badger soccer women paved the way for other sister state sports exchanges to take place in the future.

## Two very different programs celebrate Wisconsin's German connection.

### German writer at Edenfred

For the Hessen-Wisconsin Writers group, it's time to play host. Last summer, Fond du Lac writer Paula Sergi enjoyed a three-month residency in Wiesbaden, Germany, capital of Wisconsin's sister state of Hessen. Now the group welcomes German writer Julia Wolf for a three-month stay at Edenfred, a beautiful creative arts residency in the Madison Highlands funded by the Terry Family Foundation. Wolf also will receive a \$3,000 stipend from the Greater Milwaukee

Foundation's Theodore and Anna Grollmann Fund.

Wolf, 26, was selected by the Hessen Literary Society, the group representing the German side of the exchange. She is acclaimed as one of Germany's most promising young writers. Her honors include two-time wins in a national contest run by the Berliner Festspiele, scholarships from the Literary Colloquium in Berlin and the Kuenstlerhaus Lukas, and participation in writing workshops for young German and Polish writers. Her short stories have appeared in numerous literary magazines and anthologies. Wolf recently studied at the Freie Universitaet Berlin, where she majored in North American studies, Latin American studies, and contemporary German literature. Her passion for travel has taken her to the United States (she attended a year of high school in Las Vegas), Colombia, Israel, Russia, and Mexico as well as to various countries in Europe.

Shortly before her arrival in August, Wolf was brimming with excitement about her stay in Madison.

"I am looking forward to getting to know new people and new places. I draw a lot of inspiration from traveling, so I hope that exploring Madison and its surroundings will give me new ideas and new outlooks on old ideas," she says. "Currently I am working on a collection of short stories which I would like to finish during my residency."

Her stay also will involve community outreach, including participating in workshops, holding readings, and visiting schools.

Edenfred's live-in director, David Wells, is equally enthusiastic about having her there. "It is exciting to have Julia as our first international resident. She will meet a broad community of peers, including other writers, theater directors, musicians, and art curators who will be in residence during the course of her three-month exchange."

Readers can meet Wolf at the Wisconsin Book Festival on Saturday, October 21, at 2 p.m. at the Memorial Union in Madison, where she will talk about her work, the German writing scene, and the exchange experience along with Paula Sergi and writer Michael Perry, who last year stayed in Hessen in a related writers' exchange.

For now, we wish Wolf a *herzlich Willkommen*.

*For more information about Edenfred, which has art galleries open to the public by appointment, visit [www.edenfred.org](http://www.edenfred.org). For more information about Hessen-Wisconsin Writers, visit [www.hesswiswriter.org](http://www.hesswiswriter.org)*



German writer Julia Wolf and her resplendent digs at Edenfred. Parts of the home are open to the public (by appointment) for gallery viewings.



# A "Perfect World," with Questions

More than 4,000 artists answered the call when the new National Portrait Gallery, part of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., held its first-ever portrait competition. First prize was \$25,000, a commission for the gallery's permanent collection, and display of the winning work.

It was the kind of contest that would bring the winner international renown. And the top honor went to David Lenz, 44, a Milwaukee-based painter known for highly detailed, realistic portraits of everyday people—portraits so realistic they may be mistaken for photographs. Inner-city children and dairy farmers have been among his subjects.

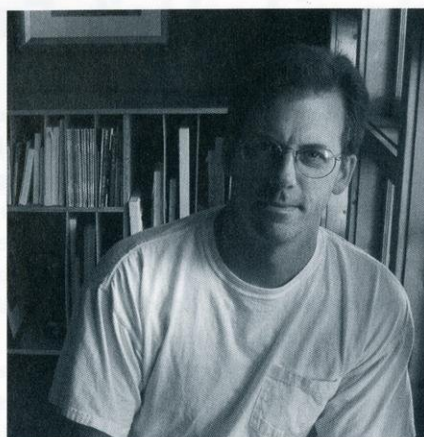
For his winning work, Lenz painted his 9-year-old son, Sam, gazing at the viewer amid an idyllic pastoral with a haloed sun suspended in the sky. The painting is called *Sam and the Perfect World* (see the outside back cover of this magazine). The viewer cannot necessarily see that Sam has Down syndrome. But something about his inquisitive gaze draws in the viewer. Sam seems connected to this world—but also separate from it.

"This creates a mystery," Marc Pachter, director of the National Portrait Gallery and a contest juror, told the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. "We don't really know who the boy is. We don't understand ... It invites us to wonder about him."

And that's the sign of a remarkable portrait, noted Pachter. "One of the things that happens in an excellent portrait is an engagement. You want to know the person; you want to know their world."

That was Lenz's intent. He had done small portraits of Sam before, but here he literally takes on the big picture of his son's experience.

"This is the first major work that explores—in depth—Sam's unique role in society," Lenz says. "In America, there is a long and troubling history of



**Artist David Lenz: Turning stereotypes upside down.**

people with disabilities being marginalized, discriminated against, ridiculed, dismissed as worthless, and perhaps worst of all, regarded as a burden on society.

"My wife Rosemarie and I were told Sam had Down syndrome five minutes after he was born. Since that very first day, the experience of being Sam's father changed me to the core," Lenz continues. "You could say I have been contemplating this painting for nine years. In some ways, it is long overdue."

What vision of Sam did Lenz intend to portray?

"I wanted to take all of those heart-breaking and incorrect views of people with disabilities and turn them upside down," Lenz says. "In the painting Sam's role is that of presenter, guide, even critic, and he is intensely meeting the viewer's gaze in a frank and thoughtful way. 'What does the civilized world look like through Sam's eyes?', I hope the viewer wonders."

Visitors to the Wisconsin Academy's James Watrous Gallery can see several Lenz works in a show called "Wisconsin's People on the Land," an exhibition held April 3–May 20 as part of the Wisconsin Academy's Future of Farming and Rural Life in Wisconsin initiative. (More information about the initiative on page 40.)

"It will be my chance to participate, artistically, in the ongoing discussion about the future of Wisconsin's rural areas," writes Lenz in an online diary on the National Portrait Gallery website ([www.portraitcompetition.si.edu](http://www.portraitcompetition.si.edu)).

Lenz pays a heartfelt tribute to the lives of small farmers in *Thistles* (oil on linen, 2001), a portrait of farmers Erv and Mercedes Wagner. The painting will be included in the James Watrous Gallery exhibition and also is featured in the new Wisconsin Artist Note Card series (see inside back cover of this magazine).

"Erv's father homesteaded the 120-acre farm nearly 100 years ago, and he carved out fields and pastures by removing tree stumps with teams of horses," Lenz writes. "For much of Erv's life the struggle was to get needed development, electric service, phone service, good roads."

"Now the pendulum has swung too far and too fast in the other direction," Lenz notes. "Close to the Wagner farm, in the last year, someone has built a large home very conspicuously perched in the middle of the most beautiful pasture you have ever seen. Across the road from the Wagner farm the neighbor's land has been subdivided. Land that was once a working farm soon will have 24 houses. America's dairy-land is now a building site."

Ironically, development already has changed Sam's "perfect world." The beautiful pasture Lenz describes is the very scene he painted in Sam's portrait before the house was built on it.

Gallery visitors can meet Lenz at an artists' reception on Friday, April 20, at 5:30 p.m. Lenz will take part in a panel discussion that evening at 7 p.m. Both events are at the Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State Street, Madison. Visit [www.wisconsinacademy.org](http://www.wisconsinacademy.org) for more information.

by Joan Fischer

# It's Story Time

The Wisconsin Book Festival turns 5 with its best lineup yet.

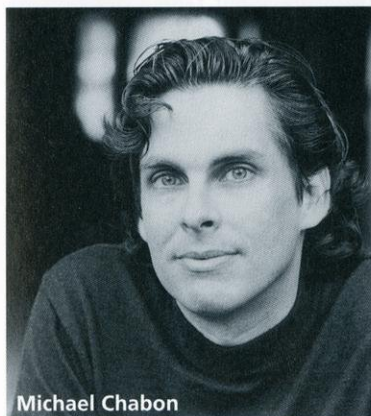
The 2006 Wisconsin Book Festival celebrates its fifth birthday in Madison October 18–22 with more than 100 readings, workshops, and roundtables that exult in the written word and offer insight into a wide range of literary genres. Presented as always by the Wisconsin Humanities Council (WHC), the event this year showcases its best array of authors yet.

Among those slated are recent U.S. Poet Laureate Ted Kooser, whose work is known for its clarity, precision, and accessibility, and fiction writer Michael Chabon, whose novel *The Amazing Adventures of Kavalier & Clay* won the Pulitzer Prize for Fiction in 2001.

One of the most colorful and witty guests is neurologist and primatologist Dr. Robert M. Sapolsky, whose work prompted the *New York Times* to suggest that “if you crossed Jane Goodall with a borscht-belt comedian, she might have written

a book like [Sapolsky’s] *A Primate’s Memoir*.”

The festival also welcomes graphic novelist Chris Ware, whose recently syndicated comic in the *New York Times Magazine* reached hundreds of thousands of loyal readers. The publication of his graphic novel, *Jimmy Corrigan: The Smartest Kid on Earth*, in



Michael Chabon

2000 inspired a near avalanche of praise from critics and an eager worldwide audience of readers, many of whom had never set foot in a comic book store.

As an event of international reach, the festival welcomes authors from around the world. This year Madison hosts Iranian graphic artist Marjane Satrapi and Kenyan novelist Ngugi wa Thiong’o. Satrapi’s best-selling autobiographical graphic novels, *Persepolis* and *Persepolis 2*, tell the story of her youth in Iran and her move to Europe, as an adolescent, to flee the Iranian Revolution. Ngugi, considered one of East Africa’s most influential writers, has survived imprisonment, harassment, and self-imposed exile for his political criticism of Kenya.

Closer to home, the festival presents Wisconsin’s own Jane Hamilton, whose award-winning novels, *The Book of Ruth* and *A Map of the World*, garnered national acclaim. In September, fans will welcome *When Madeline Was Young*, her first book in several years (see story on page 8).

The Wisconsin Book Festival also is proud to host, for the first time, all four of the WHC’s *A More Perfect Union* authors. Designed to stimulate conversation about American ideals,

realities, and policies, each year’s free, statewide book discussion kit includes a variety of books and films, along with discussion guides.

This year’s *A More Perfect Union* theme, “To Establish Justice,” draws from *A Civil Action* by Jonathan Harr; *Bombingham* by Anthony Grooms; *Sex Wars: A Novel of the Turbulent Post-Civil War Period* by Marge Piercy; and *For God and Country: Faith and Patriotism Under Fire* by James Yee.

But Madison isn’t the only place to see your favorite authors. Several communities throughout the state are hosting book festivals, many of which are sponsored in part by the WHC. Milwaukee hosts its first book festival October 10–17, with closing events on October 21. The Milwaukee festival features some of the same authors appearing in Madison, including Kooser, Ngugi, and Hamilton.



Marjane Satrapi

Meanwhile, the Chippewa Valley Book Festival (October 15–22) is hosting its seventh annual event, spotlighting 15 writers of regional and national reputation. Family events include a reading by winners of their Young Writers’ Competition, an annual festival highlight.

And Edgerton debuts a festival October 21–22 celebrating,

among other things, the 100th birthday of local author Sterling North, whose Rascal raccoon is more famous in Japan than Mickey Mouse is in the United States. Edgerton presenters include veteran White House reporter Helen Thomas.

Big or small, book festivals around the state are committed to promoting the importance of reading in our society. For more information, visit [www.wisconsinbookfestival.org](http://www.wisconsinbookfestival.org).

## WISCONSIN ACADEMY EVENTS AT BOOK FEST

### Short Story and Poetry Contest Winners’ Reading

Thurs. Oct. 19, 5:30–7 p.m., Avol’s Bookstore, 315 W. Gorham

**Wisconsin Publishers’ Showcase** presented by the Wisconsin Center for the Book, Fri. Oct. 20, 1–7 p.m., Wisconsin Historical Society and Library Mall

**The Future of Farming and Rural Life in Wisconsin—Authors’ Perspectives**, Fri. Oct. 20, 5–6:30 p.m., Wisconsin Studio, Overture, 201 State Street

**Michael Perry, Paula Sergi, and Julia Wolf** (Hessen-Wisconsin Writers), Sat. Oct. 21, 2–3:30 p.m., Memorial Union

**Magazine Editors Panel** includes *Wisconsin People & Ideas* editor Joan Fischer, Sun. Oct. 22, 12–1:30, WI Historical Society Museum

## TWO READS

## THE GREAT HOME EPIC

In her newest novel, Jane Hamilton, one of Wisconsin's most honored writers, takes readers into the heart of a very unconventional family.

*When Madeline Was Young* (Random House) is narrated by Mac, who was raised by his father, Aaron Maciver, and Aaron's second wife, Sarah. Integral to their household was Madeline, Aaron's first wife. Early in their marriage, Madeline suffers brain damage from a bicycle accident and remains a child throughout her life.

Hamilton, who lives and writes in an orchard farmhouse in Rochester, traces the roots of this novel to seeing the musical *The Light in the Piazza* in Chicago. She then read the novella by Elizabeth Spencer, upon which the play is based. In that story, there is an adult child who is impaired but marries.

Hamilton wondered, what happens after the wedding?

"My book isn't about those characters, not at all, but it was my way of answering the question," Hamilton says.

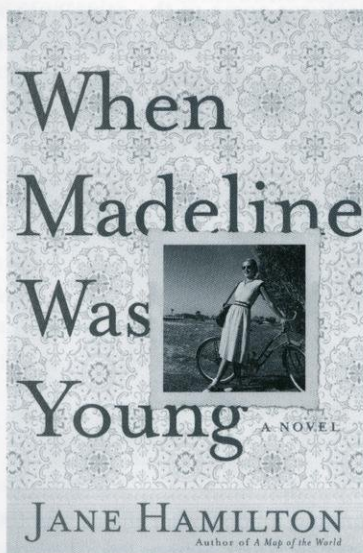
As Hamilton thought about the question, the characters emerged. Mac came to her as a physician who has noble aspirations as a child. "That's how the story came to me. He appeared, and I didn't turn him down."

Mac relates a complex story as he tries to make sense of his parents' household through the prism of his own family, his wife and daughters. In a relatively brief book, a story of three generations unfolds.

A theme that runs through Hamilton's books is that of marriage. In a culture obsessed with falling in love and breaking up, Hamilton delves into long-term relationships.

"Marriage is such an interesting institution because every couple makes their own marriage up as they go along," she says. "There's that old definition of marriage: Two families send a representative on to the field of battle. The narrative possibilities are endless."

The novel goes beyond one household, bringing in the larger world with references to Harry Truman, the Vietnam War, and the war in Iraq.



"Novels are set in time and therefore have to deal with some aspect of the political world," Hamilton says.

Although she worked hard to write about the political world without being didactic, the book came together relatively easily, she says. "I'd worked for four years on a novel that was a failure, so this book, in comparison, was a pleasure."

Whether they've been easy or hard to write, her published books have been notably successful. Her first novel, *The Book of Ruth*, won the PEN/Hemingway Award for First Fiction and was an Oprah Book Club selection. Her second, *A Map of the World*, was named a *New York Times* Notable Book of the Year and an Oprah club pick again, making Hamilton one of very few authors to have her work selected twice. She is also the author of *The Short History of a Prince* and *Disobedience*.

As she has written more books, the process has changed. "When I was younger, I wrote from sheer rage," she says. "I don't have quite the same fury—maybe it's the yoga—but my interests are the same: the great home epic."

Is there a next book out there?

"It's still a zygote," Hamilton says.

## IN DOGGED PURSUIT OF JUSTICE

On Feb. 13, 1998, the cover of *Isthmus*, a weekly alternative newspaper in Madison, featured a story about "Patty," a pseudonym for a woman who had been fingered as a liar for claiming to have been raped in her Madison apartment in September 1997.

Patty said she had been bullied into recanting the rape charges; police maintained that her story didn't stand up to the evidence. *Isthmus* news editor Bill Lueders believed Patty, and his story was the first step he took in pursuit of justice.

Over the next seven years, Lueders doggedly followed Patty's story. In the end, he pulled it all together in *Cry Rape: The True Story of One Woman's Harrowing Quest for Justice*, new from the University of Wisconsin Press.

The story was typical of Lueders' work in daring to question the power structure in the state's capital. But it got under Lueders' skin like no other story.

There are really two parallel stories in *Cry Rape*. The first is the convoluted tale of a rape investigation and prosecution gone very wrong. It reads like a tautly plotted legal thriller, an example of truth being stranger than fiction.

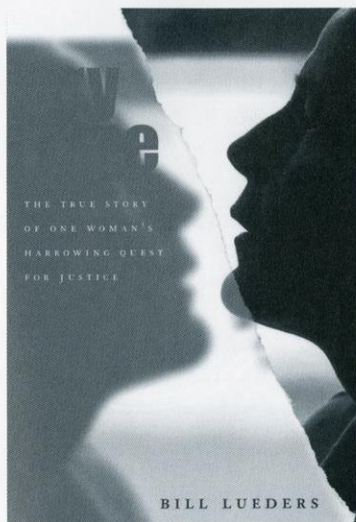
Entwined with the legal travails is the story of an emotionally and physically battered woman who demanded justice—and got it.

In the end, Patty's story was upheld. The rapist was identified through DNA matching and eventually convicted. But for

## Food and peace

seven years, Madison police and prosecutors went to great lengths to discredit her.

Visually impaired, Patty had been abused as a child and betrayed by people she loved throughout her life. She was vulnerable, a fact police exploited. As bad as the rape was, the pressure put on her to recant by Madison detective Tom Woodmansee was even worse, Patty told Lueders.



*Cry Rape* details the many painful losses Patty grappled with as she filed complaints and a federal lawsuit against the police. Even after the DNA matching identified her assailant, police and prosecutors continued to say she had lied.

"She ended up demonstrating courage and honesty far beyond that shown by police or prosecutors or judges," Lueders says.

In April 1998, Lueders filed a complaint against the Madison Police and Fire Commission charging that the department had mishandled Patty's letters of complaint and lied to him about the letters. And this was just the beginning of Lueders' efforts to get justice.

Did he go too far? Lueders says no.

"I think it's not right to expect journalists to stop being human beings. What I kept thinking when I was crossing lines was, 'This is my city. They can't do this in my community and expect me not to care.'"

And Patty? By the time the book is published she expects to have left Madison for another Wisconsin community. She's working and doing fine, Lueders reports.

The story really ends with the book, Lueders maintains.

"I feel this is the most important story of my life as a journalist and as a citizen. I think that attention must be paid to what happened to this woman, that awareness of what she was put through is the only ultimate source of justice." Lueders pauses before going on.

"Have the scales of justice been put right? No, but they may be by the book."

by Deborah Kades

Nothing promotes cultural understanding like a nice plate of baba ghanouj. And no one prepares it better than chef Sabi Atteyih of the Casbah Restaurant & Lounge, located steps away from the Capitol Square in Madison.

After 20 years in the restaurant business, Sabi has taken his culinary skills to the airwaves. His popular south-central Wisconsin TV show, "Cooking the Casbah," airs at 9 a.m. on Sundays on WKOW-TV.

The show is a culinary journey around the world. Audience members gather around the Casbah bar to watch Sabi prepare sumptuous Mediterranean dishes and then sample them. From fried tomatoes to flambé lamb skewers to stuffed turnips, Sabi serves up easy cooking tips and a healthy dose of culture and history. Wearing a rich red Islamic skullcap and a warm smile, he is congenial, informative, and entertaining.

Sabi, a fortysomething Palestinian refugee, was born in Kuwait, grew up in Syria, and moved to Madison with his family in 1981. He learned how to cook from his mother at Lulu's, the family's Middle Eastern restaurant, which is by this point a Madison institution and one of the most reliably superb restaurants in town. Lulu's is now run by Sabi's brother. The two were partners until Sabi opened the Casbah in 1999.



Sabi may have fun with food, but he's also on a serious mission to educate the public on the healthfulness of Mediterranean cuisine—native dishes from Greece, Turkey, Lebanon, Egypt, Tunisia, Morocco, and Spain. The cuisine is known for its abundant use of vegetables (more so than meats), whole grains, fish, olive oils, grapes, and nuts.

Sabi also is a proponent of the slow food movement, which teaches us where food comes from and what it's all about. "We know more about the fuel we put in our cars than the food we eat," he says. "It's important to read labels and to eat natural and local."

Sabi has a great desire to give back to the community. When people started asking him what ingredients he used, he decided to offer mini-courses at the Casbah through the Wisconsin Union. His students range from high school

continues on next page

*continued from previous page*

students to retired college deans. "Seeing smiles on people's faces is the ultimate reward," he says.

One of his pupils, Shelley Ryan of Wisconsin Public Television's "The Wisconsin Gardener," invited him to appear on her show. His short segment on the Melting Pot got a great response, and he decided to produce his own show. "Cooking the Casbah" is now in its fourth season. "I realized I had a passion for teaching the world about my culture through the medium I was most comfortable with—food," he says.

Never at a loss for ideas, his show has featured the Dane County Farmer's Market, chocolatiers, cheesemakers, farmers, chefs, and "foodies" of every ilk—all people who love to eat and cook. He's even featured an alternative fuel that uses frying oil in a vehicle run by Glass Nickel Pizza for deliveries.

"Food is our most basic, fundamental need," says Sabi. "It brings two or 2,000 people together. Having homemade food wherever we go is our connection to home."

Eating together at home or at a restaurant strengthens family and community ties, he believes. His culture is based on sitting down, sharing a meal, and talking. "When I visit people, they hide my shoes and make me sit down and eat with them," he says. He wants to share this custom with his students, viewers, and customers.

What keeps him going? The elusive goal of peace on earth. "I just want people to get along," he says. He hopes that worldwide we can find common ground in cultural diversity through culinary delight.

*by Barbara Sanford*

The Casbah Restaurant & Lounge is located at 119 E. Main Street, Madison, [www.thecasbahrestaurant.com](http://www.thecasbahrestaurant.com). "Cooking the Casbah" recipes are available at [www.cookingthecasbah.com](http://www.cookingthecasbah.com). If you'd like to be a part of the show's live audience, call 608/255-2236 for tickets.

## Roaming Writers

Wisconsin authors will rove the land courtesy of grants from the Wisconsin Center for the Book's Wisconsin Authors and Illustrators Speak program. Ten authors are scheduled to travel from September through May, sharing their personal insights about creativity and their passions about writing. All programs are free and open to the public.

The authors are:

**Marybeth Lorbiecki**, children's author and environmentalist, at the River Falls Public Library on September 26 at 7 p.m.

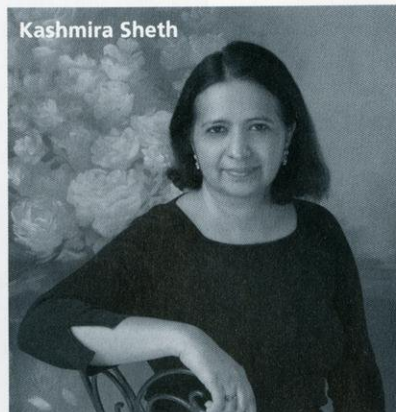
**Mary Logue**, poet and mystery author, at Verona High School on September 29. Contact Laurie Larson, [larsonl@verona.k12.wi.us](mailto:larsonl@verona.k12.wi.us), 608/244-4968 for details and time.

**Denise Sweet**, Wisconsin's Poet Laureate, at the T.B. Scott Public Library in Merrill on October 9 at 6:30 p.m.

**John Lehman**, poet and nonfiction writer, at Fort Atkinson's Dwight Foster Public Library in October. Contact Amy Lutzke, [alutzke@mwfls.org](mailto:alutzke@mwfls.org), 920/563-7790 for the date and time.

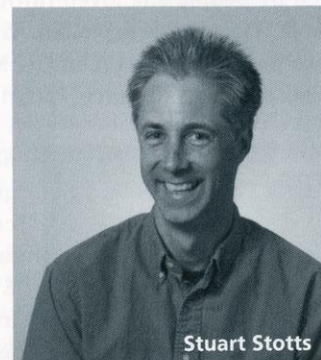
**Jerry Apps**, chronicler of rural life, at Johnson Creek Public Library, on November 9 at 6:30 p.m.

**Kashmira Sheth**, children's author, at Monona Public Library, on November 9. Contact Karen Wendt, [kwendt@scls.lib.wi.us](mailto:kwendt@scls.lib.wi.us), 608/222-6127 for the times of two programs.



Kashmira Sheth

**Stuart Stotts**, storyteller, singer, and writer, at Wyocena Community Center and Pardeeville Elementary School in January. Contact Kerri Canepa, [kacanepa@scls.lib.wi.us](mailto:kacanepa@scls.lib.wi.us), 608/429-4899 for specific date and times.



Stuart Stotts

**Michael Perry**, essayist, at Wisconsin Heights High School in Mazomanie in early 2007. Contact Judy Wahr, [jwahr@wisheights.k12.wi.us](mailto:jwahr@wisheights.k12.wi.us) for specific date and time.

**Patty Loew**, television producer and American Indian historian, at Menomonie Public Library. For date and details on this late 2006 or early 2007 program, contact Dianne Lueder, [diannel@ifls.lib.wi.org](mailto:diannel@ifls.lib.wi.org), 715/232-2164.

**Dennis McCann**, reporter, columnist, and travel writer, at the Douglas County Historical Society, on April 29. Contact Kathy Laakso, 715/392-8449, for time.

The Wisconsin Authors and Illustrators Speak program began in 1995 with financial support from the Library of Congress. Individual gifts now provide the major support. The Wisconsin Center for the Book's goal is to increase honoraria and the number of grants available. Gifts are welcome; checks with that designation may be made payable to the Wisconsin Center for the Book/Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, 1922 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53726. Questions may be directed to program chair Jane Roeber, [jroeber@wisc.edu](mailto:jroeber@wisc.edu), 608/238-9790.

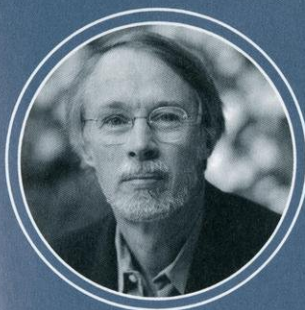
WISCONSIN PEOPLE & IDEAS/HARRY W. SCHWARTZ BOOKSHOPS

# SHORT STORY CONTEST 2007

with support from Wisconsin independent booksellers and the Wisconsin Center for the Book

Writers of Wisconsin, your time has come. Deliver your best short story, and we will declare **3** winners. Each will be published in *Wisconsin People & Ideas*, starting with next summer's issue, and be invited to read at the Wisconsin Book Festival.

## EXCITED? SO ARE WE!



**LEAD JUDGE**  
**Charles Baxter**

### PANEL JUDGES

**Timothy Walsh**  
Writer, poet, and contest coordinator

**Marilyn Annucci**  
Writer, poet, and professor, UW-Whitewater

**Laura Jean Baker**  
Writer and teacher

### THE PRIZES

**First place \$500\***

**Second place \$250**

**Third place \$100**

\* **PLUS: Manuscript review by a literary agent! (First prize only)**

## DEADLINE: DECEMBER 4, 2006

### SEND MANUSCRIPTS TO:

*Wisconsin People & Ideas*/Harry W. Schwartz  
Bookshops Short Story Contest  
Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters  
1922 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53726

### QUESTIONS?

Please see [www.wisconsinacademy.org](http://www.wisconsinacademy.org) or  
e-mail editor Joan Fischer at  
[jfischer@wisconsinacademy.org](mailto:jfischer@wisconsinacademy.org)

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to our Wisconsin independent bookstore sponsors

**Major Sponsor: Harry W. Schwartz Bookshops, Milwaukee**

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**The Reader's Loft**, Green Bay

**University Book Store**, Madison

**Village Booksmith**, Baraboo



**wisconsin academy**  
of sciences arts & letters

1. Authors must reside in or attend school in Wisconsin.
2. Stories must be between 2,500 and 5,000 words in length.
3. Authors must submit **three copies** of a story (photocopies are fine).
4. Each story must be accompanied by a \$15 entry fee (non-Academy members) or \$10 (Academy members, including those who join now) payable to *Wisconsin People & Ideas* Short Story Contest.
5. Writers may submit more than one entry, but each story must be mailed in separately with its own cover letter (see Rule 9) and entry fee.
6. Entries must be postmarked on or before **December 4**. Entries may be hand-delivered to the Wisconsin Academy (1922 University Avenue, Madison) by 4 p.m. on December 4.
7. Previously published stories (electronically or in print) are not eligible.
8. Each manuscript must be typed, double-spaced, in standard 10- or 12-point type. Each page must include the title of the story as a header. All pages must be numbered with both an individual page number and the total number of pages (e.g., Stormy Night, page 1/15, Stormy Night, page 2/15, Stormy Night, page 3/15, etc.).
9. **The author's name may not appear anywhere on the manuscript itself.** The manuscript must be accompanied by a letter bearing the story title; the author's name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address (if available); and the story word count. Every contestant must be able to provide an electronic version of the story if needed, either on disk or via e-mail.
10. Keep a copy of your manuscript. Manuscripts will be recycled, not returned. Do not send an SASE.
11. Contest winners will be announced on our website by the end of March.

WISCONSIN PEOPLE & IDEAS

# POETRY CONTEST 2007

FEATURING THE JOHN LEHMAN POETRY AWARD (1ST PLACE)

This year, we have a theme: farming and rural life in Wisconsin. Now is your chance to compose poetry relating to Wisconsin's evolving agricultural and rural heritage and identity. We are not looking for the sentimental, but for an honest exploration, in poetry, of what farming or rural life means to you. (For background information and possible inspiration, learn about the Wisconsin Academy's "Future of Farming and Rural Life in Wisconsin" initiative at the website below.) All three winners and 10 runners-up will be published in *Wisconsin People & Ideas* and be invited to read at several public events. Winners will be invited to read at the Wisconsin Book Festival.



**LEAD JUDGE**  
Bruce Taylor

**PANEL JUDGES**  
Laurel Yourke  
Peter Sherrill  
Michael Kriesel

**SPONSOR/CONTEST  
COORDINATOR**  
John Lehman

**THE PRIZES**  
First place \$500\*  
Second place \$100\*\*  
Third place \$50

## DEADLINE: DECEMBER 4, 2006

### SEND ENTRIES TO:

Wisconsin People & Ideas Poetry Contest  
Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters  
1922 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53726

### QUESTIONS?

Please see [www.wisconsinacademy.org](http://www.wisconsinacademy.org) or  
e-mail editor Joan Fischer at [jfischer@wisconsinacademy.org](mailto:jfischer@wisconsinacademy.org)

## SPECIAL THANKS

**Avol's Bookstore**, Madison For contest sponsorship

**The Reader's Loft**, Green Bay For contest sponsorship

**Abella Studios**, Madison \*For donating a three-hour recording/editing session to produce a CD of the first-place winner's poetry

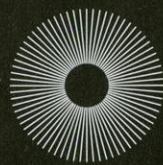
**McKay Nursery**, Madison \*\*For a \$100 "Color It Green" gift certificate for the second-place winner

1. Poets must reside or attend school in Wisconsin.
2. Poets may submit up to three poems per entry. No poem may be longer than one page. PLEASE NOTE THIS YEAR'S THEME BEFORE SUBMITTING.
3. Each entry must be accompanied by an entry fee of \$6 (non-Academy members) or \$4 (Academy members, including those who join now) payable to the *Wisconsin People & Ideas* Poetry Contest. Nonmembers: A check for \$12 covers the \$6 entry fee and a copy of the award issue, which we will mail to you. (Members receive the magazine automatically.)

4. A poet may enter more than one submission of up to three poems each, but additional submissions must be accompanied by a separate entry fee and cover letter. (See Rule 7.)
5. Contest deadline is December 4. Entries may be hand-delivered to the Wisconsin Academy (1922 University Avenue, Madison) by 4 p.m. on December 4. Entries postmarked after the deadline will not be considered and the entry fee will be retained to cover handling.
6. Previously published poems (in print or electronically) are not eligible. All work must be original. Any style or theme is welcome.
7. The poet's name or address may not appear

anywhere on the poems. Poems must be accompanied by a cover letter bearing the poem title/s, the poet's name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address (if available).

8. Keep a copy of your poems. Entries will be recycled, not returned. Do not send an SASE.
9. Contest winners will be announced on our website ([www.wisconsinacademy.org](http://www.wisconsinacademy.org)) and notified by the end of February 2007. Winning poetry will be published in the spring 2007 issue of *Wisconsin People & Ideas*, which appears at the end of March, in time for National Poetry Month (April).



**wisconsin academy**  
of sciences arts & letters

**If** you value the Wisconsin Academy, please consider making a contribution. Here are five easy ways for you to help us keep connecting people and ideas through high-quality public programs, most of them free of charge. All of these gifts are tax-deductible. Any donor contributing \$500 or more is accorded recognition on our donor board in the Wisconsin Academy's art gallery in Overture and in *Wisconsin People & Ideas*.



#### 1 Become a Member Now!

It's easy as pie! Join the Wisconsin Academy for \$25 at our one-year introductory rate. Membership rates remain a bargain even after that intro year is up—\$35 for one year or \$85 for three. Sign up using an enclosed membership card, our website, or the other contact information below.

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#### 2 An Annual Gift

A simple gift to the Wisconsin Academy, in the form of cash or marketable securities, helps us immensely in carrying out our work. These gifts are used for our general operations. **This year, all gifts will be doubled** in our Bright Future campaign. A donation envelope is included in this magazine.

**Help make  
us shine!**



#### 5 Planned Giving

Leave your legacy to the Wisconsin Academy by including us in your estate planning.



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Love a particular program? Consider becoming a sponsor! Your gift to underwrite one of our programs—our art gallery, *Wisconsin People & Ideas*, the Academy Evenings forum series, or the Wisconsin Idea at the Wisconsin Academy—will be accorded high visibility (with logo, if desired) in all publicity materials associated with that program.



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For more information on how you can support the Wisconsin Academy, please contact

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# Hip-Hop Goes to College

The university's best bet for diversity may be a spoken word program that's taking kids of all colors by storm.

BY SUSAN KEPECS

Speaking out about sweatshops: Spoken word artists (left to right) Joe Shaul, Moira Pirsch, Monica Davidson, and Lyjya Miles wow their peers in Sun Prairie.

All photos by Susan Kepecs

AMERICA'S UNIVERSITIES ARE BESIEGED by symptoms of mounting malaise. College students can't read or write. Campus diversity efforts bomb. The University of Wisconsin-Madison's so white, officials Photoshopped a black face into a recruitment brochure just a few years back. *The Capital Times* recently reported that the numbers of black and Latino undergrads on UW campuses

hover below 3 percent for each group. But drive by any Dane County high school at lunchtime and take a look at how diverse this once-Germanic/Scandinavian region has become. What's the future for these kids of color?

Finally, there's a pot of gold for the rainbow generation. Meet Willie Ney, executive director of the UW-Madison Office of Multicultural Arts, and the seven-poet national-level teen team from Youth Speaks Wisconsin, a program that Ney administers. Between Ney and this band of streetwise young spoken word artists, the status quo's about to get shook up. Say hallelujah.

## A POWERFUL, POSITIVE VOICE

Spoken word art is hip-hop poetry. Commercial hip-hop is big business, but unless you're into insipid thug themes

set to overproduced, pounding sound, you undoubtedly despise it. Ney calls it "misogynistic neo-Samboism that comes from the white capitalist in the shadows." Newspapers sometimes print its ugly lyrics as parental advisories.

But spoken word is hip-hop of a different stripe.

"It's socially conscious. It's got the beat, but these kids write political, social poems about domestic abuse, police brutality, lack of social justice, and anti-globalization," says Ney. "If all the teens who're always plugged into their iPods were listening to these messages instead of to commercial rap, it would be absolutely transformative. It could change the world."

Youth Speaks is a national spoken word network founded in San Francisco a decade ago by UW-Madison alum James Kass. In cities across the country,

Youth Speaks teens are writing rings around bored college kids. Youth Speaks is a movement gone back to its roots, Ney says—"Back to the urban riots of the Black Arts Movement that grew in the rich soil of late '60s social issues. There's a recurring theme in Youth Speaks poems: 'Hip-hop was hijacked by big business. It's our lifestyle, it's our art and we're taking it back.'"

Youth Speaks Wisconsin, the Madison-based chapter, began by serendipity. In 2003 Ney was the assistant director of UW-Madison's Latin American, Caribbean and Iberian Studies Program. As outreach, he produced related Sin Fronteras (education without borders) programs for the campus and community. On the advice of award-winning San Antonio film director Ray Santisteban and San Francisco percussionist/Latin jazz educator John Santos (both have had prominent residencies on the Madison campus), Ney brought some ear-popping spoken-word artists to Cinefest Nuestra America, Madison's popular annual Latino film fest that was tied that year to the Wisconsin Book Festival.

It's worth mentioning names: Tejana poetry-slam champion Tammy Gomez; second-wave Nuyorican activist poet queen Mariposa; Afro-Chicano truth-teller Brutha Los from the Bay Area. Their performance was an astonishing introduction to slam poetry for mainstream white Madisonians like me.

Also on this brilliant bill was national poetry slam champ Marc Bamuthi Joseph. Bamuthi, it turned out, was also artistic director of Youth Speaks San Francisco. He raved about his Madison experience to Kass, who called Ney with a proposal: put together a Madison team for the 2004 teen spoken word finals (Brave New Voices) in Los Angeles.

## HIP-HOP ON LIBRARY MALL

The rest, Ney says, is history. Since Los Angeles, Wisconsin's growing team has done numerous local slams, performed at university and high school events, and participated in the two succeeding national meets. In April the

seven teens who topped this year's local Youth Speaks finals—most of them winners for the second or third time—traveled to Brave New Voices 2006 in New York City. Forty-six teams participated in the event. While most inner-city teams are all black, notes Ney, the Wisconsin team, like Dane County's population, is thoroughly multicultural.

Ney's drive to provide opportunities for these young artists is relentless. Last year Youth Speaks Wisconsin became the very first local chapter housed in an institution of higher learning, under the outreach auspices of Ney's office. Strong institutional support kicked this teen poetry program into very high gear. Members meet weekly at Madison's Lussier Teen Center to read and critique new works. Youth Speaks outreach coordinator Josh Healey, a prominent local activist slam poet, mentors these sessions.

This fall, some of the nation's premiere spoken word coaches step on board. Husband-and-wife team e.g. bailey and Shá Cage, pioneers on the Twin Cities' spoken word scene and founders of the Minnesota Spoken Word Association, become the artistic directors of Youth Speaks Wisconsin. And Bamuthi will be in residence in Madison all spring.

Also this year, the program's outreach spreads deeper into Dane County schools. Over the summer, Youth Speaks Wisconsin and the UW-Madison School of Education offered a teacher-training institute aimed at preparing educators to incorporate socially conscious urban art forms into their school curricula.

And here's the ultimate bold step, backed by Ney's response to what he sees at the national finals. "There's a common language of truth, honesty, and liberation—it's a totally uncensored expression of the teen self. But its parameters are ages 13–19. What do you do with 20-year-olds? Some of them become mentors to the younger generation, but too many get lost. They have no clue what they want to do. They don't even think about college."

The obvious solution was to turn urban art forms that these kids already

know—spoken word, dj-ing, freestyling, break dancing—into creative, socially responsible, economically viable avenues for success. To that end, a year from now the UW-Madison's First Wave Spoken Word and Urban Arts Learning Community, the first-ever college program of this kind, opens its doors.

First Wave will provide a comfortable environment for the hip-hop generation, offering a certificate in spoken word but also well-directed integration into the larger university world. Students accepted into the First Wave Learning Community won't be college dropout statistics. Applications will be intensely screened; a 3.5 GPA is expected for acceptance. "These kids aren't getting a free ride," Ney says. "They're competing with any other student applying to get in. What we're giving them is the incentive to do so."

Most likely they will be veterans of Youth Speaks programs. Because of that



"It could change the world": UW-Madison's Willie Ney believes in the positive power of spoken word.

experience, they'll be ready to hit the ground running. "They won't get sidetracked in the ridiculous debauchery that plagues this campus. We'll set them up with internships in media and other industries. They'll be creative and original," says Ney.

At an institution that's fared so poorly with diversity initiatives, campus climate is the wild card. "Hip-hop culture is marginalized and ghettoized,"

## Where the Sun Shines a Little Bit Cockeyed

Madison, where the sun shines a little bit cockeyed  
where there's more honesty than lies—sometimes  
where a doctor's son can be a drive-by shooter  
and a prisoner's daughter can be a hopeful Christian  
where I walk along the streets all hours of the night from west to east  
we have a lot less crime but a lot more police  
you come to Wisconsin on vacation  
and you leave on probation

walking down State Street  
and seeing the future leaders of our community  
drunk / running / hands open  
wishing the sun would shine a little brighter on this city  
and give people something else to do  
than down bottles of alcohol  
making them 'go stupid'  
the Madcity blues liquefied in the shape of a beer bottle  
so we can drown away our pain

Madison where the lakes are frozen 9 months out of 12  
and people's minds are the other 3  
see, we come from the city that's growing too old too fast  
and now it's stuck in a mid-life crisis  
cuz life goes easy up at the university  
but adversely for the rest of us  
even the best of us get told we won't amount to nothing  
so we don't count on nothing but ourselves

the sun doesn't sit high here / it's on a lean  
cuz everything ain't the way it seems  
we're not small enough that everybody knows everybody's business  
but we're not perfect / in fact, far from it  
we have the highest # of incarcerated black men in the country  
we get excited about brat fest and the only place we see graffiti is at the teen center  
Madison where the sun shines just a little bit cockeyed like he's winking at you  
staring hard on a lean for every flaw that goes unnoticed

*by Moira Pirsch, Sekou Muhammad, Les Robbins, and Monica Davidson*

Ney says. "For First Wave to succeed, the campus community has to learn to celebrate rather than fear it, give it legitimacy instead of dismissing it as irrelevant."

It may take time, but Ney's confident. "I know the '07 group will be amazing. Just by being artists who compete nationally and get paid to perform in local schools, Youth Speaks teens stand out. But it's not just about poetry. It's about moving poetry into action. It's empowerment. It's organizing around the themes and issues that come up in the poems. These kids are already leaders in their high schools. You bring 20 or 30 of them here and a few years down the line you have 100. That's enough to change the climate of an institution. It's different than McNair scholars [low-income and minority students with demonstrated academic potential on a directed track toward graduate programs]. They're holed up in the library, but these kids are performers. Their visibility will be much higher. They'll have a real presence. There'll be ciphers"—spontaneous freestyle hip-hop groups—"on Library Mall."

By the time First Wavers graduate, they'll have the education and connections they need to produce whatever they want, Ney says. "In place of the black man in the ghetto with the gun who creates fear, a university education will create the leaders of tomorrow in industry, the media, and law. They'll be able to succeed and still be part of their own community. Instead of becoming marginalized, they'll be energized."

### ENGAGEMENT THROUGH POETRY

Maybe it sounds too good to be true, but I know a thing or two about being a university student, and after attending a couple of Monday afternoon meetings there's not a shadow of doubt in my mind that Wisconsin's Youth Speaks team teens are college material. They're socially aware, eloquent, and enthusiastic.

Les Robbins has that gangsta-rap look that sends chills down suburban execu-

tives' spines—baggy jeans and bling. He's also blessed with tons of charisma. "Poetry's empowerment with words," he says. "I had a lot of pain and I needed to put it down. Poetry gave me a new way to see. Instead of doing stuff like stealing cars I do something else with my time, I express myself so people can hear me. Poetry opened new doors. When I first started I never thought I'd be in this place, going to national events and meeting so many people from across the world. Writing took me to a whole new level."

Robbins is a La Follette High sophomore who's shooting for First Wave when he graduates. "I wouldn't want to go to a regular college. I want to do what I'm interested in—music, poetry, and art. That's what makes other kinds of required courses bearable. Without poetry I wouldn't be in school, period."

Poetry's our political regime, he adds, signaling the whole group.

Robbins dances when Alice Chang reads her latest poem. "He's my cheerleader—my hype man," Chang says. Like Robbins, she's angry. "Slam is 'in' right now. Commercializing it makes me want to lash out. A writer's job is to educate people. I'm from Taiwan. Most teens don't even know where that is. They think it's Thailand."

She's always been a reader; she's both peer and mentor for the rest of the team. They call her their poet laureate. "Youth Speaks lets you meet a lot of people you think you'd be very different from. Like Les isn't the type of person I usually hang out with," she says, grinning. First Wave, an English degree, and law school are in her plans.

Sekou Muhammad is a pan-Africanist roots writer. "My parents taught me about my history from a very early age. My poetry always ends up being about that. I've lived in Jamaica, I've been to Africa. I come back and see people capitalize off the suffering of others. Poetry gives us a voice to change what's going on in the world. The possibilities are endless."

At a regular Monday meeting, post-New York, he offers up for critique a poetic tribute he's just written to his 90-year-old great-grandmother. He's the

only one in the group who's not considering First Wave. Instead he's going to Morehouse College, where Martin Luther King Jr. earned his BA. "I'm gonna try to start my own leadership group, 'Youth Empowerment Association of Atlanta.' Yeah! I'm gonna study business administration, entertainment business, and journalism. There's a big spoken word scene in Atlanta. I'm hoping to make a bridge between there and Madison."

Moirira Pirsch and Lyjya Miles are poet-activists. "Youth Speaks really did change my life," says Pirsch. "It's given

me a lot of opportunities to do what I love. I see how much it's improved my life as a writer and as a person. Part of that's being able to start clubs and lead workshops in the middle schools to spread the word."

Pirsch and Miles led some spoken-word workshops at Sherman Middle School last spring. Says Miles: "Going into Sherman and helping kids write poetry, seeing the youth of tomorrow pouring their hearts out, does me a lot of good. We watched tears from these 11- and 12-year-old kids. We saw them cry about their dad beating their mom."

## Youth Speaks at Book Fest

Youth Speaks poets will give numerous performances at the Wisconsin Book Festival beginning Wednesday, October 18. They include Kevin Covall on October 18; Mayda del Valle and Dasha Kelly on October 19; and Linton Kwese Johnson on October 20. All three of these performances are at 7 p.m. in the Wisconsin Historical Society auditorium, 816 State Street (on campus). The Youth Speaks Spoken Word Showcase, featuring the Midwest Teen Teams/All Stars (including the four artists named above), takes place on Saturday evening, October 21, in the Union Theatre, 800 Langdon Street. Exact time and more information at [www.wisconsinbookfestival.org](http://www.wisconsinbookfestival.org)



"Helping kids write poetry, seeing the youth of tomorrow pouring their hearts out, does me a lot of good," says Lyjya Miles, performing here at Sun Prairie High School. "Youth Speaks is my life."

## Sweatshop Perspectives

*Monica:* I'm workin in a factory

*Moir:* They've captured me

*Lyjya:* imprisoned me to steel walls plenty guards

*All:* I mean supervisors

*Moir:* watching me haunting me in my sleep

*Joe:* my kids haven't eaten in days

*Monica:* there's no God because if there was

*All:* I would pray

*Moir:* And my fingers are achin', my fingers are achin'

*Lyjya:* it's hour 13

*Joe:* day 5 million

*Monica:* pair of pants infinity

*Moir:* and so, I sew, I sew, and I sleep and I sew,

*Joe:* and the manufacture of this 5 pocket denim isn't fillin'  
up bellies

*All:* SO

*Monica:* I have a question

*All:* What's in your pocket?

*Lyjya:* string bracelet little sister made for me on my  
thirteenth birthday, it just broke today and it sort of  
made me want to cry

*All:* What's in your pocket?

*Moir:* Pictures, the 3 loves of my life, ages 1, 6 and 8,  
youngest princess said her first words yesterday, I  
missed it

*All:* What's in your pocket?

*Monica:* Coins, I've got 60 cents in my pocket, 1/2 a day's  
pay and family needs milk and bread, hoping the  
clerk'll trust me to pay him tomorrow

*All:* Break

*Throw Pants to Lyjya*

*Lyjya & Moir:* Direct deposit is my best friend! I am 17  
years old, working 26 hours a week but it feels oh so  
good having 468 dollars in my account just waiting to  
be spent

*Monica & Joe:* Paycheck 184.86 cents neglected to pay my  
cell phone bill but still posted up at this economy  
driven institution and that's not all...I'm at the Mall

*Moir:* Sooooo, I really like these jeans, and Brad will too!  
But I'm going to the club so I better buy 2

*Monica:* Staring at these denim letting these fit my curves  
the same way my skin fits me

*Lyjya:* supporting factories overseas releasing these until  
I'm broke

*Monica:* I faint for jeans the same way a crack head does for  
coke

*Joe:* And where on earth are these made?

*All:* Well I really don't care!

*Lyjya:* All that matters in my life is that the boys are gonna  
stare cuz they already want me cuz their hearts are in  
my locket,

*Moir:* but I really don't care because their eyes are in my  
pocket!

*Monica:* hanging on the tongue of a boy, girl you need to  
stop it, cuz I keep these dollar bills in my pockets, I'm  
just wondering whose pockets I'm filling

*All:* Break

*Throw Pants to Joe*

*All:* What's in your pockets???

*Joe:* In my pocket, I got the world.

*Moir:* spinning this globe with my fingertips I have three  
cars

*Monica:* four mistresses

*Lyjya:* new suits

*Joe:* and the nation under my finger.

*Monica:* I have congressmen in my pockets

*All:* the U.S. of A. in a choke chain

*Joe:* letting me ply my trade right into your hometown

*Monica & Lyjya:* In my pockets, sweatshops tearing ripping  
beating my money out of the hearts of my captives.

*Joe:* I am the pockets of all pockets

*Moir:* I spend sixteen minutes a day to the sixteen hours of  
my workers sewing pockets to fill mine.

*Monica:* just another sprocket in the industrial machine  
making pockets to let us pocket the profits just to  
increase my bottom line a little bit more.

*All:* But wait, how much do these cost?

*Joe & All:* these are nineteen ninety-five plus the lives of the  
two little girls who lost their mother to the industrial  
machine

*Lyjya & All:* Nineteen ninety five plus the life of the mother  
who worked to death no food no water no life.

*Monica & All:* Nineteen ninety-five plus the rape of a people  
by nameless executives.

*Joe:* The cost is not in dollars but in lives.

*All:* Great I'll take 2

*by Monica Davidson, Moir Pirsch, Joe Shaul, and Lyjya Miles*

You can tell it felt good to get that off their chests in a way that nobody laughed at them. Youth Speaks is my life."

At the regional finals last winter Joe Shaul, a teenage electronics wizard, read a poem about being a geek from a laptop he carried onstage. His resonant words got him a place on the national team. "I thought there was no way I could ever do poetry. I just thought it was cool and one day after a large caffeine bender I started writing and I thought wow, I can do this!"

Monica Davidson, who's been on the team since it started, says she'd never have considered college if not for First Wave; now she's hoping to get in. "Youth Speaks was different than anything I'd ever done. It was an opportunity for me to share and speak my mind, so I jumped on. I never wrote slam before. I just used to write little love poems—recently I went back and looked at them. I've grown a lot since then. Youth Speaks connected me with my mother—we were estranged, but now she comes with me to the nationals and takes the team videos."

(Right) Les Robbins performing at Sun Prairie High. (Below, left to right) Monica Davidson, Moira Pirsch, Les Robbins, and Alice Chang at a weekly meeting in the Lussier Teen Center cafeteria, Madison.

For the group, Davidson debuts a fearless new work about saying her piece—to her mother. Afterward, the group falls silent. "That was a jaw-dropping poem," Robbins says quietly.

### TEENS GONE WILD

The Wisconsin team didn't win the national competition, but that's not what matters. Today's high school generation is plagued with problems, from ignorance and racism to drugs and poverty. Youth Speaks has their attention. A few weeks after the team's return from the Big Apple, I went with them to Sun Prairie High, where they performed for a full-school audience.



In a standard-issue wood-paneled auditorium filled to capacity with a much more diverse student body than we'd expected, Healey emcees.

"Whassup, Sun Prairie! How y'all doin' today, y'all ready for some poetry?"

"Yeah!" the students shout back.

Robbins used to live in Sun Prairie. He knows a lot of these kids. They go wild when he delivers his piece.

They cheer for Pirsch's polyrhythmic poem about her fallen heroes and are spellbound by Chang's evocative, just-written work on Africa, "sunken children like lost treasure."

"How many of you out there are geeks?" Healey shouts by way of introducing Shaul. Lots of techies identify, hollering back from their seats.

Miles, after her piece, marches into the crowd. Sun Prairie's shrieking students lean out of their seats to touch her.

Davidson grabs the mic with professional finesse. "Put my hip-hop on!" she commands, and the crowd whoops with joy.

Davidson's message, echoing Ney's observation, is about saving the art form from the corrupting hand of uber-capitalism. When she's done Healey invites anyone in the ebullient audience who's interested in Youth Speaks/First Wave to come see him after the show. For the finale Davidson, Miles, Pirsch, and Shaul do a team piece they co-wrote, a long, musical poem with the double, intertwined theme of third-world sweatshop labor and the love affair American teens have with expensive jeans (see page 18). Robbins, Davidson, and Miles take over the mics, jamming freestyle. Then it's over. As we head out toward the parking lot, Healey and the team are bowled over by a multicultural crush of kids from Sun Prairie who want to get involved. \*

*Susan Kepecs, honorary fellow in the University of Wisconsin–Madison department of anthropology, is an archaeologist and freelance writer.*



# WISCONSIN KOREAN WAR STORIES

A project of the Wisconsin Historical Society and Wisconsin Public Television, in association with the Wisconsin Department of Veterans Affairs.

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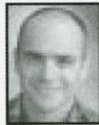
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An early Wisconsin Idea Theater production, 1950s.

Photo courtesy UW-Madison Archives

# The Arts in the Small Community

## PART I: LAYING THE FOUNDATION

MARYO GARD EWELL AND MICHAEL WARLUM

If you try, what may you expect?  
 First a community  
 Welded through art to a new consciousness of self:  
 A new being, perhaps a new appearance—  
 A people proud  
 Of achievements which lift them through the creative  
 Above the ordinary—  
 A new opportunity for children  
 To find exciting experiences in art  
 And to carry this excitement on  
 Throughout their lives—  
 A mixing of peoples and backgrounds  
 Through art; a new view  
 Of hope for mankind and an elevation  
 Of man—not degradation.  
 New values for individual and community  
 Life, and a sense  
 That here, in our place  
 We are contributing to the maturity  
 Of a great nation.  
 If you try, you can indeed  
 Alter the face and the heart  
 Of America.<sup>1</sup>

THESE STIRRING WORDS CLOSE *The Arts in the Small Community: A National Plan*, authored in 1969 by Robert E. Gard, Michael Warlum, Ralph Kohlhoff, Ken Friou, and Pauline Temkin—the staff of the Office of Community Arts Development, housed in Agriculture Hall at the University of Wisconsin.

*The Arts in the Small Community* became the bible of small community arts workers for the next 35 years, initially published by UW Extension, later reprinted twice by Americans for the Arts, now online at [wisconsinacademy.org/gard](http://wisconsinacademy.org/gard). It was actually the final report of the Office of Community Arts Development to the National Endowment for the Arts, which had given the UW team its first-ever grant for community arts development.

It is our pleasure to present a two-part story. Part I looks at this project from the perspective of 1969, putting it in a historical context. Part II, to appear in the summer edition of this magazine, looks at the project from a present-day perspective, addressing the question,

"Did anything happen as a result of this project? Why was it important?"

Back in 1965, the grant from the National Endowment for the Arts provided three-year funding to the Office of Community Arts Development to undertake a major experiment. The experiment asked, "What will happen if we enable people in small communities to devise arts programs of their own choosing?" Although this idea is no longer a radical one, in 1965—at least to the National Endowment for the Arts—it was. The proposal identified five communities in Wisconsin—Adams-Friendship, Portage, Rhinelander, Spring Green, and Waupun—and outlined a three-part process by which people in these communities, assisted by Gard and his staff, would invite artists of their choosing to town for workshops

and performances, would design locally based arts programs that were right for them, and would design some kind of appropriate organizational infrastructure to keep the arts activity flourishing into the future.

When the proposal was sent to the National Council on the Arts—the governing board of the National Endowment for the Arts—it was met with ridicule. At that time, the NEA—only one year old—was funding the "great art of America." According to Charles Christopher Mark, whose book *Reluctant Bureaucrats: The Struggle to Establish the National Endowment for the Arts* chronicled the early days of the NEA, the National Council's "focus was on the survival of national institutions such as American Ballet Theatre, Metropolitan Opera, and the resident theatres across the country."<sup>2</sup> The National Council was content to let the

fledgling state arts councils "take care" of rural America, so when the proposal from Wisconsin came before them, "the reaction was completely negative. Some of the Council members were amused that we should even propose to spend \$58,000 a year for three years on such a project." It was clear that the project would be voted down. The discussion was heated, and chairman Roger Stevens called a lunch break. Leonard Bernstein was on the National Council; he had missed the morning session but arrived during the break. And then the following events transpired:

When I told him the rural arts project had been tabled, he told me that was one reason why he wanted to come to the meeting. I thought he was another negative vote, but he said he read the full proposal and he thought it

Gard charms Lady Bird Johnson, who was impressed by the Spring Green arts program.

Photo courtesy UW-Madison Archives



important. When the session resumed ... Bernstein listened to me debating with most of the Council and then raised his hand to speak. After a dramatic pause he said, "This project has nothing to do with art, but it has everything to do with why we are sitting here." He then went on most eloquently to describe the need to break out of the elite image the arts now hold and to make the arts available to all our citizens wherever they reside.... In short, this man who represented art in its highest form was an unexpected and effective ally of Bob Gard's concept of developing the inherent need for a creative outlet in all people. When he finished, the attitude of the Council had been reversed and the project was passed unanimously. In the long run, it became one of our more sustaining accomplishments.

Where did this "radical" idea of Gard's come from?

Radical it may have been to the National Endowment for the Arts, but it was perfectly natural in its Wisconsin context.

Gard, with a B.A. in theater from the University of Kansas, attended Cornell University for his master's work in the mid-1930s. He'd gone there to study with one of the luminaries in theater at the time, Alexander Drummond. Drummond's drama program had two thrusts. In the first, he trained his students to hone the presentation of classical drama, and to create new directions in contemporary theater. But because Cornell was also the land grant university in New York, with an extension service responding to public need, Drummond was often asked by people in rural upstate New York to recommend plays for production by their drama groups. Drummond was disgusted by what he considered the foolish and trivial offerings of the drama services that were labeled "suitable for rural production," so his second thrust was the New York State Plays Project.

Gard had found his calling—the collection of regional stories, the capturing of the meaning of place through locally written drama, and the assisting of aspiring writers who wanted to create and produce plays.

Advertised in the *American Agriculturalist* magazine, Drummond encouraged farmers and their family members to bring ideas, and he and his students helped to turn these ideas into plays, and then helped them to produce these plays. Drummond wanted plays reflecting rural life as it really was, and plays that drew upon local history and stories.

Gard was hooked. He had found his calling—the collection of regional stories, the capturing of the meaning of place through locally written drama, and the assisting of aspiring writers who wanted to create and produce plays.

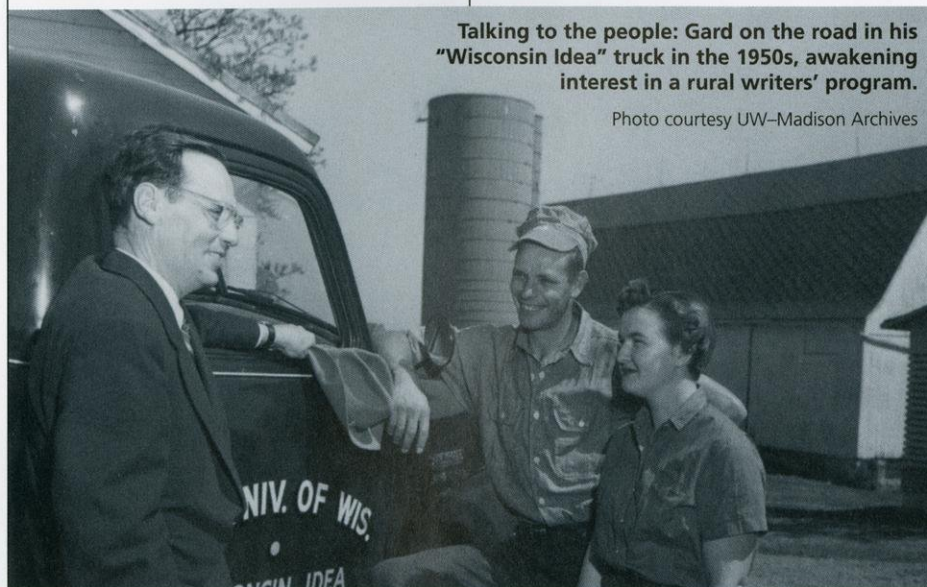
At the time, Gard knew nothing of the Wisconsin Idea, that glorious blend of populist government, social reform, putting academic research to work in the service of improving public and private life, and, in effect, declaring the boundaries of the University of Wisconsin campus to be the boundaries of the state. The Wisconsin Idea was hardly about the arts! But playwright Percy MacKaye immediately saw the

relationship between the two; in 1913 he wrote, "The Wisconsin Idea involves the full scope of popular self-government; but popular self-government without indigenous art forms is incapable of civilized expression."<sup>3</sup>

And about the same time, University of Wisconsin president Charles Van Hise said:

I would have no mute, inglorious Milton in this state ... I would have everybody who has a talent have an opportunity to find his way so far as his talent will carry him, and that is only possible through university extension supplementing the schools and colleges.<sup>4</sup>

Edgar "Pop" Gordon became director of the Bureau of Music and Drama in 1916, and, believing that music could help strengthen communities, combat juvenile delinquency, and strengthen families, he crisscrossed Wisconsin by train, helping towns create singing soci-



Talking to the people: Gard on the road in his "Wisconsin Idea" truck in the 1950s, awakening interest in a rural writers' program.

Photo courtesy UW-Madison Archives

eties and fulfilling Van Hise's idea that anyone with a talent should have an outlet for that talent. Trained as a musician, he ultimately moved into the Department of Music.

But President Glenn Frank's interest in drama threw more of a spotlight on the dramatic activities of the bureau. In 1925, Frank had said:

There's a gap somewhere in the soul of the people that troops into the theater but never produces a folk drama.... The arts are vital, if in the years ahead we are to master instead of being mastered by the vast complex and swiftly moving technical civilization born of science and the machine.... The next great dramatic renaissance in America will come when the theatre is recaptured from the producers by the people, when we become active enough in mind and rich enough in spirit to begin the creation of a folk drama and a folk theatre in America.<sup>5</sup>

Little theaters flourished in Wisconsin, often with the help of the university; "4-H" and "children's

theater" were often uttered in the same breath.

The visual arts, too, flourished in the name of the Wisconsin Idea. Dean Chris Christensen, of the College of Agriculture, conceived of the idea of an artist-in-residence for the college, and, turning for advice to his friend, Grant Wood, sought out and hired John Steuart Curry in 1937 to come to Wisconsin and help develop the artistic talents of rural people. Thus, the first artist-in-residence at any American state university was in Wisconsin—but not in the fine arts department!

It was into this rich context that Gard came to the University of Wisconsin in 1945. With his commitment to excellence in the theater via Professor Drummond, his experience in the New York State Plays Project, and his inherent "feeling for places," he immediately saw in the Wisconsin Idea a political, social, and philosophical framework in which the arts could play a vital part. Sharing the beliefs of presidents Van Hise and Frank that the arts were essential to a democratic society, and that the development of everyone's talents was a key to the future, Gard set to work assisting people who were interested in writing.

In Gard's masterpiece, *Grassroots Theater: A Search for Regional Arts in America*, published in 1955 (and reprinted in 1999—copies are available for \$10 from the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts & Letters), he describes a seminal moment. He has just conducted a three-day writing seminar for a small group of rural people. He's talking with one of the participants who has said that there are thousands of rural people eager to write. He says he hasn't seen that—and that the writing he *has* seen was not very good.

She thought one reason the plays reflected little poetic appreciation of the area was because everything was made to seem too complex, too technical, too difficult. She said there must be a great, free expression. If the people of Wisconsin knew that someone would encourage them to express themselves in any way they chose, if they knew that they were free of scenery and stages and pettiness that the plays we do seem so full of, if they knew that someone would back them and help them when they wanted help, it was her opinion that there would be such a rising of creative expression as is yet unheard of in Wisconsin and it would really all be a part of the kind of theater we had had these past three days, for the whole expression would be of and about ourselves.<sup>6</sup>

From this moment grew the idea for the Wisconsin Rural Writers Association (still going strong as the Wisconsin Regional Writers Association), which quickly attracted thousands of members statewide. This was just the beginning of myriad activities that Gard instigated—original shows that toured to county fairs, poetry societies, the Wisconsin Foundation on the Arts, the

***A Memory*, by Walter Marsden (1948, Edgerton), painted under the tutelage of John Steuart Curry.**



holiday folk fair in Milwaukee, and more, and more.

So it was only natural that, 10 years after the publication of *Grassroots Theater*, Gard should conceive of a broad and bold program in all of the arts for all of the people in Wisconsin—especially in rural Wisconsin. Housed at Agriculture Hall, the Office of Community Arts Development recognized the nascent movement that began in 1948, creating “community arts councils” in America. Though that movement had begun in small places—Quincy, Illinois, and Winston-Salem, North Carolina—nothing had been written to help rural people develop an arts council; what little writing that existed—such as Ralph Burgard’s *Arts in the City*—was focused on urban places.

A three-year program plan would be devised by the local people, starting with their hopes and dreams. They would also discuss ways in which local people could be engaged in art-making.

And thus, when the National Endowment for the Arts was created as part of Lyndon Johnson’s Great Society in 1965, Gard recognized that finally a mechanism existed that could help bring the public’s money to all of the people, to explore and enjoy the arts, and to use

the arts to strengthen the places where they lived. *All* of the people.

The five communities that received the technical assistance and funding from the NEA had been chosen for different reasons. Spring Green, of course, had been the home of Frank

These works and others may be seen at the Wisconsin Academy’s Steenbock Gallery, 1922 University Avenue, Madison, in March and April 2007 as part of the “Future of Farming and Rural Life in Wisconsin” initiative. More information will be posted at [www.wisconsinacademy.org](http://www.wisconsinacademy.org)

**Wisconsin Farm Auction**, by Joan Arend (Almond, 1945), also painted under John Stuart Curry’s mentorship.



Lloyd Wright, and a young Uplands Arts Council had been formed in 1966; the project administrators thought that Wright's legacy might be a local friendliness toward arts development. In Rhinelander, the School of the Arts was in its infancy; the administrators hoped that a further development of local interest in the arts would ensure a long life for the school. Portage was rich in local history. Waupun boasted "The End of the Trail" sculpture and a young arts council. Adams-Friendship, admittedly, had nothing at all, as far as administrators could determine.

But though the communities were selected for different reasons, the model

was to be the same. With the help of key local people, such as the Extension agent, people interested in the arts would be invited to an initial meeting to talk about their dreams for the arts in their place. In Waupun, the group wanted to bring a major orchestra to town for a concert and envisioned a Midwest sculpture center. In Spring Green, the initial interest was in attracting a resident theater company. Adams-Friendship envisioned its own orchestra.

A three-year program plan would be devised by the local people, starting with their hopes and dreams. They would also discuss ways in which as many local people as possible could be

engaged in art-making. Writers groups, local theater groups, the creative use of storefront spaces, fiber arts classes, presenting touring shows—the list could be huge.

Based on what the local groups wanted, the Office of Community Arts Development staff would generate a list of ways that they could help the towns move toward their dreams. They could help with the infrastructure—setting up a local arts council, identifying local interests in the arts, identifying local leadership, attracting volunteers, identifying local artists. They could assist in setting up arts groups—writers groups for all five communities, for instance. They would help in creating tours of groups from Madison—for instance, the Wisconsin Ballet Theater—to the five towns. Or contracting with arts graduate students to lead workshops in areas of interest in the five towns.

Gradually, the funds would shift to the communities. Initially, the Office of Community Arts Development would pay for activities; but by 1968, the funds would pass through to the communities, so that they could make—and pay for—their own decisions.

And the arts indeed flourished. Here is only a partial idea of what was going on in these towns.

In Spring Green, the Uplands Arts Council hosted a classic film festival. The local movie theater was renovated and became the Gard Theater on Main Street so that live drama and music could have a home. Boris Goldovsky brought his opera workshop to Spring Green; Lee Strasberg conducted workshops there as well. The Milwaukee Repertory Theater was in residence for the entire summer of 1967, presenting their 43-performance, three-play repertory season, with cast members living with farm families. The Upland Arts Council presented the Madison Opera Guild's "Die Fledermaus," selling out all



**John Stuart Curry stands before a work in the mid-1940s. The hatted figure in the foreground, tie askew, is Dean Christensen.**

Photo courtesy UW-Madison Archives

317 seats. They held a two-week art festival, a creative drama festival, a quilt show; they remodeled a barn into a gallery; they remodeled a chicken coop into a creative drama studio—and more. Indeed, so large did the Spring Green program become that the First Lady, Lady Bird Johnson, spent a day in Spring Green, sampling the arts offerings, escorted by Agriculture Secretary Orville Freeman.

In Waupun, well-known writers visited the community to meet with local writers. Creative drama workshops flourished. Textile and creative stitchery classes were held and local textile artists not only showcased their work in Waupun, but also exhibited their work in Portage. The theater in the city council building had fallen into disrepair, so they conducted a major remodel of this grand old space, making it once again suitable for performances. A beautification committee prepared a map of the community's points of interest, which was printed on place-mats and distributed to restaurants; this committee also landscaped the high school grounds. The writers group started a chapter in the state prison. The arts council sponsored a quilt show and a film festival. They established a crafts center downtown. They hosted a Midwest sculpture show that attracted 70 sculptors and 4,000 participants. A Youth Arts Council was formed that presented an enormous Sound and Light show.

In Rhinelander, fiber, writing, and ceramics workshops were held and master classes were offered for piano teachers. The Northern Arts Council was formed. The School of the Arts continued, bringing the likes of Marc Connolly ("Green Pastures") and Jesse Stuart and Studs Terkel to the North Woods to be artists-in-residence, and evening events of the school were always open to the community.

In Portage, organizing was block-by-block. Interested people set up regular block coffees to talk to their neighbors about the arts and the new Lively Arts Council, and how they could get involved. They organized a community chorus that immediately attracted 25

people. Another 35 enrolled in a series of acting workshops with professional actor and mime artist Reid Guilbert. The Lively Arts Council presented shows from the Madison Theater Guild. Their writers club sponsored a writing contest for fourth and fifth graders and winning entries were published on page 1 of the newspaper. They sponsored a master workshop for piano teachers. They collaborated with the Bookmobile to expand its service. Tibor Zana of the Wisconsin Ballet offered dance classes. Portage's rich history spawned a big idea: why not contact Buckminster Fuller and commission him to design a revolving stage, so that outdoor pageants and plays focusing on the history of the area could be presented in the summer to visitors? (It almost happened, too—there was indeed a Fuller design, but they could not raise the final \$25,000 of the funds they needed, and the project fell through.)

And in Adams-Friendship, the county-wide arts council presented groups from the UW Music School and the Marquette Players, as well as "La Boheme" from the UW Opera Workshop. Creative writing, painting, and ceramics classes flourished, and the group succeeded in getting the county fair board to add a ceramics category to the fair competitions; they purchased a wheel for use by

any ceramics artist. They presented a play about race relations from the University of Wisconsin. Residents showcased their work in business windows during the Chamber of Commerce's Business Promotion Days. And they sponsored a festival of ice sculpture.

Five towns in rural Wisconsin were bursting with activity. By the end of the grant period, all communities (except for Adams-Friendship) were financially and organizationally "on their own," no longer receiving focused assistance from the Office of Community Arts Development, nor funds from the grant.

What happened next?

In Part II of this story, to appear in the summer issue, we'll look at this project from the perspective of 35 years later. Stay tuned! \*

*Maryo Gard Ewell is Robert E. Gard's daughter, and she pursued a career in community arts development as well. She lives in Gunnison, Colorado.*

*Michael Warlum was the project director for the Arts in the Small Community project at the University of Wisconsin. He currently lives in Seattle, Washington.*

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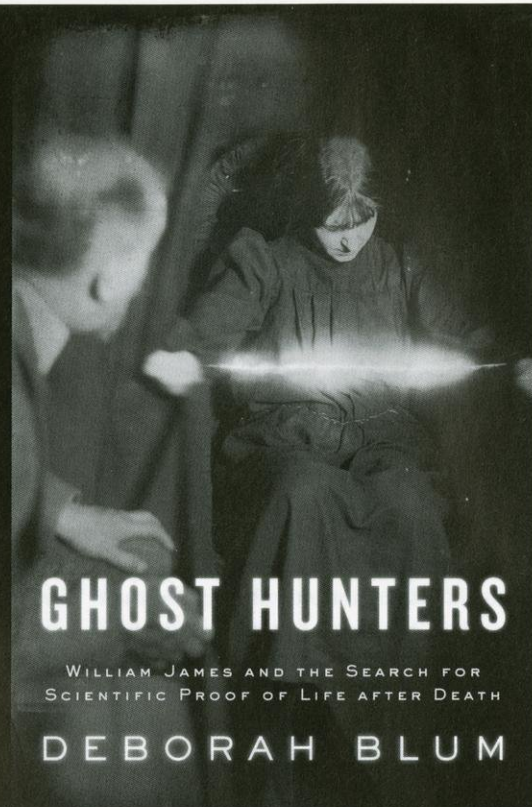
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# Science and the Supernatural

Deborah Blum's new book looks back at a time when reputable scientists took on the spirit world.

INTERVIEW BY JOAN FISCHER



**D**EBORAH BLUM IS BUILDING AN INTRIGUING TRACK RECORD exploring the sexy side of science. Sometimes that's literal—her book, *Sex on the Brain*, examined the science behind gender differences—but more often she takes on science topics that are politically charged. *The Monkey Wars*, a book based on her Pulitzer Prize-winning reporting for the *Sacramento Bee*, looked at the science and ethics of

research using primates. *Love at Goon Park: Harry Harlow and the Science of Affection* profiled one of that branch's most controversial practitioners. With all these works, Blum has shown herself to be that rarest of creatures: a science writer who has both great credibility and a popular touch in her choice of topics and her writing style.

In her latest book, Blum adds to that body by exploring a turning point in the history of science and the supernatural. *Ghost Hunters: William James and the Search for Scientific Proof of Life After Death* (Penguin Press) takes us back to the late 19th century, perhaps the last time when a reputable scholar could still hope to make a scientifically demonstrable case for an afterlife (though even then such researchers

faced ridicule). It may surprise the contemporary reader to learn that the "ghost hunters," as Blum calls them, were a brilliant, respected group of international scholars headed by William James, a Harvard psychologist who was one of the leading intellectuals of his day.

*Time* magazine calls Blum's account a "fascinating new history ... a captivating and even poignant tale." Says the *Washington Post*: "... for believers and agnostics alike, *Ghost Hunters* contains a wealth of lively and provocative reading." *Entertainment Weekly* gives the book an A.

We talked with Blum, a professor at the UW-Madison journalism school, about what inspired her ghostly journey.

**Do you believe in ghosts?**

**Deborah Blum:** Bloodstained, chain-clanking ghosts? No.

**What made you write this book?**

When I was researching an earlier book, I stumbled across some references to William James' pursuit of psychical research—the scientific study of the supernatural. And I was just fascinated by that because I'd never thought of James as a ghost hunter. Once I looked a little more, I realized that he was part of this amazingly brilliant group of scholars—including two Nobel laureates—pursuing that idea. And then I wanted to know—if these were the best ghost hunters in the history of science, what did they find?

**To what strange places did your research take you?**

Well, most of the research was reading old books, documents, and letters. So I spent a fair amount of time in the most normal libraries and archives. But I did spend some time at the archives of the American Society for Psychical Research, and the staff there persuaded me to be

part of a telepathy experiment which involved a soundproofed room, a blindfold, and some rather surprising results, at least to me. And the last time I visited my parents in Georgia, I dragged my mother off to visit a psychic so I could see what it was like. My mother is still lunching on the story.

**Please share a convincing anecdote regarding the existence of a “spirit world.”**

I’m going to tell you about a “crisis apparition,” which is an event, really, when one person appears to sense the presence of a dying person, usually a friend or relative. Such apparitions were a focus of my 19th-century researchers, and some of my favorite “ghost stories” come from that part of their research.

But the crisis apparition I’m going to recount is from an experience that my father-in-law, a retired fire chief in California, had about 20 years ago:

One summer night, he suddenly sits up in bed, so abruptly that he startles my mother-in-law awake. It’s about 3 in the morning.

“What is it?” she asks him. He replies that his cousin Jeff (I’ve changed the name here) is calling for him. They both sit in bed, listening in the dark. There’s nothing.

“It’s just a dream,” she says. “Go back to sleep.” And he lies back down.

But about 15 minutes later, he gets out of bed. No, he says, he can hear Jeff calling him. Strange as it is, his cousin must be outside in the yard. And with that, he puts on his robe and marches outside, searches the yard. But there’s no one there. Finally, he gets back in bed, and they return to sleep.

He’s still troubled when he heads for the office the next morning. And he’s hardly been at work an hour when his cousin’s wife calls with bad news. Jeff had shot himself to death in the middle of the night, about the time that my father-in-law heard that voice in the dark.

I really like that story. Partly because it’s so similar to the 19th-century crisis apparitions in my book, which suggests an interesting continuity of experience—and partly because I know my

father-in-law and he’s such a grounded, down-to-earth, Norwegian American Lutheran. He’s never had this experience before or since. He can’t explain it. I can’t explain it. And best of all, my husband—who is completely disbelieving of all things supernatural and wonders if I was crazy to do this book—can’t explain it either.

**How did the ghost hunters explain such phenomena?**

They coined the term “crisis apparition,” which I just used, for the unexpected sense of another person—a voice, touch, or vision of someone later discovered to be at the point of death. It had to be an unexpected death to be included in their work. And if you were thinking or worrying about your cousin and then thought you heard his voice, it wouldn’t count.

Their theory—unproven—was that it was a form of telepathy, a burst of mental energy at the point of death, powerful enough to break through whatever barriers we normally have against such experiences. Psychics or mediums, they thought, had very thin barriers; most of us are well buffered. But a dying friend might muster enough power to break through. For instance, one of their reports involved a clergyman, thinking of writing a birthday letter to a friend, who kept hearing a voice say, “What? Write to a dead man?” He learned later that the friend had unexpectedly died that day.

Whether you find their reasoning convincing or not, they were so smart as a group, and they approached the questions so rationally, that it’s really fun to work through the problems with them.

**What fascinates you about William James?**

Oh, everything. I spent a lot of time just reading through his letters, and his personality—full of humor and a vivid sense of life—just sizzles on the page. He’s most famous as a philosopher and a pioneer in the field of psychology, but of course I focused on teasing out the psychical research side of his life. And in that you see a man of real intellectual

courage, willing to sacrifice the respect of his colleagues for what he thinks is right.

**Consider the ghostly psychodrama, *The Turn of the Screw*, by his brother, Henry James—and then the work of William James. What was with that family?**

They did have a kind of haunted childhood. Their father, Henry James Sr., spent most of his life following the teachings of a Swedish mystic named Swedenborg, who believed that our mortal actions draw a response from the spirit world—and vice versa. James Sr. sometimes even blamed spirits for his children’s failures, for instance. All of them—there were five James children—rejected Swedenborg. But they definitely grew up knowing that the idea of “ghosts” could influence behavior. You do see that idea in *The Turn of the Screw*. Is it ghosts or madness that drives the story?

**How has this book changed the way you view science and scientists?**

Well, I am what you might call a mainstream science writer. I have a great deal of respect for the scientific process and for the way science explains the world. So I appreciate that science doesn’t—and doesn’t pretend to—explain everything. Researching the book didn’t change that. But it did reinforce my sense of science as a very human enterprise with all that entails. There were plenty of instances in my story of scientists lying to suppress evidence or punishing researchers who attempted to explore the supernatural events. And it did make me wonder—do we limit ourselves by insisting that there’s only one way, one methodology to set the boundaries of reality? William James put it this way: “We may be in the universe as dogs and cats are in our libraries, seeing the books and hearing the conversation, but having no inkling of the meaning of it at all.” \*

*Joan Fischer is editor of Wisconsin People & Ideas and associate director of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters.*

# Remembering Zeidler



BY PAUL G. HAYES

**Zeidler, as mayor of Milwaukee, signs the Book of Remembrance of the Zionist Organization of America, 1949.**

Photo courtesy Milwaukee Public Library

**I**N 1976 THE LATE ROBERT W. WELLS, author of many books and masterful feature writer for the old *Milwaukee Journal*, was assigned to interview Frank P. Zeidler, former Socialist mayor of Milwaukee and that year's national Socialist Party candidate for president.

Wells returned to the newsroom, turned out his story, and waited for the election. Later he confided to friends that he was among the 5,427 U.S. citizens who voted for Zeidler. That led some to speculate that if Zeidler could have met personally with all the nation's voters, he'd have won in a landslide.

Zeidler, plain, quiet, and polite, had an effect on people, even hardened newspaper reporters. Any encounter, whether face-to-face or by telephone or letters, the latter of which Zeidler painstakingly typed on an old typewriter on his dining room table, was memorable and occasionally life-changing.

Each of the uncounted hundreds of people who stood in a line that lasted for more than four hours at a Milwaukee funeral home after Zeidler's death on July 7 at age 93 had had such encounters, some of them recent. So had the additional hundreds who attended his funeral at Milwaukee's Redeemer Lutheran Church the next day.

Those who paid their respects included members of the local Socialist Party, World Federalists Association, Milwaukee Futurists Society, United Nations Association, Milwaukee Turnverein, neighborhood associations, and the NAACP. He had attended meetings of some of these groups just weeks before he died.

Also in attendance were Lutheran pastors and parishioners; former and present city, county, and state officials, including past and present Milwaukee mayors and at least one former governor; active and retired newspaper reporters and editors; public and parochial educators at every level, including primary grade teachers and professors and college deans; labor leaders and rank-and-file union members; and Zeidler's neighbors from Second Street, north of Locust, where the Zeidlers had lived for more than 60 years.

With Zeidler's death, Milwaukee lost the public citizen who had made Milwaukee a national curiosity: A pros-

perous, growing postwar city so honest and well run that it became a joke in Chicago. What is more, it was led by an old-fashioned German-American Socialist, the last of three 20th-century Socialist Milwaukee mayors and the last Socialist mayor of any major American city.

Frank Zeidler was elected mayor in 1948 and left office in 1960 after three exhausting terms. He had come out of the Milwaukee German-American culture, a phenomenon he was interested in as a scholar all of his life.

His father had run a barbershop. An older brother, Clemens, became a Lutheran pastor and president of a seminary; a second brother, Carl, was mayor of Milwaukee briefly during World War II before joining the Navy as a lieutenant and being lost at sea in a German U-boat attack in 1942.

These Zeidlers were not Socialists. That began in 1933 when Frank, a constant reader, began a study of ideologies in his second home, the Merrill Park branch of the Milwaukee Public Library. He decided to adopt the mantle of the socialism of Eugene Debs and Victor Berger because, he said later, it promoted worldwide brotherhood, world peace, economic equality, and democratic planning.

This was not socialism in the pejorative sense heard in the static that passes as political discourse today. The Milwaukee Socialists were appalled at Soviet communism and its call for violent revolution and the totalitarian regimes both of Josef Stalin and of Adolf Hitler and his National Socialist (Nazi) movement. Zeidler was an ardent anti-communist all his life and he believed that the 1930s communist infiltration of Milwaukee industrial unions was a serious threat.

As it was with Wisconsin in the days of the LaFollette Progressives, so it was with Milwaukee in the days of the Socialists: Politics were impeccably clean and transparent; integrity was a public virtue installed in the seats of power, and elected leaders openly shared their full agendas with voters.

Zeidler's agenda was homespun, having to do with social justice, public health, decent public housing, public

transit, public parks, and public ownership of key services. The Milwaukee Socialists always aspired to own the major energy and transit utilities, but because they had an inbred aversion to public debt they never had the money to buy the monopolies.

Although Zeidler's demeanor was plain and straightforward, he was nonetheless a complex man who embodied contradictions. He never drove a car, always riding the bus or relying on friends or family to drive him. Yet it was his initiative as mayor that led

## ZEIDLER AND THE WISCONSIN ACADEMY

Frank P. Zeidler had a relationship with the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters that dated at least from 1957, when his article, "Adventures in Study by Mail," about his correspondence courses from the University of Wisconsin, appeared in the *Wisconsin Academy Review*. In 1961, he addressed the Wisconsin Academy's annual conference in Waukesha, speaking about "Urbanization in Southeastern Wisconsin."

In 1997, he reviewed several books for the *Review*, including a volume of family letters of Victor and Meta Berger, *Milwaukee Socialists*. And in 1999, he was inducted as a Fellow of the Wisconsin Academy, being the only Fellow that year to enjoy two formal receptions, one in Madison with the other Fellows of that year, and one at the Milwaukee Public Library in the Frank P. Zeidler Humanities Room.

to the eventual construction of the Milwaukee freeway system.

His support of the freeways never wavered even at the height of Milwaukee's anti-freeway controversy, nor during the administration of his friend, Mayor John Norquist, who despised freeways. As late as 2000, Zeidler wrote that Milwaukee's anti-freeway organizers "were able to frustrate a large part of necessary freeway development to the immense disadvantage of the city."

While he was nonconfrontational by preference, Mayor Zeidler took on Milwaukee's suburbs with steely tough-

ness, initiating annexations that doubled the area of Milwaukee.

When he left office, Milwaukee had its largest area and its largest population ever and ranked as the 12th most populous city in the country—today it is 19th—but it now was surrounded by what Zeidler called an "iron ring" of suburbs, several of which incorporated in response to Zeidler's aggressive annexation policy.

In 1953, Mayor Zeidler was paid \$16,500, and he gave \$2,400 of it back to the city, according to *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel* columnist Mike Nichols. When he left office in 1960, he refused a pension, reported former mayor Norquist. Because the pension provision was passed while he was in office, he felt it would be unethical to accept it.

He was 47 when he left office. So for 46 years, Frank and Agnes Zeidler lived on Social Security and whatever fees for consulting or labor mediation and public speaking he could pick up along the way.

While Zeidler studied throughout his life by correspondence and otherwise, he held only honorary college degrees, but he held three or four of these. He produced numerous informed and scholarly papers, establishing himself as the expert on such subjects as the history of the South Side of Milwaukee, the Milwaukee labor movement, and the city's vanishing German-American culture.

His constant companion and supporter in all this for 67 years was his wife, Agnes Reinke Zeidler, mother of their six children. A few years ago when Frank was to have delivered a speech to an engineering awards meeting, he fell ill beforehand. Clear-voiced and confident, Agnes delivered it for him.

At the visitation, she was in a wheelchair near Frank's casket from 4 p.m. until after 8 p.m., greeting each member of the throng individually. In response to an admirer who remarked on their 67-year marriage, Agnes said, "It was not nearly enough." \*

*Veteran science journalist Paul G. Hayes is a Fellow of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters and a former board member and officer.*

# WISCONSIN WRIGHTS

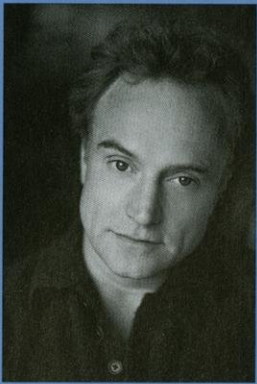
## Wisconsin New Play Contest 2007

The stage is not merely  
the meeting place of all  
the arts, but is also the  
return of art to life.

*Oscar Wilde*



DEADLINE:  
JANUARY 15,  
2007



**Bradley Whitford**  
**Lead Judge**

Mr. Whitford was born in Madison, Wisconsin, and attended Madison East High School. He earned an MFA in classical theater at the Juilliard Theater Center and has played major roles on and off Broadway. In 2001 he won an Emmy for Outstanding Supporting Actor for his portrayal of deputy chief of staff Josh Lyman on the TV series "The West Wing."

### Contest Rules

1. The contest is open to current Wisconsin residents only.
2. Submissions must be original, unproduced full-length plays. Plays that have had staged readings are acceptable. No musicals or screenplays.
3. Plays must be typed in standard professional play format. (See <http://www.pubinfo.vcu.edu/artweb/playwriting/format.html> for an example.)
4. Pages must be single-sided and numbered. Scripts should be bound in a soft cover 3-hole binder with brass fasteners or internal brads. No permanent spiral binding or 3-ring binders.
5. Include a separate cover page with the playwright's name, address, phone number(s), and email address. This will be removed before scripts are given to judges. The playwright's name must not appear anywhere on the script itself.
6. Include a title-character page with descriptions, ages, time, and setting.
7. Writers may submit only one script, along with a \$15 entry fee, payable to Playwrights Ink.
8. Scripts will be recycled, not returned. Do not send a SASE.
9. Submissions must be postmarked by January 15, 2007, and sent to Playwrights Ink, 933 N. Fair Oaks Avenue, Madison, WI 53714.

This contest is sponsored by Playwrights Ink, a nonprofit organization based in Madison that promotes the development of member playwrights and their work through collaborative critique and production.

Contest organizers are in discussion with prominent Wisconsin theaters to secure a reading of the winning play in 2007, with the possibility of a full production in 2008.

Contact [wisconsinwrights@hotmail.com](mailto:wisconsinwrights@hotmail.com) or visit [www.dcs.wisc.edu/lsa/theatre/](http://www.dcs.wisc.edu/lsa/theatre/) for more information on this contest.

# A Beautiful Mind

Over the past two decades, Walter Sava has been the driving force behind a one-stop educational, social services, and cultural center that supports and strengthens Milwaukee's growing Latino community.

BY JOAN FISCHER

Walter Sava in front of one of the UCC's colorful wall murals.

Photo by John Urban

Y

OU COULD SPEND NEARLY YOUR ENTIRE LIFE inside the United Community Center in Milwaukee and be nurtured every step

of the way. The UCC, or *Centro de la Comunidad Unida* in Spanish, located

in the city's heavily Latino neighborhood around the South Side's Walker Square, provides an array of near cradle-to-grave services under one roof or within a two-block walk. They include:

- a preschool and a high-performing elementary and middle school that are run as charter schools within the Milwaukee Public School District;
- an elder day care center (with bus service) and a 20-unit assisted living apartment building for the elderly;
- a mentoring program for homeowners that has nearly doubled homeowner-ship in the neighborhood;
- a drug and alcohol treatment program that includes outpatient services as well as a 32-bed residential program;
- a physician-staffed health clinic run in partnership with an area nursing school;

- Latino Arts, a center for dramatic, musical, and visual arts that includes a performance auditorium, gallery, and enrichment programs for adults and children.

There's also a fully equipped fitness center, an after-school homework center, a Mexican restaurant with live music, a small Latino arts-and-crafts store, and a barber offering \$5 haircuts—and that still isn't all. Through one program or another, the UCC serves an average of 1,000 people a day.

It's impossible to imagine the UCC without Walter Sava, a former college professor and corporate executive who

served as UCC's executive director from 1989 to 2003 before moving over to head its Latino Arts program, a position from which he plans to retire at the end of this year.

The UCC was founded in 1971 as a private nonprofit dedicated to serving the Latino population. The oldest core of the building, which has been expanded and remodeled numerous times, remains the former St. John the Evangelist Church at the corner of Washington and 9th.

But the UCC as it looks and functions today is only half-jokingly called "the house that Walter built." Sava is the first to share credit with dedicated staff and

board members—but they, in turn, insist that he was the visionary and driving force behind the center's growth.

The UCC draws from a rich history of community service organizations and social experiments from all around the country that have addressed urban poverty and the needs of minority families. Much of the latest thinking on the efficacy of such centers calls for them to provide comprehensive services under one roof, right in the trenches of where such services are needed. The UCC stands in the vanguard of those ideas. Think of it as a settlement house on steroids, updated for the 21st century. Quite possibly no other community-based center in the nation provides such a wide range of services.

"There was no real model for what Walter Sava did here," says the UCC's current executive director, Ricardo Diaz. "His work was unprecedented. No other city offers a better program, not even cities with much larger Hispanic populations—not Miami and not Los Angeles."

That nationwide distinction has Milwaukee mayor Tom Barrett singing Sava's praises. "His efforts on behalf of the Latino community in Milwaukee have been nationally recognized," notes Barrett. "I am extremely proud of his work on behalf of the United Community Center. He raised millions of dollars to strengthen arts, education, housing, health services, and many other important initiatives, with little help from government."

Sava, Barrett says, has been "an inspirational and instrumental member of the Milwaukee Latino Community" and "a tireless worker on difficult issues such as racism and discrimination."

U.S. Rep. Gwen Moore has known Sava for years from her work as a community activist, state senator, and now as a member of Congress. From her perch in Washington, D.C., she, too, sees Sava as a national standout.

"I value him as an icon for leadership in any community," says Moore. "He put together a holistic social services agency that really responded on the ground to people's immediate needs."

Moore worked with the UCC as a state senator in expanding many of



**Ethnic flavor in the neighborhood: Across from the UCC, a shrine to Our Lady of Guadalupe.**

Photo by John Urban

their services. It's a relationship that remains active. "Currently we're working on trying to provide more funding for their program that deals with Hispanic elders who are suffering from dementia," she says.

### BLOCK BY BLOCK

Sava and his coworkers transformed the tough Walker Square district—once marked by poverty, crime, and substance abuse, with residents who were transient and often disconnected from mainstream Anglo society and institutions—into a much safer and more stable neighborhood. With the picturesque Walker Square park and playground on one side of the street and the UCC on the other, the scene almost looks idyllic, like something out of *Sesame Street*. The UCC's programs for schoolchildren and the elderly create a bustling intergenerational ambience. Young families (presumably happy homeowners) push strollers in the park. The strong ethnic flavor adds character and color. The UCC's vibrant wall murals reflect Latino cultures, and sharing the intersection of Washington and 9th is a landscaped outdoor shrine with a blue-robed statue of Our Lady of Guadalupe.

Walter Sava is very pleased but also realistic when considering the changes he and his organization have wrought.

"This neighborhood was a tough neighborhood. It still is," says Sava. "What we've been building here has been a long process. It's still ongoing. It took 15 years and will take another 15 to get where we really should be."

Turning around a neighborhood is no small undertaking. Sava's approach was to move bit by bit, laying a solid foundation literally one block at a time.

"I remember we had these staff-and-board retreats 16 or 17 years ago about how we could take this block that the center was on and redevelop the block better," recalls Sava. "Then from this block it went to three blocks around us, and then we went from National to Greenfield. That's still been pretty much the focus. From National to Greenfield up to 16th Street. We've been geographi-

cally very focused." Those parameters encompass about 50 blocks.

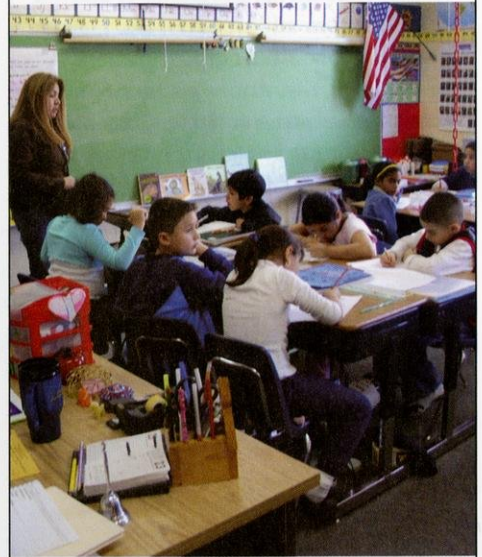
Along with moving block by block, Sava found it wise to build from the UCC's already strong base in youth programming. Not only was it practical, it made sense given the UCC's long-term goals. Sava believed that exerting a positive influence on young people through education was of prime importance.

"So much of the stuff that you can do in rebuilding a neighborhood you can do through education," says Sava. "Because once you have young people who go to college, who buy homes, who become middle class, all of those other things that cause society to disintegrate can be taken care of a lot easier."

One of the most popular youth programs throughout the 1970s and '80s was after-school boxing, a sport with a great following in Latino cultures. The UCC had its own boxing ring (on the former church altar, no less) and a gifted coach named Israel "Shorty" Acosta. An accomplished boxer himself,

Acosta qualified for the ill-fated 1980 Olympics in Moscow.

Although Sava hails from Argentina, he didn't quite get the passion for boxing and wondered if the UCC couldn't do something a little more academic, a little more genteel, with its young. But then he read a birthday card the boxing team made for Acosta. It



Preschool and elementary school classrooms at UCC: Bruce Guadalupe kids do as well as children in affluent Shorewood.

Photos by Gerhard Fischer unless otherwise noted

said, "Happy birthday, coach, from your champions in the ring and in life."

"That made me rethink my negative views," Sava says with a laugh. "Boxing is a secondary tool, but what he's really teaching is discipline—sticking to it, how to get up, how to fall down. It's a whole lesson in how to live."

From its base in youth programming, the UCC expanded to house more formal educational programs. It started an alternative middle school in 1988 as part of a broader "children at risk" initiative; the aim was to provide smaller class sizes, individual attention, and bilingual assistance to ensure success for kids who were struggling. The program began with 25 students. Today, some 20 years later, it has about 100—again reflecting Sava's belief in small, incremental growth.

"Our role has been gradual. That has characterized all our growth," says Sava. "Gradual evolution has been good for us. You keep building on things that you're doing well rather than starting up a school with 400 kids."

## SAVA'S SAVVY

Sava, who had been a board member, became executive director shortly after the alternative middle school opened. And under his aegis—his belief in gradual growth notwithstanding—the UCC in short order embarked upon two mergers that greatly expanded the center's role in education. The first was with Centro del Niño, a preschool/daycare that was struggling on Holton Avenue, Milwaukee's other heavily Latino neighborhood.

"I liked the preschool approach because that connected you to families at an early stage," says Sava. After discussions with the board, Centro del Niño merged with UCC and a few years later moved into the UCC building.

The Bruce Guadalupe Community School, an elementary school serving primarily the Latino community, also was struggling. The school was moving from building to building, the nuns that had formed the core teaching staff were diminishing in numbers, and finances were very low; the school even had to close for summer in April rather than in May 1990 due to a lack of money, Sava says.

The UCC, convinced that it needed a significant foothold in elementary education to achieve its goals, decided to take it on.

"It wasn't an easy merger," notes Sava. "There was quite a lot of discussion on their board and on our board. You always hear how mergers in the corporate world are a major production, but nonprofits are pretty tough to merge also."

In the end, five of their board members joined the UCC board, and in 1991 the UCC launched a \$2.4 million campaign to build an addition for the school.

This was only the beginning of a long and successful fundraising tear for Sava. Always with able board members and staffers at his side—especially the indefatigable Ted Friedlander, who has been on the UCC board for more than 35 years—Sava over the next 12 years raised money and oversaw investments in the UCC totaling more than \$20 million. Growth during his tenure included five major building expansions and constructions housing the array of programs and services offered by the UCC today.

Although the UCC's expansions were mostly privately funded, its programs are funded mainly by such public entities as Milwaukee Public Schools, Milwaukee City & County, state and federal agencies, and United Way. Foundations, corporations, and private donations account for about 9 percent of UCC revenue, according to the center's recent annual report.

Looking back, it seems that Sava was almost uniquely qualified to assume UCC leadership. He began his professional life as an assistant professor of Spanish at Carroll College. He then moved from academia to nonprofits; from 1977 to 1983, he headed La Casa de Esperanza in Waukesha, which works to stop domestic abuse in Latino communities. Sava then went corporate, serving as general supervisor for community services at the Wisconsin Electric Power Company in Milwaukee. By the time he hit UCC, he had been an educator, a nonprofit social services director, and an executive who knew the

**Owner occupied:** The UCC's homeownership program has helped neighborhood residents purchase these homes and many others in the Walker Square area.



way businesspeople—his future donors—think.

You can see Sava's business savvy all over the complex. Naming rights abound for just about everything but the restrooms. Corporate sponsor names line corridors next to classroom doors and senior center rec rooms: Marshall & Ilsley Foundation, A. O. Smith Foundation, Johnson Controls. There's the Michael J. Cudahy Computer Learning Center and the Northwestern Mutual Life Insurance Co. Library. The Badger Mutual Insurance Company's Hall of Fame honors scholarship winners. The apartment complex for the elderly, located next to the school, bears the prominent sign "UCC-U.S. Bank Village."

One of the UCC's most stunning successes—the Walker Square Neighborhood Development Initiative, launched in 1994 to facilitate homeownership—also reflects a business spirit. Rather than create a housing authority-style bureaucracy, the UCC fashioned the initiative as a resource and advocacy service to help Latino families navigate the channels of homeownership. Challenges those families face include poor command of English, thin credit histories (resulting from a preference for purchasing by cash or money orders), and confusion about how to secure a mortgage. Extended families who wish to purchase a home collectively meet with resistance from lenders used to dealing with one individual who qualifies.

"The UCC has been able to be a 'bridge' between lenders, brokers, home inspectors, and attorneys, creating an amicable environment where everybody benefits," says the UCC's Ferdinand Campos, who runs the program. All services are provided in Spanish and in English. Once a purchase is made, the UCC provides counseling on everything from mortgage upkeep to weatherizing and basic home repairs.

The result: homeownership has increased from 40 percent to nearly 80 percent in the greater Walker Square area. In 2005 alone, the initiative created 75 new homeowners with more than \$8 million in property value—a statistic

cited by Mayor Barrett in his State of the City address in February.

Another example of the UCC thinking like a business is the constant push for improvement. One often hears the word "accountability."

"Our families are looking for results," says Mary Beth Kuxhause, principal of Bruce Guadalupe Community School. "If we don't get results, we won't be around." Bruce Guadalupe is run as a charter school within the Milwaukee Public School District. Parental support is essential to retaining charter status.

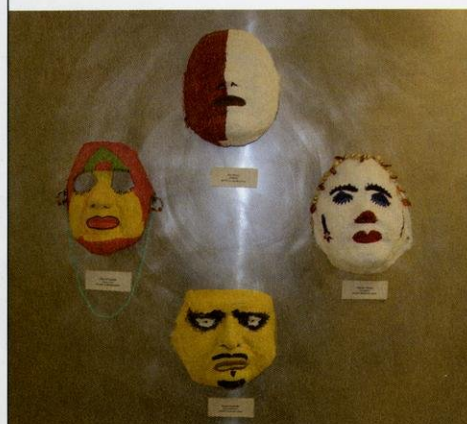
About 97 percent of the schools' students are Hispanic, and about 80 percent come from low-income families with little formal education—families who very much want their children to have more opportunities.

That's one reason that the school is not bilingual. "If you can't speak English, you won't make it in the United States," says Kuxhause. Classes are taught in English, though children who need some help in Spanish get it. Spanish is taught as a separate class, not so much for the language as for the study of Latino culture and history.

The school makes a notably orderly impression. Children walk quietly in neat lines, hands at their sides, dressed in "family friendly" uniforms (blue bottoms, white tops, no special purchase needed).

Despite the much-discussed achievement gap between white and minority students, children at Bruce Guadalupe perform above average on state tests and as well as children in nearby, affluent Shorewood, Sava says.

The UCC's business consciousness has not diminished its clear and overriding spirit of compassion. Where else



"I walk four miles a day here," says zippy senior center client Consuelo Cortez. (Above) Colorful masks brighten the walls of the senior center. They were made in UCC art programs.

would you see two residential homes for drug addicts located not 50 feet from an elementary school?

Says Sava: "People who are in the treatment program are there because they want to be. They are not court adjudicated. There is supervision 24 hours a day, seven days a week. A lot of people's lives are changed there. It's a hard program."

One of the program's graduates, clean and sober for 10 years, works at the UCC as a driver, notes Sava.

## FROM CRADLE TO GRAVE

The UCC grew not only block by block, but need by need. Needs of the community, particularly the very young and the very old, were foremost in Sava's vision.

"It's very difficult for people who have language limitations, people who don't understand the local culture, to access services," Sava notes. "The Latinos who come here from any country in Latin America understand government and they expect government to be the hospital, the senior center, the school, social services—whatever the social service is, it's all government.

"When I go back to Argentina on trips and explain what I'm doing, they just can't figure out what I'm managing here," Sava continues. "You have a senior center and you have a school and you have to raise money. It's very confusing for our community to understand that for this service, you go to this agency. For this other service, you go to the other agency."

A simple solution: Put everything on one campus. College campuses were a source of wonder and admiration for Sava when he arrived in the United States in 1963, at age 18, to pursue an education. His first stop was East Texas Baptist University for his bachelor's degree, followed by a master's degree at the University of North Texas and a Ph.D. in languages at the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

"There is no campus in Latin America. At most Latin American universities, the faculty of law is over here, the faculty of sciences is over there. Nothing's connected, everything's in different buildings," Sava says. "The idea of this campus thing seemed interesting to me—a new concept. It makes so much sense to have a geographic area, and in this one geographic area you could have all these things there."

Putting everything in close proximity made it easier for UCC programs to share resources and open services to the community. Why not have an infirmary right in the building? That way the elderly can receive on-site care—and when children get sick at school, they can receive care there rather than call working parents away from their jobs. The school library, the fitness center, and many other UCC resources also are available for neighborhood use.



(Top) Beginning with the lobby, the UCC is colorful, aesthetically appealing, equipped with all-new technology, and rich in art reflecting Latino traditions. (Bottom) Shooting pool in a senior center adorned with colorful children's artwork. Children and elders interact in numerous UCC activities.

Along the way, various partnerships and mergers encouraged efficiencies and eliminated duplication of resources. For example, a win-win staffing partnership for the infirmary was forged with the Columbia College of Nursing, with a physician available part-time.

Expansion of elder care services is another example. The UCC in 1996 merged with La Guadalupe, an adult day care center. As with the Bruce Guadalupe merger, the UCC took on some of their board members, and the adult day care center (after yet another successful building campaign) was moved into the UCC. That program, which includes lunch and a wide variety of arts and health activities, now serves some 160 seniors. And the UCC runs several buses to take them back and forth from home. Again, this was in response to community needs.

"Our Latino elderly couldn't find their way around the metro bus system, not even for trips to the doctor. They're not going to learn English," says Sava. "The worst problem you have with the elderly is isolation. And transportation is the biggest barrier. Most of our elderly don't drive."

Expansion at the UCC continues to focus on the extreme ends of life, with a \$3.4 million addition to include a Latino Geriatric Center and an Early Childhood Education Center with a kindergarten for 3-year-olds. Those new centers will open next spring. The Latino Geriatric Center was just awarded a \$385,000 matching grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to expand its care for Alzheimer's patients in a partnership that includes the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Medicine and Public Health and the Medical College of Wisconsin.

Of course, serving the young and old is of invaluable help to the sandwich generation in between—the middle-of-life working adults who no longer have to worry quite so much about their children and their parents.

Melanie Correa, a working single parent of two boys attending Bruce Guadalupe, appreciates the year-round range of activities.

"There are a lot of after-school activities. I also like that they have a summer school half-days and other summer programs," she says. "They keep the children busy so that they don't get into trouble."

Correa, whose mother has worked in UCC elder care programs for 30 years ("I grew up at UCC," Correa says), is convinced that Bruce Guadalupe offers a better education than her neighborhood public school. "They're a year ahead academically" at Bruce Guadalupe, Correa says. Moreover, she plans to send both boys to private high school, and notes that Bruce Guadalupe has a very good track record in helping graduates get scholarships or other financial assistance.

Services for the young and old clearly arose from community need—and so did the UCC arts programs, Sava says. The growth of Latino Arts, where Sava has turned his leadership in recent years, is a prime example. Popularity of Latino-oriented arts has boomed right along with the Latino population in Milwaukee, which has more than doubled over the past 15 years and now stands at some 100,000 residents—but in serving that audience, mainstream arts organizations appear to be missing the boat, Sava says.

Many of those arts groups are struggling and plagued with deficits. "But when you look around at any of their functions, you see very few brown faces, very few programs that are relevant to Latinos," observes Sava.

There had always been an arts element at UCC, but the addition of space for an auditorium, gallery, and classrooms allowed the program to blossom. Now Latino Arts is a half-million dollar operation and the 17th largest arts organization in Milwaukee, notes Sava with pride.

What lies ahead for Sava? For starters, he plans to immerse himself in history. As of mid-December, he steps down from his position as executive director of Latino Arts, thus ending the formal affiliation he's had with the UCC for nearly 20 years—but he will continue to serve as volunteer execu-

tive director of his latest passion, the Latino Historical Society of Wisconsin, a nonprofit he recently helped found.

His book, *Latinos in Milwaukee* (Arcadia Publishing, \$19.99), a photographic history he coauthored with UW-Milwaukee history professor Joseph Rodriguez, is fresh off the press. "It would not get me tenure at UW-Madison, but I know Milwaukee's Latino community will appreciate this effort," he says.

Other topics he'd like to tackle include a history of the UCC and of Latinos in Wisconsin. Establishing a Hispanic Heritage Center would also be worthwhile, he says.

"I think that will keep me busy, and most of all, I will be able to tell our kids here when they ask me why I majored in history," says Sava. "It turns out that not much of what I have done so far relates to history and yet it taught me certain skills, and now I will be applying it directly in my volunteer work."

There's just no retirement from Sava's brand of devotion. He has always served his community with heart and soul, with results that will last for generations. That's what he does—and that's who he is. Wisconsin has been very fortunate to have him call this place home. \*

*Joan Fischer is associate director of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters and editor of Wisconsin People & Ideas.*

## Honors for Sava

Walter Sava has received numerous awards throughout his career (including the Thurgood Marshall Legacy Award and Hispanic Man of the Year), but as he approaches retirement he's been enjoying some much-deserved honors for lifetime achievements. This summer he received the Maclovio Barraza Award for Leadership from the National Council of La Raza, the Latino equivalent of the NAACP. And recently he was named a Fellow of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, and will be honored at an induction ceremony on October 22. More information on page 67.

**Field Notes** from the "Future of Farming and Rural Life in Wisconsin" initiative

## Strawberry boy and other important matters

Photo by John Urban

BY BILL BERRY



IT WAS THE DAWN OF STRAWBERRY SEASON, and a little flaxen-haired boy crawled onto the wagon display at Turner's Fresh Market near Waupaca to snatch a ruby-red orb from one of the quarts.

He willingly posed for a picture by taking a bite, and we had a winner for the Future of Farming and Rural Life photo gallery. He kept right on snitching as his mother explained that he was the youngest of three boys and didn't know

much about fear. That was obvious. She was quite pretty, and I didn't mind telling her the details about the Future of Farming and Rural Life in Wisconsin project of the Wisconsin Academy as she laid some flats of strawberries in the back of her van, nestled next to canning jars and other supplies.

What about those New Jersey license plates? I asked. The family owns a cottage on the Chain O' Lakes, and they spend summers here, she replied. Where did they live in New Jersey? "A commuter community. You wouldn't want to live there," she said. "It's nothing like this."

She had that right. Turner's is perched on rolling farmlands sliced by glacial moraines that are part of the Ice Age Trail in Wisconsin. Verdant fields and woody hills offer a panoramic view at strawberry time, and someone from a

crowded exurb in Jersey might think it heaven if they were made a certain way.

New Jersey gets a bad rap, and there are plenty of places in Wisconsin that aren't like the Waupaca setting, either. Our working lands and open spaces are challenged by all sorts of pressures, but at least we're talking in many cases about what might happen, not what has already occurred. Traveling to Future of Farming regional forums around the state, those of us involved in the project get to see a lot of Wisconsin. Despite vast changes to and dire predictions about the future of rural Wisconsin, one fact remains: We are blessed or just plain lucky to have a lot of working lands and open spaces left. Numbers and I don't always get along, but from what I read, Wisconsin has 34.7 million total acres. Land in farming use is at about 15.5 million acres. Another 16 million acres are wooded. Of course, that's only part of the story. Wisconsin also has 14 cities of more than 50,000 people. Those are officially metropolitan areas, according to the U.S. Census, and only four other states have more of them.

It's little wonder that participants in our forums often are hopeful and concerned about the land at the same time. While the specifics of land use vary from Menomonie in western Wisconsin to Oconomowoc in the southeast and all the way up to Ashland on the shores of Lake Superior, the land itself remains central to much of the discussion at the forums. The diversity of both our natural resource base and the types of agriculture it supports was cited time and again as Menomonie



Photos by Bill Berry

participants identified opportunities and constraints. Land use wasn't even listed as a major theme for discussion in Menomonie, but it didn't take people long to get around to it.

In Oconomowoc, land use was a major theme. It is an issue that can draw a good spitting match in southeastern Wisconsin. One of our forum panelists, John Torinus, had just come off the defeat of a purchase of development rights program he had supported in Washington County. Torinus is a successful businessman and a bulldog from his newspaper days. He's not going away, and the group in Oconomowoc was pretty charged up by the issue, too. In short, they believe that working lands, open space, and the natural resource base in southeastern Wisconsin must be part of a healthy rural-urban interface. Trends and perceptions would seem to say otherwise, but the fact is, all you have to do is take a road marked by a letter rather than a number, and you'll find working lands in Wisconsin, even close to Milwaukee and Waukesha. The pressures are immense on those lands, but it is not too late to make a difference. That's what our most hopeful participants are saying.

Yes, one thing is clear about strawberries and land in Wisconsin. There's a lot of love for the topics.

Up in Ashland, land use was again a major topic. You wouldn't think to look at the vast forested lands of the north that they are all that disturbed by our footprints. But when you consider that 90 percent of private forestland has changed hands in recent years, and that the trend is away from large tracts to fragmented pieces, you begin to see why northerners have their own set of land-based concerns.

Author Ben Logan knows what they're talking about. We've woven arts and cultural attractions into our forums, and Logan was asked to give a reading in Ashland. Logan wrote *The Land Remembers*, an autobiographical account of growing up on a farm in Crawford County coulee country, back in 1975. The book has been reissued, and Logan, now 86 years old and living

## COME TO REGIONAL FORUMS THIS FALL

Future of Farming and Rural Life in Wisconsin forums take place on Friday, October 13, at UW-Platteville and on Tuesday, October 24, at Northcentral Technical College in Wausau. For registration and other information, visit [www.wisconsinacademy.org](http://www.wisconsinacademy.org) or contact project director Wilda Nilsestuen at [wnilsestuen@wisconsinacademy.org](mailto:wnilsestuen@wisconsinacademy.org), tel. 608/263-1692 ext. 12.

in Gays Mills, did some traveling about the state for signings this summer.

Love of the land marks virtually every page of that book, and in Ashland, Logan issued this challenge: "From my standpoint, we must find a way to make sure Wisconsin's long-range story is a positive story. That means a representation of people in some kind of lasting harmony with the land that is so vulnerable to human intervention."

We had another storyteller with us that day. He was Paul DeMain, editor of *News from Indian Country* in Hayward. DeMain is an Ojibwa and Oneida Indian. The crowd in Alvord Theater at Northland College listened with riveted attention when DeMain speculated about whether his ancestors had gathered for similar discussions 1,000 years ago.

He told a story about going out in the St. Croix Falls area with an elder to look for spearmint plants that are tradition-

ally used in the waters that bathe newborn babies. The highway had been widened, and the spearmint and other medicinal plants were no longer there. "You built your house in our pharmacy. Right in the middle of it," DeMain said.

The elder knew of one other place to find spearmint, and sure enough, a patch survived near a grassy knoll that hadn't met the hand of development.

There was a little bit of hope in that story, that they could find some spearmint. DeMain was talking about northern Wisconsin when he added this line about growth: "It's not the quantity of the neighbors, it's the quality."

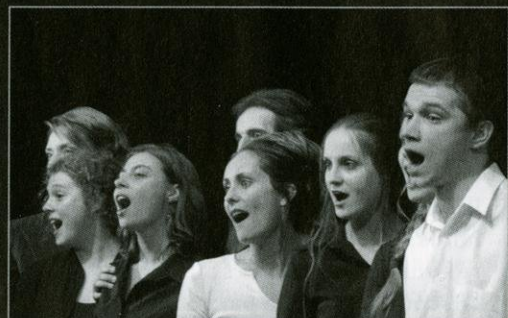
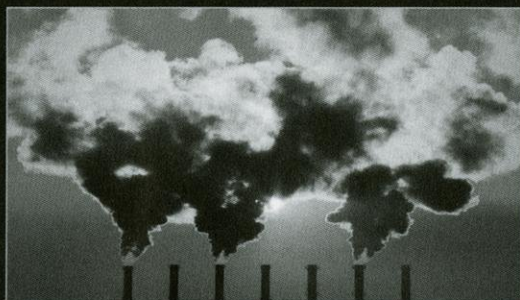
He captured in a few words the thoughts of many others who value Wisconsin's rural traditions. Ben Logan would agree, and I think that's what strawberry boy's mother was saying, too. \*

*Bill Berry is a communications specialist with the Wisconsin Academy's Future of Farming and Rural Life in Wisconsin initiative. His "Field Notes" column will keep readers informed about the project's progress. He welcomes your comments at [billnick@charter.net](mailto:billnick@charter.net).*

Note: Ben Logan's *The Land Remembers: The Story of a Farm and Its People* has been reissued by Itchy Cat Press. For more information, e-mail [ffg@mhtc.net](mailto:ffg@mhtc.net) or call 608/924-1443.



Chef Jack Kaestner and crew pose at the Oconomowoc Lake Club while preparing a "slow food" lunch for forum participants.



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## The Humanities in Our Lives

A special section from the Wisconsin Humanities Council

The humanities seek answers about who we are, where we have been, what we value—and why. They include (but are not limited to) literature, history, philosophy, anthropology, film, music, and other arts criticism, jurisprudence, religious studies, and languages. In “The Public Scholar,” we ask creative Wisconsin thinkers to explore an issue of social or cultural importance through the lens of the humanities. In “The Humanities Moment,” we ask authors to take a more personal look at their experiences with a humanities discipline. At the Wisconsin Humanities Council, it is our mission and our pleasure to highlight the role of the humanities in our lives—and in the world of *Wisconsin People & Ideas*.

## Colloquial Science

What we name our plants and animals reveals much about ourselves.

BY ROLAND L. BERNIS



WHEN I TELL PEOPLE that I earn my living writing science entries for the *Dictionary of American Regional English (DARE)*, I'm never quite sure what they think I do. Maybe they think my work is as dead as those regrettable frogs in high

school biology. But that's not what it feels like to me. Most of what I do here feels very much alive—in fact, life is at its center. Natural science entries in *DARE* deal with folk and regional names for our birds, insects, plants, mammals, reptiles, and fish. By way of those names, *DARE* touches on the remarkable ways of the living world around us. But most of all, *DARE* has to do with the people who did the naming. Their words often reveal as much about them as about the things they named.

One of the first things you notice when you look at regional names for plants and animals is how we tend to put a human spin on things. There is a shorebird, the American avocet, which is also known as *bluestocking* from the color of its legs and feet. But it has a more telling name: “From its perpetual clamour and flippancy of tongue, [it] is called by the inhabitants of Cape May, the Lawyer.”<sup>1</sup> *DARE* in fact has seven *lawyers*, two more that fly and four that swim. The other birds (the black-necked stilt and the double-crested cormorant) are noted for either their noise or the length of their bills. The fish (the burbot, the bowfin, the gray snapper, and the school-master) tend to be cunning and hard to pin down:

“That ... is a species of ling; we call it in these parts a lawyer.” “A lawyer!” said I; “why, pray?” “I don't know, ... unless it's because he ain't of much use, and is the slipriest [sic] fish that swims.”<sup>2</sup>

People name only the things they notice, so it isn't surprising that their admiration finds its way into regional names. Of course, there are all kinds of admiration. Among the names for bitterns and herons are *shit-across-the-creek* (“It was said that if the bird ate a frog on one side of a creek and flew, it would shit it out before reaching the other side”), *shit-a-quart*, and *shit-a-rod*.<sup>3</sup> “It is evident,” the naturalist Waldo McAtee remarked, “that the popular mind has been impressed with both linear and volumetric aspects of heron shitting.”<sup>4</sup>

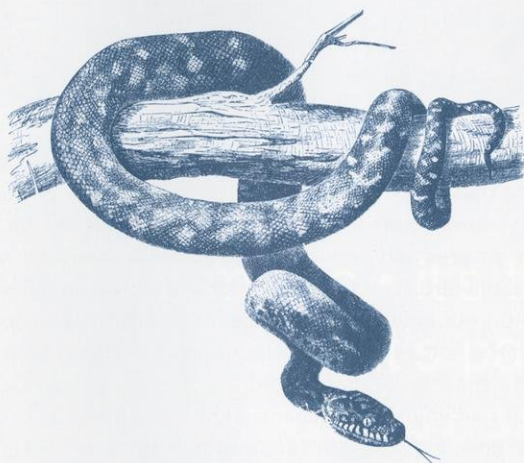
Other names in *DARE* are windows into the way we think, the way the “popular mind” makes connections. Dragonflies and snakes are found together in swampy places, and some interesting beliefs have grown up around this fact. In the South and Midland, a prevalent name for the dragonfly is *snake doctor*: “The two bumps sometimes seen on the snake-doctor, just behind his wings, are called his saddle-bags, and in them he is reputed to carry medicine for the snakes.”<sup>5</sup>

It must be strong medicine. Coming upon a mortally wounded snake,



"Words often reveal as much about people who did the naming as the things they named."

a beautiful insect—the "snake doctor"—alights on the head of the still squirming serpent. It gently and soothingly raises and lowers its transparent wings, accompanying this action by a peculiar movement of the head ... In the course of a few minutes, the stump-tail [moccasin] shows signs of life ... and soon he squirms to the edge of the water and disappears ... Remember this: *Unless you cut off a snake's head, a "snake doctor" can bring it back to life.*<sup>6</sup>



A similar kind of association is behind a salamander's being called a *spring keeper*. Because salamanders are found in clean-running springs it was decided that one causes the other. In his *Virginia Folk-Speech*, Green records the belief that the salamander keeps the water flowing and good, and that "if you kill the spring-keeper the spring runs dry."



But one hardly need invent strange tales when the reality is so rich. One of the pleasures of researching science entries is simply learning what goes on. The harmless hognose snake is also called *spreading adder* or *blowing viper*. If threatened, it hisses violently and spreads out its neck like a cobra. If an aggressor still advances, plan B is to roll over (with its tongue out) and play dead. Plan C is just more of plan B: if a curious enemy should turn the snake over, the hognose simply flips over again to show how dead it is. In a more lively vein, the *spinner shark* gets its name from a peculiar feeding behavior: it swims rapidly upward through a school of fish, snapping its mouth open and shut while spinning. It breaks the surface,

jumping or shooting up from the water nearly vertically, falling back with a spectacular splash, and in so doing making about four complete revolutions on its axis. In spring the spinners are quite common along the east coast of Florida and it is sometimes possible to see fifty in the air at one time.<sup>7</sup>

And then there are the roller birds:

In the vicinity of Dothan, Alabama, bluejays are often called "roller birds," because when the chinaberries are ripe, they sit in the trees and gorge themselves on chinaberries until they grow drunk. Then they tumble out of the trees and roll on the ground, and the cats creep out and eat them as they lie there.<sup>8</sup>

Since eating (or being eaten) is one of the most practical ways we relate to the natural world, what and what not to eat is a frequent topic in the science entries. Something that came to me cumulatively was the impression that at least half of all plants are emetic or purgative (or both), and that many of these produce "powerful," "drastic," "violent," or "explosive" effects. For our knowledge of these matters we can only thank our ancestors. To judge from some of the common names—*Indian cherry*, *Indian hippo*, *Indian physic*, *Indian tea*—a number of these were gifts to the white man.

Not all questions of edibility have black-and-white answers. In the case of mushrooms, one man's omelet may be another man's poison, as these entries show:

The species known as False Morel, though considered edible by some authorities, has caused the death of many eaters.<sup>9</sup>

When you consider the large number of people who eat false morels, the incidence of poisoning is rather low.<sup>10</sup>

Scientists have discovered that the Conifer False Morel develops a compound similar to one used in the manufacture of rocket fuel.<sup>11</sup>

Although generally considered poisonous in North America, [the milky cap] is sold commercially in Finland.<sup>12</sup>

We try to represent all points of view.

Remarks about fish also offer a spectrum of opinions. At one sense of *sheepshead* there were 10 *DARE* responses at the question about freshwater fish that are good to eat. But 14 informants from the same area offered the same response for freshwater fish that are *not* good to eat. Somewhere in between was the informant from Michigan who noted that sheepshead are used in catfood, and the Minnesota informant who remarked that Iowa people eat sheepshead.

Of course there are sometimes inconsistencies between what others are said to eat and what *they* say they eat. A (white) *DARE* informant from Louisiana remarked about the gizzard shad, "Some people eat 'em, mostly 'mongst colored people ... It's a fine food, I mean for other fish ... any kind of catfish'll eat 'em." In Pederson's *Linguistic Atlas of the Gulf States* (1986), a (white) Georgia informant says that shad are "undesirable fish" which he "gave to colored people." A (black) *LAGS* informant from Mississippi says of this bounty that gizzard shad are "not fit to eat, hardly."



As a mirror of America, *DARE* doesn't always show us a pretty picture, and this is as true of the natural science entries as of the general entries. Even in the names of our plants and animals we see the record of our divisions: *nigger baby* (three of them—two plants and a fish), *nigger bass*, *niggerbelly* (a catfish), and *nigger boy* (a limpkin) take us only through *b*. *Niggerhead* records 13 plants, one bird, and assorted clams—in addition to nine other senses.

Nor have we treated our fellow creatures better than ourselves. In some entries the earliest quotations offer accounts of fantastic abundance: birds gathering in such numbers that they break the limbs off trees, fish swarming so thickly that one might walk across their backs. And the last quotations remark on how many more there used to be. Or that there aren't any more. No passenger pigeon, no emerald trout, no Carolina parakeet.

Sometimes, though, in a wonderful exception, *DARE* records a restoration. "Nearly exterminated" in Louisiana in 1899, the snowy egret came under the protection of the Audubon Society. It was recorded as increasing in numbers "in a few localities" in 1928, and as "a regular nesting bird" on the Pecos

"One of the pleasures of researching science entries is simply learning what goes on."



in 1961. Finally, in Florida in 1969, "The snowy egrets make their homes in swamps and marshes and add beauty to these wide flat stretches of land."<sup>13</sup> No less than the rest of *DARE*, the science entries show the best and worst of us, and present us with a portrait of a laughing, wildly imaginative, and very imperfect people who may yet be wise.

*For 15 years Roland Berns has been a science editor at the Dictionary of American Regional English. He lives and works in Madison. His interests include modern and medieval calligraphy, monster movies, and unusual food.*

## Notes

1. Wilson, *American Ornithology* (1813 [1824]), 7.132.
2. Hammond, *Wild Northern Scenes* (1857), 45.
3. *Shitquick*, another name for the great blue heron, found an extended application in Lake Okechobee, Florida: "As the badge worn by wardens of the National Audubon Society bore the figure of a heron, local citizens dubbed the organization the Shitquick Society." (McAtee, *Nomina Abitera* [1945] 26.)
4. *Ibid.*, 25. In a similar vein, the great blue heron is admired for its strong-flavored flesh, and in North Carolina bears the name *forty-gallons-of-soup*.
5. Shands, *Mississippi Speech* (1893), 58.
6. Texas Folklore Society *Publication* 5 (1926), 8.
7. LaMonte, *North American Game Fishes* (1946), 10.
8. Rayford, *Whistlin' Woman* (1956), 229. This lesson in temperance shows only one of the ways in which writing science

entries is morally improving. Another is in having one's categories stretched, so that one develops a certain zenlike calm in the face of inconsistency. Take for instance the fact that the *red oak* (*Quercus rubra*) is also *black oak*, *gray oak*, *yellow oak*, and just for good measure, *leopard oak*, too. This broadens one's understanding of *red*. The *Texas oak* (*Q. texana*) also goes by *red*, *spotted*, *striped*, and *yellow-butt*, but what this does for one's concept of Texas is perhaps less clear.

9. Hylander, *Plant Life* (1942), 58.
10. Ammirati *et al.*, *Poisonous Mushrooms*, (1985), 119. It is not clear just what "rather low" means.
11. Lincoff, *Audubon Field Guide to Mushrooms* (1981), 337.
12. *Ibid.*, 686.
13. Longstreet, *Birds of Florida* (1969), 24.

## The Humanities Moment

Brought to you by the Wisconsin Humanities Council

In this feature, an author reflects upon a life-changing encounter with one of the humanities disciplines.

# My Odyssey

BY DENISE MADDOX



MY NAME IS DENISE MADDOX, and I am one of 24 people who were the first graduates of the University of Wisconsin Odyssey Project, class of 2003–2004. I would never have thought that classes in the humanities would change my life forever. I mean “forever” without exaggeration

because writing, art history, American history, literature, and philosophy transported me into a new world, where written words came alive and made magic inside my heart.

An odyssey is a life-altering journey of discovery. Like Odysseus in Homer’s *Odyssey*, I too started out on a life-changing journey. The boat was our classroom at the Harambee Center in South Madison, and the reading materials (books by William Shakespeare, Plato, Henry David Thoreau, Emily Dickinson, Langston Hughes, Toni Morrison, and so many more) were the rough seas we had to travel through. In each and every port we landed were wonderful lessons to learn. The Odyssey crew consisted of the UW professors and staff members who gave us supplies to maintain this one-year exploration of learning. The teachers were the compasses that directed us through these rough seas and guided us safely to our destination.

The journey started in September with William Blake’s poems from *Songs of Innocence* and *Songs of Experience*. We learned about a chimney sweeper who was a little child sold into slavery by his parents. As Professor Emily Auerbach read the poem, tears rolled down my face. As an African American, I understand the bitterness of slavery. The poem went on to light a fire within my soul. I have been victorious in freedom. My freedom included wanting to better myself through education. This was the first time I realized how words can move you forever, even if the original writer is gone from this world.

Wow! The transformation had started, and there was no turning back from this course. I wasn’t alone on this journey. Twenty-four minds started to look at the world with different perspectives. Indeed, with each lesson taught, the fire of knowledge began to burn brighter and brighter. For example,

my classmate Tiffany Smith said, “I have always wanted and have had the will to succeed. The Odyssey class pulled it all out of me, letting me know I could do it.” Another classmate, Joseph Hurst, said, “I was fortunate to have been a part of the first Odyssey class. One of the great benefits of this class was studying the humanities. I have always loved history and knew about African American philosophers, but through the Odyssey class I gained a great appreciation for the Greek philosophers, like Aristotle, Plato, and Socrates.”

Jean Feraca of Wisconsin Public Radio had heard about a free humanities program for adults near the poverty level started by Earl Shorris in New York. She got English professor Emily Auerbach to set up and direct a similar program here in Madison. Graduates of the UW Odyssey Project receive six credits in Integrated Liberal Studies.

During the first-ever Odyssey Project graduation in May 2004, Jean Feraca quoted a poem by James Wright called “Today I was so happy, so I made this poem”:

An eagle rejoices in the oak trees of heaven,  
Crying  
*This is what I wanted.*

The reason she quoted this poem was that the graduation was a confirmation and fulfillment of a dream: that courses in the humanities offered to students who wanted to go to college and never had a chance could transform lives and lift them out of poverty. This was only the beginning. Our class laid the foundation for subsequent Odyssey Project classes that have taken place each year. Approximately 80 students have graduated from the Odyssey Project in Madison so far, and a new class of 30 students will begin the two-semester journey this September.

Just months after they began the course, I spoke with members of the Odyssey Project 2004–2005—the class that followed mine—to see if their experiences were similar to ours. They already showed signs that a transformation had started. Several students wrote about the emotional experiences that they went through during the first weeks of the course. Terry Fox reported, “This class is thought-provoking. It increases your awareness of the history of man along with



Author Denise Maddox hugs her son, Chester Blue, a graduate of the Odyssey Project '06.

the origins of many current systems we use as well as language. This class teaches me to look farther, to read about and most importantly develop my own thoughts and opinions." James Robinson, whose brother Joe graduated from the first Odyssey class with me, says, "I feel different because I did not know that I would look forward to coming to class. I enjoy this time in class because it is an escape for me, an escape for a few hours that lets me explore my mind." Other classmates report similarly enriching experiences.

Earl Shorris, who founded the original Clemente Course in the Humanities that is the model for the Odyssey Project, explained in his book *Riches for the Poor*, "I like watching people having a second birth." His is a true statement, and I am one of the examples of his words. "Rebirth" is the perfect word to describe what happened to me. I was like a caterpillar eating everything in sight, yet I was never full until I found focused learning in the Odyssey Project. The knowledge I received helped me finally transform into a multicolored butterfly. I spread my wings into the air to dry, and now I'm flying. I am pursuing a degree at MATC and I am on the Dean's List. I hope eventually to transfer to the UW-Madison and earn a degree in writing and literature. The world might still see me as poor, with little money and material wealth, but I am rich with knowledge and wisdom.

"Words can move you forever, even if the original writer is gone from this world."

*Denise Maddox is pursuing her studies at Madison Area Technical College. She is on the forensics team, made the Dean's List for the fourth semester in a row, and was inducted into Phi Theta Kappa, the two-year college equivalent of Phi Beta Kappa. She hopes to transfer to the University of Wisconsin-Madison within a year. Her enthusiasm for learning has spread to other members of her family, most notably to her son, Chester Blue, who graduated from the Odyssey Project class of '06. He says, "My mother is the person I admire the most in the whole world. Mom is the reason I'm a student today. My mother going back to college (Odyssey Project class of '04) kept me motivated to graduate high school, which makes me the first male to graduate on her side of the family in 30 years."*



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community through conversation

This special section is edited by Masarah Van Eyck,  
Wisconsin Humanities Council.

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# Y t e r p

## Laundromat Revelation

Today at mass, Father Bob  
announced that he'd met God  
at the Valmy Laundromat,  
where he brought his shirts and socks,  
along with altar cloths,  
for their weekly purification.  
A few parishioners laughed.  
Father Bob fixed them with his one good eye.  
He said that after a preliminary exchange of credentials  
he'd asked God (who wore a gray shawl  
and had Her hair pinned up)  
If She ever had regrets at what She'd made.  
He thought that war and fratricide might make Her list,  
but She replied that these were our choice.  
Her only second thought was snakes.  
Then she gathered up her laundry,  
put it in a red plastic basket  
and went out the door.  
She might have winked;  
Father Bob wasn't sure.

by Judy Roy

Judy Roy retired from careers as a psychologist and then as a French teacher. She writes poetry in a boreal forest in northern Door County. Her poems have been published both online and in regional publications. She is a coauthor of a chapbook, *Slightly Off Q*.

## High Concept

I was just planning to be in LA  
for a couple days—make a few calls, see  
an old friend, sit on the beach for an hour.  
Nothing special. Calling up  
the Screen Actors Guild was just a whim.  
A joke. I never dreamed that anything  
would come of it. You know how the guild has a rule  
that no two actors can use the same name.  
I just called to see if they had anyone  
using mine. That's all. Just a moment,  
I'll check, the person says. She's back in  
two minutes. Did you say Jim Ferris? Yes.  
Of course you're registered, Mister Ferris.  
One moment, please. What does she mean of course,  
I'm thinking, when suddenly this poodle voice  
yaps: Where have you been I've been  
trying to get hold of you for a month  
OK a week but you gotta talk  
to me, check in once in a while. Excuse  
me, but who *is* this? Oh, this is just great—  
a week in the country and it's amnesia.  
Hello—I'm your agent. You'd be nothing  
without me. I'm quoting you here. Where are  
you? I'm not thinking, I tell him the name  
of the hotel. Nobody stays there,  
he says. Ten minutes. And hangs up before  
I can say I'm nobody, really.  
But I'm curious too, so I go down  
to the lobby to see what this agent  
looks like—if he shows. He does—and in five  
minutes. He doesn't go up to the desk,  
he comes right over to me and sits down.  
Why don't you call me I've been worried sick.  
I'm about to say Because I don't know  
you, but he's already on this great deal  
he's cooked up for me—for this other guy.  
I'm not an actor, I tell him. That's why

they want you, he says. I'm not the right guy,  
I say. I don't know this business, I don't  
know you or anybody in this town.  
Nobody really knows anybody else, do they.  
Nothing I say makes the slightest dent in this guy.  
Before I know it we're having lunch  
and all these people are acting like they know  
me. A couple I'd seen in movies—that's it.  
Nobody believes that I'm not  
who they think I am. I show them my brace—  
no movie star wears a brace like this,  
or walks like I do, unless they're trying  
to win an Oscar. Cut it out, Jim, my agent says. You can't  
keep pulling this stunt. What the hell, I think,  
maybe it will be fun, until they figure it out.  
But here's the thing: they never do. I take  
the part my agent lined up for that other  
Jim. I stand where they tell me, look  
where they tell me, say my lines. Beats  
working, I tell myself. I take more parts,  
do some deals, and before you know it, I'm  
a player, a commodity, Mister  
Green Light, as full of shit as anybody.  
What's become of the other Jim Ferris?  
Maybe he's back home, paying better attention  
than I ever did to real life, my life.

*by Jim Ferris*

## Deconstruction and the Body

One thing that happened in medical school started me thinking: I was working the ER late one night, when this guy came in, mighty messed up from a gunshot wound to the head. Blood everywhere, of course. Some of his skull had been blasted away, and we could see right down to his brain. But he was calm and lucid—in fact, he made more sense than some of my professors. While everybody else rushed around, he and I talked about Heidegger and the later Foucault. As we talked I kept trying to peek inside his skull, to see if anything changed color or moved while he thought. I couldn't tell much. We were in the midst of a discussion about the Nazis when they took him up to OR, so I went along. The neurosurgeon said I was better than anesthetic anyway.

They couldn't save the brain.

They left the brain stem and some of the cerebellum, but took almost everything else. By now we were talking about Hegel and deconstruction. I've always had trouble with deconstruction, so I scarcely noticed that I was talking to a man with no brain to speak of. They packed his skull with styrofoam so what was left wouldn't rattle around. Then they closed him up. They wouldn't let me into the recovery room with him. "How can you expect to learn anything about medicine if you spend all your time talking to a patient with no brain?" the attending asked me. After I got off that morning I hunted up my professor and asked him how I could have a deep discussion about Derrida with a guy with no brain. The professor, universally considered brilliant, told me I must have gone into a peculiar kind of low-grade shock upon seeing all the blood, and imagined the whole incident. It was all in my head. The patient had checked out by that evening when I came back on duty, but he had left a short list of books for me to read. It got me wondering about just what's really up there—what if Jesus was right and our brains *are* pucks, radically decentered each face-off—what then? We can be excused, can't we, if we confuse gravity with entropy, words with language, heart with mind, with soul.

by Jim Ferris

Jim Ferris is the author of *Facts of Life*, published by Parallel Press in 2005. *The Hospital Poems*, his first book of poems, was selected by Edward Hirsch as winner of the 2004 Main Street Rag Book Award. His essay, "The Enjambed Body: A Step Toward a Crippled Poetics," was published as the lead essay in *The Georgia Review's* special summer 2004 issue on poetry and poetics, and republished online by *Poetry Daily*. Recipient of a Literary Artist Fellowship Award from the Wisconsin Arts Board and multiple teaching awards, Jim Ferris teaches courses in communication arts and disability studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

## Marshall Field's

Frango Mints, clones of some original Ur-mint  
Hold memory fragments that lodge in the brain  
And take me rattling on the screaming El  
with my high school hero, Emily  
as if through Hell, to see your windows.

Her first real job Downtown,  
Everybody's Great Aunt Iris of good stores,  
The solid citizen we could never be—

I, the hillbilly girl with one pair of shoes,  
She, a city urchin, working for her tweeds,  
Both dreaming in your windows

Like little automated elves ourselves,  
Hammering our way toward Respectability.  
We wanted that click that only Fields can give,  
Had that shopping itch that only you could scratch.

You old capitalist breaker of Pullman strike,  
Marshall of Marshes, which Chicago was.  
Downtown hustle at five with the wind shearing  
Off Michigan like a threat.

Emily scorned your store, being a communist already.  
She taught me abortion, Dr. King, and a hookah.  
I enlightened her to boys, cheerleading, and a family  
so intact compared to hers my mother wanted to grab  
and scrub the love beads off her narrow brow.  
That was a whole husband and a half ago apiece.  
Where is she now?

Marshall of Fields, your pretentious Walnut Room,  
Cobb salads, and even waiters are all prepackaged now.  
Though you hold your head high enough, we know you were  
Kept and paid for by Dayton's, then became a Macy's concubine  
Which will now usurp your proud name as well.

But high-hatted and surrounded by rude upstart marts,  
Your stern demeanor still chastens me: "I am Chicago  
And who, little girl, are you?"

by Gay Davidson-Zielske

Gay Davidson-Zielske, aka Norma Gay Prewett, has published poetry, short fiction, reviews, and essays for many years. She is an active member of the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets (WFOP) and contributes and coordinates material for Mindseye Radio on WORT. Recent awards included a Muse award from WFOP and the William Stafford Award for Poetry in *Rosebud* magazine. She teaches composition, creative writing, and screenwriting at the University of Wisconsin-Whitewater.

## X O X O X

I paid good money  
to play Tic Tac Toe  
with a caged chicken.

I dropped my coin in the slot  
and marked my X.  
The chicken picked its O.  
X O X O X—a draw; I tried again.  
X O X O X O X—again a draw;  
I dropped another coin.

Outside, flies swarmed and killdeers fed.  
Light faded and night shadows took hold.  
Days passed endlessly to evening.  
Mountains rose and fell.  
And soon enough, the killdeers fed the flies.

Inside, X O X O X the struggle went.  
And far too slow, I came to understand  
that I could never beat this bird.  
Like death, it never chose in error.  
Stalemate was the best I could ever achieve.

And then it came to me:  
*I had already lost!*

Because I paid good money  
to play Tic Tac Toe  
with a caged chicken.

by Lester Smith

Lester Smith spent eight years as a factory worker before a layoff led him to college, a B.A. in English, and a career in publishing. Nowadays he works as a researcher and poet for Write Source, an educational design house in Burlington. In his spare time, he promotes genuine poetry and experimental fiction as president of Popcorn Press ([www.popcorn-press.com](http://www.popcorn-press.com)) and as a member of the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets.

## That Craggy Line

Estella Clark Loomis, 1882–1920

Even in a snapshot on the short front lawn  
with Grandpa cuddled against her side, she looks  
impressive, this stately woman I never met  
who taught school before three boys were born.  
The doctor warned the third should be her last.

She sent her sons to the next town to study  
violin with hot stones and heavy  
blankets to keep them warm in their single  
horse-drawn sleigh. But I will never know  
how hard she worked or what she felt.  
Everyone always said that she was wise,  
but no record of her words survives.  
Only a muslin friendship quilt, now brown  
and stained, still bears her signature in red.

One day, the family story goes, my father,  
a child of six, was laid in the parlor to die,  
his forehead split by a horse's hoof, his brain  
exposed. She offered strands of her long hair  
to bind the wound the doctor claimed would never  
heal, and, sure enough, those stitches held  
though she herself soon died in childbirth.

Between us now, besides the photo, the quilt,  
our common name, is just that craggy line.

by Estella Lauter

Estella Lauter is professor emerita from the University of Wisconsin–Oshkosh after a long career teaching English and women's studies. She has published three academic books, and her poems have appeared in several Wisconsin anthologies and journals. Her first chapbook, *Pressing a Life Together By Hand*, is forthcoming from Finishing Line Press.

## Radiation

Hair the color of bad teeth.  
Her flesh like paper  
dunked in water.  
We tried not to imagine the bruising,  
the blood-smeared gums.

In the glossy magazines—  
salsa recipes, a mayonnaise in a jar with a bright blue cap.  
We grew restless  
for our names to be called. Day after day  
we coughed into the silence.

She was our death.  
The past was burned out of her. The future gone too.  
We knew this was madness  
pretending we hadn't been poisoned.  
Science would save us,  
a weapon, our cure.

We walked down the corridor to the elevators.  
At a piano an entertainer played Chopin  
for the dying guests.  
We averted our eyes.

Outside it had been raining.  
It was April  
and we had expected sunlight, yellow buds.  
Spring was around the corner;  
sparrows preened in the gutter  
not waiting to die.

by Dale M. Kushner

Dale M. Kushner studied at the C.G. Jung Institute in Switzerland and teaches workshops on dreams, fairy tales, and writing. She is widely published in literary journals, including *Crazyhorse*, *Poetry*, *Quarterly West*, *Salmagundi*, and *Women's Review of Books*. Her current manuscript, *Via Magdalene*, was a finalist for the Agah Shahid Ali Prize in Poetry, The Tupelo Press Award, The *Prairie Schooner* Award, and the Tom Wick Prize in Poetry and has been awarded a Wisconsin Arts Board Grant in the Literary Arts. She is finishing a novel.

## Contemplating the Substance of God

What if God is more like a verb than a man?  
What if all creation groans at our ignorance  
because we alone have yet to figure out that  
the cast of characters has as much to do with  
the play as the plot? What if God is the stuff  
that binds the first two acts to the last? What

if the lack of equality between mice and men  
is well-intentioned toward both of us? How  
do we name what it means to be either mice  
or men when we are bitten by the bug that  
causes love and the sudden need for rubbing?  
What if God lives as surely in the dog sleeping

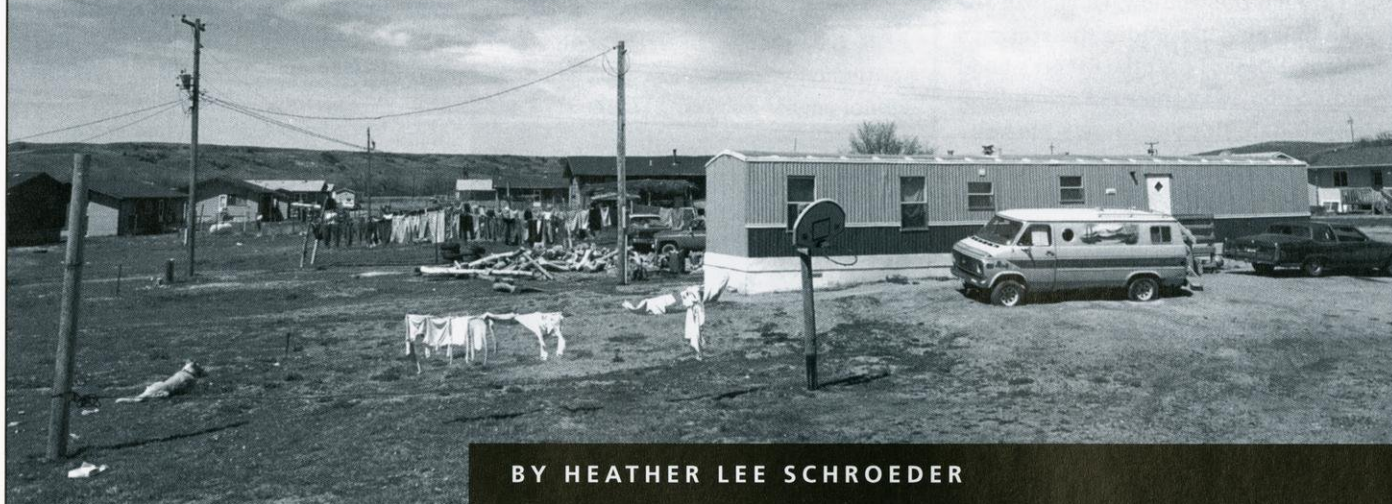
on the carpet at my feet as in you? Would  
knowing that help either of us think about  
the difficulty of being a dog, a creature whose  
freedoms we have utterly enslaved in the name  
of love. Most of them cannot even go outside  
and pee unless we will it so. What if the devil

we find in the detail of things is God's way  
of telling us we're smart enough to figure things  
out for ourselves? What if the air we breathe is  
sacred space and the thoughts we think only  
one of the links that get us to the center of what  
is always holy? What if the body does all the rest?

by Fredrick Zydek

Fredrick Zydek taught creative writing and theology at the University of Nebraska and the College of Saint Mary. He has published eight collections of poetry, including *Ending the Fast*, which won the Sarah Foley O'Loughlen Award for the poem quartet "Songs from the Quinalt Valley." His work has appeared in *The Antioch Review*, *New England Review*, *Nimrod*, *Poetry*, and a number of other publications.

# Good Buffalo



BY HEATHER LEE SCHROEDER

Photos by Bill Blankenberg



WISCONSIN ACADEMY  
REVIEW/HARRY W.  
SCHWARTZ BOOKSHOPS  
SHORT STORY  
CONTEST WINNER

SECOND  
PLACE

ON THE SECOND TO THE LAST DAY of their second honeymoon, Olivia and Jake stop at a gas station on the outskirts of Pine Ridge, South Dakota. She is shaky with exhaustion from sitting in one position, the hot sun burning down on her face through the dusty windshield, making freckles on her nose and cheeks. They have driven 300 miles, and Jake tells her they have at least 50 more to go.

She leans against the car for a minute, letting the phantom motion of the driving leave her body. She is tired, but Jake bounces with energy. Olivia understands this trip is important to him. He believes it's his chance to reconnect with his cultural heritage. At home, he sweats with a local men's group. He smudges the house with sage bundles.

Pine Ridge is a small town, the only place to stop for gas in maybe fifty or sixty miles, and the station they choose—Big Bat's Texaco—is the happening place at four o'clock in the

afternoon. Cars and double-tirewall trucks are pulling in and out of the pump area, leaving whirls of sandy dust that settle like a tan over the occupants of this outpost. Dark-haired schoolgirls in baggy pants and spaghetti-strap tank tops that show rolls of baby fat lounge outside the building on a battered bench. Olivia thinks their faces look too old for their bodies, but they chatter in girlish and high-pitched voices.

Inside the station that doubles as a restaurant, the din deafens Olivia. Brown skin everywhere. To the left, old

men, school kids, adults crowd around molded plastic tables, sipping drinks, eating burgers and fries. On the other side, two women furiously work the cash registers, trying to keep pace with the lengthening line. The people waiting chat. Olivia lets the sentences wash over her.

"I hear you got a new bull. That true?"

"Me and Angie are looking for a ride to the powwow next weekend. We're gonna go if we can."

Through the window, Olivia can see Jake pumping gas under the station's canopy. He leans over the Escort's hood and scrubs away the road grime from the windshield. She knows his ropy arms are dusted with red hair, and she imagines she can see them glistening, giving his skin a sheen. His dirty yellow tank top hangs loose on his chest, and he has a concentration line furrowing his forehead. She turns back to the counter.

In amongst the sea of brown faces and dark hair, a white man stands, waiting in line. He is tall, blond, and beautiful in a rugged way. His cheeks are covered with a scruff of fur. Olivia meets his eyes for a moment. He stares back at her for a moment, almost disdainfully, then steps up to the counter.

She wonders if she looks that married. She looks down at her pale hands clutching her purse. Her ring isn't even showing. He glances at Olivia on the way out, and she feels her cheeks burn with the heat of a slow blush.

She has come out into the stunning brightness and stands next to the car. Jake is still fiddling with the windshield, trying to remove the last streaks of dirt. Olivia means to tell Jake about the scene inside, but two boys walk over and stand between them. She imagines they are around fourteen or fifteen years old—one lanky with bad skin, the other doughy and soft with bangs that fall into his eyes.

"You traveling through?" the lanky one asks Jake. His voice has a sing-song quality Olivia loves. Jake is eager to make a connection here, she can see. He smiles, holding the windshield cleaner in front of him. It drips by his sandaled foot. She can see how white his bronzed

skin looks next to these boys. They are swarthy, and their hair is thick and straight.

"We're taking collections for our baseball team," the chubby boy says, after glancing at his friend. He holds out a grimy envelope. She can see a few crumpled bills in it, mostly ones. "We want to buy new shirts for everyone."

"Yeah," the other boy chimes in. "We're playing this afternoon. You ought to come out and watch."

"What are your names?" Jake asks.

## WINNING WORDS

Judge Margaret George  
on why she chose "Good Buffalo"

A couple visit a reservation and the site of Wounded Knee in a man's quest to connect himself to what he imagines is his ancestral Indian legacy, only to find himself not so welcome. His wife perceives this first and tries to shield him from the truth of it. There is a particularly poignant exchange at the reservation that reveals the chasm between the two cultures.

"I'm Bill Watches Eagles and he's Samson Sleeping Bull," the chubby boy says.

"What's your team's name?"

"Letan Khigla Po," Samson says.

Jake fumbles with his wallet. He takes out two twenties and hands them to the boys.

"Hey man," Samson says. "Thanks."

"I'm one-sixteenth Choctaw," Jake says, as if this explains his unexpected generosity.

"Really man? Then you're one of us," Samson says. "You really got to come out and watch us play."

"The baseball field is over there," Bill says, pointing a fat finger toward the center of town.



Olivia wants to be out of the car or at least pointed in the direction of their hotel, but Jake insists on driving out to the ball field. He tells her it would be rude to ignore an invitation, but she knows he says this because he wants to make a connection. She swallows her irritation and says nothing as he drives between houses that look like they're crumbling into the dry ground. Ripped-open trash bags decorate the front yards, and a pack of rangy dogs runs between fences. She glimpses a baby sitting on a porch all alone, sucking on a toy, his face smeared with dirt. Olivia sees the baseball diamond ahead. There are a few players on the field warming up. She wonders why the boys were at the gas station collecting money if their team is playing now, but when she turns to Jake to ask the question, his face is alight with anticipation and she cannot ruin the moment.

"This must be it," he says, turning to her.

"Maybe we ought to get to the hotel," she says. "They're expecting us."

He looks hurt for a minute, and she knows she can't stop him.

Jake parks the car and walks toward the field. There are no bleachers. Instead, people sit on blankets. Olivia follows, watching people turn to look at Jake. Her stomach hurts, and the crack of a bat against a ball makes her ears ring. She knows this is no good. She knows these people don't mind if people like her and Jake come and look at their gas stations or their graveyards, but people like her and Jake are not allowed to come to places like this.

Jake shields his eyes with a hand and looks at the field.

"Hi," he says to the family closest to them. "Bill Watches Eagles and Samson Sleeping Bull sent us over to watch the Letan Khigla Po team play."

The family is silent, and then the older girl sitting with them starts giggling. The mother pinches her arm.

"Sorry, are you with the other team?" Jake asks.

"The Eagles are our team," the mother says.

"So, the other team is Letan Khigla Po?" Jake says.

The woman shakes her head, and the girl starts giggling again, and Olivia understands what has happened. It's an easy scam on the reservation; tourists like Jake looking for a connection or white people who feel guilty about the poverty must be the easiest targets.

"Well, I gave a donation for the new T-shirts for the Letan Khigla Po team. They sent us over to watch."

Olivia can see Jake is bewildered, and she wants to undo it. She wants to back the day up and intervene when Jake pulls out his wallet and hands over the money.

"We don't know no Bill Watches Eagles or Samson Sleeping Bull," a man says.

Jake looks around and says, "Well, they said they were collecting for this team—"

Olivia can see the moment when he realizes what has happened. She wants to put her arms around him, to comfort him, but she knows it will humiliate him in front of these people. She's never seen him actually admit he's wrong. He always talks around it, and he pretends

to know things she's sure he doesn't, and yet, she's never known anyone more sensitive to all sorts of slights and hurts than him. She crosses her arms and shifts from one foot to the other.

"They were collecting for themselves," the man replies. A few people laugh and shake their heads.

She can see Jake start to come undone. She catches the edge of his T-shirt and tugs for a moment. He turns to her, and her heart breaks.

"Let's go," Olivia says.

He nods his head. As they walk away, she can hear someone say something just inaudible. Everyone laughs loudly, and then a single high-pitched voice floats up over the grass, saying "They didn't even know it meant 'get away from here.'" She hopes he didn't hear that, but she's sure he has.



"Whatever happened to pride? I didn't think it would be like this. I mean,

I knew it was poor, but not like this," Jake asks her in the car.

Olivia doesn't answer him. She knows this will pass, maybe in an hour, a day or a week. She knows he will rediscover his passion for this place, but only when he can't see the reality of it. She watches the road fall away behind them, and she lets his words flutter out behind their car. In the distance, the land meets up with the sky so perfectly that it's hard to tell how the two pieces fit together. The August heat has burned up the grass, turned it yellow and brittle. In the backseat, the camping gear knocks against the windows.

She closes her eyes and imagines they are driving to the ocean, believes that the water lies just at the point where land and sky meet. After ten or twelve miles, Jake says, "What's the matter with you?"

"Nothing. I'm just tired," she replies. She could tell him she knows he will take his discontent out on her and that she doesn't want to deal with it, but instead she keeps her face serene.



"Try driving three hundred miles in one day," he says. "It's hard to stay awake."

She worries a little piece of skin on the back of her hand—the third knuckle in. She picks the tiny scab raw, and a drop of blood wells up, perfect and red. She sucks it away, and it tastes bitter and metallic. Like bitter herbs—what Jake tells her when he mouths her nipples. That's her taste.

"I can drive if you want."

"Why start now? We're almost there."

"You want me to read?"

"If you want to," he says, shrugging.

Olivia picks up their travel guide and reads to Jake: "The reservation is located just a few miles from the site where the Sioux Nation's struggle against white domination ended on Dec. 29, 1890. Wounded Knee massacre site, so named for its proximity to Wounded Knee Creek, is about 15 miles out of town."

"We'll visit it tomorrow," he says. "It's too late today."

Their first honeymoon, five years before, lasted one day. They drove from Madison to Michigan by way of the Upper Peninsula. They filled the back seat of the '81 Escort with their camping gear, and Olivia hid a bag full of donuts under the seat—a surprise for Jake. When she straightened up, he was standing behind her, his camera against his eye.

She didn't put on a picture face for him. She turned toward him and kept her face quiet—a polished surface for his camera to capture. The inner machinery clicked and whirled, and she knew he was taking a sequence. She curved her left cheek toward her shoulder and let her hair slide down like a shutter between them. She knew enough about his camera and his eye by then to know that the angle of her cheek would show through the hair.

"You're so beautiful," he said when he had finished taking her picture and had lowered his camera, and Olivia could hear the awe in his voice.

Jake drove with one arm out the window, his ginger hair held back by a blue bandana and his eyes behind sunglasses. She rested her head back

and let the industrial disaster of Green Bay slip past and all the small dairy farms blur by. This gave way to scrub pine forest and eventually a thin strip of beach along Lake Michigan.

"I never imagined marriage," she said after a long while. "Did you?"

"Well, I guess I never wanted to until I met you," he said.



The Lazy Rest Bed & Breakfast sits in the middle of a field of wheat. Jake navigates the gravel road leading to the stand of house and outbuildings. Olivia closes her eyes. When Jake slams on the brakes, fishtailing the station wagon through the dust, she is thrown forward

## Reading at Book Fest

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and bangs her knees against the dashboard.

"Look at that," he says and points to a rusted-out gray Volkswagen bug marooned on the side of the road. Sunflowers have grown up through the cavity of its body and sprout out its windows and windshield. The car's body squats among the weeds and flowers, and Olivia imagines it's a bit like a tiger, ready to leap up and drive away if given half a chance.

Jake untangles his body from behind the wheel and moves in for a few pictures. Later these will be the only memories she preserves from the trip. She leans her head out the passenger window and calls to Jake. He stands knee-deep in grass, the camera lifted to his face. Sometimes, when she pictures his face in her mind, she doesn't see his blue eyes or his full lips, she can only imagine the blank lens of the camera staring back at her. The breeze lifts his

golden-red curls, exposing the curve of his neck and the edge of his cheek. She wishes she could put her mouth on the soft flesh beneath his earlobe.

"Watch out for snakes," she calls.



The ad in the South Dakota state tourism guide said the Lazy Rest Bed & Breakfast was the only hotel near the reservation. It's a two-story farmhouse with a low-slung addition on one side. Flower beds blanket the backyard, and Olivia can tell someone must water them every day because they aren't wasted away by the heat.

When the owner bustles out, Olivia sits back in surprise. The woman—who said her name is Mary on the telephone—is white. Her frosted blonde hair sweeps away from her face in wings and her lipstick is a deep maroon.

"Welcome," she says, spreading her arms wide as if to encompass the entire reservation. "Welcome to our oasis."

Jake climbs out and walks around the car, holding out his hand to introduce himself. Olivia fumbles for her purse and finally opens her door.

"You have a good trip?" Mary asks Jake. "I suppose the rez was a bit of a shock."

"You could say that."

"Well, not to worry. You won't have to eat fried food and drink cheap beer here. We've even got a whirlpool bath in your room."

Olivia comes to stand next to Jake.

"You must be Jake's wife, Olivia," Mary says.

"That's right."

"You got a little sun today. I've got some aloe in the house. Come in and I'll get it for you."

Olivia follows Mary, leaving Jake to manage their suitcase. He'll complain later, but she'll live with it.



At dinner around Mary's vast mahogany dining room table, a brown-skinned woman carries dishes of

steaming food to the table—a platter of sliced brown meat, a gravy boat, mashed potatoes and green beans glistening with butter. Mary sits at one end. Jake and Olivia sit on opposite sides next to another couple from Nebraska.

The seat at the opposite end is empty. Mary gestures toward it. “My husband will be here soon. He had to hire some hands today to help us with farmwork, so I didn’t expect him on time. Go ahead and start.”

Then the back door crashes open. Olivia turns toward the sound. It’s the rugged blond man from the gas station. She ducks her head toward her plate. Her hair curtains down around her face.

“Ivan,” Mary says. “Take off those boots and come sit down.”

Ivan walks to his place at the table. Olivia can see Jake is excited, eager for Ivan’s attention.

“We’re going to Wounded Knee tomorrow,” Jake tells Ivan as he sits down and before Mary can make introductions. “Any advice for us?”

Olivia hopes Ivan doesn’t turn his face toward her. He looks at Jake.

“Yeah,” Ivan says and laughs loudly. He spears several slices of meat and scoops out a mammoth pile of potatoes onto his plate. “Watch out for the tourist crap the Injuns will try to sell you.”

The maid lets a pan crash down in to the sink. Olivia jumps.

“Noreen Big Dog don’t like to hear me say stuff like that, do you, Noreen?” Ivan says, his mouth full of bison meat. He gestures with his fork toward the kitchen.

“Noreen, you can go downstairs now and watch TV,” Mary says. “I’ll call you up later for the dishes.”

Noreen strides out of the kitchen with her shoulders held stiffly. She doesn’t look at anyone at the table. Olivia wants to stand up and follow her to show she’s not part of this crowd, but she remains rooted to her seat, connected to Jake.

The Nebraskan man turns to Ivan. “What I can’t believe is how they live here.”

“That’s what I said to Olivia today,” Jake says, gesturing toward her.

She knows Jake is saying this because of what happened at the ball field. He’ll

never tell that story at this table and laugh at his own gullibility. He’ll never talk about how the poverty here makes people desperate enough to do those kinds of things. He’ll never admit to these people that he shares something with Noreen Big Dog or the boys at the station. His vulnerability is too large. She knows all of this because it threatens to swallow her regularly.

Ivan turns his eyes toward Olivia, pausing there to measure her. He grunts in recognition.

“You were at Big Bat’s today, weren’t you?”

Olivia nods. She can feel the color flood her cheeks.

He turns back to the conversation.

“I say thank the good Lord for welfare reform,” the Nebraskan woman says. “In Nebraska, our reservations were full of freeloaders, drinking up my tax dollars. Made me sick.”

“The one good thing Clinton’s done,” Ivan says.

“Don’t get me started on that one,” the Nebraskan man says, and they all laugh. Olivia puts her fork down and sets her hands in her lap.

“But isn’t Pine Ridge the poorest community in the country?” she asks. “There aren’t any jobs for people here, are there?”

“Well, like I always like to remind people, they aren’t locked in here. I’d be happy to buy their property and so would a lot of other people,” Ivan says. “If they hate it so much here, they can make it better for themselves somewhere else.”

She opens her mouth to lay into him, but Jake interrupts her.

He turns to Ivan and smiles apologetically. “My wife is a liberal. I thought it was cute when we were in college.”

Olivia wants to stand up and shout at Jake, make a huge scene, walk out the door and keep taking steps, one after another across the prairie until she reaches her own front porch, but she sits quietly, waiting to see what will happen next. Her armpits prickly with sweat, and her face feels swollen with blood.

“Maybe you just don’t make enough money yet. Only the poor can afford to

be liberal,” Ivan says, and the Nebraskan couple joins in laughing.

“Don’t let Ivan get to you,” Mary says, patting Olivia’s arm. “We hire a lot of people off the rez. They’re grateful for the work. We’re good to people here, aren’t we, Ivan?”

He nods and gives Olivia a disgusted look.



The guidebook description does not prepare them for the reality. Wounded Knee lies on forbidding land—hot, dry, and relentless in its monotony. They must drive across dusty highways populated by mufferless cars and huge red trucks emblazoned with “Tatanka Wast’e.” Later she asks a man behind a gas station counter what those words mean. “Good Buffalo,” she is told. And she laughs because she never saw any buffalo on the airless prairie, except the ones behind the fences in the Black Hills.

“What was that about last night?” Olivia finally asks Jake.

“What was what about?”

“That crap about me being a liberal. I mean, who are you sometimes? It’s like I don’t even know you,” she says. She runs her fingers quickly through her hair and pins it back in a ponytail.

“Maybe I’m different than you think I am, Liv. Maybe you have me fixed one way in your mind, you know, like I was in college, but now I’m someone different.”

“Maybe that’s true, but did you have to make fun of me in front of other people? Do you really think that?”

“Think what?”

“That me being liberal was cute in college but stupid now?”

“I never said you were stupid,” he mutters.

“But you did. Is that how you think about me?”

Jake doesn’t answer. He scans the horizon and adjusts in his seat. She can feel his foot lift off the accelerator for just a tick—a tiny hitch in the Escort’s forward momentum.

"Answer me. Is that how you feel about me?" she said.

"I was just joking around," he says. "You're way too sensitive. I'm still with you, aren't I? Isn't that enough?"

She can see a buzzard circling in the distance, dipping in and down, angling toward the ground. She imagines what might be lying beneath the sun, dying or already dead. Tears press against her throat, and she can barely swallow.

"It's enough."



The first and only night of their first honeymoon, they slept on a beach bordering Lake Michigan. It probably wasn't legal, but the car died, and they had no money for a hotel. Olivia unrolled their sleeping bags side by side on the sand. They brushed their teeth at the water's edge, and then they stretched out on top of the bags. Olivia imagined each wave pulling sand from the beach and swirling it out and eventually laying it onto another beach far away—a beach they might walk on someday. The August wind blew over their bodies, cooling their sun-heated arms and faces. Jake lay on his back, his right arm thrown over his head, the other splayed out into the sand.

He lowered his right arm around her shoulders, and she moved her head against his chest. She could hear the steady beat of his heart. It almost matched the water's rhythm. She felt dizzy with her luck. She turned her mouth to his heart to stop herself from speaking out loud.

This love caught her off-guard. She'd always chosen men who weren't like skinny, redheaded Jake. He was different, and she loved him for that most of all. She stroked his chest and arm, hoping he hadn't fallen asleep. He turned his head, and she knew he was awake.



At the turnoff to Wounded Knee—unmarked like all significant places

seem to be here—a handmade pine bough and twig shelter covers a ramshackle booth. "Free brochures," the sign tells them, and they stop.

On the booth's bench a few tourist trinkets are spread out on a blanket. The yellow surface is pilled and stained, and the peace pipe, the beaded earrings, and the dream catcher look forlorn. A listless, thin boy with a potbellied stomach sits on the hood of a late-model sedan sitting behind the stand. A stringy-muscle man perches on a stool behind the booth. His hair hangs lankly down his back in a braid. Just behind him, a fleshy woman lounges on a fold-out lawn chair. She smokes slowly, occasionally flashing her broken and brown teeth when she tilts her head back to blow smoke. Her flabby arms are wrinkled and dried.

Jake takes his camera out and frames a shot.

"I'm going to take your pictures, OK?" he says to the man behind the counter. "Just pretend like I'm not here."

The woman speaks to her companion in a short burst of language that is incomprehensible to Olivia. They laugh and the boy jumps down from the car and turns a cartwheel in the dust and makes a war whoop. Jake lowers his camera and shakes his head in disgust. Embarrassment floods Olivia. She wants to apologize for Jake. She wants to explain how he can't bear to see their broken lives, but how he can't bear to leave without capturing it on film. She wants to tell them that this contradiction makes no sense to her either, that it's Jake, and that she's powerless to make it different; but she can't be so disloyal.

"How about a donation for your picture," the woman calls out.

Olivia can see his mental calculation.

"How much do you want?" he asks.

"How about 20 bucks?" the man says.

Jake fumbles with his wallet. Olivia can see he is embarrassed. She wishes she could soothe it away, but she is furious too. He hands the crisp \$20 bill over. The man shoves it into his pocket and glances at the woman. She shrugs.

"What'd you want us to do?"

"Just sit there and pretend I'm not here," Jake says. He puts the camera back up to his face and starts looking for an angle.

Olivia fingers the wares and asks the man what his name is.

"Herbert Looking Horse," he says, but she's not sure because the wind snatches the words away.

"You know about the dream catchers?" Herbert asks her. "You know how they work?"

"I'm not sure," she replies. Behind them, she can hear Jake fiddling with his camera. She wants this human connection to persist until he is finished.

"You hang it over your bed, and the bad dreams that might visit you are caught up in it. You have a lot of bad dreams?"

"Sometimes," she says. "Sometimes I just don't understand them."

"Well, you ought to have a dream catcher," Herbert says. "Or maybe you want a good feeling catcher. It's like a dream catcher but instead of capturing dreams, it catches all your good feelings and locks them up in your house."

He holds up an intricately wrapped sphere with red, green, and black ribbons hanging down from it. Bells jingle at the end of the ribbon, and a little price tag twists in the wind.

She nods slowly. Jake strides around the booth, framing a new angle.

"I'll take this one," Olivia says, holding up a wheel. It lays in her palm, pathetically small, really, for the time they've spent at this booth. It's guilt, she tells herself as she shuffles out the worn dollars onto the counter. Jake stands to the side, his mouth set in a disapproving line.

In the car, Jake says, "I can't believe you bought something there. Didn't you hear what Ivan said last night?"

She sets her head back against the headrest. She thinks about the \$20 bill he handed over. She means to speak about it, but when she opens her mouth, she says something different.

"I thought it was ironic," she replies. "He wanted to sell us good feelings. Isn't that ironic?"

And she's certain that this will break the mood and that he'll set his anger aside and be happy Jake, but he says, "Not really."



When they finally arrive at Wounded Knee, Olivia marvels at how unromantic this place is: It is stark and run-down. It is a place where a massacre has happened, she realizes, and she thinks this might be what tourists will find in Sarajevo someday—if the fighting ever stops, if the siege ever ends.

A few tourists stand at the four ramshackle booths that line the edges of the road. There is no parking lot, which causes Jake some anxiety. No water fountains. No bathrooms. Some years later, enough money will be raised to erect a visitor's center. The center's round interior will be dark and the floor unswept, and a woman rounded by years of eating frybread and drinking soda out of a liter bottle will mind a baby who suffers in the heat. But now, there is a road, rutted from the last rain—now dried up, the dirt turned to a powder so fine that it coats everything, leaves a fine sheen on glasses and skin.

The heat is stifling, and the late afternoon sun burns everything it touches. Olivia's cheeks feel like onion skins—papery thin and crumbling. Even the ever-blowing, landscape-changing wind cannot drive away the tongues of dry heat that constantly slither around them.

Jake reads from the book as they walk up the hill to the cemetery: "On Dec. 29, 1890, United States soldiers opened fire on a band of Indian women, children, and men who were camping outside of the Army's fort. Four hundred people were killed. It is suspected that the soldiers had been drinking. Today, Wounded Knee functions as a cemetery since the soldiers dug a burial pit near where the slain fell. The dead were buried just outside the fort. The current monument was put into place by relatives of those killed in the massacre."

Olivia's sandals catch and drag in the fine, dry dust. She stumbles on the

rutted path. The grass along the edges is tall, and she fears stepping on an errant snake. At the tatter-crumble remains of a fort gate, she sits on the stone steps leading up to the burial site. Her foot has blistered on the heel, and she examines it minutely. Jake is in the cemetery, taking pictures.

She realizes that this place is silent except for the wind whispering the grasses and stirring up the dust. A few cicadas drone in the background, and an occasional car roars past. It is a place for the dead.

Jake steps near her. She turns her head and can see just his feet with white socks poking up out of dayhike boots and an impossibly long stretch of legs above the socks. He stands quietly for a moment, but she doesn't lift her head higher to capture his expression.

"What are you doing? Why are you sitting out here?" he asks, and she can just catch the edge of frantic in his tone.

"I'm just resting for a minute," Olivia replies. "I've got a blister."

"Come on. You've got to see this," he says, and she knows he is happy again, that this experience matches his expect-



tations. He catches her arm under the elbow and drags her up and over the threshold of the cemetery.

A modern chain-link dog fence surrounds the site, and inside a lone monument—Victorian in design and weathered to a grainy gray marble—sits silent and still. The grass in front of the marker is the actual grave. Olivia walks over to stand in front of it. Jake walks across it to take her picture.

"Smile, Livvie," he commands. "You look so serious. Our friends will think we spent our second honeymoon arguing."

She holds her hat onto her head, squinting into the sun, and adds a smile to her face. It feels more like a grimace, but Jake appears satisfied.

"Doesn't it remind you of the Vietnam Vets memorial?" she asks. "Look at the offerings left here. It's like reminders that these people can't be forgotten."

But it's like he hasn't heard her. He snaps a few more photos and turns back to her.

"I'm putting my offering down now," he says.

Jake kneels, placing his sage bundle and tobacco on the marker. She stands back. He stays in that position for a long time. She can see the edges of the bones on his narrow shoulders rippling up through the golden skin, stretching it thin. The marker stands indifferent and cluttered with tobacco pouches, rocks, a drawing, sage bundles and brightly colored ribbons that flutter merrily in the wind.

When he stands and steps away, Olivia adds two rocks—crystal geodes from the Black Hills—to his pile. She turns to Jake. He stares down at the marker.

"We shouldn't forget Lost Bird," Olivia tells him, and she knows he probably thinks she's crazy for mentioning it, but she can't stop thinking about Lost Bird. "She survived, you know. She was a baby. Her mother's dead body kept her alive for one more day."

Jake uses his last picture on Lost Bird's grave with Olivia crouching

down, a snake of her pale hair falling over one shoulder. Her eyes are hidden, shaded by the brim of the straw hat.

She stands up and walks over to Jake, putting her arms around his waist and laying her head against his heart. Above them, the clouds race overhead in the dry South Dakotan heat. She feels dizzy when she looks up at them.

She pulls back, puts her hands on his waist to steady herself, and looks into his face. Behind her, the wind rattles the dog fence. He fumbles with the camera, protecting it from her affection, and he smiles. The skin around his eyes crinkles and folds, and she knows she is seeing his 60-year-old face, and she realizes she'll never see that face in person. \*

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# The Drama of Work

BY JOHN LEHMAN

WHEN I ASK PEOPLE HOW THEIR WORK MIGHT BE like a movie or TV drama, I'm uniformly met with the heated reply: "I don't like your question and I'm not going to answer it." Perhaps they don't like the comparison between the repetitive routine of their lives and watching attractive actors playing lawyers, doctors, and police detectives whose professions seem to have a built-in excitement

we may not experience as administrative assistants or when teaching middle school students (though shows like "The Office" may be changing that). No, I think it's something deeper than this. Drama and life both have casts of characters, conflict, complication, setting, dramatic tension, and even occasional show-stopping climaxes. Why do people feel strongly about *not* examining an area of their lives that consumes most of their time and energy?

As a writer I've often wondered that so few books address the significance of work in our lives. The last one I read was Studs Terkel's *Working*, and before that, Henry David Thoreau's *Walden*, in which he says, "In short, I am convinced, both by faith and experience, that to maintain one's self on this earth is not a hardship but a pastime, if we will live simply and wisely ... It is not necessary that a man should earn his living by the sweat of his brow, unless he sweats easier than I do."

At work we are active participants, but what bothers us most is that someone else is writing the script. There's no safety valve. We're never certain that someone better couldn't easily be cast in our role.

Is it that today we don't seem to have any choice? Not only has the 35-hour workweek disappeared, but now each member of a married couple must work 40-plus hours per week to afford the housing, car, education for their kids, and so on, that our parents somehow achieved on one income. A recent survey of Madison-area executives reveals men work an average of 60 hours per week, women 57.

Let me answer the question about work and drama myself, because I think at its heart lies our dissatisfaction with work (and the reason for "lives of quiet desperation" Thoreau accuses us of living). I also believe there's something we can do to change this right here, right now.

For many of my generation, our parents provided the model for business success that we either subscribed to or rebelled against. I know that's why I dedicated my recent business book, *Everything Is Changing*—a zentreprenurial approach to sales and marketing—to my father. Let me ask you to stop for a minute and think about four things from your own life: 1) Who is your model for business success and why is what that person represents important to you? 2) Now identify your model for personal nonbusiness success. 3) Try to reconcile the two. What qualities do they share, how are they different? And finally, 4) What would be some tangible benefits of having a unified model for business/personal success?

Often we look for things in life that mirror how we already feel, and by changing our attitude we start to find reflections that support a new attitude. Change takes place not by trying to make yourself change, but by becoming conscious of what's not working. You can then release yourself from an old

pattern and assume one that does work to accomplish what you want. This much I know: If you're critical of yourself, others will be critical of you. If you don't listen to your feelings, no one will listen to your feelings. If you show yourself compassion and understanding, others will treat you with compassion and understanding, too. If you appreciate yourself, others will appreciate you. And if you enjoy your life, you'll



find there is always plenty in life to enjoy.

With an artistic drama we empathize with one or more of its characters, but there's also a distance between us and their situation—a safety valve that allows us to express a range of emotions, but also to say, "It's only a movie," "It's only a play," "It's only a novel." Work is based upon problem solving, how to eliminate conflict and get the job done. Episodic is fine for work. We'll settle for day-by-day operational routine. But it's the challenging that results in life-changing revelation. Drama exaggerates conflict, pushes situations to their extreme and leads us to a turning point.

At work we *are* active participants, but what bothers us most is that someone else is writing the script. There's no safety valve. We're never certain that someone better couldn't easily be cast in our role. I remember as a child sitting around the dinner table how my father would recount his workday to us. He was a natural storyteller, so I was enthralled by his adventures. My mother, on the other hand, who depended upon his salary for our family's security, was uneasy. In reality she had a better head for business than Dad—though at the time a woman was expected to be home with her children—and her responses took the form of sound business advice. It was lost upon him. My father's way of coping was to turn the raw material of the day's experiences into audience-pleasing anecdotes. Years later, as a business owner, I was to see things from yet another perspective.

The two best pieces of business advice I ever received were from rather unlikely sources. The first came on the roof of an Ann Arbor motel where I was working my way through graduate school as a janitor. An air conditioning repairman told me he believed we should each maintain both a vocation and an avocation: for example, paying the bills by working in a rundown motel during the day and writing the great American novel late at night and on weekends. At one time we make our living with the vocation, at another we may do it through the avocation (but hang on to the skills from the day job so you never feel desperate or threatened). Be happy with both, but don't be so fully invested in one that you entirely sacrifice the other. Six years ago *BusinessFirst* ran a profile on me with the headline "He Only Does What He Loves." The Carrier Air Conditioner mechanic would have approved.

The second piece of advice was from an army lieutenant in New Jersey, George Rabito. He'd been aide to the general of the Hospital Command in Germany. George could be overbearing and had sometimes used the authority of his position for personal advantage. Right before General Ursin was to rotate

back to San Antonio, Lt. Rabito, who'd decided to remain in Europe, maneuvered his way into a new position where the people he had offended couldn't retaliate against him. I was amazed at his foresight and told him so. He advised me, "Everyone should be fired early in his career. Then they'd always keep their eyes and ears open because they'd realize that, no matter who you work for, you're always working for yourself."

We seek drama, but in the workplace we resent not being the one who writes the script. But why not write the script? If you're only going to do what you love, learn to love at least two different things you can do concurrently. If you see yourself as VP of sales and you lose that position, you have nothing. Or if you think you are a classical musician and you are not employed as one, it's nice to take pride in that vice president job you do have. Equally important, if it is critical for a business to have a mission statement, shouldn't you have one of your own for your vocation and avocation too? Set a timeline and list the necessary resources to accomplish these personal (measurable and attainable) objectives. Give yourself an annual evaluation to see how much progress you're making in accomplishing the kind of success *you* want to achieve.

Is this unfair to the company you work for? No, not at all.

When someone is cast in a play or a movie it's because they're right for the part. As an advertising agency owner I hired people for the same reason. And whatever made them the best they could be was good for me and for our business. Sure, I liked to flatter myself into thinking my leadership was essential, but the biggest mistake we business owners make, besides hiring the wrong people for the wrong reasons, is in demotivating the right people we've hired for the right ones. After 10 years my ad business failed, but in my mind and in the eyes of my employees it will always be a success because of our mutual collaboration. And each of us went on from that experience to literally

The biggest mistake we business owners make, besides hiring the wrong people for the wrong reasons, is in demotivating the right people we've hired for the right ones.

work for ourselves and overcome obstacles in the new dramas we created.

Realize that employers, coworkers, customers, family, and friends want to see us succeed because they have aspirations, too, that they want us to recognize and support. We all want life to work! When we seek to understand,



we're applying empathy. We are, for a brief time, becoming that other person so we can experience his or her feelings as that individual does. This doesn't mean we agree with that person, only that we understand their point of view more fully. Once we understand someone we can proceed to the next step, which is having that person understand us. When we seek to understand, other people become less defensive about their positions, and they open up to the question "How can we both get what we want?" But the key is always to listen with a generous heart.

And how can we change our lives so that work has drama and meaning? In *Everything Is Changing* I identify two ways in which change takes place. The first is by translating the vision we have into tangible benefits we'll enjoy if the vision is realized. And the second is by employing what the Japanese call *kaizen*, "a tiny refinement made daily that creates compounding results, or constant improvement at a level beyond what was envisioned." The easiest way to do this in terms of work is simply to answer three questions about your day before going to sleep each night:

What did I learn of value?

How did I improve my life in some small way?

What did I enjoy most about today?

Try this for a week and see if you don't experience a subtle, positive shift in what you gain from your job.

In life we do experience frustration and disillusionment, and it's not realistic to think we aren't going to feel bad when those things happen. But we're more than our emotions. Feelings are just something we have. We should give them voice, hear them out, then let them move on. They're like our children. We made them. Sometimes they give us joy, sometimes they cause us frustration. We can't ignore them, but like parents, we can set boundaries—within which these emotions act—to preserve our own mental health. Ignoring feelings gives them power, as does obsessing over them. Experiencing emotions provides us with a chance not only to be human, but also to be purged of these intense feelings. It also acknowledges that conflicting emotions are part of our internal makeup and questions the idealized model of an untroubled self that our culture proffers as a goal—a paradigm that leads to the

If we're so complete, why do we feel unsure of ourselves? I believe the simple answer is that too often we accept an idealized image of ourselves that benefits others.

erroneous conclusion, "We aren't good enough."

If we're so complete, why do we feel unsure of ourselves? I believe the simple answer is that too often we accept an idealized image of ourselves that benefits others—whether they're selling fashions, automobiles, corporate culture, or religious values—rather than see ourselves as we really are. This air-brushed image is molded by TV, movies, magazines, employers, schools, government, churches, and even parents, family, and friends. It may be harmless or, in some cases, even beneficial to us as individuals. But when it erodes our sense of self-worth, we need to examine its truthfulness.

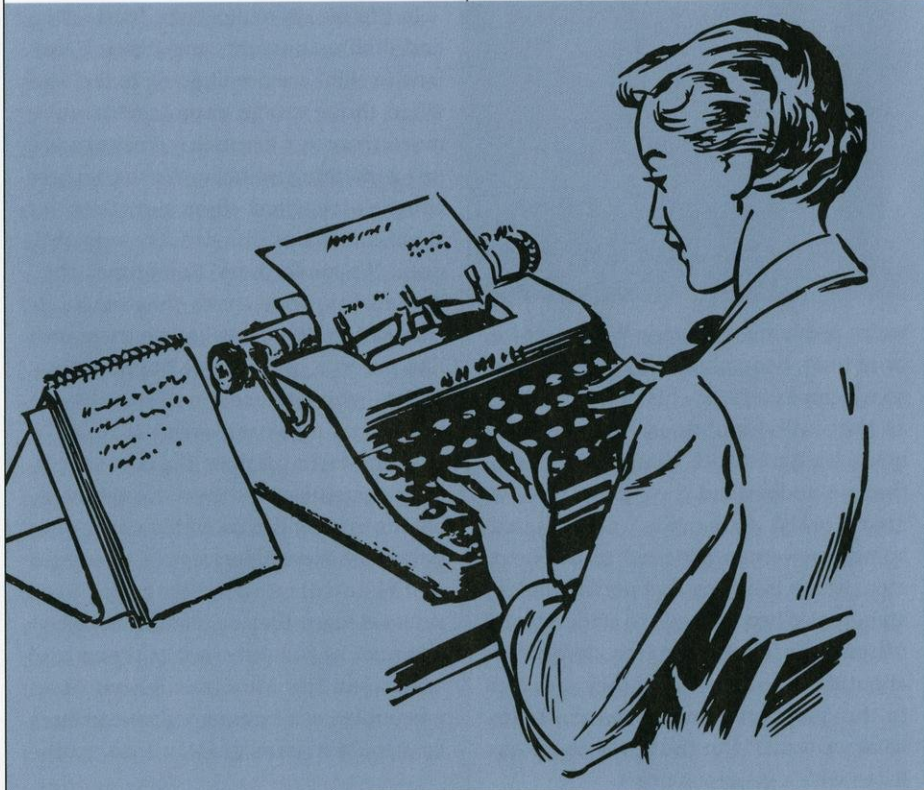
In her book *Your Life as Story*, Tristine Rainer says, "When I view myself as the hero of my own story, I no longer

complain about the conflicts in my life and in myself. I am no longer a victim of circumstances ... I am a protagonist in a world of unending dilemmas that contain hidden meaning that is up to me to discover. I am the artist of my life who takes the raw materials given, no matter how bizarre, painful or disappointing and gives them shape and meaning." She continues, "I am within each scene and each chapter of my life, defining my character through the choices I make. I am on my own side, rooting for myself, aching for myself, celebrating my sensual experiences, marveling in the exquisite subtlety of feeling in my life that novelists have made me aware of in their books. I am as engaged with the ongoing story in my life as is a reader who eagerly turns the page."

If you were to write a book about yourself, how would it begin? "Someday I'm going to..." or "Today I..."? To live your story means having something to say about yourself *right now*.

Each of us is the hero of our own story. Let's act like it. \*

*John Lehman is the coauthor of **Everything Is Changing: How to Gain Loyal Clients and Customers Quickly** from Zelda Wilde Publishing. He is also the founder of **Rosebud** magazine, one of the largest literary journals in the United States, and the poetry editor of **Wisconsin People & Ideas**. His advertising agency in Madison was Lehman Advertising and Marketing. Lehman now makes his living as a writer, publisher, business consultant, and public speaker.*



# Meet The Fellows

The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters is pleased to announce its 2006 selection of Wisconsin Academy Fellows, a formal recognition conferred upon men and women of extraordinary lifetime accomplishment in their fields. We present a brief introduction here—and look forward to meeting and learning from them in our various programs in the coming years.



## HANS SOLLINGER

Why does Madison have the second largest organ transplantation program in the world? Last year alone, its surgeons transplanted 617 organs into 512 patients.

Look no further than Dr. Hans Sollinger, a professor of surgery and chair of the Division of Transplantation at the University of Wisconsin School of Medicine and Public Health. For the past 11 years he has led the UW's Organ Transplantation program. Sollinger is internationally recognized as one of the world's leading transplant surgeons. His research focuses on testing new immunosuppressive agents and gene therapy for cell transplantation. Sollinger's greatest achievement is the development of mycophenolate mofetil, an immunosuppressive drug approved in 1995 that today benefits more than 300,000 patients. Thanks to a surgical technique that Sollinger pioneered, the survival of kidney-pancreas recipients around the world has more than doubled. Born and raised in Munich, Germany, Sollinger joined UW Hospital and Clinics in 1976. An avid bicyclist and skier, Sollinger was a member of the German ski team in the 1964 Olympics in Innsbruck, Austria.



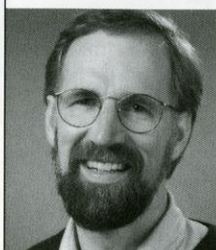
## MOLLY CARNES

It's a widely recognized and long-standing tragedy that certain groups have been underrepresented when it comes to the research and treatment of diseases. Molly Carnes, a physician and professor at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, has addressed this injustice at its roots by studying and implementing programs

to increase the participation and advancement of women and underrepresented minorities in academic medicine, science, and engineering. She has pioneered programs in geriatrics, women's health research, women in science and engineering, underrepresented minority workforce development in science and engineering, and clinical research career development.

Carnes receives \$3 million annually in federal grants to support these efforts, to great effect. When Chancellor John Wiley published a status update on the university this past year, two programs developed by Carnes were cited as model programs promoting positive institutional transformation. She directs the Center for Women's Health Research, the Women Veterans Health Program, and other career development programs. She cofounded the Women in Science and

Engineering Leadership Institute and the Wisconsin Alliance for Minority Participation.



## WILLIAM CRONON

William Cronon's research seeks to understand the history of human interactions with the natural world: how we depend on the ecosystems around us to sustain our material lives, how we modify the landscapes in which we live and work, and how our ideas of nature shape our relationships with the world around us. As UW-Madison's Frederick Jackson

Turner and Vilas Research professor of history, geography, and environmental studies, Cronon is an outstanding scholar and teacher. He is also a visionary leader who synthesizes knowledge from diverse disciplines to shape the ways university, state, and national governing boards carry out their work. His books and articles have won numerous awards and include *Uncommon Ground: Toward Reinventing Nature*, and *Under an Open Sky: Rethinking America's Western Past*. Cronon founded the university's Chadbourne Residential College, where students engage in learning, service, and leadership opportunities that complement their formal course work. For the past 10 years he has been an enlightening guide and lecturer for the Wisconsin Idea Seminar, a weeklong bus tour that immerses new faculty and staff in the historical, cultural, social, and environmental realities of our state.

## EMILY AUERBACH

University of Wisconsin-Madison English professor Emily Auerbach epitomizes the Wisconsin Idea of bringing higher education and cultural enrichment to all the people of the state.

"Professor Auerbach doesn't just study the humanities, she lives them, and encourages others to do so as well," says Michael Bernard-Donals, chair of the

UW-Madison department of English.

For more than 20 years she has brought the joy of literature to retirement centers, prisons, Elderhostels, libraries, schools, and service clubs. Through the UW Odyssey Project, she brings a free humanities course to adults at or near the federal poverty level, thus enriching and even transforming their lives. Her "Courage to Write" radio documentaries on women

writers and weekly "University of the Air" programs on Wisconsin Public Radio bring higher education to people all over the state and beyond. Devotees of the novelist Jane Austen know that Auerbach is one of her best representatives on earth. Most recent evidence: *Searching for Jane Austen*, her book recently published by UW Press.

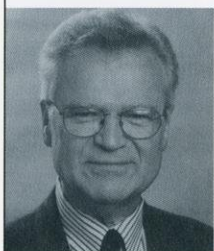
Learn more about the Odyssey Project from a successful alumna beginning on page 46.



## JOHN DEMAIN

Since coming to Madison in 1994 as music director of the Madison Symphony Orchestra and artistic director of Madison Opera, John DeMain has had an unparalleled influence upon the musical life of the region. DeMain's world-class talents have transformed the Madison Symphony Orchestra and Madison Opera into stunning musical powerhouses that rank with the finest regional ensembles in the country. His achievements have helped bring some of the best guest artists in the world to conduct and play with the orchestra and opera. DeMain is also not afraid to break new ground. He has worked an unusual amount of modern music into the schedule and has supervised the composition and performance of a number of major new musical works.

DeMain's many honors include a Grammy Award—Best Opera Recording in 1978 for *Porgy and Bess* and Best Musical Direction Award from the L.A. Drama Critics for conducting *A Little Night Music*. Upon his 10th anniversary with the Madison Symphony Orchestra in 2003, Governor Jim Doyle proclaimed him "Madison's Maestro." The title is most appropriate, given his dedication to outreach. In 2002, DeMain started Madison Opera's free outdoor "Opera in the Park" performances, which provide a wonderful opportunity for those who fear opera to experience it in a friendly setting.



## WALTER SAVA

How can we take our hardest-hit urban neighborhoods and transform them into safer communities bolstered by an array of social services, quality schools, care for the elderly, and a vibrant arts program?

Ask Walter Sava, an educator and arts administrator who has done just that for Milwaukee's largest Latino community.

Under his leadership, the United Community Center (Centro de la Comunidad Unida) grew into a model of full-range community service that other cities around the nation would do well to emulate. The UCC is home to a high-performing elementary and middle school, an elder day care center and residential home, a live-in drug and alcohol treatment center, and a homeownership initiative program that has nearly doubled homeownership in the neighborhood.

In 2003, Sava moved from heading the UCC to leading Latino Arts, Inc. under the UCC umbrella. Latino Arts encompasses dramatic, musical, and visual arts and includes a performance auditorium, gallery, and enrichment programs for adults and children. Under his leadership, Latino Arts has grown into Milwaukee's 17th largest arts organization.

Read more about Sava starting on page 33.



## PETER SHEEHAN

At home atop the Silurian bedrock of Milwaukee, Peter Sheehan is curator of geology at the Milwaukee Public Museum and a professor of geosciences at the University of Wisconsin—Milwaukee. The Silurian Period is the focus of his lifelong interest in geology. Sheehan is also an educator, lecturer, and great "popularizer" of geology as well as the topics of extinction and evolution.

Since 1977 Sheehan has shaped exhibits and programs that have put the Milwaukee Public Museum at the national forefront. His projects include development of the Third Planet exhibit, a chronological walk through Earth's history. He engages diverse groups of visitors in the intricacies of geological science in fun and innovative ways. For example, in an NSF-funded after-school program for at-risk middle school girls, he presents them with a geological layer cake complete with folds, faults, and other features. The girls sample the cakes using clear plastic tubes and interpret geological features from these "well logs" (which serve as snacks).

Sheehan is best known in the media for his groundbreaking work supporting the meteor impact theory for the extinction of dinosaurs. He has contributed to *Nature*, *Science*, and other leading scientific publications.

## Celebration Honoring Fellows Features Lee Ernst



Come hear the Fellows speak and enjoy a presentation by noted Milwaukee Rep actor Lee Ernst on Sunday, October 22 from 2:30-5 pm at the Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center in Madison.

Ernst will talk about his life as an actor in "Hiraeth," a Welsh word meaning "a longing for home"—his home state of Wisconsin, his family home, and his professional home.

The ceremony marks the formal induction of new Fellows and also offers formal thanks to members of the Minerva Society, the Wisconsin Academy's most generous donors.

Admission is \$35 (\$30 for Wisconsin Academy members; everybody is welcome to join). For reservations, please contact Gail Kohl of the Wisconsin Academy at 608/263-1692 ext. 14, [gkohl@wisconsinacademy.org](mailto:gkohl@wisconsinacademy.org).

The Fellows event is sponsored by



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## Toward an even brighter future

BY MICHAEL STRIGEL



I'M NOT SURE THERE is anything magical or special about the number three. For some it's a lucky number. In mathematics it is one of the critical prime numbers. For the Wisconsin Academy right now it serves as a good planning horizon. In the months ahead, the staff and board are devoting much thought to how we want to see the

organization grow in the next three years. We of course ask for input from you, our members, as well. And as any historian will tell you, learning from the past is essential in determining where you're going and what you must do to get there. So, please allow me a moment of reflection on our last three years of connecting people and ideas across all boundaries for a better Wisconsin.

In 2003, we completed "Waters of Wisconsin," the first initiative of our Wisconsin Idea at the Wisconsin Academy program. The Wisconsin Idea program combines the Wisconsin Academy's connecting power across disciplines and our provision of a neutral ground to explore and offer solutions to urgent problems facing our state. Waters of Wisconsin generated great momentum and enduring results. Among many accomplishments was the passage in 2003 of the first ground-water quantity legislation of its kind—legislation that the chief executive of American Rivers called "nationally seminal." We published the Waters of Wisconsin Report, essentially a white paper for sustainable water use and management, as well as an edition of *Transactions* devoted to water. We produced material leading to the creation of the state's first water policy database and to improvements in water education in K-12 curricula.

Our current Wisconsin Idea program focuses on an equally crucial topic: "The Future of Farming and Rural Life in Wisconsin." Public forums in Menomonie, Oconomowoc, Ashland, the Fox Cities, Platteville, Wausau, and Madison are drawing hundreds of people from all areas of knowledge and all walks of life—farmers, economists, entrepreneurs, researchers, and public agencies and nonprofits of an amazing range. The initiative seeks to identify the challenges, opportunities, and actions that will shape the future of this critical sector and use the best knowledge available to offer recommendations for improvement.

In 2004, we opened the James Watrous Gallery of the Wisconsin Academy in the Overture Center for the Arts in Madison, a stunning space for bringing together Wisconsin's artists and those who love art. We've reached out to galleries in greater Milwaukee and other parts of the state to show works in collaboration. And in maintaining our original gallery on Old University Avenue, we've forged a partnership with

Wisconsin Painters & Sculptors/Wisconsin Artists in All Media to provide an additional and much-needed exhibition space for artists from all over Wisconsin.

Also in 2004 we inaugurated Academy Evenings, our forum series that allows the public an opportunity to interact with Wisconsin's most innovative thinkers. Topics have ranged from the promises and challenges of stem cell research with pioneer James Thomson to Ellen Kort and her use of poetry as a tool for patients coping with illness. From their base in the Overture Center, Academy Evenings travel all over the state to connect these bright minds with curious and engaged members of the public.

And, finally, 2006 saw our award-winning quarterly magazine, the *Wisconsin Academy Review*, become *Wisconsin People & Ideas*. The change reflects our renewed dedication to reaching out while maintaining our commitment to excellence. *Wisconsin People & Ideas* continues to illuminate the stories of Wisconsin with depth and élan.

Given that these are only a few of countless other achievements among our four core programs, I feel comfortable saying that the last three years have been nothing short of momentous in the Wisconsin Academy's 136-year history.

As we look forward to our next three years, our primary goal is to build upon and grow these critical tools for connecting Wisconsinites to the things we all care about. We've launched a three-year campaign to provide the financial base needed to pursue that growth. The Bright Future Campaign was set up by key Wisconsin Academy donors who believe so strongly in our value that they are offering a dollar-for-dollar match up to \$100,000 each year through 2008.

This "double your money" campaign serves as a bridge to our growing endowment. As of 2009, the Wisconsin Academy will fund much of our core operations with endowment funds—an enviable position for any nonprofit. During the next few years, however, we rely on our members and donors to provide the funds needed to ensure the programming you've come to know in the past three years.

I respectfully ask that you consider becoming part of our Bright Future Campaign with a gift using the envelope enclosed in this magazine. Our independence is our strength in sharing these programs, and to retain that independence, we rely upon you to create the brightest future possible. Thank you very much for your generous support. \*

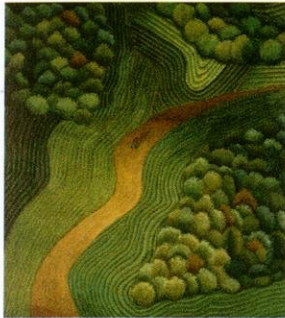
*Michael Strigel is executive director of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters. He welcomes your comments at [mstrigel@wisconsinacademy.org](mailto:mstrigel@wisconsinacademy.org), 608/263-1692 ext. 11.*

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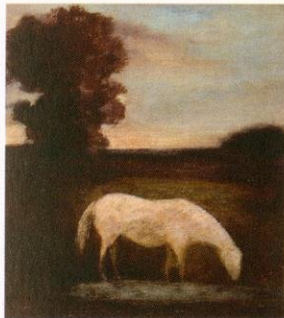
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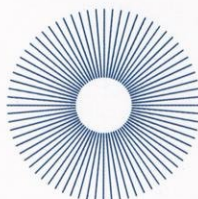


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JAMES WATROUS GALLERY

wisconsin academy of sciences, arts and letters



***Sam and the Perfect World***, by David Lenz (2005, oil on linen, 44 x 46 inches)  
Milwaukee artist David Lenz took top prize among 4,000 entries in a nationwide contest by the Smithsonian Institution's new National Portrait Gallery. Story on page 6.

Price: \$5

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