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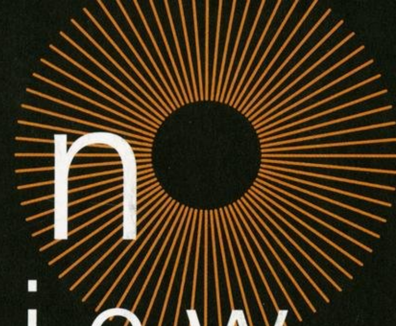

THE MAGAZINE OF WISCONSIN THOUGHT AND CULTURE

Working: A Photo-Essay About Ordinary Jobs and Extraordinary People, by Nancy Christy and Glenn Trudel

Soldiers Home Milwaukee: Saving a Timeless Sanctuary

Stories Abound by Agate Nesaule, Margaret Benbow, and Our First-Place Short Story Contest Winner

Live in a German Villa: Wisconsin Writer Wins Residency!

Six Wisconsin Citizens Who Enrich Our Lives

Price: $5

Nancy Christy builds a bridge between people with disabilities and our workplaces.

Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters Summer 2005 Volume 51, Number 3

SUPPORTING the sciences, arts & letters in our state

The Evjue Foundation was established by the late William T. Evjue, the founder and longtime editor and publisher of The Capital Times, Madison's afternoon newspaper. His will directed that the dividends from his controlling stock in the newspaper be distributed to the Foundation, which, in turn, would distribute the proceeds to deserving educational, cultural and civic organizations in the newspaper's circulation area.

For the past several years, the Foundation has been able to contribute more than $2 million annually to dozens of causes — including an annual grant to the University of Wisconsin of more than $750,000. Since its inception, the Foundation has distributed more than $31 million throughout Madison and Dane County, representing a substantial portion of the profits of the locally owned The Capital Times Co.

The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters has been the recipient of several Evjue grants over the years. They have helped support the Academy's much-heralded Aldo Leopold Conference, the Bill of Rights symposium, the ambitious Waters of Wisconsin project, and several other Academy programs through the years.

This year's grant of $7,500 will help make available extra copies of the Wisconsin Academy Review at the James Watrous Gallery's new home in Madison's Overture Center.

THE EVJUE FOUNDATION

— the charitable extension of The Capital Times
Madison's local newspaper

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summer 2005

Stop wasting human capital! Photo-essay on page 12.

The *Wisconsin Academy Review* (ISSN 0512-1175) 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 page 10 or refer to the contact information below.

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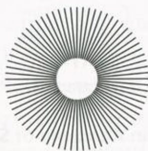

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If you've taken I-94 into Milwaukee, you've driven past this tower. Learn more about Soldiers Home starting on page 29.

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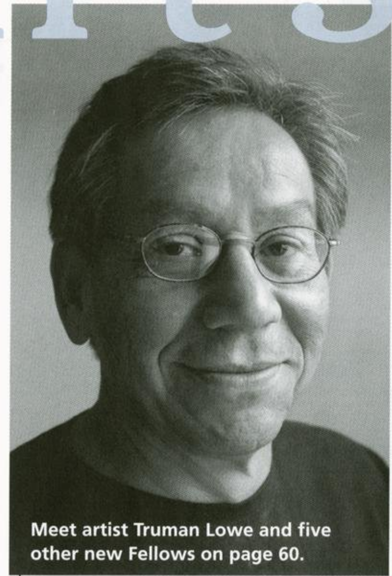

Meet artist Truman Lowe and five other new Fellows on page 60.

The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters connects people and ideas from all areas of knowledge and all walks of life to celebrate thought, culture, and nature in our state and explore how we can best address our problems.

Enrich your life by becoming a member! Learn more on page 10.

The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters was founded in 1870 as an independent, nonprofit membership organization separate from the state and the university. Our mission is "to encourage investigation, disseminate knowledge, and promote integrated application of sciences, arts, and letters to preserve and further develop Wisconsin's heritage of cultural and natural resources."

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Food for thought

The Wilson Street Grill in downtown Madison was a magical place. The reliably scrumptious food was imaginative and locally grown; the walls were adorned with beautiful art and served as a gallery, most notably in partnership with the UW's Tandem Press; and the atmosphere was urban and sophisticated without being pretentious. It was a warm and welcoming place, and nothing made it more so than the staff, one-third of whom were people with significant physical or mental disabilities; and the owners, Nancy Christy and Andrea Craig, whose passion about running a business according to their human values was inspiring. At the very least, it was something that made you feel good about eating there often.

After 14 years of success, the Wilson Street Grill closed in January 2002 to make way for a new county courthouse. Since then, Christy has continued to put her business expertise and values of inclusion to work as a consultant. In this edition we are pleased to catch up with her enterprise, Meaningful People, Places and Food, which eases the way for employers and employees with disabilities to work together for the greater success of all. Nothing speaks more for the value of this endeavor than the employees themselves, which is why Christy teamed with photographer Glenn Trudel to create a series of portraits of some of the many remarkable people she has encountered in her work.

A noteworthy point: this photo-essay is actually a reprisal of a project Christy and Trudel did for *Madison Magazine* in 1998, when I was associate editor there. Back then, the portraits were of Wilson Street Grill employees. We are pleased to give Christy a forum in the *Wisconsin Academy Review* in which to offer the public fresh perspectives on her work. (An interesting note about how things come full circle: Christy's husband, Neil Heinen, is now editor of *Madison Magazine*.) We hope you find the portraits and Christy's essay inspiring food for thought.

THIRD YEAR RUNNING

Allow us to jubilate, because nothing says it will last forever—but this is the third year in a row that the *Review* has won an award from the Milwaukee Press Club, this time second prize for best magazine writing. Once again the winning author is Michael Penn. His subject: UW psychologist Richard Davidson and his studies on the brain science of happiness. Endless thanks to Penn for his excellent writing, and to Davidson, a Wisconsin Academy Fellow, for conducting such fascinating and important work.

Quick segue: you can meet Davidson's newly ordained fellow Fellows on page 60. Luckily for all of us, they will pop up frequently in various Wisconsin Academy programs!

Happy summer reading,

Joan

Joan Fischer, editor
jfischer@wisconsinacademy.org

UP AND COMING

A glance at Wisconsin Academy events this summer. Visit www.wisconsinacademy.org or call us at 608/263-1692 for more information.

JAMES WATROUS GALLERY

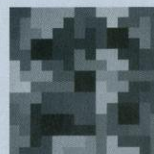
Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State St.
Tues/Wed/Thurs 11–5; Fri/Sat 11–9; Sun 1–5
Admission free of charge

Christine Holtz and Jamie Young
June 28–August 7
Opening reception Friday, July 1, 5–7 pm
Photographers Christine Holtz (Platteville) and Jamie Young (Madison) each use space and landscape as the subject matter for their artwork, but in a contrasting manner. Holtz's imagery of everyday environments creates conceptual landscapes that are stark and minimalist. Young's panoramic photos depict the lush Midwestern landscapes in vivid color with a painterly quality.

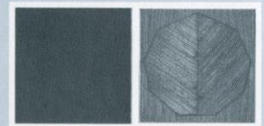
Lobby, Holtz

Japanese Garden, Young

Douglas Holst and Dorota Nelson
August 16–September 25
Opening reception Friday, August 19, 5–7 pm
Dorota Nelson and Douglas Holst, both of Milwaukee, work in the traditions of minimalism and abstraction, but with decidedly new twists. Nelson's pairs of textural acrylic paintings shown next to the collographic prints made fom the same paintings ask the viewer to examine what is real and what is simulated. Holst's large, brightly colored paintings are part cool abstraction and part Sputnik-era design fun.



4 Color Tetris Variation, Holst



Sudden Appearance 2, Nelson

PROMENADE HALL

Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State St.

Wisconsin Academy Fellows Induction Featuring Musical Presentation by Ben Sidran
Sunday, July 24, 2–5 pm
Admission $30 for Wisconsin Academy members, $35 for nonmembers. More information on page 61.

From Fond du Lac to Wiesbaden

It's a writer's dream come true. Imagine receiving a generous stipend and free lodging in an elegant villa in Germany for three months to write, reflect, and serve as a cultural ambassador for your state and country.

That dream will be Paula Sergi's life starting in August. The writer, poet, and registered nurse from Fond du Lac has been selected by the Hessen Literary Society (Literaturrat), a state cultural agency in Hessen, Germany, to spend August through October living and working in Villa Clementine, a 19th-century former home now used by the state as a residence for literary and cultural exchange. Sergi will receive a stipend of 1,000 Euros each month from the Hessen Literary Society, which is offering the residency free of charge.

The residency is part of efforts to build cultural ties between the German state of Hessen and its sister state, Wisconsin. In Wisconsin, the effort is being coordinated by Hessen-Wisconsin Writers, a group of poets and writers from Wisconsin and members of the German Writers Union's Hessen chapter.

Villa Clementine is located in Wiesbaden, the capital of Hessen. It is about 18 miles west of Frankfurt in central western Germany.

"I feel honored and well prepared for this adventure," says Sergi.

She comes to the adventure with a clear sense of mission. In her application, Sergi wrote: "I understand how writing reaches what is human in all of us, facilitates the impulse to share, and ultimately promotes the reality that we are all world citizens."

Besides writing—she plans to work on a book-length manuscript of poems—Sergi will participate in workshops, hold readings, visit schools, and work toward strengthening ties between Wisconsin's and Hessen's literary and cultural communities.

"In Germany I hope to trace how cultural institutions—the family unit, communities—are derived from historical experiences such as literature and education, and to observe how tones, gestures, and attitudes are reflective of the culture," says Sergi.

Sergi's husband will stay home in Fond du Lac with their 16-year-old son. Sergi is already looking forward to family visits. Her apartment in Villa Clementine can comfortably accommodate multiple guests, and writers in residence are welcome to bring their families for the entire stay.

Four finalists were selected by a Hessen-Wisconsin Writers Exchange steering committee of representatives from the following groups: the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters; the Wisconsin Arts Board; the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets; the Wisconsin Humanities Council; the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; the University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of German; and the Max Kade Institute at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. The final selection was made by the Hessen Literary Society.

The Hessen-Wisconsin Writers group is hoping to reciprocate by offering a residency in Wisconsin to a German writer next year—and hopes to send another Wisconsin writer to Germany in 2007. The best way to stay informed about the exchange is to sign up as a member of Hessen-Wisconsin Writers. Membership is free of charge. For more information, visit www.hesswiscwriter.org or www.paulasergi.com

It's humble, but it's home: Paula Sergi (right) will live in Villa Clementine for three months.

Upfront stories by Joan Fischer, unless otherwise noted

Short Story Contest 2005

Meet Our Winning Writers

This year's *Wisconsin Academy Review*/Harry W. Schwartz Bookshops Short Story Contest drew 148 contestants from all over the state.
We are pleased to present the winners.

FIRST PLACE
Autumn Arnold, Madison
"Epidemic"
Prizes: $500, publication in this issue of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*, review of story by literary agent Betsy Amster

Autumn Arnold was born in Alaska, attended high school in upstate New York, and earned a B.A. in women's studies and English in 1997 from Duke University. Prior to moving to Wisconsin, she lived in San Francisco, where she lobbied for improvements in the federal Food Stamp Program. She now lives in Madison with her partner, John Kelley, and works on ACCESS, an Internet-based outreach project, for the Wisconsin Department of Health and Family Services. Her short stories have appeared in the *South Dakota Review*, *Red Wheelbarrow*, and *North Dakota Quarterly*, with one forthcoming in *Passages North*.

SECOND PLACE
Jeff Esterholm, Verona
"Let's Ask the Wordsmith"
Prizes: $250, publication in the fall issue of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*

Jeff Esterholm's short stories have appeared in numerous publications, including *Acorn Whistle*, *Nerve Cowboy*, *Thema*, and *Planet Detroit*. Previously, his work has placed in *Wisconsin Academy Review* and *Madison Magazine* short story contests. In 2004, he was a finalist in the University of Missouri–Kansas City's *New Letters* literary awards competition. Jeff is a trainer on staff with the UW–Oshkosh Center for Career Development and Employability Training. He lives in Verona with his wife and two sons.

THIRD PLACE
Jane Sadusky, Madison
"The Winter Road"
Prizes: $100, publication in the winter issue of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*

Jane Sadusky is a writer and independent consultant on community response to violence against women. She received a Rowland Foundation Fellowship to the Vermont Studio Center in 2004. This is her first published short story.

We thank judges Rosemary Zurlo-Cuva, Dennis Trudell, Heather Lee Schroeder, and lead judge Larry Watson for their hard work and valuable contributions to this contest. We also wish to thank literary agent Betsy Amster for reading first-place winner Autumn Arnold's story and providing her with comment.

Particular thanks go to our sponsors. We are pleased to note an increase from seven to 12 independent bookstore sponsors this year!

SHORT STORY CONTEST 2005 SPONSORS

The *Wisconsin Academy Review*/Harry W. Schwartz Bookshops Short Story Contest 2005 was sponsored by the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, the Wisconsin Center for the Book, and the following independent bookstores:

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We thank our sponsors for their generous support of Wisconsin writers.

WRITERS *CON SALSA!*

Come hear the winners of our short story and poetry contests read as part of the Wisconsin Book Festival on Saturday, October 15, 4–5:30 p.m. at Frida Mexican Grill, 117 State Street in Madison. Our poetry contest winners are Sheryl Slocum, Kathleen Dale, and Richard Merelman.

GET READY FOR FALL

Margaret George, master of the really long story, will judge our next short story contest. Marilyn Taylor is lead judge for our poetry contest. Deadline for both contests is December 5. See contest guidelines at www.wisconsinacademy.org

Life in Letters

"To hell with the historians"

Timothy B. Tyson, his academic credentials solid, serves up his scholarship jargon-free.

by Heather Lee Schroeder

Timothy B. Tyson, a professor of Afro-American Studies at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, has built a reputation as a historian for the people. His memoir, *Blood Done Sign My Name: A True Story*, has won rave reviews and a large general readership, as did a previous book, *Radio Free Dixie: Robert F. Williams and the Roots of Black Power*. Earlier this year, *Blood Done Sign My Name* narrowly missed winning a National Book Critics Circle award in the general nonfiction category.

The book opens with the unforgettable words "Daddy and Roger and 'em shot 'em a nigger," and charts the turbulent history of Oxford, North Carolina, a small town that was ripped apart by the 1970 murder of a young black man. Tyson explores the events through the lens of his own experience as a 10-year-old.

Tyson is a plainspoken man who retains his Southern accent even after years of living in Madison. He spoke to me by cell phone from North Carolina, where he spent the 2004–05 academic year doing research and writing at the National Humanities Center.

Tyson was remarkably unfazed by the Critics Circle nomination, perhaps because he is hard at work on a history of the African-American freedom movement in the 20th century. He's also working on his first novel, called *Fallen Angels Fly*. The novel intersects an attempted lynching of a black man in 1947 with the life of Tyson's grandfather.

LIFE IN LETTERS: Tell me a little about how you navigate the waters of academic writing and popular history.

Tyson: Honestly, I never did understand why scholars don't understand that the purpose of language is to communicate with one another. It's hard enough without putting obscure jargon in between us.

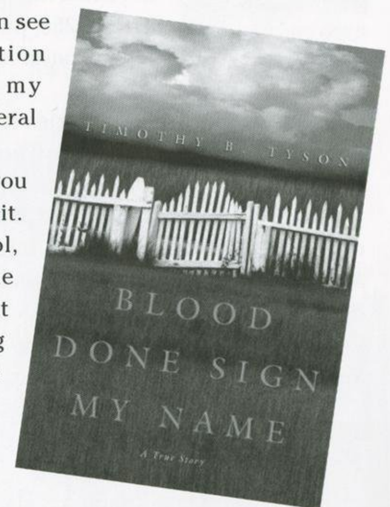
I played a game in graduate school in my first year. I kept writing these essays for my introductory research seminar, and they kept getting pretty bad grades even though I thought they were pretty nice little essays. Nothing great, but I thought they were well crafted. We were drinking beer one night, and we made a list of academic buzzwords about 20 long. If I could put 10 of these into my next three-page paper, then I would get a beer for every one above that. I ended up putting in about 18 of them because I needed about eight beers. My grades went up, and all I had done was put in a lot of gobbledygook that was absolutely indecipherable. But if you use big fancy words, they think it's intellectual somehow.

LL: That's depressing!

Tyson: It is. It was alarming, actually, that I wrote a markedly poorer essay. I took a good essay and put a lot of crap into it that nobody could read, and that pleased the professor.

But I love doing research. When I was writing *Radio Free Dixie*, I said, "To hell with the historians." I tried to write a narrative people could read. It turned out that I won a bunch of academic prizes for it.

I just don't care anymore what 20 or 30 academic specialists at a convention think about my work. I'm not writing just for them. I'm happy to write for them, and I am actually engaged in a scholarly conversation, and most of my historical colleagues, or many of them anyway, know that. They can see the scholarly conversation between the lines. But my primary audience is a general reader.



I write for my father, if you want to get right down to it. When I was in grad school, my father read some of the books I read, and he wasn't going to read something that was painful to read. If it was serious and had something to say and was well crafted, he would read it.

LL: Memoir is tough territory. How did you navigate it when writing *Blood*?

Tyson: It's slippery stuff. I used my memory in the same way I use other historical sources. You have to be skeptical of

everything when you're a historian. You have to sift through the facts and assertion of facts and evidence of facts. What I've done with my own memories is to cross-check them against newspapers, FBI files, other interviews that I've done, the city directory, maps, and I've tried to do my best to approximate some kind of little "t" truth.

LL: *Blood* has been described as a reconciliation with your Southern roots, but I read it as more of a wake-up call to Americans, that you were saying we have a lot to face up to.

Tyson: You're absolutely right. What we've done in the years since the collapse of the civil rights movement is try to create a narrative that we can live with because what actually happened was something different than what we wished had happened. Most of what Dr. King and his allies marched for didn't happen. And we never did figure out anything about the economic chasm that we're dealing with. So today, we've got 45 percent of African American children born in poverty in a de-industrialized wasteland. We've got more young black men in prison than in college, which has been the case for two decades now.

LL: Why did you decide to write a novel?

Tyson: When I wrote *Blood Done Sign My Name*, I really played by historians' rules. And that was fine, and they were a comfort to me, actually, because the memoir part of it was the hard part for me. But by the end of it, I had become so taken with narrative that the historians' rules had begun to seem like kind of a fetish.

Blood Done Sign My Name takes place in three different towns, and it would be a better narrative if I had just merged them, for example. It wouldn't make any difference. It wouldn't be any less true in an important sense, but I'm just a geek, and I was trained as a historian, and I stick with just the facts, ma'am.

Heather Lee Schroeder, a longtime books columnist for ***The Capital Times*** *in Madison, is an MFA student in creative writing at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. Her new* ***Wisconsin Academy Review*** *column, "Life in Letters," will over the next five editions take a look at some of our state's writers.*

Honoring the Book Arts

An exhibition this fall at the University of Wisconsin–Stevens Point celebrates the great fine press and book artists of Wisconsin. It is being hosted by the Wisconsin Center for the Book, a program of the Wisconsin Academy dedicated to promoting the book and book arts, encouraging the joy of reading, and honoring Wisconsin's literary heritage.

The exhibition, to be held October 23–November 23 at the university's Noel Fine Arts Center (Edna Carlsten Gallery), includes such notable artists as Danny Pierce, a professor emeritus from UW–Milwaukee; Walter Hamady, a professor emeritus from UW–Madison (who also will be holding a major exhibition at the James Watrous Gallery in the Overture Center in Madison starting in October); Stephanie Copoulos-Selle; Dennis Bayuzick; Lane Hall; Brian Borchardt; Jeffrey Morin; and Edwin Jager. The public is invited to an opening reception on Sunday, October 23, from 2 to 4 p.m.

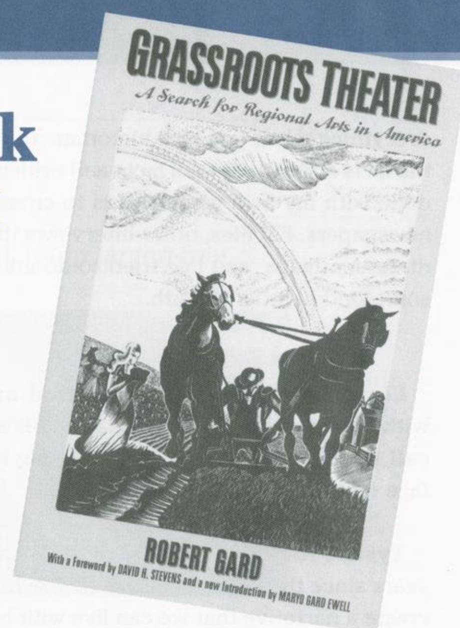
***Rooster*, part of "Martyr Mercury Rooster," a letterpress portfolio from the Sailor Boy and Arcadian Presses. *Rooster* is by Jeffrey Morin of Sailor Boy Press.**

A concurrent exhibition of Student Book Arts takes place October 30 through November 9th at the Schneider Student Gallery. The exhibition features works by students from UW–Stevens Point, UW–Parkside, and the University of North Carolina at Greensboro.

Both exhibitions are being coordinated by Caren Heft, director of the Edna Carlsten Gallery. For more information about the artists or exhibits, contact Heft at 715/346-4797 or e-mail: cheft@uwsp.edu

by Caren Heft

50th Anniversary of a Book That Started a Movement



UP FRONT, I will say that I come to my passion for community arts genetically, as well as via the head and heart. My father was Robert E. Gard, who was president of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters during the 1980s. Those of us in rural arts development know his *Arts in the Small Community* as the first "how-to" manual for creating arts councils in small places. (This grew from the first-ever rural arts grant awarded by the National Endowment for the Arts in 1967.) Thousands of copies were distributed, and I keep hearing that nothing more practical or inspirational has since been written. Though it's out of print, it is downloadable, with supplements, at www.wisconsinacademy.org/gard.

But Gard's passion for rural arts did not begin in 1967. As a farm boy in Kansas, he knew and loved the land, saw the "culture" in "agriculture." In graduate school, he found Alexander Drummond, a theater professor at Cornell who was committed to helping members of farm families write plays about their lives, about their communities.

Gard took this idea to Wisconsin, where his Wisconsin Idea Theater was committed to helping every Wisconsinite write poems, plays, and stories. Indeed, the creed of the Wisconsin Rural (now Regional) Writers Association, which he founded in 1950, included:

> Let us believe in each other, remembering each has tasted bitter with sweet, sorrow with gladness, toil with rest. Let us believe in ourselves and our talents. Let us believe in the worth of the individual ... for from sympathy and understanding will our writing grow ... Let us believe that the mark of the cultured man is the ability to express himself... and that the democratic process of government is safest in the hands of a cultured, enlightened people.

Self-expression, democracy: part of the same thing.

Gard wrote a book in 1955 called *Grassroots Theater: A Search for Regional Arts in America*. After years of trying to be an arts developer in my own right, I finally read my dad's *Grassroots Theater* about 15 years ago and was stunned. It is de facto the touchstone book of the community arts movement.

Gard firmly believed that introspection is essential for the arts developer: to unlock the doors to creative expression in others first requires the understanding of the creative drive in oneself and the articulation of why you want to affect others. So this book is the autobiographical unfolding of a deeply held philosophy based on the creative potential in everyone.

Though published in 1955, it isn't dated, for this philosophy is timeless. It includes some great stories, too. One of them—which, to me, is the heart of the book—concerns a small group of people who answered his ad to learn about creative writing. It describes the three days that they spent together: "There were times when we would speak, not as ourselves, but as imaginary characters that grew from our talk of people and events that were as real as the earth itself ..." The vignette ends with one of the women saying that:

> ... 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 ... 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 in this past three days, for the whole expression would be of and about ourselves.

These days, we're all talking about the "sense of place" at the core of our work, and this book is an anthem to that, too. The first chapter is titled "A Feeling for Places," and the book ends thus:

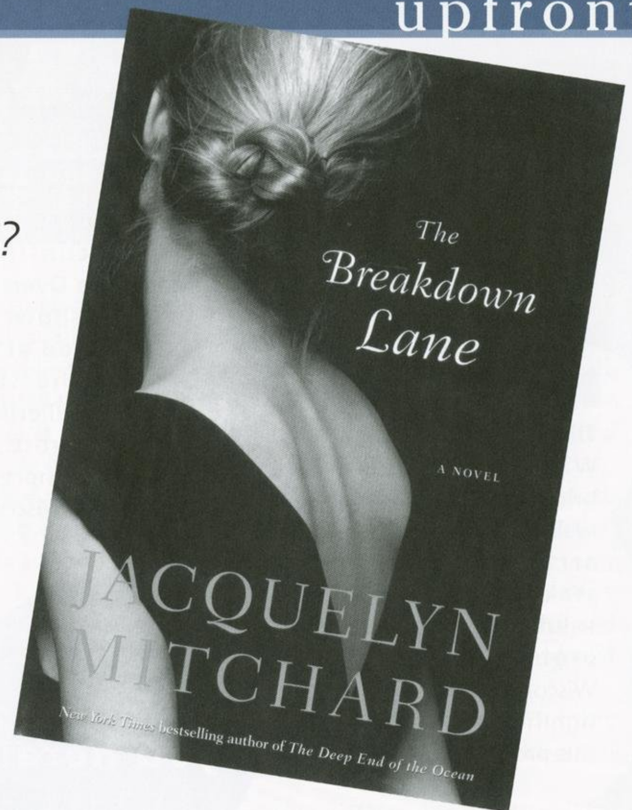
> Here on Sugar Bush Hill the wind blows hard. The forest lands stretch away and away as far as I can see. But beyond the forests there are the farms, the towns, the cities of Wisconsin, and beyond and around Wisconsin is all America waiting for the spreading back of the grassroots arts idea.

The book is 50 years old this year—and perhaps its time has come. The University of Wisconsin Press reprinted it in 1999, and it is available for $10 at the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters. Call 608/263-1692 ext. 10 for more information. It is also available, at a slightly higher price, through Americans for the Arts (www.artsusa.org/bookstore).

by Maryo Gard Ewell

A NASTY TURN—
AND THEN WHAT?

"There are periods in people's lives in which the only virtue is to endure."
—Jacquelyn Mitchard



Life is easy enough—until your husband dumps you, you get an incurable debilitating illness, and your children disappoint and betray you.

Such is life in *The Breakdown Lane* (Harper Collins), Jacquelyn Mitchard's new novel about how a woman and her family cope with blows that are beyond their control. We'd love to believe that this is only the stuff of fiction—that that many bad things can't happen to one person!—except that as of a certain age, most of us have known a Julieanne Gillis, someone upon whom the trials of Job have rained down. And everyone has experienced at least some measure of life's randomness, including its blows. How does one wrench some good from this? How does one cope? Mitchard's book explores how one family does its best.

***Review:* Your main character is put through every trial and then some. What interested you about having a character go through such extreme adversity? Why the added irony of having her actually be a professional advice-giver?**

Mitchard: The irony itself was the reason for Julie's rather extreme cluster of catastrophes. As she herself admits, she could never quite "get" how people could get themselves into such dire straits; she assumed that there was a reason for every problem, an answer for every question. What she learned is that sometimes, things simply happen to people who mean to do right, as she did, that not every problem has an apparent or immediate solution, that there are periods in people's lives in which the only virtue is to endure. As someone who believed she had life in her pocket, she was humbled by her experiences, and moved to empathy, not dispassionate advice.

***Review:* As for her inability to fix her own life ...**

Mitchard: Physician, heal thyself. The shoemaker's child goes barefoot.

***Review:* There is a lot of female rage in this book, mostly centered around Leo, a character who abandons his family to start a new one with a much younger woman. Can you please comment on that?**

Mitchard: Leo is not a caricature; he's a real artifact of our generation in our time. He loves his children; he doesn't believe he's a cad; he longs for his own freedom without counting the costs and with a ready rationalization for his behavior. Like many men (and some women) of my generation, he was unwilling to see his own responsibility for his distress—and particularly, the way in which getting exactly what you want can sometimes mean getting exactly what you deserve.

***Review:* Why was MS the disease highlighted here?**

Mitchard: This isn't a book about a disease. But MS is a particularly fickle and random illness; it mirrors the random way in which life gives blessings and then, as if on whim, withdraws them.

***Review:* What blessings are to be found in this story?**

Mitchard: Julieanne's sin, if she has one, is pride. Her gift is humor, a kind of quirky courage, compassion, and the capacity to give and receive love. Julie would have said she already possessed this capacity, but in fact it matures over the course of the story as she must cede more and more of her well-tempered control. Gabe is the family's symptom bearer, a boy who uses rage and disdain to mask pain that is not his fault. He is actually hopeful and optimistic beneath his jaded exterior. There is no completely happy ending for a family torn by divorce, but Gabe finds happiness and a self-respect he had never experienced.

the idea

The Wisconsin Idea at the Wisconsin Academy brings together Wisconsin residents with a diverse array of experts and stakeholders to find solutions to statewide problems. Waters of Wisconsin was one of the significant initiatives of this program.

the gallery

The James Watrous Gallery of the Wisconsin Academy in Madison's Overture Center for the Arts showcases new and established artists from all around the state—one of very few galleries dedicated to Wisconsin artists. Many exhibits presented there tour to other galleries in Wisconsin.

the public forums

These gatherings bring the public together with experts on a wide variety of timely topics for fruitful discussion and learning. A forum series called Academy Evenings takes place at the Overture Center for the Arts in Madison as well as at partnering venues in greater Milwaukee and the Fox Valley. More locations will be added in coming years.

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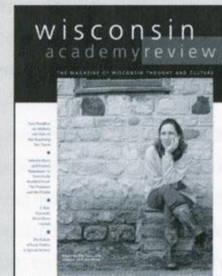

the review

The award-winning *Wisconsin Academy Review* is the only magazine in the state to highlight contemporary Wisconsin thought and culture. It features art, fiction, poetry, and articles by and about the thinkers who help shape our state.

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Heavenly Compass

A full moon on a clear late-October night reveals a line of birds migrating south, away from Wisconsin's approaching winter months. Current scientific theories suggest that night-flying migratory birds use the stars as navigational guides. Several studies have been done on this hypothesis by putting caged migratory birds in planetariums, then rotating the "sky" to arbitrarily simulate the position of the stars at different times of the year. The results showed that the birds attempted to fly toward star patterns that would have been in the correct migratory flight direction in nature, even though the planetarium sky showed the star patterns in the wrong direction. Thus scientists conclude that birds use star patterns as their navigational compasses.

With an artist's vision, sculptor Martha Glowacki has taken information about migratory birds using star patterns and turned it into an exhibition called "Starry Transit," to be held August 27–November 6 in a most appropriate setting: the Washburn Observatory Dome on the University of Wisconsin–Madison campus. Glowacki, a co-director of the Wisconsin Academy's James Watrous Gallery in her day job, hopes the exhibition will "encourage viewers to think about how scientists work, to reflect on the value of different ways of observing natural phenomena, to celebrate the special history of the Washburn site, and, above all, to create some sense of the beauty and magic of the natural world."

Glowacki feels the observatory is an ideal location for her work. Built in 1878, the observatory dome has changed little, and still reflects the late-19th-century style. "Since most of my current sculpture refers to mid-to late-19th-century scientific research, the Washburn Observatory interior, with its 19th-century apparatus, is a fitting space," says Glowacki.

Stephen Fleischman, director of the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art (MMoCA), which is partnering with the University of Wisconsin to organize the exhibition, says of Glowacki, "She's treating the entire space like part of the artwork." Jim Lattis, a science historian and director of UW Space Place, was immediately excited by the idea of using the observatory for an exhibition. An added benefit, he hopes, will be to raise public awareness about the Washburn Observatory and its many outreach programs.

The exhibition itself will include four components. The first is a tableau of birds and constellation models in a 19th-century wood and glass display case. The drawers will contain etched images from 1870s celestial maps of spring and fall constellations as well as bird migration maps of the Mississippi flyway. The second component will be two free-standing sculptures using 19th-century images of flying birds or celestial maps. Viewers are able to "operate" the sculptures. The first, a phenakistoscope—a big rotating disk with slits between pie-shaped images—simulates a bird flying against a field of stars. The second is the planisphere, which has celestial hemisphere maps that visitors can turn to locate constellations visible in the night sky on any given day of the year. "It was a popular 19th-century instrument for teaching people how to stargaze," says Glowacki.

The third element brings in poetry and field notes to compare how people observe nature in different ways. Glowacki will juxtapose Wisconsin poet Mary Mercier's poetry about bird migration with observation notes by 19th-century scientists, which Glowacki says are surprisingly poetic and typical of that era. These texts on the wall will serve as almost another type of map for the viewers, Glowacki says.

The exhibition's final component is sound and lighting that will intensify the experience of the night sky and migrating birds.

The exhibition will be accompanied by science talks, poetry readings, a migratory bird walk, and other events, says Sheri Castelnuovo, education curator at MMoCA, noting that the museum has never done anything quite like this exhibition before. It's also new territory for Glowacki, despite 25 years as a sculptor. Taking her cue from the birds she's depicting, Glowacki is reaching higher and letting the stars be her guide.

by Amanda Andrew

More information, including images, will be available at www.mmoca.org/starrytransit when the exhibition opens.

Starry Transit **(detail), 2005, by Martha Glowacki**

WORKING

Portraits of Strength

Through her work as owner of the former Wilson Street Grill and, now, a consulting firm called "Meaningful People, Places and Food," Nancy Christy has been a nationally recognized pioneer in helping to incorporate people with disabilities into the workplace. Here we present her story—and portraits of some remarkable people.

BY NANCY CHRISTY PHOTOS BY GLENN TRUDEL

HEALTHY COMMUNITIES UTILIZE EVERYONE. In our entirely worthwhile pursuit of sustainability, human capital is the resource most often overlooked. So while the roles of place and food at the intersection of business and values are important to the mission of my company, Meaningful People, Places and Food, it is no accident that people come first.

People with disabilities remain a critically underutilized and undervalued resource. Stigma and stereotyping are widespread, limiting access to normal community living. The result is a profound misunderstanding of the capabilities and contributions of people with disabilities. Countering this requires an expanded notion of community and inclusion. And among the most powerful tools of change are positive images.

At my former restaurant, the Wilson Street Grill, where a third of the workforce were people with disabilities, these images were a basic component of our business. The Grill was a neighborhood restaurant—the neighborhood being Madison's business center, the Capitol Square. It was an experiment in creating a welcoming, sophisticated environment with high-quality food at reasonable prices. We decided to employ people with disabilities, including those with comparatively severe mental illnesses. And what we found, for our business, our customers, and our other employees, was that our employees with disabilities were among

our greatest assets. The environment was richer for the inclusion of all. Conversely, when an employee was not working, there was something missing.

Our decision was the result of our desire to have a truly diverse workforce. But what we learned, and what has infused the message of Meaningful People, Places and Food, is that inclusiveness brings meaning to place and product. Practices for a sustainable business must include quality and thoughtful delivery of services. Both are enhanced by utilizing and respecting all available resources. The challenge is providing knowledge and support to those businesses seeking to diversify their workforce, and to offer inspiration to employers considering hiring people with disabilities.

Meaningful People, Places and Food is designed to accomplish both through a comprehensive program of public awareness, sound business practices, and rethinking the power of business to effect community development. It is a synchronistic approach that emphasizes community partnerships and principles of sustainability to support both sound business practices and socially progressive values. And while it is designed to complement existing or proposed community economic development goals, it is a results-based project that marries good food with progressive hiring practices to create a sustainable whole.

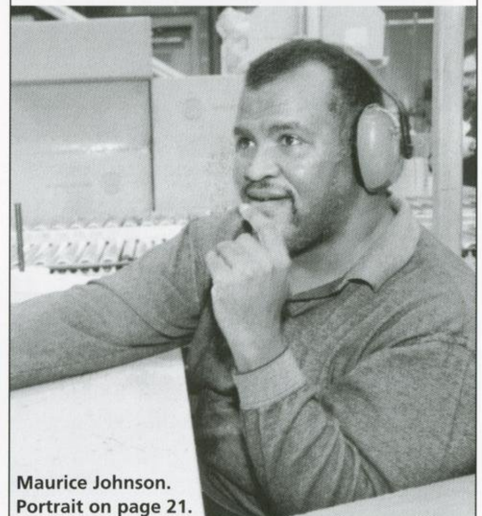
A key component is the emphasis on partnerships. Meaningful People, Places and Food is very much a continuation of the Wilson Street Grill's successful partnerships with local food growers and with advocates and support agencies for people with disabilities. But it expands on those efforts by broadening its scope to include other community groups and institutions. It is built on asset identification and utilization. One of the first projects we undertook was a review of the kitchen operation at the Don and Marilyn Anderson Hospice facility in Fitchburg. The goal was providing an appropriate food service in an atypical health care setting that met the special needs of patients and their families as well as staff and volunteers. Our recommendations included hiring a food manager with the necessary culinary and personal vision, ascertaining the food memories and interests of the patients, and providing them the food they desired; creating an herb garden to provide both fresh herbs for the kitchen and a comforting atmosphere for patients and their families; and fashioning a food service that meets the needs of visitors and staff.

The project was a wonderful example of how food can be an integral part of a nurturing and caring yet demanding environment. We faced similar challenges at the new St. Marys Rehabilitation and Long Term Care facility. There we conducted a survey of the facility's clients and recommended changes in the food service's offerings as well as the creation of an heirloom vegetable garden where patients could follow the growth of fruits and vegetables, many of which provided taste memories from their youths. In both cases the effort added meaning to the food and the food added meaning to the environment.

While both projects—as well as a third project to offer recommendations for food service at the computer company Epic Systems' new headquarters in Verona—were satisfying efforts to blend food with place, the heart of Meaningful People, Places and Food is the additional ingredient of maximum use of human capital. Working with people with disabilities adds context to our lives. Recognizing the contributions of people with disabilities, and employing people with disabilities, is an inseparable part of a sustainable whole. And while a variety of resources currently exist, there is no comprehensive program of both education and inspiration that recognizes the long-term goal of sustainable hiring practices.

The reasons are many and varied. Government has not done a good job understanding the needs of business. Advocates have not done a good job providing services businesses need. Advocates for people with disabilities must understand business. They must be advocates for business as well. For, while hiring people with disabilities is a progressive goal, it is also a fundamentally conservative proposition—an investment in individual potential, encouraging independence, and reducing reliance on other resources.

But business has failed to understand the potential in an untapped workforce. Certainly this is complicated by societal stigma. Living with a disability has too often been an impenetrable barrier to the dignity of a job. As a result, employers have missed an opportunity to diversify, enrich, and solidify their workforces, and communities have shortchanged themselves of the full spectrum of participation. In the fall of 2003, I contracted with the Developmental Disabilities Council (in my mind the best agency for "putting one's money where one's mouth is") to help market small grants, called CCUE Sparks, to "spark" community groups, neighborhood centers, faith communities, and individuals to explore innovative methods of creating more inclusive neighborhoods and communities. The response was dozens of creative and thoughtful approaches to utilizing the talents and skills of all in public community building.



Maurice Johnson. Portrait on page 21.

But again, employment remains the goal and the biggest challenge. Before the Wilson Street Grill closed I received a grant from the Department of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR) to produce a video on the employment practices of the restaurant. Then, the

While hiring people with disabilities is a progressive goal, it is also a fundamentally conservative proposition—an investment in individual potential, encouraging independence and reducing reliance on other resources.

Robert Wood Johnson Foundation and the Wisconsin Department of Commerce stepped forward to fund the creation of a workbook companion to the video. Both were my entry to a series of workshops, conferences, and seminars on employment, providing indisputable evidence of the desire to demystify employment of people with disabilities.

The videos seemed to be especially effective tools for changing perceptions of people with disabilities, and I began to seek partners for the creation of public service announcements (PSAs) that would broaden the audience by placing these images on broadcast television. The Developmental Disabilities Council (again) funded creation of two PSAs: one on Steve Singel, the man who directs the UW Marching Band in playing "If You Want to Be a Badger," and another on Becky Trochinski, an art teacher at a Milwaukee high school (see her portrait on page 15). Madison Gas and Electric Company has generously stepped forward to buy time on Madison commercial television stations to air one of the PSAs. Recently the Department of Workforce Development funded a video on its "Navigator" program. Navigators are advocates for people with disabilities who make the social service system more user-friendly. The video describes this one-stop approach to covering the range of services many people with disabilities seek and raises the program's profile by showing how effective a navigator can be. Meanwhile, the Developmental Disabilities Council and the Waisman Center's Healthy and Ready to Work program have funded production of a video about Caleb Luke, a young man with severe disabilities who is working as the result of the efforts of a dedicated support team (see his portrait on page 17).

It's been rewarding that our efforts have been recognized in stories by such news organizations as *USA Today*, the *Milwaukee Journal-Sentinel*, Fortune.com, and CNN.com. But the interest has yet to result in support for the comprehensive project necessary to instigate substantive and fundamental change in employment policies.

I have therefore embarked (with my long-term business partner, Andrea Craig) on a process to create that project. The goal is to create a public institutional food service employing people with disabilities and serving food grown or produced in the local region, thus supporting Dane County farmers. This project has the benefits of a public-private partnership and the creation of a guaranteed demand for local products supporting local growers and producers.

Most important, it includes people with disabilities in a sustainable enterprise that is a replicable model of a supportable business. Ultimately it embodies the recognition that utilizing the assets of people with disabilities in the workforce is an essential part of healthy, sustainable business practices. It is the vital step needed to destigmatize people with disabilities and recognize their contributions to our communities, our economy, and our view of ourselves. Is this step both necessary and long overdue? Looking at the images on these pages, it is impossible to think otherwise. ✺

Nancy Christy (Heinen) is nationally known for her expertise in recruiting, training, and retaining people with disabilities, which she honed while operating a critically acclaimed restaurant in downtown Madison. She is the producer and director of two videotapes documenting the program, for which she also wrote a companion workbook. Her numerous awards for her food and work include the 2000 State of Wisconsin Governor's Workforce Initiative Award. She is a food and employment consultant, writer of a monthly food column for ***Madison Magazine****, and the owner of Meaningful People, Places and Food Consulting & Design. She lives in Madison with her husband, Neil Heinen, and their dogs, Omelet and Baguette.*

Glenn Trudel has a wide range of photographic interests and has covered everything from a Soldiers of Fortune convention for ***High Times*** *magazine to the Milwaukee Bucks for* ***Inside Sports*** *to various human interactive themes for* ***Utne*** *magazine. Trudel also has a long history of teaching in schools and communities across the nation, highlighted by an ongoing residency at Haleakala Waldorf School in Hawaii, now in its 12th year. "I get a big kick out of watching the inspired responses kids have to seeing the physical world in a brand-new light," he says. More information at gtrudelphoto.com*

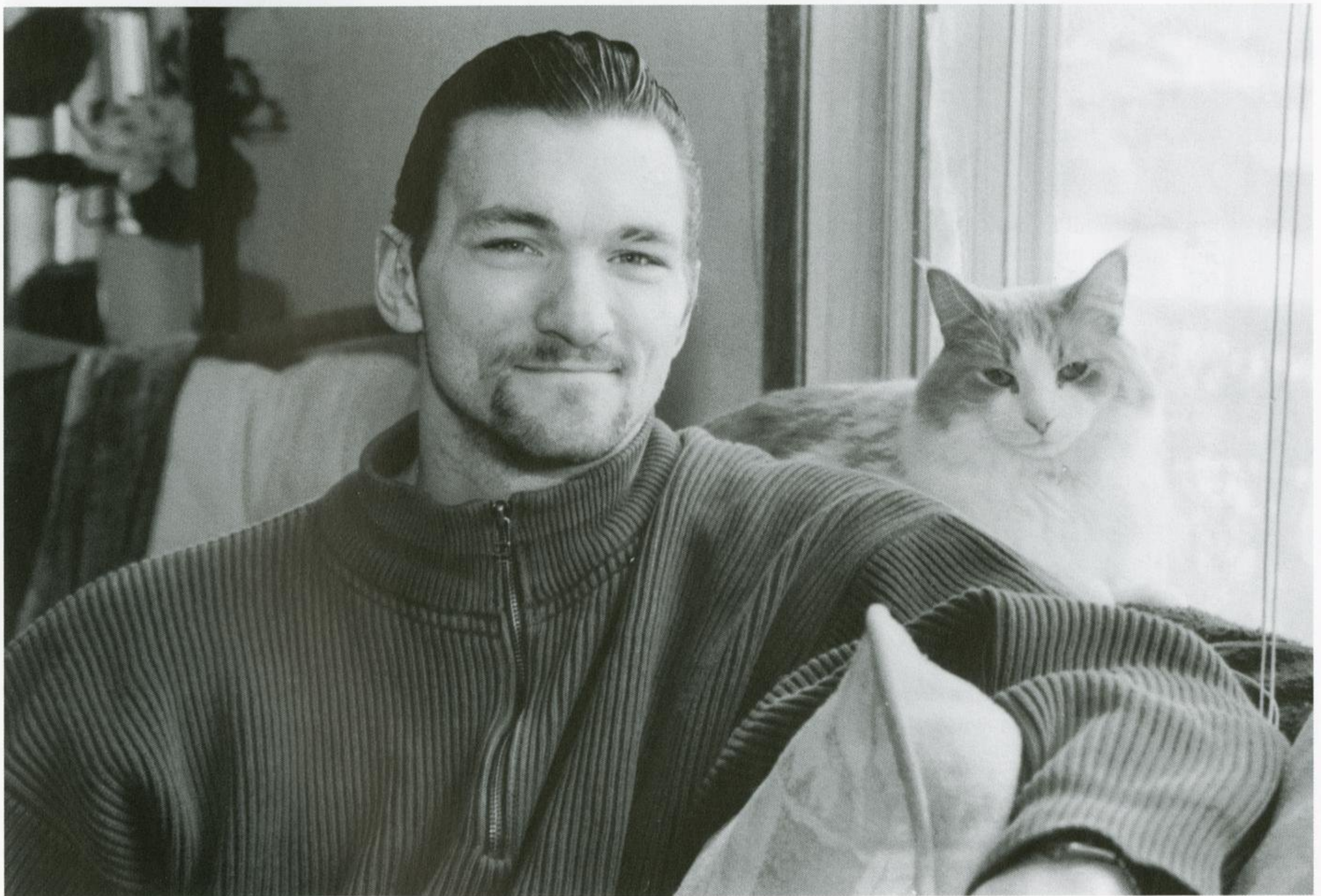
TEXT BY NANCY CHRISTY   PORTRAITS BY GLENN TRUDEL

Becky Trochinski, art teacher and department head

I met Becky several years ago when I was making a video and went to photograph her in her class. She is an art teacher at John Marshall High School in Milwaukee's inner city. My arrival coincided with a school lockdown. There was Becky in a wheelchair in a very tense environment where she is the racial minority. As Becky taught her art classes, it was clear that the kids adored and respected her. The principal called her one of the finest teachers in his school. Becky is completing her master's degree. Of her work she says, "You know, I teach these kids more than art. My work and my art have been a journey down a rough and joyful road."

Erin March, administrative assistant, Department of Revenue

I had the pleasure of meeting Erin when I interviewed him about finding a job. I was taken with his intelligence and earnestness. After several subsequent conversations I knew that he deserved a wonderful job and anybody who hired him would have a remarkable employee. His disability is a form of choreoathetosis, a neurological movement disorder that affects his speech and movement—but not his mental agility. Erin has a degree in statistics and psychology. "I am a hard worker and want a good job," he says. "I am not a disability. I am a person."

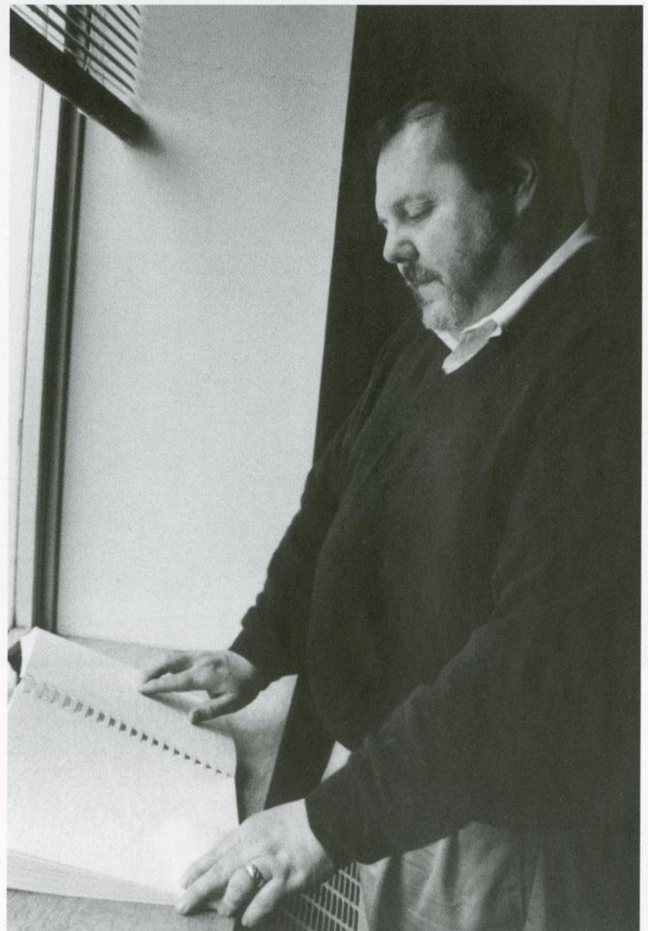


Caleb Luke, print shop employee, Hill Farms Office Building

Caleb has accomplished an enormous amount considering his complex disabilities. He owns his own house and loves to go grocery shopping. He speaks very little. His mother considers what life must be like for Caleb. "For someone who has significant mental retardation, the processing of information is very slow. Physically, because of the cerebral palsy and visual impairment, it is an effort just getting from point A to point B. On top of that, he has a complex seizure disorder and is on a lot of medications for that," she says. "I know the word 'hero' is overused, but just the idea that he approaches each day with so much energy and enthusiasm and willingness, he's a hero to me."

Carol Langley, utility clerk, Copps Grocery

I do not really know Carol except that whenever I go to Copps Grocery Store on Whitney Way, I always go to the line where Carol is bagging groceries. She seems to relish her work. "I like my job a lot," she says.



Clifford Blackwell, hearing examiner, Madison Equal Opportunities Commission

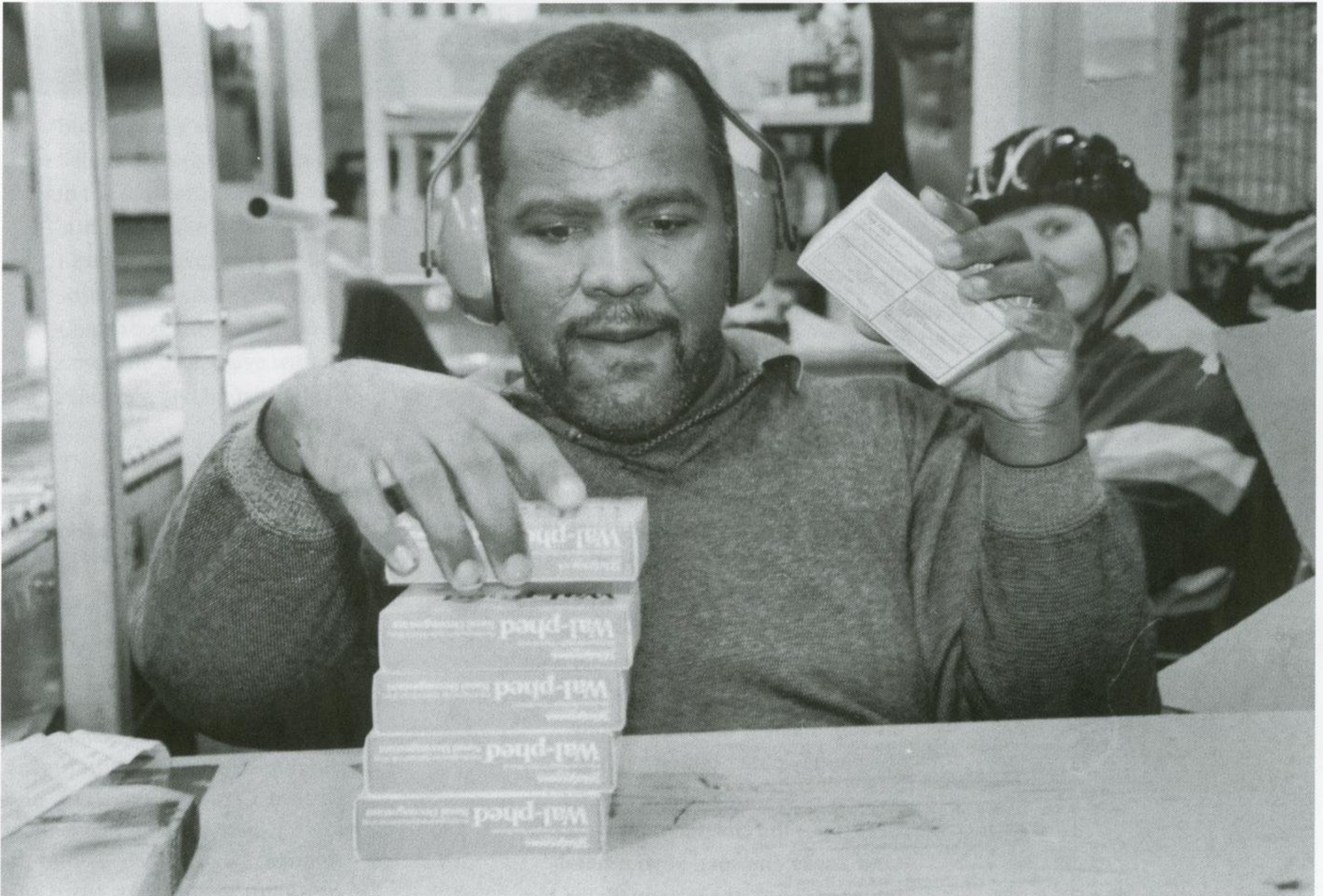
Clifford, who is blind, enjoys touching people's lives. He told me that it is a wonderful feeling to know that you have helped people and that they remember the difference he has made. Says Clifford: "Work and how we feel about it help us as people to define ourselves and how we feel about ourselves. I've been fortunate to have had wonderful role models, including my grandparents and parents. They worked hard and took pride in their work and their accomplishments. I've been fortunate that I've been able to pursue a career that has allowed me to excel individually and feel pride in what I do and have a sense of accomplishment. My work has helped me feel satisfaction when perhaps other things were not so rosy. I can express myself and my values through my work, which is great."

Joe Entwisle, senior research analyst

Joe works with my colleague, Mike Edwards. We would see each other at Ancora Coffee or at their office. Hip and generous were the characteristics I perceived when we ran into each other. It wasn't until we talked that I had the pleasure of Joe's intelligence and political insights. But his warmth can sure light up a room. "I believe work is no different for me than every other American," he says. "We associate who we are with what we do. I love what I do and the intellectual challenges it provides me. In turn, work provides me with the ability to do the things I want to do, like travel, go to concerts, enjoy the arts."

Darren Clay, lead outreach worker for crisis stabilization, Dane County Mental Health

A couple of years ago I was at Yahara House, a clubhouse and support system for people with mental illnesses, for an annual celebration. Each year they give an employment award in my name. I am always honored and always afraid of public speaking. So I was sitting on the podium with Darren, who was also getting ready to talk. And then he got up and spoke about his recovery. He recalled hearing voices and knowing he needed help, but he had been taught, "Never ask for help and never trust a white man." I was and still am blown away by his honesty and bravery. In my mind, he was the one who should have been getting the award. "Each person should have as much control over their life as possible," he says. "Preserving one's dignity is always important. I believe that we must become an active partner in our own treatment. Having a positive partnership with your employer makes a difference."



Maurice Johnson, Walgreen's Distribution Center

Maurice works on a team with a man named Terry placing antitheft stickers on merchandise. Maurice has autism and needs cues to perform tasks. The choreography between the two men is remarkable. Terry cues Maurice by lightly touching his hand after each sticker, allowing the two of them to glide through the task of placing 2,000 stickers on merchandise per shift. Together they demonstrate the power of interdependence to create independence. Maurice does not speak, but his mother, when given a tour of her son's workplace, says, "Maurice is really good at this."

poetry

contest runners-up

The *Wisconsin Academy Review* Poetry Contest brought in more than 1,000 poems from all around the state. The work of the three top winners appeared in the spring issue. We are pleased to share now the fine poems submitted by our runners-up.

And attention poets: we begin accepting entries for our next poetry contest on September 1, with a deadline of Monday, December 5. This year our lead judge will be Milwaukee poet laureate Marilyn Taylor. Guidelines and prize information are posted on the Wisconsin Academy's website, www.wisconsinacademy.org

The Opening in the World

There's a cat-sized opening in the world.
Watch him slip through it, who seems
with his hissing eyes and purring yawn
more old god than new: it opens just for him.

Now it is a door held six inches ajar
to let him out, now the miniature arcade
of tree roots in the yard, now the cove
a blanket makes around his body,
the Sunday paper tented cat-high.

Here it is—the cloister vault beneath
your knees, the span of your hand
under his back, the way death fits him
into the schedule as if he belonged.

And what is on the other side?
In some cases snow, and so he turns
around and slips back in. Or rain
or loneliness, and then he grooms.
Sun? Only he knows, stretching

in the gracious yellow aperture of space.
There is a fissure in the world he falls through
unassuming and shapely as water, he and all
the others here, and you, tumbling after.

by Cynthia Belmont

Cynthia Belmont is associate professor of English and Women's Studies at Northland College in Ashland. She has published in a variety of journals, including ***Cream City Review, Iris,*** *and* ***Poetry,*** *and has won Academy of American Poets awards and an honorable mention from the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets. She is completing her first book.*

Bearbait

"Never feed your baby on the trail. Grizzlies are attracted to the smell of milk."
—Ranger to hiker, Yellowstone Park

She calmly shuts her breasts away in the serape
but privately scours the wood for boulder shoulders,
listens for an ursine fat bass bawling her name.
In the mother's nose the beemouth of her baby
still runs white honey,
blooms violently
with a perilous death-pot spoor.
Cold-faced, the ranger moves her like a heavy icon
down the trail, grave with the weight of her important scent:
reliquary, and house of delicious things.

They both feel the heat of the burning bear
red on their backs. The ranger thinks
how a single drop of milk
in the footprint of this madonna
and the bear he hears in the wood
could stand and see and smell her clearly
and run her down like a train
as images slam through his hot mammal head:
rose of the world, milkspring, and pet of meat.

by Margaret Benbow

*Margaret Benbow is the only UW alum to have won the George B. Hill Award for poetry four times as an undergraduate. Since then her poems have won many prizes and appeared in numerous magazines and anthologies. Benbow's full-length collection **Stalking Joy** won the Walt McDonald First Book Award and was published by TTUP Press. She has now completed a second collection, **Believing Your Eyes.** She also writes short stories and was awarded a Wisconsin Arts Board grant for fiction in 2003. Benbow's story "Egyptian" appears in the new short fiction anthology **Barnstorm** (University of Wisconsin Press). Her short story, "Prizes," appears on page 48.*

History Lesson

There is so much here unclear,
in this chutney colored tub,
in this mildewed room,
in this drab hotel by an orphanage
one day away by air.

There is so much here unseen,
as the tub fills,
as the sun knocks the door,
as I undress your small body rigid and pulling;
the downy wing of hair between your shoulders,
the uncut penis,
the contrast of your caramel skin
        against raw butter and pink,
the Mongolian Spot across your buttocks
        so like a bruise I cry out,
the wilderness crawling from my throat.

I will never know what came before
        this day.
I could spend a lifetime of guess
and pray you never do.
But for now the tub is full,
the air is sticky sweet,
the bubbles rise like birds,
your brown sugar body trembles
as my arms reach to mother and still,
as my lips yearn to kiss you clean
        here and here
this first moment, my new son,
all we will know for sure.

by Cathryn Cofell

*Cathryn Cofell, of Appleton, has been published frequently in such places as **Prairie Schooner, Laurel Review, Phoebe,** and **Rattle.** She is the author of three books, most recently **Roadkill,** published by the Neville Public Museum in 2003. She currently chairs the Wisconsin Poet Laureate Commission and is the recipient of several awards, including the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters' Outstanding Poem Award for two consecutive years (an award that has since been succeeded by this contest).*

The Only Jewish Family in the Neighborhood

Out back, my mother pins old shirts
to lines, their white arms waving
off the sparrows. This year the puddle
spring leaves in the gully is so deep
ducks come, a hatch of tadpoles
wriggles. I make boats of walnut shells
and chewing gum, a toothpick
mast, and set my paper sails to catch
light wings of wind, to sail across
the surface of my life the way these words
set out to cross the page, a tremolo
of thought. My sister calls my name
and lets go of the swing, her body pausing
in mid-flight before Earth clasps her
to its breast again. But I don't care.
Like any sailor, I study the sky;
I study puffs of cumulus,
the bashful sun. The kids next door
insist that Heaven is a cloud,
so beautiful the dead give thanks
for dying, but no Father's hand
extends to me, no angel chorus sings,
unless you count the rain. I hear it
every night against my window,
complicating sleep as its words
strike night's surface. The kids
next door chase us and tell us
that we're damned; they pinch
with fingernails, pull hair. My father's
shirts fill the nothingness
of angels, and my small boats
tip. I close my lids to keep
a world of silent faces in.

by Judith Harway

*Judith Harway's poetry has been published in numerous literary journals, and collected in **The Memory Box** (Zarigueya Press, 2002). She has earned fellowships from the Wisconsin Arts Board, the Hambidge Center, and the MacDowell Colony, as well as grant support from the Wisconsin Arts Board and Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design. She is on the faculty of Milwaukee Institute of Art and Design and holds an MFA from Columbia University's School of the Arts.*

Spirograph

When I was a kid I had a Spirograph
it was a plastic ring with gears inside
each of them held a pen
like a Ouija board planchette
only instead of spirits you could summon
orange tornadoes with mechanical precision
or conjure a pink slinky from
a row of overlapping circles
each one gradually advancing

I met Julius Schwartz in 1995
at a fantasy convention
he used to be a literary agent
and he once met H.P. Lovecraft
Lovecraft died in 1937
I had an old ASTOUNDING magazine
with one of Lovecraft's stories in it
one that Schwartz had sold for him in 1935
so I got him to autograph it
60 years after the fact
he laughed and said it was
the only one he'd ever signed

I was with my Grampa
we were in a cemetery
looking at his Grampa's headstone
he was born in Germany in 1852
we stood there for a while not saying anything
Grampa was in his eighties
and I remember thinking
that in 40 years I'd be his age
that someone young who knows me then
could live until 2100

it's like my Father showing me
a pocket watch from 1690
the mechanism driven by a tiny chain
the watch advancing gradually
through time along its chain of owners
opening my hand I feel its weight
and I imagine moments overlapping
lives advancing while I go in circles

by Michael Kriesel

*Michael Kriesel lives near Wausau. Recipient of the 2004 Lorine Niedecker Poetry Prize from the Council for Wisconsin Writers, he has been nominated twice for the Pushcart Prize for his poetry. His reviews appear in **Small Press Review.** His work has appeared or is forthcoming in **Rosebud, The Progressive,** and **Bitter Oleander.** "Spirograph" is from a chapbook scheduled to appear from Marsh River Press.*

The Fight

Memory, irreverent, won't duck
what I duck—the blow
one night that knocked
me to the ground, the low

roar topped by my howl:
fourteen and a stupid fight
over a stray dog shot. I fell
and would not rise, spite

the barbed wire of my body
while pity for the still form
split us like an axe: already
his shoulders hunched around the shame,

his face a blackout. That
was not my father, the long stride
to where I lolled theatric
longed to kick me up and back, pride

the neck of the dog snapped
where the bullet hit. He kicked
a chair instead and slammed out.
Left me sobbing, sprawled and wrecked

in the kitchen corner where the clock
ticked like a heart above me doomed
to slow and stop. What
I didn't know: the spot that bloomed

bright and pink on the dog's back,
the bruise that swelled my left cheek—
both were forms of love, a dark lack
I was born to heal or slake.

Later his barn boots filled the house, a clumping
back and forth as he smoked and paced.
I lay still in bed, my heart thumping.
I coughed. He paused. Our pulses raced.

by Amy Jo Minett

Trout Rising in Pisces

You read the horoscope in
The car while I drive
Past the river and wonder
About trout
You place more faith in
The stars than I do in
God on a good day
Maybe love, money and fame
Can be deciphered in
Small daily increments the way
Fishing can be measured in the
Number of dawns
I find myself
Waist deep in the river.

by Jeff Copenhagen

*Jeff Copenhagen lives in Washburn. He works as a licensed practical nurse focusing on home health care. He has published poetry in the **American Journal of Nursing,** the **North Coast Review,** and **Lake Superior Sounder.***

*Amy Jo Minett grew up on a farm in southwestern Wisconsin, near Viola. Her first poem was published in **Dog World** magazine (when she was 12, and she was thrilled). Since then, she has published poems in **Poetry Northwest, Poetry East,** and the **Jacaranda Review.** She received her B.A. in English from UW–Madison, and her M.F.A. in poetry from the University of Virginia, and she is in the process of finishing her Ph.D. in composition and TESOL at Indiana University of Pennsylvania. She spent nine years teaching in Hungary and Romania, where she launched two creative writing journals for poets and fiction writers working in English as a foreign language. She currently teaches composition, literature, and creative writing at Madison Area Technical College.*

Between the Sheets

In those days, everyone's backyard was a maze of laundry lines,
pillowcases snapping in the breeze,
pants proud as pennants,
shirts pinned up like broad-winged birds swooping in the wind.

And we kids could never resist a basket of clothespins,
clamping them on our fingers,
fascinated with the feel—so like toothless, wooden gums—
wincing with pain but persisting,
the pressure of the spring like an addiction.

When our mothers did the bedclothes, the sheets were hung
in rows, billowing, broad, and white,
like a snowstorm upon the green June grass.

Somehow, our games of chase and tag would always end
among those sheets,
the breathing corridors mysterious as hallways through cumulus.

And I remember the day Alice Dupuis was chasing me.
Every time she stood between the sun and a sheet,
her silhouette was thrown against the white, moving wall—
the soft curves of her new and startling breasts,
the determined point of her chin, her wild tangle of hair....

I suppose she was chasing my shadow while I stood
watching hers.
And I suppose I did not run as fast as I might,
and when she grabbed me round the waist,
I grabbed her round hers.

We froze there on the grass,
then shared a single, lingering kiss
before she pushed me down, wrenched off my sneaker
and flung it far away into the next yard....

That was years ago, and we've long since made our journeys
through tangled bedroom quests.
Still, I wonder why we create such mazes in our minds,
making labyrinths of simple desires and cul-de-sacs
of natural lusts.

What's sure is that the soapy, softener-sweet smell
of today's machine-dried sheets
is cloying compared to the sun-drenched bedclothes of yesterday...
and why Alice threw my sneaker so far
still pinches me like a clothespin.

by Timothy Walsh

*Timothy Walsh's poetry chapbook, **Wild Apples,** was published by Parallel Press last fall. He has won numerous awards for his poetry and short stories, including the Grand Prize in the 2004 **Atlanta Review** International Poetry Competition. His short story "The Sweet Smell of Gasoline" was the winner of the **Wisconsin Academy Review/** Harry W. Schwartz Bookshops Short Story Contest in 2003, and his short story "Along Highway 17" won first place in last year's **Madison Magazine** short fiction contest.*

Yom Kippur Fast in Taos

Perhaps, says the rabbi after Kol Nidre,
we fast to be more like angels. Perhaps,
I think just past noon the next day. Do angels
get headaches because they don't eat?
Do they shiver at their computers, chilled
near to death by two missed meals,
a weekend of clouds, the thinly veiled threat
of snow? Do visiting angels in foreign lands
shun Yom Kippur Torah service, not wanting
to *davven* familiar prayers set to peculiar tunes?

I punch up the thermostat; still I can't
get warm. I dress for a walk outside.
No diaphanous gown; no wings. I pull on
woolen gloves, a sweatshirt over a turtleneck,
a lined nylon windbreaker jacket. In a few blocks,
blood starts to flow. The headache begins to diffuse.
A breeze herds clouds like sheep; they flock
against Taos Mountain. The sun breaks through.
I shed jacket and gloves. When angels take walks
it's like this: small birds sing from the power lines,
the orchards are gifted with apples, the spice of
a rain-soaked meadow sharpens the wood-smoke air.
Gold blessings drift from the cottonwoods.
Plastic flamingos strut in a cactus garden.
Patches of blue sky promise: tomorrow
the mountaintop will be revealed.

by Judith Strasser

Judith Strasser's memoir, ***Black Eye: Escaping a Marriage, Writing a Life,*** *was published last year by University of Wisconsin Press. She's also the author of a Parallel Press chapbook,* ***Sand Island Succession: Poems of the Apostles.*** *Her poems and essays have appeared in many literary magazines and anthologies, including* ***Poetry, The Kenyon Review, Witness, Prairie Schooner,*** *and* ***Nimrod.*** *Her video poem, "Searching for Pine Hollow," was broadcast on Wisconsin Public Television as part of National Poetry Month.*

Naming Things

I guess this is how things happen—

you get your heart broken in Boston,
pack a small suitcase and move
to Wisconsin because you heard
the Midwest is real. There are tiny
apricots that grow around the bay

outside your window. You get a job
as a cocktail waitress at Nadia's
and sleep around. Each morning,
you become more certain there is
something here that you can love.

In the evenings, you watch the news
reports of the forest fires blazing
through the West. Your cousin Gwen
calls to say she dropped out of pilot
school to fight the fires. There are more

important things than flying, she says.
The live footage is beautiful and sudden,
the flames rush across the land like
nothing will ever be enough, like there
is no other way for this to happen.

You miss the pigeons in Cambridge
and your old piano. By the time
August comes, it has been raining
for days. The orange and pink
apricot flesh has become flabby

and careless, unable to survive
in so much wetness. You walk along
the drenched shore, naming things,
slipping on the rocks that mark the way.

by Jennifer Garfield

Jennifer Garfield is a fresh graduate from the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where she majored in creative writing and environmental studies. She has two poems forthcoming in ***Karamu*** *literary magazine.*

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hallowed ground

It's within spitting distance of Miller Park. Cars whiz past it on I-94. But many area residents don't even know about Soldiers Home, a veterans' hospital and respite center that dates back to the Civil War and now has the eery, timeless feel of a sanctuary worlds apart from modern life. Plans are afoot to preserve it as a historical monument.

An evening sun illuminates the towers of the main domiciliary (1869), the signature building of the Soldiers Home, which once housed as many as 1,000 veterans. In addition, it held the dining hall and administrative offices. It was designed by Milwaukee architect William Townsend Mix and is an example of Second Empire Victorian work. At that time, Soldiers Home was located out in the country, and Milwaukee residents would catch a trolley or train to spend a day picnicking, visiting veterans, or seeing a performance in the theater there.

RISING FROM HIGH GROUND IN THE VERY CENTER OF MILWAUKEE COUNTY, the Gothic Revival tower of a building called the main domiciliary at the National Soldiers Home looks out in four directions. When it was built in 1869 it dominated a largely rural landscape. The city of Milwaukee lay a few miles to the east and only farms or crossroads settlements were nearby.

By the 1890s, the domiciliary stood at the focus of what Marquette University history professor James Marten called "a stately village" occupying 400 acres. The village had a hospital and convalescent wards, a library, an elegant theater, a multi-

STORY AND PHOTOS BY PAUL G. HAYES

A partly cloudy day provides contrasts of shading to otherwise pure white headstones in the national military cemetery at the Soldiers Home. Some 37,000 veterans and spouses are buried here. Starting with a veteran of the War of 1812, they represent all American wars since. The cemetery still is active and open to veterans.

denominational chapel, a firehouse, fine homes for the director and staff, a headquarters, and many auxiliary buildings.

Inevitably, a military cemetery began to grow west of the Soldiers Home. Its function, of course, was to receive veterans of the Civil War and, as it turned out, all later American wars.

As many as 3,000 invalid and aging men at a time were housed and cared for at the National Soldiers Home. The population changed with the wars, Civil War veterans first, then veterans of the Indian Wars, the Spanish American War, World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. A veteran of the War of 1812 is buried at the cemetery, as are a few who served in the Mexican War.

A WOMAN'S WORK

That there is a national soldiers' home in Milwaukee is due to Wisconsin's women.

Economically the Civil War lifted Milwaukee and Wisconsin. Demand grew for wheat, wool, wood, and other commodities that grew inland, and these were shipped eastward through the bustling port of Milwaukee. A labor shortage—no state sent more men per capita into battle than Wisconsin—forced farms to mechanize, and farm implement factories hummed.

Wisconsin's population grew from 776,000 in 1860 to 868,000 in 1865; Milwaukee's from 45,000 to 55,000. The Badger State was thriving.

While the war brought prosperity and some profiteering, Wisconsin's citizens were mindful of its cost in lives lost or damaged. Governor Louis P. Harvey, appalled by reports of suffering by Wisconsin soldiers at the Battle of Shiloh, led a mission to Tennessee to distribute 90 boxes of medical supplies for the wounded and ill.

Starting home, he stepped from one steamboat to another in the dark, lost his balance, and was drowned in the rushing Tennessee River. Upon his death, his widow, Cordelia, devoted her life to Union soldiers. Shocked by conditions she witnessed in hospitals in Missouri, Arkansas, and Tennessee, she directly lobbied General Ulysses S. Grant and even President Abraham Lincoln to allow her to bring the wounded and sick home to better care in Wisconsin.

The Harvey United States Army General Hospital opened in Madison in 1863, and other hospitals opened in Milwaukee and Prairie du Chien in 1864.

As the war progressed, Milwaukee women working as the West Side Soldiers Aid Society operated a refuge for soldiers in storefront buildings on West Water Street (now Plankinton Avenue). After the war ended, the women, led by Lydia Hewitt, organized a 10-day soldiers' fair in the summer of 1865 in a donated wooden hall built at Main and Huron Streets (now Broadway and Clybourn).

The fair raised more than $100,000, a huge success. With this, the Milwaukee Soldiers Home Association sent their husbands to Washington, where they succeeded in persuading the federal government to establish one of its first soldiers' homes in the nation in Milwaukee in return for the money with which to buy land.

Of three original National Soldiers Homes mandated by the National Asylum for Disabled Volunteer Soldiers Act of March 3, 1865, Milwaukee's remains the most complete. The others were at Togus, Maine, and Dayton, Ohio. The act was one of the last signed by President Lincoln before his assassination.

THREE PRESIDENTS (AND LIBERACE)

In May 1867, 212 veterans moved into makeshift quarters on the new grounds. The grander main building, designed by Milwaukee architect Edward Townsend Mix, was finished in 1869.

According to Marquette historian James Marten, while the home's population profile changed from year to year, at any given time as many as two-thirds of the Civil War veterans were foreign-born, mostly from Germany or Ireland. Most called themselves "farmer" or "laborer" by occupation, a quarter had

The multi-denominational chapel (1889) was built by soldiers who wanted a separate church structure and who contributed their own resources for its construction. Both Protestant and Catholic services were held there. It is in dire need of restoration.

wives or minor children, and 88 percent had served as privates in the army.

Elizabeth Corbett, who was a small girl when her father became chief financial officer of the National Soldiers Home in 1891, drew a pretty picture of life at the home. The family moved into one of the homes on the grounds where she and her brother grew up, using its library and theater and roaming at will.

In 1941, Corbett, by then a successful novelist, published *Out at the Soldiers' Home,* a memoir that put flesh and names on real people who occupied the National Soldiers Home.

The veterans could voluntarily check into the home and they could voluntarily leave it, but while they were there they observed a military-like regimen. They were organized into companies, stood weekly inspections, wore uniforms, arose at six to a bugle call, ate communally in a huge dining room in the main building, worked according to their abilities, and needed a pass to leave the grounds.

And while any of them could bathe as frequently as they wished, all were required to take a bath a week. One particularly "hard case" checked in, Miss Corbett reported, and promptly checked out again when he learned of the bathing rule. "I ain't had a bath since I fell in the river at the Battle of Shiloh, and I'll be God damned if I'm goin' to begin now," he said.

Growing up, Corbett made friends among the old veterans and enjoyed them. The grounds, rich with flowering fruit trees, veteran-tended flowerbeds, and groomed lawns, provided an idyllic environment.

The veterans were painters, gardeners, and kitchen workers, tended horses, and drove wagons. One who preferred solitude managed the rowboats on Lake Wheeler that could be rented by the visiting picnickers for half an hour at a time. The boats were named "Grant," "McPherson," "Hancock"—all Civil War generals. Charley the Boatman slept on a couch in the boathouse among oars and oarlocks. He collected tinfoil in his spare time, rolling it into cannonball sizes.

The Fourth of July and Decoration Day, both patriotic holidays, brought scores of civilian picnickers out in carriages and buggies from Milwaukee. The sidewalks were lined on both edges with American flags. On Decoration Day flags on the buildings flew at half-mast. Squads of veterans marched to the cemetery to pay homage to the dead and fired muskets in salute. On the Fourth of

This is an end view of Building 6, a hospital and convalescent ward, built in 1879 and designed by Milwaukee architect Henry Koch, himself a Civil War veteran, who also designed Milwaukee's City Hall and Turner Hall. The third hospital on the grounds, it held elderly veterans for years, providing them with sun parlors filled with rocking chairs, easy chairs, writing desks, flower stands, canaries, goldfish, and early gramophones and radios. It held federal offices until July 2004, when it was vacated.

People still visit graves of loved ones buried there.

July, cannons thundered and a grand display of fireworks ended the day.

A military band played regularly at the home, and its bandstand concerts were part of the summer weekend entertainment. The theater booked both homegrown and professional plays and concerts. The old soldiers lined up early for shows, got in free, and comprised a tough audience, Corbett said.

"They liked girls, gaiety, and jokes," she wrote. "They despised anything talky or highfalutin'; most dramatic conflict and practically all pathos bored them."

During Corbett's life at the home, three presidents, William McKinley, Theodore Roosevelt, and William Howard Taft visited the home. The theater remained active for 80 years, bringing in minstrel shows, temperance lectures, melodramas, and variety acts.

Veterans of later wars as well as civilian patrons from Milwaukee were treated to appearances by Will Rogers, Bob Hope, George Jessell, Burns and Allen, Sophie Tucker, and a young pianist from nearby West Allis named Liberace.

But Marquette's James Marten describes a starker side of life at the home. Relying on sketchy surviving records from the home, Marten derived a picture of men who bore emotional as well as physical scars of war.

Alcoholism was pervasive. The old soldiers could buy beer on the grounds, but for serious drinking patronized a row of saloons that opened on National Avenue.

"In 1896, for instance, more than thirty clustered near the northern and southern entrances, many with names like 'Lincoln,' 'Sheridan,' and 'Sherman,'" writes Marten.

"A *Milwaukee Sentinel* correspondent claimed that 'the baser sort from the city' haunted these saloons, shrewdly getting veterans to buy them drinks and then, after the old men were 'stupidly drunk on vile whiskey,' robbing them in the street," his account continues.

Drunkenness and other offenses were punished by courts martial at the home. While the records are fragmentary, Marten was able to document violence, fights, and sexual frustration and maladjustment. Punishment ranged from extra duty to fines to confinement.

Originally intended to admit only veterans so physically disabled that they could not care for themselves, in 1884 Congress removed that restriction and opened the home to any elderly veterans.

A GHOSTLY PRESENCE

Today, the National Soldiers Home is a ghostly, beautiful, enticing presence. Geography, topography, and federal ownership protected the campus over the decades, even while the city of Milwaukee and its suburbs filled up the land around it.

Major streets and roads passed close to the grounds, including National Avenue (which may have been named for the National Soldiers Home), Grand Avenue (now Wisconsin Avenue) and, much later, Interstate Highway 94. But none cut through the Soldiers Home campus, partly because it stands on dense limestone bedrock. The east face of the high ground is the exposed rock of a coral reef of the Silurian period.

(The reef was the source of many of the fossils that explained the underpinnings of Milwaukee—Increase A. Lapham, Wisconsin's first scientist and a founder of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, discovered it in the 1830s—and it was deemed important enough to be listed on the National Registration of Historic Places in 1993.)

The federal government eventually gave up 137 acres of the original 400 to allow for the construction of Milwaukee County Stadium and its parking lot and Interstate 94, which cut through the cemetery on the north. In the 1990s, Miller Park, which towers above all else on the eastern horizon as viewed from the Soldiers Home, replaced Milwaukee County Stadium.

Until the larger stadium with its high brick walls was built, old soldiers could sit on benches on top of the reef and watch the world-champion Milwaukee Braves and, later, the Milwaukee Brewers.

In the 1960s, the federal government built the Clement J. Zablocki Hospital on the south edge of the campus and renamed the entire facility the Clement J. Zablocki VA Medical Center. A number of veterans are in residence, but they occupy a domiciliary built in 1933.

Older buildings dominated by the main domiciliary have been grouped into a historic district that is the concern of Soldiers Home Foundation, Inc., a nonprofit working to preserve it. Volunteer Patricia A. Lynch, secretary-

Posters of the performers and performances were pasted up on the walls of a prop room at the theater.

Building 1, Headquarters (1896), was the main office of the VA center until 1942. It currently houses offices for local American Legion and Veterans of Foreign Wars (VFW) posts; the Veterans poppy shop; Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War; and the Soldiers Home Foundation, which is trying to preserve the campus and its buildings.

treasurer, says the foundation is concentrating on six buildings: The towered main domiciliary (1869), the chapel (1889), Ward Memorial Theater (1881), Headquarters (1896), Wadsworth Library (1891), and the old hospital and convalescent wards (1879).

While the library still functions and the headquarters are used by veterans groups and the foundation, the others are in serious disrepair. The domiciliary is used mainly for storage; the interior of the theater is rapidly deteriorating, its stage littered with plaster. Several years ago, the group raised funds that, when matched by VA money, helped shore up the chapel's foundation.

Congress acted in 2004 to provide $20 million a year for restoration projects at 11 historic VA sites. The Milwaukee site alone could consume that and more. Ward Theater restoration has been estimated at $6.5 million. At the same time, the federal government said that the best hope for restoration was to find new, commercial uses for the buildings.

That's controversial, as attested to in an article by respected architectural critic Whitney Gould in the *Milwaukee Journal Sentinel*. Gould quoted an American Legion officer as saying, "Once you open the gates to development, how do you define appropriate use? Where do you draw the line? Would you put a Starbucks in the White House?"

Lynch's group keeps the flame of hope burning. Each summer, the foundation sponsors an annual "Reclaiming Our Heritage" event at the Soldiers Home. This year's took place in early June and included reenactments of Civil War and World War experiences, lantern-lighted night walks of the cemetery, and a visit by the 118th Medical Battalion of the Wisconsin National Guard, which served in Iraq.

Also, it is finishing an application to list the entire historic district as federal historic landmarks. At present only the theater is so listed.

That this place remains hallowed ground is evident. Last year the National Cemetery, which since 1996 had been turning away requests for new burials on grounds that it was all but filled, was directed by the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to identify sites for graves of soldiers killed in Iraq and Afghanistan.

Since then there have been a dozen or so such burials. The first was that of Michelle Witmer, one of 20-year-old twin sisters from New Berlin then serving in Iraq, who was killed when her military police vehicle came under attack.

Milwaukee mayor Tom Barrett is interested in the Soldiers Home grounds. In his State of the City address in February, Barrett said he was prepared to lead a community-wide planning effort for the land, especially 34 acres south of Miller Park, that could be used for development. "My goals," he said, "are to preserve a priceless historic asset, create jobs through new high-tech and biotech development, and honor our veterans." ✺

*Paul G. Hayes, a veteran science writer and journalist with the **Milwaukee Journal,** is a Fellow of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters. He also served for many years as an officer on the Wisconsin Academy's board of directors.*

This is a corner view of the Ward Memorial Theater (1881). Until a separate chapel was built in 1889, the theater also served as a religious center. A ticket window at the rear sold passenger tickets for a rail line connecting with Chicago and Madison that stopped at the Soldiers Home. The tracks remain and are occasionally used. The theater was used for 80 years for vaudeville, minstrel, variety, and serious drama. The Ward Theater, named for Horatio Ward, a banker who created an endowment for such memorial halls around the country, is the only campus building officially on the National Register of Historic Places. Other buildings are "list eligible."

CONTEST WINNER • CONTEST WINNER • CONTEST WINNER • CONTEST WINNER • CONTEST WINNER • CONTEST WINNER

Photos by Bill Blankenburg

Epidemic

BY AUTUMN ARNOLD

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

FIRST PLACE

MY JOB IS SAVING ME, which is more than they promised during my interview in a dull white room at the county office building. Two tired men in short-sleeved shirts asked me very little and told me even less about the job I would have for the health department. I told them about my freshman biology class, about leaving school because of the car accident. I didn't tell them it was my fault, or that David's been dead for five months and I can't sleep at night because of the sound of cars whooshing past on the highway. After they hired me, I learned to recognize eleven species of mosquitoes and started work at the end of a cul-de-sac where our trailer looks like it was dropped from the sky.

At eight in the morning, there are thousands of inert mosquitoes glittering with condensation on the table in front of me. I use sharp tweezers to grab a single insect and lay it on the white paper that brings the bands on its legs into sharp relief. It's *Culex pipiens*, the species that carries a strain of encephalitis that can swell the brains of babies and horses. I click the gleaming silver hand counter that fits smoothly into my palm, then drop the mosquito

The steering wheel felt cold and loose in my hand, but when I let go we didn't stop, gliding silently in a warm, fluid circle on a patch of black ice.

lightly where I've marked the paper with a sweet-smelling Sharpie marker. I thank God for each click on this counter. The space between them is too small for me to think of anything else.

I finish counting and use long tweezers to push the pliable, soft bodies into eleven separate test tubes. Then I take a second jar of insects from the freezer and spread out clean white office paper on the glassy black counter. My favorite part is spilling them out, a crackle of icicles against the rustle of paper. It's easy to pull the other bugs out of the mix: huge moths with thick bodies; barrel-shaped caterpillars; daddy longlegs and a million other gangly insects that I don't have the names for but feel common and familiar. Then I pick up the male mosquitoes and move them into their own pile. They are smaller, diminutive and their proboscis is curled and furry like the twist of a fern. Everyone knows the females bite; they are also the ones who carry the disease. *Culex pipiens* are the most beautiful and most distinct: they are the largest ones whose slender body tapers into a great, curling proboscis. Their legs are thinner than a single black hair but they hold rows and rows of exquisite white bands that disappear against the white page. In the forest, they swarm like banshees to our lips and eyebrows, but here they are harmless to the world.

It's after ten when I'm startled by the scrape of gravel in the driveway. I stand up quickly to look through the high window, but what grabs my attention first is the map of our county with red dots for babies and green dots for horses. There is no dot at the bend in the road where David edged his small black car over the double yellow line. The first time he did it, a noise came from my throat. He laughed, happy to tease me with his game of chicken. He was a daredevil and I was a prude. Most dark nights it thrilled me when he drove so fast the yellow lights and thick hedges of tall houses along the river became a soft blur. I felt safe, like we were floating. The second time he did it, the other car pulled hard toward the shoulder and I told him to stop it. He laughed again. I could tell he wasn't going to stop.

WINNING WORDS

Comment by lead judge Larry Watson

"Epidemic" is a beautifully understated story about someone who is "saved" by a job. The rituals and rigors of the narrator's work allow her to keep the memories of a personal tragedy at bay. The story's prose is simple and clean but wonderfully expressive. The metaphors are subtle but perfectly appropriate to the character and the situation. Finally, the author's restraint gives this narrative its special power.

The third time he edged us over the line, I was angry. I reached over and grabbed the wheel to yank us back to where we belonged. The steering wheel felt cold and loose in my hand, but when I let go we didn't stop, gliding silently in a warm, fluid circle on a patch of black ice. It seemed to go on forever like a deep, dark lake until he turned to look at me and I heard the rasp of the tires on the snow.

When I pull myself away from the map, I can see it's my supervisor, Richard, in the driveway. He doesn't know anything about me or what it feels like when the mosquitoes swarm around me, thick as heat in the darkness of the woods. I listen to the tick of the hot engine in his white, county-issued Crown Victoria, then I wait through the long pause before the screen door slams. Richard walks with heavy steps that shake the linoleum in the spaces of floor that lag between cinderblocks. He brings a jolt of the stifling, damp heat into this room at the back of the sharply air-conditioned trailer.

"Hey," he says, clearing his throat in the quiet room. "How's it coming?" he asks, leaning over my shoulder to look at the neat piles of mosquitoes.

"Okay," I say, thinking of what Richard has promised: in the heat of August, I will be overwhelmed by the millions of insects that incubate and multiply in the swamp. I look forward to these late months of summer, when it will be almost dark by the time I get home. I won't have to find a way to fill those twilight hours, alone with myself and my apartment that sits too close to the road.

I keep counting and Richard pauses for a moment before resting his hand on the round part of my shoulder, the first warm touch I have felt in a long time. It makes me feel loose and weak to think of him holding me up like this, in his jeans and work boots and wiry gray-brown hair that curls up from underneath his baseball cap. He is tall and bone-skinny like David, the shape of men who drink beer in the afternoon and fix their own cars. Then I feel his broad thumb stroke a quick line in the space between my spine and my shoulder blade. It puts an ache in my throat, but I keep counting and don't change anything. If I change the way I hold my head, or clench my teeth, or stop the steady click of the silver counter, I might come apart. The only motion in the room is the delicate movement of my wrists and fingers. Richard sighs and steps away, fumbling in his breast pocket with the plastic wrapper of his cigarettes.

"Want a smoke?" he asks. His voice is low and throaty.

"No thanks," I say without turning around. "I'm fine."

When Richard leaves, the cold of the trailer makes me chilled and dry. When I walk to the front of the trailer and open the stiff front door, heat rushes against me like oil. I drop down onto the wooden step and stay behind the screen door, letting the weight of my fingers rest on the wire. The smell of the tall grass is overpowering and I try to focus on a single point, the gleaming door handle on my car. I stare at the handle and think about how we came out of a movie two years ago and the doors were frozen shut. David kicked at the handle, then turned and held me against his warm body as we huddled in the piercing wind. I heard the quiet scratch of his jacket against mine, and I watched his beautiful thin face as he closed his eyes and inhaled the brilliantly cold air.

I want to go back inside to the rhythm of my counter when something flickers at the edge of my vision. I turn toward the field beyond the end of the driveway, and I see a small school bus parked in the field, painted recently enough that I can see the pallor of yellow behind the green. A gang of men in orange vests has spilled out, milling in a loose line in the wide field between the end of the driveway and the trees. A panicked laugh bubbles up in my throat when I see that I'm surrounded by prisoners. It's a work crew from the county jail. I know their easy crimes: larceny and drug possession, stolen vehicles and DWI. I could be out there with them, working in the field. I could feel the wind and dust from the long gravel road as they drive the bus each night to the place that keeps them careful and secure. If anyone knew what happened on that road, they could put me on that bus and keep me there forever.

I step down toward them and my weight creaks loudly against the door. One of the men hears it and calls out to the others. The thick-bodied supervisor standing at the perimeter turns toward me and shields his eyes in the sun. He is flushed and red from shouting orders to his slow-moving crew. Then another man steps out from behind the bus at the far end of their circle. He has been peeing in the bushes but his pants are still open and he is showing himself, headed toward me at full stride. The supervisor moves faster than I expect to grab him by the arm and turn him back around. The red-faced man waves to show they mean no harm, then turns away from me to deal with the prisoner. I take one last look at their sturdy green bus before I slip into the frigid trailer, and I wish for something other than the empty, open space surrounding me.

Inside, I clean up the paper and test tubes and get ready to go home. Before I go, I remember to take four small jugs and fill them with the ether I use to anesthetize the mosquitoes in their thick black traps. I have to concentrate to hold a funnel in the mouth of each plastic jug while I lift the heavy tank of ether. I have filled these jugs a dozen times,

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I turn around slowly to see a man standing across the clearing, watching me. He is wearing the same uniform as yesterday's crew, but he is no longer weighed down with black plastic bags and orange vests and the slowness of mandatory labor.

but I don't see until it's too late that there's too much ether in the funnel, spilling the clear, cold liquid over the edge and onto my hand. I rub my hand while it's still wet and try to feel how deeply it would numb me.

WRITERS *CON SALSA!*

Come hear the winners of our short story and poetry contests read as part of the Wisconsin Book Festival on Saturday, October 15, 4–5:30 p.m., at Frida Mexican Grill, 117 State Street in Madison. Our short story contest winners are Autumn Arnold, Jeff Esterholm, and Jane Sadusky. Our poetry contest winners are Sheryl Slocum, Kathleen Dale, and Richard Merelman.

The next morning is so hot I roll the windows all the way down and let the wind push across the space between. I can barely feel the gust through my long-sleeved shirt and heavy jeans, and I put my hand on my neck to spread the sweat that clings underneath my plain, straight hair. The heavy clothing is for protection; the first time I went into the woods, the mosquitoes ravaged me, raising a hundred hot welts on my arms and neck and face. I was surprised by how quickly they sensed me, drawn to the sweetness of carbon dioxide in my breath. David was the one who told me that there are always insects surrounding us, always, hundreds of them within three feet, even in the most pristine moments in which we live.

I keep my eyes on the narrow roads that cut the steaming earth into fields and parcels, careful of what might come bounding out of the woods. In these long trapezoids between empty highways, it's cheap to buy land and bulldoze skinny pine trees that are dark and brownish gray. Their trunks are scaly and almost silver, but these are not magical forests where light glimmers and glances off of sparkling needles. It creaks slowly on the edge of the swamp. Deep in these woods, people hunt and have houses they build themselves. They keep dogs that bark at the silence of the forest and the noise of cars that streak along the highway. The knot in the back of my throat when I drive through this place has the sickly sweet, metallic taste of Coca-Cola.

I pull over to an unmarked place on the side of the road, slip my green mosquito net over my head, and take my backpack into the woods. I don't bother to lock the doors. The only people who see me out here are children, small brown boys who stand motionless and barefoot and stare at me from their front yards. Then I try not to look back at the car. It looks broken down, abandoned, leaning to the slope of the ditch on a quiet stretch of county highway.

The mosquito traps are arranged in a rough semi-circle on the springy ground, underneath tall pine trees in a forest alive and writhing with the hiss of insects. They are plywood boxes painted black, as big and heavy as apple crates. They are open on one side to let the mosquitoes hang upside down during the night; the ones I will trap have stayed well into the morning. Next to each box is a tight-fitting lid, which is where I pour a splash of ether before clamping it down tight. I let the anesthetic work quietly inside each trap, then I return to each one to loosen the still mosquitoes by pounding on each side of the painted wood until my palms are raw. I shake the small, loose bodies into a metal box with sharp corners, then into a sealed glass jar. Even when I pound wildly on the traps, I can hear the whine of mosquitoes hovering in the air. Sometimes when I count, I will find one that is fat and slick with my own blood, some small part of me that has escaped into the trance of ether and the sleep of early winter.

My hands hurt and I'm dizzy with heat by the time I reach the last box, but I can sense as plain as day that someone is in the forest with me. I hear a rustle on the dry ground and a change in the sharp pitch of my hand against the box. I think for a moment that it might be Richard, but he would not know where to find me unless he followed my car.

I turn around slowly to see a man standing across the clearing, watching me. He is wearing the same uniform as yesterday's crew, but he is no longer weighed down with black plastic bags and orange vests and the slowness of mandatory labor.

Even with the distance and the distortion of light through my net, I can see that he is sweating in this searing June heat. His collar is damp from a strong neck that looks reddish brown against his green uniform, and his hair is shaved close to his skull. He glares at the air in front of him, unable to focus on the drift of mosquitoes in the soft gray light.

"Goddammit!" he cries out, breaking our silence with a hard slap on the back

of his neck. He scratches fiercely at the raw skin, and I wonder if the blood on his hands is his or mine.

For a second I think about dropping the box and running back to the car, but it's too late. He takes a step toward me and I realize how alone we are in the cover of these woods.

"You from Kirkpatrick?"

The word is like a charm to ward off ghosts. It changes the shape of his face and the way he holds himself in the hazy light. We are still 20 feet apart when he stops, but I can see that his round skull is marred by a deep scar and another red cut that has healed only recently.

I pull my mosquito net off my head to get a better look at him. When our eyes meet, he turns like a startled animal and runs heavily into the woods. For a moment I want to keep going, to follow him into the thick of the swamp, but I'm shaking too hard to move. By now the forest is absolutely silent; he is gone.

Without my net, the mosquitoes are everywhere. I feel one plunge into the fat swell of my lip, but I manage to roll the back of my hand across my face to crush its soft body before it can come back at me again.

My brain screams in sirens when I come up over a crest in the road and see a long line of cars pointing toward a checkpoint where two slow sheriffs are leaning into open windows. When I ease the car to a stop like an armrest underneath the leaning cop, he takes a long, hard look at everything inside.

"This thing registered?"

I reach over to open the small glove compartment and a pair of David's winter gloves fall into the empty seat next to me. I hand over the paperwork and stare straight ahead.

"We got a guy escaped from Kirkpatrick," he says, edging closer. "You seen anyone around?"

I reach over and rest my hand on the warm gloves. I think for a long second about the man in the woods, about how afraid he was and how much ground he needed to cover before he would be safe.

"No, sir," I say, looking him in the eye. "I haven't seen a soul."

The car takes off quickly when I ease my foot off the clutch, and I watch the officer stare after me, scowling as I barely keep from screeching the wheels. The windows are down and I squeeze the wool gloves hard before putting them back and closing the door. I drive and drive with my jar of mosquitoes, my eyes and throat on the painful cusp between a laugh and a sob. I'll feel better when I get to the trailer, when I freeze the mosquitoes and sort them out with clicks on my counter. For now, I can feel the steady hum of the car, the damp air pounding in from the window against my hair and my face, and the slightest wisp of relief at being outside. ✷

For information about author Autumn Arnold, see page 5.

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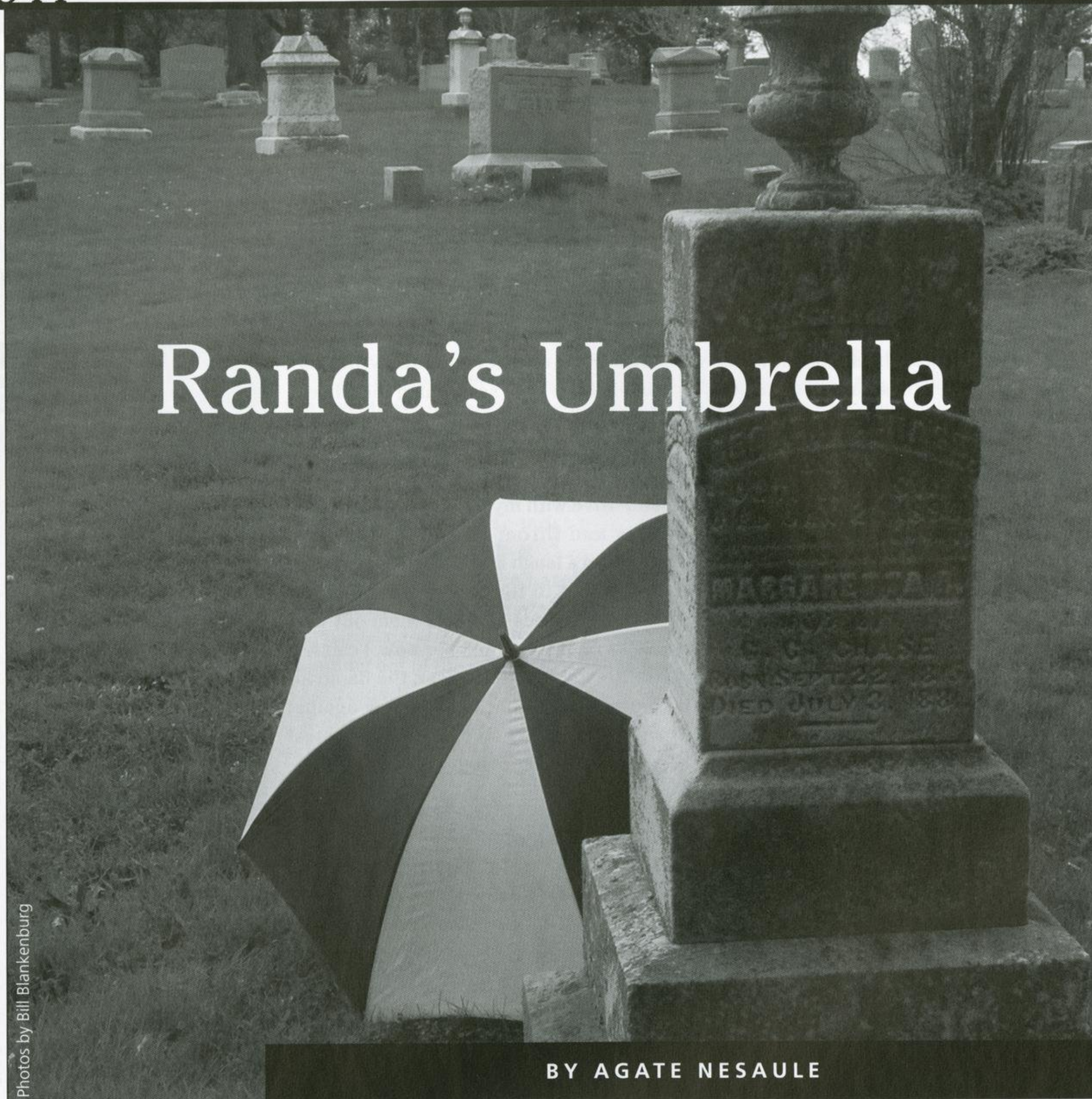

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Randa's Umbrella

BY AGATE NESAULE

AGAINST THE WHITE SATIN LINING of the expensive oak coffin, Randa's skin looks yellow and rubbery. Her narrow lips are frozen in her customary self-righteous expression, and she clutches her plump hands as if guarding her rings. My father gave her the gold wedding band a year and a half after my mother died, but Randa had to exert herself a second time to gain possession of his Latvian "Namejs" ring of entwined bands and braids. It too is gold, rather than the traditional silver, and much heavier than customary for women. A bit of red yarn securing it shows near the blue bruises of IV's on the back of her hand, which the mortician has not been able to mask completely.

Randa, seventy and a large woman, lisped to Papa, "Little Randina wants to see how your great big ring looks on her pretty little hand. She just wants to try it on. Oh no, little Randina doesn't want to give it back! She's going to cry if you

don't let her keep it, you naughty boy! You have to give it to her to prove you're no longer in love with your dead wife. Everyone says you are because you visit her every Saturday at Forest Park Cemetery in Indianapolis. You speak to your daughters and grandson on the phone too, even though you're married to me. No one has ever heard of such blind devotion to a dead spouse, and everyone is talking about it."

I want to feel triumph at seeing my old enemy brought low. For thirteen years I vowed I'd wear my red silk dress emblazoned with enormous blue morning glories to her funeral. I'd bring a case of champagne to celebrate. I'd dance on her grave, in plain sight of the elderly Latvians conventionally dressed in black.

But here I am, in a soft beige suit, a long silk scarf with birds of paradise under my green raincoat, my large oval amber earrings partially hidden by my hair. Ancient Latvians believed that amber could guard against illness and heal wounds, so the earrings should protect me from Randa as effectively as garlic from vampires. I look respectable, but it's obvious I'm not in mourning.

Instead of polite silence or discreet wiping of tears I hear squirming and whispering behind me. Juris and Lita, Randa's grown children, and Papa go up to the open coffin to take leave, but no one else does, not even to make sure she's really dead. They're all afraid of her too.

A schmaltzy rendition of Brahms' Lullaby starts up in one of the side alcoves of the funeral home parlor, screeches to a stop, and starts all over again. It's only eleven in the morning, but Victor the Violinist has probably had a drink already. Forty years ago, when he arrived from the Displaced Persons' Camps in Germany, he was a musician accomplished enough to be offered a position with the Indianapolis Symphony even though he didn't speak a word of English. But desperate drinking lost him that job as well as others in "continental" bars and restaurants, where low lights and his dark good looks transformed him into the Gypsy Violinist. Now in his seventies, Victor likes funerals. People address him as Artist Victor and there is good food, plenty of wine, and sometimes vodka at the meal afterward.

The elderly Latvians sit patiently as Victor stumbles and starts for the third time. He is one of them, they know his past and his weaknesses, but they are just as glad that no Americans, who might judge him differently, are present. None of Randa's acquaintances, neighbors, or nursing aides from the hospital where she worked before my father married her has come to see her off.

"What can we learn from this woman's life?" the middle-aged minister who has recently taken over Papa's congregation asks. The question, in his peculiarly accented Latvian acquired during his childhood in Brazil, receives no response from the two dozen or so of us scattered throughout the large room. He does not really expect us to answer because spontaneous verbal exchanges between minister and congregation are unheard of during the formal Lutheran services, but he looks ill at ease. He shuffles his notes, fails to find the answer, picks up his copy of the New Testament by the spine and shakes it until stray pieces of paper float down. "We must live so as to gain a wiser heart," he announces and hops, quick as a grasshopper, to his seat.

Randa's son Juris, her only true mourner, wipes his eyes. Grief-stricken and thin, he looks a lot older than when I last saw him three years ago. Her daughter Lita goes up to the coffin for the second time and tugs at her mother. Then she turns around, stage-whispers "I got the rings," and drops something into Papa's hand. Lights flash. Either someone with a camera has chosen to document this moment or another thunderstorm is arriving.

Funeral home functionaries instead of pallbearers slide the coffin into a hearse, and I wonder whether my father is sad instead of only relieved. No longer will Randa paste hairs across the doors before leaving for the grocery store so she can check whether he, an upstanding Lutheran minister in his eighties, is sneaking next door to cavort with the head of the Ladies' Committee at church, a ninety-two-year-old widow. Nor will she phone him every hour on the hour the minute he arrives for one of his rare visits with me and my sister to announce that she has pneumonia, breast cancer, a slipped disk and a swollen ankle, and that he must catch the next plane to take her to the hospital. I've never believed any of her complaints, but here she has up and died and proven me wrong.

She had reasons for disliking me too. "Don't marry her, Papa," I said. "She'll make you miserable." She didn't even offer us a cup of coffee the first time I met her because she was too busy berating him for being unfaithful. A young woman in his congregation, whose father's funeral service he had conducted, had kissed him on the cheek when he wished her strength and courage in the coming days. "It doesn't matter to me," Randa said. "I have too many admirers of my own, but the whole congregation is talking about it." Dear, innocent Papa. He thought her jealousy was "feminine" and a sign of love. Nor did he catch on when Randa shoved my sister Beate aside as she tried to hug him on the steps of the church to wish him merry Christmas. (We were, of course, not allowed access to him otherwise on Christmas Eve or Christmas Day.) "Get away," she hissed. "He's mine." She pushed Beate again, almost toppling her onto the hard pavement below. But Papa must have quoted my warning to Randa in a moment of marital intimacy or, more likely, in the midst of an argument.

Flashes of lightning, startling claps of thunder, and a violent downpour almost drown out an elderly member of the congregation who touches my elbow and whispers. "Country people in Latvia used to say that a storm during a funeral meant that the deceased wasn't a good person."

"People sent her a lot of flowers though," I point out.

"That's because your father asked for flowers instead of donations to the congregation or to the Latvian Society. She wouldn't have a wilted dandelion herself. They're for your father really."

"And for her children." They're one reason I didn't wear my red silk dress.

"I hope you're not taken in by Lita, though. She's her mother's daughter, she'll squeeze your father dry. And that boy is a dishrag. People say he was damaged in Vietnam, but I think he's just too lazy to get a job."

I'm about to step into the rain when my father says, "Don't go out there just in your raincoat, Agatina. You'll get soaked and catch pneumonia. Remember how delicate your lungs are."

I'm astonished by his solicitude. During the thirteen years of his marriage, he wouldn't have noticed what I was wearing, remembered I'd had TB at fifteen, or had the energy to say something, but she's been dead only three days and he's already showing affection and concern.

"Take this. It was Randa's," he says and hands me an umbrella. It's huge, with alternating panels of purple and green, a curved dark wood handle, and sturdy metal tines. It shelters me so effectively as trees bend and rain lashes during the graveside ceremony that I'm the only one who isn't sputtering and shivering when I arrive for the meal at the Ramada Inn.

The large portions of crisp fried chicken, moist ham, and mashed potatoes taste surprisingly good for motel food. German wine flows freely into tiny glasses, but no one gets sentimental enough to eulogize the departed, although there are a few toasts to my father to thank him and to wish him well in his new life. It's not clear whether he's being congratulated on his retirement, duly marked and celebrated a year ago, or on his freedom from Randa.

Victor the Violinist slides into the seat next to me.

"Hello, highly esteemed lady," he says. He smells of wine and baby powder, which he's used to mask the beads of sweat on his forehead. His shoe-black dyed hair gleams.

"May I have your son's address? I must write and ask his permission to court you. I understand you're all alone in the world too. Like me."

Victor has had four wives to my one ex-husband.

"I guess you'll be leaving soon for that big house you own. And that's a new car you're driving, isn't it? You'll have to forgive me, esteemed lady, for the next question. It might offend sensitive females, but I'm too honest not to inquire. How old are you?"

Here is my chance to get in a word.

"I'm fifty-four."

"Oh, my God. I didn't know ... I couldn't possibly ... a woman over fifty ... there's just no way ... oh, my God." He slithers away.

Victor knows funerals lead to marriages. Randa, dressed in black, plumped herself down next to my father at a funeral meal thirteen years ago.

"I heard you've just lost your wife, and I'm grief-stricken too. We two have everything in common," she announced, though they'd never met before because Randa lived in Columbus and did not come to Indianapolis for Latvian events. "We are both sensitive, we are both mourners. I lost my husband years ago." She dabbed at her eyes, blew her nose, and inspected the husband material in front of her more closely.

"I know how hard it is for a man to be a widower. No one to wash clothes, no one to cook, no one to love. And you shouldn't get tangled up with a woman your own age because you'll end up having to take care of her. By the way, I'm fifteen years younger than you, practically a girl."

The allusion to laundry must have been especially appealing to Papa, fresh from half a dozen attempts by my sister and me to teach him how to put soap and soiled clothes into the tub and quarters into the slot of the washing machine next door to his apartment. Like many men of his generation, he was helpless at tasks usually done by women.

"Are you going to be all right, Papa?" I ask as people start getting ready to leave. "Would you like me to stay on a couple of days?"

"I'll be just fine," he says cheerfully. He doesn't even seem tired after two hours of burying and two hours of talking and toasting. "But you better start back, Agatina, you have a long way to go. It'll be dark before you get home."

He was never concerned before about the eight-hour drive to Columbus, Indiana, when he used to call me to pick him up right away because he was leaving Randa. But by the time I arrived, she would have cozied up to him, and I'd have nothing to do but turn around and drive back to Madison.

"Well, if you're sure, Papa," I say, glad I won't have to miss any more days of teaching. "But I'll come next weekend in any case, to give you a hand and to check on you."

"That would be nice. I'm very grateful for all you've done for me, Agatina," he says, surprising me once again with his appreciation and with the sweet diminutive of my name, which he wouldn't have dared utter while she hovered near him, monitoring his phone calls.

The sky is dark, but a few tentative rays of sun break through the clouds now and again. The earth is wet, the fields an early light green, and small clumps of daffodils, already in bloom in the hilly southern Indiana countryside, shake themselves, raise their heads, expand, and glow. Papa is safe. I no longer have to be terrified that Randa will start beating him as he gets older and frailer or that she'll torture him physically instead of just screaming and throwing his clothes out into the street. My son, my sister, and I will actually get to spend some time with him now too.

Past West Lafayette a drizzle begins and darkness presses down on the empty flat fields on what is surely one of the most boring drives in the United States. I pop in a cassette of ghost stories and put my mind on automatic as stairs creak and doors slam in country houses in the England of the 1890s.

The car swerves so suddenly, I barely avoid the ditch. Grateful that no one else is near me, I manage to turn sharply to the left and then right onto the grass verge. I wait for my heartbeat to return to normal before I pull out into traffic again. Ten miles farther I have to jerk on the wheel the second time to avoid hitting a woman standing by the side of the road. But I see nothing except a telephone pole with black plastic blowing loosely the instant I pass. The drizzle on my windshield is turning to ice when a black stretch limousine cuts in front of me, forcing me to the shoulder once more. Its mirrored windows give no clue

whether it's full of rock stars, Mafia dons, coffins, or vampires.

I must stop. I've avoided an accident three times already, even before the freezing rain turned the pavement into black ice, and I may not be so lucky again. I creep along to the first exit and follow a weak neon sign to a Knight's Inn.

"Traveling alone?" the clerk asks, brushing dandruff from his navy blue sweater.

Have I stepped into *Psycho*? Did I see an old farmhouse, with only one window lit, in the desolate fields behind the motel? Is that where he keeps his mother's corpse and changes into her dresses? Is he questioning me because he plans to stab me to death in the shower?

Stop that. He's far too fat to be an axe murderer, and the flashy rings cutting into his pudgy fingers proclaim him to be a husband, a high school graduate, and a member of the American Eagles Club. And it's not really deserted because there are several cars in front of other units. Besides, I can move a bureau and wedge a chair under the door.

I am calm by the time I park in front of my number, but a scream escapes me nevertheless as I reach for my overnight bag.

A black shape, like a huge dead bat, has spread over the entire back seat of my car. A truck driver, a pair of newlyweds, and a family with three children spill out of the other rooms before I realize I've been frightened by nothing.

It is only Randa's umbrella, somehow unfurled on its own, which I've forgotten to return.

"Keep it as a memento," Papa says to me on the phone. "I have no earthly use for an umbrella that color."

A small voice deep inside me whispers to get rid of the umbrella as quickly as possible. The last thing I need is a memento of Randa because I want to forget her, unforgettable though she may be. But I don't listen. That umbrella is more than rightfully mine. Beate and I will never see any of our mother's things again, which Randa appropriated: her delicate hand-painted china cups saved for and bought one by one at L. S. Ayres, or her crystal vase, treasured because it was a present from Mrs. Putelis, who was later brutally murdered. Randa even glommed onto some of Mama's beloved books, though she wouldn't understand them if she tried to read them, nor could she pronounce the titles of the ones Mama studied for her late-life Ph.D. in comparative literature.

So far Randa's daughter has shown no inclination to offer Beate and me any of the things that belonged to our mother, and Randa's will has made it clear that her children inherit everything. She hasn't left even a two-dollar bill to Papa though he paid for her food, utilities, maintenance, new appliances, new roof, and new car, not to mention that he endured living with her for thirteen years. She has, in fact, done her best to make him homeless again at eighty-four, just as he was as a seven-year-old orphan during World War I and as a thirty-six-year-old adult during World War II.

But Randa's kindly son Juris has unwittingly foiled her plans by generously inviting my father to live in her house as long as he wants. I hope she's mad about that Down There. I hope she's hopping up and down, cursing ineffectually, between blazing fires as three little devils, their long tails snaking behind them, circle and jab her with their shiny red pitchforks.

It'll make her madder yet if I too get to keep something of hers. The umbrella, spread out and drying peacefully in the sun, doesn't look the least bit frightening. Its green and purple panels spring to life, tempting me. The green is the

right shade to complement my raincoat and peacock scarf, and the purple matches my Italian leather boots. Why, I might have bought such an umbrella myself! Its price is laughable as reparations for the hundreds of dollars in collect phone calls Papa made when he could sneak away from her, for the lost deposits to U-Haul when he changed his mind about leaving her, or for how miserable she made all of us, but at least it's something.

A gentle rain is falling, soaking the earth and turning brown fields to delicate green, as I pull into a faculty parking lot at UW-Whitewater. I grasp Randa's umbrella and my briefcase, tuck a few books awkwardly under my arm, and use my foot to slam the car door. I touch the lever to unfurl the umbrella.

A sudden gust of wind comes from nowhere. It slaps me in the face with the narrow tie for securing the tines, it yanks on my arm, scatters my books on the wet pavement, and lifts the umbrella above me. I almost lose my balance as Randa's umbrella strains toward the dark clouds, threatening to take me with it. I hold on, though I have no idea why.

The strong tines and sturdy material bend and twist, and then with a whoosh, the umbrella turns inside out. Its black prongs rake the sky before it collapses again into its batlike heap.

"I can't believe it did that, there's hardly any wind," Ruth, a dear friend and colleague, says as she steps out of her car. I'm glad she's seen it or I would think I was dreaming.

"Let me help you," she offers as she picks up the umbrella, which now looks obedient, even a little ashamed.

We pull at the stiff material and work the tines back and forth to fit them back into their black metal casings. It's slow going because for every two we secure, one snaps out of place. I just hope no students are watching and laughing at us, two gray-haired women's studies professors, trying to subdue a recalcitrant umbrella in the middle of a rainy parking lot.

Not that feminism was any help for dealing with Randa. The first year she was married to Papa, I tried to give her the Feminist Absolution, i.e., that she behaved so badly because she was a Woman Damaged by the Patriarchy. Psychological analysis didn't do much either. Childhood sexual abuse was a plausible explanation for the way Randa sexualized everything: she told everyone in Papa's congregation who would stand still to listen that the reason he maintained contact with his daughters was that we were blackmailing him for his past sexual misconduct with us; she bragged that she was "better in bed" than our mother; she slandered her sister in Australia and her own first husband by saying they had lots of dirty sex and even a baby together; and she couldn't leave off kissing and caressing her adult son as he tried to nap on the sofa. She may have been traumatized by something in the long-ago past, but that did not account for her vicious energy.

"There. Good as new," Ruth says, straightening and closing the umbrella.

She hands it to me and hurries ahead into the building that houses our offices. A second gust of wind slices through the quiet patter of rain, whips me around, and lifts the umbrella, inside out, once more. I hold on, feeling foolish, as its black tines hover above me, scarring the sky like a giant pitchfork, like a broom for an exceptionally fat witch.

"Maybe Randa's spirit has taken up residence inside the umbrella," I say to my friend John. "Maybe it's hanging around, waiting to get at me, like the spiteful ghost of *Beloved* in Toni Morrison or like Madelyn's angry spirit in Fay Weldon. My students believe things like that happen all the time," I say, remembering stories they've told me. The aunt's boyfriend, who used to call her Imelda Marcos whenever she brought back another pair of shoes from the mall, returned after he got killed in a motorcycle accident. He strewed her shoe boxes, alphabetized by color and season, all over the bedroom floor. The drowned fiancée of a young man came as a gentle breeze to caress his cheek and ruffle his hair as he floated roses into the river in her memory. A grandmother's husband alighted on her shoulder as a butterfly on their wedding anniversary, just as he had promised.

I want John to drive away the inexplicable, to be his usual rational self. "Because it isn't true," he said when I asked him once why he didn't believe in resurrection or reincarnation.

"Get rid of that umbrella," John says, in a reaction totally out of character, before I'm even finished with my list of near accidents on the drive from Indianapolis. "Get it out of your house and out of your car this minute. You'll have an accident. She'll make you fall down the stairs. She'll burn down your house."

Together we push the still inverted umbrella into my big black garbage can, squash down the lid, and lock the handles. We shut the garage door and latch it. And on a sunny Friday morning in May, a muscular young man heaves the umbrella onto a pile of soggy trash, turns on the compressor, and flattens it. The umbrella is on its way to the City Dump. A wave of irrational guilt, as if I'd sneaked leaky batteries or cans of weed-killer into the garbage instead of taking them to the specialized center for chemical waste, washes over me briefly. But that really is silly. They wouldn't accept Randa's umbrella at a site for toxic materials no matter what I said, and surely Randa's hostility is only personal instead of being directed at the entire population of Madison. Although I still don't fully understand why Papa stayed married to her, I believe I'm finally done with her for good.

"There's a family named Nesaule living close to the railroad station in Valmiera," a woman tells me after I give a paper at an academic conference on

my first return to Latvia after an exile of forty-seven years. Because Nesaule ("no sunlight") is an uncommon last name, whoever it was has to be a relative, though Papa's careful notes have not mentioned this family.

My father lost everybody by the time he was seven. His mother died, his kind first stepmother died, and then in one terrible summer of smallpox and starvation during World War I, his father died also. My father was away from home, at a farm where he'd been sent to work driving cows to pasture, when word came that there was no one for him to go back to. The cottage had been turned over to other laborers and his brothers and sisters had been dispersed. The tender-hearted farmer's wife wanted to keep him, but with the hard winter coming on, he would be an extra mouth to feed. The farmer bought him a pair of new shoes and sent him out on the road, pointing him toward Valmiera, where his father's brother lived.

I open a gate, walk between two flower beds, knock on the door, and am invited in as soon as I say I may be a relative from America. The house is full of people, several generations, whom I cannot sort out and with whom I don't have anything in common. They don't look like me and they don't talk like me, though my defenses against them are so high I might be missing any similarities.

For this is the house of Papa's Wicked Stepmother.

Papa hardly ever mentions his painful childhood, so I have only a few fragments of stories, sharp as stones, dropped accidentally. He had to carry huge crates of vegetables to market and move heavy buckets of soil and manure for the Cruel Stepmother, he said by way of speculating about the origins of a hernia. She forbid him to attend his grade school graduation because there was work to be done and he didn't have anything to wear anyway, he explained when I asked him why he wasn't in a class picture recently received from Latvia. She starved him and she did not allow him to eat at the table with the rest of the family, he told me when I reported that he had apologized for dropping a piece of bread and repeatedly mimed kissing it while coming out of anesthesia.

Conversation with the Wicked Stepmother's family is hard going, but we piece together bits of history, and then a granddaughter brings out a box of photographs.

"These are of my grandmother's funeral," she says.

And here, lying in a coffin, is the spitting image of Randa, Papa's wife and technically my stepmother. The same narrow lips, the same spiteful righteous expression, the same black dress. Here are some of the other family members who are sitting next to me now, only a couple of decades younger, gazing mournfully at her corpse. Here's the small funeral procession in a rainstorm, huge black umbrellas raised, on their way to the graveside. Here, almost, is an umbrella with contrasting panels.

"Would you like one to take back to your father?" the granddaughter asks, shuffling through the photos of the open coffin.

There is nothing in the world that I want more. Apologizing that I have brought no gifts, I give her some money instead and shake hands. I don't bother to make polite noises about meeting again with people whom I don't really want to know.

A small, dark-haired boy carrying bricks passes me on my way to the gate. He has the same blue eyes, the same dimples, the same delighted smile as my father. The Cruel Stepmother triumphed over my father's mild, weak-willed uncle, but some of the Nesaule family characteristics have survived in this seven- or eight-year-old boy.

"Hurry up or you'll get a whipping," someone yells from the house, and he is gone before I can even think of giving him money. They'd probably take it away from him, it wouldn't bring light into all the dark corners of this house, and it would not change his life. But I have missed an opportunity to be kind to a child like my father used to be, and this clouds my joy that I have proof for Papa that the Wicked Witch really is dead. ✺

Postscript

During the 13-day period (February 3–16, 2004) while I wrote the above, the fuses in my house blew nine times. I have never had any trouble with them before, and the electrician, who came twice and charged a total of $160.16, could find no cause. The disturbances stopped as soon as I printed out the pages, but my son's pickup had a flat tire a few minutes after he picked up his mail. The title "Randa's Umbrella" peeked out of the envelope while he changed the tire on the narrow shoulder of one of the busiest highways in Texas.

Agate Nesaule is the author of ***A Woman in Amber: Healing the Trauma of War and Exile*** *(Soho Press, 1995), which won an American Book Award in 1996, was named an Outstanding Achievement by the Wisconsin Library Association, and has been translated into seven languages. She has published numerous academic articles and literary essays, and has completed a novel,* ***In Love with Jerzy Kosinski.*** *Nesaule lives in Madison.*

Photo by Bill Blankenburg

Prizes

BY MARGARET BENBOW

GARRETT PALMER WAS THE SEXIEST POET THAT YEAR. When a poet wins a big prize, his wit is sweeter to everyone, his shoulders seem more muscular. He has more hair, and it curls.

When Garrett walked into the hall where the reading was to be held, there was the halo effect around his hair, and people ate up his famously funky leather jacket as though it were a sacred cloak of monkey fur and auk feathers worn by an Aztec prince. True, some of the faces watching him were shriveled by envy. Possibly because so many poets have nerve-shredding early lives and serve as the hunchbacks of their various parochial schools and girl scout troops, they tend to be lacerated people who are deeply fascinated by prizes and all forms of public awards and acclaim. It seems to them that all the glitter and soft licks should do something to heal. However, you could massage them slowly with vats of goose grease, pin medals as big as trash can lids on their narrow bowed chests, and it would not help. Nothing could, because their ills are irremediable.

I've had time to ponder this because I'm a poet, and also because of my junior position in the department. I do workhorse duty at the readings. I buy the white wine, oversee disposal of the folding chairs, serve as walker to visiting foreign dignitary poets and local dipsomaniac poets. I investigate reports of smoke in the can and throw out freshman poets sneaking butts.

Garrett Palmer had won the Pinehurst. As I say, he shone and glowed in our eyes, but not everyone felt that way.

"God, I hate that smug son of a bitch," Jimmy Danaan said. Danaan had dug in by the wine. He too was dressed in

leather, but the effect was far different. Not for the first time, I reflected that he was lucky he had a teaching load that would drop a moose. The chairman had wanted to kick Jimmy out into the real world for many years. But Jimmy was safe as long as he held up the department on his chunky little cement block shoulders. Right now he was pouting because he'd been forbidden to read. I secretly felt the chairman had overreacted to Jimmy's high-spirited pretense of mooning the audience at the last reading. After all, Jimmy's ancient teaching corduroys were so rumpsprung he went around in a sort of permanent half-moon anyway.

"You're drunk," I said.

"Nonsense," Danaan said grandly. At this point he spotted Molly Blevek and began shouting to her. "Ah, a fleshy girl in a pink angora sweater. Bring some of that over here, mama. Jeezez, Janey, look at the lovely fat can on her, the kind that makes a man want to plant his boot in it, a truly queenly butt. Yet she walks like Bambi. And here she is."

Molly pushed him away, hard. "Don't you know that in this crowd you can get murdered for talking that way? You're a fat drunken stupid man and you will never, ever get tenure." In spite of her cold looks and hard words, there was something in her voice, and in his gaze, that told me they'd recently been to bed together, and had been well pleased with each other when they got there.

He put his big red face in her neck. He was silent for several seconds, then began softly singing lyrics from the rock song "Can't Tear It Up Enuff": "I'm in my prime to rip it up ... sweetest piece of lovin' any girl ever had," looking at her hopefully. "Can't tear it up enough!" She tried to look coldly disgusted, but her face was not made for that expression. A delicate flush grew and sat on the oval of her cheeks. Just when it seemed impossible she would not smile, his eyes fell on her neck. "Jesus, Mary and Joseph, where did you get those? I'm in my little room writing sonnets to you, and you're out fucking about like Madonna and Catherine the Great and all those raving historical sluts?" Certainly she did have enormous hickies, I had never seen any so big and black, they looked almost like a failed garroting attempt.

"Christ, woman, whom have you been dating, Vlad the Impaler?"

"*Shut up*," Molly said, showing him her fist. At this moment Garrett Palmer reached our group.

Nothing succeeds like success, as the saying goes, and Garrett had looked pretty good to begin with. Now we accorded him the attention we might have given a strolling sun god. He was a tall, broad-shouldered man with fresh skin and a full head of romantically tumbling hyacinthine curls, jet black. He looked like an extremely sexy and effective young pharaoh. He had java-black eyes which noticed everything, and now they fell on Danaan, who was filling his big coffee thermos at the wine bowl. "Topping up your Maxwell House?" Palmer said with a smile.

Danaan, who spent his life moving seamlessly from one luridly inappropriate emotion to the next, stood with the dripping thermos in his hand and grinned at Palmer. The effect of his crooked teeth through his stubbly beard was not pleasant. "Congratulations on getting the Pinery Boy award, Garrett," he said. "Oh, excuse me, of course I meant, the Pinehurst."

"*Pinery Boy*?" Garrett repeated with a baffled smile.

"Yes, because," said Danaan, taking a big snort out of the thermos, "we could all see the log-rolling from here."

I was secretly delighted that this had been said, but that I had not been the one to say it.

Garrett, who beneath his smooth exterior is the toughest son of a bitch you will ever meet, laughed handsomely. "And that's your disinterested opinion, is it?"

"It is."

"Well, I'm surprised you didn't win some kind of prize or other yourself. You write the kind of big, gassy—excuse me," he corrected himself, "of course I meant, *bravura* pieces that often win prizes."

"Yes, and so I would," said Danaan, picking up a cocktail weiner on a toothpick and staring at it sadly, "but in college I didn't belong to a fraternity, and I didn't have any asshole fraternity brothers, and now when I enter contests, there's no old asshole fraternity brother judge to remember Jimmy Danaan."

Now, Garrett did not publicize it, but in his college days fifteen years before he'd been a Deke; and so had the head of the Pinehurst panel. They'd swung many a stein together. Garrett laughed heartily at Jimmy's remark, showing all of his fine teeth. "No, I guess there wouldn't be many to remember you, would there? You were pretty much of an outcast at Bogtrot U., or wherever the hell it is that you went, from what I've heard. Damn, Jimmy, you should have pledged when you had the chance."

Now those shining black eyes fastened on Jimmy's cocktail weiner. He gestured toward it, and spoke solicitously. "Christ, you shouldn't have so many of those. They'll clog you all up. In fact, as a friend I would have to tell you that you look terrible. What do you live on, ham fat? Look at that." He pointed to Danaan's paunch, which gleamed whitely between gaping leathers. "What the hell is that? Are you hiding a Vietnamese pot-bellied pig in your jacket?"

Danaan put his hands on his stomach and smiled beatifically. "This is my beer gut, Garrett. Women admire it. After all, as a friend told me recently," he looked into Molly's eyes with a smile, "a fine machine needs a big shed."

Garrett looked disconcerted, but only for a second. Then he said, "Oh, do you find that so?" He put one hand on his own flat stomach and the other around Molly Blevek's shoulders. "I never did."

The sight of Jimmy Danaan's neck suddenly swelling like a cobra's hood recalled me to my duties. "Come on, Garrett and Molly," I said, "it's almost show time and we still have to plan the lineup. Zenna Freitag is such a wreck with stage fright she wants to be first and get it over with. Bill Keller is going to do poems from his goat book and is going to be in costume, and there's some new kid who's been nagging me—"

This last was Molly's fault. She had persistent delusions of democracy, and

insisted that a student unknown should be allowed to finish every reading. Her idea was that some infant Rimbaud would be heartened by the audience's adulation. Of course, what they saw was the audience's asses moving away from them and out the door.

When I got Garrett away from Danaan I said, "Don't mind Jimmy."

"Why would I mind Jimmy?" Garrett said. "He keeps my edge up." Then he added something unexpected. "Most people don't know they're alive. At least he knows."

Eventually the reading began. Zenna Freitag exhausted the audience with her stage fright. Bill Keller's goat costume was a big hit, particularly the udder, which he waggled sensuously during the meatier portions of his poem about his goats Buster and Emanuelle. Molly did chaste, severe political poems without adjectives, which made people feel guilty about noticing her gorgeous shape. As for Garrett, he liked the plum spot, second to the last, where he more or less mopped up the gravy in terms of audience response. Really, most of us didn't even envy the guy. It seemed beside the point somehow. He was so smart, so gifted, and he looked so good.

Jimmy Danaan drank steadily through Freitag's hysterics, Keller's sore teats, Molly's professed solidarity with the Aleut. He did mumble, "Send them your pink angora sweater, it's cold up there," but not very loud, and people were able to ignore it.

When Garrett stood to read, his students leaped up all over the room and trooped down front to sit at his feet. This was their habitual tribute to the master. It was probably against the fire laws, but it warmed people's hearts, so I let them be. Garrett was such a popular teacher that he even had a couple athletes in his class. I noticed Buck Rugoski with his shoulders as big as a Gothic church door and his almost white brush-cut bristling fiercely above his big square-cut head. Garrett began, "I'll be reading from my new book, *I Speak Tiger—*"

"Actually," Danaan remarked to his neighbors, "that should be *I Speak Stupid*."

Rugoski shifted himself massively to glare at Jimmy, and there was a rustle, but it passed, and that was the last we heard from Danaan until Garrett had almost finished. The audience was in the kind of swoon he could always induce, which was produced by his burnt-sugar baritone, the exquisitely judged funkiness of his clothes, his glamorous vitality, and even his poems.

"And last of all," Garrett said finally, "something for my love." He then read a poem about Molly so tense, hot, and bold that I privately decided, once and for all, that as a poet, Garrett had a hardball. There had been times in the past when I wondered.

It would have been interesting to hear how the poem ended, but when Garrett reached the part about ravening like a voluptuous viper over the beautiful neck of his love, a sort of prehistorical scream blasted from the back of the room. I and the rest of the audience turned to see Jimmy Danaan bounding toward the podium with red demented stoat's eyes, claws out and flexed for Garrett's gullet. Buck Rugoski placed himself between the two of them, and now he looked like a cathedral wall.

There was a period of almost indecipherable confusion when a lot of things happened that I could not do much about. Some people told me later that I should have called the security guard at once, but at the time I thought it was better for Jimmy to try to batter Rugoski rather than our frail, elderly guard. Also, like everybody else, I was stunned that something was actually happening at a reading. There were blows and oaths and kicks, and blood spilled. Jimmy threw up at some point. I think that most people in this audience had never seen sweat, drool, vomit, and blood on the floor separately, let alone together. I will give Danaan credit, there was no quit in the scrappy little bastard at all. Apparently he never doubted he would eventually dominate Rugoski, and then murder Garrett. I was watching him briskly roll out from under the big Air Jordan on his neck, relieved that he didn't seem to have spinal injuries, when somebody thumped me hard on the shoulder.

"It's my turn to read now," the new kid said, glaring at me, foamy-mouthed like a rabid dog, "why aren't you announcing me, you said I could read, Garrett's done, they're all done, it's my turn now!"

Nothing a student poet could do should surprise me, but I was surprised. "You're crazy," I said. I pointed to Danaan rolling and bucking, as busy as a nest of snakes, Rugoski clamping his hands around Jimmy's throat and Molly trying to force them apart. I walked rapidly away to call the security guard. The kid followed so closely I thought he had his teeth in my sleeve. "No," he said, "you promised, you said I could read, I follow Garrett, he just finished, I read now."

He was wearing some kind of ankle-length, enormously bulky Stalinist stormcoat, fiercely strapped and belted, with commanding epaulets. He always wore this coat, no matter what the weather.

"Oh for Christ's sake," I said, mainly to get him out of my face, "go read."

He did read, after moving the microphone stand a few feet away from the coil of battlers, the blood and vomit. The security guard came. I'd called him to save what was left of Jimmy. There was a lot of milling around. Rugoski was sitting on Jimmy's chest, and Molly was pounding hell out of Rugoski's back and crying. Jimmy was bleeding from the nose and mouth. The kid read on, dozens of fiercely scribbled papers dripping from his hands, strutting to and fro, tossing his lank hair.

Garrett had stayed throughout at the side of the melee, like a pitcher saving his arm. I went to stand beside him. With his height, rich coloring and exaggerated shoulders, he looked like a big virile archangel bending his powers to observe, for a moment, the measly doings of weasel earthlings. But the expression on his face was deeply attentive. I noted in wonder that he was listening to the kid. In fact, he was the only person in the room listening to the kid.

Twice, as the boy finished a poem and flung it to the floor, Garrett bent to pick it up and quietly held it as he listened. I tried to tune in myself for a minute, but could make little sense of what I heard. It was like listening to a profoundly foreign, and unendurably intense, and yet somehow exalted harangue. It was like trying to make sense of a blaze.

So I gave it up and watched the security guard prop up Danaan. Jimmy looked as fresh as you might expect of somebody who'd drunk half a gallon of wine and thrown it up, been sat on, kicked in the nose and crotch and had his arms twisted almost out of their sockets. However, he wasn't finished yet, not by a long shot. When the guard accused him of mayhem, Jimmy drew himself up and said in an offended voice, "I did not punch the man in the chest, I was just touching his shirt to see if it was one of those sweatshop imports." Then he was supported from the room with Molly walking beside him, holding his hand. Garrett watched them go. The kid had temporarily stopped reading, because he was searching for a special poem that was, of course, at the very bottom of the hundreds in his bulging briefcase.

I said to Garrett, "I'm sorry about Molly," in a muted voice, letting him know I respected his pain.

"No," he said. "I always knew I wasn't enough of a social service project to keep her interested."

I sighed. Then I said in a serious voice, "I'm afraid Molly's going to regret this. Jimmy's a *disaster*."

"Oh, do you think so?" said Garrett, looking happier.

Actually, I thought Molly would greatly enjoy being the making of Danaan. She would begin with basic things, like slapping his head off every time he talked dirty in public. She would hold his hand through root canals, frog-march him to AA meetings, throw out his bunion-sprung brogues and rump-sprung corduroys, and buy him pants with a higher rise. She would lure him into bathtubs by climbing in first, then tell him to wash. If he protested, she would smack him silly, ball him senseless, and scrub him like a pot. They were made for each other. They would have a very happy life.

"I can't find it!" the kid suddenly cried out, frantically dumping the contents of his briefcase on the floor. "It's not here, and it was the one poem—"

"Never mind," Garrett said. "You gave a fine reading." The boy looked up scowling, in wonder and distrust. He was like some fierce little animal who had never heard a civil word in his life, and could not believe in it when he had it. " What's your name?"

"Artie Rempl," the boy said unwillingly, and a blush flashed all over his homely face. "I know it's a funny name."

"It's not funny," Garrett said. He showed Artie the poems he held. "When did you write these?"

"This morning. I had second thoughts about the fifth stanza in—" and he launched into an explanation so dense, packed, and technical it felt like being hit on the head with a brick, about his second thoughts, and his third thoughts, and his reversals, homages, and sudden revelations. Garrett listened, and then asked questions. I was struck by something new in his manner. If he had been a stranger, I would have called it humility.

They talked for several minutes about the poems, as the room emptied out. Artie became more and more animated, rubbing his coarse red hair with both hands, punching one fist into the other. His forelimbs sprang into weird, exuberant full-arm gestures. Finally he fell silent, looked down and again was overcome by ferocious blushes. He said, almost inaudibly, "Does this mean you like my poems? Can I join your class?"

"You don't need my class," Garrett said, and it was the only time in all the years I knew him that he sounded sad. "You will never need my class at all." As the boy's face began to cloud, Garrett suddenly thumped the flat of his hand against the bulging greenish chest of the Soviet stormcoat he wore. "It's a *compliment*, Artie," he said. "A compliment."

We helped Artie pick up the great heap of poems on the floor, and he carefully stowed them away in the ripped briefcase. There was a pause, then Garrett said, "Are you two hungry? There's that Hardees a block away—"

"I like Whoppers," Artie offered shyly.

Artie walked ahead of us out the door. Garrett reached out to lightly touch one of the epaulets on his shoulders, and said to me quietly, "I had a cool coat like that once." ✹

*Margaret Benbow is the only UW alum to have won the George B. Hill Award for poetry four times as an undergraduate. Since then her poems have won many prizes and appeared in numerous magazines and anthologies. Benbow's full-length collection **Stalking Joy** won the Walt McDonald First Book Award and was published by TTUP Press. She has now completed a second collection, **Believing Your Eyes.** She also writes short stories and was awarded a Wisconsin Arts Board grant for fiction in 2003. Benbow's story "Egyptian" appears in the new short fiction anthology **Barnstorm** (University of Wisconsin Press). Her poem, "Bearbait," appears on page 23.*

IN MY WORDS

Weddings

We keep on saying "I do." Our readers write about memorable weddings in their lives.

Photos by Bill Blankenburg

A MILLENNIAL ROMANCE

We were married on a bitterly cold February afternoon in 2001. We chose to hold the wedding at the University Club; Fred liked its convenience and its food, and I thought that it was an appropriate setting for the nuptials of a pair of middle-aged professors.

Three months dating, three months engaged. I was terrified by how wifely I felt after meeting him, having managed to escape matrimony up to that point in my life. He had been married and divorced twice and seemed to feel that the third time would be charmed. We considered, as rationally as we could, the reasons against getting married. Did I really want to marry someone who had been twice-divorced and who was a cancer survivor? Did he really want to marry so soon after a divorce, and marry someone who had never tried it and who loved living alone? In the end our fierce mutual attraction won out, buttressed by the logic that we were old enough to know what we wanted and had the skills to make it work.

The dress, the dress. How to look unconcerned yet elegant, nontraditional yet special? After an embarrassingly thorough but fruitless search of fine department stores, boutiques, vintage stores, and even (shudder) bridal shops, I had a dress and coat tailored from a beautiful blue-green wool. Complete with red shoes and a yellow bouquet, I was set.

With the major decisions behind us, we planned and carried off a small

family wedding and dinner. The photographs document Fred's preceremony impatience and postceremony relief. I look as I felt, confident and happy. My mother looks ecstatic: finally, a son-in-law. We had champagne and wedding cake at the dinner, and in the background we played Ella Fitzgerald, Oscar Peterson, and the Temptations. Back at the house, surrounded by moving boxes, Fred and my uncle watched IU basketball and the rest of us sat on the floor and talked.

We had bought a house near the university, moved, put our previous homes on the market, and gotten married all within six weeks. I don't recommend it. The obligatory wedding photo of our clasped left hands features simple platinum rings and scraped red knuckles.

Fred's cancer didn't give us much of a honeymoon. A month after our wedding, while we were visiting friends in California, the first of his many tumor fevers flared up, accompanied by an extreme backache. When we returned home we started what turned out to be several years of visits to oncologists, radiation treatments, and various chemotherapies, accelerating in frequency as the cancer spread. However, we also managed to enjoy gardening at our new/old home, going to see Fred's beloved Badgers play football and basketball, and traveling. Most of our travels were connected to Fred's sociology conferences, some to my education and psychology meetings. We visited England, Germany, Australia, Finland, and the Netherlands together. He had to cancel visits to Japan, France, and Norway due to bouts of illness. We loved to talk progressive politics and had mock arguments about whether to weight our charitable donations more heavily toward the environment (him) or people (me).

I wasn't crazy about marriage, but I was crazy about Fred. He died just short of our fourth anniversary. On my bad days I feel like our marriage was all about his cancer. On my good days, which occur more and more often, I feel privileged to have loved and been loved so deeply, and to have served a useful purpose as a companion to someone who was suffering.

Pam Clinkenbeard
Madison

TO SERVE AND PROTECT

My wife and I were married in Marinette in July of 1989. After our brief ceremony, we plunged into the crowd, greeting guests and accepting congratulations. One of the first to shake my hand was my Uncle John, whom I hadn't seen in years. John had been my mom's sister's husband before their divorce a few years earlier. Many years before that, when his sons and I were young boys, John was shot at point-blank range while working undercover for the Milwaukee Police Department. With holes in his heart and liver, he somehow managed to drive himself to the hospital. The doctors saved his life, but he suffered a stroke during surgery and was left partly paralyzed.

When Uncle John was well enough to travel but still in a wheelchair, our two families took a vacation together. One day I barged into my aunt and uncle's room in the lodge where we were staying and was confronted by the sight of my uncle's bare, scarred back. He was sitting on a stool and my aunt was washing him. I stood frozen there for several seconds, transfixed by the volcanic, blistery exit wounds.

Besides learning to talk and walk again, Uncle John taught himself to write with his left hand. Eventually both our families moved from Milwaukee to smaller, quieter towns up north. Uncle John got a real estate license, but that didn't go well for him. He sold Amway for a while; my mother bought a lot of laundry soap. The insurance money wasn't enough, so my aunt had to take a job to make ends meet.

I remember only two conversations with my uncle. When I was 17, but when my aunt and uncle were still married, I asked him what being a cop had been like. He became wistful; it was clear he had loved the work. "It was a young man's game, though," he kept repeating. I never asked him about the shooting.

The other conversation was on that day in July, at our wedding. "I'm so happy for you," he said in his deep, raspy voice. I couldn't decide if he looked happy or sad. I must have replied that I was glad he'd come, because he added, "I wouldn't have missed it."

It was only later, when it was all over, that my wife and I were told. After excusing himself from his table during the reception meal, Uncle John had left the building and collapsed on the front lawn. An ambulance was called, but a massive heart attack claimed my uncle's life before he reached the hospital.

My cousins insisted that we not cancel the dance we had scheduled. "Dad would have wanted it that way," they insisted. When we reached the hotel, a pall hung over the ballroom. Something had to be said, so my dad took the microphone. The two men had been close once, before their divorces. When Dad choked up and couldn't go on, he signaled the DJ, who played James Taylor's *Fire and Rain*. We cried. Later the DJ played happier songs, and eventually people danced and laughed.

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"They did an autopsy," my mom told us after our honeymoon. "The doctor said he couldn't believe John lived as long as he did. They said his heart looked like Swiss cheese." We all shook our heads. "Just full of holes," mom said.

"Do you know," she continued, "when the boys got into his trailer, they found all his papers laid out on the kitchen table. Insurance policies, his will ... it was all organized. He must have known."

Rick Chamberlin
Prairie du Sac

FAMILY FIRST

We wanted to be at our grandson's wedding. After all, family belongs together; but we debated going. We weren't happy with the chosen date, which was over the New Year's weekend, a time we traditionally spend with close friends in a North Woods cabin. We would have to fly twelve hundred miles to Shreveport, Louisiana, during one of the busiest times of the year. Although we believe that family comes first, we had to convince ourselves to overcome the obstacles.

That phrase, *family first*, became an encouraging mantra throughout weeks of long-distance preparation. It also helped knowing we would see our granddaughter, Lyn, who lived in Ireland with her husband. She was expecting their first child in early February but so wanted to help with the wedding that she flew to her parents' home in Dallas a week before the celebration.

We got the phone call two days before we were to leave.

"Lyn's baby came early! Both are fine!" Our son's voice filled with exuberance and relief, "And Ben arrived just in time to take her to the hospital. You'll get to see your great-granddaughter at the wedding!"

"What? They're going to bring a three-day-old baby to the wedding?"

"Sure. Doctor says it's fine. Hospitals move them out quickly these days. They'll pack a portable crib in the car for the drive to Shreveport; they want to be there with us. Though times change, family still comes first."

My husband and I promptly expanded our mantra to: *times change, but still family first.*

We rose at 3:30 a.m. for our 6:15 plane. After a two-hour layover for the connecting flight, we arrived in Shreveport in time for a nap before the rehearsal dinner. As we finished dressing, Lyn and Ben arrived, bringing Kaylyn, their three-day-old baby. Though I'd memorized that revised mantra, I still couldn't believe it! A tiny infant, born a month early, was allowed to travel so soon—and to a wedding!

"Oh, Grandma," the two proud parents pronounced, "she'll be fine. We'll even dance with her at the wedding. Then we go to Houston to get her a passport so she can fly to Ireland with us."

That's when disorientation descended. I wanted to be the great-grandma rocking the newborn, but I had to hurry to the restaurant where we met the bride's family and friends and I tried to remember names of unfamiliar people. Throughout the excitement, our family's newest member slept unconcerned in her father's arms.

Toasts to the couple followed. Our son suggested that I, the family poet, give a special toast. In the confusion and fatigue, I drew a blank. I could only repeat our memorized mantra, so I was grateful when our baby's hunger cry and the ensuing chuckles interrupted. Someday I will thank Kaylyn for saving the moment.

The wedding day was filled with traditional activities: photographing bride and groom, bridesmaids and groomsmen, grandparents and grandchildren, his family, her family, soon to be their family. Everyone wanted the newest member of the combined families included in each photo. When my turn came, a rush of joy filled me as I wrapped my arms carefully around the small, soft blanket-swathed bundle. It all became worthwhile as the beauty of the couple's march up the aisle and the exchanged vows enfolded us.

During the reception, the bride and groom included Lyn, Ben, and Kaylyn in a loving slow dance around the floor. The baby never cried. Already, she understood our guiding mantra. This

happy wedding did prove that family comes first.

Peg Sherry
Madison

THEIR WEDDING

When I was a little girl I would carefully turn the pages of my mom's wedding album. The ivory leather cover was embossed with a scrolled 'Q' flanked by my parents' first initials and the date—December 31, 1960—near the bottom. Each page tracked the progress of the wedding, from my mom getting ready with her bridesmaids to my dad clowning around with his groomsmen on the stairs that led to the church bells, from the procession up the center aisle to the picture of the two of them smiling out the back window of the limousine as they drove away from the church.

There was a stop sign in front of the limo. I'm sure my mom chose that picture as the end for the album—a signal to close the book. Years later she said she wished she had seen the stop sign before the wedding, maybe then she wouldn't have married my dad. She would laugh and turn to me and my brothers and say, "But then, I wouldn't have you."

After school I would look through the album, searching for clues. Why didn't it work? In every picture people looked happy and charmed. Mom kept practically everything, so I was able to slip off my shirt and try on her strapless bra, almost a corset, earnestly fastening each hook, then twisting the bra around so that the cups jutted out, another empty reminder that I was only a child. The elbow-length gloves that came up to my armpits and looked as wrinkled as an elephant trunk did not lend me the same air of grace and sophistication that my mom had in her wedding pictures. She sold her wedding dress when the child support checks were behind.

I traced most of the photographs—especially those of people I knew—then cut out the tracing paper. I held the flimsy silhouettes up to the window. It was like watching ghosts fluttering in my hands. I transferred the figures onto some of Mom's drawing paper. I drew the expressions and clothes. My dolls flashed brightly, not black-and-white. The bridesmaids' dresses were claret velvet. Mom had said it was a deep red that was not quite red or burgundy. With layers of crayons I came close, I thought. The groomsmen were easier with their black tuxedo jackets and gray striped pants. My mom's gown was simple and elegant, pale ivory, slightly off shoulder. My dad was a foot taller than she, slim and sharp in his tuxedo.

Mom said they barely talked the night of the wedding, then added, "Not enough beforehand, and definitely not enough after," with a twist of her lips. They had known each other only six months when they got married. My dad was on leave from the navy and they met while he was home visiting his family. They probably would have met in high school, but he had gone to a seminary. The boys from the seminary didn't host dances.

I would reenact the wedding. Sometimes the dolls would begin the day as my mom had: confiding in Pop that she didn't think she was doing the right thing. He had tried to reassure her, saying all brides are nervous. I tried a different end in which he advised her not to get married. My stomach lurched and I felt hollow.

No matter what the dolls did, the ending was always the same. I didn't really know my dad, not enough to create a different ending for them. Not enough to make him stay.

Kathleen Quigley
Sheboygan Falls

THIS ONE'S FOR MOM

Back in 1986, my boyfriend and I had our wedding all planned out: we'd invite all our hippie-dippie friends to bring food and camp out at my soon-to-be-mother-in-law's gorgeous land in upstate New York. The band—two fiddles, a banjo, and a concertina—would be friends. A JP would marry us. We'd have a low-key weekend with good friends.

My mother cried when I broke the news; she wanted to put on the wedding. "It's the only one I'll ever get to make," she said between sobs. My gut told me to say no. But my head talked me into it.

My mother and I had never had what you might call a good relationship, and it had gone steadily downhill since I'd left home at 16. We had nothing in common, not even the experience of my childhood years, which I remembered as a bleak and lonely desert and my mother recalled as a continuous stream of good times and rainbows. Maybe, I thought, if I said yes to the wedding, we could find some common ground, build a shared memory that would carry us down the road of years.

I knew within two weeks that I'd made a terrible mistake, but it was already too late. The site had been reserved (a farm in New Jersey); the kosher caterer had been booked. I would have been happy with a city hall quickie, but my mother wanted a Jewish ceremony. Our Orthodox rabbi, who had known me since I was born, declined to marry us, as my husband-to-be wasn't Jewish. A Reform rabbi agreed, but wanted $1,000, presumably to assuage his guilt over joining a Jew and a nonbeliever in less-than-holy matrimony. Finally my mother lined up a Jewish judge who agreed to perform a civil ceremony with a few Jewish elements (the chupah, the glass) thrown in.

It was soon clear to me that our wedding was just the vehicle for my mother's journey of karmic payback. Our event for 40 turned into a formal event for 200, most of them my parents' friends; my boyfriend and I had to fight for every name on the guest list. I threatened to elope many times over the next eight months. But as angry as I was, I didn't have the heart to actually do it. I still harbored the hope that my mother and I would magically come together in the course of this extravaganza.

The morning of the wedding (held outdoors, under a tent), the rain started early and fell hard. My mother was in a frenzy of last-minute weather-related

adjustments, and I had to admit that it was nice to leave all that to her. Ten minutes before the ceremony the sun came out, and I walked slowly down the muddy aisle between my parents. At the agreed-upon spot my father stepped away, but my mother didn't move. I had to gently detach her arm from mine in order to step forward. It was a metaphor, of course, and a potent one.

The rest of the day went surprisingly well. You could easily tell whose family was whose at the reception: my husband's family, Westchester WASPS, all went for the bar (which my mother had only grudgingly included), while my relatives headed straight for the all-chocolate dessert table my mother had insisted on. Our band played contra dance tunes and a few klezmer numbers. We have many wedding photographs, courtesy of the middle-school teacher my mother hired to document it, including a Vaseline-smeared shot of my husband and me waving and looking exasperated at the photographer's corny triteness. But hey, he knew who was signing the check.

There is one picture from the day that sums it up for me: My mother, standing alone in the middle of the dance floor, in the ruffled pink dress she had made especially for the day (and which, she later revealed, did not turn out at all the way she'd hoped). She's wearing bright red lipstick and a wide smile, her arms spread in a kind of free-form dance move, or maybe a blessing. She looks happy.

She didn't know, then, that she and I would be estranged on and off for the rest of her life. She would be the other grandmother, who always sent birthday cards and Hanukkah gelt but who was never part of her grandchildren's ordinary lives. This day was both the high and low point of our relationship, the day she had orchestrated, the day we both had cried and shouted over. The day she finally let me go.

Name Withheld
Madison

Share Your Stories

We welcome your contribution to "In My Words." Stories should be no longer than 600 words. The next topics are:

MENTORING, deadline July 10 (extended deadline for the fall issue). Everybody needs at least one mentor, and probably several, throughout their lives. Any experience you have had on either end of these profoundly helpful relationships.

MOVING, deadline Sept. 1 (for the winter issue). Throw out the old, pack up the remains, load up the truck and start a new life. Any story about moving and (if applicable) related life adjustments.

E-mail submissions are greatly preferred. Please send to:
jfischer@wisconsinacademy.org with the subject heading "In My Words," or mail it to In My Words, *Wisconsin Academy Review*, 1922 University Avenue, Madison WI 53726. We will contact selected authors; names may be withheld from publication on request. We regret that we cannot take phone inquiries or return submitted material.

The Wisconsin Idea at the Wisconsin Academy

The Future of Farming and Rural Life

Our next big project speaks to the heart of Wisconsin's sense of place.

BY MICHAEL STRIGEL, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

I consider myself fortunate to have grown up visiting my grandparents' 40-acre farm in Racine County. I witnessed the planting and harvesting, the raising of chickens for eggs and meat, and the canning and storage of vegetables in the root cellar for the long winters. I still remember the rich smell of that root cellar with its dark wooden stairs, stone walls, shelves of canned tomatoes and beets, bags of onions, and the dirt floor. The work I did and the stories I heard colored and shaped my early years. I know that experience is shared by many Wisconsinites—and that the connections we have to agriculture and our rural areas are changing in important ways. How those changes will affect our state's economy, environment, and cultural and social fabric in the years to come is a question worth pursuing.

Last year, Governor Jim Doyle selected a cow's head, a round of cheese, and an ear of corn as the symbols for Wisconsin's commemorative quarter. He cited the results of an online poll in which 40 percent of 347,000 voters chose the agricultural image over its closest rival. The vote confirmed what many already knew: we strongly identify our state with its unquestionably rich agricultural traditions and recognize agriculture's critical role in our state's economy.

But the face and texture of agriculture and rural life in Wisconsin are changing. Some complained that the image on the quarter was yesterday's branding and didn't represent the state's new economy. Many of us have heard that California overtook Wisconsin as the nation's biggest milk producer in 1993, and that, while the Badger State still produces half a billion more pounds of cheese each year, California is closing the gap there as well. But Wisconsin's farmers have shown remarkable entrepreneurial ability and have entered or created new markets. Consider that Wisconsin is home to the largest farmer-owned organic cooperative in North America and is the nation's second largest producer of organic foods overall (again, second to California). And Wisconsin cheese makers are branching into new areas of the traditional cheese market, more than tripling production of specialty or artisan cheese between 1993 and 2003.

Those are just a few examples of changes occurring in a very diverse industry that, like many others, continues to adjust to an increasingly global economy and the opportunities of the information age. What do these changes mean to the state? How will they affect farmers, the larger agricultural industry, those living in rural areas, and the citizens of our state in general? Are there changes we wish to encourage—or discourage—in order to create a more robust and sustainable agricultural economy and rural environment for years to come?

To begin answering such questions, the Wisconsin Academy this fall will convene a diverse array of agricultural representatives from many sectors and interests at the Johnson Foundation's Wingspread Conference Center in Racine. There, participants will chart the course for what will become an 18-month to two-year initiative—our next "Wisconsin Idea at the Wisconsin Academy" project, conducted in much the same style as Waters of Wisconsin.

Along the way, we'll invite participation of all interested parties through public forums, the Internet, and other forms of interaction to ensure that all voices are included. As we near the end, we will articulate findings and vision through very specific action and policy recommendations and a statewide conference.

The initiative has six primary objectives:

Status Convene a diverse array of interested and informed individuals to assess the current status of Wisconsin agriculture and rural living.

Trends Through a rigorous intellectual process, assess trends in the variables and systems that influence Wisconsin agriculture and rural life.

Vision Identify and articulate opportunities for change that will enhance the sustainability of agriculture and rural life.

Action Energize and provide tools to the organizations and individuals active in these areas to implement the vision.

Education and Communication Gather and share the accumulated work of this initiative in a manner that will enhance Wisconsin citizens' knowledge and understanding of these issues and develop and improve communication networks.

Leadership Identify and develop leadership capacity in citizens interested in the economic, social, environmental, and cultural issues associated with Wisconsin agriculture and rural life.

Agriculture and related industries touch every community in the state. Participants in this initiative will explore these connections and take ownership of results and recommendations to ensure that this effort will create lasting results. We hope that this work will help us better understand how those images on the quarter—the cow, the cheese, the corn—represent and are a part of Wisconsin and everyone who lives here. ✺

Michael Strigel is executive director of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters.

Global Climate Change: Evolution of a View

BY JOHN J. MAGNUSON

I have come to the following realizations. They are not unique to me:

- Climate is changing globally and here in Wisconsin;
- Impacts have already occurred and will get worse;
- Greenhouse gas emissions, especially carbon dioxide, contribute to this change; and
- Actions taken now can reduce some future impacts.

Many other scientists share these general views.

For me, ice cover on Lake Mendota was the starting point that showed me that our climate was changing in a direction related to a warmer climate. My thoughts were catalyzed by doing what I do best as a university limnologist, that is, observing and studying lakes and working with students such as Dale Robertson, who observed lake ice for his Ph.D. in 1989.

Each winter since the mid-1800s, the people of Madison noted the date that Lake Mendota became ice-covered and the date that the ice broke up in spring. These calls now are made by the Wisconsin state climatologist, but for many years they were the work of those with some self-interest in the presence or absence of ice cover—or perhaps simply by a curiosity-driven desire to track the seasons. Ice covered Lake Mendota an average of four months 150 years ago; in recent years the average has been around two and a half months. The duration of ice cover has declined almost 40 percent.

Lake Mendota is not unique in this development. Almost every lake with more than 100 years of observation in Wisconsin, in the Great Lakes region, and around the Northern Hemisphere reveals later ice on or earlier ice off. And the lakes are not alone in this respect. Valley glaciers in both hemispheres are melting back. Go visit Glacier National Park now, before its namesakes are all gone. Sea ice in the Arctic is declining in area, and Greenland and the Antarctic are losing ice.

As these changes in ice cover were being played out in human experience, I had the opportunity to help evaluate impacts of changing climate on freshwaters with the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change, the IPCC Assessments of 1995 and 2001. Here I learned a great deal as the scientific consensus on climate change and impacts was being "sifted and winnowed" from our growing knowledge base.

In the 1995 IPCC assessment, a relatively young climate scientist named B. D. Santer and colleagues wrote a groundbreaking chapter titled "Detection of Climate Change and Attribution of Cause." The broad, global patterns of climatic change they saw were consistent with the expectation of warming from increasing global concentrations of greenhouse gases interacting with the cooling influence of the human-caused sulfate aerosols that were more abundant in some industrial areas around the globe.

The implications of this paper made it controversial from the start, with opposition and support emerging in an international review by nations that is required in the IPCC process. The positions and the arguments of national representatives often were based on the outcome that a nation desired from the assessment. Most notably, the Saudis, worried about energy policy, tried to weaken the conclusions, and the Micronesians, worried about flooding from sea level rise, tried to strengthen the conclusions. In the end the science-based wording prevailed in the assessment's summary for policy makers.

Six years later in the 2001 IPCC assessment, the evidence for greenhouse-induced climate warming was stronger than ever (Kevin Trenberth summarized these findings in 2001 in the journal *Environment*). Air temperatures had increased markedly in the 1970s, 1980s, and 1990s, and these increases could not be simulated with general circulation models of the climate system unless, in addition to solar radiation and volcanic eruptions, human-generated greenhouse gases were included as one of the driving variables.

What became apparent to me was that the scientific consensus developed in the IPCC process was based on credible analyses, by able scientists, with modern tools, in an open field of ideas and debate. Human-induced climate warming through the release of carbon dioxide from the burning of fossil fuels caught my attention and changed the way I personally thought about the climate change issue.

It also became clear that all parts of the climate, ecological, and human systems would be altered by these pervasive global changes. Measured effects of climate change impacts were still few in number, but when we exercised the ecological systems we knew with potential climate changes, the world revealed to us was not pretty.

My next involvement was in a joint assessment by the Union of Concerned Scientists and the Ecological Society of America. These two groups of scientists initiated a project to evaluate climate change, its impacts, and solutions at a regional level. This more human-based scale was relevant to people; it was where we lived and where we could relate to changes that were occurring and could be expected to intensify. Three regional studies were conducted: California (1999), the Gulf Coast states (2001), and the Great Lakes states (2003), as part of the

"Confronting Climate Change" series conducted by the Union of Concerned Scientists and the Ecological Society of America.

The Great Lakes regional assessment essentially eliminated any basis for a belief that human-induced climate change was occurring not here but rather only at high latitudes or at least only somewhere else. The lake ice and other data sets revealed that warming was occurring; other analyses of historical climate data revealed that a higher percentage of our rain was falling in extreme events and that hydrologic flows were being altered. The observant sensed the increase in extreme flooding events as well as extreme winters with little lake ice. Using more recent climate models than were used in the IPCC 2001 assessment, the possibility was apparent that within 100 years winters could warm by 5 to 12 degrees Fahrenheit on average while summers could be 5 to 20 degrees Fahrenheit warmer. Increases in the proportion of rain falling in extreme events and the continuing loss of lake ice were expected to increase.

Impacts were beginning to be apparent in parts of the global support system for humans, and forecasts indicated that they would become more critical. Even systems as undervalued as lake ice and snow were having human impacts that included reduced opportunity for winter fishing, ice boating, skiing, winter festivals requiring ice cover, and economies that depend on winter recreation. In some winters warm weather eliminated sections of the Birkebeiner, a cross-country ski race near Cable, and increased the danger to snowmobilers on lakes and rivers of breaking through the ice. We are losing winter as we knew it, and with that a portion of our Wisconsin "sense of place." Perhaps more importantly, agricultural insect pests are beginning to arrive from the south, and heat death and stress to humans and livestock are expected to increase. Extreme rain events are expected to increase flooding and reduce the infiltration of rainwater into the groundwater.

In other regional assessments, sea level rise is expected to inundate marine coastal areas where many cities are located, loss of alpine snow pack foretells major water shortages in the western states, and heat deaths begin to add up in urban areas such as Paris, France.

I have become convinced that human-induced climate change is not an issue to be taken lightly. Rather, it must be addressed.

What to do? Two broad kinds of actions are required. The first is to develop and implement plans to adapt to the increasing impacts that are occurring and will intensify. For example, we cannot manage our water levels and flows assuming a flood frequency that occurred during the last 100 years; we need to do it with our best estimates of the flood frequency expected during the next 100 years. The second is to develop and implement plans to reduce greenhouse gas emissions, for example, increase energy efficiency and develop non-fossil fuel energy sources.

Things we can do are not out of our reach. Many options already are available for the home, transportation, energy production, agriculture, business, and government. For the home: increase insulation, use efficient light bulbs and appliances, add passive and active solar energy sources. For transportation: buy a hybrid automobile, use the bus or bike if possible, move closer to work, increase rail, teleconference rather than travel. For energy production: increase efficiency and use alternate sources such as wind and solar. For agriculture: increase energy efficiency and renewable energy, reduce fertilizer use and the transportation required to bring in fertilizer, develop cooperatives to use animal manure to produce methane for energy production. For business and governments: build energy-efficient buildings, use fuel-efficient vehicles, teleconference.

The preceding actions are not out of reach. Technology already is available and more is being and can be developed. Surfing the web, reading *The Economist* and other magazines and papers, and talking to others generate a wide range of options. A few cases in point: I know of a family that reduced its greenhouse gas emissions by 50 percent and still leads the good life. The city of Toronto, Ontario, reduced its emissions by 67 percent from 1990 to 1998. California has passed a greenhouse gas standard for automobiles to reduce emissions 2 to 5 percent in 2009 models, with additional reductions by 2014.

Uncertainties will always exist; the exact path of the future is not known. In my view enough is known to act on available knowledge. Policy and management decisions on greenhouse gas emissions, energy efficiency, and adaptation to impacts have already been delayed too long to prevent negative impacts now and during the next 100 years. Responding to the climate change issue will need to be refined as new knowledge and synthesis is achieved. In an uncertain world, risk-averse decisions are wiser than risk-prone behavior, especially when our grandchildren and their grandchildren will live with the consequences of poor decisions or no decisions. In many cases doing the right thing on the climate change issue is the right thing to do, regardless, in terms of preserving future energy supplies, saving money, and increasing the profitability of business and agricultural enterprises. Acting sooner helps preserve future options; once certain thresholds are crossed it is difficult if not impossible to return to goal.

The human-induced climate issue is immense. Many volumes have been written and extensive consensus documents are available. My thinking has evolved from the realizations that climate is changing, that the changes are having and will have negative impacts, that the release of greenhouse gases from burning fossil fuels is the primary culprit—and that as an optimist, I believe there are many things we can and should do. ✺

John J. Magnuson is a professor emeritus of zoology and limnology at the Center for Limnology, University of Wisconsin–Madison. He was a co-chair of the Wisconsin Academy's Waters of Wisconsin initiative.

For more information, visit these websites:

Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change:
http://www.ipcc.ch/pub/reports.htm
Impacts of a Warming Arctic:
http://amap.no/workdocs/index.cfm?dirsub=%2FACIA%2Foverview
Union of Concerned Scientists:
http://www.ucsusa.org/global_environment/global_warming/index.cfm
Pew: http://www.pewclimate.org/global-warming-basics/

The New Fellows

An exciting event each year is the selection of new Wisconsin Academy Fellows, men and woman of extraordinary lifetime accomplishment in the sciences, arts, and letters. Fellows serve as mentors and guides in Wisconsin Academy programs, offering their vision and expertise to our gallery exhibitions; our Academy Evenings forums; the *Wisconsin Academy Review;* and the Wisconsin Idea at the Wisconsin Academy, our public policy program on conservation issues.

In formal terms, Wisconsin Academy Fellows must be "highly esteemed for qualities of judgment, perceptiveness, and breadth of knowledge of how literature, art, and science contribute to the cultural life and welfare of the state." They should "have a career marked by an unusually high order of discovery; technological accomplishments; creative productivity in literature, poetry, or the fine or practical arts; historical analysis; legal or judicial interpretation; or philosophical thinking."

It is our pleasure to announce the Fellows Class of 2005 and welcome them to the Wisconsin Academy community.

ALTA CHARO

She's on the faculty of both the law school and the medical school at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and served on President Clinton's National Bioethics Advisory Commission. Pioneering stem cell researcher Jamie Thomson says he's grateful she was on campus during his initial breakthroughs to provide an ethical context to his work. Throughout her career, bioethicist Alta Charo has been in the forefront of national and global debate about the most controversial—and promising—advances in biomedical research. Her 75-plus articles, book chapters, and government reports—several of which were published in French—track her fearlessness in taking on hot-button issues, including such titles as "Playing God? Or Playing Human," "Abortion Politics v. Science," and "Commercializing Surrogate Motherhood."

For the general public, the best news is that Charo can distill and impart this crucial information in ways we can all understand. She serves as a bridge not only between science and the law, but between the outer reaches of knowledge and average citizens who are trying to comprehend complex information. This ability makes Charo a favorite with the news media and explains why her current pet project is "Bioethics Trek," an in-class exploration of bioethics topics through the narrative lens of episodes of "Star Trek" (did we mention she's also a hugely popular teacher?).

JOHN HARMON

"He's a musical ambassador for the state of Wisconsin," says Ellen Kort, Wisconsin's first poet laureate and fellow Wisconsin Academy Fellow, in describing John Harmon, an independent jazz composer, pianist, and educator who studied with Oscar Peterson. Harmon's compositions have been performed by the Milwaukee and Chicago Symphonies; the Orchestra of Los Angeles; singer Flora Purim; tuba virtuoso Sam Pilafian; and trumpeter Bobby Shew, who recently recorded a double-CD John Harmon collection with the Lawrence University Conservatory of Music. Harmon's musical base is his studio near the Wolf River, and his love of the natural world infuses his work. "Earth Day Portrait," a composition combining symphony orchestra and narration, draws on texts by John Muir, Aldo Leopold, and Gaylord Nelson.

For more than 10 years Harmon has been composer-in-residence for the Red Lodge Music Festival in Montana, and in Wisconsin he has shared his gifts with thousands of students during his decades-long career. People say that working with Harmon is an uplifting, transforming experience.

JOANNE KLUESSENDORF

Joanne Kluessendorf knows Wisconsin from the ground up. She's a geologist specializing in the Silurian geomorphology and paleontology of southwestern and eastern Wisconsin as well as northern Illinois, and she is the founding director of the state's official mineralogical museum, the Weis Earth Science Museum at the University of Wisconsin–Fox Valley, which opened in 2001. The museum received no county, state, or university funding. Kluessendorf led the successful charge to open it by writing numerous grant proposals and cultivating private donors. While maintaining an active research program, Kluessendorf has developed the museum as an outreach venue for the general public and K-12 educators, drawing thousands of schoolchildren and families each year. She serves on a host of community and statewide boards, including "Quarry Quest," a field experience that has attracted over 50,000 children and their families and raised some $290,000 for charitable education initiatives.

TRUMAN LOWE

Wisconsin has a distinguished representative in Washington who has nothing to do with politics. University of Wisconsin–Madison art professor Truman Lowe, born and raised in Wisconsin and a member of the Ho-Chunk Nation, is a nationally renowned sculptor whose often site-specific work with willow and pine saplings reflects his strong connection to his ancestral heritage and the land and waters of Wisconsin. He shares his expertise on a national level as curator of contemporary art at the National Museum of the American Indian, which opened in September as part of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, D.C., and holds a collection of some 800,000 objects.

As an artist, Lowe exhibits regionally, nationally, and internationally, with work appearing in some 30 solo exhibitions and more than 70 group exhibitions, including a sculpture exhibited in a White House garden. While he also uses metal and other materials, he is best known for his work with wood and water. "Lowe's transformation of these two primal materials into graceful and rigorous near-abstract sculpture is a major achievement in American sculpture," notes critic Lucy Lippard in the foreword to *Woodland Reflections: The Art of Truman Lowe*, by Jo Ortel (UW Press, 2004).

WARREN NELSON

Not many people could pull off staging a musical in waders—unforgettable to those who have seen "Riverpants"—but then, Warren Nelson is a Wisconsin original. Nelson, often called the Mark Twain of Wisconsin, is the founder and artistic director of the Lake Superior Big Top Chautauqua in Bayfield, which for 20 years has entertained and informed visitors with a blend of music, photography, and acting and has included such big-name performers as Willie Nelson, Bela Fleck, Leo Kottke, Dar Williams, Arlo Guthrie, and Loretta Lynn. Nelson's own productions, featuring his songs and scripts, are howlingly funny—but at the same time, they impart knowledge and depth of feeling about Wisconsin's history and natural environment. Examples include "Riding the Wind," a musical history of Bayfield and the Apostle Islands, and "30th Star," a show commissioned by the state for Wisconsin's Sesquicentennial. His droll sense of humor and down-home persona—"geezer fashion," as he calls his usual attire—make him a media favorite. He's a regular on Wisconsin Public Radio, and readers of *Wisconsin Trails* magazine once voted him the state's best folk musician.

BASSAM Z. SHAKHASHIRI

Why shouldn't science be colorful, smoking, and even explosive? Using the slogan "Science Is Fun," Bassam Shakhashiri, a professor of chemistry at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, reaches out to audiences of all ages in settings ranging from arts centers to shopping malls to impart a few science basics and show people that yes—science can be fun.

But in fact Shakhashiri is on a serious mission. Ignorance about science is reaching frightening dimensions at a time when, more than ever, the country's future prosperity—including our democracy, notes Shakhashiri—rests on a foundation of science knowledge. You won't find that among the U.S. general public. According to a National Science Foundation report Shakhashiri often cites, only about 50 percent of adult Americans surveyed knew that it takes the earth one year to go around the sun and that the earliest humans did not coexist with dinosaurs. Shakhashiri strives to improve the situation with his Wisconsin Initiative for Science Literacy, which includes a wide range of long-term goals for K-12 and higher education as well as outreach. He considers parents and teachers to be crucial in this effort, which is why he involves them in so many WISL programs.

Shakhashiri has won numerous awards for his efforts, including the 2003 American Association for the Advancement of Science Award for Public Understanding Science and Technology. Another particular distinction: Shakhashiri is the first holder of the William T. Evjue Distinguished Chair for the Wisconsin Idea.

Fellows' Induction on July 24 Features Ben Sidran

Wisconsin Academy members and the public are invited to a ceremony honoring both the new Fellows and the Wisconsin Academy's most generous donors on Sunday, July 24, 2–5 p.m. at the Overture Center for the Arts in Madison.

Our Minerva Laureate is jazz musician and Wisconsin Academy Fellow Ben Sidran, who will play the piano and share his thoughts in a performance titled "Wisconsin Idea: If You're Not Having Fun, You're Doing it Wrong." Each Fellow being honored will receive recognition and say a few words about his or her work.

Admission is $30 for Wisconsin Academy members and $35 for nonmembers (includes appetizers). To reserve a space, please contact Gail Kohl at 608/263-1692 ext. 14, gkohl@wisconsinacademy.org

NOMINATE A FELLOW

If you know of someone whom you wish to nominate as a Fellow, our next call for submissions comes out this fall. Stay tuned to our website, www.wisconsinacademy.org, or contact Gail Kohl at 608/263-1692 ext. 14, gkohl@wisconsinacademy.org

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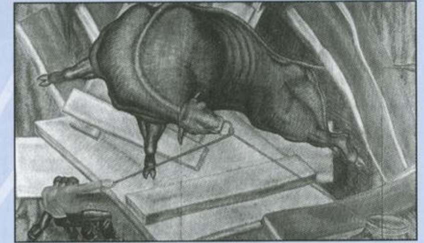
It's easy as pie! Join the Wisconsin Academy for $25 at our one-year introductory rate. Membership rates remain a bargain even after that intro year is up—$35 for one year or $85 for three. Sign up using an enclosed membership card, our website, or the other contact information below.



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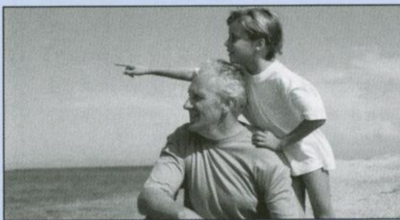

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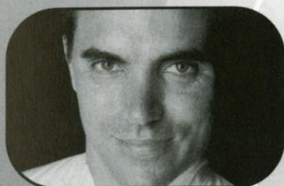

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Sanctuary in the city: National Soldiers Home, a veterans' hospital and respite center in Milwaukee dating back to the Civil War, is nestled between I-94 and Miller Park—but most people don't know much about it. Rows and rows of white tombstones add to its ghostly atmosphere. Story on page 29.

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