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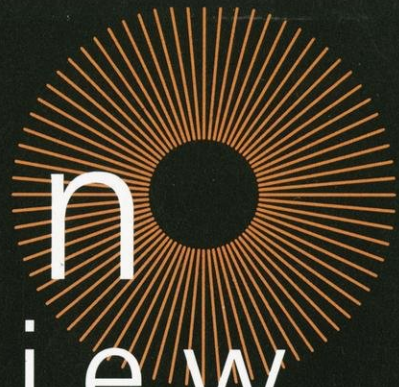
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wisconsin academy review



THE MAGAZINE OF WISCONSIN THOUGHT AND CULTURE

Alta Charo:
Bridging the Gap
Between
Science and Ethics



SPECIAL FEATURE

It's Fighting Bob's 150th!
We Celebrate His
Life and Legacy



God's Chosen People
Meet God's Frozen People:
A Dairyland Jew Kvetches



Wisconsin's First
Women Doctors:
Housecalls on Snowshoes,
Exams in the Kitchen



Poetry Contest Winners:
Read Their Winning Works

Price: \$5



Alta Charo, bioethics
professor at UW-Madison.

see us in overture!

James Watrous Gallery

BIRD ROSS AND TOM LOESER

March 22 – May 1 Opening reception Friday, April 1, 5–8 pm

Madison artists Bird Ross and Tom Loeser will inaugurate a series of side-by-side solo exhibitions by contemporary Wisconsin artists. Loeser, an art professor at UW–Madison and an internationally known art furniture maker, will exhibit his elegant (and often whimsical) painted and carved furniture pieces. Bird Ross will show mixed media constructions that combine her interests in materials, process, and performance.



Accordion Cuff by Bird Ross (2000)

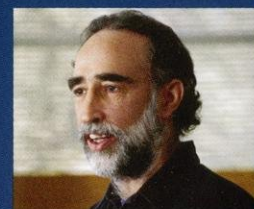
Academy Evening

LOMAX AND WISCONSIN

Tuesday, April 5, 7–9 pm

In partnership with the Future of Folk Biennial, which is directed by the UW–Madison Center for the Humanities and Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures

He was the first person to record Muddy Waters, Woody Guthrie, and Leadbelly—but legendary folklorist Alan Lomax found the music of the Upper Midwest to be especially fascinating, and he persuaded other folklorists to undertake field recordings of Wisconsin folk music for the Library of Congress. The result: 700-plus recordings by Wisconsin folk musicians from more than 25 ethnic groups. UW–Madison folklore professor James Leary presents the story of Lomax and Wisconsin, complete with recordings and information about an ongoing project to digitize this music for easy public access.



James Leary

Academy Evening

MODERN PSYCHOLOGY MEETS ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY

Tuesday, May 3, 7–9 pm

You may not be as brave as a firefighter or have the moral fiber of Mother Teresa. But you can cultivate “psychological courage,” the courage to face mistakes, addictions, phobias, obsessions, and destructive relationships—a phenomenon dating back to the virtue ethics of ancient Greece. (And you thought it was invented by talk show hosts!) Find out more about courage and virtue ethics in a presentation by Dan Putman, a philosophy professor from UW–Fox Valley and author of a recent book, *Psychological Courage*.



Dan Putman

James Watrous Gallery

PAULA SCHULZE AND SCOTT ESPESETH

May 6 – June 19 Opening reception Friday, May 13, 5–8 pm

Part of Gallery Night, Friday, May 6

Madison artist Scott Espeseth’s drawings utilize texture, atmosphere, and illusion created with translucent layers of graphite on paper. His narrative images elucidate the bitter sweetness and uncertainty of day-to-day life. Paula Schulze’s mezzotint prints are abstract explorations inspired by maps, the history of ornament, and the art and architecture of pre-Renaissance Italy. Both artists work in black and white in small size to draw the viewer in and to focus on miniature worlds of story and design.



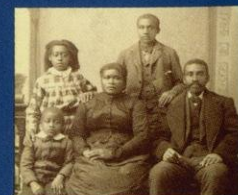
Home on Fire
by Scott Espeseth (2003)

Academy Evening

THE ROOTS OF JUNETEENTH IN WISCONSIN

Tuesday, June 14, 7–9 pm

What was life like for African Americans in Wisconsin and in Madison during the founding days of statehood? We will examine that history using descendant testimonials, historians, poetry and other readings, and music to make these roots come alive. This presentation includes Clayborn Benson, executive director of the Wisconsin Black Historical Society Museum; historian Dr. Zachary Cooper; musicians Cynthia Adams and Leatha Stanley; and poet Fabu Carter Mogaka. It is being held as part of Juneteenth celebrations sponsored by Nehemiah Corporation.



Henderson family,
Madison settlers

ALL PRESENTATIONS TAKE PLACE AT

The Overture Center for the Arts

201 State Street | Madison

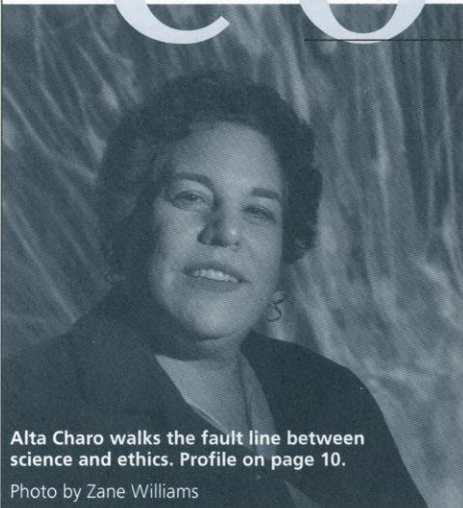
Events are free of charge. Maps and directions at www.wisconsinacademy.org

wisconsin academy
of sciences arts & letters

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spring 2005

features



Alta Charo walks the fault line between science and ethics. Profile on page 10.

Photo by Zane Williams

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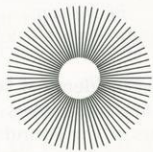
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Meet Alta Charo, a nationally renowned bioethicist whose daily work involves bridging the gap between breakthrough developments in science and the ethical implications of how humans handle them. Profile by Nicole Resnick. Cover photo by Zane Williams.

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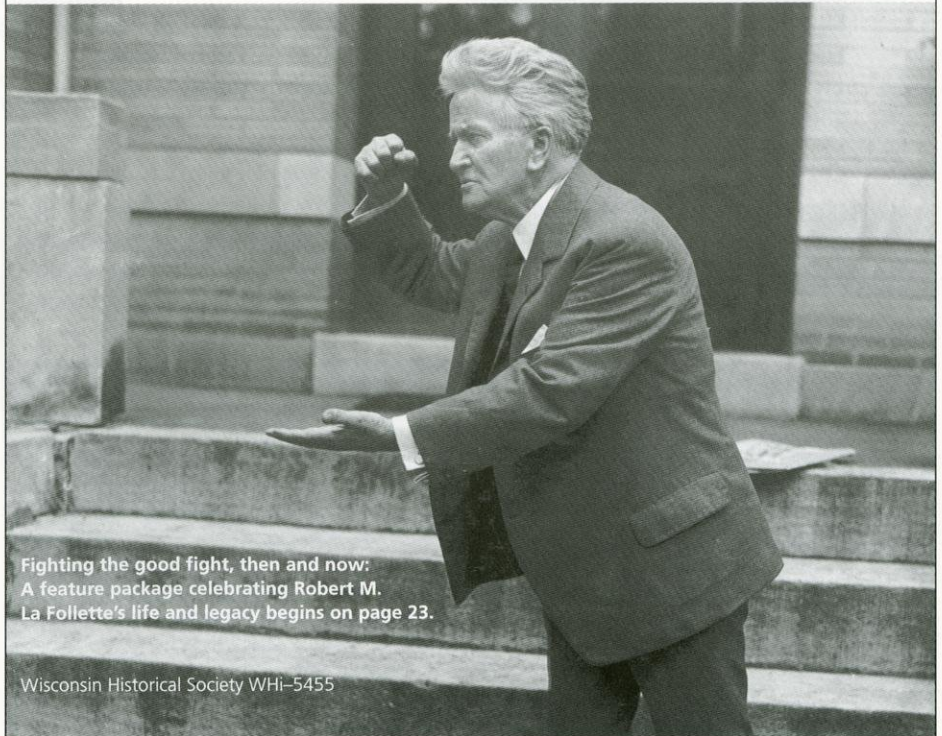
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Photo courtesy
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We thank the individuals and organizations who allow the Wisconsin Academy to flourish.

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

Enrich your life by becoming a member! Learn more on page 41.

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

UP AND COMING

A Stamp Act



Even in the age of e-mail, the venerable postage stamp packs a marketing wallop. Riding atop snail mail through snow, sleet, and dark of night, the commemorative stamp can deliver your cause or hero to many millions of consumers around the world (170 million if your name is Ronald Reagan; that's how many stamps the U.S. Postal Service just issued in honor of our 40th president).

So it's no surprise that some savvy folks in Sauk Prairie thought of making their hero, Bob La Follette, go postal. "If Elvis, the Little Mermaid, and a 1953 Studebaker can have a stamp, why not one of the five U.S. senators installed in the U.S. Senate Hall of Fame in 1959?" asks prime instigator Gail Lamberty, a longtime member of the Wisconsin Academy and the best living impersonator of Belle Case La Follette (see lower photo on page 31, front row, far right).

Seriously—why not? La Follette handily meets all criteria for U.S. stamp commemoration, which include that individuals so honored be of "national appeal and significance" on "significant anniversaries of their birth."

The selection process, as described, is as democratic as it should be—it costs no more than the 37 cents required to send in a proposal (no artwork required), and "every stamp suggestion is considered, regardless of who makes it or how it is presented,"

the Postal Service says. A Citizens' Stamp Advisory Committee made up of 15 people "whose backgrounds reflect a wide range of educational, artistic, historical and professional expertise" is appointed by the Postmaster General and recommends around 25 subjects each year.

Lamberty received a postcard in October 2003 confirming that the La Follette proposal was in the proper channels, and she enlisted support from numerous legislators (and got it from a few of them, most notably Tammy Baldwin, who sponsored a La Follette stamp resolution in the House). But as of this writing, there's still no Bob stamp in sight.

Ever resourceful, Lamberty has a new goal: a "pictorial cancellation," a curiously named stamp option that commemorates local community events but has a nationwide circulation—the event being, in this case, the Fighting Bob speech reenactment scheduled for the Capitol steps on June 14 (more on that event on page 24).

Fighting Bob meets Fighting Gail. As a fellow citizen, I salute Lamberty for her vision and persistence. It's been interesting to track this story as a lesson in engaged citizenship. We'll keep you posted on this stamp act's final outcome. And in the meantime, happy spring reading.



Fighting Bob goes postal: It would've been nice!

Joan Fischer, editor
jfisher@wisconsinacademy.org

CORRECTION

In the winter 2005 *Wisconsin Academy Review*, we regret an error in section II, line eight in Sue Blaustein's poem. The line should have read, "The wake laps at the wheel/wells and the silt of the night/streams down."

A glance at upcoming Wisconsin Academy events (also see inside front cover). Visit www.wisconsinacademy.org or call us at 608/263-1692 for more info.

IN MADISON

Overture Center for the Arts, 201 State St.

JAMES WATROUS GALLERY

March 22–May 1,
reception Fri. April 1, 5–8 pm
Bird Ross and Tom Loeser, art furniture and mixed-media installation

May 6–June 19,
reception Fri. May 13, 5–8 pm
Paula Schulze and Scott Espeseth, drawings and mezzotint prints

ACADEMY EVENINGS, WISCONSIN STUDIO

Tuesday, April 5, 7–9 pm
In partnership with Future of Folk Biennial Lomax and Wisconsin UW–Madison folklore professor Jim Leary on musical ethnologist Alan Lomax and Wisconsin folk music preservation

Tuesday, May 3, 7–9 pm
Modern Psychology Meets Ancient Philosophy UW–Fox Valley philosopher and author Dan Putman on "psychological courage"

Tuesday, June 14, 7–9 pm
The Roots of Juneteenth in Wisconsin Stories of early African American settlers

OTHER EVENTS

Tuesday, April 19, 5–7 pm, Rotunda Stage
In partnership with Future of Folk Biennial and the Robert E. Gard Foundation Our state's new immigrant groups and the role of community arts development

Avol's Bookstore, 315 W. Gorham St.
Thursday, April 7, 7–9 pm
Wisconsin Academy Review Poetry Contest winners' reading

IN MILWAUKEE

Villa Terrace, 2220 N. Terrace Avenue

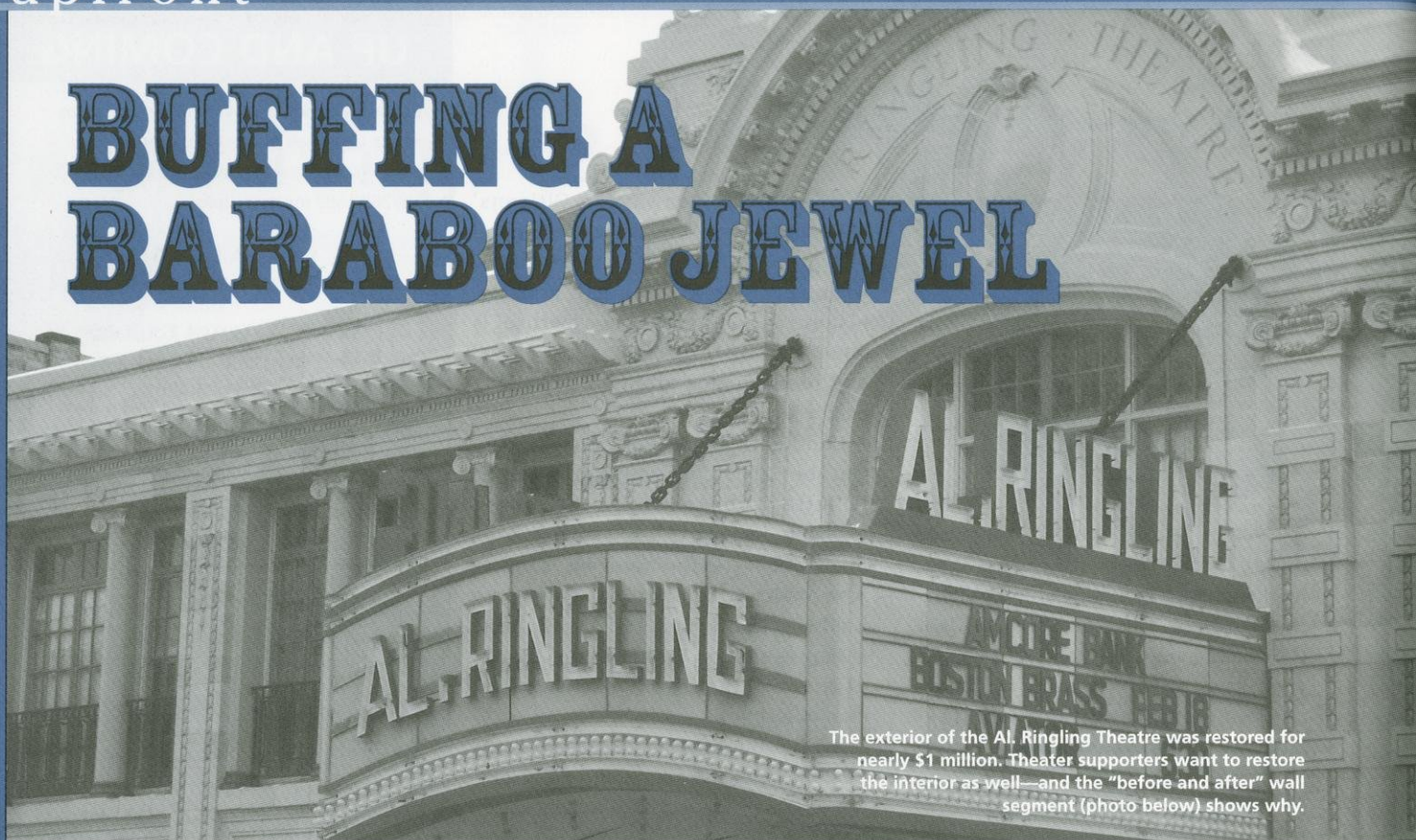
Wednesday, March 30, 7–9 pm
Lomax and Wisconsin Jim Leary with presentation noted above

IN APPLETON

Fox Cities Performing Arts Center, 400 West College Ave.

Thursday, May 19, 7–9 pm
We the People—and the Government's Watchful Eye Marquette University history professor Athan Theoharis on national security vs. civil liberties in a post-9/11 world

BUFFING A BARABOO JEWEL



The exterior of the Al. Ringling Theatre was restored for nearly \$1 million. Theater supporters want to restore the interior as well—and the “before and after” wall segment (photo below) shows why.

IN 1915, when circus impresario Al Ringling built the Al. Ringling Theatre for the citizens of Baraboo, it's hard to say if he was thinking about its existence for generations to come. Today, however, many citizens are concerned with not only keeping the theater alive and thriving, but also restoring it to its original glory.

Unlike most theaters of its generation, the Al. Ringling Theatre (ART) has stayed in continuous use since it opened. Its original purpose was to show plays and movies. Indeed, it is one of the first examples nationwide of palatial design applied to a movie theater, and it is one of the earliest structures that can rightly be called a “movie palace,” as noted by the Theatre Historical Society of America. Later, operas and vaudeville were added.

Today the theater offers current movies, a full range of live performances by professional touring companies, and a wide variety of community cultural activities. Frequent user Greg Lang organizes all the high school band and choir concerts there about a half-dozen times a year. Says Lang: “It’s a neat place to do work with kids. They’re just blown away.” He praises the beauty of the facility—but does say it needs restoration.

The theater is noteworthy, too, for the number of ghost stories swirling around it. One tale has it that a set painter found her

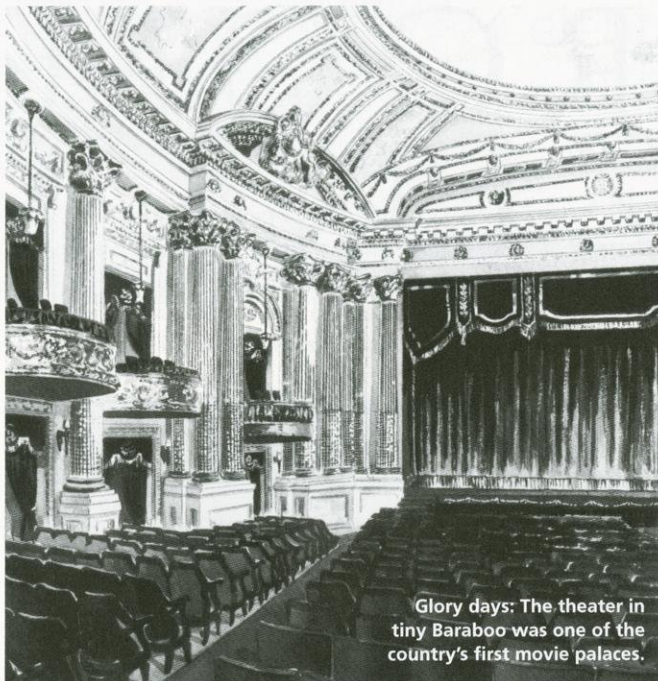
cans of paint had mysteriously been opened in her absence; another, that a stage crew heard the sound of a baby crying when no baby was present—the ghost, it is said, of a baby that had once been dropped over the box seats during a performance. While such tales have some believers, at least a few locals admit to spreading and even concocting stories themselves just for the fun of it.

In 1915, the theater cost \$100,000 to build. The recent restoration of the outside cost almost \$1 million, and the estimate for the inside is at \$6.5 million. But to ART Friends, a nonprofit organization that purchased the building in 1989 mainly to save it, the building is priceless. “You really can’t put a value on it,” says Larry McCoy, the group’s executive director. There are some who question if it’s worth nearly \$8 million to restore a building that cost only \$100,000 to build. But considering inflation, its link to national circus and theater history, and the fact that the building celebrates its 90th anniversary in November, the ART Friends may be right.

Phase One of the restoration process took about 10 years, most of it spent making terra cotta for the façade. It was very difficult for craftsmen to get terra cotta to match exactly. Notes McCoy, “Every piece is like a puzzle.”

Phase Two is just getting under way as the ART Friends plan to raise money. McCoy





Glory days: The theater in tiny Baraboo was one of the country's first movie palaces.

says it's a challenge to get support for such a big project. People look at the theater and say, "What's wrong with this place?" he says.

To help people see, literally, that it's not so much what's wrong with the building as its potential for its original greatness, money left over from Phase One has been used to restore some of the painting inside. The difference between the restored original and the present condition is stark. Viewers can easily see how changing the painting inside the theater will go a long way toward lightening and brightening the space.

In addition to renovating the interior, plans also call for incorporating two buildings next door for use in concessions, ticket sales, dressing rooms, restrooms, and—most ambitious—two small theaters for screening movies while live theater is in session.

To commemorate the theater's 90th anniversary, ART Friends are working with the UW theater department to recreate the original opening-night performance of *Lady Luxury*, as seen on November 17, 1915.

McCoy hopes to have major lead gifts in place by October. "We really have to have a \$1 million gift to kick things off," he notes. Although there is no official estimated completion date, McCoy says if everything goes well—and that includes fundraising and construction—perhaps the theater will be completely restored by spring 2007.

Lofty goals, but McCoy and the other ART Friends are passionate about and committed to their priceless treasure.

For more information about the restoration project and the theater in general, visit www.alringling.com. The theater is located at 136 Fourth Avenue in Baraboo, tel. 608/356-8864.

Story and photos by Amanda Andrew

THE REAL STORY OF



"Purest love demands frightful submission. The prison itself can open the gates to freedom."

—Dominique Aury, author of *The Story of O*

The Wisconsin Film Festival (March 31–April 3, in Madison) continues its tradition of featuring some works by filmmakers with Wisconsin ties. A spicy nugget this year comes from Madison-born, New York-raised filmmaker Pola Rapaport, who has made an 80-minute movie called *Writer of O* about Dominique Aury, author of the bestselling erotic novel *The Story of O*.



Filmmaker Pola Rapaport

Aury, now deceased, was a mild-mannered and highly civil editor for the prestigious French publishing house Gallimard. No one knew the fantasies of submission, domination, and bondage that she unleashed under the nom de plume Pauline Réage in a novel that was shocking for its day (1954) and still sizzles. Aury did not reveal her authorship until 1994, when she was more or less outed by a journalist (her secrecy had been nearly as renowned as the book itself, notes Rapaport).

Rapaport admits to a lifelong fascination with people who keep "profound secrets about their personalities." When she heard about Aury, she tracked down the still-reclusive author, by then 89, at a French country estate. Aury agreed to let Rapaport make a film about her, but it took seven years for Rapaport to bring the project to production and completion.

"There were many things that kept me committed to the film during that time," notes Rapaport in a director's statement. "One was the writer's unique personality, which was so opposite to what I had expected, and so full of humor and surprise. There was also the topic of literary freedom and censorship, which was becoming more and more important in the current climate of the U.S. And finally there was, in her process of writing *The Story of O*, the desire for personal liberation through artistic creation, which I felt was very close to my heart."

Writer of O will screen on Friday, April 1, at 9:30 p.m. More information about this and other offerings is available at www.wifilmfest.org, 877-963-FILM.

CLASSROOM CITIZENS

AT A TIME when so many grown-ups are tearing out their hair about how to engage young people in politics and participatory democracy, a high school teacher in Lodi appears to have an answer.

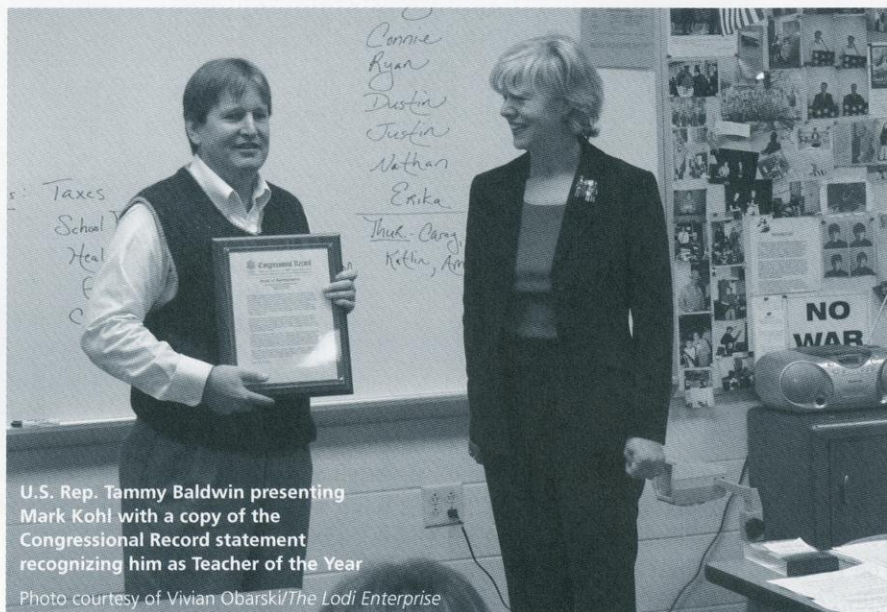
Mark Kohl, who teaches U.S. history and communication at Lodi High School, educates his students about democracy by having them write their own constitution. Classroom laws they write are upheld using restorative justice. Students list characteristics of a good teacher and a good student and each side pledges to uphold their end. His methods have proved both successful and inspiring to the thousands of young people he has taught during the past 23 years.

So it's no big surprise that Kohl was named Wisconsin Teacher of the Year for 2005, an honor that put him in the running for a national title. He also recently won a Kohl Public School Teacher Fellowship Scholarship. In addition to his full teaching load, Kohl runs a top-notch forensics program—one that has earned Lodi High School an Excellence in Speech award for 16 years running—and is working on a master's degree in secondary education.

We know where Kohl's students get their inspiration—so we thought we'd ask Kohl where he gets his.

What do you most appreciate about teaching?

First of all, I appreciate the opportunity to work with so many outstanding kids. Every child is unique. Every child can learn. And I strongly believe that every child brings value to the class-



U.S. Rep. Tammy Baldwin presenting Mark Kohl with a copy of the Congressional Record statement recognizing him as Teacher of the Year

Photo courtesy of Vivian Obarski/The Lodi Enterprise

room. I appreciate the role I play to tap into their individual strengths. And certainly, I appreciate hearing from former students who take the time to acknowledge the impact we've had on their lives. This is often the greatest joy of all.

How do you keep your job fresh and interesting after so many years?

This is such a key factor of being an effective educator. Part of this rests with personal responsibility and part needs to come from our administrators with meaningful professional development programs. But first and foremost, we need to be lifelong learners. We must continue to pursue course work that will help us acquire new innovations to implement in our classrooms. I have been fortunate to find a master's program with Viterbo University that

has been extremely stimulating and has provided so many practical ideas that I have brought back to my classroom. Also, we need strong leadership. Administrators need to help their staff continue to move forward by providing useful and meaningful staff development opportunities. Veteran teachers also need to pay attention to new teachers. They bring a new, fresh perspective that we can all learn from.

A lot of people think that engaging young people in civics issues and participatory democracy is an enormous challenge.

Teaching by its very nature is challenging. However, I do not find the participatory democracy element to be any more or any less challenging than teaching other parts of the curriculum. I have found no resistance whatsoever in

Celebrate Books, Art, and Nature at the Hamerstrom Reserve

April 23 event benefits the Wisconsin Center for the Book and Hamerstrom writing and restoration funds.

the participatory democracy activities that I use here at Lodi High School. No resistance at all. I implement these activities with a unit of study on the U.S. Constitution. The class creates a nation and the students write and ratify a constitution that ultimately provides the framework for governing our classroom. They are very engaged in the process because they are so connected to it. They're making the laws that will impact how we do things and how the classroom will be managed. That alone is quite a motivating factor.

How can we keep young people interested in participatory democracy?

One thing to do is to maintain an ongoing discussion about current events and current issues. My most recent social studies class was comprised of 9th graders. I was very pleasantly surprised by how well informed they were and how well they articulated their thoughts and viewpoints. Another way to keep students interested is to bring our elected leaders to our schools and classrooms. Our local Optimist Club sponsors candidate forums and conducts them right here at our high school so our students are exposed to and can take part in the dialogue. Last fall, our classes attended forums that involved candidates for Congress, state assembly and state senate. Follow-up discussion among our students indicates that these forums help build future voter participation. We also bring in guest speakers. I have a colleague who teaches a class for juniors and seniors called "Government and Social Issues." He does a tremendous job of exposing our students to a wide range of viewpoints. His guests have included Libertarians, Socialists, and Greens. In addition, he has had speakers addressing the Israeli-Palestinian points of view.

Frances Hamerstrom was the only woman to earn a Ph.D. under famed conservationist Aldo Leopold, and she and her husband Frederick went on to become prodigious and internationally recognized field biologists. Their work in the area of birding research was especially notable, and they were instrumental in saving the prairie chicken from extirpation in Wisconsin.

But the Hamerstroms were also passionate about the arts and letters and were themselves avid writers.

Besides churning out over 150 scientific papers, Fran Hamerstrom wrote more than 12 books, some of which appeared in translation. She was also a Fellow of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters.

What better place, then, to have a Wisconsin Literary Bash & Book Fair—an open-air, rustic, casual book and arts fair—than at the Hamerstrom Reserve in rural Plainfield, where so much of the Hamerstroms' work was conducted?

The event takes place on Saturday, April 23, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and will honor the late Frederick and Frances Hamerstrom as well as feature recent works from many Wisconsin authors, artists, illustrators, and publishers in all genres. Artists will set up their easels, authors will have pens in hand to sign their titles, and publishers will be available to discuss their presses. Readers and writers, authors and artists, publishers and self-published offerings for all ages will be on hand.

Writers in attendance include Justin Isherwood and Terese Allen as well as wildlife artists Patrick Thomas Ruesch and Deann De La Ronde, who is artist in residence at the Hamerstrom property and illustrated Fran Hamerstrom's first book, *An Eagle to the Sky*. Publishers from around the state include Badger Books, Bleak House, Home Brew Press, UW Press, Guest Cottage, and Raven Tree Press.

The event is sponsored by the Wisconsin Center for the Book, which is part of the Wisconsin Academy and runs a number of activities in support of books and the book arts. They include the "Wisconsin Authors and Illustrators Speak" program that funds writers and illustrators to present their work around the state, and the "Letters About Literature" state and national youth writing contest.

Donations and 21 percent of sales from the event will be divided among the Wisconsin Center for the Book; the Hamerstrom Fund for Writing, which was established to support writing about our natural world; and the Hamerstrom Reserve Restoration Project, a family-led initiative with the goals of accommodating educational activities, addressing conservation issues, and preserving habitat.

The event takes place at N6789 Third Avenue in Plainfield. For more information, contact Mary "Casey" Martin at 888/492-4531 (casey@homebrewpress.com), or write to her at Wisconsin Book Bash 2005, P.O. Box 185, Wisconsin Rapids, WI, 54495-0185. Martin is president of the Wisconsin Center for the Book and was a literary agent for selected titles by Frances Hamerstrom.



The Hamerstroms with a harrier and a snowy owl, ca. 1960
Photo courtesy UW Press

by Mary "Casey" Martin

Rethinking Schools

If a group of Milwaukee educators-turned-publishers have their way, public school students will learn social justice along with reading, writing, and arithmetic.

Their publishing house, Rethinking Schools, was founded in 1986 by teachers in the Milwaukee public schools who were dissatisfied with traditional methods of teaching and testing, which they believed were not serving the urban students in their districts. They banded together to publish *Rethinking Schools*, an urban education journal for reform written and edited by teachers in the trenches. In the 1990s, Rethinking Schools became a full-fledged publishing house, specializing in books, teaching guides, and classroom booklets. In 1996 it launched a website, thereby reaching a larger audience.

Rethinking Schools, now a quarterly magazine, is a resource for teachers, parents, policy makers, and students. It has tackled such hot-button issues as multiculturalism in the classroom, bilingual education, funding inequities among school districts, and the controversial No Child Left Behind Act. In the most recent issue, the article "Beyond the Bake Sale" relates the story of a New Jersey teacher who encouraged his students to learn about world hunger and how they could raise money for relief agencies. Another article discusses the use of poetry to break down racial stereotypes.

One of the publishing house's best-sellers is the first book it published, *Rethinking Columbus: The Next 500 Years*, cowritten by Bill Bigelow and Bob Peterson. Peterson, one of the founding editors of Rethinking Schools, teaches fifth grade at La Escuela Fratney, a bilingual school in Milwaukee. The book,

which evaluates Columbus's so-called discovery of America and its ramifications from a multicultural perspective using essays, poems, and historical vignettes, has sold more than 250,000 copies. It provides lesson plans for K–12 and college-level courses.

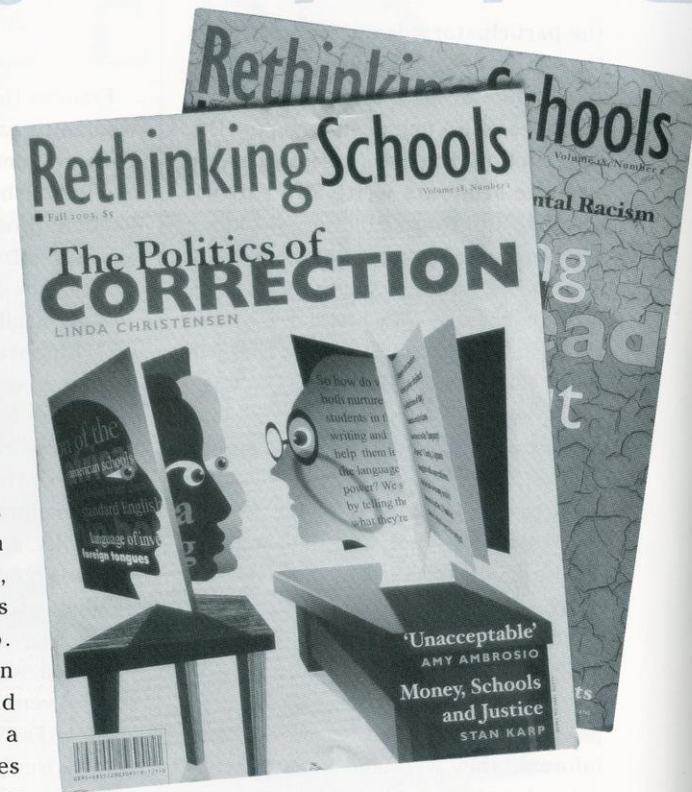
Rethinking Schools describes itself as an activist publishing house, and it encourages students to be activists, too. Ultimately, students can become "truth tellers" and "change makers" through a curriculum that encourages them to ask such questions as: Who are the power brokers in our society? Who gains and who loses? Why is a policy just or unjust? What steps need to be taken for change to occur? In this style of teaching, students are regarded as important contributors to class discussions and projects, not simply as passive recipients of information.

Rethinking Schools is not afraid to pose tough questions to educators, parents, and the public. Its driving force is to help create a more just world by introducing students to social justice issues that affect them directly—inequities of class, gender, and race. The curriculum addresses environmental racism, a term used to describe such inequities as the disproportionate number of people of color who live in houses or neighborhoods with exposures to lead and other toxic chemicals; the hurdles faced by immigrant

students in higher education; and teaching Standard English to middle school and high school students who are not exposed to it in their homes and communities.

Although much of the curriculum it advocates is a reaction against traditional teaching methods that the organization believes are exclusionary or ineffective in an urban setting, Rethinking Schools brings plenty of vision to the table. It encourages teachers to create classrooms that are multicultural and diverse, experiential and joyful, while maintaining academic rigor. An anecdote in its literature states: "We can teach for the society we live in or we can teach for the one we want to see."

by Sarah Aldridge



Poetry Bridging Cultures

There are any number of good reasons to buy Wisconsin-raised poet Todd Temkin's new collection, *Crazy Denizens of the Lost World* (Universidad de Valparaiso, Chile, 2004). The first is that he's a hell of a good poet—but more about that later.

There's the cover art, *Valparaiso mi Amor*, by Paula Caro. It's a brilliant world suspended between magic and mundane. It negotiates the same subjects as Temkin: departure, arrival, assimilation, and difference.

Next is the accompanying Spanish translation of each of Temkin's English-language poems by Andres Ferrada, illuminated by commentaries by both Temkin and Ferrada. Both men confess to being plagued but undaunted by the difficulties of translating poetry. Instead of attempting a literal translation, they decided "to create in a second language a new work that somehow emulates the spirit, music and energy of the original."

Then there's Temkin's skill with the language. He has a fine ear and a sly sense of wordplay, which must have made Ferrada's work even more difficult. In "The Capital of Nothing," for example, Temkin remembers his father, a foundryman, not "poring" over street maps, but "pouring" over them. Or, in "Bad Poems":

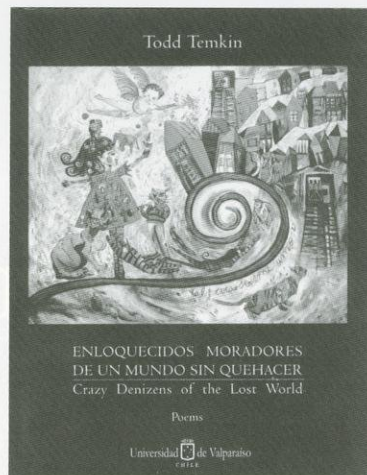
The best thing about being a cuckold
is the utter cacophony of the word,
crashing you back to earth
after months of crazed blathering
Oh, buttercup of primrose!
Oh, ecstatic avenue of sulfuric sky!

Ferrada's translation honors the intent, if not the letter, of the English original. My Spanish is not sophisticated enough to speak to the subtleties of idiom, but the words roll off the tongue deliciously well in both languages. Each has its own unique music.

Temkin is a Milwaukee native who moved to Chile to teach North American poetry at the Catholic University of Valparaiso. He left that job to found the Fundacion Valparaiso, a nonprofit dedicated to promoting the cultural heritage of that city. His efforts bore fruit when, in 2003, the historic quarter of Valparaiso was declared a UNESCO cultural heritage site. He's become a bit of a cult figure in Chile, an outsider who knows how to put the city on the map.

Temkin describes his life as "an isthmus between two oceans." He sees *Crazy Denizens of the Lost World* as a canal between those oceans. The turbulence of two countries, meeting in two languages, is heady stuff. There is much to admire.

by Peter Sherrill



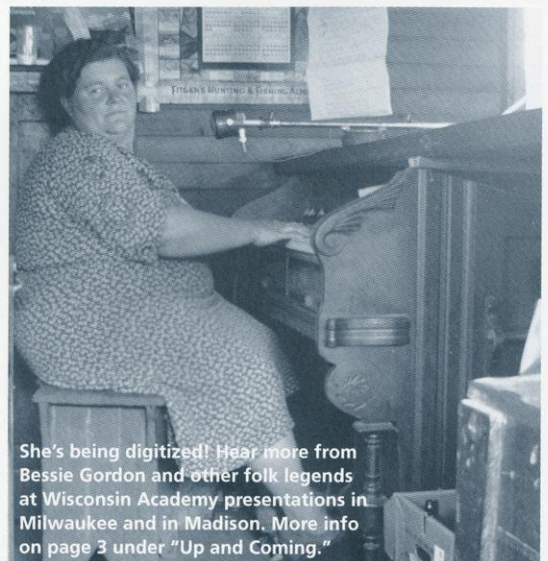
A mighty wind is blowing April 14–23 with the Future of Folk Biennial, a 10-day celebration of all things folk—especially new definitions and expressions of a quaint word that most people associate with looking backward.

That's a misperception, says folklore professor Jim Leary, one of the Biennial directors. "Such conditions of contemporary life as electronic media, political movements, mass migrations, wars, diseases, and the marketplace all contribute to the flourishing of folklore," notes Leary. "The Future of Folk will focus on ways in which many people alter past traditions to confront their present and imagine what's ahead."

Highlights of the event, run by the UW–Madison Center for the Humanities and the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures, include a talk by Peggy Bulger, director of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, on Friday, April 15, and a major Wisconsin folk object exhibit at the Wisconsin Historical Museum starting April 9.

The Wisconsin Academy will contribute with music-infused talks by Leary in Milwaukee on March 30 and in Madison on April 5 as a Biennial appetizer (see more on page 3 under "Up and Coming") and with a presentation by and about Wisconsin's newer immigrant groups on April 19, in partnership with the Robert E. Gard Foundation.

More information at www.humanities.wisc.edu



She's being digitized! Hear more from Bessie Gordon and other folk legends at Wisconsin Academy presentations in Milwaukee and in Madison. More info on page 3 under "Up and Coming."



The Optimist

Renowned bioethicist Alta Charo bridges the fault line between science and ethics—and despite her work at the epicenter of conflict, she remains a staunch believer in the power of science to advance human welfare.

BY NICOLE RESNICK

Bioethics professor Alta Charo before a backdrop of stem cells as they differentiate into specialized cells.

Photo by Zane Williams

IF LIFE WERE LIKE “STAR TREK,” Alta Charo’s job might not be so challenging. The way Charo sees it, “Star Trek” epitomizes a world inhabited by “techno-optimists,” or those, like herself, who think of technology and science as making society more interesting, more creative, and, most of all, a better place.

Yet in real life there’s a fundamental divide, and techno-optimists intermingle with “techno-pessimists”—those who shy away from and are wary of scientific advancement. The constant tension between these two groups provides the energy that fuels Charo’s

work. The resulting conflict is what gives Charo the opportunity to make such an impact and ultimately influence the way that science is conducted in today’s society.

We’re talking about the most controversial and high tech science—embryo

research, cloning, stem cells—and Charo thinks, discusses, and writes about these issues on a daily basis. She is not a white-coated scientist growing cells in a laboratory. Nor is she a patient desperately advocating for the continuation of such research in the hopes of benefiting from a cure. Nor is she an elected politician trying to convince constituents of the need to restrict or regulate scientific and medical progress.

Rather, Charo is a world-renowned bioethicist—a role that often puts her at the epicenter of conflict between vastly different interest groups. She is a faculty member of both the law and medical schools at the University of Wisconsin, where she is the Elizabeth S. Wilson-Bascom Professor of Law and Bioethics as well as associate dean for research and faculty development at the law school. Her knowledge base in dual disciplines translates into an impressive

Her knowledge base in dual disciplines translates into an impressive grasp of the legal and scientific issues that are the essence of today's bioethical dilemmas.

grasp of the legal and scientific issues that are the essence of today's bioethical dilemmas. That is why Charo is often called upon to dissect and analyze the controversy, and then advise national leaders and consult with other international experts in developing workable guidelines.

Not your average job, but then again, Charo is far from your average person. Most people who hear her speak about bioethics walk away impressed. She exudes energy, passion, intelligence, and humor. Most of all, she moves her listeners to think, consider, and perhaps

even react. And that is how Charo best accomplishes her goal.

Carl Gulbrandsen, managing director of the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF), said it best when he introduced Charo as the keynote speaker at a Bioethics Symposium last spring. "She's a gifted speaker, and she speaks very fast—so you'd better listen fast!"

While it can be a challenge to keep up with Charo, most audience members try their hardest. Because whether or not you agree with her views about issues as loaded as stem cell research, therapeutic cloning, and the government's



Charo's name rose to the top when in 1996 President Clinton decided to appoint a U.S. National Bioethics Advisory Commission.

The pressure reached a frenzy level in early 1997 when the news broke that Scottish scientist Ian Wilmut had created a sheep named Dolly through the process of cloning.

role in regulating morality, you have to agree she makes a compelling argument.

Norman Fost, a professor of pediatrics and the history of medicine at UW-Madison and director of the program in medical ethics, has been a valued friend and colleague of Charo's since she joined the UW faculty in 1989. "I remember when I first met her—I had the same reaction as everyone else," he says. "She's just a remarkable person. She combines extraordinary intellect and creativity, humor, wit, and insight that make you want to be around her. She has this effect on everyone." Quite complimentary, especially given that Charo considers Fost to be one of the most influential mentors in her own rise to prominence.

FROM THE BELTLINE TO THE BELTWAY—AND BACK

A crowning achievement in Charo's long list of career accomplishments was

her participation as a member of the U.S. National Bioethics Advisory Commission under the Clinton administration. She had been serving on the National Institutes of Health Human Embryo Research Panel in the mid-1990s, where she helped develop guidelines for the proper use of discarded embryos for scientific research. Charo's name rose to the top when in 1996 President Clinton decided to appoint a bioethics commission. Over the course of five years the commission ultimately drafted six different reports on topics that included cloning, stem cell research, research involving human participants, and international policy regarding clinical trials in developing countries. Charo recalls that as an overwhelming phase in her life, marked by constant travel between her UW faculty office and the commission's headquarters in Washington.

The pressure reached a frenzy level in early 1997 when the news broke that

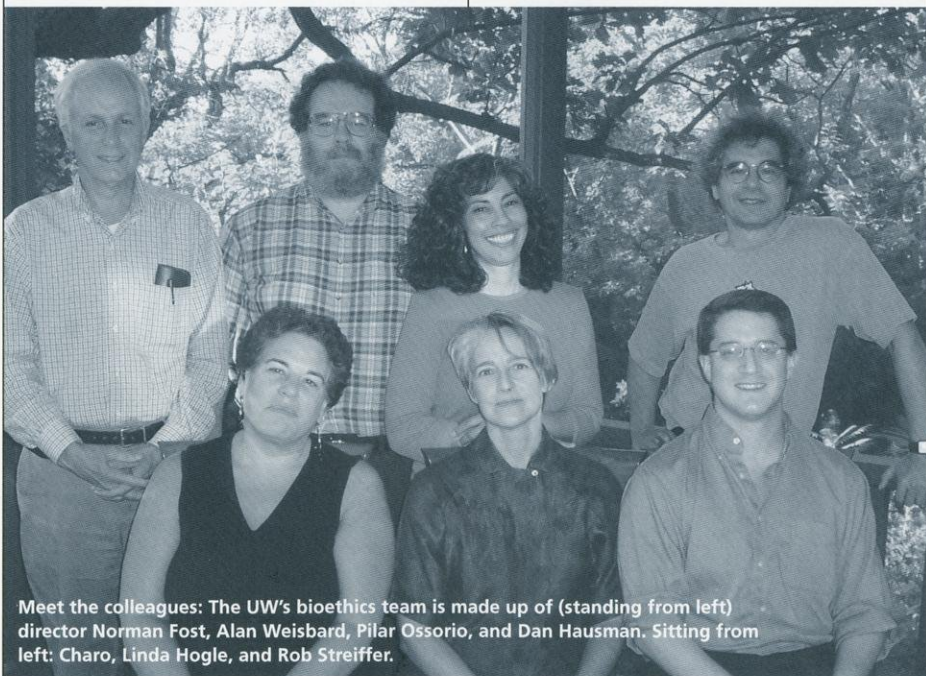
Scottish scientist Ian Wilmut had created a sheep named Dolly through the process of cloning. Within days of the official announcement, President Clinton instituted a ban on federal funding related to attempts to clone human beings using this new technique. He then asked the recently appointed commission to address the ethical and legal issues that surrounded the subject of cloning human beings. Their deadline? Ninety days.

Kathi Hanna, a science and health policy consultant in the Washington area who served as the commission's research director and principal writer, remembers the stress they all felt. She frankly describes that time as being "pretty hellish," yet she cannot say enough about the role that Charo played in drafting that particular report. "Alta was extremely helpful. She ended up doing a lot of the writing and editing, and she worked with me at all times—over weekends and late at night, or whenever I called on her to help."

Beyond the time commitment, her intellectual contribution was notable. "The clarity of her thinking is amazing," says Hanna. "And she's also very innovative—she thinks of things in a way that no one else does, and she's not afraid to be wrong. Alta is very courageous in terms of throwing things out there, and we've always appreciated that."

In the end, the panel voted for a three-year moratorium on any effort to use cloning to conceive a child—or reproductive cloning. While Charo makes it clear that she has never voted to ban or even place a moratorium on basic science research that uses cloning, in this case the issue was about reproductive cloning, and she firmly believed that at that time the science and technology was manifestly unsafe for humans.

Despite the rigorous demands and the controversy associated with that particular report, Charo says if given the chance to do it again, she would—"in a heartbeat." That is no surprise considering how these are precisely the challenges that energize and exhilarate her. Not to mention the reward of knowing that what she helped to create



Meet the colleagues: The UW's bioethics team is made up of (standing from left) director Norman Fost, Alan Weisbard, Pilar Ossorio, and Dan Hausman. Sitting from left: Charo, Linda Hogle, and Rob Streiffer.

had a critical and favorable impact on scientists, legislators, and the future of cloning research.

“The vast majority of government committees produce nothing but reports that sit on shelves collecting dust. But every once in a while your work will rise against the general noise level and help crystallize a public debate,” says Charo. “Our cloning report is an example of that. At the time, this topic [cloning] was all over the news—there were calls for immediate criminal penalties and bills introduced into legislature within weeks of the announcement.

“We produced a report that was calming, sobering, and returned public discussion to facts rather than fantasy,” she continues. “It served to slow down and stop lots of energy on Capitol Hill for draconian criminal measures. It gave the president room to submit a bill to Congress that would ask for a moratorium, not a ban, on any effort to do human cloning research until the science was better understood. Yet it provided protection for scientific research, and although the bill didn’t pass, we helped enormously to stop what appeared to be an unstoppable train.”

ENTER STEM CELLS

While issues surrounding embryo research and human cloning were keeping bioethicists busy, things only got hotter when it was announced in 1998 that embryonic stem cells had for the first time been grown in a laboratory. The promise of stem cell technology provided more fuel for politicians butting heads, pro-lifers and pro-choice supporters, and especially advocates for what until then had remained the most elusive medical cures. The world was crying out for rational and informed minds to sort through the mess.

How fortuitous that the UW–Madison laboratory of James Thomson—the place where it all began—is only a short walk across campus from Charo’s faculty office. Thomson, a UW professor of anatomy, was the first to successfully coax these cells to grow in a petri dish,

“I was extremely fortunate that Alta Charo happened to be on this campus when I decided to attempt to derive human embryonic stem cells,” says pioneering researcher James Thomson.

and in doing so opened the door to using stem cells as powerful tools in the development of treatments for a wide variety of devastating diseases.

It is also fortunate that Thomson was as sensitive to the intellectual issues tied to his research as he was to the biological needs of these magnificent cells. “Jamie understood the explosiveness of this discovery and all the ethical issues, and he spoke with Alta and myself long before beginning the research and submitting his protocol to the IRB [Institutional Regulatory Board],” says Norm Fost. “He completely predicted the issues that would arise.”

Charo and Fost, working with the UW Bioethics Advisory Committee, participated in the rather momentous decision of whether to let the groundbreaking research move ahead and under what conditions. “The UW was way ahead of the pack in developing the guidelines, and Alta was essential to all this,” says Fost. “As part of Clinton’s committee on

embryo research, she had a deep understanding of the issues; she had been through these discussions, so she was that much more valuable.”

Thomson couldn’t agree more. “I was extremely fortunate that Alta Charo happened to be on this campus when I decided to attempt to derive human embryonic stem cells,” he says. “Alta made herself available early in the process when I was just considering this line of research, and it certainly increased my comfort level that I was not doing this in an ethical vacuum.”

Once the code behind the science of growing and manipulating stem cells was cracked, the ensuing controversy—now highly emotional and political—stole the limelight. The 2004 presidential election was marked by the stem cell debate as a hot-button topic. In state elections in California that same day, voters passed Proposition 71 to provide \$3 billion in state taxpayer money for stem cell research. The vote



Doing a presentation on new reproductive technologies with Vice President Al Gore

unleashed a competition among states to support and retain stem cell research.

Charo acknowledges that California's Proposition 71 represents a challenge for the state of Wisconsin. "In a field characterized by an absence of federal funding and the presence of political controversy, California provides a nearly unique combination of political and state government funding," she says. Yet she is encouraged by a new initiative announced by Wisconsin Governor Jim Doyle last November, just two weeks after California passed its groundbreaking legislation.

State and private dollars will be used to build a \$375 million research facility on the UW campus—the Wisconsin Institute for Discovery—specifically for the purpose of centralizing stem cell and other research aimed at curing diseases such as Alzheimer's, Parkinson's, and diabetes. Construction of the institute is slated to begin this year and will proceed in three phases over the course of a decade. "Governor Doyle's initiative goes a long way toward keeping Wisconsin competitive," says Charo, "but there's no doubt that

California is now a force to be respected."

But competing forces only inspire Charo. With every opportunity to enlighten the public, provide her expertise on bioethics panels, and champion the positive potential of stem cells, she sends a passionate message. She views stem cell research as the true ticket to developing therapies for a wide range of debilitating illnesses that include Parkinson's disease, juvenile diabetes, spinal cord injury, and heart disease. She is deeply troubled about the prevailing political attitudes and legislative obstacles that may stand in the way of advancing science, and ultimately medical cures. The "criminalization" of state-by-state legislation that now makes it illegal to conduct stem cell research is an issue about which she lectures frequently.

It is not only stem cell research, but also the combination of stem cell and cloning technologies that Charo advocates if effective medical therapies are ever to be developed. To illustrate this, Charo uses breast cancer, or more specifically, the way in which scientists can elucidate how breast cancer often develops from a single gene mutation

called BRCA 1. First, scientists must utilize the technique called therapeutic cloning to clone embryos that carry this particular genetic mutation. A single cell taken from a breast cancer patient carrying the BRCA 1 mutation is inserted into an egg whose nucleus has been removed. The egg will begin to develop into an embryo whose cells all contain that exact same DNA and thus carry the mutation of interest.

Once the embryo has divided to about 100 cells in size, scientists remove the stem cells and use stem cell technology to manipulate them into becoming breast tissue. With a uniform supply of breast cells—all containing the BRCA 1 mutation—researchers can carefully observe how, when, and why these cells derail from the normal process of breast cell development and instead turn cancerous. With the power to investigate breast cancer genetics in this fashion scientists hope to eventually figure out the best way to halt the process.

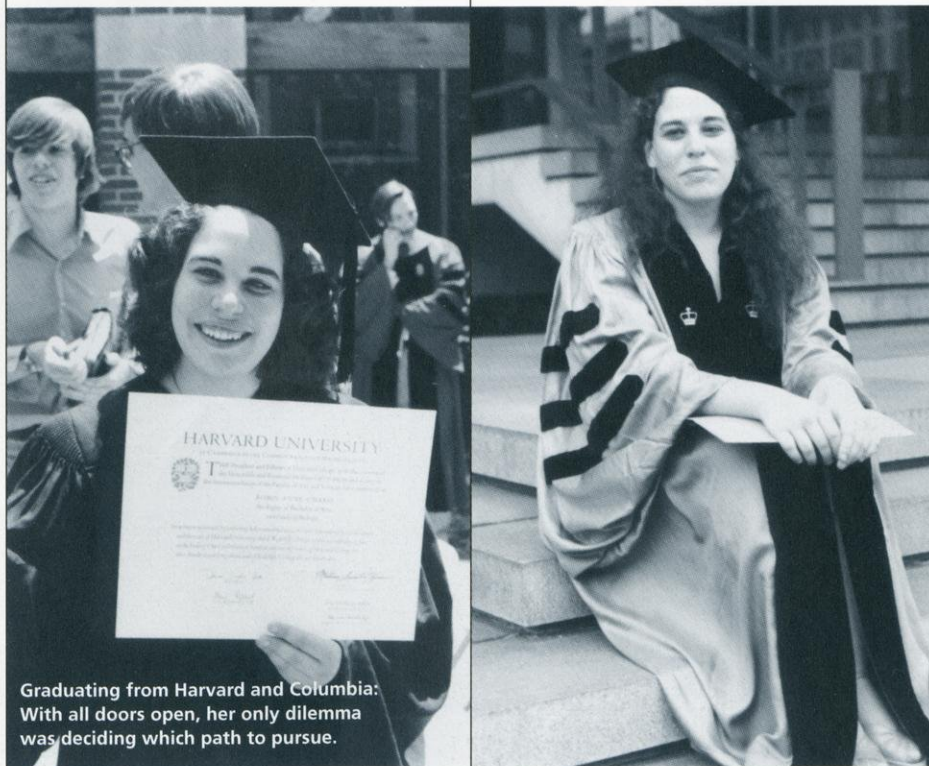
"That's why we want to do cloning," says Charo. "Not to make babies, but to make tissue, and to uncover the secrets of genetic disease."

UP FROM FLATBUSH

Charo's rise to prominence in her field is only enhanced by the story behind her family's humble start in this country. As liberal, nonreligious Jews with an inherent appreciation of political and religious freedom, Charo's immigrant parents instilled in their daughter a spark to make a difference.

Her father was from a Polish town near the Russian border. Her mother's family fled Russia near the border of Finland. "My parents came here because it was infinitely better than where they came from," Charo says. "Something about their experiences gave me the impression that my job was to keep improving this place and to do something that is bigger than yourself."

While they may have been new to America, Charo describes her parents as being very progressive and "science-oriented." Charo also was influenced by the era in which she was growing up,



Graduating from Harvard and Columbia: With all doors open, her only dilemma was deciding which path to pursue.

the 1960s and 1970s, which she calls the “age of science and progress.” Yet she also recalls a childhood that was far from easy. She, her parents, and her two older brothers shared a cramped three-room apartment in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn. During times when her father’s TV repair business was struggling, Charo’s mother supported the entire family on her salary as a middle and high school math teacher in the public schools. Charo remembers going through a rebellious stage, and her insatiable intellectual curiosity moved her to try out various religious sects the way most teens during that time were exploring the effects of certain mind-altering chemicals.

Charo was brilliant. Her excellent grades and insuppressible intelligence landed her a full scholarship to Harvard University. There she earned her bachelor’s degree in biology with an emphasis on behavioral ecology and evolutionary theory. She planned to apply to graduate school to continue these studies after graduating from Harvard in 1979 but then questioned her decision as friends urged her to consider law school. They thought law school might better fit her personality, and they knew she hoped to pursue a career in environmental activism. Moreover, while doing volunteer work with the Sierra Club in Boston, Charo witnessed how a law degree could be more valuable than a degree in biology if she pursued that field.

In the end, she took entry tests for both law and graduate school; her test results provided the answer she was looking for. “My GRE score in biology was respectable but not stellar; my LSAT score was nearly off the charts,” she recalls. “I guess that told me something about my strengths and weaknesses, so I chose to apply to law school.”

Interestingly, all three Charo siblings rose to their full potential (there’s something to be said about good genes), and applied their early respect and passion for science toward impressive careers. One brother is currently a medical researcher at the University of California at San Francisco, while her other brother is an engineer and works

While doing volunteer work with the Sierra Club in Boston, Charo witnessed how a law degree could be more valuable than a degree in biology if she pursued a career in environmental activism.

on satellite-surveillance projects for the National Academy of Sciences.

While earning her law degree from the Columbia University School of Law, Charo took every course available that combined law and science. After graduating in 1982, she was hired as a legal analyst for the now defunct Office of Technology Assessment, a federal agency responsible for reporting to Congress on issues of science and technology. This was followed by a short stint with the Agency for International Development, further whetting her appetite for the growing field of bioethics. Charo then began searching for a job in academia, and says she was surprised when the University of Wisconsin offered her a joint appointment in the law and medical schools. Finally, she was on a path that seemed more likely to provide her the opportunity to do something bigger and better. “The bioethics field is not just about the single conflict over whether you tell

someone about your patient’s genetic illness,” she says. “Rather, it’s about trying to figure out a way to manage scientific and medical advances in a fashion that improves the world.”

A SYMBIOTIC RELATIONSHIP

With 15 years of teaching behind her, Charo is still going strong. Her involvement with various national commissions and international advisory panels means that jet lag is a constant challenge. One of her most important commitments is serving on the National Academy of Sciences’ Board of Life Sciences, where she is working to develop national voluntary guidelines for stem cell research. Then there are all the responsibilities Charo tackles as a member of the UW faculty. She has been a member of the UW Hospital clinical ethics committee, the university’s Institutional Review Board for the protection of human subjects in medical



Talking head: Charo’s wide-ranging expertise and ability to explain science to a general audience make her a media favorite.

Charo touts the university culture—specifically the highly interdisciplinary nature of the UW law and medical schools—as helping her keep up with the ever-changing medical technology and ethical views regarding scientific advancement.

research, and the university's Bioethics Advisory Committee. Charo currently serves on the advisory boards of the Wisconsin Stem Cell Research Program and the WiCell Research Institute—a private organization created to provide human embryonic stem cells to academic scientists for research purposes. Her appointment in 2002 as the law school's associate dean for research and faculty development requires more administrative duties than she would prefer, yet she continues to teach, learn, listen, and think about the most cutting edge bioethical issues.

"She has an enormous energy level, like the Energizer Bunny. She just never seems to say no to anything," says Fost. "She's in the upper one percentile of UW members involved in everything—outreach, public policy, federal policy—where she brings her academic work to both the community and policy-making."

Despite the demands, Charo continues to be a dynamic teacher and lecturer, Fost notes. "This is because she combines a very deep understanding of biological issues—she understands the science, yet she combines that with the nuances and understanding of the law, ethics, and politics to better illuminate these complex issues."

Charo's commitment to the UW is balanced by the less tangible benefits she gains by being part of the UW faculty community. When asked how she successfully assimilates and keeps up to speed with the ever-changing medical technology and ethical moods and views regarding scientific advancement, Charo touts the university culture—specifically the highly interdis-

ciplinary nature of the UW law and medical schools.

"People here don't exist in a silo," she says. "I hear from others and spend much of my time attending scientific talks, working on committees, and collaborating on papers with medical and science colleagues. The result is that I'm constantly exposed to the substantive content of science—I get to read, listen, and speak to people about stuff not even published yet—so I'm acutely aware of what's really happening.

"One half of my life is spent with people keeping me immersed in the truthseeking and the modesty that is science—and I listen to them and keep in mind the realistic time frame of scientific discovery," she continues. "Then I go back to the law school and hear about the economics, the policy-making, and this gives me a much better ability to estimate what is really going to be happening next. Also, there is a great emphasis on service here, and this further exposes me to the politics of what's really happening. So, it all comes together: science, law, economics, and politics—and I see myself collecting all of this."

It also helps that Charo is an avid collector of news, which she picks up every day, usually first thing in the morning, from the Internet, the vehicle of choice that feeds her insatiable need for information. She runs an informal bioethics news service for herself and colleagues and scans every bioethics story that has any connection to what she studies. This includes reading all the major international English newspapers, as well as a smattering of French and Spanish journals.

"I provide a clipping service to others, but I have to read it all anyway,"

she says. "It's what keeps me up to speed, and it just makes it that much easier to be able to see a little further down the road."

Pairing her gift of teaching bioethics and her undisputed obsession with "Star Trek," Charo makes no secret of her dream to create what she says could one day be this country's most oversubscribed undergraduate course in bioethics. She calls it "Bioethics Trek" and describes it as an exploration of current and future bioethics topics through the narrative lens of illustrative "Star Trek" episodes. These topics include notions of personal identity, illness and health, reproduction, medical research, resource allocation, death and dying, overpopulation, bioterrorism, and immortality.

"Some of these issues and questions are incredibly difficult to discuss and teach," she says, "but by using these 'Star Trek' episodes as a way to broach these subjects, it can be very liberating."

Charo has figured out a way to apply her techno-optimist view of the world to her method of teaching. While it may help her students to more freely debate the thorny issues intrinsic to the study of bioethics, Charo shouldn't strive to make her field any more black-and-white. For then, the intellectual challenge wouldn't be quite so great, and Charo might not have the chance to shine quite so brightly. *

Nicole Resnick has a Ph.D. in molecular biology and was a researcher for many years. She is now a journalist specializing in articles about science, health, and medical research. Like Charo, she was born in Brooklyn—and also like Charo, she has learned to love life in the Midwest.



The Company Car

An excerpt from C. J. Hribal's new novel, *The Company Car*

BY C. J. HRIBAL

INTRODUCTION

This excerpt from chapter 1 follows a long scene in which Emmie Czabek, the narrator, imagines his parent's wedding 50 years earlier. His parents were married on television, on a show called "It's Your Wedding," and they were hoodwinked twice by the show's producer and host, Billy Ray King. Billy Ray switched the order of the weddings performed on the show so his own pregnant daughter could be the "lucky 100th" bride and receive a ton of prizes—prizes that should have gone to Wally and Susan Marie. Also, Billy Ray lied to Wally and Susan about their wedding being officiated by a priest. He'd actually hired an actor to play a priest, so officially Wally and Susan weren't married on the first night of their honeymoon. They get married in a church the next day, which is where this excerpt begins.

Excerpt from *The Company Car*
(Random House, May 2005)
reprinted with permission of Random House

WALTER CHARLES XAVIER CZABEK (Xavier was his confirmation name, given him the afternoon of his faux wedding to our mother) and Susan Marie Caroline Hluberstead were joined in holy and legal matrimony on the second-to-last Friday in Lent at Holy Redeemer of Angels Church on Chicago's near north side.

They got married before God, before a priest, before their parents and friends, a day after they had honeymooned at the Sheridan Hotel, unaware of the sham that had been committed against them by Billy Ray King and an actor named Joseph Clintsworth (nee Boleslawski), who later played a judge on both "Gunsmoke" and "Bonanza" (which once caused our mother to yell out, "There's the bastard who married us!" when he stepped off a carriage that

had pulled up outside the Ponderosa). The bride on this particular Friday was giddier than a bride in Lent ought to be, but then how many brides show up for their church wedding just hours removed from a tumultuous and satisfying wedding night and wedding morning (this was 1952, remember), already initiated into the rites of conubial bliss, already a man's consummated bride, already, most likely, pregnant for eight or nine hours or so?

Perhaps it was not so unusual. Perhaps it was a Korean War thing, just as a decade previous it had been a Second World War thing. Lots of couples were having quickie weddings prior to the husband's shipping out, the friends in attendance with their university books stacked on the pew next to them—a wedding, then Chem 001. It's just our parents got married on TV first, and exuberantly consummated their marriage a day early. As Billy Ray King might observe, So what? ("So," our mother would respond, "so we celebrate our anniversary on the day of the church wedding, although we really felt married the day before." It is testimony to our mother's discretion and sense of propriety that she would not tell us the complete story of their false wedding until most of us were grown and had children of our own.) After their own quickie church wedding, after what our mother came to call their "real" marriage, the bride and groom had finger sandwiches and coffee in the church basement with their parents and friends, and then they left in a borrowed car for a weekend-long honeymoon in Madison, Wisconsin, the

Terraplane being too unreliable for such an important mission.

Back then Madison, Wisconsin, was not much. There were the lakes, Mendota and Monona, a few supper clubs, a few lodges, some crafts people scattered about in cottages. The university was just beginning to be packed with soldiers in Quonset huts. Having saved the world and made it safe for democracy they were pretty eager themselves for the white-collar union card that a diploma represented. Our father, squiring our mother about the lakes, looking at the bare trees and the lake homes and the ducks huddled in the reeds, kept driving by those Quonset huts as though they were a magnet. "I don't know what it's going to be like," our father said. "We could be living in one of those. You think you're ready for that?"

Said our mother, still giddy, "Wally-Bear, I'm ready for anything."

Our father found a gravel lane off county M and pulled into the woods.

One has to remember that one does not need much in the way of amenities on a honeymoon for it to qualify as a good one. Hoodwinked on their TV marriage, driving a borrowed car,

possessing no cash to speak of, holders, if it could be said they were holding anything, of an uncertain future, our parents, young and in love and just discovering the wonders of each other's bodies, thumbed their noses at the universe, at fate, at their own limitations and foibles and said, "So what?" They had a very nice time. And while it is now the fashion to render such moments in all their breathy detail, let us leave them their privacy. Draw the curtains on that car in the woods, allow them their married pleasure. They deserve that much.



Of course it wasn't going to last. Nothing does. A weekend is not a life, after all, and squeezing from a weekend every possible moment for romance, mystery, and happiness only confirms its exquisite finiteness. They returned to Chicago, returned the borrowed car (it was loaned to them by Arthur, who thought his daughter ought not to take a bus for her honeymoon) and headed out for San Diego in a new Buick Roadmaster, a drive-away vehicle that our father had contracted to deliver to a doctor in L.A.

It is perhaps fitting that our father didn't even own the car he and our mother drove out to San Diego. He sold his interest in the Terraplane to Ernie Klapatek, and the next car he owned outright was the one he got after he retired.

The plan was for them to continue their honeymoon on the drive out, then our father would drop our mother off in San Diego and he'd motor up to L.A. alone and take the bus back, reporting for active duty just hours before he was due. They took Route 66 most of the way, following the song's route except for when they dipped into Mexico for twenty-four hours of international nooky.

While it's widely believed in our family that Sarah, the oldest, was a consolation baby, the product of our



mother and father administering solace to each other for not scoring the TV dowry, Sarah herself maintains she was conceived a day or so later, fully within wedlock, either in the woods ringing the shores of Lake Mendota, or during one of those festive rest stops, perhaps even—she'll waggle her eyebrows at the romance of this—in another country entirely. We don't believe her because our mother already knew she was pregnant while they were driving across the Southwest. Fast-acting hormones, according to our mother. She says she must have thrown up on every cactus from New Mexico to Arizona.

Some of the rest stops were more festive than others. At the Arizona-California border, the guards took one look at our father—a geeky-looking guy with lamp black eyes and scoops of hair already missing from his forehead—and another at our mother—a curvaceous brunette with the lips of Betty Grable and the eyes of Lauren Bacall—and they knew what they had were a couple of newlyweds. They recognized the look of a newly married woman when they saw one. A woman dazed with sex, which wasn't quite the case—she was dazed with pregnancy—but you couldn't expect these border guards to know that. They ordered our parents out of the car, asked them to please open their suitcases. When our father protested he was told they were looking for contraband fruit from either Texas or Mexico. They had to search everything. And though they said they were sorry, they certainly didn't appear to be. Our father's suitcases received a cursory glance. Our mother's ended up all over the highway. Her entire trousseau was scattered across the car's hood and over the roof and trunk, our mother's unmentionables toyed with, then dropped. Our mother went scarlet as the guard in charge held each item up for his compatriots, one after another, then passed it on. Each guard pinched each new item between his fingers like he was holding up a skunk, only his grin showed he knew better. "And what have we here?" and "What's this?" the head guard kept saying as he examined slips, half-slips, teddies, tap

pants, stockings, garters, nightgowns, negligees, bras, panties, silk stockings, camisoles. You name it, they held it up to the stark Arizona sun, then let it tail away from their fingers in the hot Arizona breeze. "What are you doing?" our mother screamed.



THE COMPANY CAR

C. J. Hribal

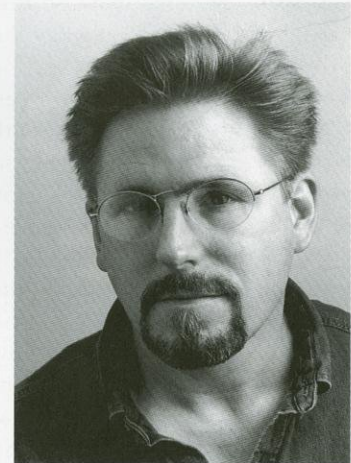
"Ten pages into *The Company Car*, you know you're in the hands of a masterful storyteller. The canvas is broad, the sights and sounds true, the vision both hilarious and heartbreaking."
—RICHARD RUSSO

"Checking for fruit," they replied. "You can't take fruit across state lines."

Four years later, driving back with two squalling kids in the backseat and her tummy rounding with what proved to be me, our mother got even. Besides Sarah, she'd had Robert Aaron, another leave baby (I've often wondered if Sarah's melancholy nature might be attributed to the circumstances surrounding her conception), and I was clearly on the way. I was a welcome-back-to-the-States baby, conceived on their fourth wedding anniversary. Besides the two squalling kids, who were turning a high pink no matter how much flesh our mother tried to keep covered—she had put diapers on their arms, pinned to the sleeves of their blouses, and tied bonnets onto their heads—our mother had a load of fruit with her. Three pineapples, a sack of oranges, and bunches and bunches of bananas—big stalks of them—were piled in the front seat and between her

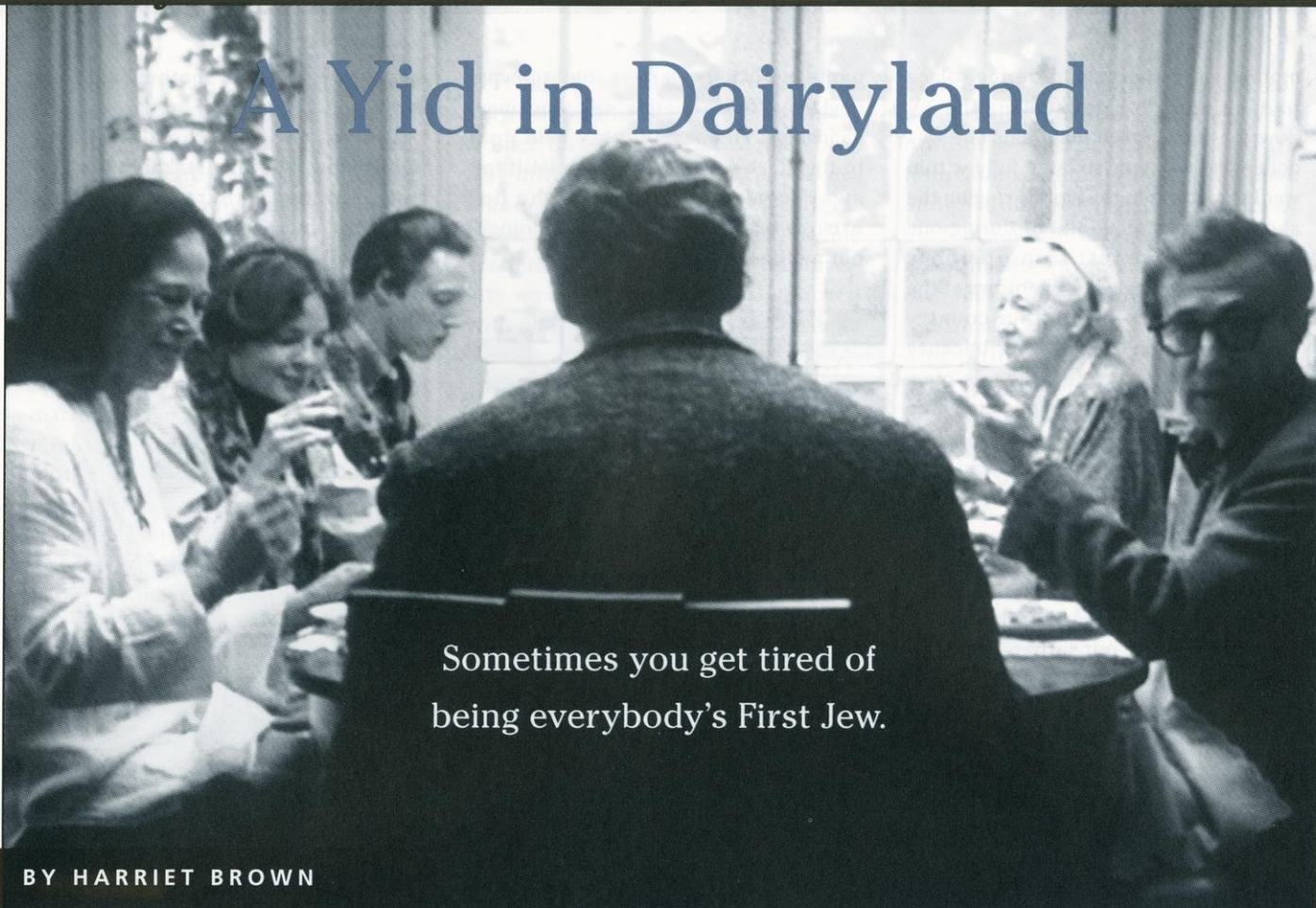
legs. Just to see, our mother said. Just to see.

She got the same border guard, puffier now, but unmistakably him. He took one look at Sarah and Robert sunburnt and screaming in the backseat, another at our mother, still pretty but obviously far gone into motherhood, and waved us through. *



*C. J. Hribal is a professor of English at Marquette University in Milwaukee, where he lives with his wife and three children. He is author of **Matty's Heart** (1984), a collection of short fiction; a novel, **American Beauty** (1987); **The Boundaries of Twilight: Czecho-Slovak Writing from the New World** (1991); and a short story collection, **The Clouds in Memphis** (2000). He won first prize in the **Wisconsin Academy Review Short Story Contest** in 2001 and was kind enough to serve as a judge in several subsequent contests.*

A Yid in Dairyland



Sometimes you get tired of being everybody's First Jew.

BY HARRIET BROWN

Annie Hall was from Chippewa Falls. In this memorable scene from the '70s movie, Woody Allen feels like a cultural alien when he visits his prospective in-laws—a classic dramatization of the Jew in Dairyland.

1. WHAT'S A NICE JEWISH GIRL DOING IN A STATE LIKE THIS?

In 1992 my husband, infant daughter, and I packed our bags and left a decent rent-stabilized apartment in Stuyvesant Town to move to Madison, Wisconsin. We schlepped halfway across the country to live in a state where whitefish is served broiled and kugel is pronounced “kee-gel.” We made the move, after much agonizing, because neither of us had a job, because we were broke, and because we thought, what the heck, let's try something new! Life in the corn belt. Flyover country. At the very least it would make a good story.

Little did we know.

That first night in our rented two-bedroom apartment (which seemed both palatial and oddly modern) we turned on the TV. It was late on a Saturday night. We watched a woman wearing a pleated candy-pink skirt and matching blouse stand in front of a weather map and say, “It'll be dark tonight and getting lighter toward

morning.” Ha ha; we'd found “Saturday Night Live”! What a relief to catch something familiar on our first night.

Except it wasn't “Saturday Night Live”; it was a real local newscast on one of the major networks. We looked at each other. What had we done?

Suddenly I was a stranger in a really strange land, a wanderer. A Yid in Dairyland.

2. JEWS WITH HORNS

On my first day at work in the Midwest, the HR woman who was showing me around struck up a conversation. “I understand you're Jewish,” she began.

Uh-oh. Did I really have to go there? Bad enough that we'd been in Wisconsin two weeks and I had yet to see another Jewfro, that the only bagel I'd found was a doughy ring studded with chocolate chips.

“Yes,” I said cautiously.

She leaned forward as if we were exchanging confidences. I could see her

dark roots. Everyone here seemed to be blond, one way or another.

"I've always wanted to know," she said, lowering her voice. "Are you Jewish by race or by birth?"

My mind went blank; this incomprehensible question had, apparently, shut down my thinking apparatus. Her face was turned toward me expectantly. The face of anti-Semitism? No, more like the face of ignorance.

In the silence, all I could think of is to incline my head gently in her direction and ask, "Wanna see my horns?"

3. MONOTHEISM 101

A month later, I was meeting with a young graphic designer. He was maybe 23, a real Wisconsin farm boy who thought that Madison (pop. 200,000) was the big city. One morning he confessed that he'd never met a Jew before.

I managed a noncommittal smile.

"I've always wanted to know," he continued eagerly. Oh, no. "Do you all believe in God?"

Oh, yes. I knew I should treat this as a teachable moment, I knew I should be grateful that he was at least asking the question and not out on someone's lawn with a lighter and a white sheet. But all I wanted to do was jump up on a table and scream. Did I *have* to be everyone's First Jew?

4. RUDE, PUSHY, AND OBNOXIOUS

From Day 1 on the new job, I'd tried to fit in. I toned down the slightly abrasive style I'd perfected in New York. I deferred as much as possible to the group think; I started every speech with a constructive comment and a perky smile.

But still it was as if I spoke a different language, a tongue both unpopular and unknown. Not just the obvious vocabulary differences (as in "Would you like a pop, or would you rather get a drink from the bubbler? Let me put that in a sack for you.") And not just the Midwestern accent that flattens all vowels. This was the kind of overly polite demurring that is the verbal equivalent of the minuet: step, glide,

dip, and somewhere in the dizzy turning, an entire conversation has taken place.

Many times I walked out of meetings with the unnerving feeling I'd last experienced in college, when I inadvertently smoked a joint laced with angel dust: I could understand individual words, but my brain couldn't string them together and make sense of them. In that case the effect subsided after a few hours, and I swore off taking hits from stray joints. But this time I was swimming in misunderstandings and confusion without the proverbial paddle.

Some months later I discovered that I'd been labeled early on as a pushy, bossy, rude, *Jewish* New York troublemaker. There was much backstabbing and gossip behind my back—in a very Midwestern way, of course—and I was disliked by everyone except my immediate boss, who'd worked with me in New York and who'd brought me to this forsaken state.

5. NOT HOME FOR THE HOLIDAYS

September rolled around, and with it, of course, the High Holidays. I wasn't a member of a congregation; I didn't even know if there *were* congregations in Wisconsin. But going to work on Rosh Hashanah or Yom Kippur would have been like touching the third rail. On purpose. Especially there, where I seemed destined to be a Walking Educational Experience, I wanted everyone to remember that Jews were different.

So I went back to the HR woman and said something about taking off for the High Holidays, and she smiled and said in an extremely polite tone of voice, "I'm sorry, those days are not company holidays."

I leaned across her desk. "How about if I work Good Friday and Christmas Eve to make up for it?" I asked.

The answer was no, but I took them off anyway. Six months later I was eased out of the job. I didn't think it had anything to do with being Jewish.

6. GOING ON A JEW HUNT

At that point, left to myself, I would probably have packed and gone home to the Second Avenue Deli's matzo-ball noodle soup and Christmas dinner in Chinatown. But my husband, a Westchester WASP, had already fallen in love with Wisconsin. And we had a two-year-old daughter, and another child on the way, and the thought of cramming ourselves once again into an even more expensive one-bedroom in the city seemed even more impossible.

To stay in the heartland, I needed to find some other Jews. I knew they were there, even though the "worship page" of our local newspaper listed 113 churches and not a single synagogue. I knew because in early spring the local supermarket dedicated half an aisle to boxes of matzo, mandelbrot, and cellophane-wrapped jellied fruit candies. There *must* be other Yids somewhere.

I felt like grabbing everyone with dark curly hair and a nose and demanding their pedigree. I settled instead for sprinkling my conversation with Yiddishisms and watching people's faces closely. Most Midwesterners pretended to understand. A brave few asked, "What is a putz, anyway?" And the occasional fellow Jew came right back at me.

And so I found them, my fellow travelers, one or two at first, and then more and more popped into focus, like hidden pictures in *Highlights* magazine. I developed my Jewdar to a frightening degree, honing in on members of the tribe who were well camouflaged in straight blond hair and twinsets. I visited the synagogues: the Conservative shul (felt like the one I grew up with—familiar and stuck-up), the Reform temple (too blandly Midwestern, not enough Hebrew), the Reconstructionist congregation (met in a church, and the rabbi lacked social skills), and the group of old hippies who met twice a year, on Rosh Hashanah and Yom Kippur, for services led by an almost-ordained woman rabbi whose husband, coincidentally, was also the county executive.

Along the way, I also made a few non-Jewish friends. And I found out a few things I had never known. Like the fact

that there had been Jews in the Midwest since long before my great-grandparents stepped onto American soil at “Kesselgarden.” The first Jews arrived in Wisconsin in the late 18th century, setting up a fur-trading post near Green Bay. There were Jewish peddlers, farmers, ragpickers, tavern owners, landowners, and pioneers. For a good chunk of the mid-19th century, you could get kosher food in just about every little town in the state of Wisconsin.

I discovered Nate Abrams, captain of Green Bay’s city football team, who helped keep the Green Bay Packers afloat in the 1920s by lending Curly Lambeau a couple thousand dollars. Erich Weiss, better known by his stage name, Harry Houdini, born in Budapest in 1874, who spent his first 13 years in Appleton and Milwaukee, learning to pick locks and slip out of ropes. Baruch Weil, a developer and founder of the village of Schleisingerville. Sol Levitan, a peddler and storekeeper in New Glarus, friend of “Fighting Bob” La Follette, who became state treasurer in 1922.

After World War II, the Jews had moved out of the small towns and into the cities of Milwaukee and Madison, where they took on protective coloring and vanished from plain view. Now, 50 years later, they were apparently very good at hiding.

In New York, almost everybody sounded like a Jew. We might not be in the majority there, but we were certainly in the cultural forefront, the proud purveyors of *schtick*, *schmuck*, pastrami, and attitude. In Wisconsin, the prevailing cultural norm was more beer, brats, and the Packers. You had to look past the blond updos and sensible shoes. Here you had to channel the inner Jew.

7. MORAL OF THE STORY

By now I had two children. I started hanging out on the playground, at the children’s museum, etc., and, like any stranger in a strange land, I learned the language. I got better at speaking and receiving Midwestern. I assimilated. Grokked. Acculturated. Caved.

Over time, and without my realizing it, my sensibilities shifted. It was hard to always be the fly in the ointment, the outsider. And, as in any culture, every interaction reinforced the social norms and my adherence to (or defiance of)



them. Slowly my default emotional temperature reset itself, from, say, broil to a high bake. I learned how to approach people in ways other than head-on. I found myself reading between the lines, doing instant simultaneous translation in my own head about what people weren’t saying.

I had an epiphany one day, 10 years after that first night, when a friend from New York was visiting and we ran into a couple of local friends. I found myself doing a kind of translation once again, only this time it was on behalf of my visitors. I realized that I didn’t have to translate in my own head anymore; I was now thinking in Midwestern. It was a strange and not altogether welcome thought. I wondered what would happen if I moved back to New York. I wondered if I’d *want* to move back to New York. I’d lost my edge, so much of what I used to think made me me.

Like Alice down the rabbit hole, I’d been changed forever. Maybe this was neither good nor bad, just different. And wasn’t that what I’d wanted when we moved here (well, besides a front yard and a decent-size grocery store)?

Another way of looking at things. A sense of the bigger, wider world.

I still missed that feeling of fitting in, of belonging, the emotional equivalent of a baseball socked into the sweet spot of a glove. But maybe that feeling was like falling in love at 16: you only got that when you gave up forever a sense of other possibilities.

I was fluent in Midwestern now, but I’d still never speak it like a native. I would always be something of an ex-pat, with a foot in both worlds and a subscription to the *New York Times*. Like it or not, I had acquired a more complex view of not just the country but the world. As a Jew, I had always felt like an outsider, and my experiences in the Midwest heightened that sense of looking in from a long way off. But now I also had a different set of feelings. There were ways in which I belonged, and still do belong, very much. I have good friends here, a community. It is and always will be my children’s cultural reference point, the place they feel in their bones is *home*.

Some days I still feel like I’m looking over my own shoulder in a dressing room, catching sight of my own back repeated in the mirror, seeing a part of myself I don’t ordinarily see cast in a strange and disturbing light. But some days I feel, at least for a little while, that sense of home, of belonging. And that, at least for the moment, is enough. *

Harriet Brown is an award-winning poet and editor of Wisconsin Trails magazine. Her books include The Good-Bye Window: A Year in the Life of a Day-Care Center (University of Wisconsin Press, 1998) and a chapbook of poems, The Promised Land (Parallel Press, 2004).

FIGHTING BOB TURNS 150

He was arguably the most inspiring, influential political leader ever to emerge from Wisconsin—a man who strengthened the progressive movement nationwide and saw this state as a vibrant laboratory and model for an enlightened democracy. He fathered a dynasty of political leaders who would shape Wisconsin for decades, and to this day his vision continues to inspire citizens of our state and beyond.

With this package of feature articles by E. David Cronon, Nancy Unger, Curt Meine, Jack Holzhuetter, and photographer Zane Williams, the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters reflects upon and celebrates Robert M. La Follette in honor of his 150th birthday in June.

BY E. DAVID CRONON

The La Follette Legacy in Wisconsin

He was a reform-bent Republican whose name became synonymous with the progressive movement nationwide. What remains of La Follette's lifework in Wisconsin today? The answer is all around us.

FOLLOWING THE DEATH OF Robert M. La Follette in 1925 the Wisconsin

legislature voted to place his likeness in Statuary Hall of the U.S. Capitol in Washington as one of the state's two selections for this signal honor.

Eighty years later few Wisconsin residents would disagree with this

decision to recognize their most

famous native son. The

sesquicentennial of La Follette's birth

in 1855 is thus a good time to recall

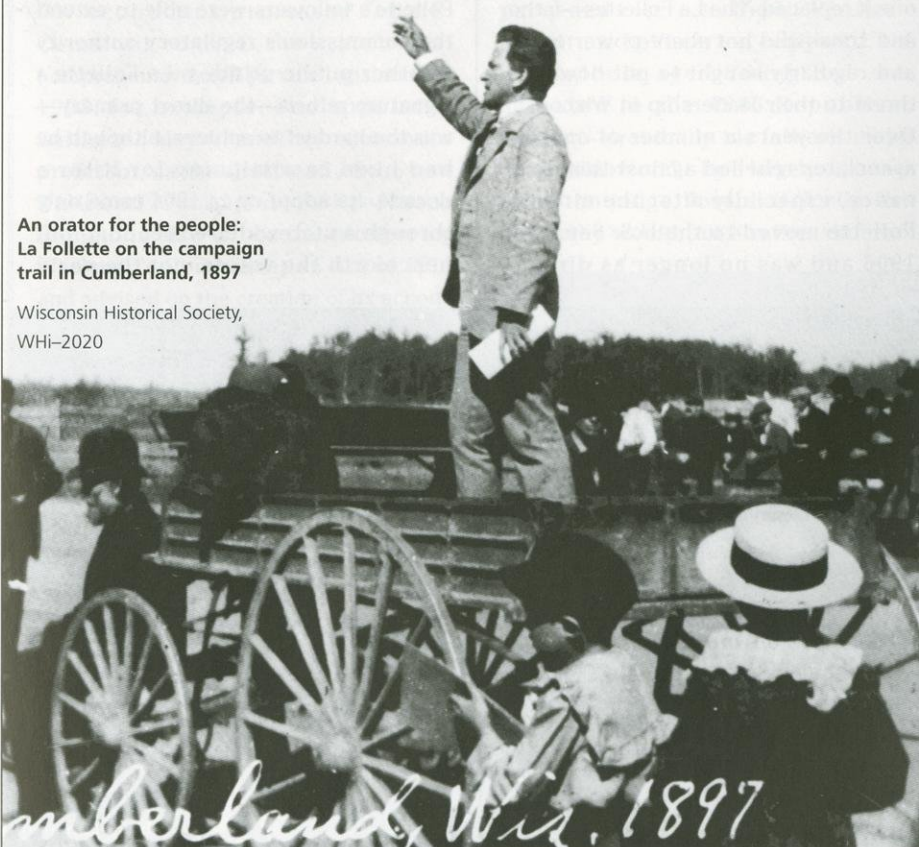
this decision and to remind ourselves

of his continuing legacy.

La Follette was not, of course, solely responsible for the reform movement—progressivism—he came to embody in the early 20th century. He built on the work of others in Wisconsin and nationally and wasn't particularly innovative in the reform ideas he espoused. Still,

An orator for the people:
La Follette on the campaign
trail in Cumberland, 1897

Wisconsin Historical Society,
WHI-2020



he was a remarkably charismatic, indefatigable leader who was the first of the progressives to capture control of a state when he won the Wisconsin governorship in 1900. No American politician ever was more successful in establishing a national reputation as a tireless and incorruptible reformer or in creating such a long-lasting political movement. By 1900 the anti-boss, anti-machine La Follette had built an efficient political organization whose influence in Wisconsin politics is still felt today. He created in fact a unique family dynasty, carried on by his two sons after his death and extending the direct La Follette reach nearly a half-century. The current Wisconsin secretary of state is a distant relative whose electoral success no doubt comes because he carries the magic name. During the family's prime, Wisconsin came to be viewed as a national laboratory for governmental reform, and the La Follette name became a symbol of the early 20th century reform movement known as progressivism.

Wisconsin politics after the Civil War was dominated by the Republican Party, a trend that held for the most part until after World War II. La Follette consequently spent his entire life as a Republican and built his reform movement within the GOP, beginning in the 1890s as a protest against the political machine controlled by the conservative bosses of the party. After he achieved a

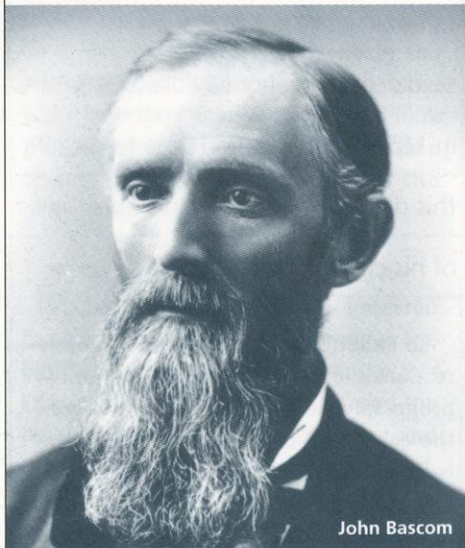
COME TO THE PARTY!

A celebration commemorating Robert M. La Follette's 150th birthday is being planned for the State Capitol grounds in Madison on June 14th. It will include a reenactment of one of La Follette's most famous speeches and a number of other events recalling the rich heritage of Wisconsin's famous political pioneer. Details will be announced weeks before the celebration. Those wishing to add ideas or suggestions should contact Dave Zweifel, editor of *The Capital Times* newspaper in Madison, at dzweifel@madison.com or through the website, FightingBob.com.

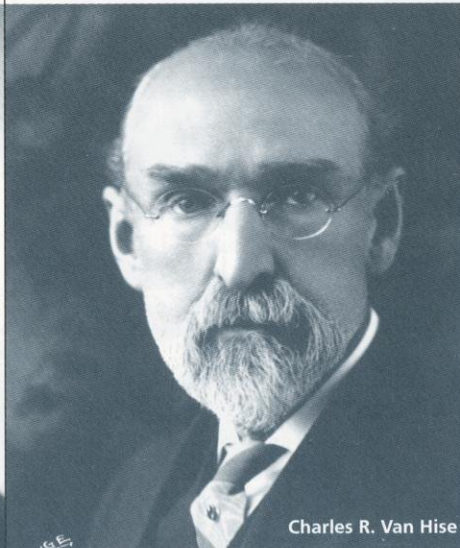
measure of success, his conservative opponents came to be known as stalwarts and La Follette's followers identified themselves as progressives, perhaps the first in the country to use that term. Ironically, once the La Follette organization achieved statewide stature within the party, it was every bit as much a controlling machine as the one it replaced. The La Follettes—father and sons—did not share power easily, and regularly sought to put down any threat to their leadership in Wisconsin. Over the years a number of onetime associates rebelled against this dominance, especially after the elder La Follette moved to the U.S. Senate in 1906 and was no longer as directly

involved in local politics. Some of Wisconsin's most notable innovations, such as the first state income tax and workers' compensation legislation under Governor Francis E. McGovern (1913–15), came through reformers only marginally and uneasily associated with La Follette.

During his three terms as governor in 1901–06 La Follette's reform achievements were comparatively modest. Because his supporters did not at first control the legislature, he was able to push through only parts of his program—control of lobbying, increased railroad taxes, the prohibition of free railroad passes, and a commission to regulate railroad rates. Wisconsin's Railroad Commission—the forerunner of today's Public Service Commission—was achieved only in his third term and was not the first in the country or the most powerful. It could regulate only intrastate rates and only equalize, not reduce, them. Still, it was a significant start on which to build state regulation of powerful corporations affecting the lives of ordinary citizens. And in the next legislative term La Follette's followers were able to extend the commission's regulatory authority to other public utilities. La Follette's signature reform—the direct primary—was the hardest to achieve, although he had been campaigning for it for a decade. Its adoption in 1904 came only through a statewide referendum, but henceforth the voters, not the party



John Bascom



Charles R. Van Hise



John R. Commons

bosses, were empowered to choose candidates for public office.

One of the most enduring La Follette achievements during his governorship was what came to be known nationally as the Wisconsin Idea—using the expertise of the state university for the improvement both of government and of the lives of ordinary citizens. La Follette and his wife, Belle Case La Follette, were graduates of the University of Wisconsin in 1879, and he was the first Wisconsin native and UW graduate to serve as governor. He and his wife were greatly influenced by the social gospel views of UW President John Bascom, whose required senior course on moral philosophy emphasized that the students had an obligation to use their education for the betterment of society. As governor, La Follette lobbied the UW Board of Regents to secure the appointment of his classmate, geology professor Charles R. Van Hise, as president in 1903. The two friends worked closely thereafter to expand the university's extension services across the state and to use the faculty to advise the legislature and state agencies. Governor La Follette recruited UW economics professor John R. Commons to draft the state's first comprehensive civil service legislation in 1905, for example, and appointed Balthazar Meyer, another economics professor, as the first head of the new Railroad Commission. Professor Commons also wrote the pioneering Workman's Compensation Act of 1911 and advised on the creation of its accompanying enforcement arm, the Wisconsin Industrial Commission. By 1911 there were 46 UW staff members serving state government. The continuing practice of consulting the UW faculty for advice on state problems and using them for service on state boards and commissions dates from this Van Hise-La Follette collaboration. Similarly, the slogan "the boundaries of the campus are the boundaries of the state," if often overused and exaggerated, acquired real meaning and force at this time.

La Follette died in 1925 after a tireless career as an independent-minded maverick progressive in the Senate and two abortive campaigns for the presi-

dency—in 1912 and 1924. Throughout he remained the respected if not always the actual leader of the progressives back in Wisconsin and to some extent across the country. Indeed, after polling a number of American historians, the U.S. Senate later hung La Follette's portrait with four others in the Senate lounge as one of the five greatest senators of all time.

"Old Bob" was succeeded in the Senate by his son, Robert Jr., or "Young Bob," who held his father's seat until 1947. La Follette's younger son, Philip, at the age of 33 was elected governor in 1930, and again in 1934 and 1936. The two La Follette sons, especially Phil, dominated Wisconsin politics during the 1930s. In 1934 they took their Wisconsin followers into a new Progressive Party and four years later Phil La Follette attempted with only limited success to turn it into a national third party in furtherance of an inflated but doomed presidential ambition. In Wisconsin the Progressive Party managed to reelect Young Bob decisively in 1940, but thereafter its fortunes declined steadily until by 1946 he felt obliged to abandon the party and return to the GOP. After a disastrous halfhearted campaign, the now-middle-aged Young Bob was defeated in the 1946 Republican primary—ironically his father's major Wisconsin reform—by a largely unknown Appleton judge, Joseph R. McCarthy. McCarthy would put a rather different

stamp on this longtime La Follette seat. Some of the Wisconsin Progressives had followed the defeated senator back into the Republican Party, which they found now firmly controlled by the stalwarts, but many of the younger ones decided to go into the Democratic Party, traditionally a lesser player in Wisconsin politics. Gradually during the 1950s and 1960s, they helped turn it into a winning vehicle for governmental and social reform, one that Old Bob would have recognized and almost certainly applauded.

We have no way of knowing, of course, whether the reform ferment in Wisconsin during the first half of the 20th century would have taken the same course or achieved as much without the leadership of the La Follettes, father and sons. Certainly many of the ideas held by Wisconsin reformers were in common currency across the country, and some of the reforms adopted here were borrowed from elsewhere. Still, it is undeniable that the La Follettes, especially Old Bob, left a gigantic imprint on Wisconsin. They provided the inspiration, leadership, and organization that brought about many of the changes and innovations that led their contemporaries to look to Wisconsin as a laboratory of popular democracy. And in Wisconsin, at least, the La Follette name has become almost a synonym for the clean and socially responsive government for which the state is still known.



Father and son: Robert M. La Follette Sr. and Jr. in 1924, the same year La Follette senior made a second run for U.S. president.

Wisconsin Historical Society WHI-28147

In a number of instances, the Wisconsin progressives led the country. As part of a general reform of state taxation, they adopted an income tax in 1911, three years before the federal government followed suit. The Wisconsin Workmen's Compensation Act contained a number of innovative features designed to give both labor and employers a stake in the reasonable enforcement of the law to promote safety and reduce industrial accidents. The Wisconsin act regulating insurance companies included a state insurance fund, which today still offers inexpensive term life insurance to the public, designed to serve as a yardstick for comparing and thereby holding down the rates for private insurance. This yardstick approach came decades before the Tennessee Valley Authority made the concept popular in the 1930s. Although they were too late to save most of the state's pine forests, the progressives created forest reserves, favorable forest taxation, and a forest commission that began the reforestation of cutover lands. They made conservation a required part of the public school curriculum.

After Wisconsin legislated an educational benefit for its veterans following the first world war, years later it served as the model for the GI Bill of Rights in World War II. This law also led the university to establish an extension training center in Milwaukee for area veterans that eventually grew into today's University of Wisconsin-

Milwaukee. The state again pioneered with the country's first unemployment compensation act in 1932 under the leadership of Governor Philip La Follette during the depth of the Great Depression. La Follette also set an example for the later New Deal by his public works program using the unemployed to construct highway bridges and other state-funded improvements. President Franklin D. Roosevelt's famous brain trust bore more than a little similarity to Old Bob's Wisconsin Idea of three decades earlier.

The La Follettes, father and sons, were political mavericks, and to a considerable extent the state they led has remained a maverick as well. One has only to recall its proud status as one of the handful of swing states in the 2004 presidential election. The La Follette progressives believed in progress through education of the electorate—hence their support of public education and their concern to see that it was properly directed. They had faith in popular democracy—witness their demand for the direct primary—but again they believed the people needed proper leadership. It is instructive that of the three direct democracy devices popular in these years—the referendum, initiative, and recall—Wisconsin under the progressives adopted only the referendum and the recall. When one reflects on the problems sometimes caused in states where voters have approved ill-

considered initiative legislation, we can be grateful that Wisconsin progressives put a limit on their enthusiasm for popular democracy.

This concern for popular rule probably explains why the citizens of Wisconsin, although they have generally supported consolidation of the public schools, have been reluctant to consolidate local governments. Even sparsely settled townships and villages are unwilling to give up their independent status for more efficient but less personal county government. Wisconsin's maverick spirit was demonstrated for all the country to see when the national Democratic Party, buttressed by a 1981 Supreme Court decision, demanded that the state party comply with its rules for a closed Democratic primary. State Democrats conceded that Republicans sometimes tried to cause mischief by voting as Democrats in primary elections (and vice versa), but Wisconsinites of all political persuasions rallied to defend the state's cherished 1904 open primary law. The fight was led by Wisconsin Attorney General Bronson C. La Follette, a grandson of Old Bob. The attorney general and other Wisconsin Democrats declared they would not change the state's primary law and would select their delegates to the 1984 Democratic national convention in the usual way. If they were not seated, Wisconsin would bring suit. Upon reflection, the national party leaders caved.

I like to think Old Bob would have been proud. *

E. David Cronon is a native of Minnesota, which has a similar progressive tradition, but has spent most of his life in Wisconsin. A specialist in 20th-century U.S. history, after completing graduate work at the University of Wisconsin he taught at Yale and Nebraska before returning to UW-Madison in 1962, where he served variously as professor, chairman of the history department, and dean of the College of Letters and Science until his retirement in 1994.



The dynasty continues:
Gov. Philip F. La Follette signing
unemployment insurance law, 1932.

Wisconsin Historical Society WHI-18151

The Misunderstood “P” Word— and Its Legacy Nationwide



A New Deal achievement with progressive roots: Visitors to the Wisconsin State Fair entering the Works Projects Administration exhibit tent, ca. 1938

Wisconsin Historical Society, WHI-26223

BY NANCY C. UNGER

I AM FREQUENTLY ASKED, especially by puzzled Wisconsinites, why I, a Californian with no ties to the Badger State, am so dedicated to the study of the La Follette family dynasty, especially its founder, Robert M. La Follette Sr. The people of Wisconsin have every right to proudly claim as their native son this tireless fighter for the people. But La Follette was also a player on the

national stage: a 2000 Senate resolution recognized him as one of the seven greatest senators in American history. La Follette’s progressive legacy is woven into the very fabric of the nation. Nevertheless, on this 150th anniversary of the birth of Wisconsin’s progressive giant, confusion reigns when it comes to understanding the significance of his legacy, and of progressivism at large. In recent years the term “progressive” has frequently been used interchangeably with “populist” and “liberal” to indicate a popular and egalitarian spirit of reform. Politicians from Ralph Nader to Russ Feingold continue to invoke both progressivism and La Follette in their speeches. But what, exactly, does it mean to be a “progressive”?

The progressive movement rose in response to conditions of the Gilded Age, circa 1877–1905. The “gilt” of that remarkable period was glittering indeed. It is perhaps best represented

by the fantastic lifestyles of individuals who made enormous profits providing steel, oil, meat, timber, and all the other raw materials, manufactured goods, and services vital to a burgeoning nation. The era saw mushrooming cities and the rapidly developing American west. The urban industrial age boasted a rising gross national product, bringing the United States to a new place of importance in world markets. But beneath this dazzling exterior chockablock with such modern marvels as streetcars, telephones and electric lights, and inexpensive manufactured goods, darkness lurked.

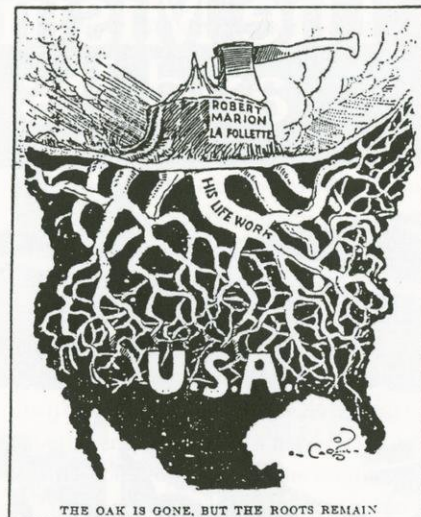
The Gilded Age economy, unstable at best, was frequently rocked by depressions. Immigrants poured in from Europe, providing much of the labor force of industrialized America. Dreams of the United States as a land of glorious opportunity, however, seemed to be realized exclusively by major industrialists

who pulled the ladder up after themselves rather than allow others to ascend. What remained were menial, often dangerous jobs so low paying that frequently the labor of the entire family was necessary for survival. After long hours in dangerous conditions, workers returned to urban ghettos rife with poverty, crime, and disease. Precious, nonrenewable resources were ripped from the earth with no thought to their conservation, let alone preservation. And government appeared at best helpless to curb the harmful excesses, at worst a willing collaborator in the profitable carnage.

This welter of challenges became the life's work of La Follette and his fellow progressives, reformers with nothing in common but their desire to combat the various problems of the new urban industrial age. Despite the diversity of their goals across the reform spectrum, they waged crucial battles in what amounted to a war over the future of the nation. In urging his fellow Americans to see "the deep underlying singleness of the issue," La Follette issued his rallying cry: "It is not railroad regulation. It is not the tariff, or conservation, or the currency. It is not the trusts. These and other questions are but manifestations of one great struggle. The supreme issue, involving all the others, is *the encroachment of the powerful few upon the rights of the many.*" (Note: This emphasis is in the original.)

It is this dedication to protecting and enhancing the rights of the many that lies at the heart of progressivism. Another definitive feature of the original progressive movement was the crucial role played by "the many," not as the passive recipients of the benevolence of more privileged others, but as active participants in the advocacy of their own cause. Progressivism included professional politicians like La Follette and welcomed the solutions to urban, industrial problems proposed by experts in fields ranging from economics to medicine. Its primary power base, however, was the common people themselves. Many of progressivism's greatest successes, including railroad reform and services to the urban worker, developed at the local level and only gradually spread into state and federal arenas.

Wisconsin led the nation in many aspects of the fight to more equitably redistribute the nation's wealth and power. By 1906, when La Follette left the governor's chair for a Senate seat, many of the state's progressive reforms were eagerly adopted by progressive governors across the nation. Wisconsin boasted a thoroughgoing and efficient reform of railroads and other powerful utilities; civil service reform for state office officials; a stringent anti-lobby law, requiring lobbyists to register with the secretary of state and to publish details of contracts with legislators; stronger provisions against corrupt practices;

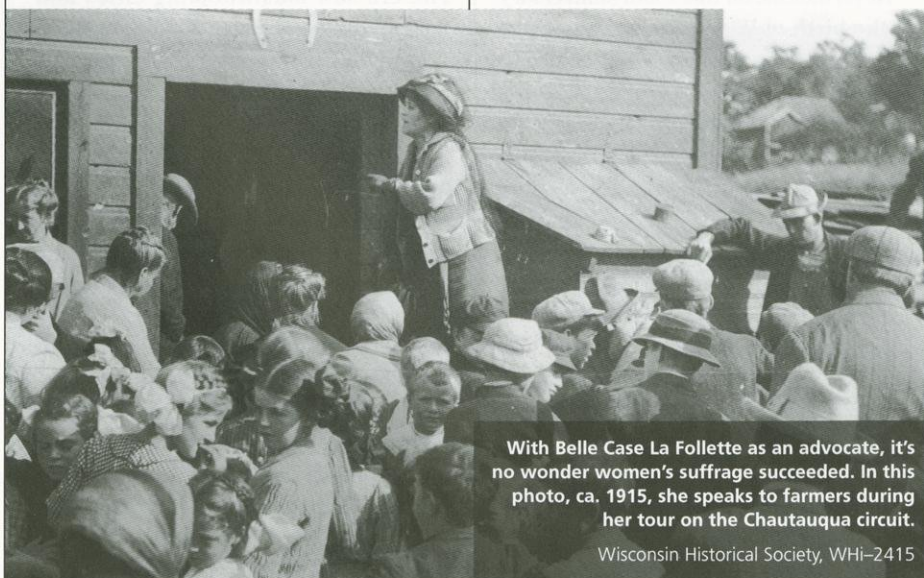


This cartoon by Cargill appeared upon Robert M. La Follette's death in 1925.

conservation measures including the forest conservation program; tax reforms; and nominations by primary elections. By 1917 the progressive movement's successes on the national level encompassed such issues as child labor, industrial working conditions, workers' compensation, education, public health, and women's suffrage.

Critics today can rightly argue that corporate giants, from Microsoft to Wal-Mart, still obstruct free competition and that the bulk of the nation's wealth and political power remains concentrated in the hands of an elite few. But the legacy of progressivism is so deeply entrenched in modern America that it is easy to miss the forest for the trees. Progressivism should be measured not only by what it achieved in very real terms, from the direct election of senators to natural resource conservation and preservation, but also by what it prevented. Had the Gilded Age excesses and abuses been allowed to proliferate unheeded, the divide between the wealthy and powerful and the ever-increasing masses of poor and working-class Americans would have grown larger and increasingly impossible to bridge. A very different America would have been the result.

Much of the original progressive agenda found its way into the New Deal. Progressive notions of equality and the power of the people were evident in the



With Belle Case La Follette as an advocate, it's no wonder women's suffrage succeeded. In this photo, ca. 1915, she speaks to farmers during her tour on the Chautauqua circuit.

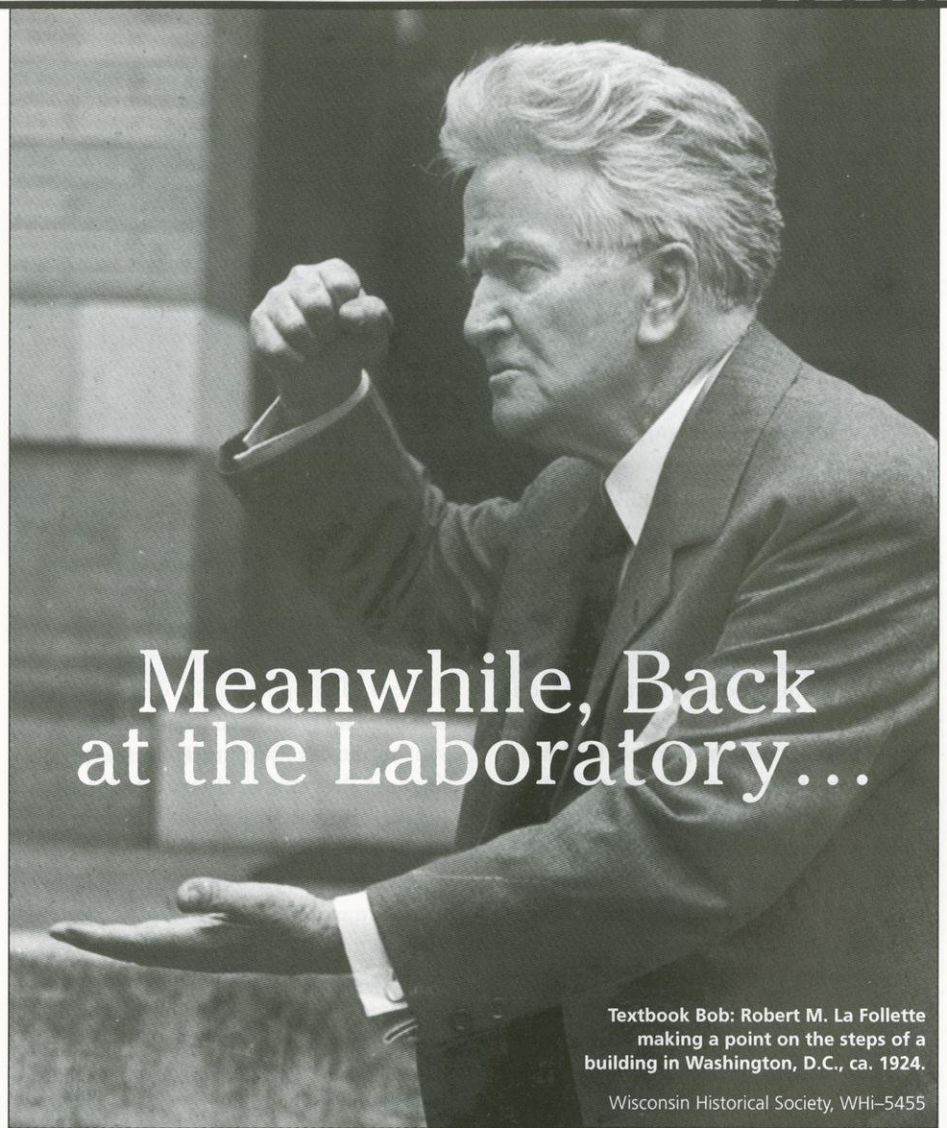
Wisconsin Historical Society, WHI-2415

Civil Rights movement and in a variety of subsequent protests and reform efforts. Although the term “progressivism” is frequently misapplied, the authentic progressive spirit still finds expression. Current examples include efforts to expand access to health care and higher education across the board, and to protect the environment from corporate exploitation.

“Mere passive citizenship is not enough,” La Follette repeatedly reminded his audiences. “Men must be aggressive for what is right if government is to be saved from men who are aggressive for what is wrong.” In Wisconsin, the annual Fighting Bob Fest is held to revitalize the progressive spirit at the grassroots level. Participants, including homemakers, activists, and professional politicians, are working together to make the state once again a celebrated “laboratory for democracy” that will lead the nation in the ongoing fight to protect “the many” from “the powerful few.” They, and others nationwide, individually and in groups, continue to fight for progressive goals.

America, noted Robert La Follette, is “not made, but in the making.” “The battle is just on,” he recognized in 1909, “it is young yet. It will be the longest and hardest ever fought for Democracy.” One hundred and fifty years after his birth, the unique legacy of progressive reform continues. *

*Nancy C. Unger's work on the La Follette family includes the award-winning biography **Fighting Bob La Follette: The Righteous Reformer** (University of North Carolina Press, 2000). Her essay on Belle La Follette's stand against racism will appear in the forthcoming edited collection **Women In Print** (University of Wisconsin Press). Her current book project is **Beyond "Nature's Housekeepers": Women And Gender In Environmental History**. She is an associate professor of history, women and gender studies, and environmental studies at Santa Clara University, and writes for *FightingBob.com* and the *History News Service*.*



Meanwhile, Back at the Laboratory...

Textbook Bob: Robert M. La Follette making a point on the steps of a building in Washington, D.C., ca. 1924.

Wisconsin Historical Society, WHI-5455

BY CURT MEINE

EVERY SCHOOLKID heard the phrase—if only once, in high school American history, sometime around March, somewhere between the Gilded Age and World War I: Wisconsin was once famous as the “laboratory of democracy.” Even kids growing up outside Wisconsin heard it. If you happened to be from Chicago, it

only confirmed your vague impression that the Land of the North was a place of purity, simplicity, and honesty, its politics as wholesome as its milk, its devotion to public integrity downright quaint.

For those accustomed to the cesspool that was Chicago’s machine politics, the clear, bracing waters of Wisconsin’s democracy seemed unfit for real life. You heard unbelievable stories about legislators mortified to learn that they had somehow overbilled the state for their travel expenses, or once forgot to pay for their own lunch. You shook your head and chuckled.

But beneath the chuckle you envied your hinterland cousins, the locals whose farm stands and Dairy Queens you stopped by on the way back to Illinois from the lake. You joked about

cheese. You scorned the Packers. But you always respected, and even took some kind of grudging regional pride, in Wisconsin's politics.

After all, you'd heard about it in history class.

The phrase was linked, in the textbook and in your consciousness, with the picture of this bantam rooster of a senator, this "Fighting Bob" La Follette. You had to like the nickname. In the picture he had preposterously big hair, and he was eternally jabbing his fist into an outstretched palm. (I pull my old text off my bookshelf. It's true! There's Fighting Bob in chapter 23, "Progressivism in Triumph and Crisis," under the subheading "Insurgency," still jabbing away.)

Like all high school history lessons, this one was incomplete. Wisconsin was much more, but we weren't told much about the Black Hawk War or the lumber barons. Joseph McCarthy just barely made it onto the stage before summer vacation, when students were unable to pay attention.

Later, when you came to know Wisconsin, you would hear the phrase more often. Entrenched elected officials and earnest reformers alike would trot it out from time to time. Visiting journalists from distant realms still invoke it on a quadrennial basis, their stock trope for this land of Midwestern mystery where people sometimes vote funny.

Yet the Laboratory of Democracy never quite achieved the status of a proper "brand." It's too hard to put on the back of a quarter. Boosters and marketing consultants fretting about Wisconsin's beer-bratwurst-cheese image ("Outmoded!" "Not sexy enough!" "Unbankable!") are hardly going to hark back to dusty words from forgotten history texts.

Ah, the text. If you look for it, you'll find it.

It's there in its raw form in the very first line of Charles McCarthy's *The Wisconsin Idea*, the stout taproot of Wisconsin progressivism. But the words are not McCarthy's. They are from Theodore Roosevelt's introduction: "Thanks to the movement for genuinely democratic popular government which Senator La Follette led to overwhelming victory in Wisconsin, that state has become literally a laboratory for wise experimental legislation aiming to secure the social and political betterment of the people as a whole." They were the words not of the sitting president, but of the rampaging Bull Moose. *The Wisconsin Idea* was published in 1912, as Roosevelt was leading his (ultimately unsuccessful) anti-Taft, anti-Wilson crusade to reclaim the White House.

With McCarthy's book, La Follette's personification, and Roosevelt's endorsement, Wisconsin's homegrown

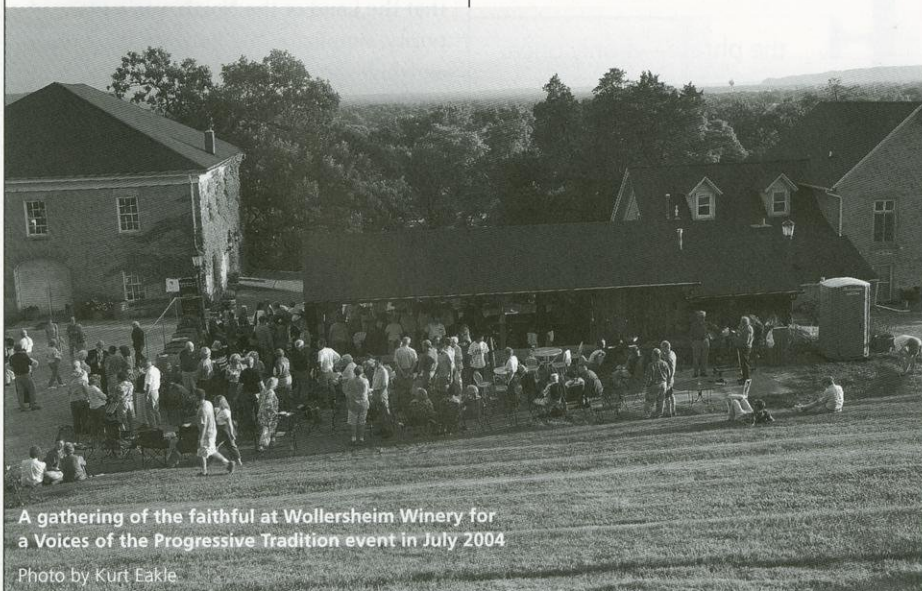
progressivism became widely admired and adapted among reformers throughout the country. Wisconsin secured its reputation for "practical and effective" responses to powerful economic interests; for "patient care in radical legislation"; for an educational system that provided its people with "the opportunity to learn how to use their power wisely." For those who fought for and shaped it, the Wisconsin Idea was no platitudinous label. It was an authentic expression of revolt, of sensible rebellion against abused privilege, corrupted policies, wrecked resources, concentrated wealth, and closed government. In response to the political challenges of the emerging modern age, the Wisconsin Idea was a clarion call to devise new ways of self-governance, open to participation, informed by knowledge, and guided by a revitalized vision of the commonwealth and the common good.

The Progressive Era was many things. Its mythology can easily hinder critical understanding of the forces that drove it, the principles that distinguished it, the great achievements and heroic flaws that marked it. But it is especially important in these days of harsh political polarities to recall that progressivism, in Wisconsin and the nation, was not a simple partisan matter. It included Republicans like La Follette and Roosevelt as well as Democrats, independents, and pragmatic socialists. It drew rural farmers and urban workers, small businesspeople and unionists, woman suffragists and clean government campaigners, conservationists and settlement house organizers. Under its broad banner of reform in the public interest, progressivism united disparate constituencies.

And in Wisconsin—its laboratory of progressivism—American democracy reinvented itself.



A century later, the laboratory is a far different place. It now contains highly sophisticated equipment for analyzing our political chemistry, manipulating our opinions, and engineering our poli-



A gathering of the faithful at Wollersheim Winery for a Voices of the Progressive Tradition event in July 2004

Photo by Kurt Eakle

cies. Properly focus-grouped, carefully framed, and effectively marketed, “Wisconsin” ideas are more likely to be distilled in hermetically sealed policy think tanks and distributed efficiently from national party headquarters. The excitement of invention has long since dissipated, replaced by the slick protocols of consultants, pundits, and message machines.

And yet ... back in odd corners of the old laboratory ... back where the cobwebs and dust bunnies reign ... the spirit of rowdy and creative experimentation has defiantly begun to reassert itself.

Two thousand and one marked the 100th anniversary of La Follette’s governorship and of Teddy Roosevelt’s presidency. The anniversaries passed with nary a commemoration in Washington or Madison. But on September 21, 2001, on an evening still reverberating from the 9/11 terrorist attacks, a full house gathered in Baraboo at Annie Randall’s bookstore, the Village Booksmith, for “Voices of the Progressive Tradition”—an evening of selected readings from Fighting Bob and TR and Charles McCarthy, from Baraboo’s own Belle Case La Follette, from Portage’s Zona Gale, the Town of Fulton’s Charles Van Hise, the village of Witwen’s Rose Litscher Meyer. Local readers and special guests recited their words. Host and historian Jack Holzhueter wove the threads of the tradition together. A long evening of conversation ensued. Talk inevitably circled around the same theme again and again: “Not much has changed in a hundred years ... We face the same challenges now ...”

Since then, the “Voices of the Progressive Tradition” have continued to be heard. Subsequent readings have been held at Spring Green and Sauk City and Portage and Prairie du Sac, and at the Senate Parlor at the State Capitol. Hundreds of Wisconsin citizens have listened to words from the well-known and the obscure—citizen advocates and teachers, ex-governors and supreme court justices, farmers and conservationists, local officials and business leaders, historians and journalists. The



Crowd scene at Fighting Bob Fest III, 2004

readers have included a similarly wide range of backgrounds and experience.

On that first evening, Tom Holmes read the words of Gifford Pinchot, Roosevelt’s “chief forester,” who was a leading conservationist and progressive governor of Pennsylvania. Tom and his wife Sue live in Baraboo and run Glenville Timberwrights, their timber-frame construction business. George W. Bush’s tax cuts of 2001 had worked their way through the system. Tom and Sue had just received their refund and were mulling over how best to invest it. They decided to dedicate the money to a

“Progressive Voices” lecture series, “designed to bring speakers to Baraboo on hot-button issues not being addressed by the media” and to offer a forum for people “of all political stripes ... interested in progressive change.” On a cold evening that December, 150 people gathered to hear the inaugural offering by former gubernatorial candidate Ed Garvey.

In any productive laboratory, all results only suggest the need for further experiments.

In January 2002, the Holmeses joined a gathering in Wisconsin Dells convened

Dressing their parts at Voices of the Progressive Tradition (2004), including Review authors Jack Holzhueter (back row, far left) and Curt Meine (front row, far left)



Photo by Kurt Eakle

Photo by Patricia Kennelly Denker

by Garvey and by Hiroshi and Arlene Kanno, leaders in the struggle against the Perrier/Nestle corporation's proposal to build a large water-bottling plant in Adams County. The gathering brought together farmers, business owners, and representatives from grassroots groups concerned with local conservation and environmental issues, campaign finance reform, and the influence of big money in state politics. More meetings followed. Soon another idea was hatched: hold a come-one-come-all "chautauqua" where citizens could learn from one another, compare notes, listen to other voices, discuss shared concerns and needs—and celebrate Wisconsin's progressive heritage. Thus was born "Fighting Bob Fest." Kari Nelson Argo of the Dells suggested the name.

The first Fighting Bob Fest was held at the Sauk Prairie Fairgrounds in Baraboo on September 7, 2002. Its organizers had no idea how many people to expect. Maybe 50 ... or 100 ... would care enough to show up that morning. One thousand citizens came, from all across Wisconsin. With the Holmeses leading an army of volunteer organizers and Garvey serving as master of ceremonies, Illinois' former Senator Paul Simon opened a day of spirited speeches. "Mere passive citizenship is not enough," Fighting Bob once insisted. Simon echoed his words and spirit. "We all change history," Simon said, "either by what we do positively, or what we do negatively, or through our indifference, turning it over to others. All of you who are here happen to be involved in something that is very key to the future of civilization. I want you to change history positively!"

Sadly, Simon's voice was stilled in 2003, but the spirit of his invocation was not. The second Fighting Bob Fest, in September 2003, drew 2,500 people. The third, in September 2004, drew 4,000—twice as many people as attended the state Republican and Democratic conventions combined. The event had grown not only in numbers, but also in the breadth of political persuasions represented, the depth of its discussions, and the age range of its attendees

(no, young people do not listen to those who caricature them as shallow slackers). A fourth Fighting Bob Fest is planned for September 2005.

Throughout Wisconsin a thriving network of engaged citizens continues to emerge, experiment, and grow. The Grassroots Citizens of Wisconsin draws members from Iowa, Sauk, Lafayette, and Grant Counties. A new Voices for Change group meets in Walworth County. A new Coalition for Responsible

Robert F. Kennedy Jr. came to Fighting Bob III (2004)

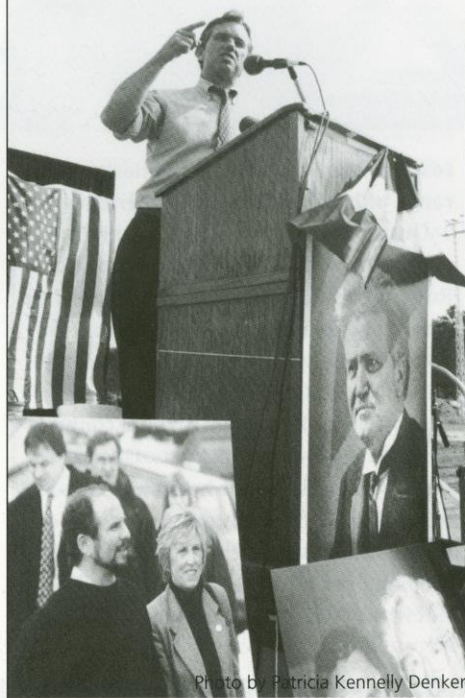


Photo by Patricia Kennelly Denker

Regional Development gathers in Medford. A new independent progressive publication starts up in Rock County. FightingBob.com carries on discussions over the Internet. This past January, some 1,100 "politically homeless" Wisconsin citizens, representing diverse political philosophies and coming from every county in the state, gathered in Madison for "The People's Legislature." The goal was to bring together at least 804 people—one more than the number of registered lobbyists in Madison.

The stereotype that progressive thinking and action is endemic only to Milwaukee and Madison, and confined to certain portions of the conventional

right-to-left political spectrum, is being broken. Citizens, and even some politicians, are nurturing native ideas for better governance throughout the state. Guided by La Follette's conviction that "permanent progress can only be secured through intelligent discussion"—a conviction that runs exactly counter to the power politics of the day—they work to revive, challenge, and extend Wisconsin's progressive tradition from within. They are not waiting for others to do so.

What results will these experiments yield? Will they reflect history's lessons? Will they merely retrace the progressivism of the past, or will they reinvent it for the future? As scientists invariably recommend, "further research is needed." Back here, beyond the shiny think tanks, the research is ongoing. *

*Curt Meine counts himself among the "politically homeless." He is a consulting conservation biologist based in Prairie du Sac and has authored several books, including the biography **Aldo Leopold: His Life and Work** (University of Wisconsin Press, 1988) and the recently published **Correction Lines: Essays on Land, Leopold, and Conservation** (Island Press). Meine serves as senior fellow with the Aldo Leopold Foundation and as a research associate with the International Crane Foundation. He is also active in local conservation as a founding member of the Sauk Prairie Conservation Alliance. He was a leader in such Wisconsin Academy projects as conferences about Wallace Stegner and Aldo Leopold, and, more recently, the three-year Waters of Wisconsin initiative.*

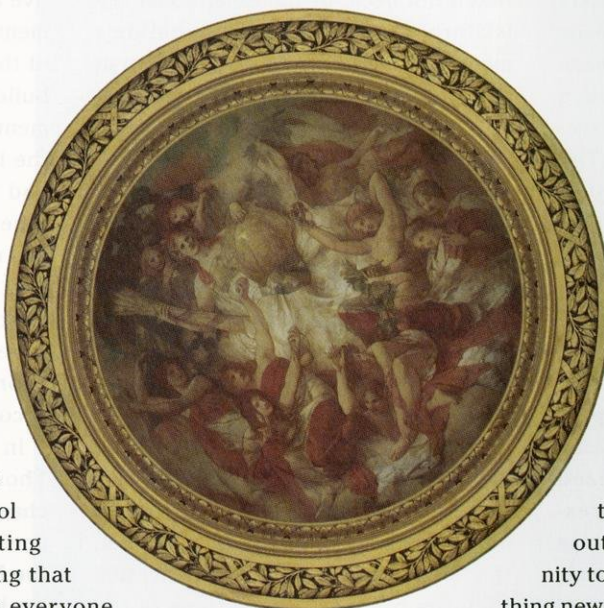
capitol art

a progressive tour

The most beautiful state capitol in the nation reflects the vision of an enlightened era.

If Robert Marion La Follette had not been governor in 1904 when plans were set in motion to expand the Wisconsin Capitol building, and if Wisconsin government had not been at its progressive zenith between 1900 and 1914, it is unlikely that the state's Capitol would be the remarkably exciting public space that it is—a building that arouses appreciation in almost everyone who sees it. Rarely do government leaders, architects, artists, and designers meld their interests as successfully as they did in creating what is without question the state's premier public building, and very likely the most beautiful state capitol in the nation.

The original intention in 1904 had been to enlarge the structure as a response to the growing bureaucracy of a growing state. The needs of Wisconsin's Supreme Court and the state law library alone required significant attention, not to mention the proliferation of boards and commissions that were created in the Progressive Era and that addressed pressing public policy issues of all sorts. They were significant elements of what came to be known in 1911 as the "Wisconsin Idea," an approach to government that fostered



unprecedented levels of cooperation between the state's scholarly community and its elected and appointed officials.

Expansion plans were abandoned, however, after a disastrous fire ruined much of the building in February 1904. But out of disaster came the opportunity to replace the structure with something new, not merely to expand it. Though

Wisconsin's resources are relatively modest economically in comparison to other states, between 1906 and 1914, when the Capitol was finished, the legislature, governor, and citizens did not hesitate to invest heavily in a new building reflecting faith and pride in government as a force for positive change. Such a government needed a suitable ceremonial center, a true "temple of democracy," as historians have often called capitols. Of the many that were erected during the late 19th and early 20th centuries, reflecting the maturation of several states during that period, Wisconsin's stands out for its elegance, sumptuousness, and the pride exhibited in it by Wisconsinites from the groundbreaking in October 1906 through the completion of restoration in 2001. It was always popular with the people, a testimony to the

TEXT BY JACK HOLZHUETER PHOTOS BY ZANE WILLIAMS

designers, the people of the state, and those artists, craftspeople, and workmen who created it with diligence and an eye to the future.

Architect George B. Post, the scion of the New York firm George B. Post & Sons, which designed the building and selected most of the artists who embellished it, intended the building as one of his masterworks. He wanted it to be an example for the rest of the country, to show what could be done in the creation of public buildings that would satisfy practical, artistic, and ceremonial needs simultaneously. He worked in the Beaux Arts tradition in which he had been trained and in which he practiced successfully for most of his career. The Beaux Arts style fosters repetition—symmetrical facades and ornaments, a vocabulary of classically derived designs, and predictable placement of sculpture and paintings. One of the tenets of the tradition held that no single element of the composition would dominate, that the whole would appear to be greater than the sum of its parts. This architectural goal harmonized superbly with the goals of progressivism: the body politic would devise ways to provide for the complex needs of the citizenry and the environment, with the end result of a unified society and environment in which all elements were in balance, none of them dominant.

Of course, these balanced results were easier to achieve with a building and the surrounding landscape than they were with society and the environment. And as with progressivism, many obstacles blocked the path. Personalities were at play in government (especially with the Wisconsin Supreme Court justices, who

very much wished to control design for their chambers and courtroom), among the artists (Hugo Ballin, the creator of the murals in the Governor's Conference Room, and the Capitol Commission never did see eye-to-eye, although Ballin's work now is seen as some of the building's most exciting), and with the contractors (seemingly interminable delays marked construction from beginning to end).

And then, of course, there was money. Had it not been for the exceptional legislature of 1911, perhaps the nation's most progressive legislative session in all of American history, the final appropriations might never have been adopted and the building and grounds might never have been completed as they were. (John Nolen, one of the most significant landscape architects of the day, designed the grounds.) In the final stages of construction it became apparent that money would not be forthcoming to complete the sculpture program for the building's exterior (some of the grand stairs and elements of the terrace balustrade were to have had sculpture created for them). Mostly because of the onset of World War I, the last wing built, the North Wing, received less attention than the other major sections of the building. And when it was done in 1917, the war prompted state officials to delay formal dedication ceremonies for the building as a whole. They finally occurred in 1964.

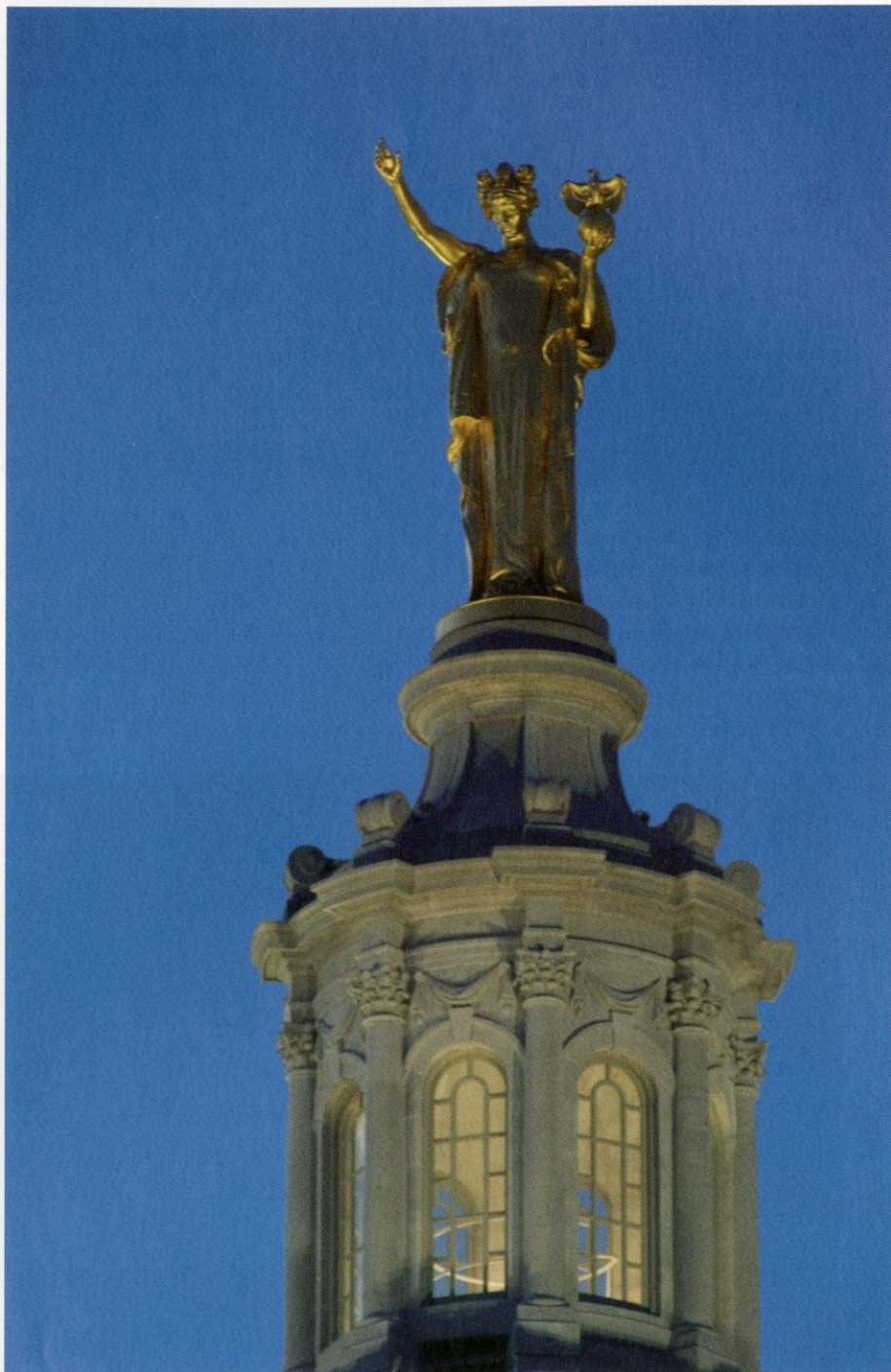
As soon as they occupied the Capitol, officeholders and building managers put their personal impress on it, leading to all manner of changes to artwork, decorated surfaces, and furniture placement. Technological innovations rendered

mechanical systems obsolete within a very few years. Overeager cleaning nearly destroyed some murals; tobacco and coal smoke badly smudged surfaces that maintenance crews could not reach. And by the 1920s, Beaux Arts architecture was out of fashion and its appealing complexities took on the appearance of sheer fussiness. The historic preservation movement that gathered steam in the 1960s proved to be the Capitol's salvation. By 1980 the executive and legislative branches of government set restoration and rehabilitation of the building in motion. Instead of a building that housed multiple government agencies, the Capitol had become the home for a full-time legislature (it had met for only a few months every other year when the Capitol was built, and most legislators used their desks in their respective chambers as their offices), the governor and lieutenant governor, the attorney general, and the Supreme Court. State office buildings accommodated all others.

In 2001, when Governor Tommy G. Thompson, who had been a principal champion of restoration, reoccupied the governor's quarters on the first floor of the East Wing (the last wing restored), the laborious preservation effort was in its mop-up stages. The building looks like one that George B. Post might recognize and be proud of, just as Robert La Follette would be proud that the people of the state still find the Capitol is their temple of democracy, a building they love to visit, admire, and use as he and his fellow progressives had intended a century ago. *

Wisconsin, by Daniel Chester French

The stunning gold-leafed sculpture atop the Capitol's dome was created by Daniel Chester French, the reigning master of monumental outdoor sculpture of his day in the United States. Female figures dominated governmental buildings in that era, harking back to the ancient period. Wisconsin's upstretched right arm bestows beneficence upon the state, while her left arm holds an orb surmounted by the national symbol, an eagle, which also referred to Wisconsin's famed Civil War eagle, Old Abe, which had resided in the previous Capitol. Wisconsin's head-dress is a badger, a reference to the state's nickname. The sculpture's elements and posture embody the inclusiveness of progressivism.



Resources of Wisconsin

by Edwin Howland Blashfield

New York artist Edwin Blashfield was one of the most acclaimed muralists in America at the time the Capitol was built, and George Post successfully recommended him for both the mural in the assembly chamber and for this oil-on-canvas mural in the oculus in the dome. The central female figure symbolizes Wisconsin and is wrapped in an American flag while holding the state's coat of arms. Other women surround her, holding examples of the state's resources and products: lead, copper, tobacco, fruit, a freshwater pearl (at the time the Mississippi River's mollusks provided pearls and mother of pearl), grain, and leaves. In true progressive tradition, the references emphasize the roles workers played in creating products from the resources. A viewing deck, now closed to casual visitors, enables close-up looks at the 32-foot-in-diameter painting, which is on a curved surface. From the rotunda floor, the painting suggests a heavenly swirl of persons among clouds.

Liberty by Kenyon Cox (right)

Known chiefly for his oil paintings, Ohio native Kenyon Cox devised four mosaics for the rotunda executed by the Decorative Glass Company of New York. They occupy the curved supports (pendentives) between the openings from the wings to the rotunda, and they symbolize the three branches of government—legislative, executive, and judicial—plus the underlying foundation for free government, the concept of liberty. These concepts harmonized particularly well with the La Follette era's emphasis on honest, innovative, representative government, an emphasis echoed by Cox, who wrote that Liberty's left hand points upward "as if to say, 'Under a republican form of government, the voice of the people is the voice of God.'"





Wisconsin Surrounded by Her Attributes, by Hugo Ballin

Originally known as the Executive Chamber or the Governor's Reception Room, the Governor's Conference Room was modeled after the reception or council room in the Doge's Palace in Venice, where the reigning duke and six councilors debated matters of state and decided on courses of action. For the Wisconsin room, painter Hugo Ballin of New York created allegorical paintings for the ceiling and historical paintings for the walls. The central ceiling panel (nine feet in diameter) employs both Wisconsin attributes and resources for themes: beauty, strength, patriotism, labor, commerce, agriculture, and horticulture. In the tradition of progressivism, all these themes touch more on the character of the state's environment and citizens than on the nature of government, which responds to the needs of the state's environment and her people. Ballin's murals for the room's walls were the only controversial works of art in the building; his ceiling murals received praise. Ballin soon went to Hollywood, where he wrote and directed movies and became an important muralist.



Arms of the State of Wisconsin, by Mack, Jenney, and Tyler

After architect George B. Post died in 1913, his sons recommended that the Capitol Commission engage the firm of Mack, Jenney, and Tyler (Charles Mack, Edgar Jenney, and Ernest Tyler) of New York as the principal decorator, rejecting Wisconsin firms whose grasp of the Capitol's style did not meet their expectations. The firm installed hundreds of murals painted in oils on canvas as well as hundreds more stencils and patterns and pounds of gold leaf. Ernest Tyler seems to have painted many of the canvases like the arms of the state that adorn the first-floor ceilings of the short corridors between the four major entrance pavilions and the rotunda. This version of the coat of arms was used beginning in the 1880s, and the badger was copied from John Audubon's engravings of North American quadrupeds. Fittingly, Tyler was Audubon's great-grandson.

The Trial of Chief Oshkosh by Judge Doty, by Albert Herter (right)

The Capitol's second floor (the floors of the Capitol are designated in the European manner, with the first floor being called the ground floor; the second floor is on the third story of the building) houses the principal meeting rooms in the building for the Supreme Court, Senate, and Assembly, with the fourth room being the most elaborate hearing room in the building. The murals in the courtroom sketch the development of western jurisprudence, concluding with the 1830 trial of Chief Oshkosh of the Menominee tribe conducted by federal judge James Duane Doty, later a territorial governor. (What is now known as Wisconsin was then a part of Michigan Territory.) Oshkosh was accused of murder, but Doty found him innocent because he had acted in accordance with Indian law, thus setting a notable precedent in American jurisprudence. The decision was remarkably "progressive" for an era when capital punishment was common.





First-floor pavilion ceilings, by Mack, Jenney, and Tyler

Besides classical motifs and Wisconsin themes, Mack, Jenney, and Tyler turned for decorative inspiration to the signs of the zodiac and to marine wildlife, which they used in four identical ceilings for the first-floor circular rooms of the pavilions at the heads of the grand exterior stairs. The signs of the zodiac, which signify inclusiveness, appear as well in the Governor's Conference Room and in the ducal palace in Venice. A statue, *The West*, by Vinnie Ream Hoxie of Madison and Washington, stands in the center of the southwest pavilion room. It honors the westward movement that characterized settlement of the United States.

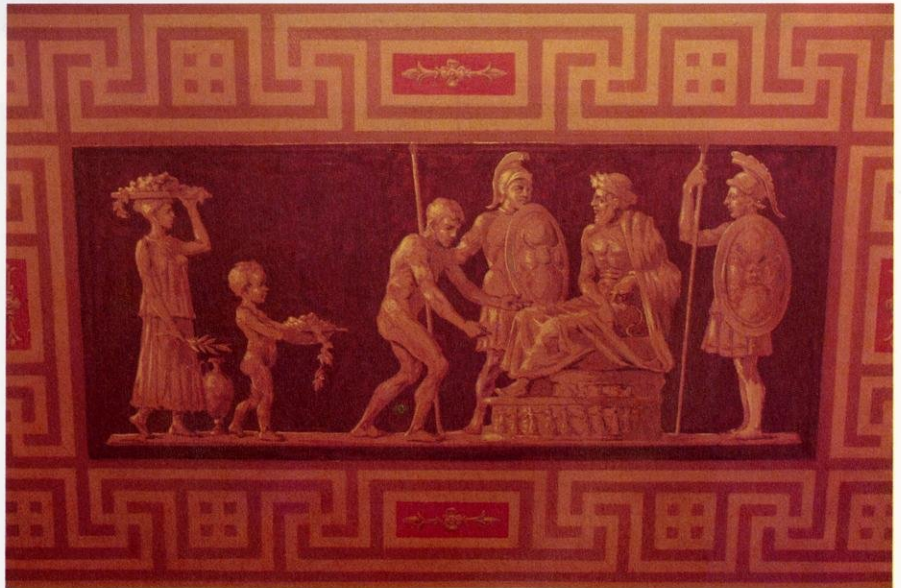
Basement rotunda ceiling,
by Mack, Jenney, and Tyler

Although furnished as a lunchroom for visitors and occupants, the basement rotunda is one of the more elegant spaces in the Capitol, completely lined with stone except for the ceiling, and with a heavily decorated ceiling. All the panels were painted on canvas, shipped from New York, and installed. The circular painting at the center of the room depicts Greek gods and goddesses associated with food. The botanical motifs used in the paintings throughout the room are associated with Wisconsin flora. Conservators have likened the room to a grotto where all are welcome to join in the bounties of Wisconsin's natural and agricultural resources.



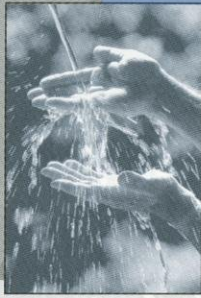
Untitled mural in the senate chamber's lobby,
by Mack, Jenney, and Tyler

The lobby of the senate's chamber on the second floor showcases the variety of decorative techniques employed by Mack, Jenney, and Tyler throughout the building: raised plaster decoration (*pastiglia*), oil-on-canvas murals, stencils, patterns, and much gold leaf. Two relatively small oil-on-canvas paintings in the lobby reflect the decorators' homage to the roots in the classical era of both government and architecture. (Ernest Tyler is remembered in his family for his "Wedgwood-like" paintings.) In this example, an apparently grateful family brings tributes to a ruler, testifying to the resources of the region and the industriousness of the citizenry.



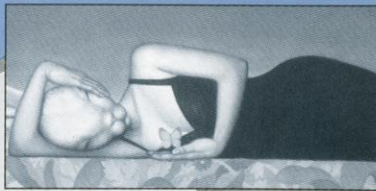
Jack Holzhueter retired in 2000 from the editorial staff of the Wisconsin Historical Society, where he assisted with the six-volume history of the state and appeared regularly for 15 years on Wisconsin Public Radio with sketches about Wisconsin history. In retirement, he assisted with preparation of a multivolume historic structure report for the Capitol. With Curt Meine and Gail Lamberty, he founded "Voices of the Progressive Tradition," a program of readings devoted to Wisconsin's progressive past.

Zane Williams is a noted photographer of the Wisconsin natural and cultural landscape. Over the past 25 years his work has graced art books, guidebooks, textbooks, calendars, and the 32-cent Wisconsin Sesquicentennial U.S. postage stamp. His most recent published work, *Doubletake: A Rephotographic Survey of Madison, Wisconsin* (UW Press, 2001), rigorously examined the nature of change in the heart of the state's capital city over the past century.



the idea

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



the gallery

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



the public forums

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

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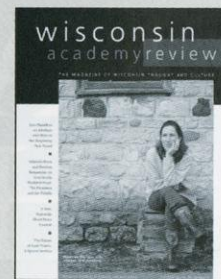
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the review

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FIRST PLACE

"Fly Fishing," by Sheryl Slocum, Lake Geneva

Winner of the John Lehman Poetry Award

Prizes: \$500 and a CD recording session at Abella Studios, Madison

SECOND PLACE

"The Only Children of Single-Parent Gods," by Kathleen Dale, Milwaukee

Prizes: \$100 and a \$100 "Color It Green" gift certificate

from McKay Nursery, Madison

THIRD PLACE

"The Hostage to His Beheader," by Richard Merelman, Madison

Prize: \$50

Winners' Reading on Thursday, April 7, 7–9 pm at
Avol's Bookstore, 315 W. Gorham Street, Madison

This year's *Wisconsin Academy Review* Poetry Contest drew a record number of participants: 424 entries comprised of up to three poems each. While we have not counted each poem, it is certainly safe to say that well over 1,000 poems were submitted—quite a statement about the vibrancy of poetry in Wisconsin!

As usual, selecting only 13 of them for honors—three winners and 10 runners-up—proved difficult because of the overall high quality of the entries. We would like to thank our judges, Bill Stobb, Rick Ryan, and Shoshauna Shy—and especially our lead judge, Jean Feraca—for their time and dedication in taking on the challenge. Special thanks go to our poetry editor and contest sponsor, John Lehman, for his devotion to Wisconsin poets and poetry and his years of hard work and generous support for this contest, which in its present format is now in its fourth year. Thanks, too, to Avol's Bookstore for monetary support and for hosting our winners' reading in April, National Poetry Month.

In this issue of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*, we invite you to enjoy the winning poems as well as an additional selection by each of our three winning poets. We would also like to announce our 10 runners-up, who have been invited to participate in the April reading. Their winning poems will be published in our summer issue. They are (in alphabetical order by author):

"The Opening in the World," Cynthia Belmont, Ashland

"Bearbait," Margaret Benbow, Madison

"History Lesson," Cathryn Cofell, Appleton

"Trout Rising in Pisces," Jeff Copenhagen, Washburn

"Naming Things," Jen Garfield, Deerfield, Illinois

"The Only Jewish Family in the Neighborhood," Judith Harway, Shorewood

"Spirograph," Michael Kriesel, Aniwa

"The Fight," Amy Jo Minett, Madison

"Yom Kippur Fast in Taos," Judith Strasser, Madison

"Between the Sheets," Timothy Walsh, Madison

POETRY

contest winners

THE JUDGE'S WORDS

*Lead judge Jean Feraca on
"Fly Fishing"*

I think it was Emily Dickinson who said that a poem should make you feel like the top of your head has just blown off. That's what happened to me not once, but every time I reread "Fly Fishing." It's something of a miracle when a poem that fits on a single page can start with something as mundane as a splash from a pothole and end at "the meeting of the worlds," touching on a baseball game, a child lifting her foot to take a first step, and a holy man greeting death with shining eyes along the way. That, in a twinkling, is the art of poetry, and it belongs to no one else on earth but the poet.



SHERYL SLOCUM

1ST
PLACE WINNER

JOHN LEHMAN
POETRY AWARD

Fly Fishing

An oncoming car's wheel slogs
into a pothole.
Through already descending lashes
I see the water come,
white, wave-shaped, leaping
in an arc
toward its rapping impact
with my windshield
and my involuntary blink.
That poised moment
when the arc is still intact
and water knows nothing
of obstacles, catches at my throat,

reminds me
of baseball when the batter
plans to bunt.
Pitcher, shortstop, basemen—
all move forward
as the ball leaves
the pitcher's hand.
All, intent, unknow
everything
except the impact of wood
on whitened leather.

I have seen a bird fall
mid-flight,
a holy man greet death
with shining eyes,
my child lift her foot
for her first step.
I have gazed into memory-erasing
blue, waiting
for sky to contract
into the first star.

It is this throw, this cast
of all change,
like a long line curling
above a river,
extending, descending,
that makes me rise,
forgetting all,
to put my mouth
around the meeting of the worlds.

by Sheryl Slocum

Fighting Fire

Haze settles like wrong into all the clefts
 and hollows of the land.
 I look up at the reddening sun, knowing
 not far away, fire fighters
 struggle in thin and scorching air
 to outwit hungry flames.
 My father worked in a fire tower; from
 his nest of steel and glass
 mapped lightning strikes, made calls
 and directed armies
 of men, mules and planes to strategic sites.

Now his body labors
 to believe its own life. I pray for those
 watching the hot spots,
 for the monitors, buzzers and warning
 lights that do their work
 as nurses go their rounds,
 tuck patients in,
 and turn down the lights into a half-darkness
 that settles uneasily
 on those who die and those
 who merely sleep.

by Sheryl Slocum

Sheryl Slocum lives in Lake Geneva. She began writing poetry in elementary school in imitation of the *Ideals Christmas* magazine. Later, she filled reams of paper with adolescent verse. Adulthood brought adventure in Chad, Africa, Lumberton, New Mexico, and Washington, DC. After settling down and beginning a family, she experimented with fiction, which brought her back to poetry. Although she has won several prizes for fiction, Slocum considers poetry her primary art. "Writing makes me notice, often as if for the first time, and states things I realize I have needed all of my life to be able to say," she says.

One significant early prize was when Mr. Vocolo, her seventh-grade English teacher, pinned her poem "Faraway Coyote" on the class bulletin board. More recently, Slocum's poetry has won prizes and honorable mentions in Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets contests and in *ByLine Magazine* competitions. She was invited several times to read poems in the former incarnation of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters' poetry competition.

Slocum's poems have appeared in numerous magazines and journals, including *The Lyric*, *ByLine Magazine*, *Blueline* (an Adirondacks literary magazine), and *100 Words* (a 'zine out of the University of Iowa). The publications Slocum considers the most satisfying, however, are those printed in serials that are actually read by her friends, peers, and colleagues: *The Anglican Theological Review*, *The Wisconsin Poets' Calendar*, and the *Wisconsin Academy Review*. She lives in Lake Geneva and is a member of the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets and the Root River Poets.

THE JUDGE'S WORDS

Lead judge Jean Feraca on
"The Only Children of
Single-Parent Gods"

I admire this thought-provoking and well-wrought poem for the originality of its conceit, the way it pairs Greek myth with Christian myth, Great Mother with Great Father, prodigal son with wayward daughter, and lets the two embattled gods have it out like quarterbacks playing in the Super Bowl. By using fresh imagery and contemporary language in retelling these two old stories, the poem brings unique perspectives to what is ancient, and vice versa.



KATHLEEN DALE

2ND
PLACE WINNER

The Only Children of Single-Parent Gods

The only children of single-parent gods
like preachers' kids must rebel.

Persephone runs away with her under-
ground lover, bad boy with beautiful

hands who catches her and leans her back
over his Harley. Eating his seed,

she reigns, six months a biker queen,
while her Great Mother tries to call,

leaves squawking voice mails, desperate
to tell her all she was always meaning

to: when you clean the tub, don't
mix chlorine and other chemicals;

never use Vaseline to
remove mascara; you don't have to

smile and be nice to strange men.
The daughter can't hear, doesn't care

but nods her precious head, turns to the scruff,
the black boots, licks the ripe pulp

running down his chin.

The Son of God,

that mild boy know-it-all,

rejects his Father's xenophobia, balks
at the family business, doesn't go to college,

join the army, marry, or supply
grandchildren (is he gay?), instead

becomes *un médecin sans frontières*,
is tortured as an example far from home

while the Father, also on the phone,
networks, tries to pull strings, call in

markers, says it's a god damned lie
that He ever sent him down there.

At the end daughter and son cry
out for their parent deities but even

if they were heard, even if they can
be resurrected, their folks cannot

save that which they wish to save. Mother
turns her back on summer, curls into yellowed

leaves and weeps; Father slams his fist
through Heaven's darkening wall, starts another war.

by Kathleen Dale

August Night Journey, Chicago Emergency Room: A Sestina

—for Rachel

The gunshot wounds, the unconscious, the already dead, head through automatic doors, are whisked from view. The rest of us, on our cumbersome way, sit, row upon row, as in a painted boat and journey through uncertainty, watch our triaged, color-coded hieroglyphic charts inch up. The faces of those who are parents

are smeared with the aftershock of fear. New parents abandon baby carriers, cradle small heads. A wild-haired mother, lion-masked Sekhmet, common hieroglyph, peels open a flimsy vomit bag, fierce protectress, for her daughter. Unexpected and uncurtained, a grown orphaned child pukes in the next row.

A half hour later, the slow clock still rowing oars of hope toward the door, an attendant tiredly shuffles in with an uncertainly clean mop. Bursting through doors, cops hoist the head of a madman nearly hit by a car, the rest of him strung out, shrieking cracked hieroglyphics.

The homeless themselves, untranslatable hieroglyphics round the base of the room, snore in scattered rows, mouths hinged open, arms heavy at rest clutching dirty blankets, clumsily parenting themselves while the sinuous snake of time heads through the sand of night toward dawn, slithering, certain.

Then woodenly, like a carved painted servant buried with a queen, the helpful hieroglyphic spell “here I am, look at me” written on its stand (your head averted, resting on space), at last I face your unrowdy pain, in the hunch of your shoulders, the smudge of your eyes, apparent, the gist easily gathered from the bruised edges of your rest,

your nearly grown beautiful body shudders. Restive, I long to offer myself to you, head off uncertainty. But undeciphered, fixed as wood, outgrown as your parent, I dumbly watch you (your name called) navigate the hieroglyph of health alone, and return, drained survivor. You have rowed back hard. I would have hammered you a head

of gold, immortal, transparent. Instead, outside we merge, unmasked, with green uncertainty, decode the darkening hieroglyph of summer. We do not name the rows of enemies we put to rest, but the ruddy rising head of the sun is filled with their blood.

Kathleen Dale teaches writing and other courses at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee, and notes that she has extended writing time only in summers.

She says that writing “always teaches me something about where I am and what’s next, and it’s always a kick to see what new connections the language will make this time. During the school year I squirrel away drafts to work on during the too-short summer. But even during the long winters they’re always there on the computer for a quick look, a quick revision, a quick reminder that this is what I do.”

Dale’s poems have been published or are forthcoming in many publications, most recently *Rattle*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, *Free Verse*, *Switched-on Gutenberg*, *The New River: Digital Writing and Art*, *Poet’s Canvas*, *The Pedestal Magazine*, *River Oak Review*, and *Chiron Review*. Recently she won second prize in the Milwaukee Public Library’s Love Poem contest (for Valentine’s Day).

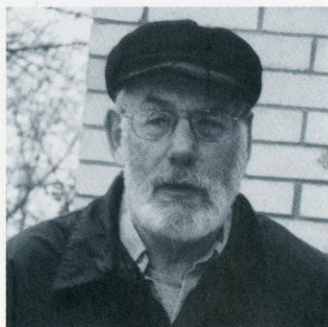
Dale lives in Milwaukee with her husband and three daughters.

by Kathleen Dale

THE JUDGE'S WORDS

*Lead judge Jean Feraca on
"The Hostage to His Beheader"*

This is a startling poem that deserves to be honored for its humanity, its forbearance, and its courage. How many of us in listening to the horrendous reports of beheadings coming out of Iraq during the last several months have wondered to ourselves what it must be like to face such a death, and how each of us might hold up in being put to such a test. And so the poet imagines what is unimaginable, thereby fulfilling for all of us a function very few poets are ever brave enough to undertake. It would have been all too easy to sensationalize this subject; instead, the poet, in choosing to focus only on the most ordinary, mundane details, reminds us of what is truly precious in all our lives.



RICHARD MERELMAN

3RD
PLACE WINNER

The Hostage to His Beheader

I can tell by your silence that whatever I say
about baseball at Wrigley isn't
getting to you because I'm speaking
in English or about Jesus Christ my Redeemer
though somebody said on TV or a movie
that He's one of your prophets so
you've probably heard about my mercy.
Take my wallet look at the pictures
every one of them worth a million words
who knows? God knows life
isn't easy for an ugly kid which is my kid
mugging on the bumper in his Little League shirt
you wouldn't saddle your kid with an overbite
neither did we my wife bought him braces
spent a bundle of money after the body shop
folded. My wife isn't a looker, never really was,
and hefty since she quit smoking
see her stomach sag like a sack of potatoes
in the next one, taken by the shade tree
at her grandmother's lake place, a sort of oasis.
Listen a minute: maybe you've had a rough time
of it too and your boy's teeth need to be straightened
and your wife has stopped making the effort
and the bank forecloses, and it's too late for

by Richard Merelman

Cigar Maker: Tampa, 1981

Through gritty windows
 he glimpses stale tobacco
 spilling from broken oak barrels.
Havatampa's an American brand,
 brittle leaf unseasoned,
 core mixed with pinches of sawdust,
 burley flaking, like *Shredded Wheat*.
 He mans the sealing machine,
 where paper pulp becomes wrapper
 and cellophane suffocates flavor.
 A plastic filter
 separates tongue from tip
 like a plexiglass panel
 between butterfly and flower.

From the balcony café
 he gazes over the marshes
 to the Refugee Intake Center,
 where his boat landed at Safety Harbor.
 He remembers his last cheroot,
 the one he rolled in Havana
 from batches he blended,
 stuffed into a lunch box,
 smuggled to Tampa,
 smoked in his trailer last night.
 He licks his lips,
 tastes flue-cured maduro,
 watches the binder's slow burn,
 breathes the filler's cedar aroma,
 traces the shape of the ash.
 Best of the bunch he brought:
 even the cigarillos, soft as chiffon,
 clove-scented coronas,
 hand-fashioned panatellas.

The break bell clangs
 like a cell door slamming.
 Back to the factory floor.
 In rubber gloves and a canvas mask,
 he makes cigars without heart.

by Richard Merelman

Richard Merelman lives in Madison and began writing poetry three years ago, following his retirement from the department of political science at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. His poems have appeared in *Free Verse*, *The Wisconsin Poets Calendar* (2004), and *California Quarterly*.

When asked why he writes poetry, Merelman says, “Good poetry transforms personal experience into something of lasting artistic value. I like the fact that poetry utilizes the English language to its maximum potential. Also, a good poem combines rigor with freedom, not only in the relation of form to content, but also in the relationship of ideas to emotions. Finally, more than any other art form, a poem is a self-contained, concentrated aesthetic expression.”

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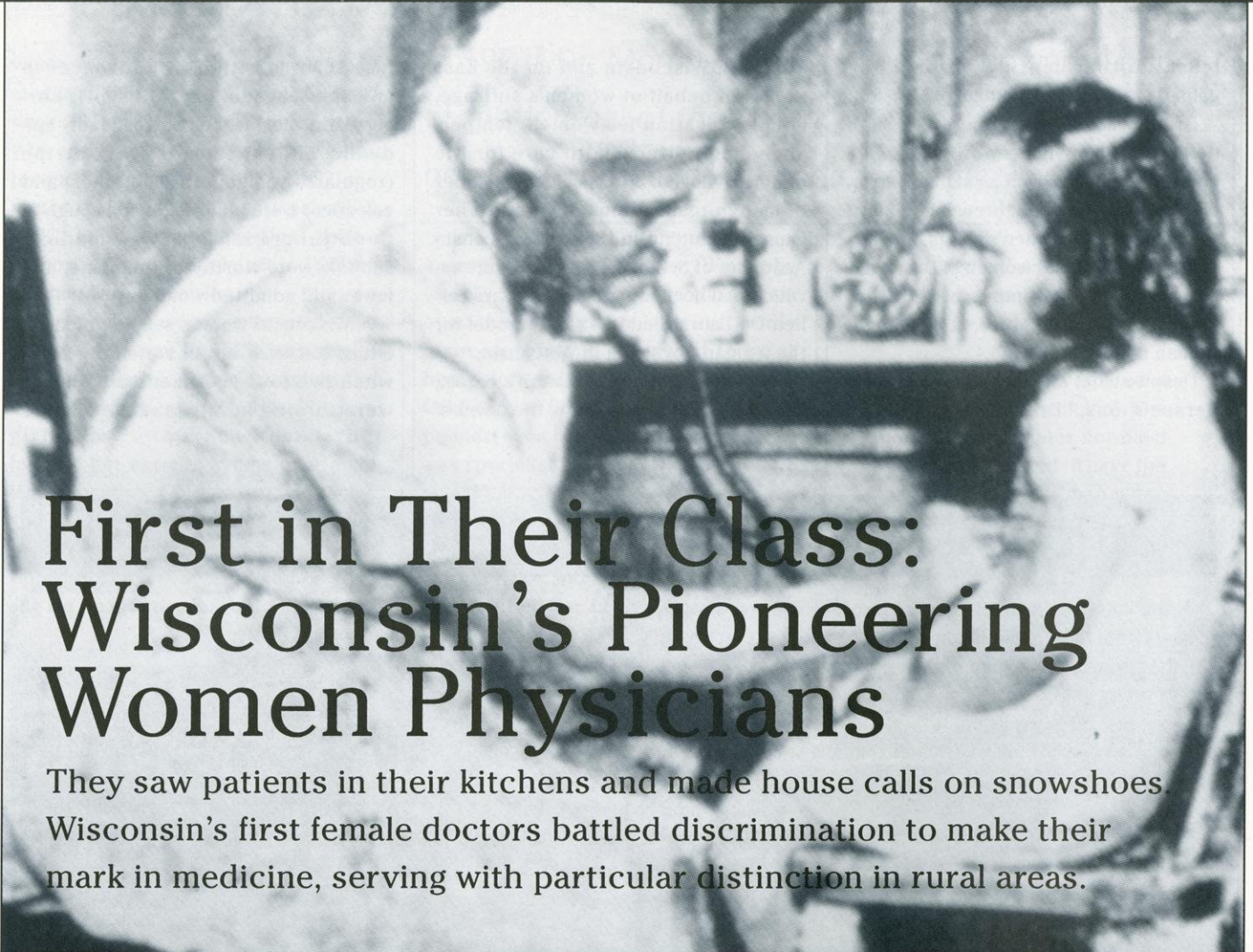
—George Orwell



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First in Their Class: Wisconsin's Pioneering Women Physicians

They saw patients in their kitchens and made house calls on snowshoes. Wisconsin's first female doctors battled discrimination to make their mark in medicine, serving with particular distinction in rural areas.

BY EARL R. THAYER

WITH PROFILES BY STEVE BUSALACCHI

Dr. Lillie Rosa-Minoka Hill—who in 1899 became the second Native American in the United States to get a medical degree—set up a clinic in the kitchen of her home near Green Bay.

Photo courtesy *Milwaukee Journal*, 1947

“Educated physicians ... would not be afraid of compromising [their dignity] by association with a learned woman ... If women have brain and perseverance enough to go successfully through the five year course of study ... they should become practitioners. In my opinion, only a limited number of women will become doctors ... the life and destiny of women lie in another and equally useful direction ... it is not worth our while to make a stupid raid on the sex.”

Orlando W. Wight, M.D., 1870
Chairman of the Wisconsin State Medical Society's
Committee on Medical Education

Dr. Wight was playing medical politics with the gender issue. His remarks were made at the first meeting of the State Medical Society after Dr. Laura Ross Wolcott and several other women physicians had been granted admission to the local society in Milwaukee. It seems likely that he was pandering to the many male

physicians who had voted against Dr. Laura's joining “their” medical society.

Dr. Wight's expression of promise and prejudice came 21 years after Elizabeth Blackwell became the first woman to graduate from an American medical school. It was a dual message that women across the nation heard for at

least another century before they gained equity in the medical profession.

Dr. Laura was more energized than deterred by Dr. Wight's words. A deeply compassionate as well as skilled physician and surgeon, she threw herself into the struggle for women's rights. She fervently believed that women M.D.s would gain only if all women profited from activism for social justice, equality, and human dignity.

Despite what she called "aggravating persecutions," Dr. Laura took to the

stump in Wisconsin and on the East Coast on behalf of women's suffrage, equal education for women, temperance, and better health care for the underprivileged. She became a member of many organizations devoted to her causes, including, in 1878, the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, which had been founded eight years earlier. Dr. Laura died in 1915, a model for the woman physician in Wisconsin.

Over the course of Dr. Laura's career, the medical profession saw the dawn of

true science with major advances in anesthesia, radiology, antiseptic surgery, and vaccines to control deadly epidemics. Physicians of every stripe (regulars, homeopaths, botanics, and eclectics) were plentiful even though of doubtful credentials. Few medical schools were worthy of the name, and fewer still admitted women.

A Wisconsin woman seeking medical education went out of state until 1893, when two four-year medical colleges were formed in Milwaukee. Only 19

"I'm not dead yet!"

Laura Ross Wolcott, M.D.

You know you're despised when a colleague places your obituary in the local paper before you've passed on. That's exactly what happened to Wisconsin's first woman physician, Laura J. Ross Wolcott, M.D., who came to Milwaukee in 1857.

Her real obituary, listed in the January 1916 edition of the *Wisconsin Medical Journal*, states that she was only the third woman in the United States to receive a medical degree. Laura Ross graduated from the Women's Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1856. A year later, she moved to Milwaukee.

"It appears she was the first bonafide (woman) medical school graduate practicing in Wisconsin," notes Earl Thayer, author of *Seeking to Serve*, a 150-year history of the Medical Society of Milwaukee County. But the local medical community was less than enthusiastic about her arrival. At the time, women doctors were considered "quacks" and not real physicians.

She remained "despite some of the attempts of the male physicians to get rid of her—one even published a false obituary of her in one of the Milwaukee papers hoping that her patients would leave her because she's now dead," Thayer says. But a rival paper rode to her rescue, confirming that Ross was very much alive and a reputable doctor.

Even so, she was initially rejected for membership in the Medical Society of Milwaukee County in 1868, despite her popularity among patients. "The Society cannot survive the presence of a woman," claimed one report Thayer dug up.

But again, help was on the way. One of the heaviest hitters in Wisconsin's medical community went to bat for Dr. Ross. It was her friend Erastus B. Wolcott, M.D., who was surgeon general of Wisconsin during the Civil War. Greatly respected, his endorsement paved the way for her acceptance into the Society. Wolcott and Ross may have been more than friends because they later married.

"The minute she married him, she became a major figure professionally and socially," says Thayer. Laura Ross Wolcott used her prominent place in the community to fight for the admission of women to hospital medical staffs, allowing women to attend med-



Laura Ross Wolcott, 1882

Wisconsin Historical Society Image WHI-2461

ical school in the same classes with men, and advocating for civil rights. For example, she paid for and arranged the first women's suffrage convention in Milwaukee, bringing in Susan B. Anthony.

Dr. Laura Ross Wolcott died at age 82 on December 8, 1915, at her home in Ravenswood, Illinois. The only need for an obituary this time was the fact that she had indeed passed away.

by Steve Busalacchi

women were among the 745 men graduated from these schools over the next 20 years. Meanwhile, the University of Wisconsin, which had offered a two-year pre-medical course starting in 1887, converted this to a two-year "half-school" in 1907. The four-year medical school authorized by the legislature in 1848 languished with indecision.

Nonetheless, women physicians educated elsewhere found Wisconsin an attractive place to live and practice. One of these was Margaret Caldwell, a farm girl from Pewaukee whose father favored her early marriage over a college education. On her own in Chicago, she graduated from Woman's Hospital Medical College (Northwestern University) in 1876. Within a few years she set up practice in Waukesha, where,

In 1901, Dr. Morris Fishbein, then the powerful editor of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, helped fuel the fires of medical anti-feminism.

according to her biography (Waukesha County Historical Society), the "locals eyed the lady doctor with unfriendly glances, thinking she ought to be at home doing more womanly work." Dr. Caldwell, an imposing six feet and 200 pounds, soon became widely recognized as a specialist in women's diseases. She was the first woman presenter of scientific papers at the Wisconsin State Medical Society's annual meetings.

In 1901, Dr. Morris Fishbein, then the powerful editor of the *Journal of the*

American Medical Association, helped fuel the fires of medical anti-feminism when he wrote in the June issue:

"Women will never hold a strong place [in medicine]. The normal woman does not have nor is she expected to have the virile courage of a man when confronted with a critical case that demands independent action and fearless judgment."

Leaping with Lindy

Bertha Reynolds, M.D.

So you thought your college days were tough? For a young woman named Bertha Reynolds, getting her homework done in the early 1900s meant having male friends smuggle cadavers so she could dissect them in a barn by lantern light.

That kind of dedication earned her the affectionate nickname "Doctor Bertha" in Lone Rock, where she practiced medicine for 40 years. Reynolds was among the state's first licensed female physicians. Dr. Bertha was so dedicated to her community, says *The American Woman's Gazetteer*, that she would often take elderly patients into her own home until they were well enough to care for themselves.

"This pioneer woman physician, who invaded a male-dominated profession, made her calls on horseback and by boat, automobile, and airplane, and once made an emergency call with Charles Lindbergh," proclaims an undated press release from the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

The Lindbergh story goes like this, according to *A Life of Service*, by Judith Redline Coopey. It was spring of 1923 and Dr. Bertha received two emergency calls from small nearby towns: one from Clyde, the other from Plain. The roads were impassable and the Wisconsin River was too rough to cross. Luckily, she had heard that a young pilot had flown into Lone Rock the day before and was able to arrange for plane transport.

As the pilot helped her into the cockpit she asked: "What's your name, young man?" the story goes.

"Charles Lindbergh," the pilot replied.

"Well Charles, I'm in a hurry. Let's be off."

Thanks to the doctor/pilot duo, both patients were saved. And while Lindbergh was waiting for Dr. Bertha to finish tending her



Wisconsin Historical Society Image 2463

patient, he gave free plane rides to pupils at St. Luke's School in Plain, where he landed.

In 1940, she retired to Avoca at age 72. "But when World War II broke out, leaving the town without a physician, she took up her stethoscope again and practiced for another thirteen years," notes *The American Woman's Gazetteer*. The publication also related the aforementioned story about the smuggled cadavers in her barn. Women students in her day were forbidden to see certain bodies, presumably male ones.

Bertha Reynolds, M.D., was 93 when she died on Halloween, 1961.

by Steve Busalacchi

This is your life, Dr. Kate Newcomb!

The pennies that built a desperately needed hospital in northern Wisconsin may not have come from heaven, but local residents insist an "angel" was responsible nonetheless. Because enough pennies from around the world flowed into tiny Woodruff, the hospital opened debt-free in 1954.

That success may be credited to a beloved physician named Kate Pelham Newcomb. Known as the "angel on snowshoes" and also as "Doctor Kate," she frequently trekked through impassable roads to make emergency house calls. Dr. Newcomb covered 250 square miles around Boulder Junction.

Born in Kansas in 1886 and raised in upstate New York, Kate Pelham enjoyed a comfortable life as her father was president of the Gillette razor company. He initially refused to allow Kate to attend medical school, so she became a teacher instead. Her father later relented, and Kate graduated from medical school at age 31 and practiced for a short time before marrying Bill Newcomb.

Dr. Kate soon gave up her medical career to care for her ailing husband, moving to northern Wisconsin in 1926 because clean air became increasingly important to his health. Her hiatus from medicine didn't last long; a local doctor demanded that she tackle an emergency situation he couldn't attend to. It was the first visit of many Dr. Newcomb would make in northern Wisconsin over the next three decades.

"Her office was just a block from school and many of the kids in school were known as 'Doctor Kate babies' because she deliv-

ered probably 4,000 babies in this area in her lifetime," says Marsha Doud, a former patient and a volunteer curator at the Dr. Kate Pelham Newcomb Museum in Woodruff.

Since there was no hospital in the area, Dr. Newcomb made room for patients in two cabins on her property in Boulder Junction. "They stayed up there in those little cabins and she took care of them right there," says Helen Schlecht, another former patient and the museum's treasurer (and Doud's mother).

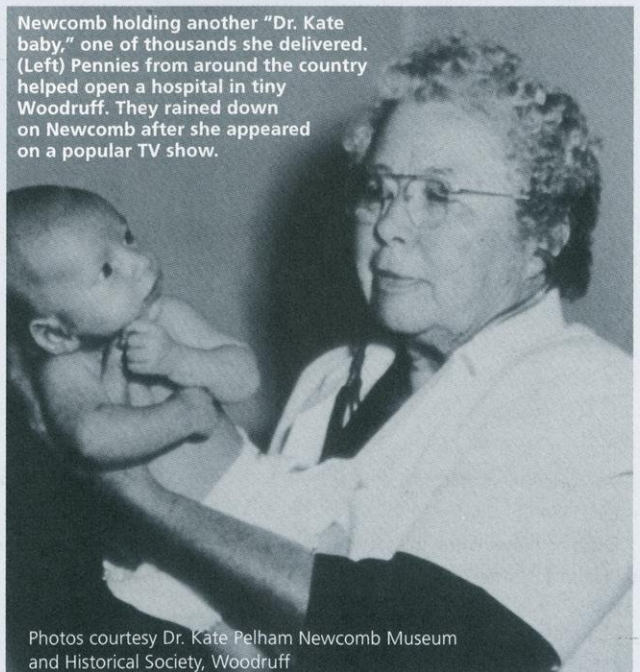
Even an all-expenses-paid trip to California one March wasn't enough to lure Dr. Newcomb away from the people she served. "Kate felt flattered by the invitation, but she decided she could not spare the time from her busy schedule," writes Adele Comandini, author of *Doctor Kate: Angel on Snowshoes*, a 1956 biography now being reprinted.

It turned out that the invitation to the "medical convention" was a ruse by producers of the hit television show "This is Your Life." They needed to get her into the studio without her knowing she was the subject of the program.

Assistance from the Wisconsin Medical Society made it happen. Both Comandini's book and the April 1954 *Wisconsin Medical Journal* state that a representative from the Society traveled from Madison to Woodruff to personally urge Dr. Newcomb to attend the "convention." Dr. Newcomb was told that she was selected to represent Wisconsin in a ceremony honoring a famous doctor from London who perfected penicillin and made it available to the world. That was enough to convince Dr. Newcomb to hop on a train from Woodruff to Los Angeles.



Newcomb holding another "Dr. Kate baby," one of thousands she delivered. (Left) Pennies from around the country helped open a hospital in tiny Woodruff. They rained down on Newcomb after she appeared on a popular TV show.



Photos courtesy Dr. Kate Pelham Newcomb Museum and Historical Society, Woodruff

Kate Pelham Newcomb, M.D.

While she was sitting in the studio on March 17, 1954, host Ralph Edwards approached her with a leather-bound book and asked her to read what was printed on it. Then he announced the show's trademark words: "This is your life, Dr. Kate Newcomb!"

Completely flabbergasted, she still had no idea what was going on.

"You've been a minister to wounded hunters and trappers, treated injured lumberjacks and Indians, revived half-drowned vacationers, trudged miles on snowshoes through frozen woods to deliver babies by the light of a kerosene lantern ..." Edwards continued.

During the program, the host also mentioned Newcomb's dream of building a desperately needed hospital and the fact that a local high school class was in the process of collecting a million pennies to help defray the cost. Edwards asked viewers to send pennies to Dr. Kate Newcomb in Woodruff, Wisconsin.

"Pennies came here by the tons—\$105,000 worth of pennies," says Doud. A Hollywood screenwriter named Adele Comandini showed up, too. But after spending time with Dr. Newcomb, she decided to write a book instead.

Lakeland Memorial Hospital opened in 1954, shortly after Dr. Newcomb returned from the incredible California trip that concluded with her first airplane ride. "She arrived in time to attend the formal opening of the hospital, but missed part of the ceremony because she was called away to Tomahawk to deliver a baby," noted the *Wisconsin Medical Journal*.

Dr. Newcomb died two years later, but her name and folk hero status live on throughout northern Wisconsin as various health care facilities there still carry her name.

"Doctor Newcomb was Woodruff's only claim to fame," says Schlecht.

by Steve Busalacchi

In urban areas, hospitals were reluctant to admit women physicians to their staffs. Thus many of Wisconsin's early women doctors took their talents to small towns, where they blossomed in appreciation and worth.

Against this deeply entrenched male hierarchy in American medicine, women simply went about proving their own case for equality in the profession. It was slow, even demeaning at times, but their philosophy for progress was best expressed by Dr. Caldwell: "Once I decided ... to become a doctor, I decided to devote all my time toward being a good one."

Being a good physician didn't guarantee success, especially in urban areas where hospitals initially were reluctant to admit women physicians to their staffs. Thus, many of Wisconsin's early women doctors took their talents to small towns, where they blossomed in appreciation and worth. Typical was Mary Sorenson, born in Denmark in 1837. She went to medical school in Chicago and settled in Milltown (Polk County) when "lady doctors were unheard-of." She is remembered by older settlers of the area as "one of the finest persons ever to have lived there."

Other examples include Helen Binnie-Zank, who graduated from the Wisconsin College of Physicians and Surgeons in Milwaukee in 1911. While practicing in Portage and Kenosha she worked to improve the lot of women in medicine as a longtime officer in the Wisconsin Medical Women's Society. And Elizabeth Baldwin was the first woman physician at the Marshfield Clinic and in 1957 the first woman doctor to be named to the State Board of Health.

And then there was Lillie Rosa-Minoka Hill, who in 1899 became the second Native American in the United States to get a medical degree. When she married a farmer from the Oneida Reservation near Green Bay, he insisted it would not be proper for his wife to practice medi-

cine. She gave it up to help tend the farm and raise six children. But she could not conceal her medical degree. Patients just appeared at her house, and her kitchen served as a clinic. The entire reservation benefited from her persistent efforts to improve sanitation and nutrition. Finally, and with pride, Charlie Hill accepted his wife's practice. Dr. Hill died in 1952 amid honors from her medical college, the UW agricultural school, the American Medical Association, and many other organizations. She had made it undeniably clear that women physicians could successfully manage practice, marriage, family, and community service. In doing so she had helped widen the opportunities in medicine for women (and men) from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Few women did more to demolish the myths perpetrated by Drs. Wight and Fishbein than Dorothy Reed Mendenhall. With a medical degree from Johns Hopkins in 1900, she won international acclaim when she discovered that a certain blood cell (now known as the Reed-Sternberg cell) was present in every case of Hodgkin's disease. After moving to Madison with her new husband, physicist Charles Mendenhall, she stayed at home for eight years to raise four children. When she returned to medicine in 1914 it was to study infant and maternal mortality in Wisconsin. Her *Wisconsin Medical Journal* report in 1917 showed that when women in childbirth were attended by physicians they were more likely to suffer puerperal fever (then an often deadly infection) than when attended by midwives. She argued that the cause was physicians' use of anesthesia and forceps as well as the "low standard of obstetrical practice in Wisconsin." She called for a ban on

deliveries by general practitioners, the training of more obstetricians (there were none outside Milwaukee), and statewide education of women in prenatal and infant care. Dr. Mendenhall's studies shook the medical establishment to its core but paved the way for improved obstetrical care in Wisconsin.

Good fortune likewise came to Wisconsin when Amy Louise Hunter arrived in 1935. Denied family financial support for her education (they wanted her to be a housekeeper), she worked

her way to doctorates in medicine and public health. With her family, her gender, the Great Depression, and the advice of her Yale professors working against her, Dr. Hunter got a job as head of the new Bureau of Maternal and Child Health in the Wisconsin Board of Health. At a retirement event in 1961, a tribute to her declared that "a legion of children and young adults living in Wisconsin today simply would not have survived" had it not been for her pioneering work in maternal and infant care, nutrition,

nurse and physician education, and school and mental health.

In the early 1900s women constituted no more than 5 percent of the M.D. population in the nation. This did not start to change until the late 1960s. Meanwhile, national standards for medical schools were established in 1910. The two Milwaukee schools were found to be "utterly wretched." Their remains were purchased by Marquette University in 1913 and became its School of Medicine, quickly earning a

Climbing Many Mountains

Maxine Bennett, M.D.

Medicine and mountains. The two went together well for Maxine E. Bennett, M.D., of Madison.

"Every vacation, we went mountain climbing," says Dr. Bennett, who in 1953 became the first woman to be named chairman of a department at a major American medical school (otolaryngology, or ear-nose-throat, UW-Madison).

Her voice is clear and strong, she has no trouble hearing, and her memory is almost as awe-inspiring as the mountains she's climbed.

"In 1949, after I had taken my specialty boards in New York, we left in August and went to Switzerland and we climbed the Monch, the Jungfrau, the Eiger, and then the Matterhorn on August 12th and 13th in 1949," she states immediately and without pause.

Doctor Bennett's exploits as a climber were featured with more fanfare in the *Milwaukee Journal* on October 2, 1949. The headline reads: "Two Madison Women Doctors Rest From Their Work by Climbing the Matterhorn." Above the article, she is pictured alongside her medical school friend and climbing partner, Margaret Prouty, M.D., perched atop the mountain with big smiles on their faces.

"The final stretch is almost a perpendicular wall of solid rock. The climbers hold onto what are called 'fixed' ropes, which really swing free in the cold wind, and they 'walk' up," the article explains. "Most of the [final] two hours is spent in grueling, nerve-racking work."

Dr. Bennett describes the 6,000-foot ascent this way: "You got up at around 2 a.m. to avoid the glacier melt. We started out and we were on top at 11 o'clock."

When asked if there were ever any close calls, she replies simply, "No."

Her interest in mountain climbing began while she attended the University of Nebraska Medical School, where she was one of three women students. That's where Bennett met Prouty, who also practiced in Madison. The two of them became licensed Rocky Mountain guides, according to the newspaper story. Throughout the years they spent their vacations climbing all of the peaks in



Maxine Bennett

Photo courtesy Wisconsin Medical Society

Colorado, the Grand Tetons, Mount Rainier and Mount Adams, as well as peaks in Mexico.

In 1967, Bennett reached a professional peak by being the first woman physician admitted to the prestigious American Triological Society, an organization of ear, nose, and throat specialists.

When asked about her achievements, she replies modestly: "There weren't many women in medicine at that time and there weren't many in ear, nose, and throat."

There probably weren't too many climbing the Matterhorn, either.

by Steve Busalacchi

fine reputation. In Madison, the four-year University of Wisconsin Medical School was not established until 1925, graduating its first class two years later with 19 men and, surprisingly, six women.

Mabel Garden Masten, a graduate of Rush Medical College in Chicago, took advantage of this new medical school by signing on as its first woman intern. She then became its first woman resident in 1926, and almost immediately joined the UW Medical School's department of neuropsychiatry, serving as chief of the department from 1944 to 1954. Dr. Masten opened the door for many distinguished women physicians at the University of Wisconsin.

One of these was Madeline J. Thornton, a Johns Hopkins Medical School graduate who took her obstetrics and gynecologic residency at Wisconsin in 1929-31. The soft-spoken Thornton carried a heavy workload. She

Two events in the 1950s and '60s helped women entering medicine. Health planners foresaw a shortage of doctors, and the civil rights and social reform movements carried women's issues into mainstream thinking in business and the professions.

usually saw patients from 7 a.m. until 5:30 p.m. In between she conducted groundbreaking research on oral contraception and internal sanitary protection for women.

Thornton's view of women in medicine in those days was reported by the *Milwaukee Journal* in February 1996:

"Any young woman who wants to make a go of the practice of medicine must have a genuine interest ... aptitude ...

and possess unlimited ambition and industry. A physician's work is hard work. She performs her duties for the love of it and not for material gain."

Whether "love of medicine" will be ample reward for 21st-century women physicians is an unanswered question.

Two events in the mid-1900s prompted major changes benefiting women seeking to enter the medical profession. First, health planners in the



A role model at home: Anna Thomas Standard, shown here with her physician father, Edgar Thomas, in 1954 is believed to have become the first female African American physician to practice in Milwaukee.

Photo by George Koshollek, *Milwaukee Journal*

1950s perceived a developing shortage of physicians. Second, the civil rights and social reform movements of the 1960s carried women's issues into mainstream thinking in business and the professions. As a consequence medical schools abandoned their quotas and female enrollments jumped.

For women physicians, Helen Dickie could not have become part of the University of Wisconsin Medical School at a better time. First in her graduating class at the UW in 1937, she returned after a residency to become a full professor of medicine (1955) and head of pulmonary diseases. She was a leader in every phase of tuberculosis care and a pioneer in the disease of farmer's lung. She was a "giant in Wisconsin medicine ... smart, wise, direct, earthy, outspo-

ken," according to colleague J. D. Kabler, who offered a tribute in a 1984 issue of the *Wisconsin Medical Alumni Quarterly*. In 1974, *Wisconsin State Journal* reporter William Wineke described her staunch advocacy for women colleagues and students as achieved without personally experiencing "any great criticism, since the only way you can be put down by criticism is to have a spirit willing to be put down."

Whether in academia or private practice, stories of smarts and grit marked the growing acceptance of women physicians by the profession and the public. For example, Patricia Stuff and Bill Grover, both family physicians, married one day and started practice in Bonduel (near Shawano) the next. Within two years they had constructed a

house and a clinic, had three children (including twins), and built a loyal base of patients.

How did they do it? "We had a wonderfully understanding relationship, got up very early every morning, had great full-time help, and tried to work smart," Dr. Stuff recalls. "At medical school I was taught, if pressured, to just stand up and take it, and get on with doing the job better than anyone else if you can."

Even when gender and race raised the odds, women doctors succeeded. Anna Thomas Standard grew up in Milwaukee's inner city, went to medical school, became a pediatrician, married, had two children, and upon returning to Milwaukee in 1954 may have become the first African American woman physician to practice in that city. Dr. Standard

The Right Stuff

Patricia Stuff, M.D.

Patricia Stuff, M.D., of Bonduel, may be the only AMA candidate to have received a standing ovation after delivering a concession speech.

Stuff, who in 1973 became the first woman officer (vice speaker, State Medical Society House of Delegates) in the 132-year history of the Wisconsin Medical Society, also made a historic national run 11 years later. In 1984, she became the first woman to run for speaker of the American Medical Association House and is believed to have paved the way for other female physicians. Her campaign slogan was "Pat Stuff Has the Right Stuff."

"She lost by 6 or 10 votes," recalls Earl Thayer, then executive vice president of the Wisconsin Medical Society, who ran her campaign. After the loss, Stuff told the 353 AMA delegates: "I surmise you rebelled at the possibility I would be the first madam this house has ever had." The House erupted in laughter and her mostly male colleagues gave her a standing ovation.

Dr. Stuff remembers that her three male opponents had more experience than she and were more politically astute. "I was shot down, so to speak, but considering the candidates, that was not too bad," she says.

"That campaign projected a woman from Wisconsin in a national high position—no woman had ever been speaker of the House of Delegates at AMA. She was a person whose skills and abilities as a leader were apparent," says Thayer. Had she sought the office two years later, Thayer is

sure Stuff would have won easily and been on track to become the first woman president of the AMA.

But Dr. Stuff chose not to run again for national office after reflecting on the time commitment she would have had to make to fulfill the responsibilities of the job. "I was in solo practice and too young to retire, and if I took that much time out I would find that when all was said and done, I wouldn't have had a practice to come back to," she says.

Dr. Stuff began her family practice in Bonduel, in northeastern Wisconsin, in 1957, and remains there in retirement. A self-described "farmer's daughter," she loves the rural area and now spends more time tending her garden.

by Steve Busalacchi



Patricia Stuff in early and in more recent years



Photos courtesy Wisconsin Medical Society

recalls the 1950s and '60s when "most of the profession was respectful of my talents ... despite some little areas of discrimination."

But the toll of solo practice was heavy. At one point, she came home from hospital rounds near midnight to

find her children still up. "When I asked why they weren't asleep, they said: 'We just want to see you.'" That's when she decided to move to the Food and Drug Administration in Rockville, Maryland, where she had a distinguished second career.

As the 21st century opened, the nation's medical schools were brimming with women students. At the UW they comprise nearly 55 percent of the enrollees; at the Medical College of Wisconsin they are at 40 percent. Nationally, women now make up 25 per-

Doctor in the Court

Pauline Jackson, M.D.

Although a medical school professor once told her she might be better off staying home and having babies, Pauline Jackson became the first woman physician in 151 years to become president of the Wisconsin Medical Society. The La Crosse psychiatrist was elected to that office in 1993.

Dr. Jackson attributes the long wait for a woman to take the helm at the WMS more to the practicalities of motherhood than to an overt glass ceiling. In her medical school days, women bore the vast majority of family responsibilities, making a demanding career as a physician challenging enough without taking on a professional leadership role. What's more, daycare services were neither common nor as socially acceptable as they are today.

Dr. Jackson started her career in La Crosse in 1972, initially taking care of children and then settling on a general adult psychiatric practice. A small part of her practice—forensic psychiatry—led to her biggest criminal case, that of Bryan Stanley, who in February 1985 used a shotgun to kill a priest and two other men at St. Patrick's Church in Onalaska.

"I met with Bryan within three hours of him committing the crime," Dr. Jackson recalls. The chief public defender asked her to judge Stanley's mental state and offer a judgment on what it might have been at the time of the murders.

It was the first time she had been on the scene so quickly with a defendant who had not had medication and who still had the crime freshly in mind.

"It was just fascinating because here was this young man, clearly psychotic, delusional, and believed that what he had done was a call from God," says Jackson. Two weeks later, after court-ordered medication, Dr. Jackson remembers that Stanley was functioning fairly normally and "realized he had done something terrible."

In addition to her more common, less-publicized practice work, Dr. Jackson served on numerous boards and in leadership positions during her career. But she can't recall any instances where her gender made it more difficult to work with male colleagues. She does believe, however, that being a woman probably opened a few doors for her.

"If anything, it might just have been my small stature that bothered me at times because I had to look up to most of the people around me," she says.

Being just one of two women in her 62-member medical school class at Stanford, she had to get used to working with men from



Pauline Jackson

Photo courtesy Wisconsin Medical Society

the beginning. Jackson recalls being treated well by the male students, even to the point of being looked out for because of her minority status.

Such consideration seemed less apparent with the faculty, however. In her second year of training, Jackson tells of a "humiliating" experience when she and other students were standing around the bedside of patients at a county hospital. The surgical professor asked Jackson who discovered that hand washing between delivering babies could prevent disease transmission from one mother to the other. When she was unable to answer, he shot back: "Well, if you don't know that, you'd better stay home and have babies."

Before she left medical school, Jackson says she came to realize that this "really tough" professor, in his own way, was just trying to prepare her for becoming a woman doctor in a very challenging, male-dominated profession. And she later thanked him for that.

"He was really dishing out to me the same stuff he dished out to the fellows, but he phrased it in a way that would hit me fairly hard," says Dr. Jackson.

by Steve Busalacchi

cent of all physicians, and their numbers are rising fast.

So what do women physicians today think about the future? Dr. Ernestine Willis, pediatrician and associate dean for multicultural student affairs at the Medical College of Wisconsin, sees unbounded opportunity for women in medicine. Yet she perceives a challenge for medical educators who need to "bring greater equity to women physicians in academia and train physicians, including persons of color, to be better

tuned to the changing diversity and cultures of our country before they can expect to achieve quality care for their patients."

Dr. Pauline Jackson, La Crosse, believes that "women, by our very nature, will not need the sometimes excessive incomes aimed for by many men." She suggests this will be a factor in future health care reforms, as women become the majority of America's practicing physicians. Dr. Jackson also sees an accelerating trend in women physi-

cians marrying non-physician men who "recognize what they are getting into and enjoy assuming a larger role in family and household while their wives are full-time practitioners."

Leslie v.H. Taylor, a Madison psychiatrist, executive director of the Dean Foundation, and a lead investigator in pharmaceutical medicine (one of only a few in the U.S.), sees "fabulous" times ahead for women physicians. She warns, however, that the "greatest concern for women (and men) is not so much equity

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Fighting with Laughter

Diana Lamps, M.D.

To Manitowoc psychiatrist Diana Lamps, mental illness has become a laughing matter. Not because it's funny per se, but because mental health insurance coverage has become so absurd.

Dr. Lamps uses humor and music to educate the public about what's happening to patients who desperately need help but are denied insurance. She wrote a song called "Suicide Is Cheaper" after receiving a letter from a frustrated patient.

"She was disgusted with the fact that her health insurance wouldn't pay for her treatment," Lamps explains. "She said: 'What do they want me to do? Maybe I should just commit suicide. It would be cheaper.'"

That comment led to Dr. Lamps's song, which was featured in a musical benefit for the Manitowoc County chapter of the National Alliance for the Mentally Ill (NAMI). Here's a verse:

"For 20 long years I've been helping people chase their blues away. Showed them how to love, taught them how to get through the day. Then one day a man came, he says he's gonna manage my care. Said he'd save some money, but he didn't say for who or where."

The chorus line reads: *"Now if you're gonna get sick it better not be in your head. In case you're feelin' low, some folks rather see you dead."*

Lamps has chosen to express her frustration with the health care system this way because she believes many people don't realize what's happening. For example, she says some insurance plans allow only two sessions for the treatment of depression. What's more, she says there is a lot of pressure on doctors to "medicate and medicate only."

"You feel sometimes like you're supposed to help somebody blindfolded with your hands tied behind your back these days. It's really gotten to the point of absurdity," says Dr. Lamps.

Susan Golding, a member of the board of directors for the Manitowoc chapter of NAMI, praises Lamps for helping to bring



Diana Lamps

Photo courtesy Wisconsin Medical Society

mental illness out in the open. "It shouldn't be under the covers. It should be talked about just like we talk about diabetes or any other illness," says Golding. And she adds that if humor and music can help do that, all the better.

"Diana's committed to the area, committed to her patients, to the point that she should be committed!" Golding says with a hearty laugh.

by Steve Busalacchi

A Force of Nature

Dolores A. Buchler, M.D.

Ask Madison's Dr. Dolores Buchler to provide a recipe for young women seeking to become physicians, and she will use her own life as an example: energy, attitude, excellence "and damned hard work." Then she will add, "As with most issues, there are choices. No problem, just make a decision and get on with enjoying what you like to do most."

Dr. Buchler started making choices and decisions earlier than most. As a child in Casper, Wyoming, she was interested in two things, science and people. "By age 12 I knew I wanted to be a physician."

After graduating from the Medical College of Pennsylvania in 1957, Buchler interned at Philadelphia General Hospital. It was a 1,000-bed "nightmare of an institution, with two jails inside its walls ... my first night on duty I had a patient with an axe in his sternum."

She then became the second female resident in obstetrics and gynecology (Ob-Gyn) at Kansas City and went on to Oklahoma for a fellowship in general surgery and radiation oncology. This seems to have set the tone for the rest of her life: boundless energy; a tough, gutsy, in-your-face attitude; and a drive for perfection in her field.

Example: When a woman in labor was presenting as a breech birth, Dr. Buchler proposed a cesarean section. The department chairman, a nationally recognized Ob specialist known as Big John, insisted the case be handled by manipulation with forceps.

Buchler defied Big John, saying, "Your advice stinks. We weren't taught that way." She proceeded with the C-section and all went well.

In July 1969, Dr. Buchler accepted an invitation to join the University of Wisconsin's Ob-Gyn department under Dr. Ben Peckham. She was double board certified in obstetrics-gynecology and radiation oncology, along with extensive surgical training—a rare bird in the profession at that time.

The feisty Buchler went head-to-head with Peckham and other physicians on many occasions, but over the next 26 years she helped bring national recognition to the UW's Ob-Gyn service.

Dr. Buchler became the first in the nation to combine Ob-Gyn, medical oncology, and radiation oncology into a single clinic for women. When in 1990 it was discovered that high-dose radiation therapy could safely treat gynecologic cancer with a course of 15 minutes rather than two or three days, Buchler adapted that program to her department and made it a national model. At the same time, she became the first to convert a medical school Ob-Gyn program from an inpatient to an outpatient service, a major change.

Almost unnoticed among those achievements was Dr. Buchler's pioneering work in women's health. Going against the standard practice in gynecologic surgery, Buchler had the goal of using



Dolores A. Buchler

Photo courtesy Wisconsin Medical Society

whatever successful treatment left a woman with the least loss of tissue. This compassionate approach, along with her high competence, brought her a reputation as the doctor of choice among Madison doctors' wives.

As for tomorrow's women in medicine, Dr. Buchler reiterates the importance of choices. "Women, like men, must balance the time requirements of medicine with what they want to do with their private lives. No one can do everything—so make your choice."

However, Dr. Buchler offers an important caveat: "Women have one disadvantage in the equity equation: they get pregnant. This requires time off, flexible scheduling, and sometimes it results in slower advancement." To which she adds her usual advice, "No problem, just make your choice."

Dr. Buchler retired in 1995 as professor of obstetrics-gynecology and human ecology at the UW, having rejected an earlier offer of department chair as "not my cup of tea."

A former dean of the UW Medical School calls her a "treasure." A former student says, "I will be forever indebted to her." Local colleagues call her "brilliant," "exceptionally skilled," "outspoken," and "a unique people person."

Retirement? "No problem," according to Dolores Buchler, as she turns her seemingly boundless energy to golf, travel, and talking with the people she loves.

"I enjoyed every minute of my education and my practice. I'm still enjoying every minute of my life."

by Earl R. Thayer

“The greatest concern for women (and men) is not so much equity as economics,” says Leslie v.H. Taylor. We must ask whether “the current emphasis on bottom line corporate medicine ... is leading America toward better physicians and better health care.”

continues from page 60

as economics. With the current emphasis on bottom-line corporate medicine we need to ask whether this is leading America toward better physicians and better health care.”

Perhaps the most compelling assessment comes, ironically, from a man. Dr. Gerald Kempthorne, a former Spring Green family practitioner and a benefactor of the arts, writes, “Maybe we should ask ourselves, why did we keep women out of medicine for so long? I suspect that men considered medicine their domain and didn’t want to see encroachment by women, who might just have had better brains and warmer hearts.”

To which Dr. Laura Ross Wolcott whispers down, “I told you so, more than 140 years ago!” *

*Earl R. Thayer worked for the State Medical Society of Wisconsin (now the Wisconsin Medical Society) for 40 years, the last 15 of them in the position of secretary-general manager. He has also served on numerous state and national medical and health-related boards and committees, including serving as president of the American Association of Medical Society Executives. He is an active member of the William Snow Miller, M.D., Medical History Society at the University of Wisconsin Medical School. His publications include the books **Seeking to Serve: A History of the Medical Society of Milwaukee County 1846–1996** (Vilar Arts, 1996), **The Men of Company B** (Odana Press, 2002), and many articles and papers on Wisconsin medical history.*

Steve Busalacchi is director of public relations for the Wisconsin Medical Society. Prior to that position, he spent 15 years as a reporter for Wisconsin Public Radio.

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A complete history of women physicians in Wisconsin medicine has yet to be written. Innumerable books, papers, and manuscripts containing bits and pieces on the subject are located at the Wisconsin Historical Society. Many additional papers and personal records of women physicians are located in the Wisconsin medical history files of the author. A complete bibliography for this article is available from the author upon request.

Photos by Bill Blankenburg

THE RITUAL SALAD

Aunt Esther calls with a simple request: "Why don't you bring the potato salad to the reunion?" I take a deep breath. I can't decline, but it is not the type of assignment I am looking for. Potato salad was one of my mother's specialties. She always made it for family gatherings. Her secret recipe gave the salad a unique flavor that everyone loved. However, this summer, after decades of potato salad, decades as my mother, she is gone.

Reluctantly, the day before the reunion, I gather the ingredients: eggs, potatoes, peas, celery. As I cut some chives and parsley from our garden, the earthy scents take me back to the plot mother kept at the far end of our yard.

We moved to the suburbs in November of 1968, just before I turned nine. The next spring and for many springs thereafter, mother put in a garden. "Carole, get your nose out of that book! Come out here and help me weed!" she would call as the screen door slammed.

In her garden you'd find sturdy rows of sweet corn with their glistening silk, tangled cucumber vines, curly lettuce, willowy asparagus, sweet raspberries, and, of course, her favorite—towers of juicy tomatoes. Mother seemed to know so much about the natural world: how to plant, when to pick and prune. I attributed her knowledge to having grown up on a farm. In my child's mind, this equated to the frontier.

The day of the reunion, watching the two boiling pots on the stove, I think about how this salad typifies mother's cooking: fairly simple, hearty, and plenty of it. Our meals were typical of the era, yet I don't remember her ever using a recipe. There were a few traditional dishes, like goulash and stuffed cabbage, but mother gravitated to many of the new convenience foods: frozen fish sticks, instant mashed potatoes, cans of tuna and cream of mushroom soup made into a casserole.

As I peel the hot, steaming spuds and eggs, images of the past alternate with today's inside my head. I'm overwhelmed, still. Mother was my mother when I was growing up. But as I got older



323-1085 GROWING FOR OVER 30 YEARS

IN MY WORDS

GROWING OLDER

we came to accept our differences. We were just getting to know each other. As I toss the salad ingredients, a tear or two roll down my cheeks, threatening to join the mixture.

It was a few years ago, after mother had a stroke, that she first asked me to make her potato salad for the reunion. I wasn't ready for it. I knew I could never equal her domestic skills and would disappoint her. But a small part of me felt honored. Mother gave me the recipe over the phone and I was surprised to learn how easy it was. She never commented on how mine turned out. Funny, but until then, I didn't care for potato salad.

Adding the finishing touches, I pour what is now a thick combination of textures and flavors into a rustic antique bowl. Like a frame, it celebrates the history the salad holds. I breathe in its tangy sweetness; a sense of comfort seeps into my soul.

Later that day, driving to Aunt Esther's, I steady the large bowl in my lap. It's as heavy as my heart. This may be our first reunion without mom, but she'll be here. I pause on the steps and then pull open the door as Uncle Ed shouts, "Oh great, you made Anne's potato salad!"

*Carole Glass
Wauwatosa*



SURFACES

If it hadn't been for Dorothy, Sandra's mother, dying and leaving an address book behind with our telephone numbers, we probably never would have gotten back together after more than 30 years. And suddenly there we were, all

about to arrive at Lisa's house in the woods at the peak of a fiery New Hampshire autumn.

I was the first to pull into the gravel driveway. Pulling up the emergency brake with a crunch, I looked toward the house, anxious to spot Lisa as soon as possible in order to give myself time to adjust to the transformation of the dewy teenager I had known years ago into a woman approaching 60. And there she was, coming down the front steps, walking rapidly in my direction with a bright smile and open arms.

"Oh, my God, I can't believe it's you! Finally!" she said.

We embraced, then stood back to take a good look, holding on to each other with our fingertips.

I realized that I would never have recognized her on the street. Her once long, honey-blond hair was now chin-length and gray, though still thick after chemotherapy. Our ritual had consisted of washing and cream-rinsing our hair



together after school, setting it in big brush-rollers with the help of a thick gel, and then drying it while we watched "American Bandstand." The sight of her brought back the cloying scents of the hair care products and the scratchy pull of bristles on my scalp. Fighting the social conditioning that makes even women see other women past their reproductive years as generic (while men, damn it, maintain their individuality to the end!), I strained to find the younger Lisa beneath her aging surface without her noticing it. Of course, she was doing the same thing to me.

We decided to walk down the road to meet the others. Lisa was upbeat and talking a blue streak. I was grateful for the time to listen and observe. Here she was, a once conventionally attractive but manipulative young woman who had tormented her boyfriends and the mother who doted on her, completely transformed and empowered. She faced her uncertain future full of passion for life and compassion for others. I liked this version of her much better.

And suddenly there were the others, Sandra and Jeanne, on this brilliant and auspicious day. Unable to resist the fall colors, we jumped into their car and decided to go for a drive. Dazzled, we rolled past colonial village centers and over hills that flashed glimpses of distant mountain peaks.

Jeanne looked most like her old self, well coiffed and well dressed but nervous, the only one with grandchildren and who still smoked. Sandra, divorced, her speech slurring slightly, had flown all the way from California from her job as a psychiatric nurse. Her multicolored hair, she said, was costing her a fortune. I had no idea what they thought of me.

However, for children of the *Hair* generation who worshipped youth above all else and swore never to trust anyone over 30, we pretty easily gave up the notion that there was anything left of our old teenaged selves—and, moreover, in a spirit of "Good riddance!" We didn't spend much time reminiscing about the vain and self-centered women we had been, but focused on the here and now and the future.

I left exhilarated, not by a youthful part of me that had been deeply buried and rediscovered, but by the exciting flux of life that we shared, and that was right there on the surface for the taking.

*Evelyn M. Kain
Ripon*



AFTER THE ATTACK

Head down and bellied over the side of my work truck, I never saw it coming. The tip of the blade plunged into my lower back, ripping open my spine like a samurai sword slicing through warm butter. I screamed out in agony as the pain rushed down my legs to my toes, mutating into a burning wave of needles while muscle turned to mush. The seven-foot water main valve wrench, which I'd just lifted from my truck bed, fell from my hands as I dropped to my knees like a wingless jet.

Sprawled out on my back across the searing summer blacktop, I looked up in amazement at the dark shadow of the heavy wrench, falling out of the sun and diving fast for my head. My left hand shot up and caught it by the handle, just inches from my face. I tossed it aside and realized I couldn't move or hear a thing except for the pain that was throbbing from my right big toe straight to my head. The smell of hot pavement and the persistent crackling of a young starling brought me out of the fog and back to reality.

That's when I realized there wasn't any attacker or piercing blade—only the failure of my back and knees, and the end of a career. I looked around for help, thinking I'd be there for hours, until I remembered the cell phone on my belt and called 911.

What is it about growing older and feeling your body morph from a rabbit into a turtle? Remembering when

normal maneuvers like springing out of bed for a fire call were easy and painless. Finding that your lightning-fast, short-term memory engine has disappeared into a wisp of smoke. And discovering that your once-active lifestyle has slipped into a nightmare of clinic appointments, surgery, and prescription drug dependencies.

My wife, Cheryl, calls my memory burps "CRS," for Can't Remember Shit. At least I think that's what she said. All I know is when the back and legs go south, life in the fast lane sputters to a crawl and the brain tries to adjust. Plus, sitting around dreaming of a full recovery is like waiting for the Cubs to win the World Series.

In the meantime, I've been downsized. My wife, along with some great neighbors, has taken over all my tools and most of my jobs around the house. My new daily duties are setting up the coffee, bringing in the mail, and feeding the cat. It helps to have a good sense of humor.

On September 11, 2001, two months after being released by my employer and just 12 days short of my 50th birthday, I watched death rain down from the skies as I sat helpless in a self-assumption of uselessness. Two days later, I wrote a short poem called "Remember." Stories followed—memories of my childhood in the heartland, from Wisconsin to Mississippi, and the once-buried images of my firefighting career.

So, after all these years, I've learned another lesson. Life is a work of fiction until you live it, when it becomes a book of memories and unfulfilled dreams, yearning to be remembered and understood. Writing about it doesn't mean dwelling upon the past, but using those experiences to enlighten and inspire others. It also keeps your mind active as you pull those hidden memories from the attic before the light goes out.

Just don't be afraid to start over, no matter what others may think or say—even yourself.

*Terry Smith
Onalaska*



IT'S THE NEW 70

This past summer, I had my 80th birthday. I can't phrase it "celebrated my birthday" because I didn't feel celebratory. I am now OLD.

One doesn't turn 80 all of a sudden; it's not an overnight accomplishment, but the impact is profound. I find myself telling people I hardly know and who could care less that I am 80 years old, as if I am trying to persuade myself this has not happened.

I don't waken every morning questioning whether I feel OLD. I don't. Certainly I feel no different than when I was 79. This grand age does, however, provide a fine excuse to lie around in bed in the morning, although I have not ever in my adult life been one to have three loads of clothes washed and the ironing done by 9 a.m.

The ability to drive a car is the proverbial lead balloon that hangs over the heads of the OLD. I can pass a line of parked cars in a ramp and know which were driven by Elders; if we get straight within the lines of a parking space on the first try, it's a fluke.

One son advised me that I should no longer drive long distances. I recently drove 2,200 miles without incident and enjoyed every mile. I didn't tell this fellow how I planned to get where I was going—in my own car, but, had I cracked up on the highways, he would have had the satisfaction of warning me this was something I ought not to do—now. Driving at age 80 is dangerous.

My landmark birthday was royally celebrated, which indicates its importance in my lifespan and the urgency of my young friends to express their affection before it's too late. My appreciation is profound. I might fool them and survive another 10 years, at which time I'd become REALLY OLD.

In addition to a devoted and dearly missed husband, devoted children, and fast friends who have stood by me through various wars, having young friends has been a gift that keeps on

giving. Should I ever need to sit around feeling OLD, I'll have volumes of happy memories to page through. My life is good—and always has been.

Next summer I'll be 81 and won't have that pesky zero to contend with for a long time. Zeros are the markers of passing time.

*Ann Peckham
Middleton*



THE CHILD WITHIN

Everything I do today as an artist has its roots in youth. The older I become, the more secure I feel about letting out the young, impish me who knew nothing about rejection, perfection, and negative thinking.

As a child, I stuffed penciled poems and stories in the dead space under the bottom drawer of my built-in desk. I was sure I would be famous and published one day. I've been published many times since, though I may never be famous. Now I have zip disks to hold my words.

Three years ago I took up painting. I hadn't painted since high school. Painting was another secret activity without any parental prompting to develop my artistic talent. I acquired paints when I spied a set at the local paint and hardware store. The oils were packaged in a neat wooden box with an assortment of canvases. I had to have them but I could not pay the full price. Despite an overwhelming shyness at the time, I asked for permission to buy the set on credit, and was surprised when the owner allowed me to take them home with my \$5 down. I returned each Saturday to pay off my debt.

I painted upstairs in the attic, in an old chair set in front of the dormer windows looking down upon the front yard and into the tall elm trees. I painted sunsets and kept them hidden in my room.

When I told my mother about this years later, she was surprised.

Today I paint with watercolors. I've left oils, much preferring the vivid pigments of watercolors and the way they flow onto paper. But those early attempts to be an attic artist paid off in sowing a lifelong love and appreciation for art.

Another childhood passion was sewing. I fashioned doll clothes on a Singer sewing machine that was a toy. The small machine fit on the windowsill of the old oak double-hung windows. I clamped the machine on the ledge and turned the hand crank to sew. Kneeling on the floor, cutting clothes from left-over scraps, I learned to make my own patterns. By the sixth grade, I had graduated to my mother's big sewing machine and used the same principles to make my first garments, two sets of identical brown shorts.

Now I have a large work area to hold my collection of sewing machines. I own five, although I use only three of them on a regular basis. My husband calls it my "sweat shop," and I won't dissuade him of that notion so that I can continue to spend many happy hours watching fabric flow under the needle.

Those childhood activities were kindled by some innate fascination with the process of creation. The child inside me lives on, shaping my life, showing me the way to become more genuine and authentic. What the adult brings is the need to perfect those skills, no longer so easily satisfied with expression, now trying to get it right—the right words, the right brushstrokes, the right stitches, that keep my hands busy as they express what lies within my heart.

What I'm learning now is that I shouldn't listen to that adult voice. The joy of play will take me further, and since I now know I really don't want to be rich and famous anyway, I might as well simply enjoy the pure pleasure of creation.

*Candace Hennekens
Fall Creek*



CRADLED BY THE RIVER

When Alzheimer's reduced my father's world to half a room in a nursing home, I asked him how he was able to deal with the vicissitudes of age. He looked at me and said, "You can't deal with them. The best you can do is try not to notice."

Now it is my turn to deal with vicissitudes. While my friends enjoy the pleasures of retirement tripping around the world, my journey consists of visiting the primordial world of the river that flows past my front door.

Illness has a way of reducing one's world. "Can I eat?" "Can I sleep?" "Can I defecate?" "Can I endure?" It is a selfish time. So much is lost

The world of illness is a lonely place inhabited by monsters. Dante described it: "Midway along the journey of our life I woke to find myself in some dark woods ... This wood of wilderness, savage and stubborn (the thought of it brings back all my old fears) is a bitter place! Death could scarce be bitterer ..."

What to do? How to be? Where to go?

On days when my life meaning is threatened as though a ravaging and roaring lion were six feet from me, leaving my bones loose and draining away my strength like water while my heart turns to wax and melts within me,* I sit on a rock by the side of the river and listen to the flowing of the Eternal. My confusion and sense of loss are cradled by the river. Not knowing, not understanding, not trusting—it is a frightening time.

In the primordial world of river life I find a home. I enter a timeless space where there is no beginning and no end. There is, instead, an everlasting circling, cycling certitude.

The world of the river fills the mind with wonder. I am face-to-face with those big questions that have been asked ever since our ancestors emerged from the waters and stood on their own two feet ... questions like my daughter asked when she was four years old:

"How did God born himself? How did the world begin? Did the mother born the world?" I find answers like my daughter found: "I think a giant planted a seed and that is how we got started." While they are not scientific, they satisfy my self.

I am discovering again the four-year-old that dwells in my heart. Like a child playing hooky from school, with no purpose other than observing and absorbing as much *naked truth* as possible, I stay by my river. There are no clocks. Time is measured by eons. There is a transforming of paradigm. I become more "me" than I have ever been. I discover a centered salvation in the sense of finding my Truth.

I am a river: a river of fire and desire, hope and despair, imaginings and wanderings, stagnations and overflowings. I half dissolve in the cry of the gulls. In dawn's light, the blue heron glows white, like some celestial being. The whiteness takes my breath away.

I drink in the waters until my thirst is quenched and my throat is coated with silver.

Courage is required. My internal river continues to flow, seeking a way past the obstacles that appear in its path. It will find its way and it will join with the sea. That is a given. There is no other way.

While it is indeed "sad to dwell amongst the ruins," as Voltaire observed, "the heart does not grow old."

While I cannot articulate an experience that is deeper than words, I hear the 10,000 voices. I have no need to find the name.

All I really know for sure is that I am on an immense journey. It is enough. (At least most of the time it is enough.)

*See Psalm 22, which precedes the resolution of 23. It deals with the angst of grief. In all likelihood it was the scripture that Jesus drew upon while he hung on the cross. "My God, My God, why have you forsaken me ..."

Shirley Holzer Jeffrey
Wauwatosa

Share Your Stories

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

WEDDINGS, extended deadline April 15 (for the summer issue). Any story, happy or not, about a memorable wedding in your life and its outcome.

MENTORING, deadline June 1 (for the fall issue). Everybody needs at least one mentor, and probably several, throughout their lives. Any experience you have had on either end of these profoundly helpful relationships.

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

E-mail submissions are greatly preferred. Please send to:

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with the subject heading "In My Words," or mail it to In My Words, *Wisconsin Academy Review*, 1922 University Avenue, Madison WI 53726. We will contact selected authors; names may be withheld from publication on request. We regret that we cannot take phone inquiries or return submitted material.

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Act Now to Develop New Energy Sources

Energy fuels not only our technologies, but also a democratic, equitable society.

BY JAMES R. JOHNSON

Three decades have passed since we found ourselves facing what many called an “energy crisis” in the U.S.; however, even the more moderate 1970s predictions of energy usage for the turn of the century were at levels far higher than those we use today. Conservation; improved efficiencies in our power plants, auto engines and myriad appliances; and a substantial change in the nature of work have contributed to a more energy-efficient society. Yet in spite of these measures we face an energy dilemma in our future that foreshadows major technical challenges and economic and social consequences.

Our modern world was built on the use of fossil fuels, coal, oil, and gas. These are a finite resource provided by nature’s slow chemistry and will be consumed within a few hundred years of humankind’s fast physics. Unless we can develop suitable alternatives, we face a major social problem likely to emerge in this century. The choices among alternatives are limited by inventions as yet unmanifested, environmental considerations, and the decades-long times needed to develop new energy systems to support our immense levels of consumption.

The technical challenge may appear simple, but it is in fact daunting. Energy is omnipresent, available for the taking. But it takes energy to get energy! The process is called conversion, or investing energy in an energy source to get another form of energy that we need or desire. Conversion may be as simple as placing a bucket of water in sunlight to warm it for a bath. If we want food energy we must prepare the soil, plant the seeds, tend the plants, and harvest the fruit. If we need gasoline for our autos we must drill for oil, refine it, and deliver it to a filling station. For electric energy we must build power plants that make steam for turbines that turn electric generators. In our invested energy we also have to count energy used to make the equipment for these processes, including in these

examples such items as buckets, hoes, tractors, fertilizers, refineries, turbines, and so on. There is no free lunch in the conversion processes.

Some of the potential energy sources are huge. Light from the sun over the total surface of the earth is an example, but the flow of solar energy is relatively weak. A converter covering about a square yard can produce at most enough energy to light a small light bulb when the sun is shining. The energy used to build the converters that power satellites is more than the energy produced by those converters over their expected lifetime. The sum of wind power over the whole planet has the potential to generate enormous amounts of electric energy—but wind varies in speed and only a few locations are useful for windmills. Nevertheless, solar and wind energy converters are important fields for new technology. It must be noted that at the converter location these systems are considered benign and non-polluting even though the manufacturing processes to build the converters are not. A principal incentive for the use of sun and wind resources is that they



are renewable.

The fossil fuels, coal, oil and gas, are also very large energy sources. They can be thought of as energy stored from the sun. Over the past half-billion years, nature provided living collectors of sunlight, and with a bit of fortuitous climate and geology converted the dead bodies of plants and animals to these fuel sources. Unfortunately, their supply is finite, they are non-renewable, and the costs of converting them to useful energy, although relatively low, will continue to rise. Further, their use produces emissions that may require expensive control systems and, in the case of carbon dioxide emissions, may affect our climate. Our incentive to use them has been and remains the very large yields of useful energy returned for the energy spent in producing it.

A measure of the energy costs spent in conversion can be expressed as a ratio: energy yield over energy spent. In the case of oil, for example, in recent times this ratio means we may get seven times the energy from oil as we spend in converting it to a useful form. By comparison, solar hot water rooftop converters may deliver two times their energy cost over their expected lifetime and windmills slightly more. I do not count in these ratios external costs such as environmental consequences or the quality of the energy produced (e.g., electric energy from windmills is higher-quality energy than hot water from rooftop collectors).

However, an energy economist will state that the bottom line is that for our total energy system we must produce more energy than we spend or the system cannot continue to function. Likewise, a dollar economist will compare the dollar costs of conversion among various alternative systems.

Energy is fundamental to human society. Nothing moves, nothing acts without it. The late Frederick Cottrell wrote in the 1950s, "The energy available to man limits what he can do and influences what he will do." We need not go back in history very far to find societies operating with much lower energy ratios. In early human societies where food was the only energy source, a likely ratio may have been 1.1 to 1. Over humankind's history, the energy ratio had to have been positive, but it was barely so much of the time. We read of ancient civilizations where with a small surplus of energy, often unpredictable, the records are replete with tales of drought, plagues, and starvation. As recently as 200 years ago in the United States, nearly 90 percent of the population was involved in food supply.

The exponential growth of our technological society over the past two centuries was made possible by the enormous stored energy of the fossil fuels and their high energy ratios. No comparable replacement technologies are as yet developed. The only possibilities on the horizon are renewable systems that will require unimaginably large land space usage with their still-to-be-conceived converters having low energy costs; or nuclear systems that are either "on hold" or, as in the case of nuclear fusion, in an unproven development stage. The technical challenges are awesome.

As the developing world increases its usage of energy, the need becomes still more compelling. During this same time, the system energy ratios will decline. If we fail to invent and develop energy systems that have reasonably comparable energy ratios to meet this need, substantial changes in lifestyles will be required.

Cottrell's aphorism about energy limiting what we can do and influencing what we will do would then be a warning. Given such a failure to develop new energy technology, the history of humankind is not comforting. In the past, low-energy-ratio societies were stratified far beyond what we would find tolerable in a democracy. Most often kings and queens and their retinue lived well but the rest, not often found in the pages of our history books, lived in indentured servitude or slavery.

In the past, low-energy-ratio societies were stratified far beyond what we would find tolerable in a democracy.

Thus it seems to me that there is not only a daunting technical challenge ahead, but an even greater social challenge! This will be the coevolution of social systems preserving the benefits of a democracy and free enterprise that not only will accommodate whatever our new technologies can deliver but at the same time assure the opportunity for equality of their benefits for all who live and work in these societies. Some will see this as needing to mute our energy appetites. Others may argue that this is a reason for limiting our population so that each might have access to more of the energy available. Some may think that such energy limitations are a reason for socialism, while still others will point out that our technological society is based on the free enterprise system and that technology has always found a way. For the foreseeable future, however, we may have to adapt to lower-energy-ratio systems.

And yet, there is still a large supply of coal, oil, and gas, even though they are getting more expensive to produce. We likely will be able to adapt to whatever changes of climate their use may bring. The dilemma is not an immediate crisis as some would have it. The habit of making everything a "sky is falling" episode has not served us well. However, given the very long time it takes to invent, develop, and implement large new energy systems, we urgently need to get on with it while we still have the fossil fuels to do it! And while we are at it, we need to pursue ways our society can sensibly and fairly use those energy systems, living within our energy means. *

Wisconsin Academy Fellow James R. Johnson, a pioneer in material sciences and engineering, holds 30 U.S. patents and served as a laboratory director and executive scientist for 3M Company. He is a member of the National Academy of Engineering. He served as president of the Wisconsin Academy board of directors and also was a director of the Wisconsin Academy Foundation.

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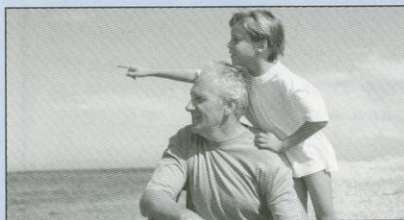
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