Wisconsin Academy review. Volume 47, Number 1 Winter 2001

Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, Winter 2001

wisconsin academy review

THE MAGAZINE OF WISCONSIN THOUGHT AND CULTURE

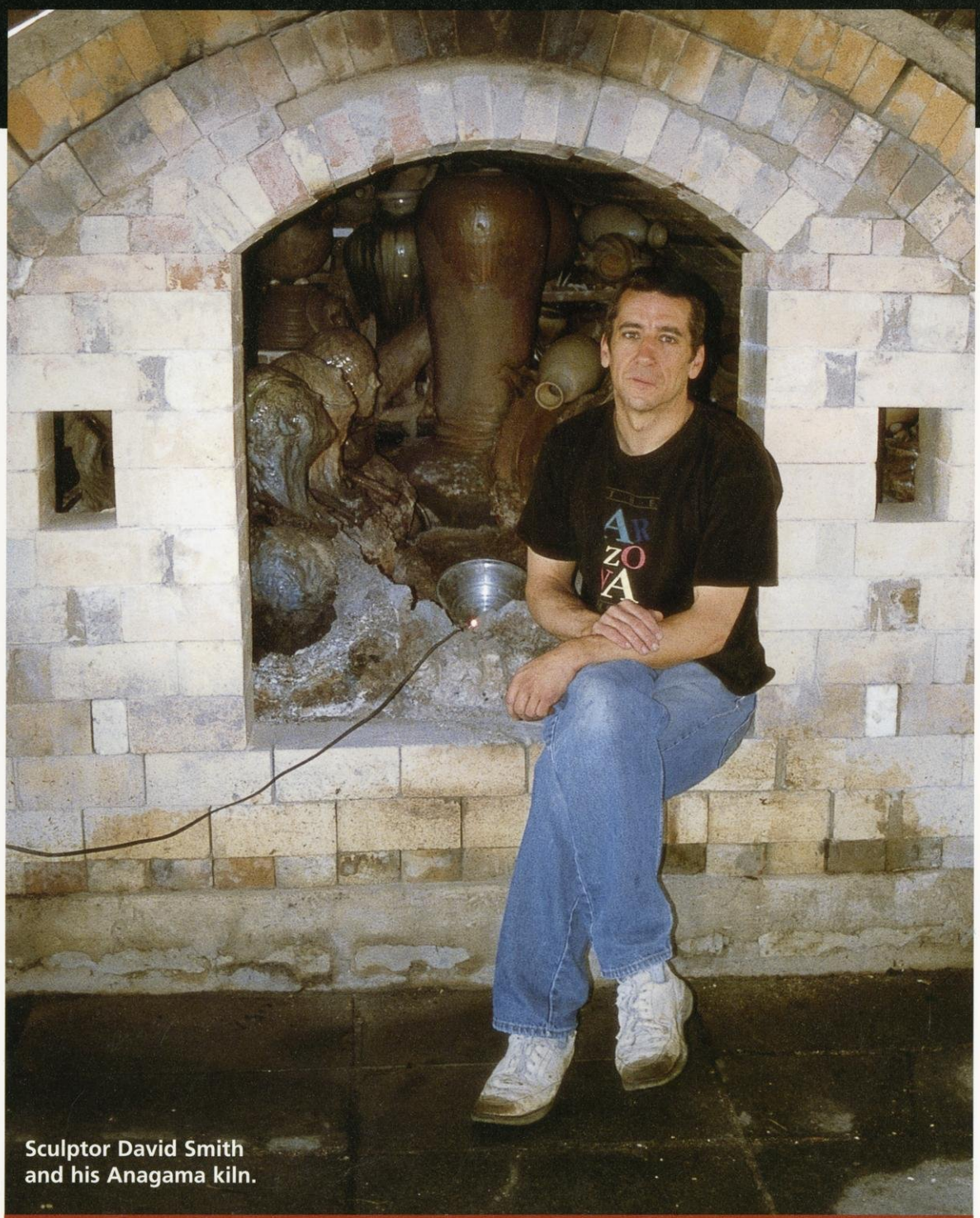
Firing Up the Kiln with David Smith

Adventures in Education: The Learning Expedition

Picking a Poet Laureate with John Lehman

Dave Zweifel on Restoring Civil Discourse

New Urbanism Gets Smart



Sculptor David Smith and his Anagama kiln.

Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters Winter 2001 Volume 47, Number 1

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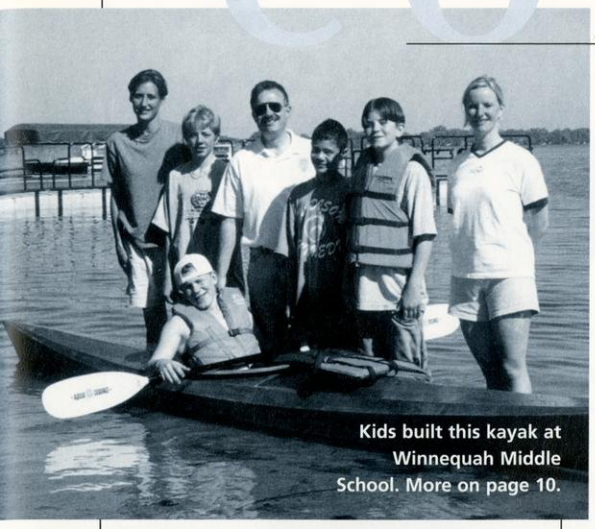

Kids built this kayak at Winnequah Middle School. More on page 10.

features

New Urbanism meets Smart Growth in our subdivisions. See page 43.

The *Wisconsin Academy Review* (ISSN 0512-1175) is published quarterly by the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, 1922 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53705. All correspondence, orders, manuscripts, and change-of-address information should be sent to this address. The *Wisconsin Academy Review* is distributed as a benefit of membership (annual cost: $50/regular, $40/seniors/students, with reduced fees for longer membership periods). For information call (608) 263-1692, or visit the Academy website: www.wisconsinacademy.org

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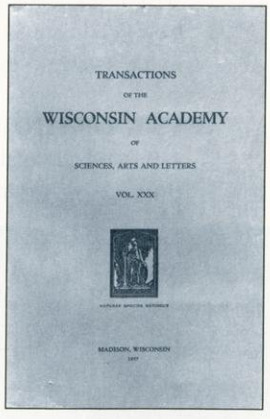
departments

Ellen Kort is one important lady. Find out why on page 34.

Past and Present

"The most serious defect in the whole collection of teaching materials is the absence of the phrase 'we don't know.' Just why are we so undemocratic in professing ignorance? It seems a special privilege of scientists."
—Aldo Leopold, writing in *Transactions*, the scholarly journal of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, in 1937.

Here at the Wisconsin Academy, we believe in professing our ignorance—and in questioning just about everything. Read more about us on page 24.



The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters is an independent, nonprofit membership organization. It was chartered by the state legislature in 1870 with the mission of gathering, sharing, and acting upon knowledge in the sciences and humanities for the benefit of the people of Wisconsin.

The Wisconsin *what*?

It was one of those little jokes that make you say "ouch." Oh, I knew, sitting in the darkened Isthmus Playhouse at Madison's Civic Center, where architect Cesar Pelli's grand plan for a $100 million cultural center was about to be unveiled, that many members of the audience weren't exactly familiar with the Wisconsin Academy. That perhaps a few of them, upon hearing that the Wisconsin Academy Gallery will occupy a plum space in the Overture Center's glass-domed rotunda, may well have asked themselves, "The Wisconsin what?" But I didn't think I'd see those words in print!

We can thank *Wisconsin State Journal* reporter Tom Alesia for making it happen in his piece about Overture the next day. Alesia himself is actually very familiar with the Academy, having won a first-place fiction award from us for his story *Winter at the Zoo*, which was published in the *Wisconsin Academy Review* (Summer 1999). But I do think he captured the general public's response quite well with his biting little question.

Besides, we can afford to laugh, we're in Overture now. And we got there due to the solid body of work and respect that the Academy has built over many decades (perhaps too quietly!) among people who care about culture and intellectual discourse in our state. Thanks to these supporters—and, while we don't wish to neglect anyone, Jerome and Pleasant Frautschi certainly were key among them—the Wisconsin Academy Gallery and the artists it serves will now be accessible to a wider public.

The move also gives the Academy a chance to pay further tribute to a man often referred to as "the father of the Elvehjem Museum of Art." James S. Watrous was a painter, art historian, educator, author, muralist, mosaicist—and an Academy Fellow. Through a generous gift by the family of James and Margaret Watrous, his name and memory will live on in a highly appropriate way. The James S. Watrous Gallery of the Wisconsin Academy, located in our state capital's premier arts center—that's Overture—will showcase work by the most significant Wisconsin artists. We are honored that our gallery will bear Jim Watrous' name, and we gratefully take on the challenge of ensuring that our work there, both in quality and in spirit, does justice to the legacy of a great Wisconsin scholar, artist, and mentor.

Please see page 4 for more on one of the biggest stories to hit the Wisconsin Academy in 130 years.

TRUST US, IT HAPPENED

Stories by "anonymous," or articles that rely on anonymous sources, pose a dilemma to any editor. Anonymity encourages the reader to place an undue amount of trust in a publication—trust that has been violated spectacularly on a number of occasions. Remember *Washington Post* reporter Janet Cook and her Pulitzer Prize-winning series about a drug-addicted child who, it turned out, never existed? Not to mention the string of fictitious sources revealed in more recent years at *The Boston Globe, The New Republic*, and other publications one would expect to be above suspicion.

I was hoping not to have to face the anonymous question quite so soon in my stay here. But then along came this edition's memoir by "A Mother in Wisconsin," a beautifully written, wrenching account of a family with an out-of-control teen. The piece reminded me of what anonymity is for: to allow the truth of a story to be revealed in a manner that protects the source. We're interested in sharing the story, not in "outing" the author or her son, and in the information and consolation A Mother's memoir may offer readers who find themselves in similar situations.

For her tale is nothing if not widespread. Children are becoming derailed in the best of families, causing caring, competent parents no end of despair. Middle school principal Tom Van Winkle moves this problem from the personal to the systemic, and even offers a piece of the solution, in his article about "expeditionary learning," an engaging, hands-on approach to education that also addresses fundamental questions of student character, responsibility, and behavior. The discerning reader may recall that the founder of expeditionary learning, the German educator Kurt Hahn, was the head of Salem School, which so strongly influenced UW–Madison historian George Mosse in his early years (and which we described in the summer edition of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*). The interdisciplinary nature of this learning method should warm the hearts of many an Academy member. So will, I hope, the opportunity the article offers to reflect upon and address the complex and confounding problems surrounding educating young people today.

Happy reading,

Joan Fischer
608/263-1692
joanfischer@facstaff.wisc.edu

Illustration courtesy of Cesar Pelli & Associates

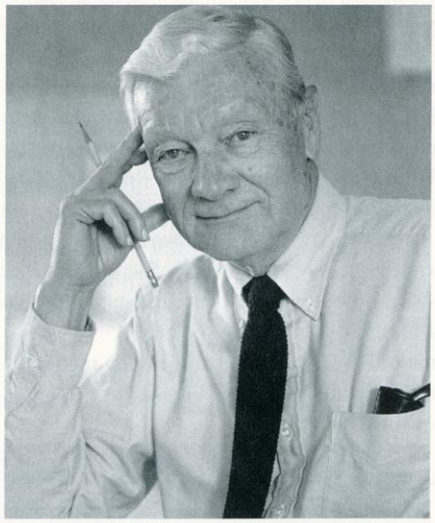
Into the Overture

Please note, if you will—and how can you miss it?—the glass dome crowning the main entrance to the Overture Center, the $100 million arts complex slated to open on Madison's State Street in 2004. That dome will soon be the Wisconsin Academy Gallery's home. The James S. Watrous Gallery of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters—more on the name below—will occupy the top floor of a multilevel rotunda located where Yost's department store used to be (Yost's distinctive facade will remain intact). Light will stream in from the rotunda's glass dome, and a grand staircase will lead up to the Academy Gallery. And the gallery itself will double in size compared to its present space, with 130 linear feet of wall space, 1,500 square feet of floor space, and an adjacent banquet hall (2,500 square feet) available for receptions, readings, and other Academy events.

Twice the size, and a majestic perch in what will be our state capital's leading arts venue? Obviously this move has huge implications for the Academy and its featured artists.

"The contrast will be dramatic in terms of accessibility to the public and the presentation of the art itself," says Wisconsin Academy Gallery curator Randall Berndt. "We've had all this wonderful art. The gallery program is respected by art professionals across the state. This is the next step in our evolution. We're no longer hiding our light beneath a bushel."

The move also offers the Wisconsin Academy a chance to pay further tribute to a man known as "the father of the Elvehjem Museum of Art": James Scales Watrous (1908-1999), whose career as a teacher, art historian, painter, author, muralist, and mosaicist was devoted to serving the University of Wisconsin.



Educator, artist, historian, and mentor James S. Watrous: Our new gallery will bear his name.

But his influence reached well beyond the university, notes Robert G. Lange, executive director of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters.

"His most lasting gift was that of serving as a cornerstone of, and advocate for, culture and civilization in Wisconsin and beyond in the broadest sense," says Lange. "It is precisely because of his lifelong and deep commitment to culture in all of its aspects that Jim was made a Fellow of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters in 1982."

The Wisconsin Academy Fellows program honors Wisconsin residents whose dedication to knowledge and culture have led to extraordinary contributions to our state. Other Fellows include state Supreme Court Chief Justice Shirley Abrahamson, musician Ben Sidran, and UW–Madison oncologist Paul Carbone.

Among Jim Watrous' achievements are two books that are still widely used by art historians and students: *The Craft of Old-Master Drawings* (1957) and *A Century of American Printmaking: 1880–1980* (1984), both published by the University of Wisconsin Press. That first book, a pioneering study of the processes and ingre-

dients used in drawing materials of centuries past, not only explains why, for example, Michelangelo preferred natural red chalk and Rembrandt and van Gogh used reed pens, but still serves as a valuable tool in recognizing forgeries.

And Watrous' art lives on in such projects as the Paul Bunyan murals in the Memorial Union (funded as a Public Works of Art Project in 1933), as well as murals in federal buildings in Park Falls, Wisconsin, in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and mosaics at various UW–Madison buildings.

The city can thank Watrous for the Elvehjem Museum of Art, which took seed when Watrous, as a young instructor in 1939, came across a large store of paintings in the basement of Bascom Hall that were "badly deteriorating from excessive heat and humidity," he wrote. Thus began a long and difficult process to obtain funding for a suitable place to store them and other works Watrous assiduously collected over the years. Watrous was named chairman of the proposed museum's building committee in 1963, and the Elvehjem finally opened in 1970, 31 years after Watrous had started his efforts.

Watrous also helped organize early exhibitions of the Madison Art Association, now the Madison Art Center, the city's museum of contemporary art, which also will be housed in the Overture Center.

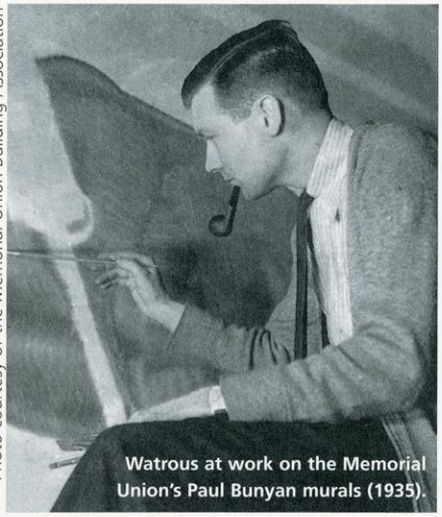


Photo courtesy of the Memorial Union Building Association

Watrous at work on the Memorial Union's Paul Bunyan murals (1935).

Thanks to a generous gift by his family, James S. Watrous' name will live on in Overture. The family agreed that a Wisconsin Academy gallery bearing Jim Watrous' name "would be a wonderful way to continue his lifelong interest in Wisconsin art and artists," notes his daughter, Lynne Watrous Eich, director of the Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission.

The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters is honored to have a role in sustaining James Watrous' legacy. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Watrous family.

by Joan Fischer

Photo by Gail Kohl

Happy to be there: (from left) Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission director Lynne Eich, philanthropist Jerry Frautschi, Wisconsin Academy Foundation president Ann Peckham, and Wisconsin Academy Gallery director Randall Berndt at the Overture announcement in Madison's Civic Center.

who's who

Harold Kruse

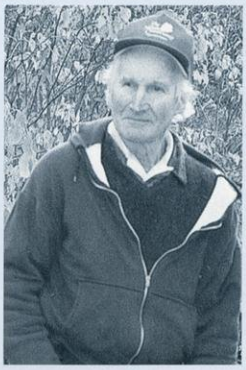


Photo courtesy of the Nature Conservancy

Occupation: Organic farmer, naturalist and conservationist near Loganville (Sauk County).

Years in Wisconsin: 75. The farm's been in his family since 1892.

Claim to fame: Sells organic herbs, vegetables, and edible flowers at the Dane County Farmers' Market. Author of *Natural Areas in the Baraboo Hills.*

Currently working on: Farming and working with the Nature Conservancy, the Baraboo Range Preservation Association, and a number of other conservation organizations.

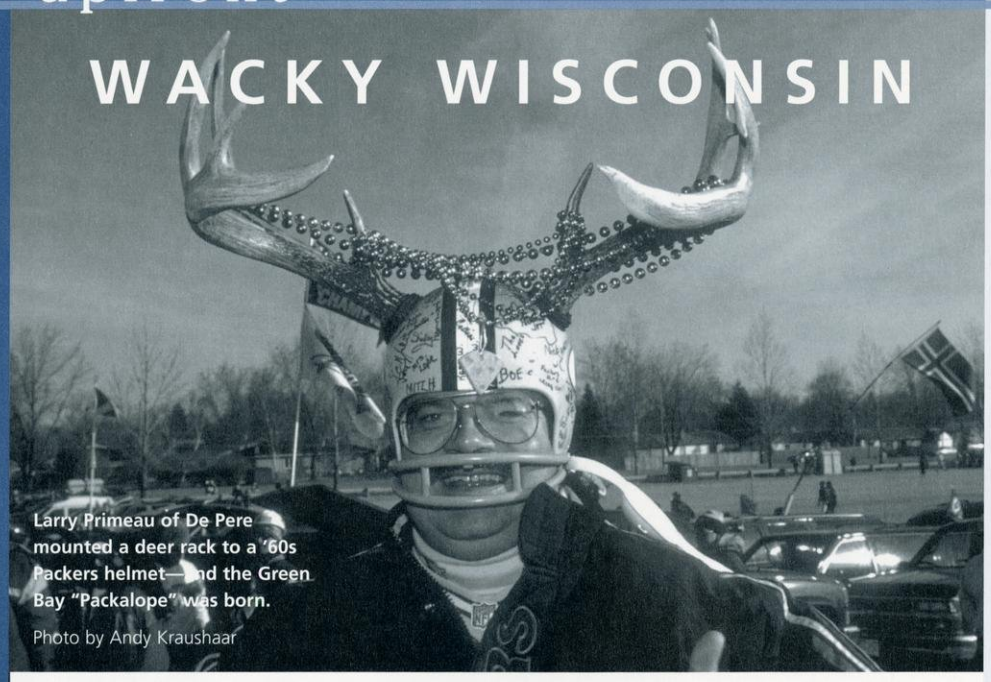
Memorable quote: "We humans are an arrogant race. Somewhere along the way we came up with the idea that we were granted 'dominion' over the earth, dominion being interpreted by many as including the right to plunder, pollute and destroy with no thought to the future."

Mission: "To try and leave the world a better and more beautiful place than when I came on the scene."

What this state really needs is: "A continued strong commitment to protecting and restoring a clean and healthy environment, and promoting sustainable use of our natural heritage of soil, water, plants, animals, and natural beauty."

Kruse's book, ***Natural Areas in the Baraboo Hills,*** *is available at the Village Booksmith bookstore in Baraboo (608/355-1001) and at the Baraboo Range Preservation Association, P.O. Box 31, North Freedom, WI, 53951.*

WACKY WISCONSIN



Larry Primeau of De Pere mounted a deer rack to a '60s Packers helmet—and the Green Bay "Packalope" was born.

Photo by Andy Kraushaar

Finally, a book for all Wisconsin travelers, natives or newcomers, who have ever felt that *Northern Exposure* should have been set here. Masterfully assembled by public radio's *Whad 'Ya Know?* host Michael Feldman and show researcher Diana Cook, *Wisconsin Curiosities* (The Globe Pequot Press, 2000) introduces us to more than 125 oddities in "the mitten-shaped state." To wit:

- Meet a Durand woman who has unintentionally crashed into 17 deer. The book evokes an encounter with her latest victim: "As Anna Mae got out of the car and approached, the deer raised its head and gazed at her, as if to say, 'You must be the Anna Mae Bauer I've heard so much about,' then lay down and died."
- An essential point in cow-tipping: rush the cow from the uphill side. The *uphill* side. But even using this method, the "domino effect"—collapsing an entire chorus line of cows—has never been documented, the book attests.

- A visit to the Moccasin Bar in Hayward is almost like having tea with a host of cheery woodland creatures—except that they happen to be dead and stuffed. You can see "rabbits in calico kibitzing at sheepshead and Tyrolean-hatted chipmunks drinking beer and rolling dice." And let's not forget "Judge Wolf hearing the case of the badger that jumped the woodcock season."

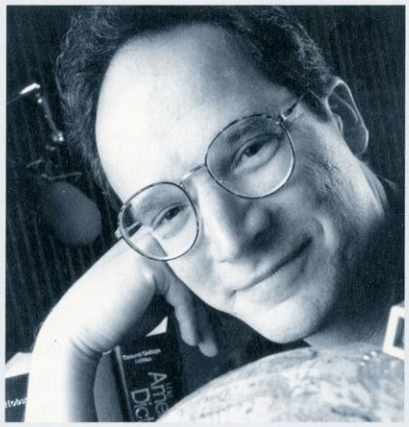
Oh, these stories are real, all right. Just try making them up.

by Joan Fischer

Poetry in strange places: Feldman's book celebrates the artistically satisfying bathrooms at Sheboygan's John Michael Kohler Art Center.

Photo courtesy of the John Michael Kohler Art Center.

The Curious Mr. Feldman



Do you consider yourself a Wisconsin curiosity, and if so, why?

Feldman: No, but if I am, I'd like to think I'd be a curiosity anywhere.

How did you get the idea for this book?

I got the idea for the book at the moment Globe Pequot asked me to do it. If they had asked for ***War and Peace,*** I'd still be writing. Naturally, I refused three times (traditional Wisconsin etiquette) before accepting (and after confirming that Diana Cook wanted to do it). I'm not a travel writer, or a writer, for that matter, but I do have some curiosity.

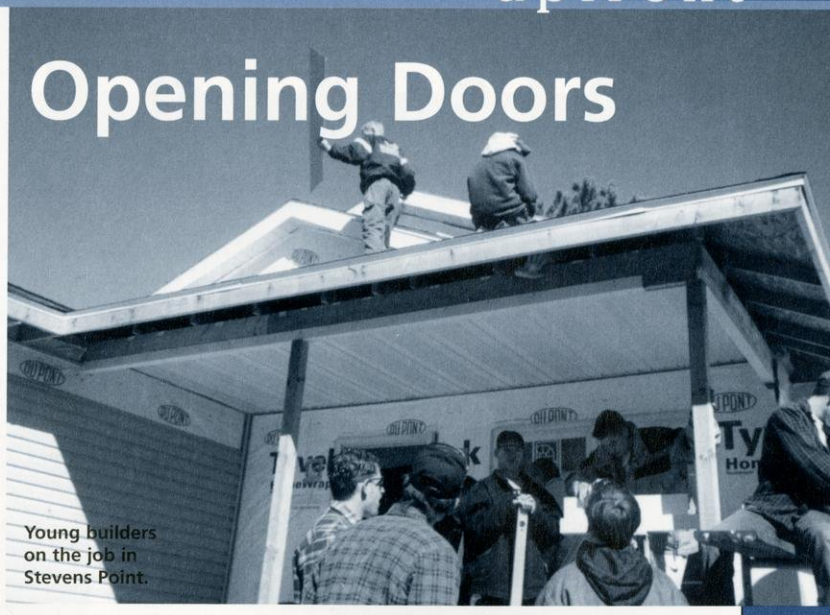
What's the biggest curiosity in the book? Or can you name a few things that especially intrigued you?

I like a lot of the primitive art in Wisconsin, from the bathtub grottos endemic to Kenosha County, to the Dickeyville Grotto, the Concrete Park in Phillips, and Dr. Evermor's giant sculpture gallery near Baraboo, and garage doors across the state too numerous to mention.

Why do you think Wisconsin has a disproportionately high number of curiosities?

I suspect every state has its curiosities (hence the "Curiosity" series) although it is almost harder to recognize them in your midst because you're so used to them—seeing grown men in snowmobile suits hanging by their feet from bridges in Kenosha Harbor in the middle of the night is something we would think nothing of, for example, because that's what you do when the smelt are running. Naturally.

Building Houses, Opening Doors



Young builders on the job in Stevens Point.

Up in Stevens Point, kids are taking "learning by doing" to extraordinary lengths. Students at Stevens Point Area High School, P.J. Jacobs Junior High School, and Pacelli High School are building homes for the needy, funded by Habitat for Humanity and CAP Services. This year, they're building two houses for local families. The home-building program is now in its third year.

Students can earn credit by taking the class for one semester. However, many students who have taken the course continue helping out for no credit during study halls.

"It's very positive and very rewarding," says David Rasmussen, a technology instructor at P.J. Jacobs Junior High. "The students are here because they want to be."

Rasmussen believes the Stevens Point handymen and -women may well be the youngest in the state. "To the best of our knowledge, we're the only school in the state of Wisconsin that builds a house with ninth graders," he says.

The kids are learning more than just how to pound nails and shingle roofs (useful though those skills may be). They work alongside local contractors and learn what's involved in every aspect of home building.

But learning doesn't stop with plumbing, electricity, and carpentry. Rasmussen incorporates English, writing, and science into the work. He requires his students to keep a daily journal and to participate in lectures by the contractors. The kids also tour local factories and industries.

Rasmussen hopes that by introducing students to the skilled trades, some of them may pursue careers in those fields after graduating.

"There's a huge shortage of the skilled trades in America, and we haven't peaked with our shortage yet," he notes.

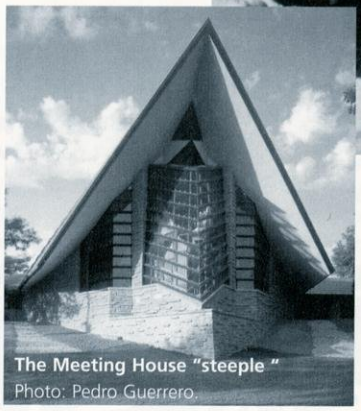
by Trina Laube

this old landmark

In the month and year of my own birth—February 1951—the first worship service was held in Madison's Unitarian Meeting House. A layman, the well-known philosopher Max Otto, preached the inaugural sermon entitled "To Own or Be Owned," in which he cautioned his fellow Unitarians against allowing this new edifice to usurp the congregation's historic function and purpose.

"No amount of acclaim will make the admired structure our own," Otto admonished. "To become ours it must bring enrichment from within to the religious cause which our Society exists to serve. Caught up in our aspiration and thought and action, the architect's work of art has to be absorbed in the art of life."

Otto probably didn't have to press this point too hard. Truth be told, 50 years ago most members of the small, struggling Society were as frustrated as they were pleased with what seemed to have become an interminable project. Five years had elapsed since Society member Frank Lloyd Wright had agreed to the undertaking. The architect had submitted preliminary plans four years earlier. Groundbreaking had taken place in 1949, but construction proceeded slowly as workers strove to fulfill Wright's bold and challenging design.

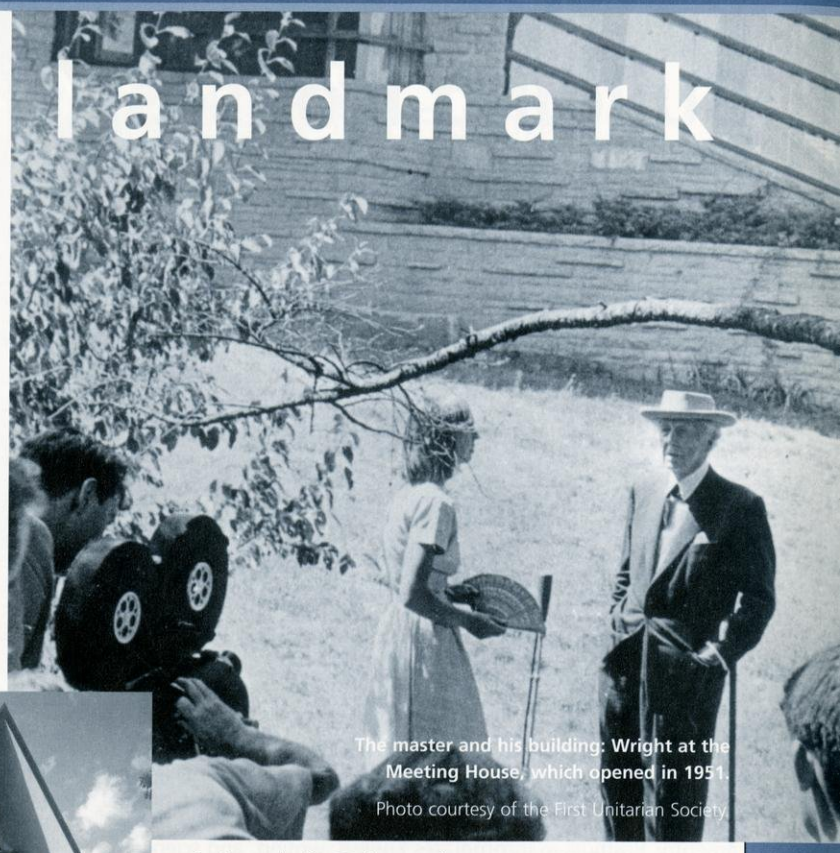


The Meeting House "steeple"
Photo: Pedro Guerrero.

Indeed, when the congregation convened for the first time beneath its landmark prow, the Meeting House was still, as building committee chairman Herb Jacobs recalled, "an uncompleted eyesore rather than a showplace." Another six months would pass before the stakeholders were satisfied with the results of their considerable investment.

And what an investment the Meeting House was! A project Wright initially estimated at $60,000 ended up costing well over $200,000, then a huge sum for a congregation of fewer than 200 to bear. The price tag would have been higher had it not been for the sweat equity of the Unitarian faithful, considerable sacrifice by contractor Marshall Erdman, and Wright's own unwavering commitment. After all, it was "his" church they were building.

Over ensuing decades the Unitarian Meeting House has performed yeoman's service. Sheltering an active, worshiping congregation that has burgeoned to 1,800, it has established itself as a favored Madison venue for public concerts, recitals, lectures, and tours. Thousands of admirers pass through the Meeting House each year; literally hundreds of couples exchange wedding vows before its rough-hewn stone pulpit, and memorial services for notable scholars and citizens occur frequently. The area's finest musicians clamor to perform in the acoustically lively auditorium. Underscoring its commitment to free expression, the Society has routinely opened its doors to provocative speakers and innovative artists.



The master and his building: Wright at the Meeting House, which opened in 1951.
Photo courtesy of the First Unitarian Society.

As it marks its 50th year, however, our Meeting House is clearly showing its age. And even as it has basked in the reflected glory of Frank Lloyd Wright's genius, the Society has had to cope with another side of his legacy: the leaking roof.

When I was called in 1988 to serve as parish minister, the congregation had just spent several hundred thousand dollars on much-needed repairs. A few years later, an even larger sum was needed to replace a major portion of the Meeting House's distinctive copper roof. Like the earlier generation that raised up our remarkable building, recent stewards have learned that Wrightian creations come with a high price tag!

And yet the congregation has dug into its pockets as needed. Today, a Wright building recognized by the American Institute of Architects as one of only 17 worthy enough to demand extraordinary preservation efforts stands in reasonable condition. Nevertheless, further repairs loom, some of an urgent nature; professional restoration consultants have come up with seven-figure estimates.

As in the past, Madison Unitarians will gird up their loins and embrace the challenge. But we also hope that, having enjoyed and used it for 50 years, its many admirers in the larger community will also step forward to serve the Meeting House. It is our spiritual home, but it is also an irreplaceable Wisconsin treasure.

by Rev. Michael Schuler, First Unitarian Society

Editor's Note: Stewards of the Unitarian Meeting House welcome statewide assistance and support in the effort to preserve this Wisconsin landmark. For more information on how you can help, please contact Michael Schuler at: michaels@fusmadison.org or 608/233-9774, ext. 13.

Body Identified

We just knew some eagle-eyed reader would notice we failed to identify a famous-looking man shown out on the town with actress Uta Hagen (far left) and Peter Lorre (far right) in our Fall issue. He's actor, writer, and director Richard Carlson, who was a popular leading man on stage and in films of the '30s–'50s. Many thanks to Beverly Bildsten of Baraboo for clueing us in. Bildsten attended high school with Carlson in Minneapolis.

Cheers for Revamp

I could not believe my eyes when I saw my new copy of the *Review,* which arrived yesterday. What a triumph!

You and your staff have breathed new life into this publication, not only in terms of graphic design (which is sensational!) but also content. I have been waiting for years for Tom Every to receive his well-deserved place of honor ("The Land of Evermor"). And the visit and interview with Jane Hamilton was a delight to read.

The new subtitle, "The Magazine of Wisconsin Thought and Culture," is certainly apt, since the new magazine promises to fill just that role in the print world. We have long needed a lively magazine such as this, and now, as the *Review* is reinvented in its 46th volume, we finally have it.

Again, my congratulations to you, to Marcia Larson, and to all the others who have had a hand in this striking achievement.

Jerry Minnich
Publisher, Prairie Oak Press
Madison

I just happened to stumble upon the new *Wisconsin Academy Review* and as someone in the magazine business (as well as education, and with a heart close to the concerns and approaches of the arts and humanities) I thought I'd pass along my observations.

Let me do so by way of a little story. I have been frightfully busy these past six weeks. Today was the first day in a very long time that I had a chance to go to my college library. While there, I immediately found what I was looking for, then decided to take a minute to browse the latest art magazines (I teach photography, among other things). As I walked away from the periodicals in the "A" section, I was thinking to myself how much I missed just hanging out in the library. I glanced over my shoulder at the last row of shelves, the "W" section, and saw the latest issue of *Wisconsin Academy Review.* The cover really caught my attention. Color! Lively design!! And, Jane Hamilton in farm boots!!!

It stopped me dead in my hurried tracks. I plopped my burden of books on a table and sat with the magazine awhile, intrigued by the features, the interview, and the poetry. But I was also particularly interested in the photography—good old Zane Williams' work! Lovely color images of zany sculptures. Gorgeous, lush, juicy black and whites and duotones. It all tasted very, very good.

My compliments.

Don Albrecht
Northland College
Ashland

Your Fall 2000 issue is to be commended. I noted that Bob Lange mentioned the National Telemedia Council (NTC) having an office with the Academy—marvelous! I was brought back to the UW–Madison in 1962 as a professor with a four-part mission: 1. Develop a state public TV network with legislative support; 2. Manage WHA-TV; 3. Introduce a mass media sequence into the Department of Speech; and 4. Introduce instructional TV in the L&S college. It was the third mission that began educating toward media literacy. An organization known as Better Broadcasting was already in place and later became NTC. My own mother, who was state PTA president and president of the Milwaukee School Board, was one of the women who had developed and promoted the predecessor of NTC. So, I am truly pleased that Ms. Rowe will be housed there.

Enjoyed the Badger Ordnance piece immensely. Joyce and I spent the first five years of our marriage there—again, thank you, Bob and entire crew.

Lee Sherman Dreyfus
(former Wisconsin Governor)
Waukesha

The *Wisconsin Academy Review* welcomes your comments. Please send letters to the Editor, 1922 University Avenue, Madison WI 53705, by e-mail to joanfischer@facstaff.wisc.edu, or by fax to 608/265-3039. Letters may be edited for reasons of space or clarity.

Adventures in Education

Monona middle schoolers built "Our Golden Dream," an ocean-touring kayak. It's a product that "represents the charm, beauty, and authenticity of learning when a curriculum is thematic and connected in its approach," notes author/ educator Thomas Van Winkle.

All photos courtesy of Winnequah Middle School, Monona

ORDINARY MIDDLE-SCHOOL STUDENTS are building kayaks and writing books. Here's how "expeditionary learning" puts the excitement back in education—and why it may be our best chance for saving our public schools.

BY THOMAS VAN WINKLE, PRINCIPAL
WINNEQUAH MIDDLE SCHOOL

WHAT KIND OF PUBLIC educational experience is appropriate for 21st-century learners? The oft-cited societal ills—juvenile crime, teen pregnancy, substance abuse, violence, gang activity, truancy, and dropout rates—all have significant deleterious effects on public education. These problems alone have convinced many would-be instructors to steer clear of the teaching profession.

In addition, for more than three decades now, U.S. public schools have been denounced and then challenged to improve all students' performance, regardless of circumstances. Teachers are directed to align their local curriculum with state standards, differentiate instruction and challenge the gifted, modify the curriculum for special education students, and maintain a positive attitude while accomplishing each at the same time. Is it possible for individuals and schools to achieve all of these goals?

While corporations invest heavily in ongoing and comprehensive staff training and professional development for their employees, U.S. teachers continue to attend piecemeal inservice sessions that are not only *not* comprehensive, but intermittent at best. Usually these inservice experiences remind teachers of the myriad tasks they are expected to achieve. It is not surprising, then, that some teachers become cynical when any kind of significant instructional change is proposed. Who has the time or energy? Is it actually possible, then, for public school teachers to meet rigorous academic and character standards that will successfully transform lives and engage learners? While my answer to this question would have been "no" just a few years ago, I now believe it is possible. We are now working with a powerful design for developing the curiosity, skills, knowledge, and courage needed to imagine a better world and work toward realizing it.

Here's just one example of the power of this design. The students decided to christen her "Our Golden Dream." The name couldn't be more fitting for this floating mahogany masterpiece—a 17-foot ocean-touring kayak. Building "Our Golden Dream" reflects the reality that learning happens best with emotion, challenge, and the requisite support. Students discover their abilities, values, "grand passions," and responsibilities in

Expeditionary Learning Design Principles

1. The Primacy of Self-Discovery

Learning happens best with emotion, challenge, and requisite support. People discover their "grand passions" and responsibilities in situations that offer adventure and the unexpected. They must have tasks that require perseverance, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, self-discipline, and significant achievement. A primary job of the educator is to help students overcome their fear and discover they have more in them than they think.

2. Having Wonderful Ideas

Teach so as to build on children's curiosity about the world by creating learning situations that provide matter to think about, time to experiment, and time to make sense of what is observed. Foster a community where students' and adults' ideas are respected.

3. The Responsibility for Learning

Learning is both a personal, individually specific process of discovery and a social activity. Each of us learns within and for ourselves and as a part of a group. Every aspect of a school must encourage children, young people, and adults to become increasingly responsible for directing their own personal and collective learning.

4. Intimacy and Caring

Learning is fostered best in small groups where there is trust, sustained caring, and mutual respect among all members of the learning community. Keep schools and learning groups small. Be sure there is a caring adult looking after the progress of each child. Arrange for older students to mentor the younger ones.

5. Success and Failure

All students must be assured a fair measure of success in learning in order to nurture the confidence and capacity to take risks and rise to increasingly difficult challenges. But it is also important to experience failure, to overcome negative inclinations, to prevail against adversity, and to learn to turn disabilities into opportunities.

6. Collaboration and Competition

Teach so as to join individual and group development so that the value of friendship, trust, and group endeavor is made manifest. Encourage students to compete, not against each other, but with their own personal best and with rigorous standards of excellence.

7. Diversity and Inclusivity

Diversity and inclusivity in all groups dramatically increase richness of ideas, creative power, problem-solving ability, and acceptance of others. Encourage students to investigate, value, and draw upon their own different histories, talents, and resources together with those of other communities and cultures. Keep the schools and learning groups heterogeneous.

8. The Natural World

A direct and respectful relationship with the natural world refreshes the human spirit and reveals the important lessons of recurring cycles and cause and effect. Students learn to become stewards of the earth and of the generations to come.

9. Solitude and Reflection

Solitude, reflection, and silence replenish our energies and open our minds. Be sure students have time alone to explore their own thoughts, make their own connections, and create their own ideas. Then give them opportunity to exchange their reflections with each other and with adults.

10. Service and Compassion

We are crew, not passengers, and are strengthened by acts of consequential service to others. One of a school's primary functions is to prepare its students with the attitudes and skills to learn from and be of service to others.

You can learn more about Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound on their website: www.elob.org

Learning math, English, social studies, science, technology, and art—all while building a kayak.

situations that offer adventure and the unexpected. "Our Golden Dream" is a product that exhibits the charm, beauty and authenticity of learning when a curriculum is thematic and connected in its approach. For the students who built "Our Golden Dream," learning became an expedition into the unknown. They ventured into the uncharted waters of math, English, social studies, science, technology, and art as they conducted an in-depth study of kayaking and kayak construction. The project required perseverance, collaboration, fitness, craftsmanship, imagination, and self-discipline. The final product was a significant achievement characterized by rigorous academics and relationship building.

The kayak expedition represents just one of 14 "learning expeditions" implemented at Winnequah Middle School in Monona, a small city adjacent to Madison, during the 1999–2000 school year. Winnequah is an Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound school, one of approximately 130 in the nation. After receiving an Obey-Porter comprehensive school reform grant award in 1999, the staff at Winnequah set out to transform the middle school into an Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound school.

What is "expeditionary learning"? It's a design for school reform that challenges K–12 students to meet demanding academic and character standards. Expeditionary learning staff collaborate with the Winnequah staff to make the school a safe, engaging community where all students are expected to achieve more than they thought possible.

A GERMAN IMPORT

Expeditionary learning extends the experience of Outward Bound, an adventure- and service-based education program founded by educator Kurt Hahn, into public school. Hahn fled Hitler's Germany for England in 1933. He founded the Salem School under the sponsorship of Prince Max von Baden, Germany's last imperial chancellor. Hahn established the "Seven Laws of Salem," which codified the principles for which he stood. These were: "Give the children the opportunity for self-discovery; make the children meet with triumph and defeat; give children the opportunity for self-effacement in the common cause; provide periods of silence; train the imagination; make games (i.e. competition) important but not predominant; and free the sons of the wealthy and powerful from the enervating sense of privilege."

Expeditionary learning preserves the faith in active self-discovery. Students in expeditionary learning schools learn to work together in teams, rise to seemingly impossible challenges, and use their knowledge in service to the community. The curriculum is integrated in its approach, where the learning is rooted in personal experience. Similar to Hahn's "Seven Laws of Salem," expeditionary learning schools promote 10 design principles that guide adults in designing learning expeditions and working with students. In expeditionary learning schools, learning is viewed as a metaphorical expedition into the unknown. The 10 design principles codify the principles for which Winnequah and other Expediationary Learning Outward Bound schools stand (see page 11).

At the heart of the design is the learning expedition. Learning expeditions are long-term, multidisciplinary explorations of a single theme or topic, such as hunger, water quality, the Holocaust, or personal achievement. Harnessing the power of adventure and discovery, expeditions take students on intellectual journeys with challenging projects, fieldwork, service, performances, and celebrations. Teams of teachers at Winnequah design their own learning expeditions so that they are aligned with Wisconsin state standards and local district standards. The expeditions are meant to motivate and compel students to learn the skills and content they need to produce high-quality, original work and to excel on the standardized tests by which student and school performance are regularly evaluated.

Students in the midst of a learning expedition engage with challenging content and skills that have contextual meaning and importance. In other words, the basics are not abandoned. Rather, they are built into the learning expedition timeline. Each expedition proceeds through distinct stages. In the beginning, students are immersed in an experience that captures their interest in the topic or theme. This immersion is followed by a sequence of skill building and closely supervised project work, and, finally, by a more independent challenge in which students apply and present their knowledge to an audience of significance. Throughout the learning expedition, teachers are expected to hold high expectations for all students, and provide time and structure for the sustained effort needed to produce quality work through multiple revisions. To honor the hard work of everyone involved, an expedition often culminates in a celebration that includes families and community members. On the maiden voyage of "Our Golden Dream," community members, and even the media were

invited to celebrate the accomplishments of the boat-builders.

At Winnequah, learning expeditions are rapidly becoming the central focus of curriculum and instruction, not an add-on or enrichment activity. During the 2000–2001 school year, close to 30 learning expeditions will be introduced. Our goal is for learning expeditions to become the primary method by which students learn the content and skills they need to understand and an important part of the strategy to prepare students for state assessments.

The topics, questions, and learning goals that give shape to learning expeditions are informed by local district and state standards. To accommodate the expeditions, the school provides flexible schedules and significant planning time for the teaching staff. A flexible block schedule has been one of the keys to success at Winnequah.

TEACHERS AS LEARNERS

The Winnequah staff is mindful that not all of the curricular areas can, or should be, incorporated into expeditions. Math is often the most difficult subject to integrate. Herein lies the beauty of Expeditionary Learning Outward Bound. It is a design, not a prescription. No force fits are appropriate. No curriculum should ever be forced to fit into a thematic learning expedition.

This is yet another reason that a flexible schedule is important to this design. Time can still be put into the curricular areas that do not fit into a particular expedition. Whether or not a particular content area fits into an expedition, all Winnequah teachers can promote, support, and reflect the design principles in their classroom on a daily basis.

Significant and ongoing professional development plays a vital role in the expeditionary learning model. If you wish to improve instruction, you must know in what direction you are headed, and you must invest in the personal professional development of each and every staff member. This is, perhaps, one of the most striking and exciting aspects of this reform design. Most of Winnequah's veteran staff members have been saturated with piecemeal "sit and get" inservice sessions and faculty meetings for more than two decades.

Now, a leadership team made up of staff, in concert with our expeditionary learning school designer, map out the school year inservice activities to align with the goals of the design. Every inservice opportunity and most staff meetings are dedicated to a different aspect of improving our educational practice and enhancing student achievement.

In addition to the on-site technical assistance provided by the expeditionary learning school designer, all Winnequah staff have the opportunity to participate in Outward Bound educator courses and summits. Outward Bound educator courses offer teachers the opportunity to become students in challenging backcountry and urban expeditions. Two-thirds (close to 45) of our staff members have participated in staff development opportunities. Whether the experience is whitewater rafting in Utah, sailing in Penobscot Bay, Maine, canoeing in the Boundary Waters of Minnesota, sea kayaking in Lake Superior, mountain backpacking in the Blue Ridge Mountains, or exploring the diverse communities of New York City, these courses have challenged Winnequah staff physically, emotionally, and intellectually beyond the reaches of any professional experience they have had before.

As the teachers leave their comfort zones, they experience, firsthand, what it is like to be a learner again. These courses have been life-changing experiences for many Winnequah staff. And we have discovered that these experiences have far greater impact on the classroom and culture within the building than any other professional opportunities they have had before.

Summit experiences are less physically rigorous, yet they provide complete immersion experiences in learning expeditions. They are residential, intensive, week-long learning experiences that enrich a person's understanding of the expeditionary learning design principles. Summit participants experience firsthand what it is like to experience a learning expedition.

A BOOK-WRITING EXPEDITION

A real-life expedition is a journey with a purpose. Prior to becoming an expeditionary learning school, Winnequah staff members experienced a very successful multidisciplinary unit of instruction. As a matter of fact, I believe that the undertaking, which was to have the entire school write, illustrate, and professionally publish a book, probably helped solidify our decision to become an expeditionary learning school.

Pat Howell, a Winnequah special education teacher who served as the book's project coordinator, got the idea for

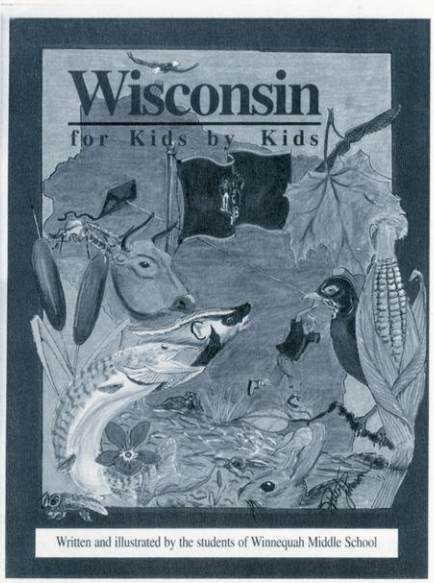
"Cities in ashes,/towns swept out of sight./Millions on millions/destroyed in one night," goes a poem about the Peshtigo fire quoted by eighth-grade authors Brittany Bailey and Heidi Siferd (noting that in fact the death toll was closer to 1,200). Drawing by eighth-grader Paul Klabacka.

Wisconsin for Kids by Kids after reading *M for Montana,* a similar project.

Wisconsin for Kids by Kids is divided into three sections—people, places, and past events. Sixth-graders illustrated and wrote the people section, while seventh-graders worked on places and eighth-graders produced the events surrounding Wisconsin history.

Without knowing it, Howell followed the principles of designing a quality learning expedition. She invited experts to work with the students as they created the book. Editors and journalists from Madison magazines and newspapers provided assistance in writing and editing. Professional illustrators assisted student artists on-site, and staff at the State Historical Society proofed the work for accuracy. The involvement of professionals added a dimension of legitimacy to the project. Students made requests to revise their own work and surprised the teachers when they were not yet satisfied with their work. Building a culture and expectation of revision fits the expeditionary learning model. Rather than teachers forcing students to "re-do," students made special requests to keep working on the book.

The book's layout and design were completed during the summer of 1998. Involving community resources, Howell



and the students raised donations to help pay for the $15,000 printing fee. The student response to the publication was overwhelmingly positive and the book's quality and success surprised many of those who had helped with the project.

Statewide response to the publication, which is now going into a second printing, has been awe-inspiring. In addition to accolades from State Superintendent John Benson and Governor Thompson, the State Historical Society awarded the project high marks. Perhaps the most satisfying accolade, though, is that the book has been purchased by several school districts to be used in their fourth-grade Wisconsin history units.

Praise from our colleagues is the most rewarding. Howell and her colleague, Norma Hessling, have now completed a teacher's guide and student workbook for the book. Information on these items can be obtained by contacting the school (tel. 608/221-7676).

As we move forward with expeditionary learning, we plan to make projects like *Wisconsin for Kids by Kids* the norm rather than the exception. While the societal ills we face in Monona are no different than those faced by other public educators, the tools at our disposal are different in the sense that we are approaching the challenge in a comprehensive "all school" way. Enter our building and ask a staff member what we are all about. You will doubtless hear that we are an expeditionary learning school. This singular focus provides a vision of where we are and where we hope to go. We will continue investing in our people through ongoing and intensive professional development opportunities. Already we have witnessed important improvement in student performance, school culture, and reputation. We will continue to create authentic learning experiences for children, who will, we hope, have greater interest in their education. Our experiences thus far, successful or not, have convinced us that expeditionary learning is the right design for our school. ▼▼

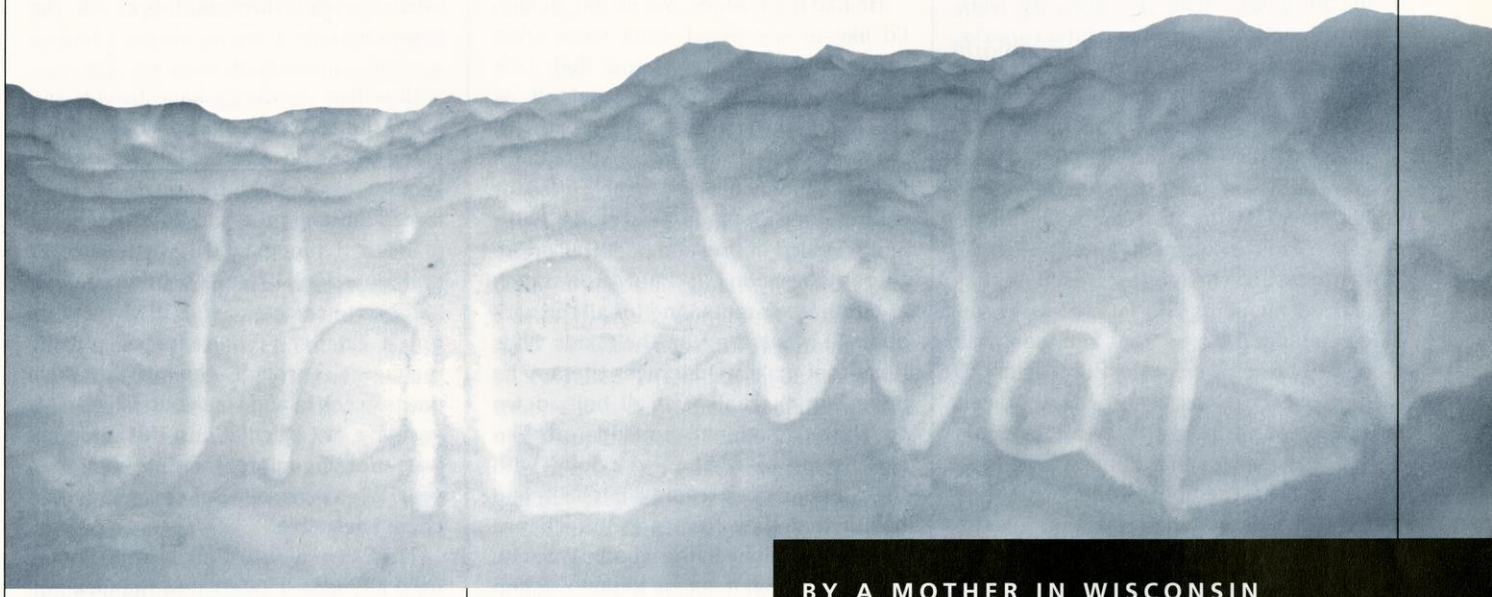
Thomas Van Winkle, 37, is principal of Winnequah Middle School in Monona, Wisconsin.

Cranberry Harvesting, drawing by eighth-grader LeAnne Tiberg. The accompanying text, written by eighth-graders Steve Curtis and Amy Marcus and vetted for accuracy by the State Historical Society, describes the past and present of Wisconsin's cranberry industry.

You can purchase a copy of ***Wisconsin for Kids by Kids*** by calling Winnequah Middle School, 608/221-7676 ext. 117. It is also available for $14.95 at many bookstores around the state. Teachers can order class sets from Badger House Publishing Ltd. in Green Bay at 800/242-5585.

"Nothing left to lose except money."

We've read about expeditionary learning in a school setting. What about expedition therapy that claims to put wayward young people on track? Here's one family's story.



BY A MOTHER IN WISCONSIN

EARLIER THIS YEAR I sat in a cabinlike yurt in the foothills of the Cascade Mountains in Oregon waiting for my 17-year-old son to walk through the door of this place he'd never been, wondering what on earth had happened to him during the previous three weeks. His dad, my ex-husband, was the only other person I knew in the room, and we were surrounded by strangers: the fragmented families of the six other teenagers who, like our son, had detonated in some way and been sent to live outdoors for a while.

THE KIDS HAD SLEPT in the snow every night, rationed their cheese and lentils, climbed mountains, waded in icy lakes, written in journals. But mostly they had walked and walked, and often snowshoed, on one of the hundreds of wilderness therapy expeditions that criss-cross the backcountry of the Pacific Northwest each year. Now, after three weeks of this, the children we had sent away were walking back to us. Their expectant families wondered: Did we get their attention? Do they hate us? Was there any point to this at all?

Outside the yurt, the hikers gathered to read letters from home and spend a final few moments together. Inside, expedition staffers waited for the parents to settle. There was murmured conversation, a few self-conscious introductions, and

some comparing of the from-the-field reports each family had received during the trek. My ex and I had received two terse communciations. Our son was "struggling with the physical and organizational challenges of the trek, but making progress," read the first. We were appalled. He's lettered in contact sports, we exclaimed. He's over 6 feet tall, weighs 180 pounds, and is in blissfully good health. What were they doing to him? Was this code for "He's fallen (in a snowdrift!) and can't get up"? Or "He left his gloves at the last campsite and he can freeze his fingers off for all we care"? I envisioned helicopter rescues that arrived moments too late. The second communiqué noted that our son was contributing "a great deal of insight" to group discussions; we comforted each other that he could still speak.

I heard voices and approaching footsteps. Then the floor of the yurt shook as the kids reached the top of the wooden staircase and stamped the snow from their heavy boots. Like defendants awaiting a jury's verdict, we turned our faces to the door and watched them file in. Their shining faces, eager smiles, and confident strides gave everything away.

"Don't tell us!" I wanted to shout. "Don't say anything. Just turn around and go back and keep doing whatever it is you did out there. We've seen enough. Go and don't look back."

I've had several months to refine my thinking on this, but that was the moment at which I best understood everything I've learned about why expeditionary learning works, and everything about why it doesn't.

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Time has passed and the verdict, having withstood appeals and reconsiderations, still stands. The trek was a success and a failure.

"The best $7,000 I ever spent in my life," says his dad.

"A complete waste of time," says my son.

But here's what I notice during this exchange: Nobody is yelling. Nothing is escalating. Even the dog has decided it's now safe to stay in the room while my ex and our son talk; she sits at their feet with the anticipating look that happy dogs have. It's a small thing, this moment in which nothing bad is happening. But it lets me picture the three of us walking together toward a light at the end of the tunnel that just might not be an oncoming train after all. My ex is right: It's the best $7,000 he's ever spent.

He had his reasons. We all did, in fact. I'd like to say that I don't know what drives other parents to send their kids outward bound, but that wouldn't be true. Thanks to the horror stories they've posted on Internet bulletin boards, and confessed over coffee or during long-distance telephone calls, and revealed in pre- and post-trek group therapy sessions, I know too much about these parents. And for all the variation in what they or their kids have done that makes wilderness therapy an appealing alternative, it all boils down to this: We think our kids are so endangered by what they're doing with their time, money, energy, intellect, and health that they have a better chance of surviving alone in the woods. We actually think, when it comes to the question of life and limb, that alone in the woods is the safer bet. We think there's nothing left to lose except money.

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"I tell parents to take that money and take their kids on a cruise," says a woman posting on one of the increasing numbers of "troubled teens" Internet bulletin boards. It's still 1999, and finally dawning on my ex and me that our son needs more help than he's getting from his parents, his school, and assorted counselors. A friend directs me to a website and from there I fan out, searching through databases and news groups for hints, rumors, magic bullets. Tough Love. Boarding schools. Military academies. Would a walk in the woods be the cure for my frustrated, floundering, and increasingly angry son? Was there a road map for his bewildered, anxious, and increasingly ineffectual parents?

I am almost sold on expeditionary learning when I read her message. A cruise, sure. I could dismiss this woman as a naysayer, an unbeliever in the benefits of wilderness therapy, but she has the most horrifying credibility imaginable. Ten years ago, her daughter died of exposure and dehydration on a wilderness trek. I check the website where she details her efforts to legislate child safety into wilderness treks. I read the collected tragedies of insults and endangerments visited on other children in the name of wilderness therapy. Dozens have suffered. At least three have died. The prosecutions that have followed seem paltry and offensive. Heartbroken, I turn off the computer.

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How bad do things have to get, and how remote do the chances of anything going wrong have to be, before you risk sending your child to his death on a forced march in the middle of nowhere?

Before I thought I'd have to answer that question, I found a program that had been in existence for 10 years without a fatality. Ten years of putting teenagers through their wilderness paces, week in and week out, 52 weeks a year. By my calculations this program was grossing more than $2 million a year. What a racket. But everybody had come back alive.

Then, on a weekend morning after we'd all made it safely into the new millennium, I picked a pair of jeans off the basement floor and found the sort of contraband that parents dread finding in their kids' pants pockets. When it isn't the first time, and especially when you've already taken all the prescribed steps since the first time and throughout all the other times, you know when it happens which time is suddenly, definitively, the last time. Standing in the laundry room, I reviewed the failing grades, the lack of enthusiasm for anything, the increasing distance between my son, his family members, his "good" friends. And I recalled a line from his favorite childhood book: "Things cannot go on like this," a character warns. "Something will happen."

When he learned that the contents of his pocket had gone into the garbage disposal, my son was enraged. Red-faced, with eyes blazing and fists clenched, he drew himself up in front of me. "You owe me fifty dollars!" he shouted.

So I had my answer. Days later my son and his dad were on a plane.

"Isn't there anyplace closer?" my ex had asked. "Can't we send him up north?"

If there were expeditionary learning treks or wilderness therapy programs in Wisconsin, my research hadn't revealed them. "And besides," I reminded my ex,

"We want him to go to the Place Where Nobody Has Died."

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Expeditionary learning: You set out and learn through what you experience during your journey. In that sense, all of life is expeditionary learning. Why should it matter so much that you wend your way far from civilization and deep into the wilderness?

"Mom, I cried myself to sleep for the first three nights," my son says, afterward. "I couldn't believe you and Dad had done this to me."

We are sitting on my couch, looking at pictures he'd taken on his trek. Five boys and two girls squinting into the sun, on snowshoes, carrying immense packs and surrounded by towering evergreens: this would have been a morning hike, after they'd each awakened, made their own breakfasts, completed a writing assignment, and packed up their own encampments.

"He demands we call his parents," the counselor's report had read. "He says, 'They didn't want me to do something this hard.'"

Another photo, this one of my son shirtless and ankle-deep in a lake that was clearly more ice floe than water; the grin on his face is broad and the muscles flexed in his arms are strong ones, and he seems embraced by an acutely blue sky. This would have been after lunch, after the first of the two daily, hours-long group discussions that are the only time during which the kids are allowed to talk to each other.

"What's this?" I ask, holding up a photo of mostly white.

"That's my wall," he says. And, yes, it is a thick, solid wall of packed snow, about 6 feet tall and 10 feet long. Into it a mittened hand has carved in blocky letters "THE WALL."

"Pink Floyd?"

A quick, ducking smile, and then he tells the story. He'd built it on his solo, his end-of-trek three days and three nights alone in the woods. Before he built it, he said, he went crazy. "I totally, completely, lost my mind."

"And then?"

He shrugs. "And then I got over it." And built the wall.

I looked down at the photo. It is symbolic only of boredom, my son insisted. But I see it as the first tangible limit my son has set for himself. Beyond the wall is the craziness he'd let go, the feelings he'd long feared to set loose in the sedate confines of a therapist's office, the recklessness that is now harmlessly feeding the wild trees and mountains and sky.

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In the end, that's a large part of it. Wilderness treks do more than let us discover inner strength. They also reveal the value of a well-considered boundary: Here is a cliff we will not jump from, there is a river we will not cross alone. These lessons are taught daily in civilized life, but often in ways that are cluttered, small, easy to miss; the vastness of wilderness throws them into sharp relief. The children on my son's trek returned to their families with a more sophisticated understanding not only of how strong and smart they really are but also of how necessary it was to set limits for themselves.

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After they'd hugged us and grinned back at us and taken their seats on the floor of the yurt, the kids began the tale of their journey. They had learned to stay warm through the night by digging their snow beds to a certain depth, and doing a certain number of sit-ups to build the body heat that would line the layers of clothing they wore. They had learned to ration their food to make it last, and to season it to make it palatable. They had learned to concentrate, to accommodate, to adjust, to strive. Nature had provided the consequences and compensations that drove the lessons deep. Caring counselors had set examples and guided the group discussions that helped everyone find a place in their hearts for this new awareness.

Then, in front of their parents, the kids began to plumb the emotional depths of the lessons they'd learned. We listened quietly as a teenage boy admitted he'd been all bravado at the outset of the trek. He wept as he told of putting himself in harm's way to save a fellow climber from a dangerous fall down a mountainside. "I always secretly thought I was a chicken," he said, intimating that the strain of hiding this imagined flaw had led him to do things in his life that were ridiculous, reckless, mean. "And then, without even thinking about it, I did something so brave. I couldn't even accept that I had done it." The girl he'd rescued sobbed as she described how he broke her fall and how the group then had to force him to face the fact that he was obviously, demonstrably, brave.

There were also apologies to parents and siblings for past transgressions, and pleas for forgiveness and understanding. The counselors broke in often during this part of the discussion; their gentle comments—even strong statements were couched gently—astonished me. These people had really gotten to know these kids and admire their inner steel, their better angels. What a gift. All of the praise was specific and personal. There was none of the blandly institutionalized credit for conforming that is doled out too often by teachers and parents back in civilization.

The kids drank it in. All the while, their faces, their expressions, their body language, everything they said and left unsaid, begged for reestablishment or strengthening of an emotional connection with their parents. They were telling us how much they needed that connection, and counselors were suggesting how we might go about providing it. Canyons of need yawned before these families, emo-

A Sampling of Online Wilderness Therapy Resources

www.teenliberty.org

Books, essays, and links concerning the dark side of wilderness treks and behavior modification schools.

http://homestead.juno.com/i've been there/

A compilation of personal reports, news articles, and lawsuit updates concerning programs that have been "red-flagged" by a watchdog group.

www.wilderness-programs.org

A five-star rating system that also provides links to individual programs.

www.bridgetounderstanding.com

Personal testimony, program promotions, links, and discussion groups run by a for-profit consulting service.

www.woodburyreports.com

Personal testimony, program summaries, links, and bulletin boards run by a for-profit consulting service.

tion surged in. None of us are out of the woods, I thought as I looked around the room. The tangible wilderness of snow and trees seemed more manageable by comparison.

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Take your kid on a cruise. Because it's safer? Easier? Or because, ultimately, it will have the same effect? My son had three weeks of life the way it's supposed to be lived: filled with challenges, personal growth, rewarding cooperation with peers, growing awareness of self and society, spiritual exploration, utterly constructive interaction with attentive, caring adults. And he's better off for the experience—more self-confident, more patient, more communicative, more aware, more hopeful, more respectful. He's living proof that everything about a wilderness trek "works."

Everything except, of course, for the fact that a trek ends. Just as a week at the beach won't leave you forever soothed, a trek through the wilderness won't leave you forever triumphant. And that, I suspect, is why he will acknowledge the impact it had on his life yet still call it a waste of time. The problem with expeditionary learning in wilderness treks isn't with the process itself. It's that it isn't nearly as widespread and accepted a way of learning—and of teaching—as it should be.

Parents who reach the point of sending their kids into the woods generally have to choose between two starkly different options when it comes to deciding what to do with them when they come off the trail. Some kids head off to private schools where the entire curriculum is modeled on expeditionary learning. Structure and attention ensure that past out-of-control behaviors continue to recede. They are the ones who, tracked over time, are moving most smoothly toward becoming well adjusted and making it safely into adulthood.

But more post-trek kids return to their homes, to their enabling circle of friends, to their imperfect parents, and most significantly, to their old schools. Their experiences have given them new tools and understanding with which to live their lives, but they must also struggle to fit their newly expanded horizons into a universe that seems to have shrunk while they were away.

Three or four times since that day in the Cascades, I've happened upon my son sorting through his trek photos, or leafing through the journal he kept while in the wilderness. He doesn't wish to be that cold again, I don't think, or that hungry. But he's searching for a way to be, once again, that engaged and challenged, that alive and in the moment. I'm sure of it. ▼▲

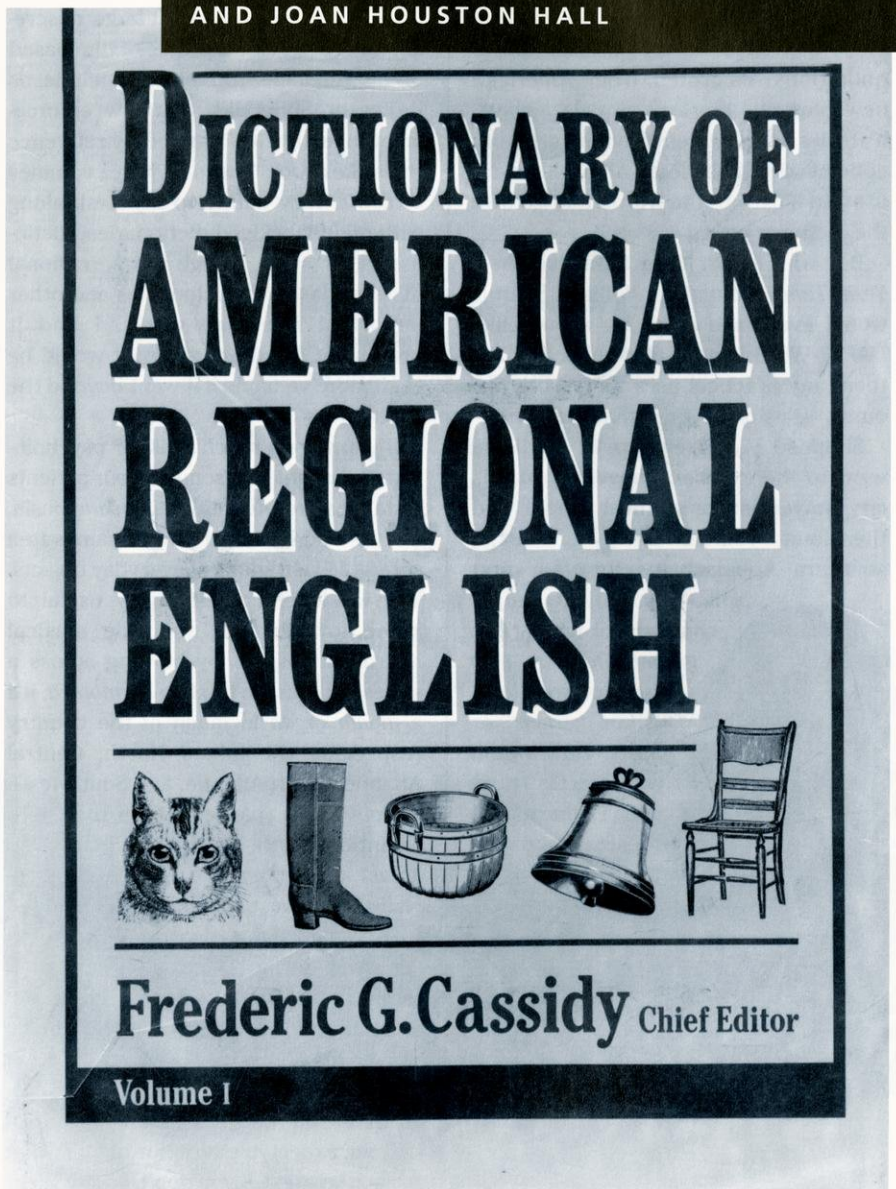
This essay was submitted by "A Mother in Wisconsin" on condition of anonymity. All events described here are true, though some minor changes in details were made to protect the family's identity.

Feeling "bumfuzzled"?

Have no fear. A Wisconsin-based dictionary can help.

BY FREDERIC C. CASSIDY
AND JOAN HOUSTON HALL

PRESIDENT CLINTON'S staunch refusal to give up his own regional vernacular has frequently left members of the Fourth Estate confused—or *flummoxed, bumfuzzled,* or *ferhoodled* (as they say in some regions of this country). Reporters were baffled when Clinton proclaimed that his staff members were there to work for the American people and "not to *throw off on each other.*" And when he said of a dissenting major general that "he doesn't know me from *Adam's off-ox,*" many were admittedly *in a swivet.*



WHERE DO BEWILDERED reporters (or others) turn for clarification? To the heartland, to flyover country, to the land of *bakery, bubblers,* and *brats**. To the makers of the *Dictionary of American Regional English* (familiarly known as *DARE*). In Madison, Wisconsin, we and a staff of 12 work with a massive collection of the words, phrases, pronunciations, and grammatical constructions likely to be brought to Washington by the regionally speaking folks who represent the 50 states. Our files make it easy to explain Orrin Hatch's *hissy fits*, Ronald Reagan's *squoze* or Al Gore's *rip-tootin'* presidential race.

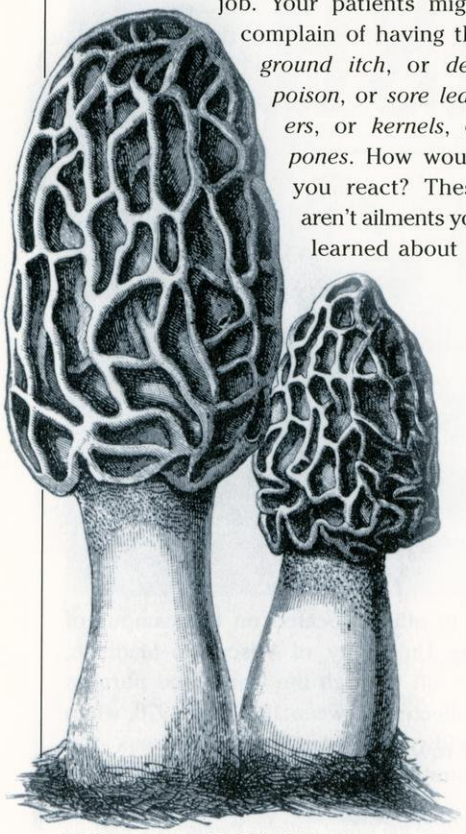
In offices located on the campus of the University of Wisconsin–Madison, we sift through the words and phrases collected between 1965 and 1970, when fieldworkers fanned out across the country to ask native-born Americans

* *And if you're from Wisconsin, you know that* **bakery** *isn't just the place where you buy the pastries, it's also the sweet delights themselves; the* **bubbler** *is where you get a drink of water to wash down the bakery; and* **brats** *(properly rhyming with rots, not rats) are the staple of summer grilling—succulent, greasy bratwurst links, traditionally smothered in sauerkraut.*

what words they used for the simple realities of their daily lives: "What do you call the rolls of dust that collect on the floor under the bed? What joking expressions do you have around here about snoring? Of someone who seems quite stupid you might say, 'He hasn't sense enough to __ __!'" In addition to the 2.5 million responses gathered in this way, we have the collections of the American Dialect Society (established in 1889 specifically to make such a dictionary as ours) and a huge file of quotations excerpted from American newspapers, diaries, novels, plays, histories, government documents, and ephemeral publications. All of these are used to illustrate the words that go into the dictionary.

But who (other than folks like [*New York Times* columnist William Safire]) would ever have a use for a book like *DARE*? Word lovers, of course. But are there any practical uses for a work like ours? We've discovered that there are.

Suppose you grew up in Madison, went to the excellent university in this city, stayed on for medical school, and then found yourself somewhere in the southern Appalachians for your first job. Your patients might complain of having the *ground itch*, or *dew poison*, or *sore leaders*, or *kernels*, or *pones*. How would you react? These aren't ailments you learned about in medical school. If you had a dictionary of regionalisms on your shelf, you could slip out, look up the word, and come back knowing what questions to ask next.



Or suppose you were a forensic linguist, as is Roger Shuy (formerly of Georgetown University, now cozily ensconced in the mountains of western Montana). Further, suppose you were asked to read the manifesto of the Unabomber or another at-large miscreant and to provide a profile of him based on his language. You might conclude, as Professor Shuy did, that law enforcement investigation is aided by reference tools like *DARE*: "I keep my three volumes of *DARE* very handy to my desk along with my unabridged dictionaries, dictionaries of slang, usage texts, regional dialect atlases, encyclopedias and other important reference works. I find it invaluable. Needless to say, it would be even more valuable if it went beyond the letter O."

If you were a psychiatrist or psychologist, you might give some of your patients a standardized test to diagnose aphasia. They would be asked to give names to a series of illustrations of everyday objects. You would find it extremely useful to know, for example, that the musical instrument played by blowing across a series of holes isn't only a *harmonica*; it's a *mouth organ* in much of the country (especially the Inland North, Central Atlantic, South Atlantic, and Southwest), a *mouth harp* (particularly in the South Atlantic, North Central and Western areas), and a *French harp* as well (especially in the West Midland, Texas, and the Central part of the country). Why should you care? Because the answer key to the test is highly unlikely to recognize any regional or social variation on the naming of common objects. And if your patient from Mississippi calls a pair of stilts *Tom Walkers*, you need to know that that is a normal, expectable term for them in that part of America. If you don't, your patient will be marked "wrong" and could end up with misdiagnosis simply because he used his legitimate, regional English.

And what about all you librarians? We always assumed that a reference like *DARE* would be invaluable in answering the weird and wonderful questions that come your way. And Kathleen Glaser, from the reference room at the Putnam County Library in Cookeville, Tennesee, proved us right: "A library patron wanted information on dry-land fish. We looked in every 'fish' book we could think of, to no avail. As the patron kept repeating that this fish 'grew in the woods,'... I finally got to wondering if this was a regional expression. And of course it was: a dry-land fish is an edible mushroom."

Not to be outdone, oral historians also find uses for books that can bring life to the words of our grandparents: What did it mean a century ago to *put a flea in someone's ear*? To be on *your beanwater*? To *honeyfuggle* with your *jimpsecute* in the *keeping room*?** Writing from the Institute for Oral History at Baylor University, M. Rebecca Sharpless tells of listening to tape recordings of Texas regional dialects and finding similarly unfamiliar words: "We exhaust the standard unabridged dictionary, then we turn to the *DARE*... Nineteen times out of 20, what we're looking for is [there.]"

On the 20th time, when *DARE* doesn't have the answer, we turn the tables and ask others for help. Our website http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/dare/dare.html has lists of words and phrases that have us stumped. While we might not know something *from Adam's housecat*, for you it might be small *skimption* to figure it out. Give it a try.

Frederic G. Cassidy was the chief editor of the ***Dictionary of American Regional English*** *and a UW–Madison emeritus professor of English until his death in June, at age 92. Co-author Joan Houston Hall is* ***DARE****'s associate editor. This article originally appeared in* ***The New York Times Magazine*** *(August 6, 2000). Reprinted with permission.*

Contributions to honor the life and work of Professor Cassidy can be made to the Frederic G. Cassidy *DARE* Fund, 1848 University Avenue, Madison, WI, 53706, Attn: David Simon.

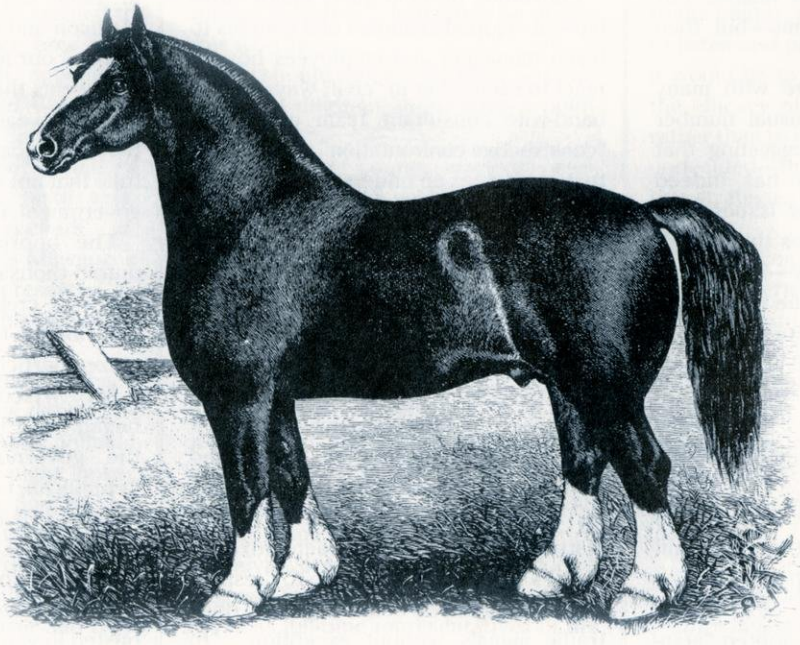
*** These are all old-fashioned phrases meaning, respectively, "to give someone a hint or a warning" (chiefly Northeast), "to be in high spirits" (New England) and "to make a show of affection" (Georgia) with your "sweetheart" (Texas) in the "sitting room" (New England).*

The *DARE* Challenge

Test your regional lingo. Match up the numbers and letters in these two columns (answers below).

1. arigato ____
2. goose nest ____
3. iron man ____
4. crimmy ____
5. election pink ____
6. mean ____
7. kiss-me-quick ____
8. nebby ____
9. leppy ____
10. mouse ____
11. comb one's head ____
12. fish tail ____
13. jewlark ____
14. blockader ____
15. infare ____
16. get one's nose open ____
17. keekling ____
18. chank ____
19. feest ____
20. holy poke ____

A. a ball of bread dough fried in deep fat
B. to be infatuated or in love
C. a celebration for a newly married couple
D. cold, chilly
E. disgusted with, sated by
F. a dollar
G. to eat noisily, chew loudly
H. to flirt or court
I. a jazz dance step
J. a lump or swelling caused by a blow
K. a moonshiner
L. an orphan calf, lamb, or colt
M. a rhododendron
N. a sinkhole
O. snoopy, inquisitive
P. a sudden dip or rise in the road
Q. thank you
R. a type of a pastry
S. to whip, beat, scold severely
T. very, exceedingly



Answers: 1. Q; 2. N; 3. F; 4. D; 5. M; 6. T; 7. P; 8. O; 9. L; 10. J; 11. S; 12. I; 13. H; 14. K; 15. C; 16. B; 17. R; 18. G; 19. E; 20. A.

More than manners

Surliness and a lack of respect have helped corrode public discussion and our political process. Here's how we can put the "civil" back in "civil discourse."

BY DAVE ZWEIFEL

EARLY LAST SUMMER I WROTE a newspaper column about manners or, more accurately, the lack thereof. Why, I lamented, do we cut into line at supermarkets, refuse to signal when we're about to make a turn while driving, leave our cell phones on in the theater, refuse to yield to the pedestrian waiting to cross the street?

IT WASN'T ONE OF THOSE weighty columns about a burning issue of the day like saving Social Security or providing health insurance to all our uninsured children or finding a new way to finance our beleaguered school systems—but then again, perhaps it was.

The column hit a chord with many readers. More than the usual number took time to respond, suggesting that society's lack of civility has indeed become one of our major issues. The average person experiences this loutish behavior nearly every day—from "road rage" on the highway to the unpleasant clerk at the convenience store.

Some of my readers insisted that incivility is the real reason we are failing to address our other problems. If we're constantly uncivil to each other, how in the world can we talk?

This phenomenon has become of such concern nationwide that people and organizations are creating initiatives to try to fight it.

Bar associations have adopted "standards of civility" aimed at combating a rash of intemperate behavior among lawyers in the courtrooms and beyond.

A dedicated website, appropriately named "civility.net," has been launched to address the problem in a number of social settings. The site includes a petition that people running for political office are asked to sign. One of its provisions is to "reject degrading, disparaging, or demeaning descriptions or visual images of your opponent."

Consulting firms in many major cities have developed seminars and courses to teach managers and employees how to react to each other in "civil" ways. A husband-wife consultant team calls their "constructive confrontation" an approach that "combines an understanding of conflict processes, dispute resolution, and advocacy strategies."

Bad manners became of such concern in Palm Beach, Florida, that the local daily newspaper and a television station teamed up this summer to sponsor a "Civility Weekend." Schoolchildren were encouraged to write essays on civility, service and business clubs sponsored programs about respecting one another, and some 500,000 civility "pledges" were distributed to the Palm Beach citizenry. Signers agreed, for example, to "respect the rights of others at all times," "to obey traffic signals without exception," "to hold doors and help others in need of assistance," and to "not be late for a movie or talk during the showing."

Trivial, perhaps. But friends in Palm Beach insist that people actually did "act a little nicer"—for the weekend, at least.

What isn't so trivial, though, is the way this same incivility has impacted our political process, not just in Washington, where it reached its height during the seemingly endless proceedings that led up to President Clinton's impeachment in 1999, but at the State Capitol in Madison and even down to the floors of some of our municipal governments.

It seems that politicians don't just disagree with each other, in many instances they truly loathe each other. It's an attitude that not only gets in the way of good government, it threatens to destroy it.

The boorish behavior has soured untold thousands on politics. It has lessened the credibility of government and contributed to a precipitous decline in citizen participation.

My Wisconsin newspaper career began in 1962. Gaylord Nelson was the governor—a Democrat with a Republican Legislature. John Reynolds, another Democrat, followed Nelson, again with a Legislature controlled by his political opposites. Then in November of 1964, Warren Knowles, a Republican, ousted Reynolds, but when he took office in January of 1965, the State Assembly was controlled by the Democrats, thanks

to Lyndon Johnson's long coattails in his '64 win over Barry Goldwater.

If ever there was a time ripe for governmental gridlock, the '60s were it. And, indeed, those were politically contentious years. Republicans in the Senate would routinely hold up confirmation of Nelson's and Reynolds' appointments to key state government positions. The Democrats later played havoc with Knowles if for no other reason than to get even. Both parties, just as always, used parliamentary tricks against each other to gain the upper hand on a favorite bill.

Hyperbole bounced off the Capitol walls, particularly in the State Senate, over Vietnam and the student protests that were rampaging outside. It wasn't unusual for one legislator to bellow how wrongheaded or shortsighted or fuzzy-brained was his colleague from the other side of the aisle.

Deep philosophical debates over bills dealing with marijuana and other drugs, along with prolonged arguments involving civil liberties, raged on the floors of both houses. It wasn't unusual for tempers to flare, sometimes out of control.

Yet through it all there was respect, which, in turn, led to compromises on everything from the enactment of the state's first sales tax (3 percent) to providing millions more to buy land for the state's park system.

Politicians from both sides seemed to understand that no matter how contentious or stubborn their opponents were, they, too, represented Wisconsin citizens. Even Republican Sen. Gordon Roseleip, who gained notoriety when he failed a butter-margarine taste test, understood that "city slickers" in Democrat Martin Schreiber's Milwaukee district deserved to be represented as diligently as the farmers in his own rural district.

Consequently, it wasn't unusual back then, after a day of raucous debate, to find representatives from both political parties engaged in a late-night poker game in a hotel room on the Square.

Guy and Heidi Burgess, who run the Conflict Research Consortium at the University of Colorado, point out that civility doesn't mean "roll over and play dead."

"People need to be able to raise tough questions and present their cases when they feel their vital interests are being threatened. A civil society cannot avoid tough but important issues, simply because they are unpleasant to address ... (but) while continuing confrontation is inevitable, the enormous destructiveness which commonly accompanies these confrontations is not," they wrote.

Politicians of old seemed to recognize that you can confront without destroying. But today the battles are much more for keeps. Somehow budgets still get passed, but only after weeks of holding one side hostage. And even then compromises are few and far between. Rather than forge an agreement through cajoling and persuasion, a particularly contentious portion of the budget will simply be excised. Prescription drug price help for the elderly was but one example this year. Meanwhile, the senior citizens' dilemma continues, while the politicians blame each other, hoping to score "points" with voters in the next election.

Stories abound in the State Capitol about dirty tricks that today's representatives play on each other—spying at fundraisers in an effort to harass contributors, threatening lobbyists who attend the "other guy's" functions, starting and spreading rumors about legislators' private lives. Some legislators, it is said, haven't spoken to each other in years. The animosity between some is so intense that one will automatically oppose the other's initiatives no matter how worthy.

Why should this be so? What possibly can be so different about today's politicians?

There are, of course, many theories. Some insist that it's nothing more than a reflection of our modern "uncivil" society. We don't treat each other with respect, so how can we expect any different of our elected representatives?

The problem, though, is much deeper.

Gone, I'm afraid, is the public involvement that once was a hallmark of state government. Until the '70s and '80s, Wisconsin's Legislature was still primarily part-time. Many legislators held "real" jobs at home where they were exposed to the viewpoints of ordinary Wisconsin citizens. Today's legislators view themselves as full-time representatives of the people. Their ears now get bent not by Charlie in the local coffee shop or Sally at the office, but by paid lobbyists or prominent campaign contributors who visit them in the State Capitol.

In short, many legislators have lost touch with the "regular" citizens from whom they would discover that most issues are not so black-and-white.

Exacerbating the problem is the alienation, for some, and disinterest, for others, with the political system. As more citizens refuse to take part, the less responsive the legislators feel they need to be. It's much easier refusing to deliver for a lobbyist than for a group of voting citizens who take an active part in the debate.

So why be civil with a political opponent when there is no great need to worry about the consequences? Instead of worrying about finding ways to deal with others on tricky issues, today's legislators can concentrate on reelection campaigns and raising the necessary money to tell the people what a wonderful job they are doing.

Is there a solution?

The obvious one is to get our citizens, cynical as they are, involved again. But that will take many steps, beginning with removing the taint of big money from the system. Only when the citizenry sees that money isn't buying the power and the favors will it feel there's a chance to be heard.

Meanwhile, there may be ways for others to encourage an honest discussion of the issues again, bringing that discussion to the people, and getting the Legislature to listen and participate. How refreshing it would be to hear a lively debate over the efficacy of private school vouchers rather than to have the issue decided—or undecided—through elaborate destructive strategies concocted behind closed doors.

The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters comes to mind as the kind of organization that just might be able to forge the kind of "civil" discussion that is so needed in today's political world.

We do live in a less than civil world. If we're going to change it, our political leaders must lead the way, not be the followers.

Dave Zweifel is editor of the Madison daily newspaper ***The Capital Times.***

Calling All Thinkers

THE ACADEMY WANTS YOU

Christine McDermott

The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters provides a gathering place where the thoughtful citizens of Wisconsin, from a wide range of disciplines, can discuss and act upon issues of public concern. Through our many programs and projects, we help create what Aldo Leopold called a "thinking community."

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WHAT YOU'LL SUPPORT

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(for more, see www.wisconsinacademy.org):

- **The Wisconsin Idea at the Academy,** a new program, examines as its first project the integrity and quality of our state's water resources.
- **The Wisconsin Academy Gallery** is the only noncommercial gallery in the state to feature different Wisconsin artists every month, and reaches beyond established art circles to find them.
- **Fall Forums** take on topics of public interest. Last fall's conference focused on the risks, rewards, and realities of genetically modified foods. The next Fall Forum will focus on the Bill of Rights and our criminal justice system.
- **The Intelligent Consumption Project** examines forest resource consumption and its effect on the environment. The project brings together a wide range of people in forestry nationwide—from loggers and environmentalists to representatives from business, agriculture, and academia—to formulate a viable consumption ethic.
- **The Wisconsin Center for the Book,** affiliated with the Library of Congress, conducts many programs in support of literature and the book arts. Examples: "Wisconsin Authors Speak" brings writers to communities throughout the state. "Letters About Literature" invites young people to tell authors how a book has changed their lives.

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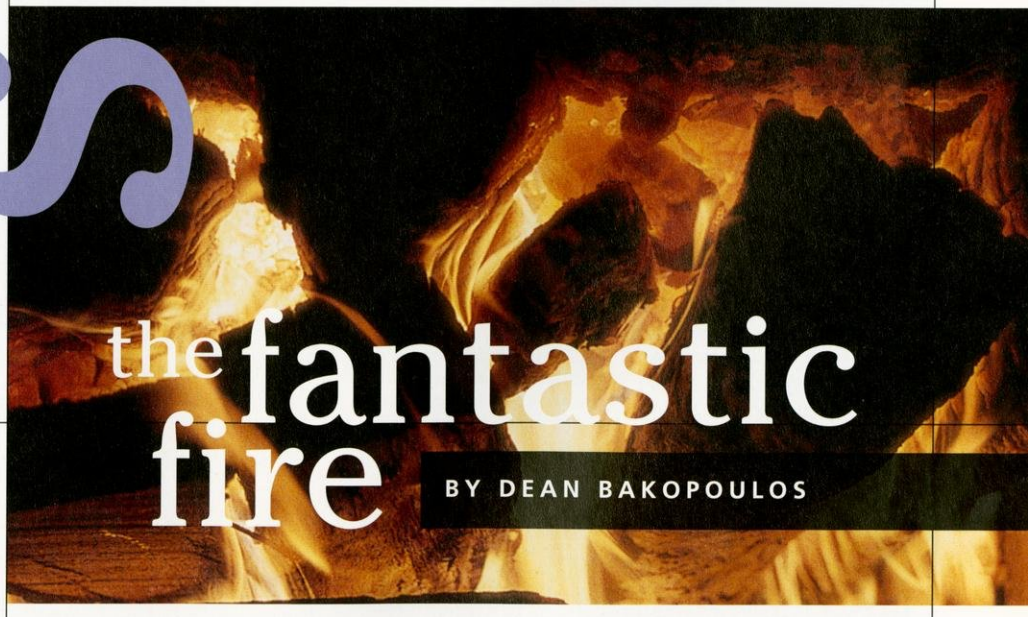
Since 1870

WISCONSIN ACADEMY
OF SCIENCES, ARTS AND LETTERS

david smith

the fantastic fire

BY DEAN BAKOPOULOS



ON A THICK, HUMID AUGUST AFTERNOON, I drove out to see David Smith, artist and art professor at Madison's Edgewood College, on the farmette in Stoughton where he lives and works. We had set up an appointment, but he was not there. His wife, Renee Gouaux, also an artist, was in the yard with the couple's three young daughters. Renee told me Smith was gone, he was in Montana on a spur-of-the-moment trip to help his in-laws prepare for the worst. In the dry, high heat of summer, forest fires raging across Idaho and Montana were headed toward the Nine Mile Valley, where Renee's parents live. Smith had gone West to help his in-laws clear highly burnable brush and vegetation from the perimeter of their home, doing their best to fireproof a landscape that was already as dry as ash.

The irony was not lost on me.

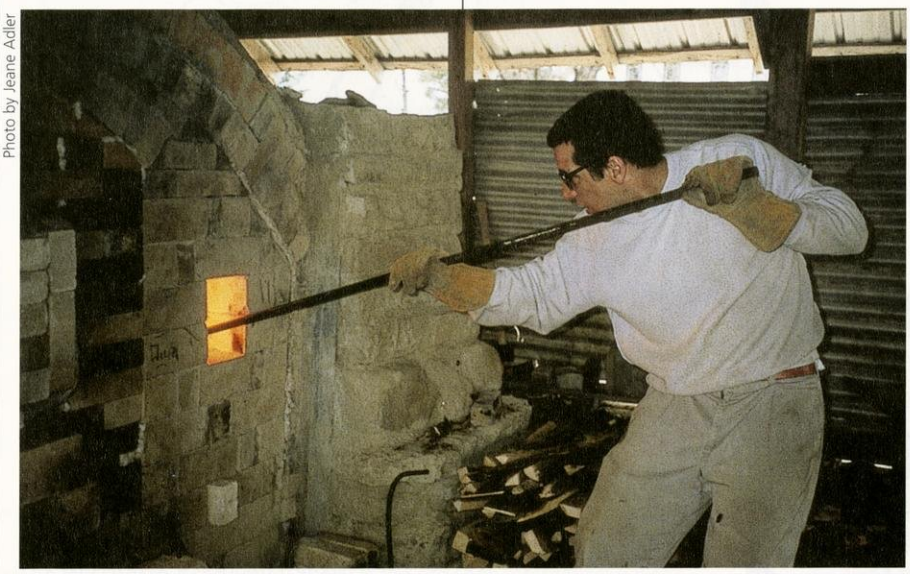
Sculptor David Smith has introduced many Americans to the mystical, ancient Chinese art of Anagama firing, which he's re-created on his farm in Stoughton.

Smith is a sculptor who works with the elements—fire and earth. The unpredictability of clay and the power of fire are key forces in his creative process. A few weeks before, Smith told me that one of the main appeals of his chosen medium is the unpredictable nature of the work, the fact that the ultimate result is highly dependent on the temperamental force of fire and the sensitive surface of clay. Trying to control and manipulate that force to reach a desired aesthetic is part of the game.

"Any time you collaborate with the forces of nature, you learn a lesson about humility," Smith told me. "When you work with fire like this, one of the first things you learn is that you can't force your will on nature."

Since 1995, twice a year, Smith has fired the Kegonsa Anagama kiln, which he built on the land that surrounds his farmhouse.

Photo by Jeane Adler

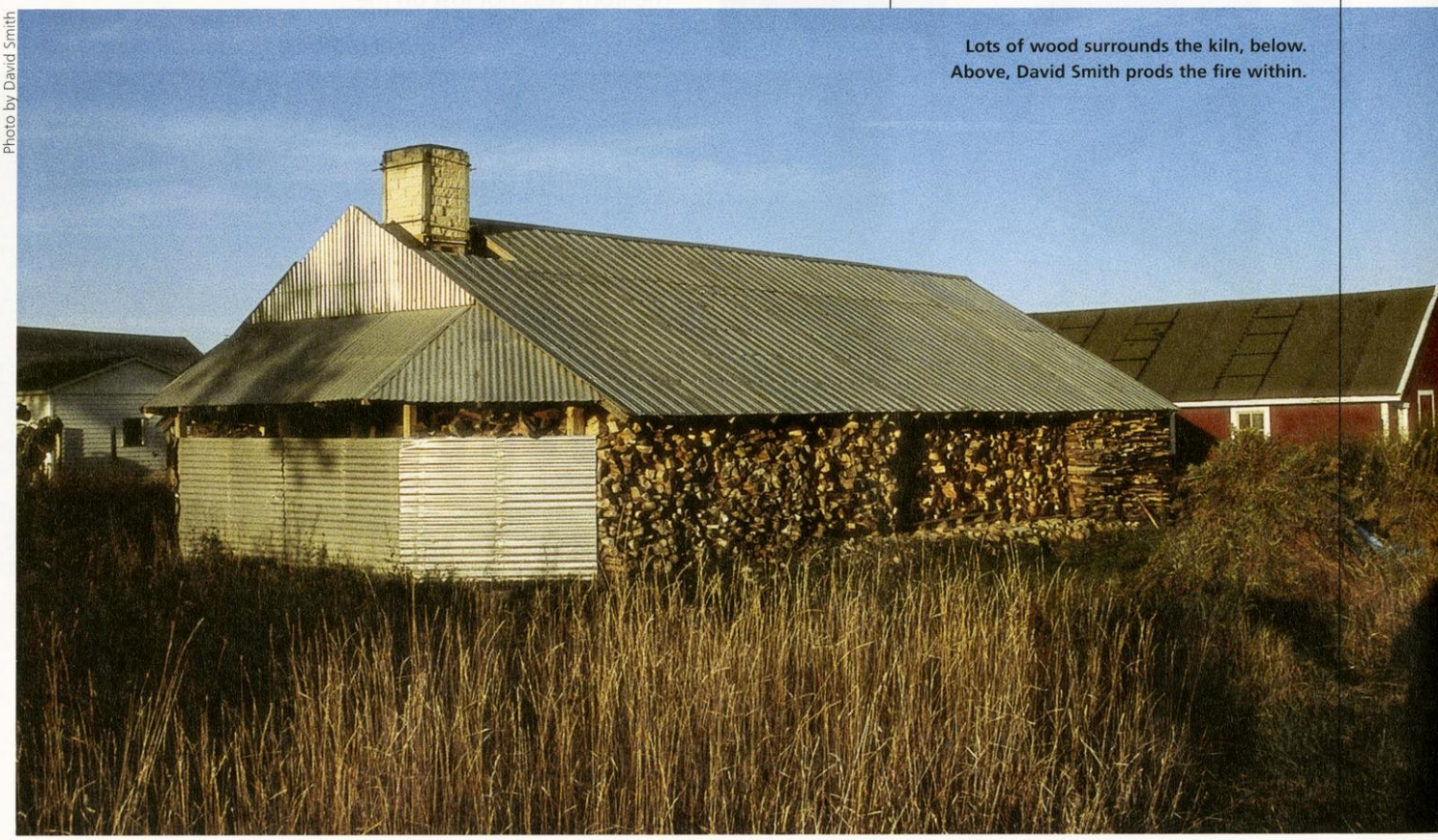


From a distance the outer structure of the kiln looks like any outbuilding on any farmette, about 45 feet long and topped with a metal roof. But if you look closer you see that the walls are lined with hundreds of split logs, stacked floor to ceiling, and that there are no tractors inside. Instead you are invited into a rather cozy vestibule, a sitting area at the foot of a 20-foot long, man-made cave. During a kiln firing, the "cave" will be filled with hot ember, flying ash, and hundreds of pieces of clay sculpture. The fire inside the kiln will burn for seven days and seven nights, constantly tended and stoked by Smith and a collection of visiting artists, local colleagues, and students from Edgewood College. Temperatures in the kiln will reach nearly 2,400 degrees.

As you approach Smith and Gouaux's farmette late at night during the peak of the firing, you can see what seems to be a mystical fire shooting flame and smoke into the quiet sky.

Indeed, the ancient Asian process of Anagama wood-firing is a mystical one for many. The first Anagama kilns were developed in China more than 2,000 years ago,

Photo by David Smith



Lots of wood surrounds the kiln, below. Above, David Smith prods the fire within.

and later were introduced in Japan. The kilns remained a largely Asian method of firing clay. In 1980, there were at best a half-dozen Anagama kilns in the U.S. In the last 20 years, well over a hundred have been built.

Firing an Anagama kiln takes months of preparation as well as a sustained physical and mental effort. Following the long prep period, a week of hard work and intense cooperation are the keys to a successful firing. The scope and magnitude of the firing process is what attracts many people to Anagama kilns—artists who are intrigued by a firing process that requires so much physical and mental stamina, but also carries with it the spiritual elements of patience, cooperation, intuition, and dependence on the natural elements of wood and earth, ash and flame.

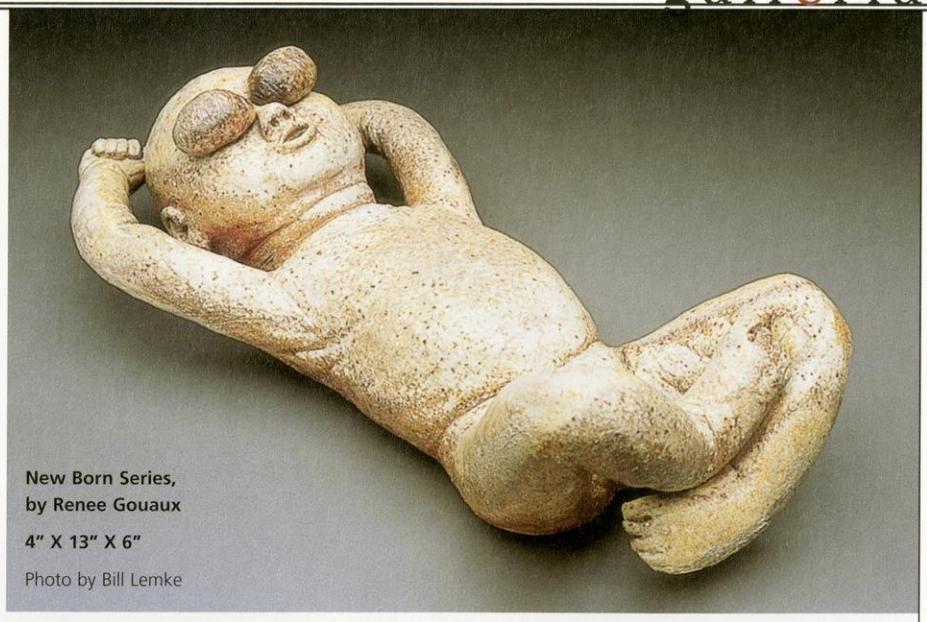
And of course, there is the appeal of the work itself. The pottery and sculpture that goes into an Anagama kiln is scorched by burning wood and glazed with the fly ash that settles on the surface of the clay. The effects of the heat can be hard to predict, but Smith, like anyone experienced in Anagama wood-firing, stacks the kiln deliberately, directing fire and ash to produce a wide range of patterns, textures, and colors. No piece emerges the same. There is no "right" way to stack a kiln once the basic principles of firing have been learned. Experimentation and intuition are encouraged, Smith says, and are an essential part of the process.

Anagama wood-firing is an intense artistic endeavor. For many, including a handful of artists who travel around the world from Anagama firing to Anagama firing, it becomes an obsession.

CREATING THE KEGONSA KILN

Smith cites two early influences that pointed him toward a life in clay and kiln. One of them was jazz. Born in Detroit in 1959, Smith grew up in a structured, serene, upper-middle-class neighborhood in the city's northern suburbs. As a teenager, Smith began to take an interest in jazz, instantly drawn to what he perceived as the music's freedom and improvisation, its randomness, its fine line between melody and dissonance. Jazz still informs much of Smith's work process.

"Like jazz, a lot of the sculpture that comes from Anagama kilns pushes the enve-



New Born Series, by Renee Gouaux

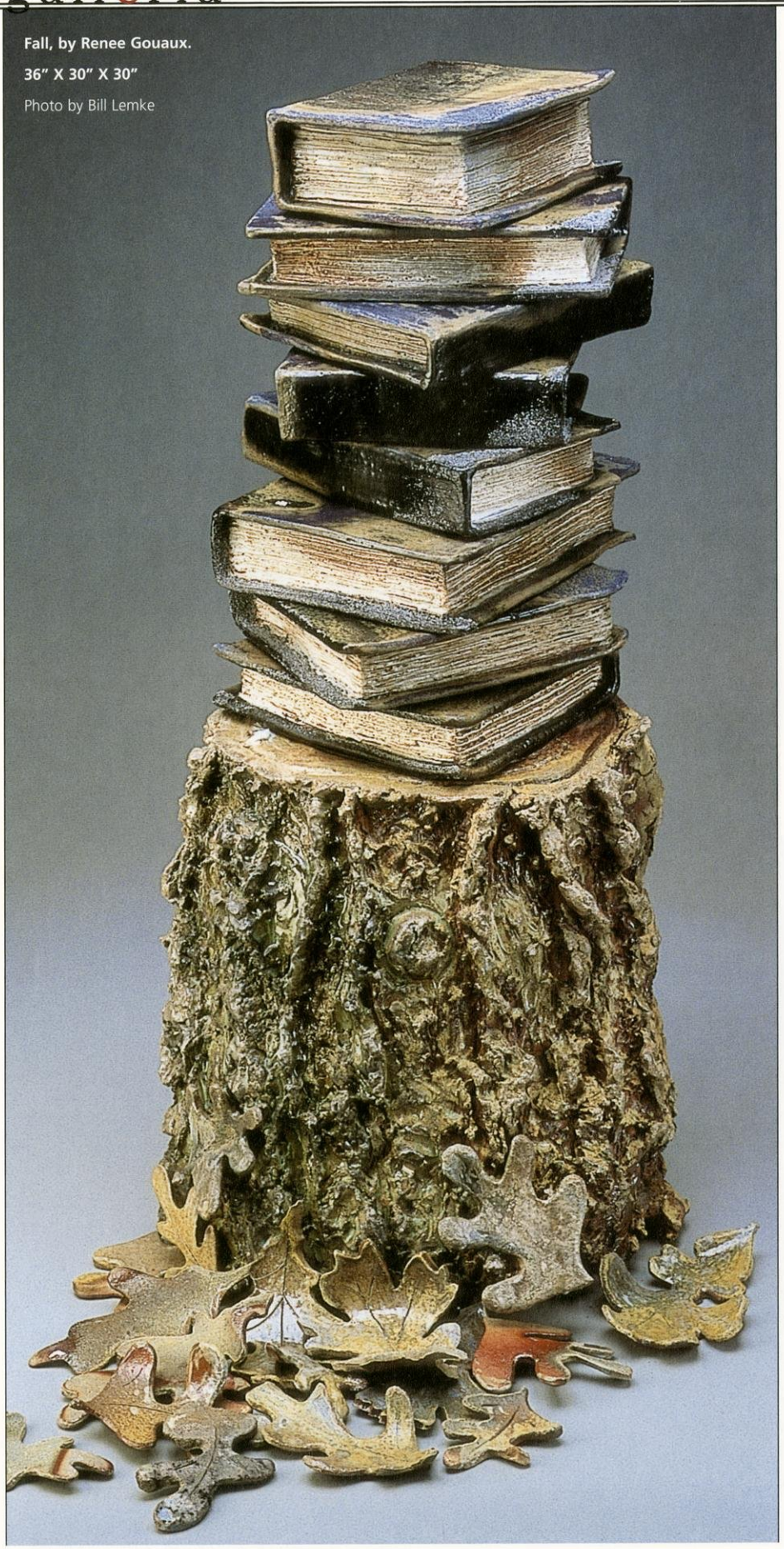
4" X 13" X 6"

Photo by Bill Lemke

Fall–Inner Ear, by Renee Gouaux.

36" X 30" X 24"

Photo by Bill Lemke



Fall, by Renee Gouaux.
36" X 30" X 30"
Photo by Bill Lemke

lope as to what 'beautiful art' is supposed to be," Smith says. "Rough surfaces and asymmetrical patterns are challenging for a Western mind; they are not easy for people to relate to instantly."

His second great influence came when he was 18. Smith spent two summers working on ranches in western Nebraska and Montana as a farmhand, tackling the daily tasks of working the land. There, he says, he learned the joy of using his hands, of physical labor, as well as the awesome power of nature and the need to intuitively adapt to such forces as weather, gravity, fires, and floods.

Smith graduated from Michigan's Albion College, majoring in art and minoring in biology. Many of the things he enjoys, Smith says, including jazz, farming, and sculpture, are a mix of soul and science.

But it was in 1981 that Smith became deeply involved in what was then the small resurgence of Anagama kilns in America. Smith went to New Jersey and served as an artist assistant on the Anagama kiln projects of Peter Callas and Peter Voulkos, two renowned figures in American ceramics.

Studying under them greatly influenced Smith's development as an artist. Both Callas and Voulkos, though working in a traditional Eastern medium, brought a distinctly Western perspective to their work, a sense of abstract expressionism that added an entirely new dimension to an ancient art form.

"I still strive for that today," Smith says. "I want to add a new perspective, to ask 'What do I, as a contemporary Western artist, intend to do through this ancient Eastern art form?' I'm working with an old, old principle, but trying to do new things."

In 1984, Voulkos directed Smith out West to the University of Montana in Missoula, where Smith earned his MFA under the guidance of another well-known artist, Rudy Autio. While in Missoula, Smith built an Anagama kiln at the university. Smith went on to teach at UW–Stevens Point, and was an adjunct faculty member at Beloit College before arriving at Edgewood College in 1991. For the past six summers, Smith and his family also have returned to Montana, where Smith teaches a course in Anagama kiln firing.

In 1993, after buying the farmette outside Stoughton, Smith began the immense project of building the Kegonsa Anagama kiln. For two years, he made no pots or

sculptures. Outside of the classroom his hands barely touched clay. Instead he spent all his free time planning, designing, and building his own kiln on his own land.

"I had to remind myself that eventually I was going to create something again," Smith says. "But for two years, the building of the kiln was my art. I almost forgot that I was eventually going to work with the clay again."

FIGURES IN FIRE

In the last five years Smith's reputation as an artist has grown, and the reputation of the Kegonsa Anagama has grown as well. Not only is the kiln used to fire Smith and Gouaux's work; students from all disciplines at Edgewood College have a chance to fire their own sculptures. Artists visit from all over to have their work fired in the Kegonsa Anagama kiln, and Smith has been involved in recent collaborations with artists Ken Shenstone of Michigan and Campbell Mastin of Montana. The last firing included work of Don Reitz, a former professor of art at UW–Madison and a legendary clay artist who built Madison's MFA program into one of the best in the nation.

Building and maintaining his own kiln has been integral to Smith's development as an artist.

"Every kiln has its own personality," Smith says. "Staying with one kiln for over five years has really helped me to grow as an artist, and to learn the subtle ways of the kiln. I've done a lot of experimentation in terms of placement of pieces within the kiln, and I've gotten some very surprising effects. I really have developed a relationship with the kiln."

Some of the qualities that make Smith's Kegonsa Anagama kiln unique can be seen in the work the kiln produces. Smith's kiln is designed to maximize the firebox, so that numerous pieces can be in contact with the charcoal. The Kegonsa kiln also has a wide front, a low arch, a tapered back, and a slope of less than 10 degrees, all of which help create a high-velocity environment inside the kiln, with significant fly ash deposits and local flashing yielding a very complex and intense range of surfaces and colors.

The comfort Smith feels with the Kegonsa kiln helps him focus more of his energy on his own work rather than on trying to learn how a particular kiln will act.

Some clay artists choose to work in only one mode—formal or conceptual—but for Smith the formal and conceptual complement each other, like pieces to the same puzzle.

Smith works in the traditional modes of pottery, making vessels and pots much like ancient potters made many centuries ago.

Storage jars, by David Smith.
Left, 16" X 12" X 12"; right, 18" X 13" X 13".
Photos by Bill Lemke

Wood-fired stoneware, fresh from the kiln.

Photo by David Smith

But as an artist, Smith also concentrates on making more figurative and abstract work.

"When I'm making pots and vessels, I'm working in a very physical, timeless, intuitive way," Smith says. "I'm using skills that will refine my craft, but it's a very different kind of focus when I'm working on a figurative piece. The process of making figurative pieces is much different, much more of an imaginative and intellectual process, where I am much more aware of the ideas behind the work."

Smith's main project for the last few years has been a series of human torsos that he calls the "Fundamental Series." The Fundamental Series speaks of process, the process of pushing clay with hand, the process of fire, of ash, of wind. These fundamental figures are waiting, looking, reaching. Some look as if they're being born out of an abyss. Their surfaces are landscapes, a topography of wind and fire and glass with warm and cool gradations, punctuated by flashes of intense light. Their postures are still yet highly kinetic, as if the fire has just swept through, as if a leaf or stick has just settled on a shoulder, as if the smoke has just lifted.

The fire leaves a visual record on each torso. A piece in the firebox will bear all of the action of the area, dramatic strokes of intense heat, of blasted ash. A sheltered piece will have a glassy surface, with whispers of color from when the ash blew by.

In many ways, the Fundamental Series showcases the juxtaposition of two opposing elements. Early pieces in the series often depict the human torso in a state of struggle or suffering; the expressions on the vaguely human faces are pained. Or, as an observer once told Smith, "They look scary."

Smith says his early work in the series was darker and angrier, depicting human figures in intense conflict with the world around them. These human forms are vivid with a sense of resistance and battle, as if they are emerging, or struggling to emerge, from an unpleasant space. Later pieces in the Fundamental Series show human figures much more at ease and at peace.

"I'm still concerned with the same themes, the struggle between humanity and nature, between angst and serenity," Smith says. "But I've started to depict them differently."

Indeed, one of the most recent pieces shows two human figures almost leaning into one another—very calm, accepting forms. There's no sense of struggle or

suffering, only a brilliantly rendered sense of peacefulness and grace.

Smith has been working on the series for some time now, and in preparation for a museum show next year in Missoula is working in two-dimensional forms as well, further exploring what he can do with the series.

"I almost quit the series," Smith says. "But I needed to stay with it, and the past few firings, I've been happy with the direction of the work. You need to stay with something until you get it right, until you get what you envision. The more you make, the more the pieces evolve."

As his vision of the world evolves, Smith's role as husband and father have been two key elements in his artistic and personal maturation, he says. Because his wife Renee is also an artist, the two of them both need to make time for their work, and that means they share the responsibilities of child care and running the household.

"I think we bring pretty different approaches to the work into the studio," Smith says. "That helps to keep things fresh, to keep me looking at things from different angles. And we complement each other well. It's a noncompetitive relationship. We're very different people, but we share the same core sensibility."

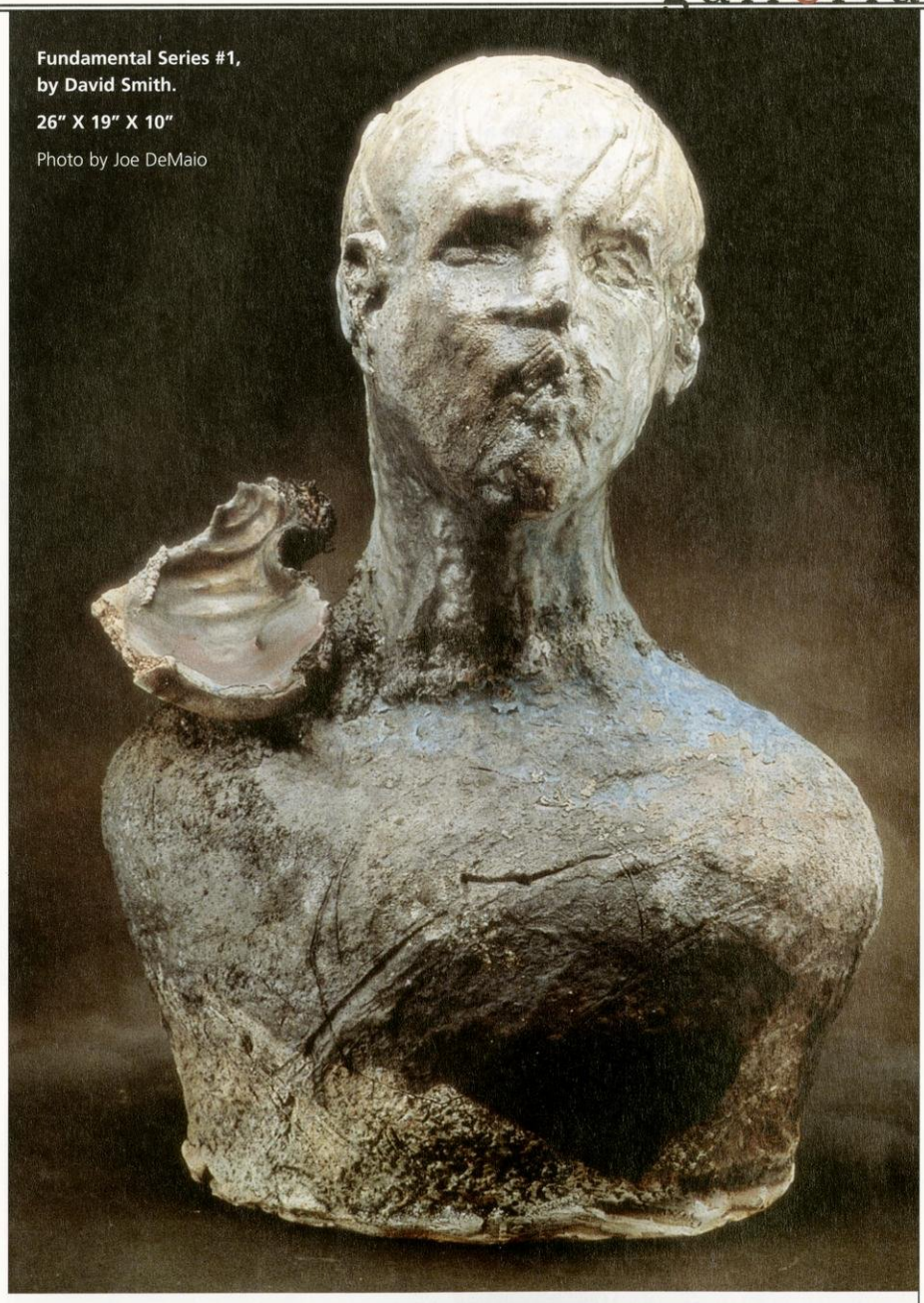
It's the kind of relationship that someone needs, say, when spending two years building an Anagama kiln in the backyard, Smith jokes: "If an artist is trying to share a life with someone who doesn't value the same things, who isn't passionate about the same things, artistically and emotionally, I think it's very hard."

Indeed, the couple's three daughters, Gaither, Stirling, and Ada, are also very present in their parents' lives. There is no off-limits zone at the Kegonsa Anagama kiln. The children, as well as their dog and cats, are a constant, high-energy presence at kiln firings and in the outbuilding that serves as David and Renee's studio.

THE BIG EVENT

When you meet David Smith for the first time, the impression you get is one of balance. His hands and forearms are visibly muscled and move with a quiet grace as he speaks. His voice and demeanor are exceedingly calm and even. There's no shakiness or sudden movements or frenzied energy.

It is a remarkable quality for someone who manages to be a college professor, professional artist, farmstead and kiln



Fundamental Series #1, by David Smith.
26" X 19" X 10"
Photo by Joe DeMaio

Vessels, by Ken Shenstone.
Photo by David Smith

caretaker, wood gatherer and splitter, husband, and father of three.

And twice a year Smith gears up, like a swimmer at championship season or a farmer at harvest time, for the big event: the firing of the Kegonsa Anagama kiln.

At first, Smith thought he might attempt to fire the kiln three times a year, but found such a schedule to be too stressful and rigorous. Now he fires the kiln in the spring and in the fall. The kiln firing, of course, takes much more than simply stacking the wood, striking a match, and getting started.

"Once you start mixing the clay, the process begins," Smith says.

For three months or so before the firing, Smith focuses on two things. The first is the creation of artwork, clay pieces from pots to large sculptures, that will go inside the kiln. The second is the long process of wood prep, splitting and stacking hundreds of logs for the week-long fire. About four weeks before the firing, Smith does the final wood prep and begins the important task of loading the kiln.

Platter, by Don Reitz.
Photo by David Smith

Fundamental Series #12, by David Smith.
27" X 35" X 14"
Photo by Bill Lemke

The initial fire is lit at the mouth of the kiln, a small campfire that will soon become a roaring and intense seven-day fire. The fire takes seven days to cool then, a time to mentally "come down" as well for Smith. And then a few days to unload the kiln, and see what the fire has left you.

I've now been to several firings of the Anagama kiln, and have, along with my wife, whose own work has been fired in the kiln, taken a "shift," staying up all night, monitoring the burning of wood. Each time I come to a firing, I encounter a wide range of people, from college-age Deadheads to lifelong artists and everyone in between.

In the air there is always a boundless energy and simultaneous calm. As Smith puts it, "We get in touch with the natural rhythms of day and night. You hear the sounds around you, time goes by in a different way. Everyone settles in, we get into a different pace."

As a kiln builder, Smith has succeeded. As an artist, Smith is doing something new and necessary. Taking the lessons of an ancient tradition and reinterpreting it from a new perspective, he's creating some of the most interesting, intuitive, three-dimensional art in Wisconsin in one of the most interesting, intuitive ways possible.

As a writer who has never moonlighted in the world of visual arts, I confess to feeling a sense of artistic envy every time I attend a firing at the Kegonsa Anagama. A sense of community and collaboration is evident here in a way that's not possible in the world of writing. And although it may be a subtle or an unintentional reaction, there is a backlash against the high-tech, information-packed world that is inherent in Anagama wood-firing. Spend an afternoon stacking wood with Smith or a night stoking the firebox while Smith catches a few hours of sleep, and you can go to a different world. No phones, no computers, no data. At times there are not even voices or words. There's nothing but what is there, what is in front of you. Just earth, wind, fire.

And that's what David Smith knows best.

Writer Dean Bakopoulos is books editor for the ***Wisconsin Academy Review.***

When poetry made headlines

A behind-the-scenes look at choosing Wisconsin's first poet laureate.

BY JOHN LEHMAN, MEMBER OF THE GOVERNOR'S POET LAUREATE SELECTION COMMISSION

"WE CAN LIVE WITHOUT POETRY, but not well," says Doug Flaherty, a Wisconsin writer who has had his poems published in *The New Yorker, The North American Review,* and *Harvard Review.* "It's a way to get back to what the Buddhists call our 'original mind.'"

DENISE SWEET, an Anishinaabe Native American from White Earth, has given more than 100 public readings/performances throughout the U.S. and in Canada, Mexico, Guatemala, and Great Britain. She speaks excitedly about the oral tradition, local stories involving places, people, and both personal and family events. "These," she says, "are the poetry of our lives we all need to capture and share together."

But it is the soft-spoken Ellen Kort who offers a very personal reply to my question, "What role does poetry play in your life?" She has spent much of the last few years working with at-risk children, cancer and AIDS patients, and domestic abuse survivors. She has 12 books of published poetry and is the recipient of the Pablo Neruda Literary Prize for Poetry, among other awards. Kort states, "I have been writing poetry most of my life, except for a period six years ago when I lost my son in a sailing accident. I just couldn't write, I was too full of grief. Then I realized I had not only lost a son, but in not being able to write, I had also lost a friend."

Wisconsin may not be without poetry, but until this year it has not had a poet

Meet our poet laureate

"I want people to learn to love poetry and to welcome self-expression as a pilgrimage of co-creating the world in a positive and healthy way."

Photos by Trina Laube

ELLEN KORT has been named Wisconsin's first poet laureate. Her writing has been featured in a wide variety of journals and anthologies and has garnered several awards, including the Pablo Neruda Literary Prize for Poetry and the Wisconsin Sesquicentennial Prize for Poetry.

A resident of Appleton, Kort has traveled widely as a poet, speaker, and workshop facilitator throughout the United States, New Zealand, Australia, and the Bahamas. Her poetry has been performed by the New York City Dance Theater and nominated for a Grammy award (as part of a poetry collection in the "spoken word" category). It has also been architecturally incorporated into Milwaukee's Midwest Express Center, Appleton's Fox River Mall, and the Green Bay Botanical Garden, and included in the Hospice Poetry Recording Project of Seattle.

Kort is not only a widely respected poet, but an inspirational teacher as well. She gives to her community in a variety of ways, including running writing workshops for at-risk teens and for cancer, AIDS, and domestic abuse survivors. Kort mails poetry cards in celebration of National Poetry Month in April and uses glow-in-the-dark chalk to write poetry on city sidewalks. One of her grandmothers several generations back was a Native American, a heritage that flavors her work.

Kort has twice served as a poetry judge and moderator for the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters' poetry competitions. She has agreed to serve as a judge in a *Wisconsin Academy Review* poetry contest in 2001.

laureate. Today members of the poet laureate selection committee sit in the conference room of a law office a few blocks west of the Capitol in Madison and interview each of the top three candidates we had chosen a month before. These face-to-face interviews could change the final order of preference. It is a final, and to my mind somewhat questionable, step in naming Wisconsin's first poet laureate. As a member of the poet laureate commission, and before that the advisory committee, I had been deciding whether I should quit in protest.

SWEET AND BITTER FRUIT

The journey to that point had already been rocky. It started with a proposal eight years ago by Russell King, then president of the Council for Wisconsin Writers. It was rejected by several of the other organizations representing many Wisconsin writers. The objections were again voiced earlier this year, this time by others, when the question of a state poet laureate was resurrected by Governor Thompson's staff after someone pointed out that Wisconsin was one of only 14 states not to have one. The high visibility of Robert Pinsky, a very active national poet laureate, added to a resurgent interest. The Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets had already been reconsidering the benefits of the position for more than a year.

Many of Wisconsin's better-known writers were skeptical. Door County's Norb Blei commented, "I think the idea sucks. I'd rather see the money spent on poets and poetry throughout the state—even poetry in the schools." Small press and regional writing enthusiast Tom Montag argued, "It's not that I fear the position is a political appointment. As a poet, I am naturally inclined to bite the hand that feeds me. If you'd ask a poet to serve as poet laureate, that's one thing. This whole 'nomination' thing as currently configured is something else." The University of Wisconsin–Madison's Ron Wallace told the *Appleton Post Crescent,* "When I think of the whole idea of the poet laureate, I've been somewhat ambivalent. It could raise issues. If an academic poet gets picked, it could alienate nonacademic poets and vice versa. Instead of bringing the poetry community together it could be divisive." And Lawrence University professor Peter Frizell's concern was that candidates be judged on quality as opposed to popularity. He said, "The poet

Mesmerizing delivery: Denise Sweet's collection of poems, *Song for Discharming,* won the Diane Decora First Book Award from the Native Writers Circle of the Americas.

laureate should be someone who has a pretty substantial national reputation as a poet. You could have all the programs you want and still have people outside the state smiling or laughing at Wisconsin." He argued that candidates be judged on quality. "Some figures are vastly better known in state circles than they are elsewhere, but capable poets tend not to be groupies."

Peter Sherrill and Cathryn Cofell of the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets, Barbara Houghton of the Wisconsin Regional Writers Association, and I, from the Council for Wisconsin Writers, met to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of such a position. The consensus was that this should not be a contest to pick the best poet, but in the words of King's original proposal, someone well qualified "to serve as a herald for Wisconsin's poets and their work and to enrich the lives of Wisconsin's citizens by sharing the sweet fruit of poetry with those who have not tasted it."

The Fellowship contacted other states to find out how they handled the situation. We were particularly taken with the simplicity and directness of the plan adopted by Colorado. A few short hours later this initial advisory committee left with a proposed set of procedures that minimized concerns and an action plan and timeline that, with our organizations' approvals (and some valuable input from the Arts and Humanities Councils), was quickly forwarded to Nora Weber at the governor's office. As often happens with politics, nothing happened, then it did.

What made the Wisconsin process unique were: 1.) It was open to anyone who was a resident of Wisconsin and had work published anywhere; 2.) It asked applicants to propose a special project they would accomplish during the four-year term; and 3.) Besides five of their poems, applicants had to submit an audiocassette of themselves presenting their work. Poetry is not the most democratic of art forms. For one thing, it demands more of the reader and also of the writer than does prose. This isn't just in word choice (though poets do believe each word has to be the right one, not only in terms of meaning but also in its connotation, sound, and sometimes even its history). Poetry usually involves an intense look at our emotions, at things below the surface. It can be risky, but consequently more fulfilling, than easy entertainment that provides an escape from our lives rather than self-discovery. Most people turn to poetry for graduations, weddings, anniversaries, and funerals; others (and young children are a wonderful example of this) see its relevance to the joys and sorrows of everyday activities. The concerns about this position—making poets competitive or envious of one another—seemed outweighed by an opportunity for making poetry a real part of more people's lives.

AN EARTHY SEXUALITY

On Tuesday, June 20th, Governor Tommy Thompson announced at a press conference in the Capitol that he was initiating the poet laureate position. He asked the media to get the word out and encourage nominations. In a brief statement he said, "This is a shining moment for the arts in Wisconsin ... Poetry provokes thought, opinion, and discussion. It is our hope that by encouraging people of all ages to learn about poetry we will whet their appetite for reading as well as for the other arts." I and other members of the advisory committee were taken aback by the mean-spirited questions directed by reporters to a governor who admitted that, although he is a voracious reader, he did not know that much about poetry. He prudently said, "That is why I'm appointing a poet laureate commission. They'll do the screening and make recommendations. I'll follow their choice for first place. That's the person I'll appoint." Even more distressing to writers, no matter what their feelings about the poet laureate position, articles in the papers the following day seemed to trivialize the matter and regard the appointment of a state poet laureate as the equivalent of choosing the honeybee as our official state insect.

Perhaps it was that response that later caused Kevin Keane of the governor's staff to overreact on the sexual content of two of the finalists' poems and insist on our screening the candidates in person. In anger at the initial media reaction, I wrote a response that Heather Lee Schroeder gamely published in her literature column in Madison's *Capital Times*: "Most of the media see this as an opportunity to smirk or throw a few barbs at Thompson. What a shame. Why should we even have a poet laureate? I think the reaction from the press should tell you. In Wisconsin, writers are regarded poorly, and poets as a joke. As a poet I don't say this easily. We need a visible symbol who can bring some respect to the thing we writers value so much in our lives, and who can give others a clue as to how it could be meaningful to theirs ... This is a well-meant effort by a representative group of writers (not politicians, advertising agencies, or high-paid special interest groups). The process may have its flaws, but deserves to be taken seriously..."

Imagine my chagrin one week later as I opened the 50 packets of applications to

Erotic wordsmith: Doug Flaherty's work has been called "impressive and singularly his own" by poetry great Robert Creeley.

"Poets are not elite beings on pedestals, but everyday people who can turn triumphs and tragedies into written and oral forms to be offered like food to one another. Poets need to write not only for themselves, but to find creative ways of offering the gift of self-expression to a larger circle ... to encourage the poet in all of us," says poet Ellen Kort.

send to other members of the commission —and poem after poem was disappointing. Not that there couldn't be good poetry about "cheese," "the Packers," and "up North," but these were clichéd, maudlin, derivative, or dependent on forced rhymes. I thought, "My God, what if the detractors were right and this is a bad idea that will make us all laughingstocks." Then I came upon work by six or seven poets like Kort, Sweet, and Flaherty, and suddenly the clouds parted and the sun appeared like a huge wheel of cheese.

Three weeks later the official nominating committee met. It included the ever-efficient Cathryn Cofell (as chairperson), Barbara Houghton, and myself, as well as poet and Wisconsin Public Radio host Jean Feraca representing the Wisconsin Humanities Council; Linda Ware, the Wisconsin Arts Board designee; Erica St. Angel from the governor's office; and Dr. David Shih, a citizen representative selected by the governor.

The discussion of all the works was spirited and stimulating. The poems were identified by number—no one knew the authors until the selection was narrowed to the top five choices. We then looked at proposals and publishing credentials. When the number was reduced to the three "commended poets" we listened to the audiocassettes. And what about the work itself? Denise Sweet's poems spoke to her Native American heritage with a freshness and inclusiveness that connects with contemporary readers in a very meaningful way. Ellen Kort's were energetic little masterpieces with subtle nuances that made even ordinary subjects memorable. And Doug Flaherty's words wooed us with vivid images and earthy sexuality. We were mesmerized by Sweet, emotionally moved by Kort, and impressed by the gutsy sophistication of Flaherty. All three were worthy of being the state's poet laureate. However, our final choice was not to come until after the personal interviews on October 14th.

WE WERE OUTRAGED

The interviews were prompted by Kevin Keane's concern, on behalf of the Governor's office, that the media might misinterpret the sexual content of Flaherty's poetry to the detriment of the new position. He wasn't telling us that this should affect our choice, only that "we needed to be absolutely sure of that choice." Especially since, as the state's first poet laureate, the position would attract so much attention and set a precedent for the future. Jean Feraca, as a public radio host, and I, as a publisher, were particularly outraged. This was exactly the kind of intimidation with regard to subject and character that was behind other writers' skepticism about mixing politics and the arts. "All poetry is political," as one of our finalists pointed out—but the political message it embodies is that the individual transcends social, religious, sexual, and economic considerations. Like it or not, we were recommending a poet laureate for Wisconsin, not for a particular governor or political party. Governor Thompson said as much at the press conference.

No one had to quit. We performed the job we'd been sworn to do. Ultimately, the choice was neither Flaherty nor Sweet, but Kort. Sexuality or specific content was not an issue. We all agreed it was better to have a good piece of art about a subject some might find offensive than a passable poem about something no one had strong feelings about one way or another. But during the interviews the committee was particularly struck with Kort's sincerity and the scope of work she was already doing (and would continue to do whether or not she was appointed) to promote poetry in a way consistent with the goals of the position. Besides being an excellent poet, she was a person who would grow with the position, and the position would grow because of her being in it.

And so Ellen Kort was chosen to be Wisconsin's first poet laureate. Says Kort, "I love poetry and believe it belongs to all of us. That's why I take it into schools, from kindergarten to elementary and middle schools to high schools and to at-risk teens and university classes. I want people to learn to love poetry and to welcome self-expression as a pilgrimage of co-creating the world in a positive and healthy way. It's why I teach teachers how to work with it, so they, too, will live it and offer it to their students in all its amazing glory.

"Poets are not elite beings on pedestals, but everyday people who can turn triumphs and tragedies into written and oral forms to be offered like food to one another. Poets need to write not only for themselves, but to find creative ways of offering the gift of self-expression to a larger circle ... to encourage the poet in all of us."

Congratulations, Ellen Kort. Long live the diversity of poetry and poets in Wisconsin!

John Lehman is poetry editor of the ***Wisconsin Academy Review*** *and founder and associate publisher of* ***Rosebud,*** *a nationally circulated literary magazine based in Cambridge.*

The *Wisconsin Academy Review* applauds all three poet laureate finalists. Readers may sample their work in this month's poetry section, beginning on the next page.

poetry

Bear

The way she came lumbering up
from the river that first spring
her winter-slow heart picking up speed
as she nosed her way through the back yard
toward the house across the porch
to stand full length huge paws and face
pressed against the glass door

My mother on the other side
mesmerized stirred by the memory
of something ancient
a familiar chant rivering through
the raw loneliness of her blood
She placed one hand against the glass
small against the flattened spread
of padded claws The bear turned then
heading south where her cubs waited
at the edge of the woods

We found signs of her all summer
her vocabulary of scratch marks on trees
overturned stones bear scat and tracks
left like an offering I worried why a bear
might come so easily to the house
Mother said it was a prayer sent
from the ancestors Today
on this first day of spring I bless
what has been lost bless all women
who stand waiting at the door bless
my mother her warm and dangerous love.

by Ellen Kort

If Death Were a Woman

I'd want her to come for me
smelling of cinnamon wearing
bright cotton purple maybe hot
pink a red bandanna in her hair

She'd bring good coffee papaya juice
bouquet of sea grass saltine crackers
and a lottery ticket We'd dip
our fingers into moist pouches

of lady-slippers crouch down to see
how cabbages feel when wind bumps
against them in the garden
We'd walk through Martin's woods

find the old house its crumbling
foundation strung with honeysuckle
and in the front yard a surprise
jonquils turning the air yellow

glistening and ripe still blooming
for a gardener long gone We'd head
for the beach wearing strings of shells
around our left ankles laugh

at their ticking sounds the measured
beat that comes with dancing
on hard-packed sand the applause
of ocean and gulls She'd play

ocarina songs to a moon almost full
and I'd sing off-key We'd glide
and swoop become confetti of leaf fall
all wings floating on small whirlwinds

never once dreading the heart
silenced drop And when it was time
she would not bathe me Instead
we'd scrub the porch pour left over

water on flowers stand a long time
in sun and silence then holding hands
we'd pose for pictures in the last light

by Ellen Kort

Ellen Kort, of Appleton, is Wisconsin's first poet laureate. Read more about her on page 34.

Song For Discharming

Hear the voice of my song—it is my voice
I speak to your naked heart.
—Chippewa charming song

Before this, I would not do or say what impulse
rushes in to say or do
what instinct burns within
I had learned to temper in my clever sick
while stars unlock at dawn, anonymous as the speed
of light
my gray mornings began as nothing, freed of geography
and stripped of any source or consequence.
I was, as you may expect, a human parenthesis.
There is no simple way to say this,
but drift closer, Invisible One, swim within this stream
of catastrophic history. Yours? Mine?
No, you decide. And then

come here one more time so that I may numb like dark
and desperate, so that I may speak your name this
final round
you might think an infinite black fog waits to envelope me
you might dream an endless flat of light
you might think I drink
at the very edge of you, cowering like passerine while
hawks hunt the open field of my tiny wars.

but, little by little, like centipedes that whirl and spin
and sink into scorching sands of Sonora
or like gulls at Moningwanekaning that rise and stir
and vanish into the heat lightning of August
I will call you down and bring you into that deathly coil
I will show you each step and stair
I will do nothing and yet it will come to you in this way
that sorcery that swallowed me will swallow you too
at your desired stanza and in a manner of your own
making

While I shake the rattle of ferocity moments before
sunrise
while I burn sage and sweetgrass, and you, my darling,
while I burn you like some ruined fetish and sing
over you
over and over like an almighty voice from the skies
it is in that fragile light
that I will love you
it is in that awakening
I will love myself too
in this dry white drought about to end
in this ghostly city of remember

You will know this, too
and never be able to say.

by Denise Sweet

Moningwanekaning:
Chippewa for Madeline Island, Lake Superior.

In September: Ode to Tomatoes

In September, the order of business
will always begin with tomatoes
the passionate fruit
of defiant grandmothers
of bachelor lords
in their kitchens of chaos
and of the occasional gardeners like myself
who can marvel the wonders of nature
while complaining of lower back pain.

Even then, the flaming Big Boys
and voluptuous Romans gather themselves
in dishpans, in aprons, yes, even at the doorstep
waiting for the enthusiasm of an early riser
to spill with poetic love
over a Mason or a Kerr of the stewed,
the brewed, the blended, the pureed:
this is destiny,
this immortality,
this is salsa
In the dead of winter!

Tomatoes suspended in jars,
smiling their fetal smiles
outshining the corn relish
and the bony heaps of mutant squash
23 PINTS OF TOMATO MARMALADE
CANNOT HELP BUT PERSIST WITH THE IDEA OF
SPRING
amidst the basement darkness
and the stacks of dying *Milwaukee Journals*.

Yes, even though we walk through the valleys
of shadowy Death,
we will always can tomatoes
we will ladle together
the green into red
secrets into sauce
we can because we can
and not because we must.

by Denise Sweet

Denise Sweet is an Anishinaabe from White Earth (a.k.a "ojibwa"), and author of ***Songs for Discharming, Know by Heart,*** *and* ***Days of Obsidian, Days of Grace.*** *She is an associate professor at UW–Green Bay, where she teaches literature, creative writing, Native American landscapes, and Yucatan travel seminar. Sweet also chairs the American Indian Studies program at UW–Green Bay. She is the mother of two fine Anishinaabe sons, Damon and Vaughn, and Nokomis to Bazille, her first grandbaby.*

Stilt Man

for Carlene

Amazed by how length and height
can be transformed into depth—young men
like I once was, cloned to clip bra and panty ads
from Penney's and Sears' catalogues, at night
sneak photos of Nordic blondes and brunettes,
topless African Dinka ladies from *Geographic*,
to rub themselves mattress sore, while Jesus
fluoresced and quaked behind the bedboard.
There was the amazement and pain, aroused
by two-dimensional space. Exquisite feeling,
but not fully-seeing breasts for the brassiere,
at sixteen, prone to torturous timing—
awaited the signal of a murmur or a sigh
to undo a three-dimensional snap or clasp,
stare down two Saturday-night-specials
with fire-power to render impotency,
or at least incompetency. Even in late years,
flesh-laden female skeletons can render
a male magically rigid and spastic all at once.

Remember? When I enter at your bidding,
I make peace with the world and groan
such shock waves, neighbor houses tremble
as if built on stilts, built like legs I try
to walk upon after I rise from you, a sun
burned on a fuse to near-extinction.
The stomach walks away, slack and strained.
I am a sac, drained, birthed from your flesh,
hold breath like staring at 3D images,
never to go blind, rubbing rods and cones
against magic sheets of images which
hone me into ecstasy when the eye muscles
relax and I enter the holiness of depth.
Yet, to enter your world of silk-arousal,
I am confused by the silent music your legs
contrive to tease the air, and I lumber about
the living room, mouthing gratitude and longing—
childlike and lost like a holy man. I whirl
through days of lost light, until I am
born again through a needle's eye, after
beating my body into submission
at the wailing wall between your thighs.

by Doug Flaherty

Stilt Man originally appeared in the *Harvard Review*.
Reprinted with permission.

Home Before Dark

You dropped in out of April rain,
and when I asked you for touch
you said the white farmhouses
in Connecticut all have duck ponds.
You laughed until my mouth
sheltered yours against shadows.
In the deep woods of my fear,
a black door stands against a tree
and the door neither opens
nor ever closes on love.

And then I felt your tongue,
a bullet in the wound of words.
Then I felt them slither again,
knowing they swim down deep—
the small fish, not yet legal
in the pool of my stomach,
nibbling the flesh-bitten walls
until all the bait vanished.
I was waiting for them to break
into light and stroke me once
more upstream to be reborn.

But your eyes reminded me
we are neighbors, lamb and bull.
Our houses will never sleep again.
Then you winked and said again,
the white farmhouses
in Connecticut all have duck ponds.
Those creatures are too white to fly,
their souls too content to soar,
their stomachs heavy with love-grain.
I tell you need keeps me grounded,
and I turn to stroke your whiteness.
Promise to have you home before dark.

by Doug Flaherty

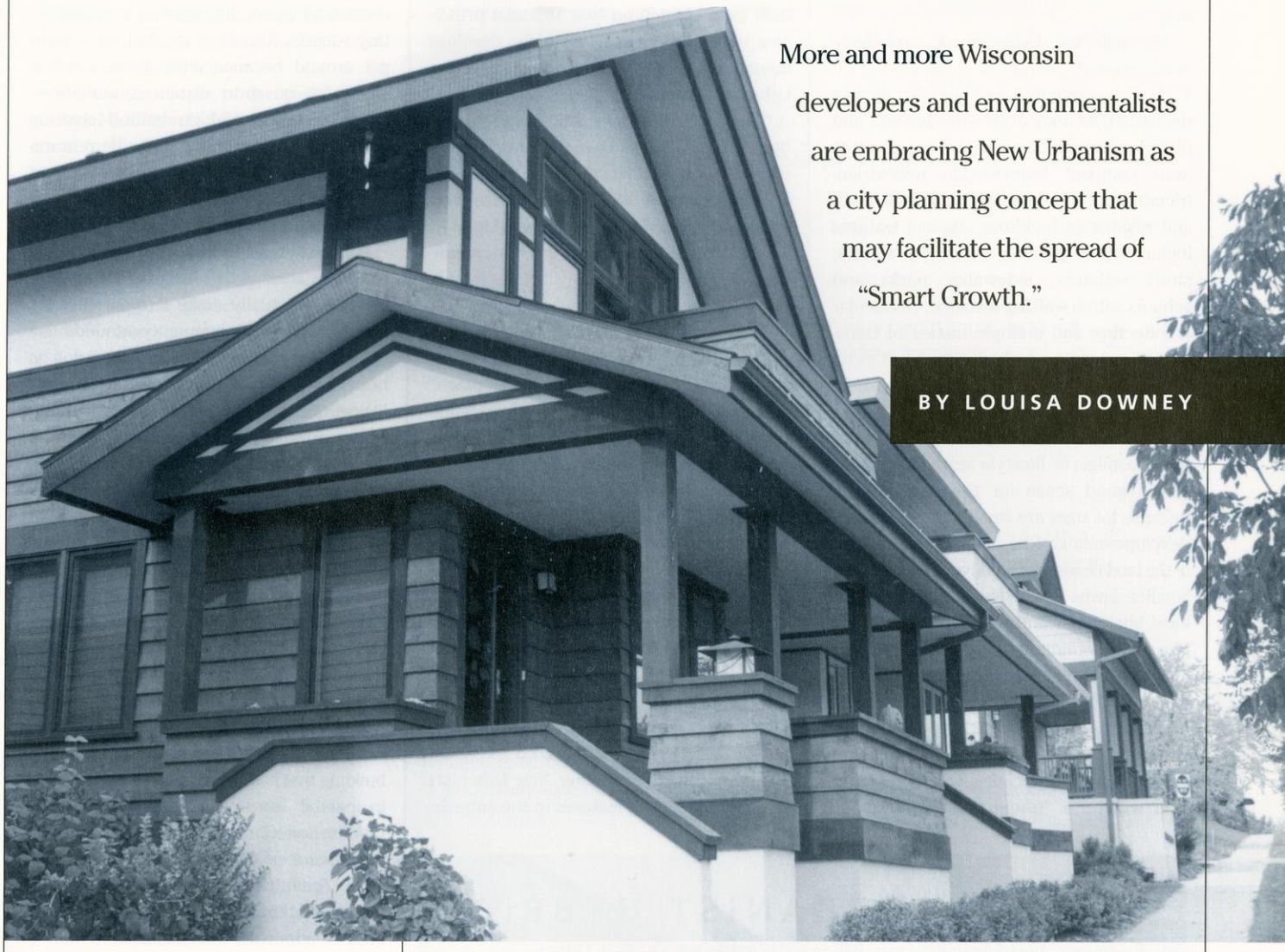
Home Before Dark was originally published in *The New Yorker* (April 1, 1972). Reprinted with permission.

Doug Flaherty has appeared in scores of magazines, including the ***Quarterly Review of Literature, The Nation, Beloit Poetry Journal, Wisconsin Review, Southern Poetry Review,*** *and* ***North American Review.*** *Flaherty has published a half-dozen books of poetry. His book,* ***Near the Bone*** *(Pentagram Press, 1975), won best poetry book of the year from the Wisconsin Council for Writers. Flaherty has had poems in 11 anthologies, including* ***Wisconsin Poets*** *(1991), published by the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters.*

Back to the Future

More and more Wisconsin developers and environmentalists are embracing New Urbanism as a city planning concept that may facilitate the spread of "Smart Growth."

BY LOUISA DOWNEY



Front porches, small lots, short setbacks, and sidewalks help make Middleton Hills a fine example of New Urbanism.

Photo by Louisa Downey

HOWEVER AMBIVALENT SOME AMERICANS may feel about the suburbs—the conformity, the sterility, the isolation of communities that largely are abandoned during the work day—one thing is certain: suburban growth is rampant and too often uncontrolled, spiraling out wildly from city centers across the nation.

WISCONSIN, AS A STRONG RURAL STATE, provides a particularly poignant example. Seven million acres of farmland have been developed here since 1950. By 2015, the state will be forced to absorb 400,000 additional households that must be sheltered, fed, and schooled. With land at a premium, the question is: Where?

Small wonder, then, that many Wisconsin environmentalists have seized upon New Urbanism—a city planning design that resurrects the more compact, mixed-use

neighborhoods of yesteryear—as an optimal vehicle for Smart Growth, a development concept that calls for minimizing damage to the environment while allowing communities to grow.

Although New Urbanism is a relatively new concept—the term was coined in 1991—it has rapidly taken hold throughout the nation. Its body of land-use policies and planning and design principles are aimed at more compact, human-scale, pedestrian-friendly development, with a mix of retail and residential buildings. Typical features include front porches, narrower streets, short setbacks, sidewalks, parks and schools within walking distance, vernacular architecture and multiple modes of transportation—many of which have been virtually illegal under current zoning laws for 50 years or more.

But New Urbanism goes much deeper than nostalgia or lifestyle aesthetics; it also makes good sense for the environment. Because lot sizes are smaller, New Urbanist developments can be built on one-quarter of the land needed for a conventional suburb. Smaller lawns mean fewer contaminants; local businesses and public transportation mean less commuting.

Hence the marriage with Smart Growth. Recently Wisconsin became the first state to pass the Smart Growth law, the most comprehensive overhaul of Wisconsin's land use laws in decades. One core provision will be a "traditional neighborhood development" ordinance that 59 Wisconsin communities with populations over 12,500 must adopt. Traditional Neighborhood Developments, or TNDs, are communities built from scratch on New Urbanist principles (as opposed to being older developments that add on or integrate New Urbanist elements).

"The TND ordinance will be an educational process," says Dave Cieslewicz, executive director of 1000 Friends of Wisconsin, a Madison-based land use research and advocacy group that began working on Smart Growth legislation. "If 59 communities need to adopt it, they'll have to talk about it."

As Wisconsin's first TND, Middleton Hills in Middleton, near Madison, serves as something of a prototype. The development was conceived and designed by Miami-based architect Andres Duany, who has built many of the some 250 TNDs around the nation, including Seaside in Florida (the oldest TND in the United States) and Kentlands in Maryland. It is too early to tell what will become of Middleton Hills. But other TNDs have had time to mature and are a good gauge of whether it, and other TNDs built under the Smart Growth law, will succeed.

A HOME FOR MISTER ROGERS

Andres Duany and other New Urbanists find few redeeming features in the suburbs that began dotting the American landscape after World War II. On the contrary, they believe that suburban development has bled community to death. Suburban homes are set far apart, like castles stranded on tiny islands. Residents depend on cars to get around because often there are few sidewalks, no short distances, and therefore no choice. Hidden behind steering wheels and vanishing behind remote-controlled garage doors, suburbanites often have little more interaction than waving at each other in passing.

It doesn't have to be that way. According to Duany, altering the design of a neighborhood can actually make it more diverse, friendly, and even community-minded.

Some critics have ridiculed his vision as hopelessly utopian, even artificial. How fitting, one writer noted, that *The Truman Show,* a movie about a man whose entire life unfolded in a stage-set town, was filmed in Duany's Seaside.

Yet, with rare exception, TNDs all over the United States and Canada report that vital communities are thriving in their midst. During a year spent observing life in Celebration, a Disney-owned TND in Florida, author and ethnographer Andrew Ross noted an aggressive sociability among residents, which he attributed to the development's traditional town design.

"If anything, the pace of community building that had been set there had resulted in partial burnout," he writes in *The Celebration Chronicles: Life, Liberty and the Pursuit of Property Value in Disney's New Town* (Ballantine Books). "Several pioneers acknowledged that there was too little time for their own families."

A similar phenomenon is already unfolding in Middleton Hills. Bill and Liz Erpenbach built their home there because they liked the idea of a neighborhood where everyone knew each other. Like their neighbors, the Erpenbachs have a front porch (mandatory for large homes under the design code) and collect their mail at the "neighborhood store." House lots are small, which puts residents into close quarters where they're more likely to interact.

As in Celebration, Middleton Hills' front porches often are empty, but a lively back-alley culture has sprung up. Residents have what they call "alley neighbors," says Liz Erpenbach. They watch each other's homes and organize kaffeeklatches, summer picnics, book exchanges, and theater trips. "It just

THE NEW URBANIST HYBRID

Sun Prairie, a small city near Madison, will soon sport the biggest New Urbanism development in the state. "Project New Town," as it is called, is being developed by Don Simon, a builder who until recently has been better known for his traditional mass-constructed subdivisions.

The 460-acre development will include 1,600 dwellings and 129 acres of open space, walking trails, bike paths, and preserved wetlands. Stores, a school, and possibly a church provide a mix of uses. Other New Urbanist features are large porches, balconies, a village green, and recessed garages.

From a pure profit perspective, a New Urbanist subdivision is a sound investment for a developer. More people per square acre means more bang for your land buck.

It's no surprise, then, that developers have already adopted the lexicon of New Urbanism. Several hybrid projects are already in the works in the Madison area. Hybrids are conventional suburbs that incorporate some, but not all, of the principles of New Urbanism.

While they may not be "New Urbanist" enough for some proponents, others note that even some mixed-use development will decrease traffic, enhance a sense of community, and allow children and seniors to get around on foot. And that, they say, is a step in the right direction.

makes sense—people are friendlier," she says. "They talk over the clothes line."

If it sounds like modern-day "Cleaverism," that's no accident. TNDs target buyers looking for a particular kind of community —one of potlucks, porch swings, and middle-class family values.

"Built with a sense of the past," rhapsodizes Middleton Hills' promotional literature, "and a clear understanding of what makes people feel at home." Celebration's online marketing plucks shamelessly at the heartstrings: "... old-fashioned rocking chairs line a community lake where kids frolic in a fountain." By placing the social goals front and center, the developer sends a clear signal about expectations, and community becomes a self-fulfilling prophesy.

Jane Gribowski-Miller, director of design for Middleton Hills, says that in fact the appeal is broader. "There's a certain type of person who embraces the concept," she says. "Some like traditional neighborhoods. Some like the architecture. Some like downtown Madison but they wanted a new house. Others are from the suburbs and they wanted more diversity."

A range of housing not seen in conventional suburbs, from single-family homes to granny flats, theoretically should provide enough variety for both the wealthy and people on a low income, as well as accommodate people as they move through different stages of life. "Someone can start in an apartment, move up to a live-work and then a house, and then downsize to a condo, and still stay in the neighborhood," says Gribowski-Miller.

Nonetheless, income diversity, a core aim of the TND, has failed to materialize. Left to an avaricious real estate market, housing prices have soared. One study by George Washington University found that homes in these developments sell for 11 percent more than comparable homes elsewhere. That's a conservative estimate. Home prices in Seaside increase about 25 percent a year, while sellers in Celebration commanded $150,000 more for their homes than in any other top-selling development in central Florida in 1998. Closer to home, houses in Middleton Hills start at a slightly more affordable $160,000 and climb to $400,000, with the average floating around $220,000. Such prices make one Middleton Hills street named "Diversity Road"—yes, it exists—into something of a joke.

STATE GETS SMART

When Gov. Tommy Thompson created the Strategic Growth Task Force in 1996, he set in motion a long-overdue, long-awaited reform of Wisconsin's land use policies.

The trail was picked up in 1997 by 1000 Friends of Wisconsin. The group's goal was to reform land use policy and design legislation ensuring that every community in the state have a land use plan in place by 2010. The reforms were signed into law by Thompson in October 1999.

The Smart Growth law breaks down into three basic parts:

1. State Aid for Planning

Starting in 2001, the state will provide funds to help communities write comprehensive plans.

2. Smart Growth Dividend

Beginning in 2005, the state will offer a payment incentive to encourage local governments to write comprehensive plans and to grow compactly.

Communities can accumulate credits for each new unit of housing constructed on lots of one-quarter acre or less. They can also receive a bonus credit for each new unit of affordable housing (selling at 80 percent or less of the county's median sales price). The credit value has yet to be determined.

3. Consistency

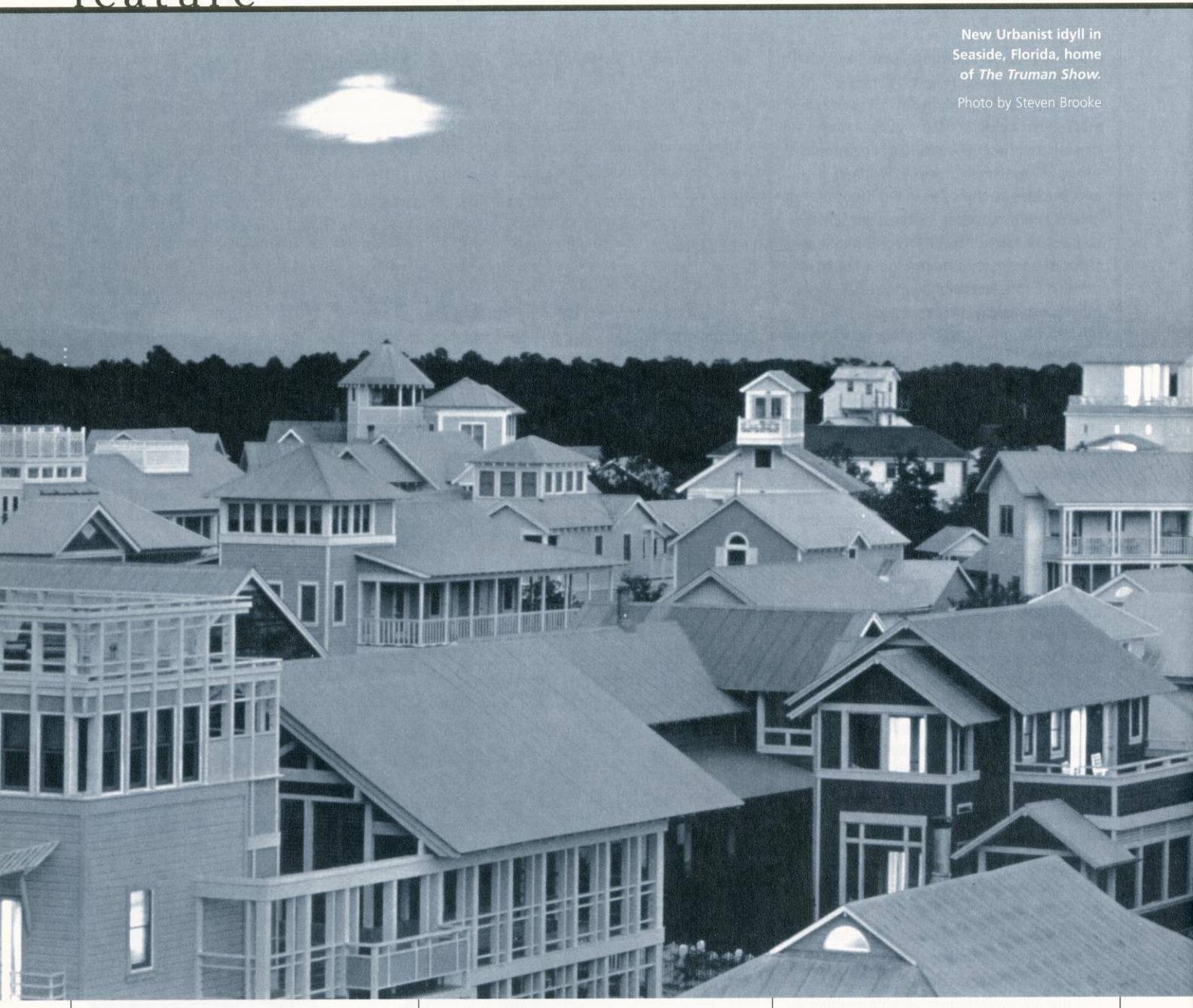
Beginning on January 1, 2010, local land use actions must be consistent with a comprehensive plan. That date was selected to give communities enough time to complete their plans.

The new law requires the University of Wisconsin Extension to develop model ordinances for Traditional Neighborhood Developments and conservation subdivisions by January 1, 2001.

Within one year of that date, every city, village, and town in Wisconsin with a population over 12,500 must adopt an ordinance similar to the model. While communities are not required to actually build TNDs, changing various codes to allow for TND development is a necessary and important first step in encouraging their implementation.

Walnut Street in Milwaukee, an example of New Urbanist redevelopment in the heart of a city. Many of the surrounding streets are still blighted.

Photo by Louisa Downey



New Urbanist idyll in Seaside, Florida, home of *The Truman Show.*

Photo by Steven Brooke

Ironically, the design codes themselves are partly responsible. TNDs often have themed or "vernacular architecture." For example, homes in Middleton Hills must be built according to three basic Frank Lloyd Wright designs, and only natural materials such as wood, stucco, and stone are allowed. The codes make for a development that is beautiful and intimate, but more expensive to build.

High demand and short supply are also driving up costs in New Urbanist developments—a situation that will likely change, says Cieslewicz. "As New Urbanism gets infused into the marketplace and becomes more common, that will lead to more affordable housing," he says.

Demographic changes have also triggered an interest in New Urbanist neighborhoods, says Cieslewicz. In the next 25 years, 77 million baby boomers will retire. Many say they'll want smaller houses close to entertainment and medical facilities. "We're already seeing it happen," says Cieslewicz. "There has been an explosion in the condo market in Madison and Milwaukee—and that's just the leading edge."

To be truly New Urbanist, TNDs should be more compact and densely populated than conventional suburbs. Cieslewicz estimates that a minimum of 20 people per acre are needed if New Urbanism is to work as a mixed-use community. But many TNDs, Middleton Hills included, are no more densely populated than conventional suburbs. Instead, having small yards and homes encourages people to use the public realm, which has been enhanced by wetlands, parks, and walking trails.

Developers like higher densities because they can build more homes on a given parcel and still charge a premium for the New Urbanist concept. "The Smart Growth law gets developers to first base," explains Cieslewicz. "We can use the marketplace and profit motive to make better developments." Four new New Urbanist hybrid

developments in the Madison area have already been proposed or constructed.

Population density can make or break a business in a TND. Even in Celebration, the largest TND, several first-wave businesses disappeared, although successive merchants have been more successful. Some developers are stepping in and subsidizing rents. Others rely on shoppers from neighboring towns.

With only 400 homes when fully built out, Middleton Hills may lack sufficient size and density to support many businesses. The neighborhood store, Moze's, has already scaled back its operation due to weak sales and food spoilage problems.

In only four years, however, the mixed-use development has attracted a wide range of amenities that draw people from both inside and outside Middleton Hills, including a medical clinic, store, hair salon, architecture firm, and retirement home. One resident even runs an insurance agency out of his house, says Gribowski-Miller.

At the very least, says Cieslewicz, mixed uses give residents the choice of driving or walking. "Considering everything that was built up to this point, Middleton Hills is so much better," he says. The development will eventually include mass transit.

NEW URBANISM HITS THE CITIES

TNDs like Celebration and Seaside have long informed the public's perception of New Urbanism. In fact, New Urbanism goes farther. Under the leadership of Mayor John Norquist, Milwaukee city planners are applying New Urbanist principles to steer a significant urban rebirth. Norquist is a vocal advocate of New Urbanism and a founder of the California-based think tank Congress for New Urbanism.

For the past 50 years, cities have tried to mimic suburbs in an attempt to recapture their lost middle-class population, says Peter Park, a Milwaukee city planner and an assistant adjunct professor of architecture at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee. The result was disastrous. "There was nothing in the code that related to pedestrians," says Park. "That's critical to how you make an urban environment."

Park says New Urbanism provides a market solution to the problem of cities. "We try to start from the point that the city is our strength. Cities can't compete with the suburbs, so we try to capture the market of what people want in a city," he says.

The CityHomes development in Milwaukee's inner city represents New Urbanism at its best. It is made up of new three- and four-bedroom homes with garages in alleyways, short setbacks, pristine lawns, and traditional architecture. The development has attracted a solidly middle-class black suburban population. Although located in a neighborhood where homes sell for as little as $25,000, CityHomes are now valued at more than $100,000.

New Urbanism has also been put to work in existing neighborhoods. Ten years ago, Brady Street on Milwaukee's East Side was a tattered cluster of taverns, junk stores, and restaurants, remembered mostly for its past as a hippie hangout. Today, it is a New Urbanist's dream of lively outdoor cafes, high-end clothing stores, restaurants, and bakeries. Trolleys and buses rumble up the street alongside cars and pedestrians.

Brady Street is another example of New Urbanism in Milwaukee's center.

Photo: Louisa Downey

THE END OF SPRAWL?

Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist sees New Urbanism as the future.

You're known in the state and around the country as someone who's been in the vanguard of New Urbanism. What sparked your interest?

Norquist: Like a lot of Americans, I share a discomfort with the built landscape of the last 50 years—strip sprawl, boxes in parking lots, separated uses with housing in one pod and commercial and retail in their own pods. People have lost their sense of place and community.

To what do you attribute this problem?

I think it's the result of our mindless obsession with extreme forms of post–World War II modernism. It's not about the style of building, but how they're organized.

There is a street in Tel Aviv, Dizengoff Street, that is full of Art Moderne buildings organized in such a way that creates a café atmosphere—just like the Champs Elysées in Paris or State Street in Madison. You can have modernist building styles. What's important is the relationship between the buildings. When buildings relate to pedestrians, streets become destinations, not something you blow through on your way to somewhere else.

I don't have to rely on aesthetic reasons to support this. In New Urbanist projects, home prices are 10 to 15 percent higher. The public likes it better. We're restoring the principles that guided development for thousands of years—terminating a street with a temple or church, for example, goes back to the ancient Greeks.

People pay more to shop in a street that's organized properly. In the East and the West [coasts], malls are tumbling. It's even happening in the Midwest.

CityHomes in Milwaukee is an unusual development. How do you gauge its success?

Houses started at $70,000 and they had to be subsidized to get them to that level. Now their value is more than $100,000. The idea behind CityHomes was to create a market for other homes in the neighborhood. In the inner city, traditional architecture becomes more important. When you have low-income residents, you can't experiment with architecture. That's what we've done in public housing until recently—built large, concrete Le Corbusier-style buildings. It doesn't work. Houses need to be familiar, the same as others in the neighborhood.

The development has a solidly middle-class black population. Was that a goal?

Middle-class African Americans are one of the markets we were trying to attract. African Americans feel more comfortable in the city because they don't have to deal with as much discrimination. We're delighted to have a large middle-class population in Milwaukee.

In your book *The Wealth of Cities,* you wrote, "You can't build a city on fear and you can't build a city on pity." What did you mean by that?

If you feature problems as the main aspect of the city, you chase investment away. You can't build a city on pity and you can't build a city on pathologies. You need to solve problems, not dwell on them. New Urbanism is really about urbanism—which is what cities have. You need to highlight the positive, point to their design superiority.

Sprawl planning and design is now under severe attack. Twenty years from now, sprawl will not be built. Places will be organized around traditional design principles. Many buildings have been renovated, others have been torn down and replaced.

"Brady Street stopped trying to pretend it was a strip street in the suburbs," says Norquist, adding that property values in the area have risen. "If you have higher property prices in a New Urbanist project than in sprawl, that's the real test. Capital tends to flow toward it.

"The city contributed to Brady Street by not doing things. I'm proud of the fact that we didn't put a lot of municipal furniture on the street, like kiosks. We added a lot of street parking—about 50 spaces. It doesn't make the traffic engineers happy, but it keeps the people happy."

Cities and infill sites have a huge advantage over greenfield sites because such infrastructure as utilities and roads are already in place. Unlike suburban developments, city neighborhoods have mixed uses and porous boundaries that give businesses access to customers from all over town. The diversity so elusive in the suburbs is a given. "Cities are diverse places; suburbs by their nature are not," says Park.

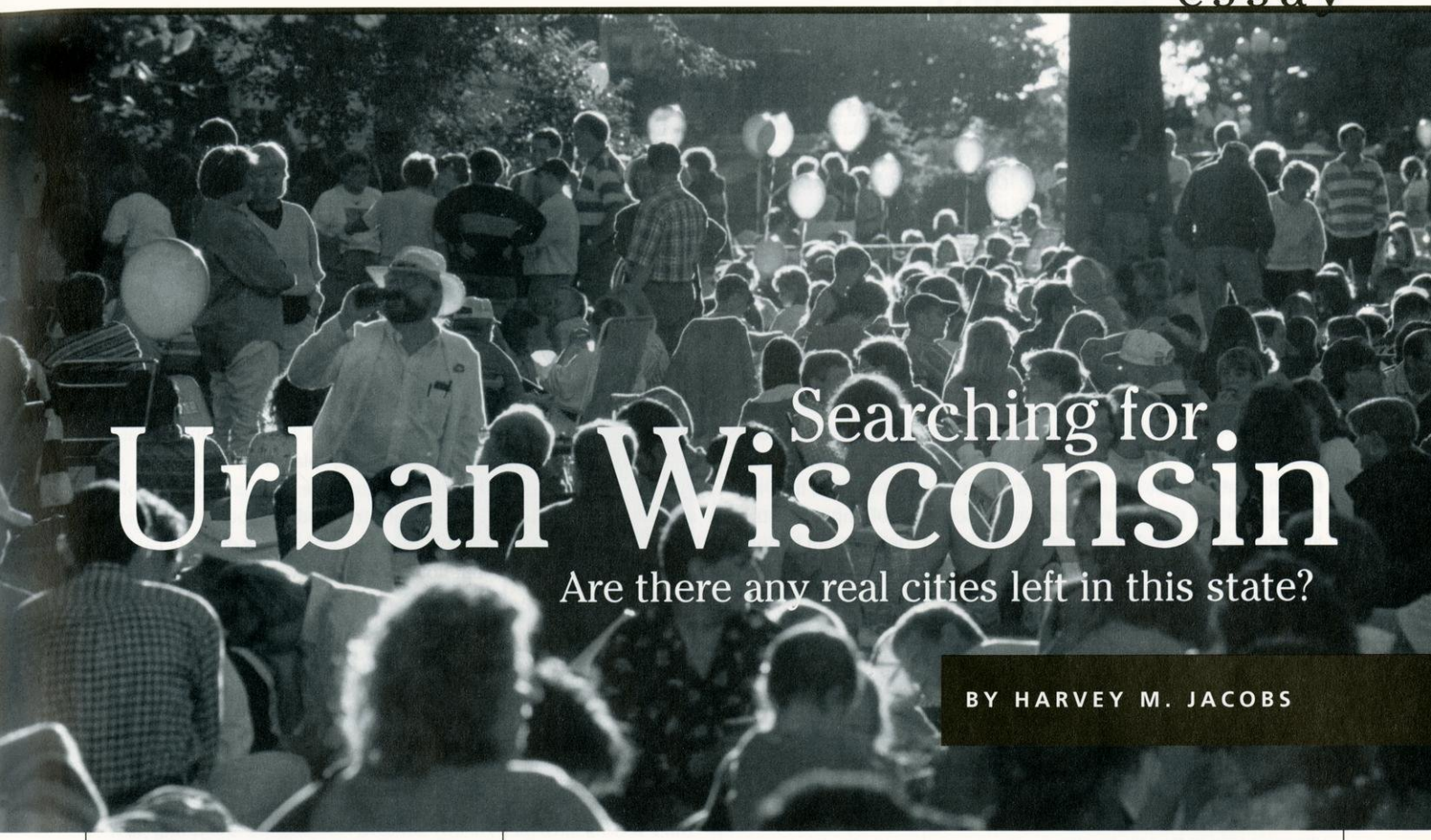
All over the country, New Urbanism is being applied to "retrofit" suburbs with new downtowns or revamp infill sites and brownfields in major metropolitan areas. Under the federal Hope VI program, cities are tearing down old urban renewal projects like Chicago's Cabrini Green and building New Urbanist-style neighborhoods with sidewalks, yards, and garages.

Norfolk, Virginia, has torn down a crime-infested cluster of superblocks called Diggs Town and replaced it with a New Urbanist neighborhood. Similar projects are underway in Baltimore, Detroit, Washington, D.C., and Charlotte, North Carolina, to name a few.

Milwaukee is already seeing a turnaround. Middle-class empty nesters are choosing downtown for its nightlife and atmosphere. Young professionals are commuting to work in the suburbs and living in the city.

"They work downtown, their favorite restaurants are downtown, and other things like the symphony are downtown. It has unique housing that you can't find anywhere else," says Park.

Louisa Downey is a Madison-based freelance writer with a special interest in city planning.



Searching for Urban Wisconsin

Are there any real cities left in this state?

BY HARVEY M. JACOBS

Concerts on the Square, and events like it, may draw big crowds in Madison—but in general people come together only on occasion, not with regularity, says Harvey Jacobs.

Photo by Andy Kraushaar

I RECEIVED THE REQUEST to prepare this essay while living in Italy during the spring of 1999, where I was teaching in UW–Madison's study abroad program. While living in and around Florence I also visited Rome, Venice, Bologna, Pisa, and many of the ancient cities of the Tuscan region—Lucca, Siena, Fiesole, and Cortona. As I teach urban planning, my residency led me to continuously ponder the nature of cities and community life, the interaction between these two, and to reflect back upon Wisconsin.

DOES WISCONSIN have real cities? Is Madison a real city? I don't think so. Madison is a conglomeration of people living together in a legally defined place, but there is not much of it that functions as a city, in the way cities were invented and meant to be.

This is not surprising; in the early years of this country's founding, people left Europe to come to America for access to land. Owning a piece of land that you controlled—farming it, planting trees on it, hunting and fishing on it—this is what the American dream is founded on. Later, in the nineteenth century migrations that settled Wisconsin, people left Europe and the eastern states for the same reason (upstate New York, where many early Wisconsin settlers came from, was believed to be too crowded).

Americans are profoundly ambivalent about cities and urban-ness. To most Americans, cities are places of danger, crime, and chaos. They are places where you confront the unknown—the unknown place, the unknown person, the unknown culture. It is instead in the small towns, the farmstead, the frontier settlement and settler where you find virtue, honesty, and those characteristics that best embody that which is American. We seem to have always

felt this way—our literature is replete with testimonies to this dichotomy. Our nationally recognized Wisconsin literature? Laura Ingalls Wilder's *Little House on the Prairie* series; Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac.*

To Europeans, cities denote urbanity, civilization, and rising above the parochialness of the countryside—Karl Marx wrote about the idiocy of country life. The European city is density and intensity, it is a mixing of social classes and races, it is an intimacy of neighborhood—knowing the person who sells you the newspaper, knowing your baker, your cheese merchant, and your coffee shop attendants. And yet at the same time, the city is the place of random chance and opportunity: not quite knowing who you will meet on the street, who or what will be around the corner or down the path that you have never traveled before. Cities, as Italians invented them in the early part of the second millennium, present one with a paradox—they offer both intimacy and anonymity. You have an innate sense of familiarity in your neighborhood (your village) and yet the city as a whole presents you with the opportunity to become lost, to discover yourself anew by discovering new places and new people.

But above all the classical city as it was invented is a place of public life—surrounding you in the squares and cafés from morning into the night. Why? One reason has to do with the unavailability of space. By American and Wisconsin standards, European and Italian homes are small. Physical space is scarcer and thus more valuable. More Europeans live in apartments rather than freestanding homes. If they are fortunate, they have a terrace for some plants and a little outside seating, and if they live on the ground floor perhaps a small yard. But the majority do not have their own yard, garden, or children's play area. By contrast, Wisconsinites share the American desire for private land and personal space. We retreat into our home spaces; we are captured and perhaps isolated by them. We covet our small pieces of land, reflecting the reason many of our ancestors came to America. But the consequence of this use and arrangement of space is that we are private consumers.

In contrast, Italians are public consumers. They enjoy and take pride in the privacy of their homes as much as anyone anywhere, but an essential part of their lives includes time spent shared with their community. Each evening, from about 5 p.m. to 7 p.m., people of all ages take an evening walk in their neighborhood—known as the *passeggiata.* People stop and talk, young people eye each other, older people admire and watch over the teenagers, everyone enjoys the babies and toddlers. And everyone gets a public education by watching everyone else—children learn how to grow into young people, young people into adults, adults into older adults, and older adults learn about today's youth culture.

Beyond the *passeggiata*, Italians make full use of the squares that are the hubs of their cities. The fruit and vegetable markets, the clothing markets, the antique and resale markets all happen in the squares and give people a further opportunity to undertake the business of life together. Concerts, fairs, plays—*spettacolo* to the Italians—take place in the square, with ready access for all, from the family with children in strollers to the homeless.

Anticipating an accusation that I am overromanticizing life in Italy, let me be clear about my point—Italians create the city by living in it fully, by engaging in it, by making it their place.

How does all this relate to Madison? Why am I arguing that Madison isn't a city?

Perhaps most fundamentally, because many of Madison's residents actively and enthusiastically abandon the city. What characterizes Madison? The Capitol Square is the symbol of the city, sitting as it does in the center of the Isthmus. But what really characterizes Madison is the growth of its suburbs, on both sides of the Isthmus. Madison has undergone a social transformation to a population that has no relationship to its public spaces.

Several years ago I was shopping in a store in a nondescript mall on the West Side. It was the winter holiday season. I mentioned to the clerk that I was going to the Civic Center that weekend for the annual performance of *The Nutcracker,* as my daughter was dancing in it. She paused and then said, "You know, I don't think I have been downtown for six or seven years." We were five miles from the Civic Center. I wish this was an isolated instance, but it isn't.

Wisconsin used to have cities. Milwaukee was a city. Madison was a city. There were vibrant neighborhoods with people who actively engaged the city's public spaces. But for many reasons, including urban renewal, the interstate highway system, white flight, and a changed economic structure, the cities that were are no more.

Can Madison become a city? By my definition, it has all the elements of a city. It has the urban downtown mall of State Street, the Terrace behind the Memorial Union on the UW campus, the Capitol Square (scene of the Farmers' Market, the Art Fair, the Taste of Madison and the family New Year's celebration), and now the rooftop of the new Monona Terrace Community and Convention Center. And these are only our grand public spaces. The city is full of small parks, and other places to gather. All of these are admirable and engaging public spaces, with tremendous potential to bring people together, which they do on occasion but not with regularity.

People have to *want* to be brought together. They have to enjoy it; they have to embrace the excitement, the vitality, the familiarity and the uncertainty of interacting in a public space. My experience, my reflection, is that for the most part, most people, most of the time, don't want it. It saddens me, because I believe we would all be enriched by it. So for now all I can do is encourage you to join me in searching for, and helping to create, urban Wisconsin.

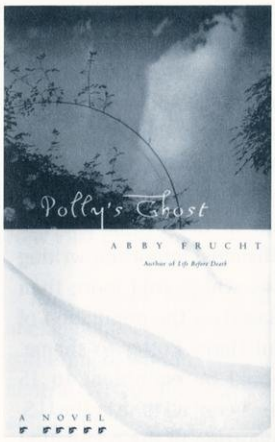
Harvey M. Jacobs is a professor at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, where he teaches in the Department of Urban and Regional Planning and the Institute for Environmental Studies, and serves as director of the Land Tenure Center, a research, technical assistance, and training institute. Jacobs is author of the book ***Who Owns America? Social Conflict Over Property Rights*** *(University of Wisconsin Press, 1998).*

This essay appears in the 1000 Friends of Wisconsin book ***In My Neighborhood: Celebrating Wisconsin Cities*** (Prairie Oak Press, 2000), an anthology of essays, poems, and photographs. Other contributors include Milwaukee Mayor John Norquist, ***Wisconsin Academy Review*** editorial advisory committee members Marie Kohler and Paul Hayes, Wisconsin Poet Laureate Ellen Kort, photographer Zane Williams, and writer Tracy Will, host of Wisconsin Public Television's forthcoming history series, ***Wisconsin Stories.***

Polly's Ghost

by Abby Frucht

Scribner, 2000, 362 pages



Novelist Abby Frucht.

REVIEW BY MARY HILES

The state of Wisconsin is a major "character" in Abby Frucht's latest book, *Polly's Ghost.* Much of the story takes place in a small lakeside city resembling Oshkosh, where Frucht has lived for nearly a decade, quietly building a body of work that has made her one of Wisconsin's most critically acclaimed novelists. Three of Frucht's previous five books were *New York Times* Notable Books of the Year, and her book *Licorice* won the Quality Paperback Book Club and New Voices awards.

Polly's Ghost is replete with Oshkosh references: Snell Road and County Trunk A, the lighthouse at Asylum Point, the plague of lake flies each spring. Even Polly's last name, Baymiller, is a play on Miller's Bay, a hoop of placid water that borders the city's most popular park.

The book's strong sense of place, said Frucht in a recent television interview, was wholly intentional: "My fondness for Wisconsin and my pleasure in living here became a catalyst for the book. And the locale was organically important. The lakes, with their constant interplay between the mysterious, fluid water and the solid surface of the earth, play an important role in the book."

Polly's Ghost is a funny, warm-hearted book with a carnival of characters and wonderful poetic vision. Quite a feat, given the heavy-duty nature of the story's central event: a mother dying in childbirth. But *Polly's Ghost* is more about life than death, more about love than loss.

Early in the novel Polly speaks longingly of Tip, her motherless child: "I only wish I ever had the chance to hug and kiss him, teach him his letters and numbers, the colors and shapes, the animal sounds, all the starts of the ways of the world that accompany a person through life like rocks in a hard stream, put there as if for crossing."

Polly's perspicacity and poignancy, her wit and wisdom, and above all, her determination ensure that the story will not end there. Polly sets off to find Tip, but her movements are controlled by the Night, a tuxedo-clad supernatural version of Fred Astaire, who whirls her through time and space and sets her down at a whim—sometimes for years on end. During her search Polly unwittingly causes an airplane to crash into the lake, killing the pilot, Tom Bane, who becomes an avenging ghost of the water with Tip as his major target.

Frucht keeps the complex plot firmly on track while suffusing her tale with mystery and wonder. Polly's stylish way of wearing the diaphanous clothes that aren't really there, the cheeky way she inserts her thoughts into others' minds to nudge them into action, and the flirtatious way she seduces the Night into taking her for just one more whirl make Polly one unforgettable ghost. But it is her humanity—her quicksilver humor, her sexy style, her indomitable determination—that captures the reader's heart, and, in the end, saves Tip from Bane and frees Tip to live the exuberant life Polly envisioned for him.

Polly's Ghost signals a departure for Frucht, whose previous works were more focused, with far fewer characters and less emphasis on place. Commenting on her new direction, Frucht has said: "I wanted a big change in my work. I wasn't bored with the streamlined nature of my other books, but I had been quite aware of it for years. I had been determined to create a kind of symmetry and balance in my books. And when I began to write this one, I was determined to do the opposite. I wanted the book to mirror more the chaos of real life than the neat preconceived frame of my other books. I opted for the broader terrain, the bigger screen."

Frucht's readers can be grateful that she did.

Mary Hiles holds a Ph.D. in English literature from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee and is associate director of publications at UW–Oshkosh.

Laura

by Larry Watson

Pocket Books (a division of Simon and Schuster), 2000, 326 pages

REVIEW BY JEREMIAH CHAMBERLIN

Larry Watson, who teaches English at the University of Wisconsin at Stevens Point, is the award-winning author of *White Crosses, Justice, Montana 1948, In a Dark Time,* and a collection of poetry entitled *Leaving Dakota.* His work has been widely praised for its profound awareness of place. This new novel, while stepping out of the familiar locale of the West, is still written with his characteristically elegant prose and his uncanny ability to portray the interior as well as exterior landscapes these people inhabit.

Laura is the story of a man's obsession. In the sweltering Vermont summer of 1955, 12-year-old Paul Finley meets Laura Coe Pettit—a fiery, independent young poet teetering on the verge of success. In a tremendous opening scene, one that sets the tone for decades of her sudden arrivals and departures from his life, Paul wakes one night to find this woman in his bedroom smoking a cigarette by the window. She's come upstairs from one of his parents' parties, seeking refuge from the gin and tonic ice tinkle, the smoke and haze of laughter below. Paul is as fascinated as he is bewildered by this strange woman. And in an accidental moment of confession, one Paul only partially grasps the significance of at the time, Laura admits her own desires for his father.

This scene could serve as a template for nearly their entire relationship: the perpetually young Paul, disarmed by Laura's beauty, intelligence, and wit, struggles to compete in a game he not only has

difficulty playing, but one in which she is ceaselessly changing the rules.

The novel progresses in a deceptively simple, linear fashion, touching down at the moments the lives of the two characters intersect. Sometimes these encounters take place by accident; at other times, by Paul's determined will alone. Watson lays the ground rule for the narrative in the first few pages of the book: "Clocks and calendars can try to convince us that time always passes in equal measure, but we know better. Our 35th summer passes five times faster than our seventh, and for years my life speeded up or slowed down according to my meetings with or departures from Laura."

Because the novel is tracked in this manner, secondary characters in the book—Paul's mother, his sister, and later even his own wife—sometimes seem marginalized. But then again, they, like everything else in Paul's life, are simply casualties of his consuming obsession.

Watson's greatest gift to his audience, though, is his honesty. While Paul is an unlikely competitor on the field for Laura's affections, he is always portrayed with dignity and respect. His insights are at times nothing short of stunning. And as painful as it is to watch him in moments of boyish confusion, young adult awkwardness, or middle-aged carelessness, the narrative is always compelling.

Laura, like all of Watson's fiction, is a literary feat of voice. A pitch-perfect chronicle of one man's heart-fisted journey, chartered through the decades to a place where only memory holds sway.

Jeremiah Chamberlin's stories have placed in national fiction contests. He is co-manager of Canterbury Booksellers in Madison. His short story, ***The Month of Dying,*** *appeared in the fall issue of the* ***Wisconsin Academy Review.***

Thomas Paine: Firebrand of the Revolution

by Harvey J. Kaye

Oxford University Press, 2000, 160 pages

REVIEW BY DAVID T. CANON

When asked to name the Founding Fathers of our nation, most people would dig back into their high school civics class, or maybe an introductory American politics class in college, and come up with George Washington, James Madison, Thomas Jefferson, Benjamin Franklin, or Alexander Hamilton. Those with very good memories may mention John Jay, John Adams, or John Marshall, but few would remember Thomas Paine. Even Paul Revere and Samuel Adams are probably better known than Paine because of a poem and a beer, respectively, despite the fact that they were bit players in the founding of America compared to Paine.

UW–Green Bay professor Harvey Kaye aims to provide Paine's proper place in American history with this excellent biography of the "firebrand of the Revolution." (The book is intended for young readers; more on that below.) Paine led a complex and controversial life. Born and raised in England, Paine spent his early adult life as a corset maker, privateer (a pirate who worked for the king), tax collector, and the owner of a tobacco shop. In quick succession he was fired from his job as a tax collector, his tobacco business failed, and he was separated from his second wife (his first died in childbirth). At age 37, his life was in shambles. A chance meeting with Ben Franklin led Paine on the course that would change American history. With a letter of introduction from Franklin, Paine set out for America in 1774.

Paine quickly became involved in the debate over the direction that the colonies' dispute with England should take. Paine emerged as the most powerful voice for independence. Through his bold and powerful writing, Paine made the case for equality, liberty, and freedom. His greatest strength was his faith in the common person, which was reflected in his writing for the masses rather than the political elite. His most important writing for the Revolution was *Common Sense*, which sold more than 150,000 copies within a few months. Based on the population of the colonies, these numbers would put Harry Potter to shame. Indeed, Kaye points out that this would be equivalent to 15 million copies today, making it the bestseller of all time in the U.S. Considering that a relatively small proportion of the population was literate in the late 18th century, these numbers are truly stunning.

After the American Revolution, Paine returned to England and wrote *Rights of Man,* which was a defense of the French Revolution and equality. Paine played a key role in the French Revolution, but because he ended up in a minority faction against the Jacobins, he was nearly executed during the Reign of Terror.

About this same time he wrote *Age of Reason,* which was probably his most controversial book. In this book he challenged organized religion, saying, "I do not believe … in the creed of any church I know of. My own mind is my own church." Kaye says that Paine's "great mischief … was to make understandable and accessible to the laboring classes ideas that had previously circulated only among the higher social ranks." While this book was another bestseller, it hurt his status in the United States, where many people had "come to see him as an agent of the devil for his blasphemy." About a century later, Theodore Roosevelt referred to Paine as a "filthy little atheist." Paine became even more enmeshed in controversy when he personally attacked George Washington in writing. Many of his former supporters deserted him, and by the time he died in 1809, few attended his funeral.

In general, this is an excellent, balanced account of Paine's life. Kaye writes in a lively and vivid style, and the book contains many pictures, photographs, and original documents. My only criticism is that it is not appropriate for ages 10 and up (as advertised on the promotional material). I gave it to my 10-year-old son to read, and read one chapter with him. He is an avid reader, but found it very difficult. A high school librarian I know also read part of the book and said it would be appropriate for her best 9th- or 10th-graders. The vocabulary is much too difficult for a 10-year-old and there is not enough context given to understand basic events. However, this is an excellent book that will be of interest to anyone who wants to learn more about Thomas Paine.

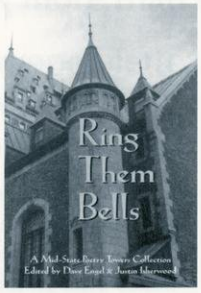
David T. Canon is a professor of political science at the University of Wisconsin–Madison.

He-Man Poetry and Latino Wisconsin

BY DEAN BAKOPOULOS

Ring Them Bells: A Mid-State Poetry Towers Collection

Dave Engel & Justin Isherwood, Editors
New Past Press



Ring Them Bells is a big-hearted, gut-socking collection of poetry from an informal gathering of working men who write poetry in central Wisconsin. The editors, Dave Engel and Justin Isherwood, deserve kudos for the simple fact that they collected and published the kinds of poems that often sadly get forgotten on bar napkins or on scraps of paper that get tossed into a campfire. These are unpretentious, 100-proof poems.

The men of the Mid-State Poetry Towers are represented here, each putting forth several poems, mostly free verse, dealing with the longings, lamentations, and loves of rural men. Present here is an abundance of joy—poems with a lot of hunting, a lot of beer, a lot of feeling. You can imagine some of the stuff here, especially the song lyrics published at the book's end, were composed with the help of many frothy, foamy beverages.

All in all it's a fun collection, one that thumbs its nose at the seriousness of similar anthologies. Each poet is pictured in the book, and many—in what seems to be a badge of pride for the Mid-State Poetry Towers crew—are not your beret-wearing, coffeehouse scribes. These guys look like they can tear your head off and knock the wind out of your lungs. Indeed, in their strongest poems, they do just that.

I Didn't Know There Were Latinos in Wisconsin

Edited by Oscar Mireles
Focus Communications

As the title suggests, this collection of poetry and prose is evidence that there's more to Wisconsin than Norwegians, Swedes, and Germans. In the rich anthology *I Didn't Know There Were Latinos in Wisconsin,* it becomes evident that indeed there are Latinos in Wisconsin, and they are a multi-voiced chorus with much to say and share.

The pieces in this collection are grouped by theme—Cultural Identity, Death and Things Worse, Sisterhood, Mothers and Fathers, and Ideology and Action—and range from the sad and serious to the brash and humorous.

In a funny, bright piece called *Weeh Con Sohn!*, Ed Gomez writes, "Please do not ask me whether I speak Mexican. Mexican is not a language. It is a culture, a people from the country of Mexico. When we first arrived in Wisconsin (pronounced Weeh-con-sohn), we were wondering if we looked Mexican. Locals politely would make remarks like 'Let me tell you where to get the best burrito in town,' or 'My husband and I went to Cancun for a second honeymoon—and the people were so friendly!'"

Other pieces wield an even sharper criticism. w.r. rodriguez's brilliant poem "The Day I Threw Thoreau Off the Roof" is a dark and poignant statement about the hopelessness of poverty and makes a powerful case against the clichés of American society—in this case attacking the futility of civil disobedience in a world of racial prejudice and economic inequality. The poem begins with these lines:

"The Day I Threw Thoreau Off the Roof/
was three days after a riot, was two days after our/mayor/
toured the property damage, was a day after the/radio told/
me I lived in a slum, was my first day off work in/months./
the day I threw thoreau off the roof, was a hot day/"

Despite varied approaches, all of the pieces aim to get across the complexities of Latino culture to a state still getting accustomed to its growing diversity. And that makes this an important and vital book.

Troublemakers

by John McNally
University of Iowa Press

Articles of Faith

by Elizabeth Oness
University of Iowa Press

Two prestigious short fiction awards have gone to authors with Wisconsin ties.

Elizabeth Oness of La Crosse has won the Iowa Short Fiction Award, and John McNally, a 1999 Djerassi Fellow at UW's Creative Writing Institute, won the John Simmons Short Fiction Award. (Last year's Simmons Award, coincidentally, went to another former Djerassi Fellow, Nancy Reisman.)

McNally's collection, *Troublemakers,* depicts the underbelly of American working-class life from the point of view of young men coming into the world full of preoccupations, insecurities, and a penchant for mischief. These stories can be laugh-out-loud one minute, and hauntingly sad the next. From Chicago's South Side to the rural plains, McNally's characters are each a Midwestern Everyman lost in a swirl of mistakes, miscalculations, and Miss Americas.

Oness' collection, *Articles of Faith,* is an equally skilled and evocative collection of stories revolving around the silences we extend and the silences we break. These stories deal with a multitude of themes centered around the idea of the things we take on faith, and delivers a sharp and honest vision of human fragility and complexity. Oness takes some risks in her stories, both in theme and in style. Oness, whose poetry chapbook *Sure Knowledge* was recently published by Parallel Press of Madison, is a brave and compelling writer, one whose career may soon be taking flight.

Each writer received $5,000 and publication by the University of Iowa Press.

JANUARY '99–JUNE '00

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looking back on leopold

In fall 1999, the Wisconsin Academy held a conference on Aldo Leopold that drew more than 600 participants. Here's an update on conference outcomes in an open letter to participants and Academy members.

Just over a year ago we gathered in Madison to celebrate the 50th anniversary of Aldo Leopold's *A Sand County Almanac,* and to look forward to emerging challenges in conservation. At the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, we have continued to build upon the success of that conference. We would like to update you on some of the activities at the Academy and elsewhere that have flowed out of the Leopold conference.

Familiar Faces, New Initiatives. Conference director Michael Strigel is now director of programs at the Wisconsin Academy, while conference co-chair Curt Meine is now the Academy's director of conservation programs on a part-time basis. The Academy has created a New Century for Conservation Program specifically to continue working on themes from the Leopold conference.

The Wisconsin Academy Water Initiative. This major new initiative examines the state of water science, conservation, and policy in Wisconsin as the first project of a program called The Wisconsin Idea at the Academy (more on oage 56).

Fall Forum on Genetically Modified Food. The Wisconsin Academy returned to Monona Terrace in November for a day-long forum entitled "Genetically Modified Food: Risks, Rewards & Realities." Leading agricultural biotechnology critics and proponents met for substantive discussion in direct conversation with the general public. Our goal was to allow all interested citizens to understand the issues better, and to help shape the diverse agricultural and consumer realities we are rapidly creating. See www.wisconsinacademy.org for more information.

"Aldo Leopold and the Origins of Ecological Restoration" exhibit. The Wisconsin Academy organized this prairie restoration exhibit for the conference. It has since been on display at a gallery in Prairie du Sac, at the International Crane Foundation in Baraboo, and is now at the Bergstrom-Mahler Museum in Neenah. The exhibit has played a catalytic role in one of the Midwest's most important conservation issues: the fate of the 7,354-acre Badger Army Ammunition Plant in Sauk County. You may find more information on this issue at www.saukprairievision.org and in the fall edition of the *Wisconsin Academy Review* (excerpts online at www.wisconsinacademy.org).

The Intelligent Consumption Project. Under this project, the Wisconsin Academy, in partnership with the Forest Products Laboratory of the U.S. Forest Service, has explored the connections between forest conservation and consumption of forest products. A final report is now in preparation. See www.wisconsinacademy.org/programs for more information.

Federal Land Ethic Council. Our Washington, D.C.-based colleagues have been working hard over the last year to create a Federal Land Ethic Council to continue fostering the sort of cross-agency discussion and action that we tried to build into the Leopold conference. A memorandum of understanding has been prepared and signed by most of the participating agencies, and the Council is now beginning to identify new initiatives of its own. For information on the Council, contact Bruce Beard (beardbd@acq.osd.mil) or Jim van Ness (vannessj@osdgc.osd.mil) in the Department of Defense.

Environmental Justice and the Land Ethic. We have taken further steps in exploring cross-cutting issues involving environmental justice, training programs, diversity, outreach, and emerging issues in natural resource and conservation, working with Dan Durett (program manager at the National Council for Science and the Environment), Dave Blockstein (senior scientist with the NCSE), and colleagues in the U.S. Natural Resource Conservation Service. In early December the NCSE sponsored the inaugural National Conference on Science, Policy and the Environment at the National Academy of Sciences in Washington, D.C. (see www.cnie.org/ncseconference for more information).

Conservation Legacy Network. Following the Leopold event, several conference organizers began working toward a meeting of various "conservation legacy" organizations. The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service has taken the lead on this, and we hope this spring to bring together organizations representing the legacies of Rachel Carson, Ding Darling, Olaus and Mardie Murie, Sigurd Olson, and other key conservation leaders.

These are only a few of the activities resulting from the Leopold conference that we are aware of and have contributed to. We know that relationships built at the conference have continued to grow in exciting new directions. We invite you to share with us any additional reports of new projects and partnerships. One of our objectives in planning the conference was to ensure that its impact extend beyond the meeting hall and the time we spent together. We can be very pleased that our achievement in Madison has been matched by post-Madison successes as well.

Sincerely,

Paul Johnson
Curt Meine
Joy Zedler
Conference co-chairs

Michael Strigel, director of programs
Robert Lange, executive director
The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters

The Wisconsin Academy and the importance of risk

Risk is seductive. All our lives we waver between living prudently or extravagantly, responding (or not) to the siren song of risk that tempts us with opportunities yet unrealized. As I get older, I am understanding more clearly that the possibilities inherent in risk offer us our best chance for growth and success.

Both our children were born at home, with lay midwives in attendance. To do this was my wife's decision all the way, and since she was the one having the babies, it seemed logical to me to heed her wishes! Although not thrilled with her plan and, frankly, seeing disaster written all over it, I am here to tell you that all's well that ends well. Mary, Morgan, and Taylor are all doing fine.

Were we lucky, stupid, or thoughtful? Opinions from family and friends vary considerably. At the very least, our decision makes for interesting conversation when the subject arises. We, of course, planned carefully, had comprehensive OB prenatal care, as well as prenatal care from our midwives and so on, but, in the end, we took the risk, for it seemed to be the right thing to do in terms of how we were choosing to live in the world.

What are the implications of risk for the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters? While at first blush the Academy does not appear to be revolutionary or radical, I think the Academy's underlying premise is very clear: The Academy is expected to be governed by the pursuit of risk. For what else does knowledge do but often endorse risk? Where does knowledge frequently lead if not to a call for action or a new way of thinking? And, as we all know, calls to action and new thoughts are a risky business indeed.

Therefore, as the Academy moves into the 21st century, we are embarking on an active (i.e., risky) agenda that we hope will help us—and you—understand what the Academy is and should be for the new age.

After much careful thought and prolonged review, we are proposing as the Academy's core program the following four elements from which all of our activities will grow. We present this to you based on the premise that taking risk is a good thing at this time in the life of the Academy—and that it seems to be the right thing to do.

1. The Wisconsin Idea at the Academy

A familiar idea, but in a new package for us. In this program, the Academy will address issues of public concern by convening groups with diverse perspectives for forums designed to discover underlying facts and, in some cases, common ground. By doing this, the Academy will play a pivotal role in giving decision-makers much-needed reliable information. Our first Wisconsin Idea project focuses on the future of Wisconsin's water resources. Note that the Academy has played the role of independent convenor throughout its history, but with this program we are formalizing that role.

2. The Wisconsin Academy Gallery

Through the extraordinary generosity of W. Jerome Frautschi, who made a $100 million gift to the City of Madison to build a new performing arts venue called the Overture Center, the Academy's art gallery has been invited to serve as a community art gallery within the Overture Center, just a block from the State Capitol. Our gallery program featuring a different Wisconsin artist every month will now be positioned to achieve its full potential.

3. Fall Forums at the Wisconsin Academy

In response to the Academy's commitment to public education for the common good, our program of annual conferences will be built around significant issues of the day that are in need of examination and review. In November we held a very successful Fall Forum on genetically modified foods. We are now looking forward to our Fall Forum 2001 on the Bill of Rights and our criminal justice system, to be held in Milwaukee in October.

4. Publications of the Wisconsin Academy

The *Wisconsin Academy Review* and *Transactions*, our annual scholarly journal, reflect our interdisciplinary mission and highlight our niche of being the only publications focusing on contemporary Wisconsin thought and culture. There have been, and will continue to be, changes in both of these publications to ensure their ongoing vitality and relevance.

Other Academy programs—The Wisconsin Academy Fellows, the Wisconsin Center for the Book, the Lois Almon Grants Program, and the National Telemedia Council—will continue to thrive and hold an important place at the Academy as we go about meeting our mission of gathering and sharing knowledge for the benefit of the people of Wisconsin. We hope to add more programs in the years ahead, in accordance with our new direction.

We are committed to making the Academy a vital presence in Wisconsin in the 21st century, and are prepared to take some risk to do so. We hope you want to join us on this journey.

All the best,

Robert G. Lange
Executive Director
rglange@facstaff.wisc.edu

The fire burns for seven days and seven nights at David Smith's Anagama kiln in Stoughton.

Photo by Jeane Adler

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