Wisconsin people & ideas. Volume 53, Number 4 Fall 2007

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wisconsin people & ideas

WISCONSIN ACADEMY OF SCIENCES, ARTS AND LETTERS

From Darwin to DNA

Sean Carroll uses gene analysis to learn about the origin and development of species

CELEBRATING AARON BOHROD

A forthcoming exhibition explores his work

THE WAY OF THE WARRIOR

Patty Loew on Native Americans in the military

BLACK HAWK WAR AT 175

What is its meaning today?

FUTURE OF FARMING

Highlights from final report

ENTER SHORT STORY AND POETRY CONTESTS!

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Fall 2007
Volume 53,
Number 4

great minds, important ideas

ACADEMY EVENINGS

wisconsin academy of sciences, arts and letters

Tales from the Other Biotech Frontier — Alta Charo

Tuesday, October 23, 7–8:30 p.m.,
lecture hall, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Overture

UW–Madison medical ethicist and attorney Alta Charo recently spent a year at the University of California at Berkeley in the epicenter of a booming biotech industry. What are the lessons for Wisconsin? How can our state keep its edge in an ever more competitive research climate?

From Darwin to DNA — Sean Carroll

Tuesday, November 13, 7–8:30 p.m.,
lecture hall, Madison Museum of Contemporary Art, Overture

UW–Madison evolutionary biologist Sean Carroll uses DNA to examine the origin of species. What does evolutionary biology tell us about the biological development of species (including our own) and the impact of changing environments?

MILWAUKEE

Everyday People: An Artist's Tribute — David Lenz

Thursday, September 27, 7–8:30 p.m.,
Milwaukee Art Museum, 700 N. Art Museum Drive

The paintings of Shorewood artist David Lenz reveal the inherent beauty of everyday people—from central city children to rural dairy farmers to people with intellectual disabilities. How does the artist tell their story? Who is regarded as "significant" in America today? Lenz won first prize in the Smithsonian Institution's recent National Portrait Gallery portrait competition and a commission to paint a portrait for its permanent collection. He will talk about the gallery's selection process for the commission and the different areas of his work.

FOX VALLEY

Stem Cells 101: The Latest News, Our Future Challenges — Ian Duncan

Thursday, October 11, 7–8:30 p.m.,
University of Wisconsin–Fox Valley, 1478 Midway Road, Menasha

If you've never quite understood what stem cell research is all about, here's the talk for you. UW–Madison professor and researcher Ian Duncan enlightens us on the history, controversy, and promise of stem cell research—and where it is headed in Wisconsin.

No tickets required. Admission is free.
$3 suggested donation. Seating is first come, first served.

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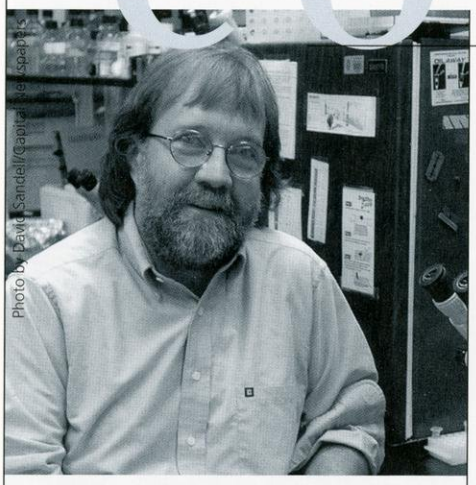

Photo by David Sandell/Capital Newspapers

Sean Carroll reads genes the way paleontologists read fossils. Story on page 11.

Wisconsin People & Ideas (ISSN 1558-9633) is published quarterly by the nonprofit Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters and is distributed **free of charge** to Wisconsin Academy members. For information about joining, see page 10.

wisconsin academy
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Writing Contests—Calls for Entry

Short Story Contest, page 53 Poetry Contest, page 54
Cash prizes, publication, and a one-week stay at Edenfred!
Deadline December 3

features

Aaron Bohrod, shown here in his Monona studio. A profile of the artist begins on page 29.

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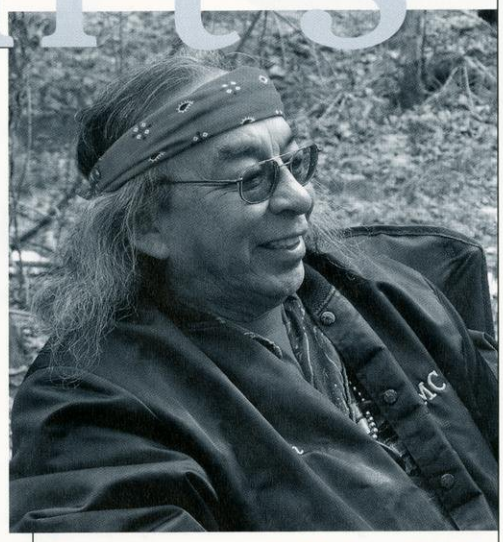
departments



Vietnam war veteran Jim Northrup tells his story (and shares his poetry) in Patty Loew's documentary "Way of the Warrior." Story on page 37.

ENLIGHTEN YOUR LIFE!

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

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

Enrich your life (and receive this magazine regularly) by becoming a member! Learn more about us on page 10. You can send in an enclosed membership card to join—or sign up online (or make a donation) at www.wisconsinacademy.org.

Let the season begin

BY MARGARET LEWIS, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

Excitement is the norm at the Wisconsin Academy come autumn, and this year is no exception. We are publishing the final report of the Future of Farming and Rural Life in Wisconsin project (see highlights on page 26) and we have planned a stimulating new season of Academy Evenings and gallery events around the state.

Our Academy Evenings series opened earlier this month by illuminating one of the hottest topics in the nation: immigration. Four free lectures at Madison's Overture Center focus on its impact in Wisconsin and solutions to the problems of illegal immigration from Mexico. Please see the inside front cover of this magazine for an overview of other Academy Evenings coming this fall.

Starting October 30, the Academy has scheduled a two-month exhibition of works by Aaron Bohrod, one of Wisconsin's most important artists. The exhibition, held at the Academy's James Watrous Gallery in Overture, will include a lecture November 18 by Tom Lidtke, director of the Wisconsin Museum of Art in West Bend. Further examination of Bohrod's life and work is provided in this magazine beginning on page 29 with a piece by Robert Cozzolino.

Details of the Academy's wonderfully full fall season can be found on our website, www.wisconsinacademy.org.

Just as exciting for the future of the Academy is how we are responding to what we heard from our members in our recent survey.

Among other things, members said they wanted more regional offerings, more ethnic representation in programming, more e-mail communication with the Academy regarding events and activities, and the development of youth programs.

In response, we are launching an electronic newsletter to communicate with existing members and attract new members. We are exploring ways to make our website more helpful, including opportunities to chat with presenters and artists and renew memberships online.

And Wisconsin Eye, Madison City Channel 12, or Wisconsin Public Television will videotape Academy Evening presentations so that they can be viewed on one of 19 city channels around the state, Wisconsin Eye, or the public television station nearest you. In addition, Portal Wisconsin, a website supported by Wisconsin's Cultural Coalition, will continue to post videos of many Academy Evening presentations on its website, www.portalwisconsin.org. Our partnerships with other statewide organizations help us reach our members and a statewide audience.

Members also offered ideas for future programming. They include:

- Separation of church and state
- The crisis in Wisconsin print media
- Wisconsin health care costs
- Biofuels and energy independence
- Follow-up on the Future of Farming and Rural Life project, including land use and school financing in rural areas

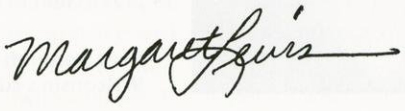
We are excited about the prospects of expanding programming to other parts of the state. But we need your help to do that. Please let us know if you would help coordinate an event in your area—find sponsors, identify a location, invite friends, assist with local advertising.

In a challenging budget environment, we also have good news: Academy Evenings and our other talks will remain free, and new member rates remain at $25. Renewal membership rates, which have remained steady for the past five years, will increase by $5 to cover increased costs of printing and postage. We also are introducing a new membership category for corporations and other organizations, which have long been among our leading supporters.

Please encourage your friends to join us. Or take advantage of the new member rate to present a birthday gift membership (which of course includes the magazine) to a family member. Think about giving a membership to your local library so that they can offer the magazine to your community, or to your favorite professional to make the magazine available in his or her waiting room. The Academy offers "the best of all things Wisconsin," and new members will allow us to grow our program offerings.

Thanks again for your wealth of support and ideas.

Sincerely,



Margaret Lewis
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608/263-1692 ext. 11

Off to the Villa!

A writers' exchange program between Wisconsin and Germany sends a Baraboo poet to Wiesbaden

As summer turns to fall, a poet from Baraboo gets to enjoy the leaves turning color from another vantage point: her suite in a German villa.

Deborah Bernhardt has been selected for a three-month residency in Wiesbaden, the capital of Wisconsin's sister state of Hessen. The residency, which began in August, is funded by the state-run Hessen Literary Society in Germany and includes a 3,000-Euro stipend.

Bernhardt is serving as a cultural ambassador for Wisconsin by holding readings, visiting schools, teaching workshops, and strengthening ties between Wisconsin's and Hessen's literary and cultural communities.

Mostly, however, the residency is intended to give her time to pursue her own writing in the stimulating environment of another country and culture. She gets to pursue this work while living in Villa Clementine, a state-owned cultural center and arts residence that was built in 1882 as a plush home for a manufacturer and his wife (his darling Clementine).

All in all, it's a pretty sweet gig.

"What excites me most about the opportunity to live in Germany is that I don't know what my discoveries will truly be and that I won't just be 'visiting' Germany—I will *live* there. Three months of hospitality are quite a privilege," noted Bernhardt shortly before her departure.

Bernhardt, who teaches at the University of Wisconsin Baraboo/Sauk County, holds an MFA in creative writing from the University of Arizona. She is the recipient of a Wisconsin Arts Board literary grant, she has published widely in literary magazines, and her poetry collection, *Echolalia,* was published by Four Way Books as the winner of the 2005 Intro Prize for Poetry. More about her is posted at http://deborah.bernhardt.googlepages.com.

The residency is part of a larger commitment to strengthen cultural ties between the sister states of Wisconsin and Hessen. In Wisconsin, the effort is being coordinated by Hessen-Wisconsin Writers, a volunteer group made up of poets, writers, and various cultural, educational, and nonprofit organizations.

Bernhardt and two other candidates were selected after a public call for applications by the Hessen-Wisconsin Writers Exchange steering committee, comprised of representatives from the following groups: the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters; the Wisconsin Arts Board; the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets; the Wisconsin Humanities Council; the Wisconsin Department of Public Instruction; the University of Wisconsin–Madison Department of German; and the Max Kade Institute at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. The final selection of Bernhardt was

Poet Deborah Bernhardt is already serving as Wisconsin's cultural ambassador in Hessen.

Latin Roots Sui and Cidium

Under oneself. Tending, and does. Thinking only of one's hand.
Sui as in suitor—suing and pursuing.
To cede, which is withdraw. Sidelong. A glancing under decide.
Words get tired of melodrama and off themselves. Lying there, suitable.
An overuse of is, is, is. Sous as in under. Can you spare one under.
I haven't got a side. What it is: preventable. Ensuite. Or isn't—it's predisposed of.
Ici dieu. Where. Sous. You see. Non. Underneath veined cities.
Sweet seed, don't grow, don't, my sour sigh.

made by the Hessen Literary Society in Wiesbaden.

Bernhardt is the second Wisconsin writer to stay in Germany as part of this exchange. In 2005, the group sent over Paula Sergi, a poet from Fond du Lac. In 2006, the group hosted German writer Julia Wolf for a three-month stay at the Edenfred creative arts residency in Madison, owned by the Terry Family Foundation. Wolf also received a $3,000 stipend from the Greater Milwaukee Foundation's Theodore and Anna Grollmann Fund.

The plan is to continue alternating between hosting a German writer one year and sending a Wisconsin writer to Germany the next.

Information about the exchange may be found at the websites of the participating organizations, including www.wisconsinacademy.org and www.portalwisconsin.org.

Villa Clementine, Bernhardt's humble home in Wiesbaden.

Fresh Water and Muddy Policy

BOOK REVIEW BY CURT MEINE

The Great Lakes Water Wars
by Peter Annin
Island Press, 2006

FOR DECADES THE CITIZENS, governments, businesses, and organizations of the Great Lakes watershed have been involved in a remarkable experiment in natural resource management. The hypothesis behind the experiment is that unprecedented collaboration can protect, sustain, and maintain a great aquatic ecosystem, repository of 20 percent of the world's surface freshwater. The experiment continues as the demand for fresh water grows regionally, nationally, and globally, and as other forces are felt upon the waters: climate change, invasive aquatic species, declining aquifers, polluted runoff, legacies of contaminated sediments, faltering wastewater treatment infrastructure, privatization and commodification of public waters, and international trade agreements.

Collaborative approaches have increasingly become the norm in resource management fields, from forestry to watershed restoration to sustainable agriculture. The joint effort to steward the waters of the Great Lakes basin stands as one of the oldest, most instructive, and most problematic examples of collaboration. In *The Great Lakes Water Wars*, Peter Annin reports on this ongoing experiment—its history and complications, contingent results, and emerging uncertainties—with well-measured concern and a sure eye for the human drama behind the policy scenes. Annin is a Madison-based former *Newsweek* magazine correspondent and associate director of the Institutes for Journalism and Natural Resources. He provides a concise primer that remains readable while not shortchanging the story's legal details and bureaucratic dramas.

That is no easy task. To grasp the significance of the Great Lakes waters and their management challenges, Annin must grapple with the minutiae of water policy even while stretching his perspective across spatial scales. Early in his account Annin visits the apocalyptic wastelands that were once covered by the waters of the Aral Sea in Central Asia. There Soviet-era water engineers and agricultural planners

conspired to create, through diversion of the Aral's waters, one of the world's most stunning examples of environmental mismanagement. From the bed of the former sea, shrunk disastrously in just half a century to a quarter of its former extent, Annin draws a lesson as stark as the Aral's briny, desiccated flats: "Large lakes have limits."

Annin returns to the local scale to describe those places in the Great Lakes basin where we can see those limits just beyond the water's horizon. At the heart of Annin's book is a series of careful accounts of flash points in the "water wars": the diversion of water out of the basin through the reversal of the Chicago River in the late 1800s; the diversion of water into the basin in the 1930s and 1940s through control dams on the Ogoki River and Long Lac north of Lake Superior; the tangled policy implications of requests in the 1980s and 1990s for diversions of water at Pleasant Prairie (Wisconsin), Lowell (Indiana), Mud Creek (Michigan), and Akron (Ohio). These historic (if little-known) battles tested not only the integrity of the Great Lakes watershed boundaries, but the ability of existing policy to safeguard the lakes.

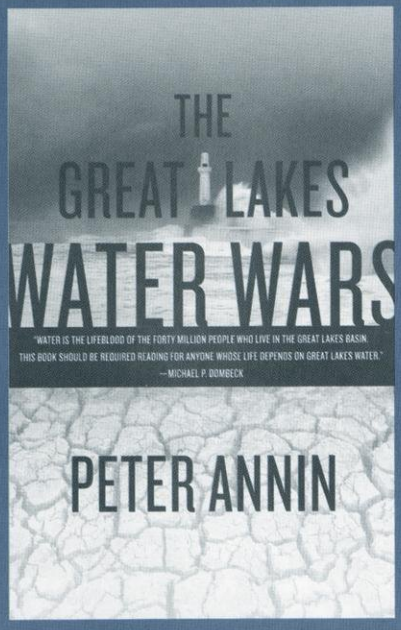
A wake-up call came to all parties in 1998, when a novel plan was put forward to export Lake Superior water to Asia by freighter. For basin-dwellers, the scheme brought old, only slightly submerged fears to the surface: *They are coming for our water!* Only "they" were not former Rust Belters relocated to the Sun Belt sprawl of the arid Southwest, but distant consumers newly entitled through the power of international trade accords.

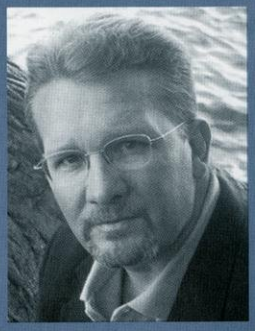
Thus began the struggle, still continuing, to devise a new and more comprehensive agreement for collaborative management of the lakes. The product of that struggle, the yet-to-be-adopted Great Lakes Compact, is a complex expression of shifting chemistry among the basin's varied "water personalities" (Annin's term):

> Michigan is adamantly opposed to diversions, but balks at limitations on its own in-Basin consumptive use. New York has major hydropower considerations. Illinois is worried about maintaining its U.S. Supreme Court-mandated water allocation that keeps metropolitan Chicago alive. Ontario shares many of Michigan's anti-diversion sentiments, and Quebec, at the tail end of the system, is concerned about what everyone else does upstream. Minnesota has been the most progressive water jurisdiction in the Basin—Indiana decidedly less so—with Wisconsin, Ohio, and Pennsylvania somewhere in between.

Annin tracks the evolution of the relationships among the region's partners in the last decade as "geographical loyalties were pushed" and "different stakeholders figuratively circled one another in the negotiating room." At issue is not only the future of the lakes, but whether the basin's citizens, leaders, and democratic institutions are up to the job—and responsibilities—of cooperative governance. As Annin concludes, "If the region can't figure out a way to protect and manage the waters of the Great Lakes Basin, someone else will step in to do it for them. Rightly so. The Great Lakes are far too precious to be left in the hands of the incompetent and the incapable." *The Great Lakes Water Wars* is itself a vital contribution to competent and capable stewardship.

Annin's book focuses intensively on the evolution of policy involving Great Lakes water use, management, consumption, and diversion. In so doing, it cannot cover the entire gamut of Great Lakes issues and perspectives. (I would like to have read more, for example, on the historical ecology of the lakes as a manipulated system, the ecological necessity of watershed-wide management, and the role of Native American and Canadian First Nations in the development of Great Lakes policy.) It nonetheless stands as an accessible, timely, and much-needed overview of the globally significant effort to keep well the Great Lakes.





Author Peter Annin: Flash points in the "water wars" form the heart of this book.

Curt Meine is senior fellow with the Aldo Leopold Foundation in Baraboo and director for conservation biology and history at the Chicago-based Center for Humans and Nature.

Authors and Artists Hit the Road

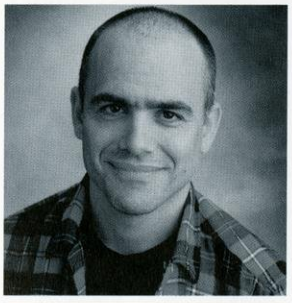
What do the Frank L. Weyenberg Library of Mequon and Thiensville, the Verona Public Library, St. Paul Catholic School of Genesee Depot, and the Syverson Lutheran Home of Eau Claire all have in common? They are among seven organizations that are bringing a Wisconsin author or illustrator to their communities to speak and to read from their work.

The presentations are made possible by the Wisconsin Center for the Book's annual Wisconsin Authors and Illustrators Speak grants, which provide $250 to the presenting artist or writer. The following presentations are free of charge and take place from fall through spring:

KATIE MCKY

Early October 2007 (date to be announced)
Syverson Lutheran Home, Eau Claire, in partnership with "The Red Hats Are Coming" and L.E. Philips Memorial Library

Katie McKy, author of *Pumpkin Town!* and *It All Began with a Bean*, will be featured at the Syverson Lutheran Home in a presentation that will bring grandparents and even great-grandparents together with little ones to enjoy a good story. McKy, known not only for her writing but also for her story-telling abilities, was chosen for her love of teaching, children, and gardening.



MICHAEL PERRY

Monday, October 22, 7 p.m. and Tuesday, October 23, time to be announced
Frank L. Weyenberg Library of Mequon and Thiensville

The Mequon-Thiensville library, in inaugurating what they hope will become an annual Community Reads program, is starting with *Population 485* by Michael Perry. Because they wanted someone who "spoke to the theme of an individual's role and relationship to his/her community," regional writer Michael Perry was the strong and obvious favorite. The event will include local schools, Harry W. Schwartz Bookshops, and local volunteer fire departments.

DAVID MARANISS

Tuesday, October 30, 7 p.m.
Verona Public Library, partnering with Verona Senior Center and area high schools

David Maraniss, author of such books as *Clemente* and *They Marched into Sunlight* as well as celebrated biographies of Vince Lombardi and Bill Clinton, will speak in Verona to a crowd that includes veterans, sports enthusiasts, senior citizens, and high school students ranging from athletes to English classes.

LOIS WALFRID JOHNSON

Saturday, November 3, 10 a.m.
Milltown Public Library, partnering with home-schoolers

Lois Walfrid Johnson's books for young people include her bestselling "Adventures of the Northwoods" novels, which are set in the early 1900s in the upper reaches of Wisconsin, Minneapolis, and Michigan. Her "1857 Riverboat Adventures" offer page-turning cliffhangers, the mysteries of the Underground Railroad, and a fresh perspective on the freedoms sought in the Declaration of Independence.

KATHLEEN ERNST

Thursday, November 15
1:30 p.m., St. Paul Catholic School, Genesee Depot
6:30 p.m., Waukesha Public Library, partnering with Waukesha Community Library

Kathleen Ernst was chosen for her expertise in historical fiction and her ability to keep history captivating for young readers. Her writings include *Heart of Stone, Highland Fling,* and *Midnight in Lonesome Hollow: A Kit Mystery.* Two programs are planned, one at St. Paul Catholic School and one at Waukesha Public Library.

MICHAEL PERRY
March 25, 7 p.m.
L.D. Fargo Public Library, Lake Mills

MARY LOGUE
Monday, April 28, 7 p.m.
Menominee Public Library, partnering with Menominee Writers Guild

Poet and mystery writer Mary Logue has published seven adult mysteries and six in the celebrated Claire Watkins series, one of which (*Dark Coulee*) won the Minnesota Book Award for Popular Fiction in 2000. She also has written numerous books for young adults and children.

RICH CHRUSTOWSKI
Thursday through Saturday, April 24–26 (time to be announced)
Menasha Public Library, partnering with Heckrodt Wetland Reserve and Menasha Joint School District

Author/illustrator Rick Chrustowski creates exciting and accessible science books that use dramatic close-ups to give children a memorable look into the life cycles of creatures common in our region. His works include *Bright Beetle*, *Hop Frog*, and *Turtle Crossing*. These events take place on Earth Day.

For more information about the Wisconsin Center for the Book's Wisconsin Authors and Illustrators Speak grants, contact Sarah McGowan at (920) 346-2784. Next year's application is available at www.wisconsinacademy.org/book. The Wisconsin Center for the Book is an affiliate of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters.

by Sarah McGowan

Wisconsin Center for the Book Events at Book Fest

Wed., Oct. 10, noon, Capitol Rotunda: Presentation of the first Governor's Commendation for Lifetime Literary Achievement to a Wisconsin recipient for enhancing the development of children's literature, presented by First Lady Jessica Doyle, with remarks by Don Johnson, chair, Wisconsin Center for the Book (WCB).

Sat., Oct. 13, 1–6:30 p.m., UW–Madison Memorial Library, in and around room 126: **Publishers' Showcase,** a Wisconsin book exhibit, open all afternoon. **Booklovers' Dialogue** event opens at 1 p.m. with a reading by Heather Swan Rosenthal, winner of the WCB's Poetry BookMark Award. Sessions running all afternoon include presentations by publishers, authors, and booksellers as well as expert advice for writers. **More at www.wisconsinacademy.org/book**

First Themed Book

When the Founding Fathers included "to insure domestic tranquility" in the preamble to the Constitution, they gave us a concept we could reflect upon and debate about for the next 220 years.

What are today's real or imagined threats to a peaceful existence? And what role should the government play in protecting it? These and other related questions demand constant revisiting and redefinition during changing times.

This fall, authors at the **Wisconsin Book Festival (Oct. 10–14)** will explore how the concept of domestic tranquility relates to everything from gun control and freedom of speech to immigration and environmental concerns. It is the first time this annual event, now in its sixth year, will carry a theme.

Kicking things off in the Overture Center's Capitol Theater on Oct. 10 will be two of the country's most passionate nature writers and activists. **Terry Tempest Williams,** a fierce advocate for freedom of speech and author of the environmental classic *Refuge: An Unnatural History of Family and Place*, demonstrates how environmental issues are social issues that ultimately become matters of justice. Accompanying Williams will be nature writer and former petroleum geologist **Rick Bass,** the author of a number of award-winning fiction and nonfiction works that explore the necessity of our nation's open spaces and clean air, land, and water. These include *The Lives of Rocks* and *Where the Sea Used to Be*.

Terry Tempest Williams kicks off the event Wednesday, Oct. 10, at 7 p.m. in Overture's Capitol Theater with a talk about environmental and social justice.

Fest Takes on Tranquility

Some authors will focus on our individual quests for peace. Returning to the festival is **Rabbi Harold Kushner**, author of *When Bad Things Happen to Good People*, *How Good Do We Have to Be?*, and *Overcoming Life's Disappointments*. Esteemed poet **Jane Hirshfield** and Pulitzer Prize–winning novelist **Michael Cunningham**, author of *The Hours*, will also grace the stage.

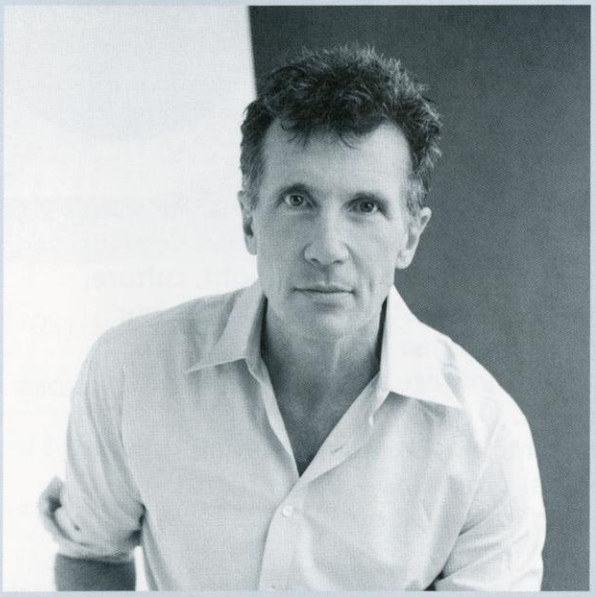
Bringing domestic matters to the level of policy, Wisconsin's own **Representative David Obey** will present his upcoming memoir, *Raising Hell for Justice: The Washington Battles of a Heartland Progressive*. Pulitzer Prize–winning author **Susan Faludi** comes with her latest work, *Terror Dreams: Fear and Fantasy in Post-9/11 America*, which examines how the attacks have changed our national culture. Recalling the domestic concerns of a previous era, South African novelist **Zakes Mda** presents *CION*, which tells the story of an Ohio family and its ancestors as two brothers navigate the Underground Railroad.

For some, today's most prominent threat to domestic tranquility lies at our nation's borders. **Luis Alberto Urrea**, a recent Pulitzer Prize finalist for *The Devil's Highway*, offers a harrowing look at the deadly struggle of a group of migrant workers attempting to cross the U.S./Mexico border. Novelist **T.C. Boyle's** *The Tortilla Curtain* contrasts the lives of American professionals and Mexican immigrants in the hills of southern California.

Taking the issue beyond our borders will be Nigerian author **Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie**, whose novel *Half of a Yellow Sun* explores Biafra's impassioned struggle to establish an independent republic in southeastern Nigeria during the late 1960s.

The Wisconsin Book Festival, a presentation of the Wisconsin Humanities Council, is free of charge. For the latest information, visit www.wisconsinbookfestival.org.

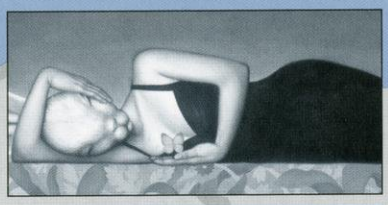
Jean Feraca reads from her new memoir, *I Hear Voices: A Memoir of Love, Death, and the Radio,* on Sunday, Oct. 14, at noon in Overture's Wisconsin Studio.



Michael Cunningham, author of *The Hours,* delivers the festival's grand finale on Sunday, Oct. 14, at 6 p.m. at the Orpheum Theatre.

Our Contest Winners at Book Fest

Thurs., Oct. 11, 5–6:30 p.m., Avol's Bookstore, 315 W. Gorham, Madison, *Wisconsin People & Ideas* Short Story and Poetry Contest winners reading. Christopher Scalia, Kirk Farber, and Ingrid Aamot (fiction) and Joel Friederich, Sara Parrell, and Kay N. Sanders (poetry) read their winning works.



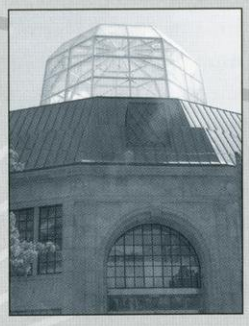
the gallery

The James Watrous Gallery of the Wisconsin Academy in Madison's Overture Center for the Arts is *the* leading showcase for Wisconsin artists. Many exhibits presented there tour to other galleries in Wisconsin.

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. "The Future of Farming and Rural Life in Wisconsin" is the current initiative in this program.

$25 gets you here!



the public forums

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

the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters connects people and ideas from all walks of life to celebrate thought, culture, and nature in our state and address our common problems.

Our programs are a catalyst for ideas and action.

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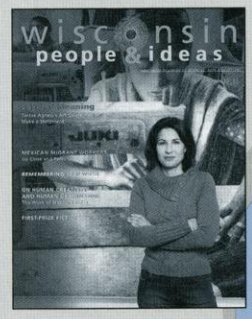

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Professor Sean Carroll gives an Academy Evening presentation on Tuesday, Nov. 13, 7 p.m., at the Madison Museum of Contemporary Art lecture hall in Overture. Admission is free ($3 suggested donation), seating first come, first served (no tickets). More information at www.wisconsinacademy.org

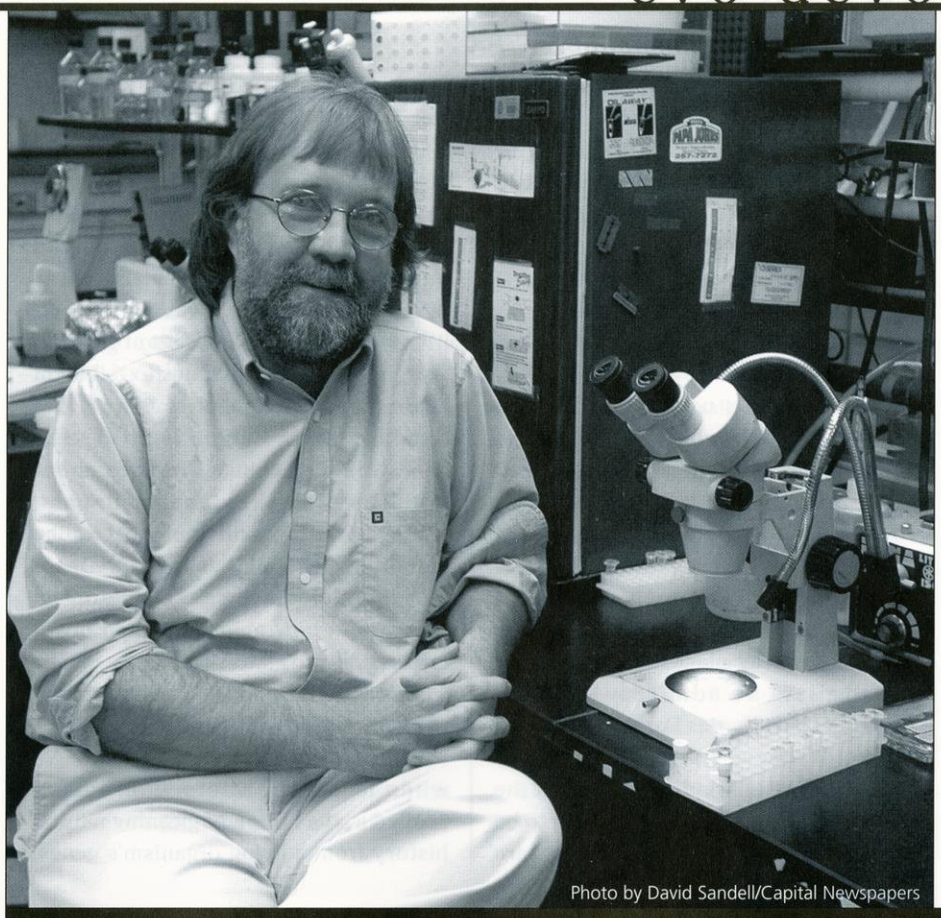


Photo by David Sandell/Capital Newspapers

From Darwin to DNA

Sean Carroll, a UW–Madison professor of genetics and molecular biology, is at the forefront of an exciting new field in which scientists use gene analysis to learn more about the origin of species and their adaptations over time.

BY MICHAEL PENN

FIRST, A FISH STORY. Eighty years ago, on a solitary blip of land in the southern reaches of the Atlantic Ocean, a young Norwegian scientist named Ditlef Rumstad caught a most extraordinary fish, a fish that until that moment couldn't possibly exist.

Long and pale, with large eyes and a protruding jaw full of sharp teeth, the fish vaguely resembled a crocodile. Rumstad had never seen anything like it, but neither had he been anywhere like Bouvet Island, a barren mound of ice located some 1,600 miles southwest of the southernmost tip of Africa. He had arrived on the *Norvegia*, a research vessel sent to establish an outpost for wayward sailors, and as far as anyone knew, he and the crew were the first humans to set foot on the island. As the ship's biologist, Rumstad made dutiful note of his catch, which he called "white crocodile fish."

Then, he made an astounding discovery: his crocodile fish didn't bleed.

Red blood is the telltale stain of life coursing through virtually every known animal on the planet. Inside red blood cells are molecules of hemoglobin, which ferry oxygen around the body and, biologists assumed, are essential to respiration. But when Rumstad sliced open the strange fish, it leaked a colorless fluid that seemed entirely devoid of red blood cells, which didn't make sense at all. How could such a creature oxygenate its cells?

Returning to Norway, Rumstad told a colleague, Johan Ruud, about his discovery. Ruud himself had traveled with whalers a few years before and heard their tales of these nearly transparent fish, which they called "devilfish"

or "icefish." But he had never seen one alive. He dismissed their stories as the lore of lonely sailors. All that he knew about life told him such a creature could not survive. It must be legend, a fish story.

TAKING DARWIN TO THE NEXT LEVEL

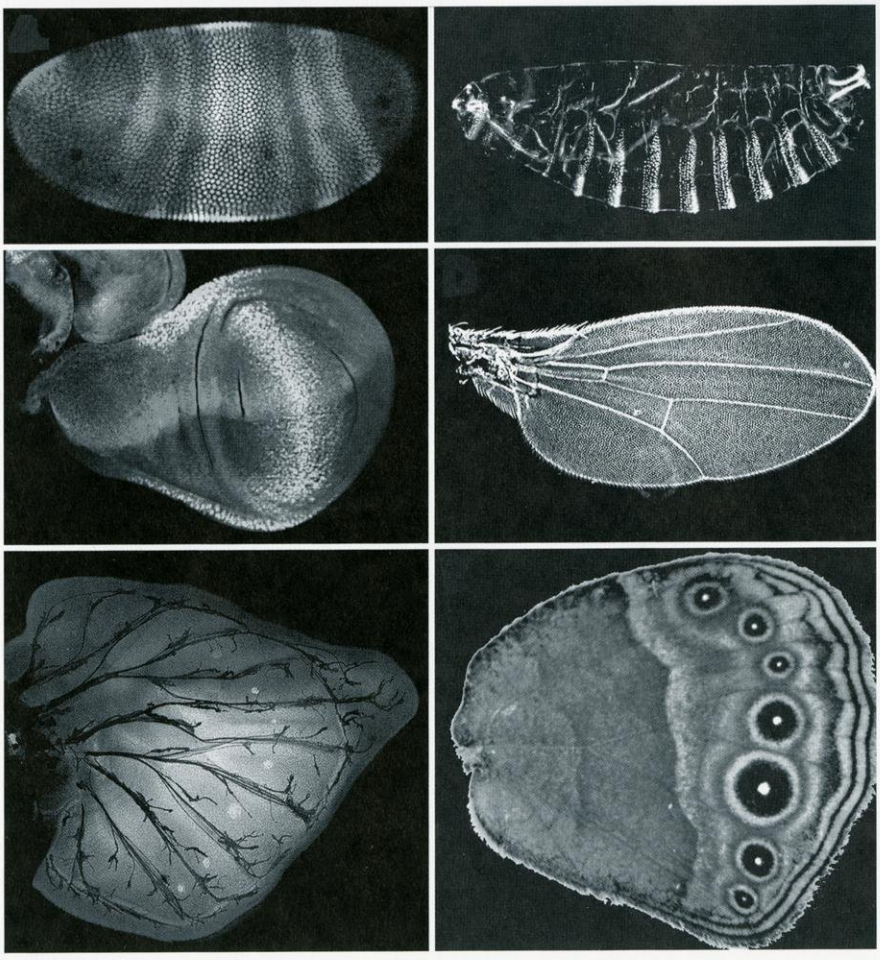
Dressed in his usual attire of blue jeans and a rugby shirt, with a muss of shoulder-length hair and a red beard now flecked with gray, Sean Carroll looks like he would have been quite at home on the *Norvegia*. Part of him would have loved that assignment, hanging out with the flensers, trading tales of faraway places. Like the great naturalists he admires—curious explorers like Charles Darwin and Alfred Russel Wallace—Carroll entertains a healthy share of wanderlust. You get the feeling he'd like nothing more than to be chasing crocodiles or unearthing rare fossils, making discoveries in the great Out There.

But Carroll is consumed by smaller fossils. In a genetics laboratory on the University of Wisconsin–Madison campus, he hunts for life's origin at its tiniest scale: on the molecular strands of DNA that reside in the cells of all living things. Just as paleontologists search for preserved bones to tell them about the size and shape of animals that lived long ago, Carroll analyzes the genes of living things for clues about their ancestors. By comparing and testing genes from different species, he can often tell which animals are most closely related, who descended from whom, and how animals gained novel features such as limbs and wings.

This kind of analysis, which Carroll calls the "forensic record of evolution," was inconceivable even 30 years ago, when most scientists would have scoffed at the notion of gleaning natural history from a living organism's genes. But such readings, made possible by advances in molecular biology, are now complementing—and in many cases surpassing—what fossils and comparative anatomy tell us about how plants and animals evolved. DNA is now so central to the field that it shares equal time with fossils at the American Museum of Natural History's permanent exhibition on human origins.

"DNA allows us to create a factual record of descent," says Don Waller, a UW-Madison professor of botany and president of the Society for the Study of Evolution. "When taxonomists just had leaves and flowers to work with, it was somewhat guesswork to decide who was whose closest relative. Now, we can nail that sucker. We can say with definitive assurance that this group [descended from] that group."

Carroll stepped to the helm of this revolution shortly after joining the UW–Madison faculty as a professor of genetics and molecular biology in 1987. Three years later, at the ripe age of 30, he landed a coveted appointment as a Howard Hughes Medical Institute investigator, which gave him ample latitude to pursue his research as he saw fit, and he began to explore an emerging branch of molecular biology known as "evo devo," which links the study of embryonic development (hence, *devo*) with evolution theory (*evo*). Studying gene activity in the embryos of fruit flies, he parked a succession of papers in *Science* and *Nature*, the most prestigious research journals in the world, and soon had the ear of the scientific community. In 1994, the excitement brewing around the emerging field prompted *Time* magazine to put Carroll on its list of



Patterns of gene expression in early stages of development (left column) reflect their forms later in development (right column). This is illustrated by a fruit fly embryo and later-stage fruit fly larva (first row); a fruit fly wing imaginal disc and adult fruit fly wing (second row); and a butterfly wing imaginal disc and adult butterfly wing (bottom row). Different genes are expressed at different times during development to encode and refine anatomy.

Images courtesy of Steve Paddock, Jim Langeland, Jane Selegue, and Craig Brunetti

America's most promising minds under 40 years old.

As talented as he is at the bench, Carroll has proved even more adept at carrying advances in genetics beyond the traditional boundaries of the complicated science. He has written a widely used textbook on the subject and two books for general audiences. The first, *Endless Forms Most Beautiful*, was tabbed one of the best science books of 2005 by *Discover* magazine. Last year, he followed up with *The Making of the Fittest*, which explored more examples of how DNA is reinforcing Darwin's theory of evolution, drawn from both his own lab and others around the world. He is now at work on a *Nova* documentary to air in 2009, the 150th anniversary of the publication of Darwin's seminal work, *On the Origin of Species*.

That public profile has cast Carroll in the unique role of being Darwin's closer. At a time when many Americans still harbor doubts that humans evolved from earlier forms of life, many biologists believe that DNA evidence—so widely trusted as proof of identity or paternity in legal cases—has the power to settle the debate over Darwin's theory of evolution for good. And Carroll, a deft writer with a keen ear for stories, may be uniquely qualified to make the case.

"What Sean is doing is unlocking Darwin's toolkit," says Neil Shubin, a paleontologist at the University of Chicago who has collaborated with Carroll on research. "He is giving us a mechanistic understanding of how body forms are created and change over time."

In other words, Carroll is changing the conversation from "Did evolution happen?" to "Here's how."

Or so science hopes.

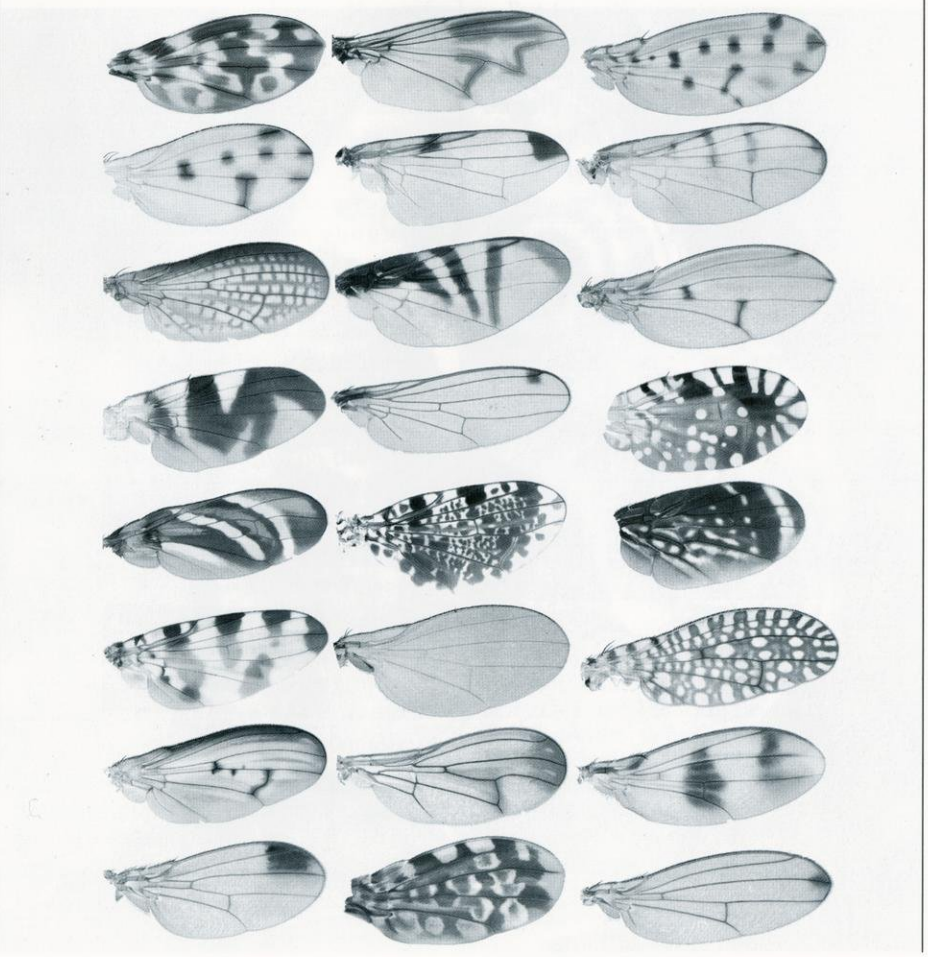
DOINGS AT THE CARROLL LABORATORY

"It's a little bit of a zoo in here at times," Sean Carroll says, casting an eye around his lab. The description fits on two levels. First, the cramped suite on the second floor of the Bock Labs building is typically abuzz with activity. Postdocs shuttle between computers and bench stations, setting up experiments and taking turns peering into microscopes. The lab radio cranks out a steady thrum of Tom Petty, Jimi Hendrix, and the Stones, all staples from Carroll's extensive library of classic rock.

But Carroll's lab is also a literal zoo, housing at various times some 50 species of fruit flies, various butterflies, centipedes, yeasts, brine shrimp, spiders, and velvet worms. The lab relies on its strange ark of species to pursue its research questions, which revolve around a handful of genes that are involved in the formation of body parts, building everything from fruit fly bristles to jellyfish eyes. And since in most animals those features take shape during embryonic development, this kind of inquiry requires watching organisms as they grow from egg to birth, a process that is delicate, intricately detailed, and microscopically tiny.

"In the lab, you're driven to be curious about generalities. The art is to find a particular model to lead you there," says Carroll. The specific details of the projects "would put you to sleep in 45 seconds. But if I told you the questions we're trying to answer ..." He interrupts himself, eager to relate a story about a student who is exploring the genetics of brewer's yeast. But the point is clear: Carroll doesn't study life to learn about fruit flies; he studies fruit flies to learn about life.

Life has long enthralled Carroll. As a boy growing up in Toledo, Ohio, he



The magnificent diversity of pigment patterns on the wings of different fruit fly species (*Drosophila sp.*) has evolved over 60 to 80 million years. The wing pigmentation patterns in insects have various biological functions, including mimicry, camouflage, thermoregulation, and mate selection.

Images courtesy of Benjamin Prud'homme and Nicolas Gompel

roamed parks and lakeshores, hunting for snakes and insects and slimy things. Diagnosed as allergic to animal fur—erroneously, it turns out—he was permitted to keep an odd menagerie of pets around the house: lizards, newts, salamanders, frogs, and an alarming assortment of snakes. His parents patiently tolerated the repeated appearance of strange specimens in the family refrigerator, where Carroll would often store his reptiles' food. When he wasn't playing baseball or listening to rock and roll, he tuned in to watch Marlin Perkins on *Wild Kingdom* and Jacques Cousteau's exploits aboard the *Calypso*.

In school, Carroll gravitated naturally toward biology, and he sped through Washington University in St. Louis in two years. But he soon found himself at a crossroads. In those days, probing deeper into the natural world meant choosing between big and small. Students who liked the big picture of how animals fit into the tree of life went into paleontology or taxonomy; those who preferred a more mechanistic understanding of biological function typically veered off into molecular biology. The problem for Carroll was that his interests sat squarely at the intersection, where very few people worked.

"I like understanding biological mechanisms. There's a beauty and there's tremendous satisfaction in understanding how something works at its most fundamental level," he says. "But I love the diversity of life. I like butterflies and zebras and dinosaurs and trilobites, and I wanted to investigate how they evolved and how they're made. You couldn't do that solely from the fossil record."

By the time Carroll finished graduate school, an upheaval in genetic science would begin to make that marriage possible. New tools developed in the 1970s were giving biologists their first crack at experimenting with the twisted strands of DNA in living cells. They could now deactivate and clone genes, giving them tools to observe what effect manipulating a gene would have on an organism.

Much of the work was done on a few model organisms, including *Drosophila*, a variety of fruit fly that has long been a workhorse of lab science. Biologists had seen how removing certain genes created horrific mutant files with no eyes or with extra legs growing in unnatural places, hinting at the role those genes played in body formation. Then came a shocking realization. In 1983, a scientist named Walter Gehring found that the gene missing from mutant flies with no eyes was virtually identical to a gene already known to exist in humans, one that caused a defect in the formation of human eyes.

The finding turned science on its ear, suggesting that different animals were built of similar genes. "No one anticipated that the same genes that construct an eye in you or me are fundamental to the functioning of an eye in a fruit fly," says Don Waller. "That was just amazing."

Carroll, fresh off a Ph.D. in immunology, was equally surprised—and delighted. Seeing a path to explore his interest in evolution through genetics, he left immune systems behind and took a postdoctoral research position in the University of Colorado lab of Matthew Scott, a developmental biologist who had made one of the early discoveries in fruit flies. Scott was attempting to do something very few people had done—to peer inside a developing fly embryo and observe how genes orchestrate development during the first hours of life.

Always a rapacious student of natural history, Carroll knew that Darwin himself was interested in embryonic development; he cited similarities in

An adult African butterfly (*Bicyclus anynana*) resting on a leaf. The wet-season form (pictured here) has prominent eyespots on its wings whereas the dry-season form has less prominent eyepots. This is an example of phenotypic plasticity.

Image courtesy of Paul Brakefield, University of Leiden

mammalian embryos as support for his idea of common ancestry. But the science of evolution had left embryology aside, limiting its view to the variations in developed animals. It struck Carroll that development—that critical transition when fertilized eggs start down their divergent paths toward being leopards or chimpanzees or lobsters—had a lot to say about evolution. It *was* evolution, in a condensed time frame.

The problem was seeing it all unfold. Because the science was so new, there were few protocols for monitoring gene activity, especially in something as delicate and fast-changing as a fly embryo. Scientists could tweak genes, but they needed a way to track when and where those altered genes were switched on to know for sure what role they played in development. At Colorado, Carroll set to work on that task. From his background in immunology, he devised a scheme to attach chemically dyed antibodies to the proteins produced by genes when they are activated, creating a visible signal in the parts of an embryo where genes were working.

"That required a whole lot of technology that wasn't invented," Carroll recalls. "I'd been working on it about 18 months with nothing to show for it. That's a really difficult time. It isn't like cooking out of a cookbook. You have to keep trying things, and a lot of them don't work."

Finally, on what Carroll had figured would be his last shot at making his system work, the antibodies revealed something dramatic: the genes that glowed created patterns, marking off the parts of the fly embryo that would eventually begin forming the various features of its body. "I put the slide under the microscope and I see these little embryos with brilliant green stripes," he says. "And we had hit it, baby. We were in the game."

What Carroll revealed was a way to eavesdrop on the genetic process at its most furious moment, as genes fired off instructions for building limbs and eyes and wings even before they appeared. Soon, science would come to understand that the genes active during that time exist in virtually every insect and animal, from fruit flies to mice to humans. What he had seen were the fingerprints of evolution.

EXPLORING THE GENETIC TOOLKIT

Like Darwin, who drew inferences about all life's diversity by observing 13 species of Galapagos Island finches, Carroll is a master in the art of extrapolation. In the lab, he is relentlessly focused on the big picture, challenging students to be more creative and more ambitious in their thinking and extracting the widest meaning possible from their work. "Sean's sense of adventure with regard to science freed the rest of us to tackle challenging—and sometimes impossibly difficult—questions," says Nicole King, an assistant professor at the University of California at Berkeley who worked in Carroll's lab as a postdoc from 2000 to 2003.

"He is always focused on what kinds of experiments will change the way people think about things, rather than just what kinds of experiments we know we can do," adds recent Ph.D. graduate Chris Hittinger, now at Washington University in St. Louis.

It's for that reason that Carroll has been insatiably curious about the toolkit genes of body formation. Scientists have only recently realized that most living creatures are built from very similar genes. Humans, for instance, are more than 98 percent identical on the DNA level to chimpanzees, our closest living relative on the family tree, and we share 85 percent of our genes with mice. What Carroll is after is how life gets organisms as different as mice and men from such common parts.

To do this, Carroll seeks to understand how genes have been passed down through generations and what changes each species has introduced along the way. With no DNA samples of ancient ancestor organisms to study, he relies on comparing analogous genes in related species, allowing him to draw inferences about how genes were structured in shared ancestors. (One such study, which identified common limb-forming genes among insects and crustaceans, caught the eye of humorist Dave Barry, who cited Carroll's research as the reason he doesn't eat lobster, since research proved they were really big insects.)

By the mid-1990s, Carroll's lab had identified, isolated, and analyzed genes in fruit flies that are responsible for the formation of limbs, bristles, and wings. Then, a colleague from another university, who had spent decades studying the genetics of butterflies, asked if there might be parallel systems working to form wing patterns in butterflies and fruit flies.

Carroll was intrigued. He had always been fascinated by the diversity of patterns and colors displayed on the 17,000 species of butterflies that inhabit the planet, and the naturalist in him wanted to learn more. "When you look at something as beautiful as a butterfly wing," he says, "I think it's natural to ask, 'How was this made? Why does it look the way it does?'"

But Carroll was also aware that the colorful designs on butterfly wings are anything but fanciful; they factor significantly in mating and often offer protection from predators. It is easy enough to explain why natural selection preserves those patterns, given the survival advantage they offer. The real

Little lab workhorse: For almost a century the fruit fly (*Drosophila melanogaster*) has been a valuable resource in genetics and developmental biology, and now in evolutionary developmental biology (evo devo). The animal is inexpensive to maintain, it has a relatively short life cycle of around two weeks, its entire genome of 14,000 genes has been sequenced, and several thousand genetic mutations are available for study.

Image courtesy of Nicolas Gompel

The emerging understanding that drives evo-devo science is that it's not the genes that make us different; it's how we use them.

trick would be in showing how genetic variation allows those patterns to arise in the first place, the so-called "arrival of the fittest." It is on this point that many objections to Darwin's explanation hinge; proponents of intelligent design, for example, argue that the evolution of complex body structures and organs isn't possible through simple genetic mutations and would be attainable only through a master hand directing the changes.

Carroll's work on butterfly wings, however, shows that genes have a remarkable ability to take on new jobs with very simple genetic tweaks to their chemical makeup. Studying butterfly larvae weeks before their wings actually appear, Carroll's team tested various genes that they knew from their research on fruit flies had something to do with wing formation, hoping to see that one of them might be involved in drawing wing patterns. Before long, they found one, a gene that in fruit flies has multiple jobs related to body formation. Depending on where it is deployed, the gene was involved in limb formation and helped shape parts of the fly's wing. In butterflies, Carroll found that the gene had similar duties, plus one more. The gene had evolved a new switch that when turned on drew patterns on butterfly wings.

To Carroll, this proved something vitally important in grasping why evolution works: as they evolved, butterflies didn't invent new genes to paint their extravagant wings; they arrived at that ability by the accidental mutation of a gene they already had.

"It demonstrates that evolution is a tinkerer," Carroll says. And if one accepts this as true, it's much easier to swallow the fact that even something as perfect as a butterfly wing is built from a cobble of existing parts, bit by bit, genetic tweak by genetic tweak, over the long march of time.

"The thing about diversity is that what you see makes sense, and you imagine that there's some will involved to be different," says Carroll. "But it's the process. And that's why Darwin's idea is so big. It's understanding that a little performance difference can compound over billions of years to generate all the diversity on the planet."

SCIENCE FOR THE PUBLIC

The astounding genius of Darwin is that he inferred all of this without the benefit of genetics, which wouldn't be revealed for another half century after he wrote *On the Origin of Species*. We know now that the "slight variations" Darwin observed in inheritance are the result of genetic mutations passed on from parent to offspring. We know roughly how often those mutations occur, and we can map them. We know that each of us carries around some 175 original gene mutations that weren't present in our parents. Sometimes, those mutations cause conditions such as Down syndrome or cystic fibrosis, but many of these genetic typos have little outward effect and we would never know they're there.

We also know the complete DNA sequences of nearly 200 plants, animals, and other organisms, a vast encyclopedia of genetic knowledge that grows every day. These data are refining our knowledge of ourselves and our closest relatives, often in surprising ways. When the human genome was sequenced in 2001, for example, many biologists did not expect to find that humans have only about 25,000 genes, not significantly more than it takes to build a mouse.

The emerging understanding that drives evo-devo science is that it's not the genes that make us different; it's how we use them. Researchers have found, for instance, that a simple genetic difference between humans and chimpanzees—just a two-letter alteration in the DNA alphabet—deactivated a gene that controls the formation of the large, bulging jaw muscles in chimps, which some scientists believe helped humans' skulls grow larger to support expanding brains.

"This is a stunning period of discovery," says Michael Ruse, a professor of philosophy at Florida State University who has written several books on the history of evolution science. "I imagine that 20 to 30 years from now, scientists will look back and say how lucky they were to be working at this time, when so much was becoming clear."

Yet while we know so much more than Darwin did, we still agree on so little. Two years ago, a survey conducted by the Pew Forum on Religion in Public Life found that just 26 percent of respondents agreed that life evolves through natural selection. Forty-two percent agreed with a statement that humans and other living things have always existed in their present state, and another 18 percent said life has evolved through divine guidance. While it's tempting to think these numbers represent creationist backlash to a naturalistic explanation of life's origins, another survey, done in 1999 by the National Science Foundation, found that 49 percent of Americans believed that humans lived at the same time as dinosaurs—actually, we arrived about 65 million years too late—suggesting that *The Flintstones* and *Land of the Lost* may be as influential on people's views of science as religion.

The blind eye many Americans turn toward science is particularly alarming given how central it has become to societal concerns. Stem cells, climate change, antibiotic resistance, and pandemic flu are just a few of the items on our national agenda that hinge on some basic appreciation of the underlying science. "What's being discovered in labs today affects our health, our environment, and our understanding of who we are and how we got the way we are now," says paleontologist Neil

Shubin. "There are important questions that we have to tackle, yet we are unbelievably ill-equipped to handle these discussions because science is often not part of the conversation."

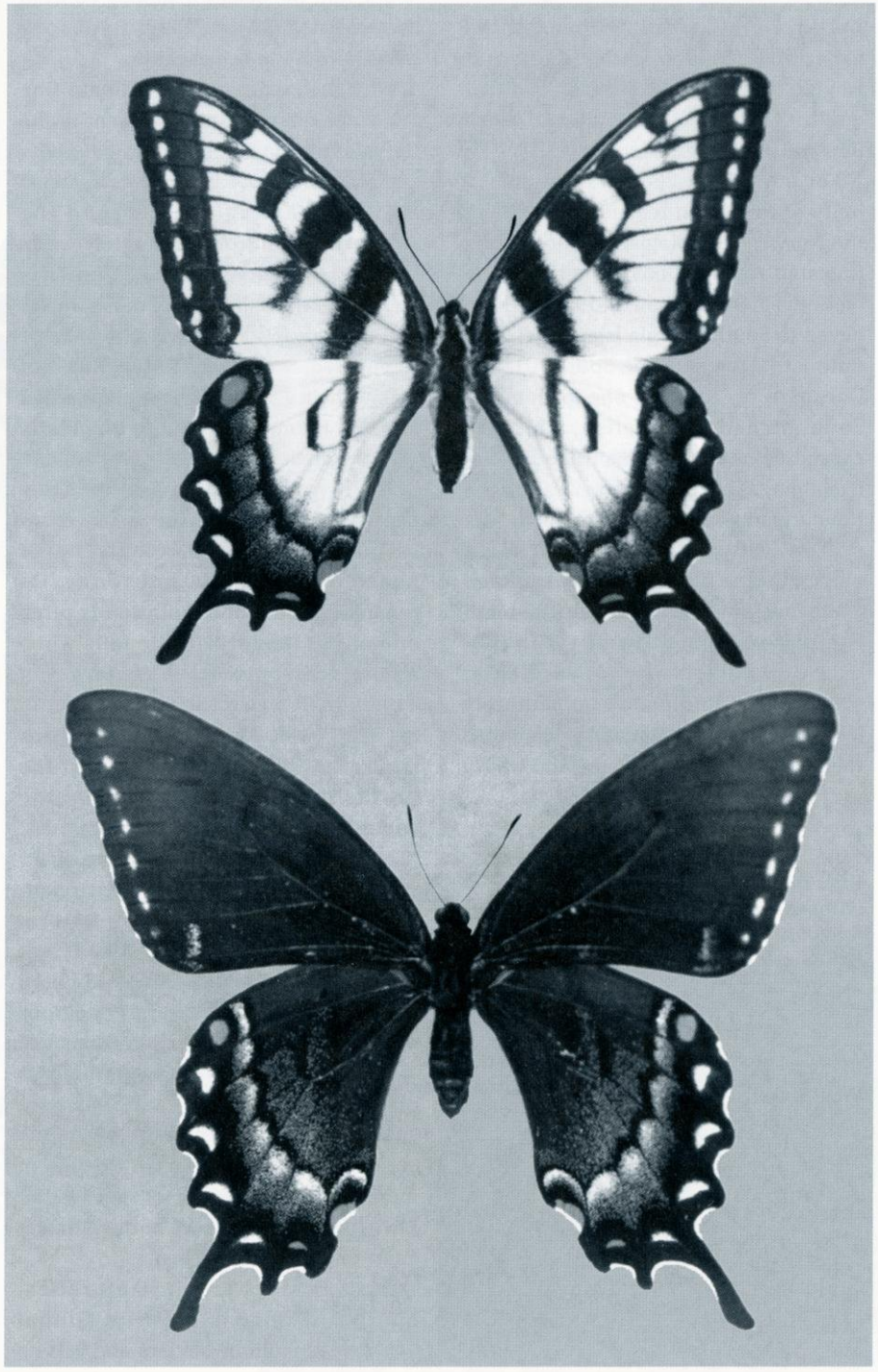
Carroll agrees, and it's a significant reason why he has taken a step back from lab science to give public lectures and write books for broad audiences. In the past, he has attempted to stay out of the battles between scientists and creationists because he doesn't find the way those arguments play out in public to be productive. Raised Catholic—his father wrote chant music for the Gregorian Institute of America in Toledo—Carroll respects religious ideologies and, like many biologists and theologians, objects vehemently to the notion that believing in evolution requires an abandonment of faith. But his training as a scientist tells him to ask questions he can test—questions for which hypotheses can be made and evidence collected. He's more comfortable debating Gould than God.

"I don't really like the way this goes on in popular culture, this he-said, she-said," says Carroll. "I see my job as equipping teachers and educating those who are interested. I don't see myself as converting anybody."

Others might disagree about Carroll's influence. Shubin, for example, credits Carroll for helping him see how genetics reinforced his research in field biology. The researchers collaborated on a paper in the mid-'90s and have remained friends since. "Sean has been absolutely instrumental in my own evolution," he says, noting that his lab now includes a genetics component. "It's hard to talk to Sean about science and not catch his enthusiasm."

"What is unique about Sean is his ability to tell the story," says Don Waller. "Yes, he's one of several leading researchers in the field, but I think he's unexcelled in his ability to share ideas with a broader audience. And we desperately need that right now."

Carroll's writing drips with the passion he feels for his field. He's not afraid to show his personality—*Endless Forms Most Beautiful* begins with a quote from The Beatles, followed six pages later by a line from Jimi Hendrix's "Little Wing"—nor is he afraid to show his unabashed joy and wonder at nature's brilliance. In that sense, he is like Darwin, who closed *On the Origin of Species* with the quote that inspired Carroll's title: "There is grandeur in this view of life, with its several powers, having been originally breathed by the Creator into a few forms or into one; and that, whilst this planet has gone cycling on according to the fixed law of gravity, from so simple a beginning endless forms most beautiful



Females of the Eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly (*Papilio glaucus*) are either wild type (top) or melanic (bottom). This is an example of sex-linked mimicry where the melanic females are thought to mimic the distasteful Pipevine swallowtail butterfly.

Image courtesy of David Keys

and most wonderful have been, and are being evolved."

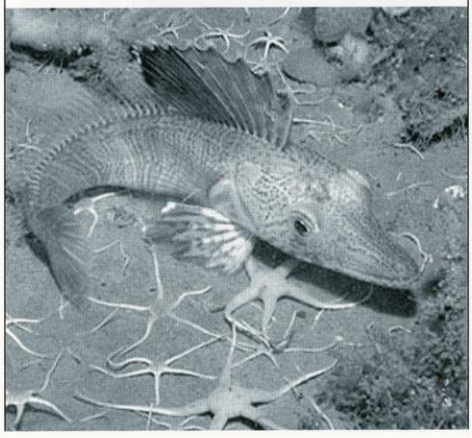
"I think what we're finding out is really cool," Carroll says. "I think it's enriching, and if you have an interest in life—if you go to zoos, if you take walks in nature, if you keep tropical fish, if you watch *The Crocodile Hunter*—science has stories to tell you."

THE DANGERS OF DENIAL

Above all, Carroll believes in the undeniable power of stories. And this is why he tells the one about the fish that couldn't exist, the bloodless fish of Bouvet Island.

For more than 20 years, the possibility of these fish teased Johan Ruud, the Norwegian biologist to whom Ditlef Rumstad reported having netted them on Bouvet Island. Then, in 1953, he journeyed to South Georgia Island, a British outpost in the extreme South Atlantic Ocean, to try to catch one for himself. Soon, he had four icefish, which he carved open in a makeshift laboratory. Examining that strange, colorless blood, Ruud found a few white blood cells, but no red. Cells made up less than 1 percent of the fish's blood, which Ruud estimated gave the fish about one-tenth the oxygen capacity of their red-blooded relatives. Hearing this, evolutionary biologists immediately began to wonder: How did icefish lose their red blood cells? When? And why?

How the icefish adapted to survive without red blood cells illustrates the power of evolution.



The answer came 40 years later, in a lab at the University of Illinois. Researchers studying the DNA of these fish found that two genes that in other species of fish code for hemoglobin had essentially gone extinct—they had mutated to the point of uselessness. While they were junking those genes, however, the fish were developing other capacities better suited to their cold-water environment. Their gills became larger, and the scales disappeared from their skin, allowing them to absorb oxygen from the ocean water.

Why such extreme adaptations? One factor may have been movement in the Earth's land masses, which caused a sudden shift in ocean currents some 30 million years ago and turned the southern ocean from moderately warm to inhospitably cold. When this happened, the fish living in those waters had limited options: leave, die, or hope to survive. Some, like the icefish, got lucky. Their genes changed in ways that allowed them to deal more efficiently with the challenges of their new habitat, and they managed to get by. They became the fittest, and they survived.

Four years ago, Carroll had never heard of an icefish, but today, its remarkable tale of adaptation is often one of the first stories he tells when talking to people about the power of evolution. It's also the first chapter of his latest book, *The Making of the Fittest*. He likes the story for two reasons. The first is that icefish are some of the coolest creatures he's ever run across. "They make a heck of a story," he says.

The second reason is more urgent. One of the cruel realities of natural selection is that living creatures can't choose their genetic modifications. It's a game of roulette, and natural conditions decide which genetic modifications win and which ones lose. If environments change more quickly than DNA can, species fail to adapt and die. Biologists estimate that this has been the fate of more than 99 percent of all species that have lived on the planet. In the ultimate game of survival, they lost.

In the waters around Antarctica, another change is brewing. Global warming is melting glaciers and raising the temperature of the water. Sea ice is receding, and with it, some of the major sources of food for fish and mammals living in the southern oceans. Biologists estimate that the population of krill, a small crustacean that feeds near sea ice, has declined 80 percent in the past 30 years. Icefish are having to explore wider areas for food, something that their watery, oxygen-poor blood is not well-equipped to accommodate. Their blood, so handy for dealing with extreme cold, makes them sluggish and listless. The very capacities that allowed them to survive are now putting them in grave danger.

And this is where our fish story ends. If we continue to deny evolution, if we continue to misapprehend the power of natural selection to allow life to thrive or die, if we continue to ignore that we are part of that system, placing pressure on environments and causing natural selection to move faster than genetic change can, there will be consequences. And one of them may well be that the fish that couldn't possibly survive will not. ✺

Michael Penn is editor of ***Grow,*** *a new magazine about life sciences research published by the University of Wisconsin–Madison College of Agricultural and Life Sciences. Several of his articles for* ***Wisconsin People & Ideas*** *have won awards from the Milwaukee Press Club.*

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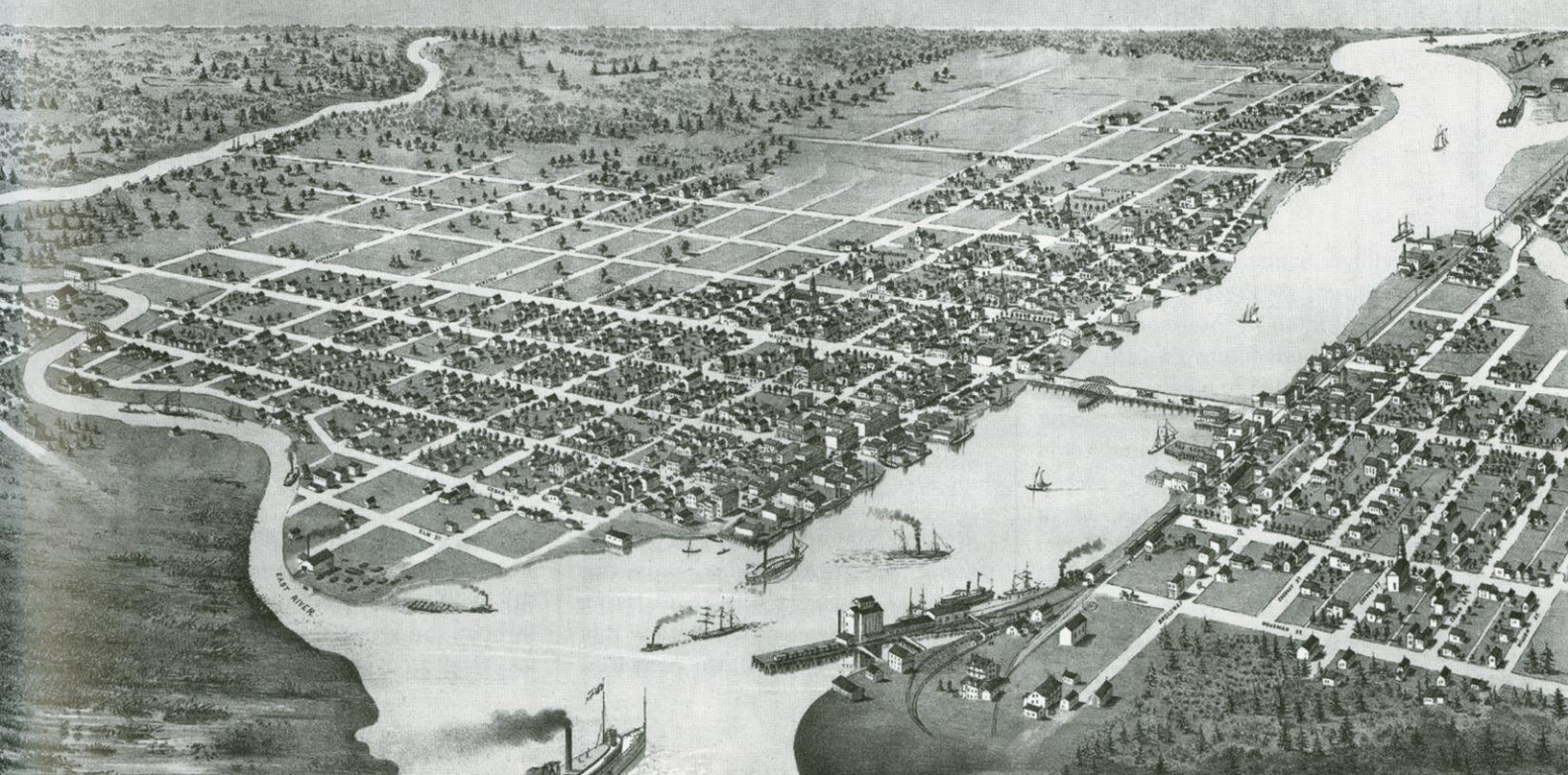
WISCONSIN HOMETOWN STORIES

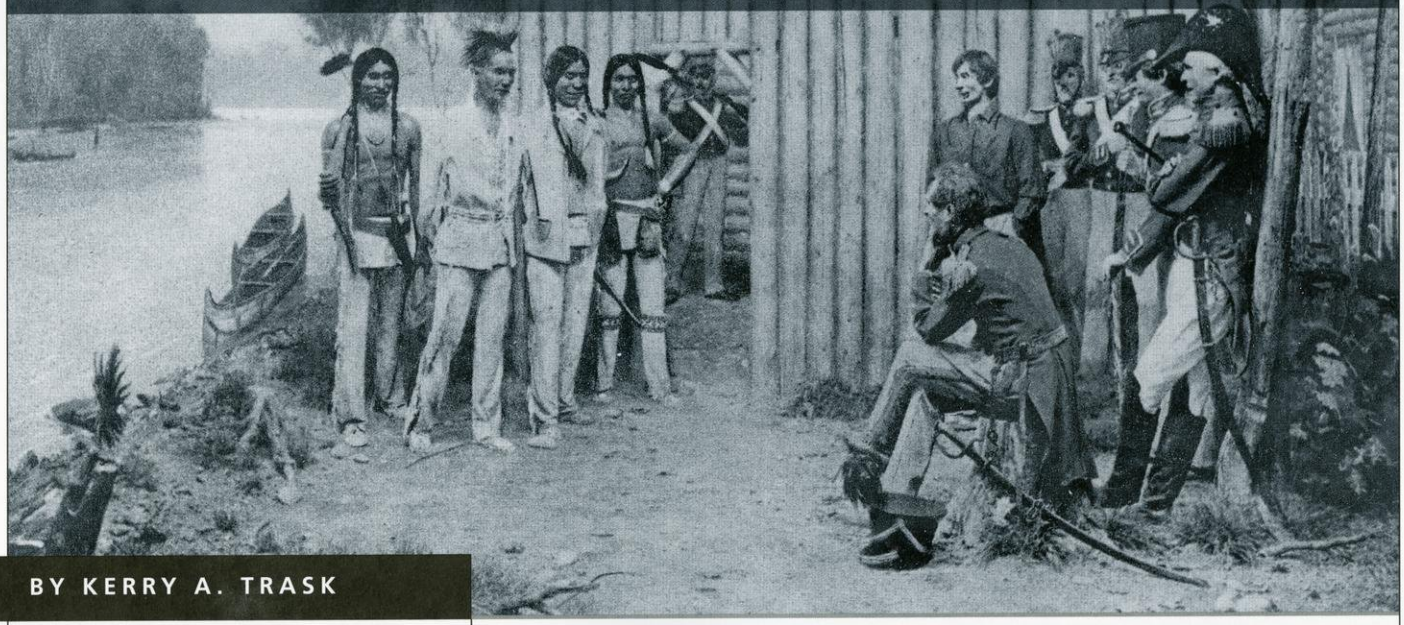
GREEN BAY



The Bullets Flew Like Birds

Remembering the Black Hawk War

A "brief and bloody encounter" that took place in Wisconsin 175 years ago sheds light on our national character.



BY KERRY A. TRASK

Black Hawk's surrender on August 27, 1832, at Fort Crawford in Prairie du Chien, as depicted in a diorama at the Milwaukee Public Museum.

Wisconsin Historical Society image 4521

"MEMORY BELIEVES BEFORE KNOWING REMEMBERS. Believes longer than recollects, longer than knowing ever wonders," wrote William Faulkner in *Light in August*. In saying so he suggests there is an intuitive dimension to memory that makes possible a deeper understanding of existence than can ever be acquired by simply knowing the facts of life. Lincoln alluded to that same sense when referring to the "mystic cords of memory" that he said connected the events of battlefields to the hearts of the people. Remembering certainly allows the past to remain a part of ongoing experience, providing depth, breadth, and perspective to our understanding and liberating us from the distortions that inevitably arise from too much self-focus.

People living within oral societies—people like the Sauk—for whom the survival of their entire culture depended on memory, understood this quite well. For them all the essential knowledge of life, as well as their understanding of their place and role within the world, was communicated down through the generations by the relentless retelling of unchanging stories, told

in a rhetorical style in which rhythm, cadence, repetition, and vivid imagery were used to hold the listener's attention and make the message especially memorable. Such stories not only defined the group's cultural identity, they also produced a way of thinking about life that enabled people to make sense of it, to find meaning in it and better cope with its many tragedies and vicissitudes.

But this repetition of stories is not unique to oral societies. Indeed, the historian Robert Ferguson tells us: "Every culture has five or six stories it tells itself over and over again as part of a pattern in self-recognition and sought-after cohesion."

For Wisconsin, the story of the Black Hawk War, re-created and retold countless times during the past 175 years, is clearly such a narrative. At last count there have been 21 nonfiction books published about Black Hawk and the war (counting my own), along with six novels, two plays, and two book-length epic poems, as well as innumerable articles and public lectures. Furthermore, Black Hawk has remained vividly alive in our own collective imagination through hundreds of paintings, sculptures, plaques, and monuments, as well as in the naming of colleges and credit unions, counties, parks, streets, country clubs, and sports teams in his "honor." For a violent conflict of such modest magnitude and short duration—lasting less than four months and killing fewer than 75 Americans—the Black Hawk War has received what may seem some extravagant attention. And yet, such attention is warranted because of what

this brief and bloody encounter reveals about us as a national culture and how we became who we imagine ourselves to be.

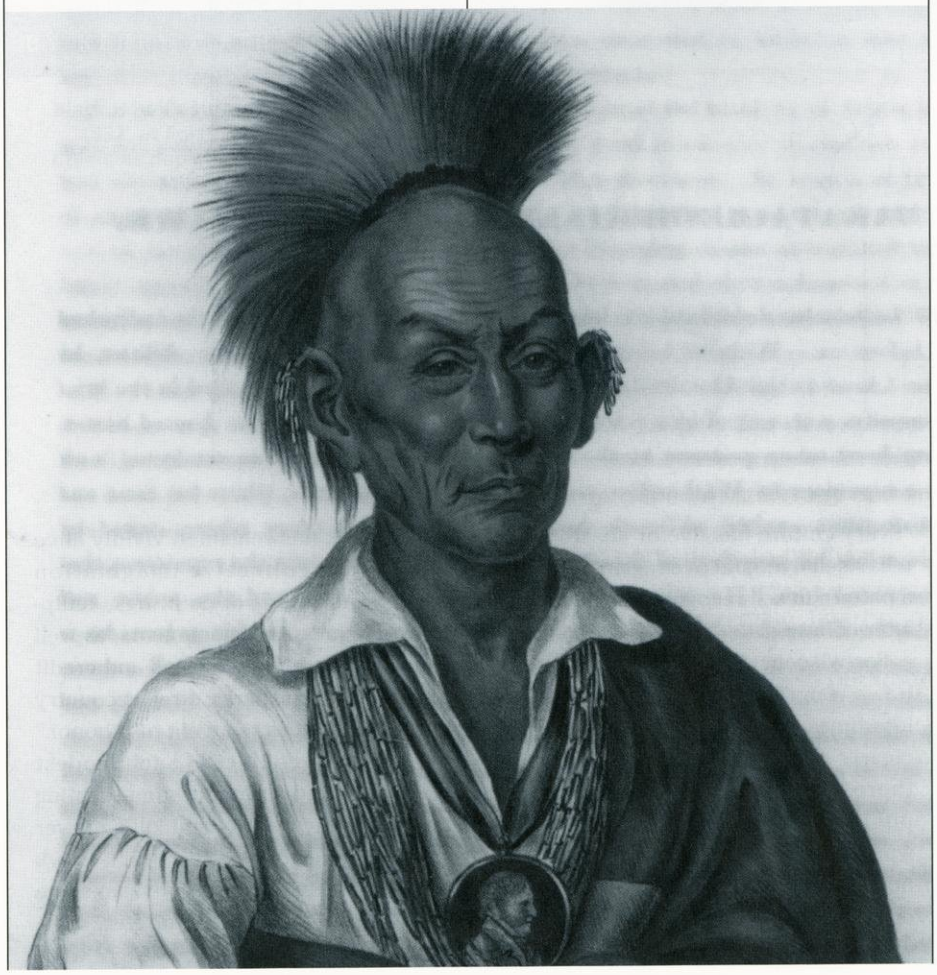
In many ways the story of the war has been the creation myth for our region and the war itself the "big bang" that created Wisconsin. Before the war there was no Wisconsin, just the wild, western extension of the Michigan Territory where French and Native participants in the fur trade seemed caught in the endless cycles and rhythms of nature. Only the chaos of mining camps and the sulfuric smoke of lead smelters disturbed the otherwise pastoral calm of the Driftless Region. But during the war, because of the movement of troops through previously mysterious and uncharted regions, white America became more aware of what was here. And then, at the end of the conflict, as a consequence of the treaties imposed upon the tribes and eventually with the removal of the tribal people themselves, vast amounts of land and resources became available to people moving out from the east. In 1832 Wisconsin was up for sale and open for white occupation, and by the autumn of 1836 enough people had poured in and taken up residence to justify the organization of the Wisconsin Territory. But most important of all, the war, by the shedding of Indian blood, had transformed a profane wilderness—a place without form or order where white people were aliens who did not belong—into the sacred space of the Republic. And thus, through the killing of Native people, white men came to believe in their own power and superiority and their right to take possession of a land that was not their own.

NO EARTHLY CONSIDERATION

The war began in April 1832, when Black Hawk led a band of about 1,600 warriors, women, old people, adolescents, and children across the Mississippi, from Iowa into Illinois. The summer before they had all been expelled from their traditional homeland near the confluence of the Rock and Mississippi rivers, and driven out of their grand summertime settlement of Saukenuk by a large and angry army of regular soldiers and Illinois militiamen (see map, page 21). The commander of that force, Major General Edmund P. Gaines, had banished them to the region beyond the great river, warning them never to return. Out there in the wind and waving grass life was hard, especially for the women, who found it almost impossible to break through the tough, thick sod to cultivate new gardens and cornfields, and there, said Black Hawk, they were hungry and became "as miserable as the howling, hungry wolf in the prairie!" Therefore, with the coming of spring, he and his followers defiantly set out to reclaim their lost land.

In pondering the importance of that place Black Hawk confessed: "When I call to mind the scenes of my youth, and those of later days—and reflect that the theatre on which these were acted had been so long the home of my fathers, who now slept on the hills around it, I could not bring my mind to consent to leave this country ... for any earthly consideration."

In saying that, he gave voice to a deep and compelling sense of belonging and place shared by all other members of the tribal community, for, to them, Saukenuk was much more than a mere conjugation of dwellings and garden plots. It was a place of powerful spiritual forces at the very center of their world and way of life. There the tribe experienced its fullest physical reality. It was where they buried their dead, arranged their marriages, celebrated



Despite the Western garb, Black Hawk (left and opposite in a painting by Robert Sully) at one time embodied the tribe's collective identity. His autobiography is one of the most moving documents to recount an Indian war from the Native side.

Wisconsin Historical Society images 25690 and (opposite) 11706

their most important festivals and feasts, and where the great cycles of their collective life began and ended and began again. It was at Saukenuk, as in no other place, where everything that combined to make them Sauk came together. Without it they would be cast adrift in a world with no center and without meaning, where they could no longer be themselves.

By appearance and rank Black Hawk may have seemed an unlikely person to lead such a band. In the spring of 1832, he was a man well past his prime, in his mid-60s, lacking any notable oratorical skills. He was a physically small, almost frail individual who held no official position of leadership within the tribe. However, it was mostly what he represented that made him important. As a hard-line traditionalist who honored and upheld the old customs and ways, he was uncomfortably out of sync with the changing times—and it was precisely those anachronistic qualities that were the source of his mysterious appeal and authority. Amid the confusion overwhelming their world he remained, in the eyes of his followers, the very personification of the tribe's authentic collective identity. To them he was what a Sauk man ought to be—what they had all once been and hoped to become again—and the primary issue on the minds of those people who crossed the river that cold and rainy April morning was the issue of their survival as a distinctive culture. That survival, they believed, was inseparable from the sacred sense of place associated with Saukenuk.

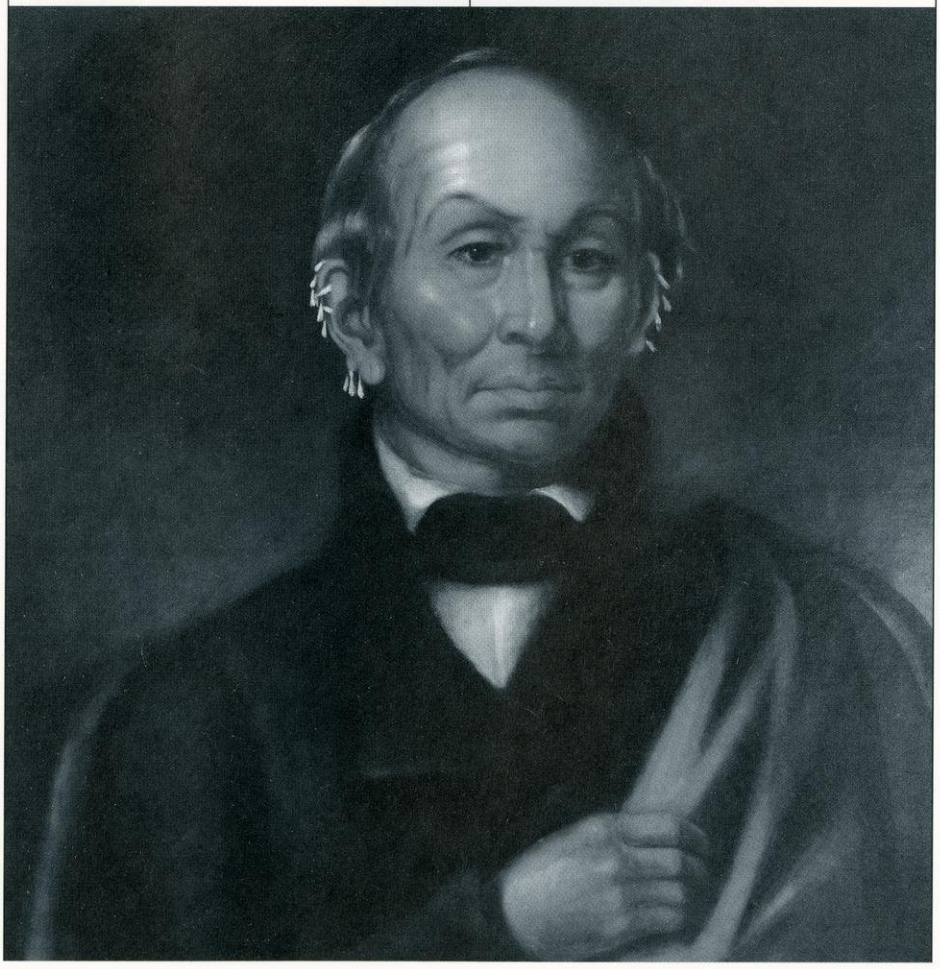
The Americans, especially those who rushed frantically into the region looking for lead, seemed to neither understand nor respect any of that. They were a people of sound and fury, motion and process, described by Alexis de Tocqueville as unconnected individuals "without roots, without memories ... without routines, without common ideas, without a [sense of] national character."

Once the young republic had broken free of the paternalism and social deference that had held the old order together, the forces of the free market system began to run wild, especially at the fringes of the expanding society. The personal freedom and opportunity that came with that resulted in enhanced mobility and immense productivity, but it also drove men to become preoccupied with self—with self-reliance, self-control, self-improvement, and self-promotion—and for most of them the only valid form of masculinity was that of the self-made man. Amid the commotion of all that, said de Tocqueville, each man was thrown "back forever upon himself alone" and confined "entirely within the solitude of his own heart."

Black Hawk and his followers lived in fear of becoming too much like the white men, cut off from one another, without roots, exiled to a land bearing no resemblance to where they had been born, in a place without magic or meaning, where the stories that sustained their shared existence would soon be forgotten.

With people as different as the Sauk and Americans, and with no responsible force to mediate their disputes, conflict and violence were inevitable. And when they occurred it was all too often in response to imagined threats and fictitious rumors, so that good sense gave way to terror and human compassion to a voracious lust for bloodshed.

Throughout the spring and early summer of 1832 the Sauk were hunted and pursued by a small force of about 220 regular soldiers commanded by General Henry Atkinson and Colonel Zachary Taylor, and a much larger one of Illinois militia volunteers called into action by Governor John Reynolds, who was eager to enhance his political reputation by killing as many Indians as possible before the autumn election. Among those volunteers was 23-year-old Abraham Lincoln from New Salem, who was elected captain of his militia company. And serving with the army



was Lieutenant Jefferson Davis, a recent West Point graduate.

The Sauk, unable to reoccupy Saukenuk, fled up the Rock River valley hoping for support from the Winnebago and Pottawatomie—support they never received—and then crossed over into Wisconsin in late May, where they vanished into the swamps around Lake Koshkonong. There were raids and violent clashes along the way, including the Sauk's defeat of a mounted militia force led by Isaiah Stillman—a humiliating encounter for the Illinois men infamously known thereafter as "Stillman's Run." There was also an attack, led by Black Hawk himself, on the settlement and fort on the Apple River south of Galena, and a particularly gruesome raid on the William Davis farm on Big Indian Creek, on the eastern side of the state, where 15 settlers were brutally butchered, their bodies grotesquely mutilated, and two teenage girls carried off as captives.

Such incidents brought racial hatred to the boiling point among the white people of the upper Mississippi valley, who called for a war of extermination against all the Indians of the region.

In time, the Sauk broke out of the swamps and headed west across Wisconsin, past Lake Mendota and over Bascom Hill, pursued by a hard-riding brigade of miners commanded by Henry Dodge. Dodge caught up with them near the Wisconsin River late in the day on July 21, and a fierce skirmish ensued on a ridge, in a rainstorm, at dusk. "The bullets flew like birds in the air and whizzed by my ears like the wind in trees in winter. My warriors fell around me," declared Black Hawk, who directed the battle from the back of his white horse. Although suffering significant casualties, the Native warriors held off their attackers while Black Hawk skillfully organized the retreat of the rest of the band across the river. Those among them without good horses and the women and children unable to keep up with the fast pace of the march quickly made crude canoes and set off down the Wisconsin River. The rest headed overland through the dense forests and rugged hills towards the Mississippi. Hunger, sickness, and exhaustion took their toll, and the route of their fearful retreat was littered with the bodies of dead horses, dead people, and baggage cast aside in their desperate attempts to stay ahead of the horsemen determined to hunt them down and kill them off.

In the mist of early morning, August 2, on the east bank of the Mississippi, a short distance downstream from the mouth of the Bad Axe River, the band was finally descended upon by the soldiers, who were soon swept up in the ecstatic frenzy of massacring Sauk men, women, and children until the ground was littered with their mutilated bodies and the water of the river turned red with their blood. They "fell like grass before the scythe," declared Indian Agent Joseph Street. A few of the Sauk made it across the Mississippi, but when the shooting and clubbing finally ceased, only 39 survivors—all women and small children—remained to be taken prisoner.

The place where those final ugly spasms of the war occurred was later named "Victory." It was a victory of sorts, but one in which later generations could not take pride. Indeed, it raised some disturbing questions about us as a people.

A QUESTIONABLE TRIUMPH

However, what happened at Bad Axe, while deeply troubling in itself, was only a single manifestation of a tragically redundant pattern of violence against the Native people, which commenced in the 17th century with King Philip's War and recurred again and again, like the compulsive playing out of the pathological urges of some serial killer, down to the bloodbath in the snow along Wounded Knee Creek in 1890, and then across the seas.

For far too long the reconstructed memory of the Black Hawk War (and all the other Indian wars) was designed to allow white people to feel good about themselves. The stories told over and over again invariably cast white Americans in the roles of virtuous pioneers who became innocent victims of inhuman Indian cruelty, heroically fighting back in defense of their families until cut down by their vicious enemies who emerged from out of the dark and primal forests. And until quite recently

Black Hawk Bluff, site of the Battle of Wisconsin Heights in the Black Hawk War.

Wisconsin Historical Society image 39390

most Americans believed, as did the distinguished historian Milo M. Quaife, that at the very core of American history there had been "a tragic struggle, on the part of the superior race to grasp, [and] of an inferior one to retain, possession of the virgin continent." The "progress of civilization," said Quaife, and the fulfillment of this country's manifest destiny, required "the victory of the superior race," and consequently, the defeat and subjugation of what the Declaration of Independence refers to as "the merciless Indian savages."

This narrative exonerates white America for all the pain, misery, and death that befell the Native people, but the validity of its plot is severely compromised by the Black Hawk War. For this particular episode of "ethnic cleansing," unlike most others, there exists a counter-narrative that provides a coherent account of the conflict from the Indian side of the battle line. In the summer of 1833, Black Hawk dictated his life story—and therefore the story of the war—to Antoine LeClaire, the government interpreter at Fort Armstrong, who translated it into English. The manuscript was then edited and put in final form for publication by John B. Patterson, a journalist from Galena, and in the book that soon became a national bestseller, the voice of the "other" spoke with a tragic eloquence.

Although somewhat embellished and self-serving, Black Hawk's autobiography exposes the dark side of white America's dealings with the Native people. "More compelling than anyone before him," states J. Gerald Kennedy, a professor of American literature at Louisiana State University, "Black Hawk challenged American illusions of national virtue and conversely insisted upon the ethical nature of his own culture." And in doing so, continued Kennedy, he revealed "the sheer inhumanity that rabid nationalism can inspire, especially when fueled by a conviction of racial superiority."

It is a sobering account to be taken seriously, one that has the power to liberate us from the false images and deeply rooted lies we continue to believe about ourselves and the "others" we have considered our enemies—images and lies that continue to inflict pain and inspire violence. There is something undeniably correct in the old adage about the truth being the first casualty of war, for whenever battle lines are drawn the people on opposing sides immediately begin to use words and tell tales to vilify and dehumanize one another and to justify their own atrocities. The lies and distortions then live on in the war stories retold long after the killing is over, and how wars are remembered has a good deal to do with the collective identities people form of themselves.

That is why we need historians and why we need to remember and reflect upon past conflicts in all their dimensions. We need to rediscover and rescue the truth that will enable us to get beyond the caricatures, stereotypes, and false myths—beyond the mascots, racial profiles, and noble savages—we might otherwise accept as authentic reflections of reality. Then we can accurately know what actually happened and why it occurred, and also, and more importantly, set ourselves straight about who we really are. After 175 years, we may finally be able to honestly and empathetically understand, at the deep and intuitive level suggested by Faulkner, why the Sauk considered this place sacred and Black Hawk and his followers crossed the river that long-ago springtime. ✺

This engraving from 1845 depicts the defeat of Black Hawk by General Henry Atkinson at the Battle of Bad Axe on August 2, 1832.

Wisconsin Historical Society image 4518

General Atkinson's victory over Black Hawk.

Kerry A. Trask is a professor of history with the University of Wisconsin Colleges and has taught at UW–Manitowoc since 1972. He earned his Ph.D. in history at the University of Minnesota. A native of Canada, he has a particular interest in the early history and development of the Great Lakes region and has taught courses and published numerous articles on that subject. Trask is the author of three books. His most recent is ***Black Hawk: The Battle for the Heart of America*** *(Henry Holt and Company), which was awarded the 2006 Benjamin F. Shambaugh Award by the State Historical Society of Iowa and recognized for "Outstanding Achievement" by the Wisconsin Library Association.*

Related story: Patty Loew discusses Native American service in the U.S. military starting on page 37.

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

What lies before us

Photo by John Urban

BY BILL BERRY

STEVENS POINT—This final Field Notes column is supposed to take care of business at the culmination of the Wisconsin Academy's two-year Future of Farming and Rural Life in Wisconsin project. We will get to that. First, a few questions.

Did you ever walk along the edge of a cornfield on a brisk autumn day? Have you heard the wind rustle the dried shocks and stopped to marvel at how fat the cobs grew in one season? The walking is easier in autumn. The insects are pretty much done with their heavy work and the cooler air is a jolt of pure energy. As the days shorten, the pace of life seems to quicken.

My friend Justin Isherwood, the potato farmer and writer who lives down the road a bit, once wrote that purple is everywhere in autumn. It is the color of royalty, he said, and autumn is the season of the same. For some reason that stuck with me, and I look for purple everywhere when Wisconsin turns colors in fall. It is there on the very tips of the tall grasses, where the seed heads are drying. It is there in the woods, where the gentians hide. It is there, too, in the corn tassels and even the ears. There is a hint of purple in the fleeting sunlight and on the wings of the mallards.

One is either stirred deeply by rural places or moved a little if at all. For those who care, the emotions run to the heart. You know that even as these landscapes are very close to nature, they are also the products of the hands of humankind. They are always changing yet much the same as they have been since people first put them to work. They are tough, yet fragile. Forgiving, but exacting.

The rural lands are our places in between, vast hardworking stretches that connect our cities and brush up against our wild places. They are lands of great bounty.

There are many beautiful places on earth. We visit the mountains and oceans, rainforests and rivers, and they leave us in awe. But the open spaces of our home places demand more than awe. They exact detail from us, require us to understand them and the people who work the land. That is what we have tried to do throughout the course of this Wisconsin Idea project of the Wisconsin Academy.

A just-released final report includes more than 80 recommendations for healthy and sustainable agriculture and rural life in the state. Some will be considered seriously and perhaps lead to action. They could help make a big difference for agriculture, rural Wisconsin, and the state in general.

The recommendations are the voices of engaged and interested citizens from throughout the state. We have heard that there weren't enough of certain groups, or were too many of another, and maybe there's some truth in the criticism. But the fact remains that to the greatest extent of our abilities and our tiny staff's tireless dedication, we sought input from as many groups as we could possibly reach.

The result, says project co-chair Tom Lyon, is "the broadest-based study of agriculture and rural life done in Wisconsin in the last 40 years I've been here." Lyon is a farm boy from Iowa but has spent much of his life keeping tabs on agriculture here in Wisconsin as the head of a successful agribusiness.

It wouldn't be too big a stretch to take Lyon's assessment a step further and say this is likely the most comprehensive study ever of all things rural and agricultural in Wisconsin.

"The study brought all forms of divergent views and people together," notes Lyon. By the time we gathered at Monona Terrace for the state conference in May, many in attendance were struck by that diversity. It validated our highest hopes for the project. Funding for the study represented that same broad range.

What have we learned from this undertaking? Project co-chair Stan Gruszynski has said throughout the course of the study that it is but a commencement. Much of the tangible progress that might result will be accomplished in the days and months ahead as action steps are implemented and citizen engagement activities continue.

But the study had another important function—to raise the collective awareness of our citizens about the challenges and opportunities that face our farms, family forests, and rural areas.

It's not very hard to select some top-tier issues from the list of 80-plus. We think they all have relevance, but some are matters we really ought to tend to now, before it's too late. They include:

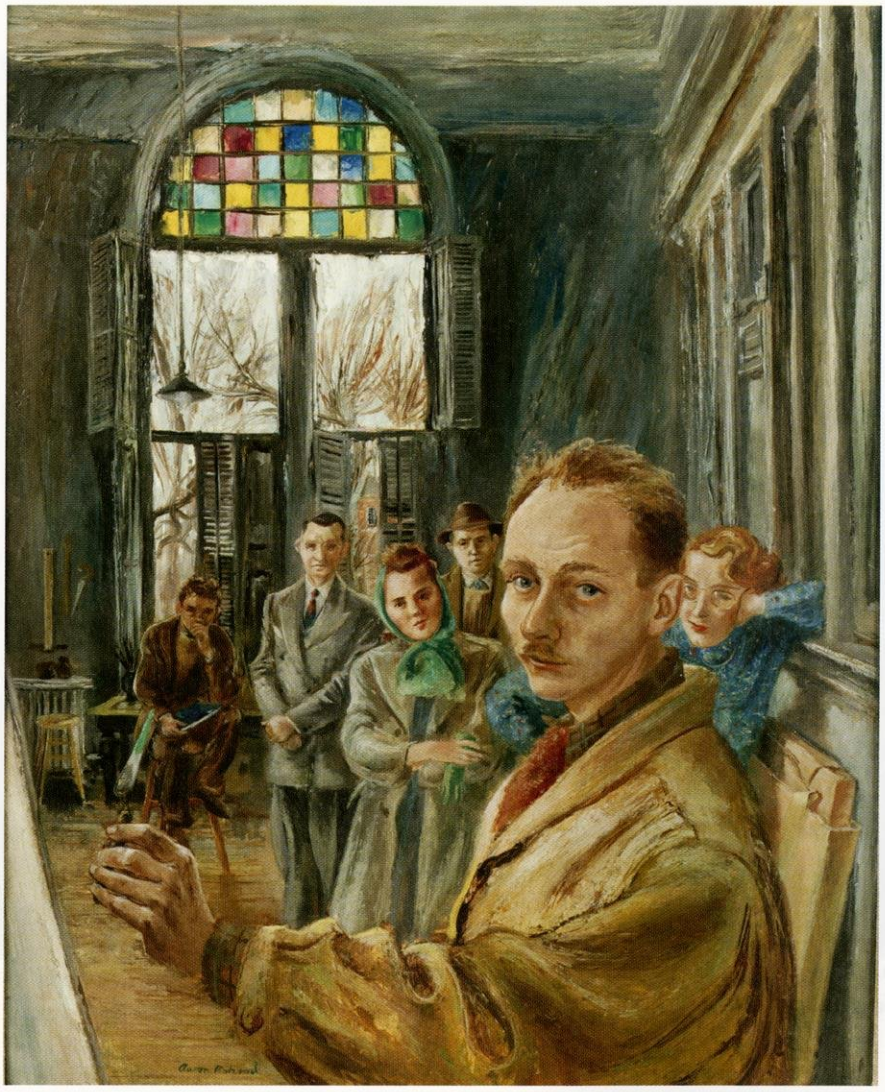
- Among farmers, the so-called "ag in the middle"—working family farms where on-farm income is the major source of income—are most endangered. We recommend a number of steps to help these farms modernize, transition, and find a foothold in a sea of change.
- Affordable and quality health care for farm families and rural residents is pitifully lacking, and steps must be taken to meet this basic necessity. Who knows how many farms were tipped over the edge because of this vital issue? We call for immediate remedies that address the special needs of families in these straits.
- Working farms and forest lands were seen by our participants as being under intense pressure, and strategies to protect them are needed. A series of recommendations focus on doing that with a variety of tools. Some of the steps bear a price tag for all Wisconsin residents. Unanswered is whether state residents will be willing to trade their support for the wide array of benefits provided by working lands.
- Education about agriculture and rural issues is vitally important, our participants also said. Our recommendations reflect this and stress the need to reach people of all ages and backgrounds about agriculture's vital role in the lives of all state residents. They focus on reaching audiences of all types to enhance understanding about the interrelationships of healthy farms and healthy cities.
- Wisconsin's educational institutions—K-12 and higher education—need continuing refinement to meet the rapidly changing needs of agriculture and rural communities. Several of our recommendations propose significant changes, such as calling for an elected state school board.
- Diversity of types and sizes of agricultural enterprises in Wisconsin is a major plus. Several of our recommendations reflect this by focusing on helping farms, forests, and rural areas find ways to innovate, develop specialty operations, and take advantage of value-added niches. Farms of all types and sizes can enjoy these opportunities.
- Rural and urban communities are components of larger regional economic entities, and strategies that identify, embrace, and support regional economic strengths and characteristics are important in a global economy. Several recommendations focus on this theme and the need to develop enhanced opportunities for and support of rural entrepreneurship and innovation.
- The emerging bio-economy provides both promise and challenge in Wisconsin. Our recommendations call for moving forward with development of the bio-economy and research necessary to propel it. But we also caution that protecting natural resources should be part of our emergent strategy and note that as we work to develop the bio-economy, the focus should be squarely on enhancing opportunities for local ownership.

Dairy farmer John Rosenow, a leader in the Future of Farming and Rural Life in Wisconsin project (shown here with U.S. Sen. Herb Kohl, right), testified before Congress last June about the need for immigration reform.

It seems fitting that the first president of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, established in 1870, should be John Hoyt, who also was editor of the *Wisconsin Farmer* newspaper. Hoyt was a champion of the benefits of science and education to farmers. By committing 137 years later to an in-depth study of agriculture and rural life as part of its Wisconsin Idea public policy program, the Wisconsin Academy remains true to its founding mission—and continues to provide leadership in an area of vital importance to our state. ✺

Bill Berry is a veteran journalist and a communications specialist with the Wisconsin Academy's Future of Farming and Rural Life in Wisconsin initiative. He welcomes your comments at billnick@charter.net.

The **final report** may be viewed at www.wisconsinacademy.org/idea and will be available in book form. Visit that web address or call 608/263-1692 ext. 10 to order a copy.



Artist in Residence: Self-Portrait, **by Aaron Bohrod, 1943. Oil on canvas, 26 x 21⅛ inches. National Academy Museum, New York (121-P)**

AARON BOHROD AT 100

A retrospective of his work is on exhibition October 30–December 30 at the Wisconsin Academy's James Watrous Gallery

BY ROBERT COZZOLINO

The best-known episode in the career of Aaron Bohrod (1907–1992) remains the most curious. In 1953, at the height of his professional life, he abandoned all genres but still life. Bohrod's shift in focus and its compulsive result is documented in a massive autobiographical monograph, *A Decade of Still Life* (University of Wisconsin Press, Madison, 1966). It was a strange and risky move for a number of reasons. In the 1930s and 1940s he had been hailed as a successful "American scene" painter, well-regarded by his peers, art critics, and collectors. His often thickly painted, brilliantly colored Chicago street scenes had earned him positive national reviews, profiles in *Time* and *Life* magazines, prominent representation at the

***Landscape Near Chicago,* by Aaron Bohrod, 1934. Oil on composition board, 24 x 32 inches. Whitney Museum of Art, New York (32.13) Photograph by Geoffrey Clements Studio**

Associated American Artists Galleries in New York and Chicago, and prestigious exhibition prizes. On the strength of these pictures, he was offered two visiting artist positions, attained a job as a correspondent during World War II, and was offered numerous commissions.

Critics puzzled by Bohrod's sudden devotion to still-life painting lamented the abrupt break with his earlier work. While most praised the skill that underlay his confident new compositions, some found little of interest in the work and suggested that he return to the lives of *people* rather than dwell on their *things*. Many observers have since viewed the still lifes as Bohrod's hermetic response to an increasingly complex contemporary art world that had witnessed the rise of Abstract Expressionism and in which he felt increasingly out of place. At first glance, Bohrod's meticulous, sharp-focused paintings appear to draw on historical realist models, such as 17th-century Dutch and 19th-century American trompe l'oeil pictures (painted with illusionism that "fools the eye" into believing that what is painted is real). Yet much of what is reproduced in *A Decade of Still Life* employs realism and abstraction synthesized in a way that points to their modernist sources. Despite the artist's provocative public pronouncements against abstraction, Bohrod's still lifes are complex and obsessive, tending toward all-over patterns, unusual textures, and strange combinations of props that go beyond the requirements of realist legibility. In this sense they might be considered excessively realist, challenging viewers to see them as radical abstractions that mask as straightforward images of tangible objects.

This year marks Bohrod's centenary, and the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters is commemorating the event with an exhibition at the Wisconsin Academy's James Watrous Gallery in the Overture Center for the Arts in Madison. The exhibition, "Aaron Bohrod: A Life and Still Life," is on view from October 30 to December 30 and features work from all periods of Bohrod's life. Such a milestone affords a good opportunity to introduce Bohrod to a new audience and reexamine his long and fascinating career.

Bohrod was born on the near west side of Chicago in 1907. He drew intuitively from a very early age, doodling wildly, trying to render faces and objects, and copying characters from comic strips. A little later, after seeing an ad in the back of a magazine, he took a "how to draw" correspondence course. Bohrod's father, who had been a cigar maker, opened

***Joan of Arc in Montebourg,* by Aaron Bohrod, 1944. Oil on canvas, 24½ x 32 inches.**
Art Institute of Chicago Mr. and Mrs. Frank G. Logan Purchase Prize Fund 1945.191

a grocery store in the 1920s, and young Aaron set up its window arrangements, which he later referred to as his "first still lifes." While he said that with a wink, it is tempting to imagine the visually oriented young Bohrod soaking in the store's array of item package colors and shapes, graphic designs and logos on product labels, and shelf and case juxtapositions. The still lifes that proliferate in his postwar career sometimes seem like displaced individual shelves cut from curio shops. Although his parents hoped he would pursue medical school, Bohrod enrolled at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, where he took full-time classes from 1926 to 1928 and occasional courses until 1937. There he had the benefit of a comprehensive museum collection and thorough beaux arts–inspired training.

Bohrod maintained that his comparatively brief training at the Art Students League of New York had a bigger impact on his life and career. He studied there from 1928 to 1931 with several instructors, but none left a deeper impression than the charismatic John Sloan (1871–1951). Sloan had earned his fame as a member of Robert Henri's (1865–1929) circle and was one of "The Eight" urban realists who exhibited together at the MacBeth Galleries in New York in 1908 to protest the conservative practices of the National Academy of Design. Sloan had trained at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia but also learned critical skills of observation as a reporter-illustrator for the *Philadelphia Inquirer* and later, the *Philadelphia Press*. A sensitive observer of New York's population and their intimate lives, Sloan often rendered scenes that put viewers into the role of voyeur. He taught with the example of Robert Henri in mind. Henri had urged budding artists to depict the life around them, paint what they know, and forge an indigenous, authentic American art. This direct contact with a prominent, prestigious American artist clearly motivated Bohrod. "When I studied with [Sloan] I was inspired to draw all of the time," he reminisced. Bohrod's staggering output stupefied his instructors, and he later confessed that he rarely stopped to eat.

Bohrod returned to Chicago in 1932 "determined to do in my own way with my own city what Sloan had done with New York." Echoing Sloan's advice that he not overlook humble material and paint "anything that has character," Bohrod insisted that "the shabbier," even bleak aspects of Chicago attracted him. The fancy, well-to-do Gold Coast section of Chicago held no interest for him; he wanted to paint the lives

***Oakdale Avenue at Night,* by Aaron Bohrod, 1942. Oil on Masonite panel, 21 x 28 inches. Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, Philadelphia Henry D. Gilpin Fund 1943.4**

and surroundings of ordinary people. Shoppers, loiterers, and casual strollers haunt Bohrod's numerous Chicago street scenes and his studies of its outlying neighborhoods. Yet they seem displaced rather than integrated into their city. Bohrod's figures seem to live on the surface, unable to seep into the city's substance, unlike Sloan's, which propel New York from street level like blood cells in the body.

What is distinctive in Bohrod's work is how Chicago itself is the character that dominates his pictures. Its debris, rising buildings, sonorous lights, bright or peeling paint on signs, hard bricks, puddles, broken glass, smokestacks, storefront windows, and El stations have more personality than its inhabitants. The corner view, *Oakdale Avenue at Night* (1942), shows a massive block of apartment buildings, row houses, and other dwellings that rise ominously at the back of a blond woman about to cross a street. The woman seems an afterthought in this spooky nocturnal scene that captures the anthropomorphic qualities of architecture at dusk. Undulations, curves, and openings in the masonry groan and yawn like an old creature settling in to slumber.

Bohrod's experience was broadened by work for the WPA in the late 1930s, including murals done for post offices in Clinton, Galesburg, and Vandalia, Illinois. He was awarded two consecutive Guggenheim Fellowships in 1936–37 and 1937–38. In 1942, after a brief stint teaching at the School of the Art Institute, he accepted a visiting artist appointment at Southern Illinois Normal University, Carbondale, Illinois (now Southern Illinois University), funded by the Carnegie Foundation in an effort to "decentralize art interest in America." Bohrod had few official duties and enjoyed interacting with university faculty, students, and local residents. Carbondale was welcoming, comfortable, and stimulating to his work. "It pleased me," he reflected in a 1944 article, "when it seemed that the strip mines, the town railroad park, the streets of Carbondale, and

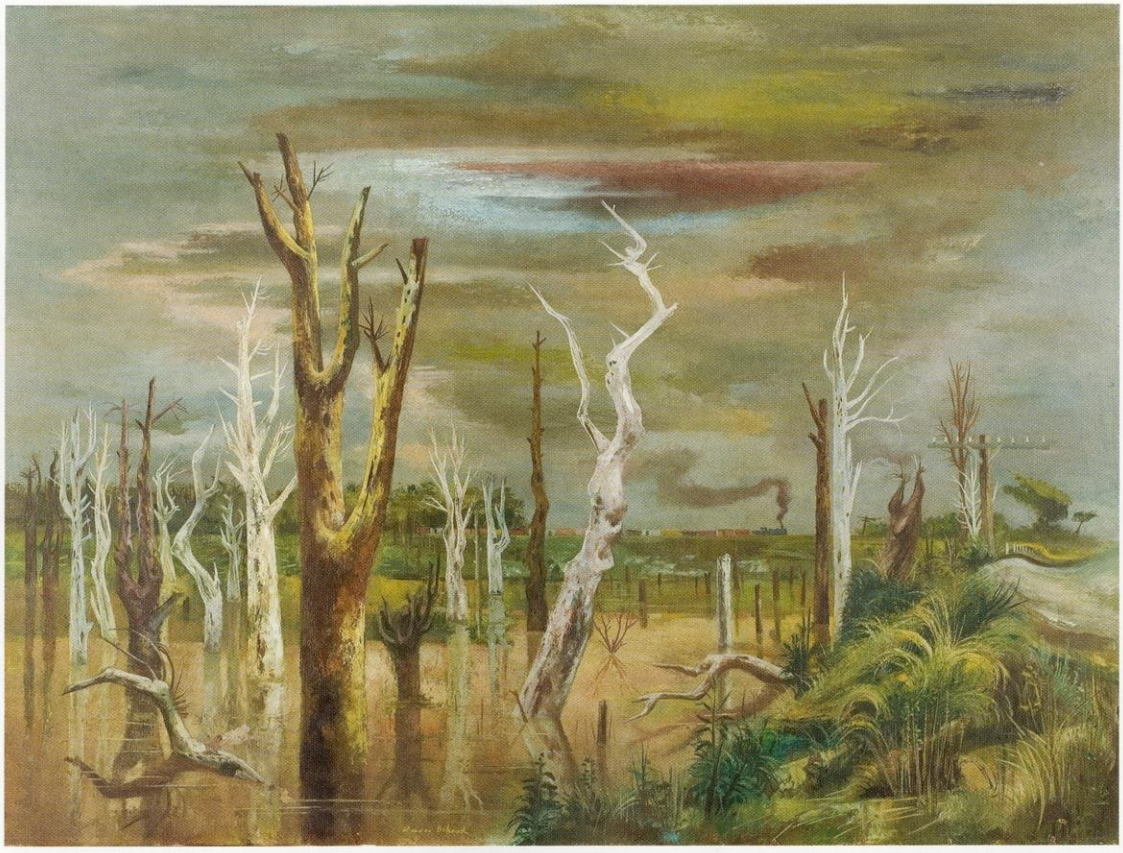
***Architecture*, from *The Seven Lively Arts*, by Aaron Bohrod, 1947**
Oil on canvas, 96 x 48 inches Seymour H. Persky

the surrounding country which they knew so well and which may have seemed commonplace in the eyes of most of the residents, took on a new interest after they had seen them portrayed through the eyes of a painter." His Carbondale experience was cut short when Bohrod's dealer, Reeves Lewenthal, and the artist George Biddle advocated for him to get an assignment recording the war with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers. Eventually he served as a correspondent for *Life* magazine.

Bohrod disembarked from San Francisco for the South Pacific, where he operated alongside soldiers in New Caledonia, the Solomon Islands, and Guadalcanal. Later he covered London, entered Normandy after D-Day, and accompanied General Patton's Third Army into Germany. Bohrod's paintings and sketches of the Pacific capture the oppressive heat, humidity, and stickiness of the jungle. They also convey the terrible exhaustion of the men fighting in the Pacific theater. Bohrod maintained that he considered it a duty to undertake the war assignment as a way to convey "truth" about the sights, smells, sounds, terrors, and boredom of war. He emphasized the importance of accuracy in detail and narrative as a moral and political necessity. Yet Bohrod conveyed empathy in his war pictures, found irony in military maneuvers, spotted the absurd and incongruous, and did not shy away from depicting its horrors. *Rendova Rendezvous* (1943) is among the most unforgettable paintings from his Pacific assignment. It shows three dead Japanese soldiers rapidly decomposing—fuming and melting—into the tropical jungle underbrush. Another prominent war-period painting, *Joan of Arc in Montebourg* (1944; see page 31), shows the French saint/heroine memorialized in an equestrienne statue. She appears triumphant on a rearing horse in a French town square devoid of people. The "town" no longer appears to exist, its crumbling, annihilated buildings transformed into filth and debris.

After the war Bohrod returned to Chicago, where he painted a series of pictures worked up from European sketches and resumed painting Chicago. In 1947 he was commissioned with five friends to paint pictures on the theme of the Seven Lively Arts for Riccardo's restaurant on Rush Street. A lively Chicago meeting place for artists and writers, the restaurant was the namesake of Ric Riccardo, also an artist. The project included subjects assigned by Riccardo to Ivan and Malvin Albright (drama and sculpture, respectively), Vincent D'Agostino (painting), William S. Schwartz (music), and Rudolph Weisenborn (literature). Riccardo painted the panel for dance and assigned architecture to Bohrod. The seven panels hung behind a bar shaped like an artist's palette and are now in a private collection in Chicago. Bohrod's was centered in the arrangement.

The war was on Bohrod's mind when he made this important but little-known painting. It colors every aspect of the monumental picture. At the center, a towering column is about to topple backward into the landscape. It is pockmarked, scraped, gouged, and generally battered by time. Two blueprints with highly stylized abstract designs and a plate torn from an anatomy book showing a skeleton holding its own skin are nailed to the column. These and other details foreshadow the strategies of his later still lifes. Amid witty details, such as a toppled house of cards and cartoony falling nude figures, the war permeates the picture. One figure holds what appears to be the painting of a destroyed European town.

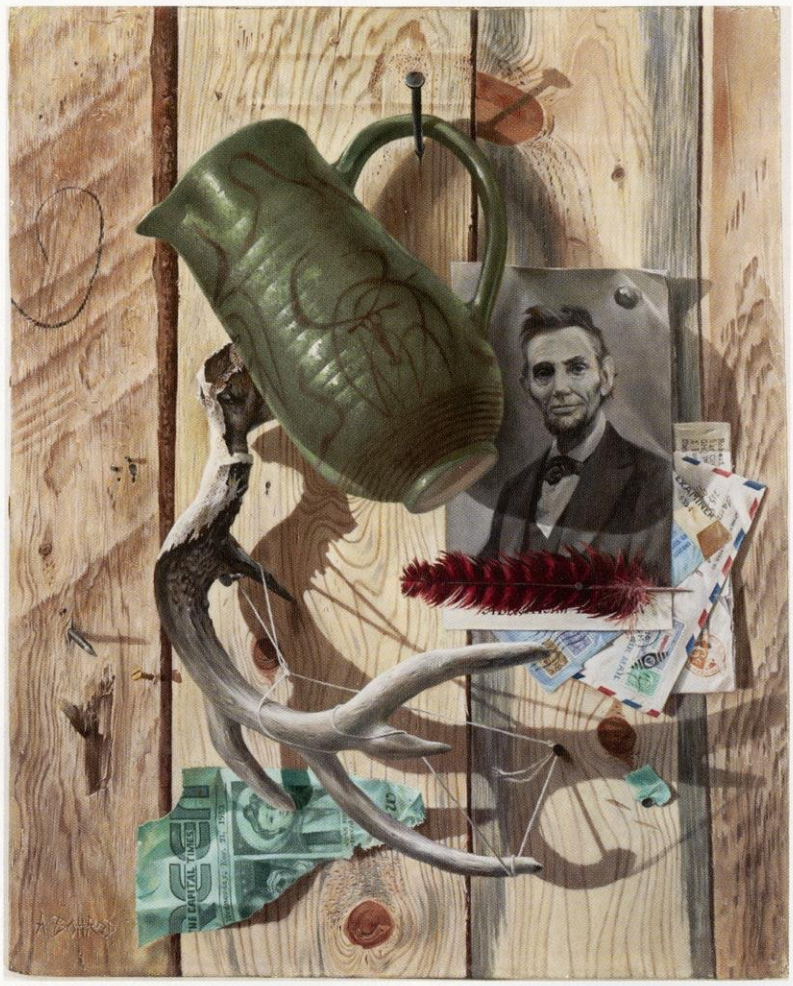


***Wisconsin Swamp,* by Aaron Bohrod, 1951. Oil on gesso board, 24 x 32 inches. Lawrence University, Appleton, Wisconsin**

In the landscape beyond, Bohrod depicted a real and imaginary historical survey of architecture. They crowd one another on the right and left sides. Pastiches or memories of Irish, Greek, Roman, Minoan, Medieval, and Renaissance structures unfold on the left side, while a densely packed conglomeration of more recent building styles is crammed into the space on the right. A twisted roller-coaster track and a carousel horse complete the strange procession of structures, further suggesting destruction. Bohrod's thickly brushed dramatic sky adds to the sense of turmoil and suggests fiery apocalypse. *Architecture* was an unusual and ambitious painting in his career. It teeters between two worlds in its play of American scene details, memories of devastated Europe, and reliance on heightened illusionism and allusion.

Throughout his career, Bohrod strove to identify with and to understand place. It is possible that this was a deciding factor in his appointment as successor to John Steuart Curry (1897–1946) in the University of Wisconsin's artist-in-residence program. Bohrod served in the post—which carried no teaching duties and had no connection with the art department—from 1948 to 1973. Bohrod traveled around the state to meet amateur artists, judge exhibitions, give informal criticism, and encourage art and art programs in rural areas. He was also expected to make paintings about the state during his tenure and found interest in old barns and primordial-looking swamps. "I think I still chose material that put ruggedness and maybe bittersweet sadness above scenic beauty," he noted about adapting to Wisconsin's landscape and subjects.

During the summer of 1953, Bohrod had an epiphany while working in Marquette, Michigan, on numerous drawings and small gouaches of rocks along the Lake Superior shoreline. On his return to Madison he tried to translate his sketches and elaborate notes about the rocks into an encaustic painting. "As I looked at the blurred, indistinct depiction I felt I had missed the quality of incisiveness the sketch had suggested," he lamented. Persistent, Bohrod returned to the sketch and attempted an oil painting that was more precise, even glassy in its hard-edged, sharp evocation of the large rocks. He became obsessed with capturing the "intricacies of the craggy clump of landscape. To aid my work I picked up



***A Lincoln Portrait,* by Aaron Bohrod, 1954. Oil on hardboard, 20 x 16 inches.**
Chazen Museum of Art, University of Wisconsin–Madison
Bequest of Harry Steenbock

little pebbles and stones which, while held in the left hand, served as models to stand for the large boulders and rocks constituting the materials of the piece. Delving into the stone's character, examining its pits and depressions, outgrowths and protrusions, its subtle color nuances, its veins and its fissures, I experienced a way of seeing that had never occurred to me before."

This experience of close looking, trying to distill the essence of an object and "almost rebuild it," led Bohrod to embark on what he thought would be a short series of severely executed still lifes "as an all-out form investigation." The first one, *Magic Realism* (1953), included illusionist paraphernalia lent to him by his neighbor, the amateur magician Art Brush. Bohrod claims that he was unsatisfied with his early attempts at still life because he wanted to achieve an "every-last-cell-of-matter effect" but fell short because he shrunk down the source material in translating it to a small canvas. By the time he painted *A Lincoln Portrait* (1954), he had decided to work with a one-to-one size ratio between object and painted representation. This became his preferred manner of working, and it proved to be a challenging but absorbing method for the artist and a thrilling result for viewers.

While this meditative, precise, and microcosmic analysis may have been inspired by his experience painting Lake Superior rocks, it also stemmed from a longstanding position that Bohrod found increasingly more important to his identity as an artist. One of his earliest public statements against non-objective painting appeared in a pamphlet that accompanied his 1952 exhibition at the Associated Artists Galleries in New York. The cover featured a full-bleed front and back design that looked suspiciously like a detail of a Jackson Pollock poured painting. Bohrod's signature sat centered near the bottom of the front cover in a clean rectangular box. Inside, a statement declared Bohrod's devotion to subject matter and nature, emphasizing his opposition to contemporary abstract art. He wrote, "I think I can enjoy as well as anyone else the tantalizing sparkle of much of present day painting. The design on the cover of this catalogue is one of my off-moment manifestations of every artist's delight in surface eye stimulation. But surface decoration should not be mistaken for painting.

Avoidance of the subject and escape from its discipline has serious limiting consequences. Already much of today's painting has been whittled down to mere decoration."

In two 1954 articles about Bohrod's switch to still-life painting in the *Milwaukee Journal* and *Time*, he explained his new style. "If explanation of these works is needed at all, I might say that they come about particularly because of my impatience with and my reaction against the scattershot, non-objective and surface-decoration schools of painting which seem to constitute the bulk of current recognized endeavor." He continued, "What I deem important ... is the method of full and severe realization, the interpretive exploration of substance and material and the overall employment of what might be called 'esthetic craftsmanship.' This is a quality which, unfortunately, has all but disappeared from most of contemporary painting."

Refuting the notion that his work was strict trompe l'oeil or straight objective imitation, he claimed, "This is not a speck-by-speck translation. It is a distillation process, sending it through an artist, that makes the difference ... I have never experienced a more gratifying way of working."

Bohrod's preference for painting that was "about something" and statements against art that seemed to reject subject matter echoed criticism of modern painting by surprising figures. Artist Marcel Duchamp consistently railed against purely retinal painting—painting that merely excites the eye in a superficial way. Art should concern itself with intellectual, philosophical, sexual, and spiritual content, he claimed. Lincoln Kirstein, a critic and writer, also attacked certain kinds of modern painting for abandoning technical rigor, intellectual depth, and quality. He championed artists such as Paul Cadmus and others for pursuing modern subjects through a study of the past.

While some claim that Bohrod became a reactionary crank who did not understand the aims of Abstract Expressionist artists, it is clear from paging through *A Decade of Still Life* that he often composed with their elaborately patterned, gorgeously textured surfaces and rhythmic flourishes in mind. Space and design in Bohrod's 1950s and 1960s still lifes subsume modernist painting more often than they reject it. The trompe l'oeil format revels in having it both ways—an all-over abstraction masking as reverently painted illusionism. Bohrod confirms this in numerous assertions that the paintings stemmed from his "desire to demonstrate aesthetic worth in a form at the opposite pole from the abstraction that was almost officially designated as the way the artist should be working in the middle of the twentieth century." Later in life he often claimed that if he could no longer work with objects, he would paint as an Op artist, designing kinetic perceptual illusions like Richard Anuszkiewicz, a younger artist he admired.

Why did Bohrod switch completely over to still life, and why did he persist with the genre for the rest of his life? This simple but important question remains tough to answer. The late Milwaukee art critic James Auer argued that Bohrod the "place and people painter" became "more and more interested in inanimate objects" because of lingering memories of the war. Auer supposed that Bohrod's experience of death in the Pacific and in Europe changed his perspective. Suddenly it made more sense to animate what was inanimate than to suspend people and their city in a layer of paint. The many self-portraits in his still lifes show a hyperawareness of the act of looking, transformation, and mutable meaning. *Beauty and Beast* (1954) shows a revolver hanging on the trunk of a tree surrounded by pinned pages of illustrations of butterflies torn out of scientific journals and books. On one illustration, Bohrod's signature slides seamlessly into a line of text, underscoring his stylistic metamorphosis and transformed artistic identity. In such details as this, Bohrod repeatedly integrated his presence in the still lifes. The life cycle and mortality unites many of the still lifes; transformation is at the heart of their meaning, and life is nothing if not a series of changes from one state to another.

Bohrod mused that artists get too comfortable in the mainstream and are surprised when the scene changes. In *Still Life in the Old Boy* (1984), a WHA documentary, Bohrod suggests that his new approach was guaranteed to be radical due to its reactionary position. "A lot of people have thought 'enough is enough,'" he noted in his 70s, remarking that many considered still life too limiting and old-fashioned. Bohrod asserted that still life was a "vastly unlimited field" because it integrated shifting meanings and layers of references. It also challenged him to rebuild the substance of objects through paint. Bohrod claimed in 1945 that he was a general practitioner in art, specializing in "landscapes, architectural structures, figures and still lifes" because he was "too interested in too many subjects to be tied to one kind of painting." The still lifes allowed him access to this diversity of subject; they include every possible genre because he stretched their limits over and over again. A quote from William Blake's *Auguries of Innocence* that Bohrod selected for an epigram in his 1956 New York solo exhibition brochure captures the impulse, mystery, and resonance of the still lifes:

To see a world in a grain of sand,
And heaven in a wild flower;
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand,
And eternity in an hour. ✺

Note: See the inside back cover of this magazine for information about the Bohrod exhibition. The opening reception includes a talk by Robert Cozzolino on Friday, Nov. 2, at 6:30 p.m.

Robert Cozzolino, who earned his Ph.D. in art history at the University of Wisconsin–Madison, is curator at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia and author of *Art in Chicago: Resisting Regionalism, Transforming Modernism* (Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts, 2007). Cozzolino is co-curating a retrospective of the artist George Tooker for 2008–09.

Way of the Warrior

A documentary by Patty Loew, produced with Wisconsin Public Television, looks at the culture and contradictions of Native Americans serving in the U.S. armed forces. It will be broadcast on WPT and nationally on PBS in November.

INTERVIEW BY JOAN FISCHER

Photo by Wolfgang Guenther

Patty Loew, above, and her grandfather, Ed DeNomie, as a World War I soldier in upper photo, top right.

Photos courtesy Wisconsin Veterans Museum/ Patty Loew unless otherwise noted

THROUGHOUT THE WARS OF THE 20TH CENTURY, Native American men and women served in the U.S. military in numbers that far exceeded their proportion in the general population.

Considering how the U.S. government has treated Native Americans, this phenomenon begs exploration. Why would Native men and women lay down their lives for a nation that consistently has served them so poorly?

"Way of the Warrior," a new documentary by UW–Madison communication professor and veteran broadcast journalist Patty Loew, uses personal stories of heroes and soldiers to try to answer that question. These stories from World War I, World War II, Korea, and Vietnam

weave a rich tapestry of positive and negative themes—the warrior ethic, prejudice and stereotypes, forced assimilation, poverty, cultural pride, redemptive acts, and healing.

Loew, who is a member of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe, uses historical footage, period photographs, Native music, personal diaries, and interviews to reveal what it means to be "ogichidaa"—one who protects and follows the way of the warrior.

What drew you to this topic?

Patty Loew: My grandfather was one of 12,000 Native Americans who volunteered for World War I. I imagined him taking the oath to defend the U.S. Constitution and found it ironic—given that he, like many Native Americans at the time, were not citizens and had no protections under the Constitution. Also, I've spent quite a bit of time in Native communities at powwows and ceremonies. Veterans enjoy a really exalted status. Warriors are revered. Tribes have extraordinarily high enlistment rates. To me, the high enlistment rates didn't seem to be as much about poverty or lack of opportunity as with other minority communities. There was a deeper cultural meaning. I wanted to explore that.

How do the veterans you interviewed deal with the irony of risking their lives for a nation that often has treated them so poorly?

Yes, this wasn't lost on them—especially the Korean War vets who came home after the war and went to bad "B" Westerns where they saw the very military they had fought and risked their lives for turning the Gatling guns on their own Native people. Can you imagine what they must have felt? But many told me that they didn't feel they were risking their lives for the United States as much as they felt they were defending their own people, their own communities.

How important was the cause of any particular war in motivating Native men and women to sign on? Did this vary significantly depending on which war?

I didn't get the sense that it was the "cause" in the context that most mainstream Americans view war. Many Native men—and women, because a surprising number of Native women became WACS and WAVES or worked in defense industries—enlisted because of clan obligations (clans like the Bear Clan among the Anishinaabe, for example, are "warrior" clans, and military service is culturally consistent with those clan obligations) or because of family traditions that went back to the Civil War in some cases.

One vet told me that he enlisted because in 1827 his tribe had signed a "peace and friendship" treaty with the U.S. and promised to come to the military assistance of the U.S. should it ever be needed. Even though he said the U.S. had broken every promise made to his people, his tribe was still honoring the treaty they signed. I had to pick my jaw up off the ground after hearing that one!

Given their often impoverished socioeconomic status, was the motive for many Native Americans to sign on the opportunity for advancement (in education, job skills, health and retirement benefits, etc.) rather than actually fighting?

It's so complicated and layered. Some *were* motivated by economic necessity. Others, like mainstream men and women, were looking for adventure. Still others enlisted out of a sense

Vietnam war veteran Jim Northrup, 3rd Batallion, 9th Marines

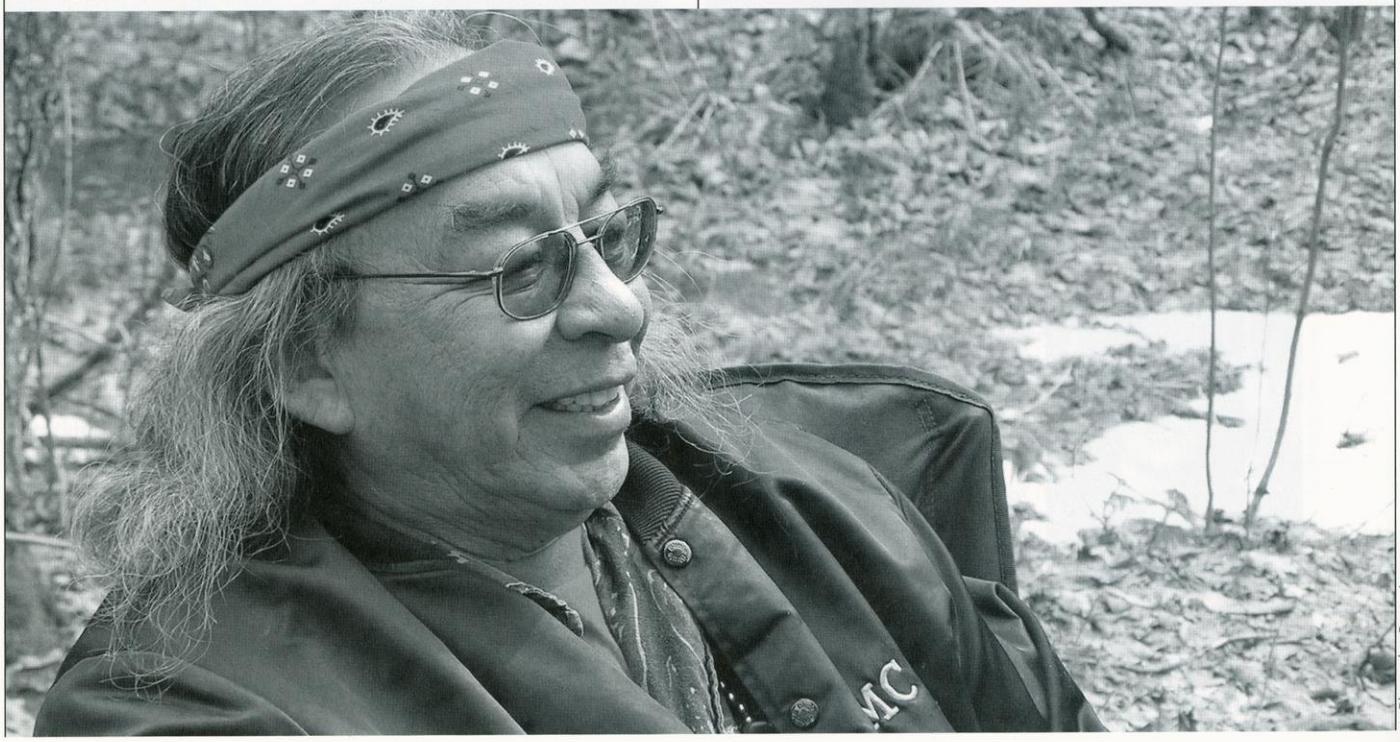


Photo by Patty Loew

of patriotism. But there were other uniquely cultural reasons (clan obligations, family traditions, treaty obligations, and so on). It varied from tribe to tribe and from war to war.

In World War I, for example, many young Native men were in Indian boarding schools, which were very militaristic. Boys and girls marched to their dormitories, to the dining halls, to their classes. Little boys drilled in cadet uniforms with wooden rifles every morning. It was like "being a POW," as one interviewee told me. These children were already being treated as little soldiers. As Tom Britten, author of *American Indians and World War I*, told me, "It was a seamless transition from military school, to training camps, to the front lines."

I can say the majority of Native men did not enlist for the benefits. Of all racial and ethnic groups, Native Americans are the *least* likely to seek veterans benefits. It's actually quite a problem for the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"Warrior" sounds like such an inherently male term. What has the role of women been in Native American warfare, and how is it different in the context of the U.S. armed forces? Do Native women express appreciation for the opportunity to "do battle"?

Native women have a long history of being warriors. During the American Revolutionary War, an Oneida woman by the name of Dolly Cobar picked up her husband's musket after he fell at the Battle of Oriskany and took his place. Since my documentary examined the relationship between Native Americans and the U.S. military, I did not research the role of women in Native American warfare. I can say that the women World War II veterans I spoke to talked about how they felt their service was a way to help defend their communities and support the male members of their nation who were serving.

My mother, Alice DeNomie Loew, worked for the Perfex Corporation in Milwaukee, a company that manufactured the Norden Bombsight. She left the Layton School of Art, where she was studying to become a dress designer, and turned her talents toward designing torpedo beds and working on the NBS. Here's an excerpt of her interview:

> "Oh yeah, because my brothers were in service and I felt that I was working toward protecting them. What little I was doing I was trying to do the best I knew how. And it was imperative that I make everything match these specifications ... little alterations in the blueprints from one to another, I made sure that it came out exactly right. I hadn't met my husband yet, but my older brother was in the Air Force. My brother-in-law was in the Air Force and people I knew that were going in to serve, so I felt that I was doing my part."

How have the U.S. armed forces treated and valued their Native members? Are they regarded as particularly good members of the military, and for what reasons? Finally, have they tended to serve in units of their own or are they dispersed among troops of all different ethnic backgrounds?

Walking Point

With his asshole puckered up tight,
The Marine was walking light, He was hunting men,
Who were hunting him.

His rifle was in perfect order,
He wasn't, fear, fear of not feeling fear,
The heat, mud, and mosquitoes
All addled his brain housing group
As he walked and thought along

Thou shalt not kill,
That stuff didn't work here.
God must have stayed back
In the real world.

Is any of this real?
Is this a green nightmare
I'm going to wake up from?

He sang to himself as his sense
Gathered evidence of continued existence

His eyes saw, his ears heard
His heart felt a numb nothing,
His mind analyzed it all
As he studied the trail

He amused himself as we walked along
The old story about bullets, Ha.
Don't sweat the one that's got your name on it,
Worry about the one addressed:
To Whom It May Concern.

On another level his mind churned with
Rifle, M-14, Caliber 7.62 mm, a gas operated,
Magazine fed, air cooled, semi-automatic
Shoulder weapon.
Weight—12 pounds with 20 rounds
Sustained Rate of Fire—30 rounds per minute
Effective Range—460 meters

Or,
Hand Grenade, M-26,
And so on and on and on.

Movement! Something is moving up there!
Drop to the mud, rifle pointing at the unknown,
Looks like two of them, hunting him.
They have rifles but he saw them first.
The Marine Corps takes over,
Breathe, Relax, Aim, Slack, Squeeze.

The shooting is over in five seconds,
the shakes are over in a half hour,
the memories are over, never.

by Jim Northrup

It's so difficult to answer this question. Native Americans disproportionately serve in *the* most dangerous positions—walking point, doing long-range reconnaissance, parachuting in behind enemy lines—what Tom Holm, author of *Strong Hearts, Wounded Souls,* has described as the "Indian scout syndrome."

It's based on stereotypes, sometimes imposed by white commanders, but often assumed by Native soldiers themselves, that somehow Indians are superior trackers and fighters—so-called "super warriors." They can see in the dark, have an innate sense of direction, can tell volumes from a single bent blade of grass. It's been around a long time—probably since European encounter and reinforced by popular fiction (for example, James Fennimore's *Leatherstockings*).

Stereotypes have deadly consequences. If you're a military commander and you need soldiers for an impossible mission—scaling cliffs at Omaha Beach to take out German artillery in advance of the D-Day invasion—who are you going to send? Super warriors, of course.

In World War I, Native Americans had a casualty rate five times higher than the American Expeditionary Forces (AEF) as a whole. In Vietnam, Native soldiers were far more likely to see "moderate" to "heavy" combat than non-Natives, according to Holm's research findings.

Regarding your other question, because of the U.S. government's assimilation policies regarding Indians, Native soldiers, unlike African Americans, fought in integrated units. There were some divisions—the 32nd and the 36th—that contained infantry units mustered out of boarding school locales. My grandfather served in the 128th, 32nd Division, which had a large number of Ojibwe, Ho-Chunk, Oneida, Menominee, and Potawatomi soldiers. The 36th, formed in large part by National Guard troops in Arizona, Oklahoma, Texas, and New Mexico, was disproportionately Native. Perhaps the most famous unit, the 45th—also known as the Thunderbirds—was almost all Native. It was one of the most highly decorated units of World War II, with five Native Americans receiving the Congressional Medal of Honor.

World War II veteran Sgt. Phil Coon, 31st Infantry Division, who survived the Bataan Death March in the Philippines. Coon is a Muscogee Creek Indian.

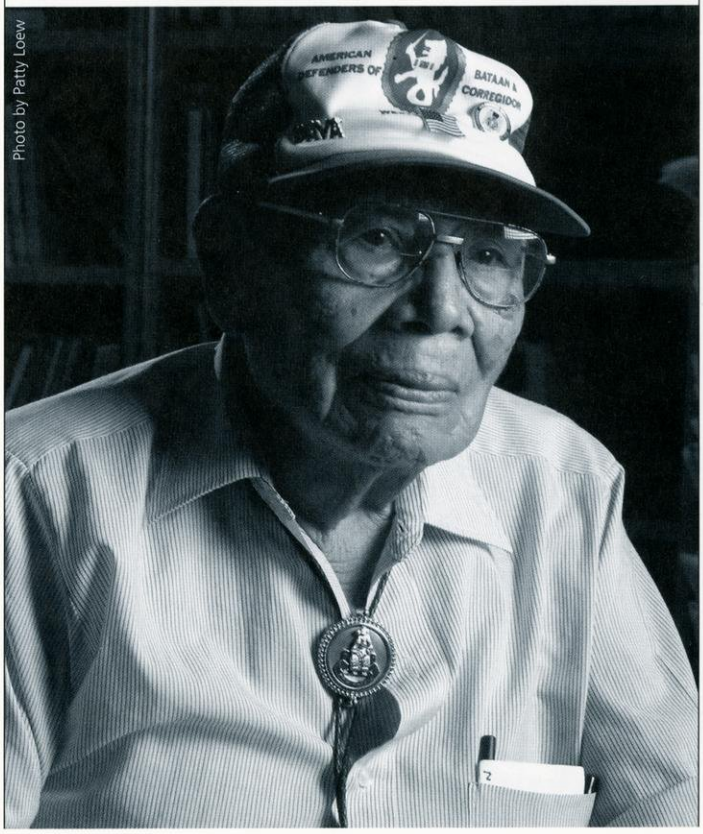


Photo by Patty Loew

Can you recount one or two particularly noteworthy interviews or anecdotes concerning your subjects? What moved you or inspired you about them, and why?

Journalist Jim Northrup, a former Vietnam combat marine (3rd Batallion, 9th Marines), was perhaps the most memorable interview. Northrup, an Anishinaabe from the Fond du Lac Reservation in Minnesota, talked candidly about post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and how writing poetry helped him deal with his PTSD. I can share one of his poems. [Note: See "Walking Point," page 39.]

One of the most revealing aspects of the interview was Northrup's realization of the similarities between themselves and the indigenous people of Vietnam they were fighting. Here's an excerpt:

Q: Holm writes about how Native men came back with a sense of themselves in a more global context. They began making intellectual connections between their own lives and indigenous people around the world.

Northrup: "I made the connection much earlier than that. Cuz I traveled around different countries and people would look at me and touch my skin and say 'same same' or point to my eyes and 'same same' or what little bit of hair I had and say 'same same.' This happened in Puerto Rico, it happened in Panama, it happened in Okinawa, it happened in Japan, it happened in Hong Kong, it happened in the Philippines. It happened in Vietnam. Everywhere I went people thought I was one of them and start speaking the language like I was a native. I'd laugh at them and start speaking a few words in Ojibwe and we'd start from here."

Q: How did you process that?

Northrup: "As we're going through some of the villages, I could see that someone had spent a lot of time making the baskets that they use to process rice, much like the way we do at home, the way we winnow the rice, and I could see that someone had spent a lot of time and we'd just go through and trash it or burn it. We were there as Marines. We were there to kill people and that's what we did ... Our motto

was, if it moved, shoot it. If it doesn't, burn it ... it's what we did. We were the bayonet end of America's foreign policy and we killed and got killed."

My sense is that quite a few Native men who enlisted during the Vietnam War had expectations that things would change when they got home—that their sacrifice would somehow mean something for their communities. When they came home and *nothing* changed, they got angry and got political. And their communities pushed them to become spokesmen. They had experienced the outside world. They knew the way things worked, so who better to delegate those responsibilities to? It's no coincidence that the leaders of the American Indian Movement and Red Power (Civil Rights) were veterans.

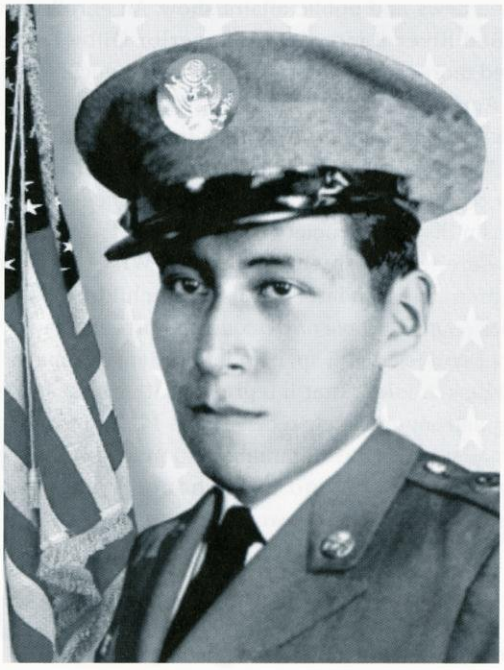
Please describe one or two important things you learned from this project.

The most important thing I learned—a concept I find myself thinking a lot about lately—is that nearly every Native community with which I am familiar has a protocol for reintegrating returning vets back into the community. In the American mainstream, the military does a good job of providing soldiers the basic training they need to become killing machines. But it doesn't do much to help transform soldiers who experience the horrors of battle into individuals of peace. Every Native community I visited had ceremonies to purify its returning warriors: sweat lodge ceremonies, debriefing protocols with clan mothers. The Hopi ritually wash the hair of returning veterans and give them new names. There is a realization in Indian Country that the community has an obligation to its returning vets ... not just for the mental, emotional, and spiritual benefit of the individual soldier, but also to protect the community.

These men (and now women too) have witnessed unspeakable things. They bring back a kind of poison that if not purged threatens to poison the entire community. I think about that every time I read about some former Marine climbing a clock tower in Texas or hiding behind a grassy knoll waiting for a presidential motorcade to pass by. I think about this as I see tens of thousands of American GIs returning from Iraq and Afghanistan and wonder what psychological demons they'll be facing and what personal wars they'll continue to fight. According to Holm's research, Native vets who return to communities with reintegration ceremonies face far fewer episodes of PTSD and have much milder symptoms. I believe that the American military can learn quite a bit from Native communities in this respect.

Military portrait of Cpl. Mitchell Red Cloud, a Ho-Chunk Medal of Honor recipient (posthumous) who sacrificed himself to give his company time to retreat from a Chinese offensive during the Korean War.

National Archives photo



World War I: Three Native soldiers goofing around with a staged "attack"; below, Loew's grandfather, Ed DeNomie, in full doughboy uniform.

Can you give us an idea of the breadth of this documentary? How many people did you talk to, and did you include Natives from states other than Wisconsin? What was your overarching goal with this project?

We traveled to four states (Oklahoma, Arizona, Minnesota, and Wisconsin) and gathered stories from half a dozen distinctly different Native communities (Bad River Ojibwe, Ho-Chunk, Muscogee Creek, Fond du Lac Anishinaabe, and Hopi). I interviewed several dozen veterans, an equal number of family members, dozens of scholars, and veterans advocates. My goal was to explain the contributions of Native Americans to the U.S. military, the consequences of Indian stereotypes, and, most important, the cultural meaning of being a warrior in Native communities.

Is there anything you'd like to add to this? Please feel free to tell us more.

I never intended to get genealogical in this documentary, but it was almost as if my late grandfather had a hand on my shoulder during this project. In searching for historic film of World War I at the Wisconsin Historical Society, I came across a rare 1916 National Guard training film shot at Camp Douglas. It included my grandfather's unit, shot the very month he trained at Camp Douglas!

Then a relative found a roll of undeveloped film in my grandfather's trunk. I developed it and discovered that it was film my grandfather shot of his unit during the Mexican Border Wars in Waco, Texas, as National Guard troops were chasing Pancho Villa.

Finally, last year at Indian Summerfest in Milwaukee, a cousin gave me an envelope she thought I might find useful. Inside—my grandfather's diary penned from France during World War I. I learned that he had fought in all six campaigns in which the AEF was involved, including Soisson, Chateau Thiery, and Meuse-Argonne. I also had two audiotaped interviews of my grandfather conducted by my mother, brother, and cousin.

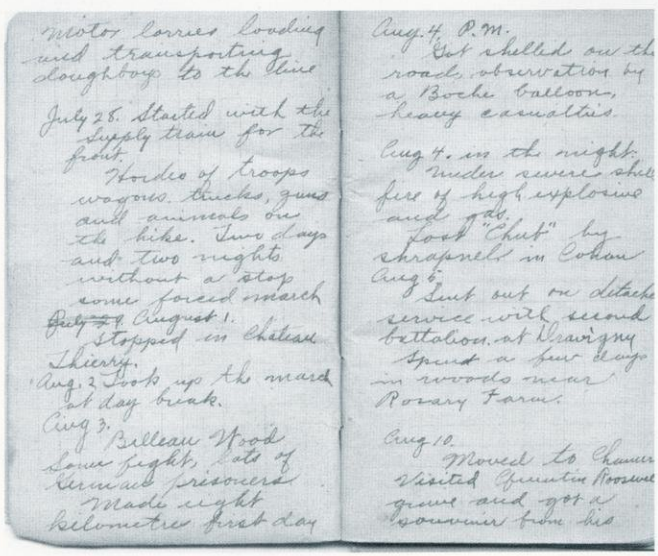
I realized that there was probably no better-documented Native doughboy in the country and I had to tell his story.

One other unusual find—my graduate assistant went to the National Archives with a list of film we needed to tell the individual stories of Native soldiers I had researched. I asked her to bring back film of the 32nd Division and the 128th Infantry in particular. She brought back a roll shot by the Signal Corps—the only roll of the 128th—that was 11 minutes long. Nine of those minutes were wide shots of the troops parading in front of "Black Jack" Pershing, who commanded the troops. But there were two minutes of the troops at rest, playing football and baseball. Of those two minutes, there were only two close-up shots where a soldier could be identified: a pitcher throwing the ball and a batter hitting it and racing to first. My grandfather was that batter.

What are the odds? It wasn't so much spooky as it was compelling. I believe my grandfather *really* wanted his story told! ✷

PBS has scheduled "Way of the Warrior" to air November 1 at 9 p.m. central time. PBS affiliates may choose to show it at another time that month. Stay tuned to Wisconsin Public Television or visit www.wpt.org to confirm broadcast time in Wisconsin. The documentary will be available on DVD through VisionMaker Video, a service of Native American Public Telecommunications.

"Best-documented Native doughboy": Excerpts from a diary kept by Loew's grandfather.



motor lorries loading and transporting doughboys to the line

July 28. Started with the supply train for the front. Hordes of troops wagons, trucks, guns and animals on the hike. Two days and two nights without a stop some forced march ~~July 29~~ August 1. Stopped in Chateau Thierry.

Aug. 2 Took up the march at day break.

Aug 3. Belleau Wood some fight, lots of German prisoners Made eight kelometres first day

Aug. 4 P.M. Got shelled on the road, observation by a Boche balloon, heavy casualties.

Aug 4. in the night. Under severe shell fire of high explosive and gas. Lost "Chet" by shrapnels in Column

Aug 5. Sent out on detached service with second battalion at Urvigny Spent a few days in woods near Rosary Farm.

Aug 10. Moved to Chamery Visited Quentin Roosevelt grave and got a souvenir from his

Patty Loew is an associate professor in the department of life sciences communication at the University of Wisconsin–Madison. She also hosts and produces documentary segments for Wisconsin Public Television's *In Wisconsin,* a statewide news and public affairs show. An enrolled member of the Bad River Band of Lake Superior Ojibwe, Loew has produced more than a dozen award-winning documentaries on Native American topics, including "Spring of Discontent," which aired regionally on ABC affiliates, and "Nation Within a Nation," which aired nationally on PBS. Her book *Indian Nations of Wisconsin: Histories of Endurance and Renewal* (Wisconsin Historical Society Press, 2001) won an Outstanding Achievement recognition from the Wisconsin Library Association, and she later published a children's version of that work (*Native People of Wisconsin*). Currently she is writing *One Sky Two Views* with space scientist Sanjay Limaye, a book for middle schoolers that integrates Native star stories with Western astronomy. Loew received her Ph.D. from the School of Journalism and Mass Communication at the University of Wisconsin–Madison and holds honorary degrees from Northland College and Edgewood College.

Related story: Historian Kerry Trask reflects upon the meaning of the Black Hawk War starting on page 20.

poetry

Poet-Dog

I am a Poet-dog
yipping at the ankles of
the Sun and Moon
for word-scraps
from their table.

When Wind begins
scattering morsels
I leap and catch
the choicest ones
to keep me running.

If they are dry
I drop them in
my bowl of Lake
and they get soggy.
It is a mean

existence, all abject
begging for mere
jots and mutters.
I am a poet-Dog,
perpetually hungry.

Georgia Ressmeyer

Wind Lover

Why can't I store
the wind in bottles,
blue and green,
save excess ripples
from the ocean's
skin, the snapping
flap of shirttails,
sheets, and sails,
the ping of rigging
on a metal mast,
the restless, forward-
leaning dash of
grasses in the fields,
the whistlings of
the pines? How can
I live without wind's
swirling breath?

Georgia Ressmeyer

Georgia Ressmeyer, a two-time winner of grants in creative writing from the Wisconsin Arts Board, is the author of *Bernice: A Comedy in Letters* and *Sea Robin*. She served as a staff and managing attorney with the Milwaukee Mental Health Division of the Wisconsin Public Defender's office for 18 years. Her poetry has appeared or is forthcoming in *South Carolina Review, The Alembic, The Lyric, Wisconsin Review, Puerto del Sol,* and other publications. She lives in Sheboygan.

Romantic Vacation

Linda breaks open her fortune
cookie.
"A romantic vacation—this year."
She smiles at her husband, Jim.
Marge and George crack open
their cookies.
"Mine says, 'You are cute and
clever,'"
Marge laughs. "And yours,
George?"
"A romantic vacation—this year,"
he reads. How about yours?"
he asks Linda. Eyes focused
on the small white slip of paper
in her hand, she pretends to read,
"It's not always wise to speak the
truth."

Wilda Morris

Crossed Chopsticks

Along with their food
they share complaints.

His wife doesn't appreciate
the work he does
around the house.

Her husband won't eat
anything but steak
and potatoes.

Into their mouths they stuff
crab Rangoon,
sweet and sour beef.
Out come words
dripping with empathy.

Watch as he breaks
the first almond cookie,
offers her half.
Watch as she reciprocates.

Wilda Morris

Wilda Morris has been attending writing workshops and studying with Wisconsin poets for 14 years. Her work has appeared in numerous publications across the country, and on numerous websites. Three of her poems have been translated to Chinese. Her nonfiction book, *Stop the Violence: Educating Ourselves to Protect Our Youth,* was published by Judson Press.

Skiing With My Father Who Is 73

Dad coaxed me to the woods when the morning
temperatures rose over new snow. We skied through
old growth forest. Too long in the city, I had forgotten
its beauty. Today I noticed how the bark of the Red Pine
had weathered to rose and almost grey, how wide
the trunk of the Cedar, how tall the Hemlock,
and how both Pine and Hemlock creaked in the wind.

We chose the longer loop because there were two of us today.

There I noticed the tracks of a smallish deer: the pointy,
tentative indentations of hooves fresh in the snow between
my skis and later, interspersed along the track, the shape
of very large paws.

Annie Parcels

One Day Off Each Summer

I wish you had told me sooner how your dad took one day off each summer to take you fishing. One day, one precious day he bartered with a neighbor for someone to milk the cows.

One day, just one precious day, he loaded the borrowed boat onto the back of the green Ford pickup and you drove out to that small inland lake surrounded by forest of balsam and pine.

One day, one precious day, just one day each summer you held a can of freshly dug worms and you sat together—not talking much—but spent the day, that precious day. Precious because you both knew there was work to be done and if you wasted the sun you cheated yourself.

You were thirsty and hot in the sun waiting for the fish to bite, even a nibble. But you tried to be happy because you knew tomorrow after milking you had to muck the barn, then get outside to fight the weeds, then fertilize and after this sunny day get water on the fields. And always there was wood to cut, and split, and stack to heat the farmhouse that held frost on your bedroom window all winter long.

I wish you had told me sooner how your dad took off one day each summer to take you fishing. One day, one precious day after the first crop of hay was cut and the corn was started real nice. One precious day, only one day. Precious because you knew there was work to be done and if you wasted the sun you cheated yourself.

Precious because somehow Dad had to scrounge up the money to buy that part to fix the tractor because that new hay had to be seeded and the corn tended to and that cow about to drop had to be watched because you knew there wasn't much money for a vet and if that birth went bad or it was a boy that was just another wasted year for that cow and her calf would only be plowed under: food for next year's crop instead of another cow to milk to bring in another few cents a pound even with a subsidy.

I wish you had told me sooner about how your dad took one day, one precious day off each summer to take you fishing. One day, one precious day. Precious because you both knew there was work to be done and if you cheated the sun you cheated yourself.

I wish you had told me sooner how most of the joy your dad found was at the end of a bottle or with another woman because he thought both were cheap and quick and could be had in the dark. I wish you had told me sooner, I wish you had told me more. Then maybe I would have understood more, could have understood some of why when the sun rose cold on that winter's morning after our own son was born, and he and I had both survived the night, you went off to work.

Annie Parcels

Annie Parcels was raised on Michigan's Upper Peninsula, where she was taught to revere nature and have the courage of her convictions. She has lived most of her life near the Great Lakes and presently resides in Wauwatosa with her faithful and exuberant Labrador retriever, Ginger. Parcels writes openly of the tentative nature of human relationships.

The Only Law

Do you remember the song
"The Man who Shot
Liberty Valance"? I heard it
along the bike path
one night in June.

An old white man rolled past,
headed south in a
motorized chair. It played on
a boom box rattling
in his front basket.

He stuffed a pipe as Gene
Pitney's voice
boomed between embankments,
thrilling the spines
of opossums crouched in debris.

I grinned – he was serene –
and the music was so loud.
I saw the movie.
I know the story
that gunslinger ballad tells.

In Shinbone's clattering restaurant
the timid sheriff
wants to eat. Attorney-at-Law
Ranse Stoddard wears
a kitchen apron. He's washing dishes
and recommending
the establishment of due process.
John Wayne's rancher, Tom Doniphon,
is tolerant and amused.
"Pilgrim" he says,
"in the Territory,
it doesn't work that way. If you're really
staying, get a gun
and learn how to use it"

Maurice remembers
watching the "Duke"
on a plywood screen in Phu Loi.
In the service he saw
"The Green Berets" four times.

Nineteen and Black, he'd learned
what the Territory taught
Ranse Stoddard. Now
he coaches innocents and victims
in every movie we see.

Don't toy with him, he tells
Ranse – who stumbles to a
showdown with Valance –
People do what you let them
get away with.

Sue Blaustein

16th and Locust

There's a Holstein painted
on the east wall
of Mother's Foods. She's
endowed
with primly cloven hooves.

Five years ago (or longer)
someone altered her
with spray paint,
covering her udders
with crude loops. She got

testicles and a prick
with three cascading droplets,
permanently headed
for the ground. Her slim ears
still taper like ash leaves,

waving at right angles
to her thoughtful head. The markings
for her nostrils
resemble sperm, or baby bullheads.
She symbolizes
all the secrets around me.

Sue Blaustein

Sue Blaustein lives in Milwaukee and works as an inspector for the Health Department. She also serves as president of her union (AFSCME Local 1091) and is a volunteer organizer for AFSCME. Her poetry has appeared in *New Delta Review, Isotope—A Journal of Literary Nature and Science Writing*, and in the online journal *Blue Fifth Review*.

Salting the Walks

BY KIRK FARBER

Photos by Bill Blankenburg

WISCONSIN PEOPLE & IDEAS/HARRY W. SCHWARTZ BOOKSHOPS SHORT STORY CONTEST WINNER

SECOND PLACE

I WOULDN'T BE POURING WATER ON THE SIDEWALK if our landlord, Michael, hadn't lied to me in the first place. He's not a compulsive liar. In the three months I've known him, he's only told the one lie. But what a pointless one. I mean, really.

While I wait for the January air to freeze the water, I gaze at the stars. I watch them sparkle with a vividness only winter allows—brilliant and clear, they're like diamonds in a sky-sized jewel case. I appreciate them because they are only what they are: stars. Points of light in the sky. There is no debate, no argument. I want to reach out and touch them, use them as leverage to help me up out of my troubles. I want to share this with Shelly, too, but I guess she's made her choice.

Orion hovers over me, the largest constellation visible this time of year. Orion the Great Hunter, complete with club and shield and sword. Most people don't know that he was really a bard who made up stories to fool pirates and get women. He couldn't hunt worth a damn. He was a liar, too.

Michael took over ownership of our rental house in the beginning of October. It's a typical Arts & Crafts upper-lower, the kind you see lining the streets in Archie Bunker's neighborhood, but this one had some touches of real elegance: floor-to-ceiling leaded glass windows, built-in china cabinets, decorative moldings. It was warm and inviting, and even though Shelly and I weren't the owners, it felt like our home.

Michael had meticulously gone over the details of our lease to assure us he wouldn't be changing anything. He kept asking us if we had any questions. He wanted a smooth transition as much as we did. His professionalism was a refreshing change from our previous landlord, Harriet, an octogenarian who communicated largely through panicked Post-it notes stuck to our back door. She often demanded random, odd things. "Don't park near trees!" she wrote once. "Please stop the noisy smoke!" was another. She might have had a touch of the Alz.

The one legal change Michael did make was revising our annual lease to a month-to-month. This brought me and Shelly unspoken relief. We'd recently been walking on eggshells with one another due to The Greg Incident, and signing on to a yearlong contract was a frightening prospect. The new lease allowed us to deny our problems in nice, neat, monthly increments.

Michael also offered to reduce our rent in exchange for lawn and shoveling duties. With such a small yard, I couldn't say no. And with a nice shovel and a bucket of salt, shoveling would be no problem. I asked him about this as he and I were signing lease papers, and that's when he told the pointless lie.

"I've never used salt in my entire life," he said.

I looked up at him with my head cocked, like a dog who hears a funny noise in the next room. His bizarre declaration had disturbed the flawless, professional flow of things.

"Really?" I asked. "Our last landlord kept a bucket out back—"

"Never," he interrupted, and stopped writing to look up at me. "I've never used salt."

"But it gets icy out there," I said.

"No," he said, and kept writing.

Just no. It does not get icy out there. Total denial.

I tried to make sense of his bravado. Who felt the need to deny salt with such vehemence? Maybe he used sand? Or chromium chloride melting crystals? Wasn't it all just called salt? Michael shook his head as I sat there speechless, continuing his silent disagreement with even the notion of the salt. I bit my lip to stop my smile from turning into a laugh. "That's fine," I said, and we continued to scribble initials where they needed to be. But truth be told, his lie was eating away at me.

Shelly yelled up at me, "Are you still alive?"

I was in the attic office, researching on the Internet. I learned that if you want to create clear ice, you need to start with distilled water. Boil out the impurities, keep the water hot, and then pour it in layers.

Shelly said, "You've been up there a long time. Are you ever coming down?"

"Five minutes. I'll be right down."

I went on to learn that this method of ice-making mimics icicles in nature: pure water dripping in layers to create a beautiful clear smooth finish. Virtually invisible.

"You said five minutes an hour ago. What are you doing?"

"Seeking truth," I said, but I don't think she heard me.

A slew of home improvements marked the beginning of Michael's reign. They were odd bits of work, with little ability to impress, but according to Michael, he was moving mountains. He would visit every Sunday morning at 10 a.m., dressed in sweatpants that were too small for his large frame. He wore suspenders and too much gel in his jet-black hair, which left him looking like a Legoland citizen. He drove a small, 12-foot-long station wagon with a 16-foot-long ladder tied to the roof. His arrivals made me nervous, the arrogance traveling in such a goofy package. But he was punctual, I'll give him that. Every Sunday morning at 10 a.m., like clockwork.

The first time he visited he carpeted the back stairs. When he returned the following Sunday, he asked: "How about those stairs?" followed by a long, slow nod.

"They're nice," I said. "They seem quieter."

"Good," he said, still nodding, "Good, good," stroking his goatee slowly like an old movie villain, as if he were our Great-Uncle Michael, the one with the oil inheritance who looked after us, his proletariat kin.

The Sunday after that he wanted to install an electric garage door. We'd been getting along fine without one, but he was insistent. "I'm going to be putting that in soon," he told us as we left one day for a walk. "Real soon," he said and stroked at his mustache, nodding and studying the standard garage door as if it were a diseased tumor, something that needed immediate removal.

"We don't really need one," I said.

"I would love it," Shelly argued. "I can barely lift that thing by myself."

"I'm just saying—"

Michael flipped his hand up like a stop sign. "All my properties have them."

The next week we had an electric garage door opener, and it was convenient, as promised. Shelly absolutely loved it. I was beginning to hate Michael more and more each day.

"You're going to break your goddamn neck," Shelly said, and she blew a tight column of smoke out the kitchen window. I had just poured two more bottles across the sidewalk. They were layering nicely. I stood in front of the stove and monitored the next batch of distilled water, turned the heat up to high.

"Why do you have to swear like that?" I asked.

"I like to."

"It's not very becoming of you," I said, and stirred at the water.

"Are we going for tea and crumpets?"

"What?"

Shelly turned her head sharply back and forth, like a robot doll. "Tea and crumpets, darling. Although crumpets

Winning Words

Lead judge Charles Baxter on why he chose "Salting the Walks"

This story gives us a narrator who salts his walks and metaphorically salts his wounds. Our common tendency to think the worst sometimes about those who care for us is dramatized here in vivid, chilly scenes. This narrator, imagining the worst, makes the worst happen in this wintry and insightful tale.

aren't very becoming of you." She held her cigarette out with her palm up, continuing a terrible British accent. "I use foul language because it gives my sentences *emphasis*, Phillip."

"Phillip, that's a funny British name," I said, removing the barb from her joke.

"You're going to break your neck because it's winter, remember? Water turns to ice."

"It's been so cold for so long, I forgot."

She blew another column of smoke out the window and ignored me. Lately she'd been starting up sparring matches only to let them go right away. She seemed to be letting go of a lot lately. This, coupled with the increase in swearing, didn't bode well for us. It wasn't very becoming of us, I wanted to say, but decided otherwise.

Shelly blurted: "We were invited to the Krings' party."

"Great."

"We don't have to go."

"No, let's go," I said.

Shelly stared out at the sidewalk. "You should throw some salt on that."

"The sun will melt it."

"It's too dangerous to wait for good weather."

"I'll do it tonight," I lied, and watched the new batch of water begin to boil. Little bubbles quivered on the bottom, not quite ready to let go.

"If you want to go to the party, we'll go."

"Then we will," I said.

We sat in Shelly's car, parked in the driveway, and waited for the heat to kick in. She huddled into a tight little ball in the driver's seat. She refused to drive a cold car, said she couldn't concentrate when it was so cold. Clouds of breath spewed from our mouths and noses, dramatic moving art, tinted green by the light of the dashboard.

"We don't have to do this," Shelly said.

"Of course we do."

"Greg will be there."

"There will be a lot of people there. It's a party."

I watched our breath swirl and expand, tangible evidence of our life and heat. It struck me that we looked like alien creatures, lost in this world, breathing strange elements as we tried to adapt to our new atmosphere. We each rubbed our gloved hands together, as if this would help anything. Shelly shifted her weight and sat up a little. Her face went sour, like something had turned inside her.

"Don't you think we should stop this?" she asked.

"Stop what?"

"This," she said, and shrugged.

"What's this?" I asked and shrugged back, teasing her.

"Come on."

We both stared straight ahead then, watched the frost at the bottom edge of the windshield melt. Tiny white continents broke away and slid to their demise.

"I didn't sleep with Greg," she said.

"Great."

"You have to believe me."

"I do believe you," I said. "I'll be right back."

"Don't—"

I jumped out of the car, walked into the house, up the quiet stairs, and back inside our flat. I filled two Aquafina bottles with my special water, heated them in the microwave, and brought them back outside. They steamed in my hands as if they were alive.

Shelly's automatic window groaned under the strain of the ice. She gave it a few ups-and-downs, but only managed to crack it open about an inch. "When are you going to talk to me about this?" she asked.

"There's nothing to talk about," I said, and poured the first bottle thoroughly over the first square of cement. The water moved slow and thick, like blood. I tried to keep it even, like the website instructed, but gravity had its own plan, pooling most of it on one side. I watched the second bottle's contents ooze across the second square, then tossed both empties in the back of the car, hopped in and shut the door.

"If you don't trust me, this isn't going to work," she said.

"I told you I believe you."

"But you don't trust me."

The surface of the freshly poured water flash-froze, an illusion of permanence.

"Let's go," I said.

"We shouldn't."

"We'll be late for the party," I said, and clapped my hands together.

She put the car in reverse and slowly let her foot off the gas, doing her best to concentrate.

We drove down a lonely stretch of County Trunk UU, nothing but frozen fields on either side of us, glowing blue under the moonlight. I enjoyed the quietude, the stillness even as we were in motion.

"Look, you can see the planet Weenus," Shelly said.

I didn't laugh. Shelly and I met in a college class called Geology of the Planets. Our professor had a thick German accent and would mispronounce words. It was one of our first shared jokes.

"Were we supposed to bring something to the party?" I asked.

"Just ourselves."

I looked up at Venus, studied its turquoise light. I thought: how could anything be so beautiful from so far away, when up close it was pure chaos?

I thought of that first week in class, how much Shelly and I studied just for an excuse to spend time together, how we'd listened to every word of our professor's booming voice. "Wulcanism!" the prof roared the first day of class, "is the primary geological function on the planet Weenus." He had massive hairy eyebrows that would rise when he wanted us to take special note. "Ven vee talk about massive wiolent change, Weenus is the place things really happen." Chuckles rippled through the lecture hall. "Wulcanoes. Fire. Gasses. But ven vee discuss more lethargic geological formations, let's talk about Earth and her glaciers. Ice and snow and dirt, slowly moving and grinding against itself, for centuries, millenniums." He raised his mono-brow high. "Compared to Weenus, this glacial geology is a slow and painful way for a planet to form."

I might have learned more in that first week of class than in any other class I'd ever taken. And after Shelly and I fell in love, I believe we skipped more classes than ever before. I was head over heels, amazed at the new energy within me. Like a tiny sun, I shed light on everything in close proximity.

As we reached the end of County Trunk UU, Shelly turned into the Krings' private drive. She gripped the wheel tighter as the snow and gravel crunched beneath us.

The party was warmth and laughter. Alcohol and piles of jackets. Faces red with liquor or frostbite, or both. There were smokers out on the balcony, dancers by the stereo. Greg came to the door almost immediately, and I was actually relieved to get it over with.

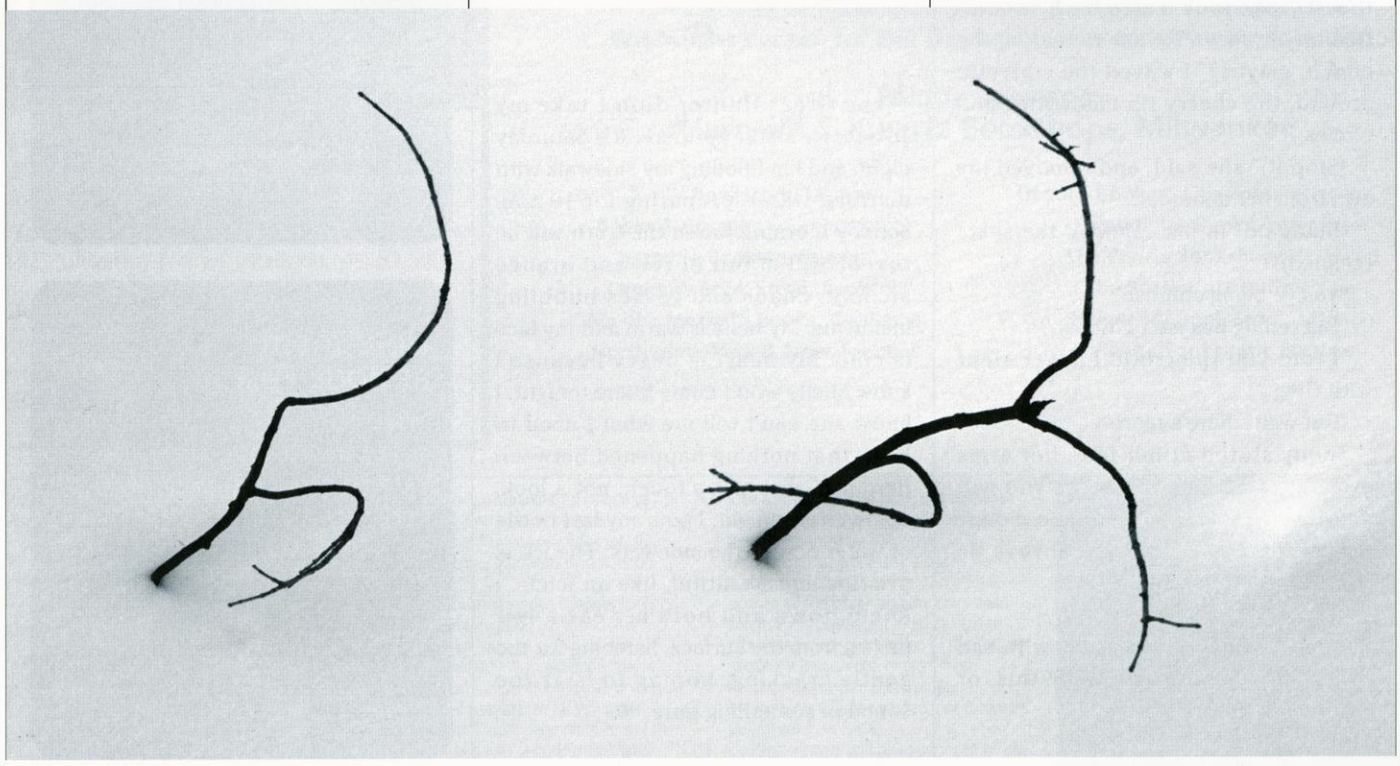
"Hey guys!" he said, with too much emphasis on the plural. He held a martini glass full of something reddish orange. He offered to take our coats. Shelly kept her eyes on me, monitored my every emotion.

"I'll keep mine, thanks," I said, "Still warming up."

He took Shelly's coat and whisked it away down a dark hallway instead of dropping it on the pile in the main room. A waitress came by with a tray of drinks. I grabbed one for Shelly and two for me.

I found out about Greg in the stupidest way, like something you see in the movies. I was looking for my keys, and rummaged through one of Shelly's coats in the process. And there was his phone number, written on a napkin. I didn't get upset right away because Greg hangs on the periphery of our circle of friends. Maybe she'd been out with the usual suspects and he was out too, and he'd written the number down and Shelly just happened to use that napkin. I just couldn't fathom any direct connection. But when I jokingly asked her about it, she froze with her mouth in an "O" shape, and then laughed too loud. She said things like "That's so weird" and "I never called him" and I've never seen her get so squirrelly. It was unnerving. But I wanted to believe her more than anything in the world.

This was about a month before we found out our house was up for sale.



Harriet had left a Post-it note on our back door to warn us. "SOLD to the highest bidder!!" the note said in big Sharpie letters. "Freeze-Dried!" another note added. Harriet's son stopped by, a frightened-looking man with only a few wisps of hair combed sideways across his head. He spoke with his hands shoved in his pockets, told us he would be taking care of the details. He explained that we could stay, but with the added tension of The Greg Incident, I wasn't sure if that was a viable option.

I stood out on the balcony and sipped orange-and-red drink number three. I found a cigarette left on the ledge and lit it. Shelly was chatting inside with the circle of friends. She was also watching my every move, and eventually decided to join me.

"Since when do you smoke?" she asked, and cuddled up next to me. The alcohol had relaxed her enough to make such a bold, affectionate move.

The alcohol had affected me too. I felt remarkably calm. I draped my arm around her. "So, you didn't sleep with him but you fooled around a little, is that it?" She took a step back, a question on her face. "Rolled around on the couch, maybe?" I waved the cigarette around, the cherry tip made little red circles.

"Stop it," she said, and removed my arm from her shoulder.

"Made out in his car with the seats reclined?"

"You're being childish."

"But telling lies isn't childish?"

"I told you the truth. I never slept with Greg."

"But wait, there's more?"

Shelly stared at her feet, her arms crossed, shaking her head. "You will never be happy," she said. "No matter what I tell you, there will always be something left unsaid for you."

"Try me."

"I have." She looked at me with sad eyes. "You can either pursue this, or you can let this go."

I pointed the cigarette at her. "You can either tell me the whole truth, or you can tell me a half-truth, which is another word for lie."

Just then, Greg bounded out on the balcony with his arm around one of the dancing girls. He ceremoniously held up a tray full of fresh cosmos and cigarettes for everyone. A real sharing kind of guy. "Oranges and vodka here to brighten up your gloomy faces," he announced.

My eyes locked with Shelly's. She grabbed a drink. I tossed my cigarette. It hissed in the snow.

I took Shelly's car home from the party because something told me she wouldn't mind. When I got back on County Trunk UU, I drove too fast because the road was too long, the sky was too big, and there was nothing to look at but the constellation Orion. I tried to turn the automatic window down, but it stuck halfway. I pushed my face into the biting night air. "Fuck off!" I yelled at Orion. "You're taking up the whole damned sky."

The Great Hunter didn't take my advice. He's still up there. It's Saturday night, and I'm flooding my sidewalk with distilled water, preparing for 10 a.m. Sunday morning, when the truth will be revealed. I'm full of red and orange alcohol, chaos and gasses bubbling inside me. My belly is warm and my face is cold. My heart is heavy because I know Shelly won't come home tonight. I know she can't tell me what I need to hear, that nothing happened between her and Greg—not a touch, not a look, not even a thought. I pour my last bottle of water across the sidewalk. The ice is pristine and beautiful, like an icicle. I kneel down and hold my ear a few inches from the surface, listening for the gentle cracking, hoping to hear the sound of something pure. ✹

Kirk Farber recently relocated to Colorado, where he works for the Pikes Peak Library District. Previously he was an active member of Milwaukee's Redbird Studio. His fiction appears online in ***Hobart*** *literary journal, and this year he completed his first novel. He holds an English degree from the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.*

Hear them at Book Fest!

The three winners of our short story and poetry contests will read at the Wisconsin Book Festival on Thursday, October 11, 5–6:30 p.m., at Avol's Bookstore, 315 W. Gorham Street, Madison.

Heads up: Our next short story contest deadline is Monday, Dec. 3. More information on the next page.

Wisconsin People & Ideas/Harry W. Schwartz Bookshops

SHORT STORY CONTEST 2008

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

Writers of Wisconsin, give us your best short stories. We will publish the top three winners in *Wisconsin People & Ideas* and invite you to read at the Wisconsin Book Festival 2008. **NEW THIS YEAR:** The first-prize winner receives a one-week stay at Edenfred*, the creative arts residence of the Terry Family Foundation. **SAME AS EVER:** The first-place winner's story will be reviewed by a notable literary agent.

**www.edenfred.org for more info*

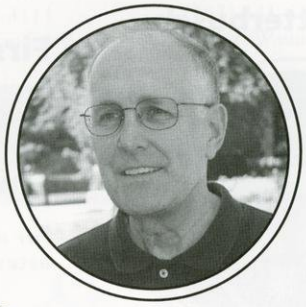
PANEL JUDGES

Timothy Walsh
Writer, poet, and contest coordinator

Marilyn Annucci
Writer, poet, and professor, UW–Whitewater

John Heasley
English teacher, Richland Center High School

LEAD JUDGE
Anthony Bukoski



CASH PRIZES

First place $500

Second place $250

Third place $100

DEADLINE:
DECEMBER 3, 2007

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

QUESTIONS?
Please see **www.wisconsinacademy.org** or e-mail editor Joan Fischer at jfischer@wisconsinacademy.org

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1. Authors must reside in or attend school in Wisconsin.
2. Stories must be between 2,500 and 5,000 words in length.
3. Authors must submit **three copies** of a story (photocopies are fine).
4. Each story must be accompanied by a **$20 entry fee** (non-Academy members) or $15 (Academy members, including those who join now) payable to *Wisconsin People & Ideas* Short Story Contest.
5. Writers may submit more than one entry, but each story must be mailed in separately with its own cover letter (see Rule 9) and entry fee.
6. Entries must be postmarked on or before **December 3**. Entries may be hand-delivered to the Wisconsin Academy (1922 University Avenue, Madison) by 4 p.m. on December 3.
7. Previously published stories (electronically or in print) are not eligible.
8. Each manuscript must be typed, double-spaced, in standard 10- or 12-point type. Each page must include the title of the story as a header. All pages must be numbered with both an individual page number and the total number of pages (e.g., Stormy Night, page 1/15, Stormy Night, page 2/15, Stormy Night, page 3/15, etc.).
9. **The author's name may not appear anywhere on the manuscript itself.** The manuscript must be accompanied by a letter bearing the story title; the author's name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address (if available); and the story word count. Every contestant must be able to provide an electronic version of the story if needed, either on disk or via e-mail.
10. Keep a copy of your manuscript. Manuscripts will be recycled, not returned. Do not send an SASE.
11. Contest winners will be announced on our website by the end of March.

wisconsin academy
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Wisconsin People & Ideas

POETRY CONTEST 2008

FEATURING THE JOHN LEHMAN POETRY AWARD (1ST PLACE)

Poets of Wisconsin, send in your finest! All three winners and 10 runners-up will be published in *Wisconsin People & Ideas* and be invited to a public reading in April, National Poetry Month. Winners also will be invited to read at the Wisconsin Book Festival 2008. **NEW THIS YEAR:** The first-prize winner receives a one-week stay at Edenfred*, the creative arts residence of the Terry Family Foundation.

**www.edenfred.org for more info*

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Bruce Dethlefsen

Kris Babe

Andrea Potos

John Lehman, contest coordinator

LEAD JUDGE
Dale Ritterbusch

CASH PRIZES

First place $500

Second place $100

Third place $50

For additional prizes, see asterisks below

DEADLINE: DECEMBER 3, 2007

SEND ENTRIES TO:

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

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Please see **www.wisconsinacademy.org** or e-mail editor Joan Fischer at jfischer@wisconsinacademy.org

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

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

1. Poets must reside or attend school in Wisconsin.
2. Poets may submit up to three poems per entry. No poem may be longer than one page.
3. Each entry must be accompanied by an **entry fee of $10** (non-Academy members) or $8 (Academy members, including those who join now) payable to the *Wisconsin People & Ideas* Poetry Contest.
4. A poet may enter more than one submission of up to three poems each, but additional submissions must be accompanied by a separate entry fee and cover letter. (See Rule 7.)
5. Contest deadline is December 3. Entries may be hand-delivered to the Wisconsin Academy (1922 University Avenue, Madison) by 4 p.m. on December 3. Entries postmarked after the deadline will not be considered and the entry fee will be retained to cover handling.
6. Previously published poems (in print or electronically) are not eligible. All work must be original. Any style or theme is welcome.
7. The poet's name or address may not appear anywhere on the poems. Poems must be accompanied by a cover letter bearing the poem title/s, the poet's name, address, telephone number, and e-mail address (if available).
8. Keep a copy of your poems. Entries will be recycled, not returned. Do not send an SASE.
9. Contest winners will be announced on our website (www.wisconsinacademy.org) and notified by the end of February 2008. Winning poetry will be published in the spring 2008 issue of *Wisconsin People & Ideas,* which appears at the end of March, in time for National Poetry Month (April).

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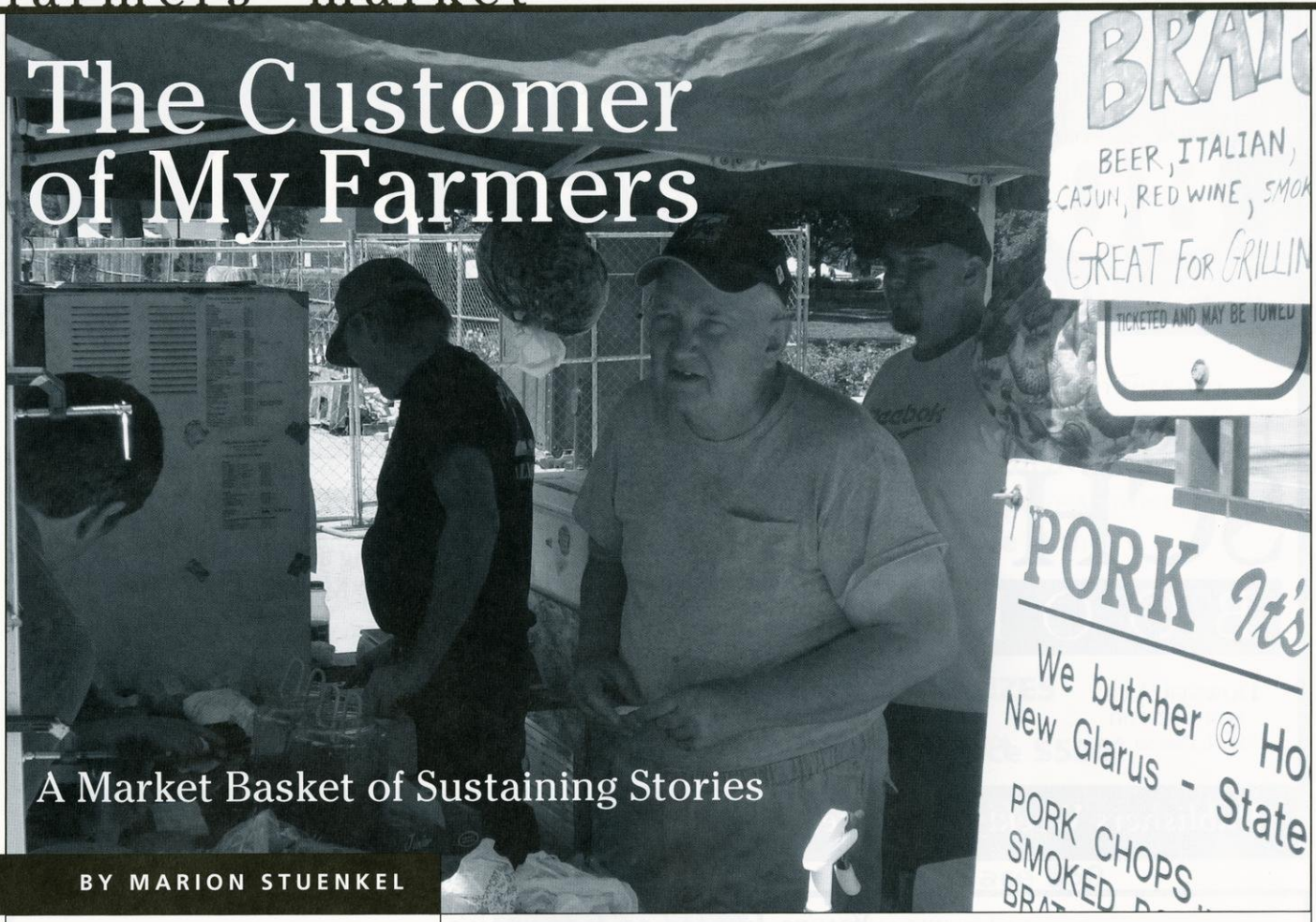
The Customer of My Farmers

A Market Basket of Sustaining Stories

BY MARION STUENKEL



John Carr, of Pecatonica Valley Farms (center), with Travis Carr (right) and Ray Murphy (left)

I buy more than fresh local food when I shop at the Dane County Farmers' Market.

REGARDING THE DIVISIONS OF MORAL GOODNESS, Cicero wrote in his classic *On the Good Life*: "The first is the ability to distinguish truth from falsity, and to understand the relationship between one phenomenon and another and the causes and consequences of each one. The second category is the ability to restrain the passions. And the third is to behave considerately and understandingly in our associations with other people."

The market basket I carry to the Dane County Farmers' Market is filled on Saturdays with the food and stories of farmers. I believe the experiences we share are representative of ordinary people around the world, and that whichever way my community goes, so go international communities, sooner or later. We create the reality of the future of farming in Wisconsin by the choices we make today from what we glean from our stories.

At the summer market my beef is from Jim and Rebecca Goodman. At the winter market I buy Marr's beef. Not long ago the Marr family traveled to Normandy, France, where half a century ago men killed one another for land (Hitler's "living space"). The Marrs journeyed to honor an uncle who lies there in St. James Cemetery. Jim and Rebecca Goodman went to Cancun, Mexico, to celebrate their 25th wedding anniversary by protesting the World Trade

Organization and mourned the death of the South Korean farmer who sacrificed himself by immolation on the gate between the dealmakers and those broken by the deals. My blood and bones are sustained by these farmers' produce; my heart, mind, and choices are nourished by their stories.

All year I buy eggs, chicken, bacon, and pork chops from Wade and Mary Carr and family. Pecatonica Valley Farms' turkey upstages our Thanksgiving table. Their sausages added to squash soup provide cold-weather fare for guests. At Christmas I make New Mexican posole and biscochitos with their pork roast and lard. Wade Carr often wears a chicken hat, but the twinkle in his eye turns to flint sparks as he tells what they fed him during a hospital stay in Flagstaff, Arizona: "Apple juice from China! I know they have apple trees nearer to northern Arizona than that. Wisconsin has apples for sure!"

Carr called a local HMO a while back about the cost of health insurance premiums. Carr insures all his farm workers, not just those who are family members. Being a responsible employer and supporting his local community are core values for him. The woman from the HMO told him to fire everyone and hire only workers who are around 20 years of age. What kind of man would do that? Outraged, he tells of the frequent calls from temporary agencies, now euphemistically called staffing services, who offer workers for so little a day that he knows they aren't getting a fair wage, let alone health insurance. Carr told me his very ill rural neighbor died. The community had been raising money because the lifetime cap on her insurance was reached. My lifetime health insurance cap is $2 million! The farm, in her family for well over a century, was in jeopardy. Carr relates that three days after her death her husband received a bill of $1,000,007.

"Don't you think that was stressful?" he asks me.

Yes, I do. Something is wrong, out of balance, way out of proportion. What happened to the doctor who took a chicken in trade for his skill if too many rainy days came too quickly and cash savings were exhausted? He's gone, along with the people who sold seed and farm equipment. Gone with the rural teacher, the minister, the local journalist and newspaper editor. The canning factory left the market town. The school is consolidated. The library is understaffed. The movie theatre, with stars painted on the ceiling, is boarded over. The town revival antique stores have reproductions from China. The real antiques went long ago to collectors who have nothing to stop for. They can get anything from anywhere at any time. Gone with the neighborly restaurant where one gathered on a Saturday night or after Sunday services to have

Jerry (left) and Jeremy Marr, of Marr Family Farm

chicken and dumplings and homemade pie. Traveling through rural small towns can be distressing. The one near my mom's farm almost resembles a ghost town.

But Carr and I are not in despair because we have a relationship. A name, a face, a heart, and a mind, not anything from anywhere at any time. Madison, Wisconsin, is where. Saturday mornings are the time, and the things of which I avail myself are healthy food and stories. I go to market in the role of customer of a farmer. A few years ago I asked if it was safe to eat his hens' eggs raw. Carr said, "I let my grandkids." So my grandkids lick cookie dough, too. My daughter-in-law can have eggs sunny-side up here as well as at her mother's home in Venezuela. I depend upon him for healthy food and he depends upon me to buy it. We both depend upon each other for our stories, which inform and entertain. Don't get him started on the November day they had to drive me home after market with my turkey, or when I might have the job protecting pig posteriors. We depend on one another.

Bill Warner and Judy and Hannah Hageman live on Snug Haven Farm and grow the spinach I eat. They wash the leaves in the same good water they drink. Knowing the farmers who grow my food is the ultimate in safety. Judy writes a weekly e-mail newsletter for the Dane County Farmers' Market. The last feature is a personal note about something that happened on the farm that week. It might be about baby birds or her love of the oaks or what happened when schoolchildren visited. I know of the 100-year-old trees sharing land with the hoop houses for the spinach. I know what she has grown and where the dirt under her fingernails comes from.

My winter potatoes come from Butter Mountain Farm. They sell potatoes with romantic names and a variety of complexions. The Mountain Rose is red inside and out. Some are purple or yellow as well as shades of brown. Some are better bakers or fryers, some better in fresh soup. Some hold up better when the soup's frozen and then thawed. Getting to know these potatoes has been like getting to know groups of people who have different crafts or skills in common. No one could ever have told me I'd get such delight out of meeting so many Mr. and Mrs. Potatoes or have a personal potato favorite. But I do. They are called Coors' Pinks. I hope I spelled that right, having only heard it. You don't have to be literate to eat. One of the sons of Butter Mountain is a talented composer and songwriter, and often he is the one who pulls out a bag and says, "Here's the pinks we have, saved 'em for ya." One time his father told me about working in the field with his son as his son created songs in his head while he labored with his hands, and how good that was. To come to Coors' Pinks entailed numerous conversations at market about my energy source (Would I use electric range top or my solar oven?), recipe, and result. I don't have to peel the potatoes. I don't have to worry about them being irradiated. And my food dollar is sustaining a composer.

Some years the crop from Hickory Nut Heaven is big. Bob and Audrey Biersach will tell me if it's spotty this year. We discuss the weather to tell the future or read the past. Certainly we are not scientific. I suppose if rainfall and sunlight patterns, wind, and moonlight were analyzed we'd not be in suspense, but perhaps we wouldn't then be so grateful. The squirrels know best how to plant a hickory tree so that enough are left for them to meet their need to eat and store. The hickory nut crop is more of a gathering venture, dependent on Mother Nature, a reminder of the bounty of the earth if a crop is big. When a crop is scarce, it's a reminder of the precariousness of it all. Winter evenings the family Biersach is shucking and picking.

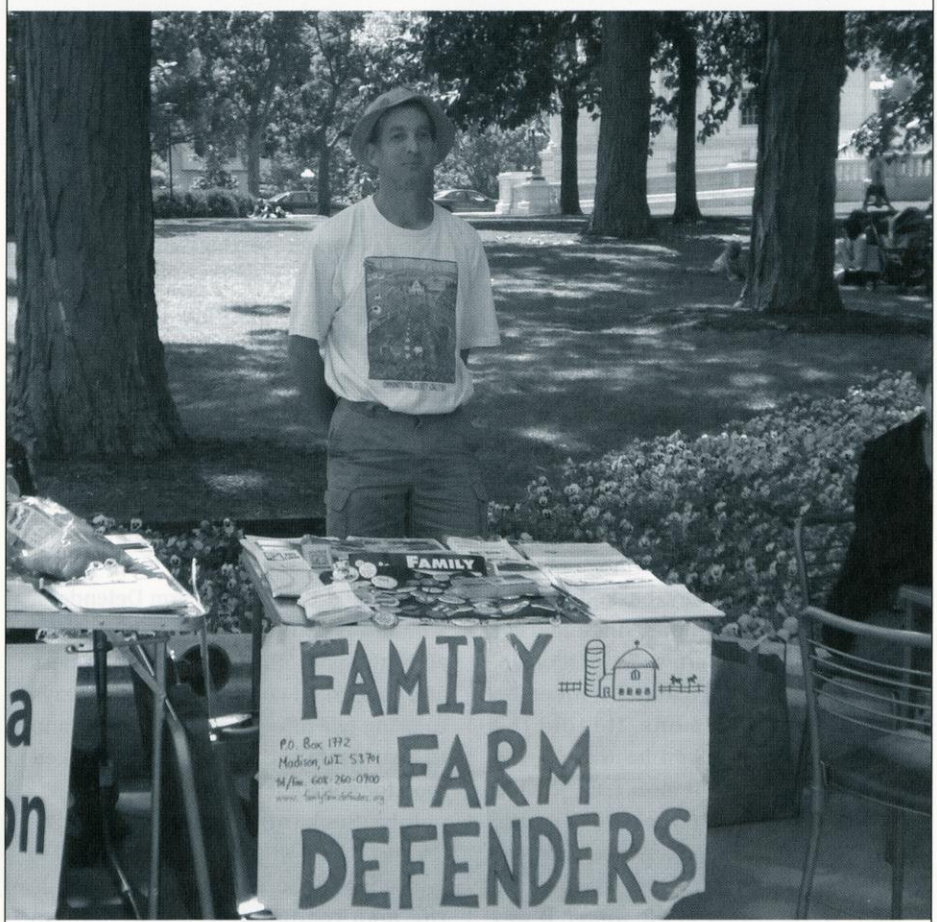
One farmer at the market has butternuts, but they go fast because most of the butternut trees in Wisconsin succumbed to a fungus some years ago. Not his tree. Silvan F. Disch is a gnarled man getting short with age, looking something like a Swedish tomte. He is proud of the butternut tree on his farm, a survivor. A resistant tree, old but still fruitful. Why did that tree survive? The old farmer smiles shyly at me, knowing that the answer will remain a mystery. It is enough that it is so, and we are thankful.

Dale Marsden in his signature skep hat.

There is a fine sense of anticipation when buying locally harvested food. Looking forward to May for morels, June for strawberries, and August for blueberries is a yearly reminder of childhood because though I was raised in the city, both my parents had farm roots. The wait for the first sweet corn to be trucked to Vanlaten's Farm Stand was dramatic, like waiting for Christmas candy. There must be a fable about what happens when a few people have anything they want to eat in seemingly unlimited amounts. About what happens when the cycles of life are hidden by overproduction, when the limits of resources are ignored by turning deserts into gardens with diverted water, when people who once lived in abundance go hungry, a fable about acquisition gone amok. I am happy to be in tune with the seasons again.

I get to anticipate freshly made maple sugar and syrup from Krause Farms in the spring. Helmuth and Ruth are vendors only at the summer Market on the Capitol Square. They run out of maple products by Christmas and wait for the sap to run again in the spring to begin anew. Lent comes at the time of the year in the Northern Hemisphere when fresh food is not locally abundant. I feel a sense of unity with my forebears as I conserve those last servings of maple syrup. How good it is to slather maple syrup all over griddle cakes again in April.

And knowing your farmer means you can make direct special requests. Since I now exert effort to purchase only local food I have been converting treasured recipes using everything from cane sugar to maple sugar. I asked Ruth Krause for a confectioners' grind. She had some for me the next market Saturday. Another time I asked for squash blossoms from a woman who sells vegetables at the summer market. The next week there they were, so I was able to fry some as my mother did and dry some for thickening winter soups. That trick I learned at the Wisconsin Historical Society's display on traditional Native American lifestyles. During winter market, when crafts can be



(Above) John Peck, of Family Farm Defenders

(Below) Helmuth and Ruth Krause of Krause Farms

marketed, the woman and her daughter sell beautiful creations of dried flowers. I gave a Christmas tree made of dried roses to my daughter-in-law.

I buy honey, beeswax, and candles from Dale Marsden. At Christmas his votive candles glow in the luminarias I set before my home. Marsden wears a skep hat; a skep is a beehive made from straw, wicker, or rope. One Saturday last March a friend and I went to the Winter Farmers' Market for breakfast and shopping. On Marsden's table I saw a small basket containing three lemons next to his candles and honey. I asked how he could be selling lemons since Market produce has to be grown in Wisconsin. He was surprised I had not noticed he sometimes has lemons. He told the following story: When he was 15, his sister gave him a lemon tree for his birthday. It stood 10 inches tall in the pot. He put it outside in the summer for the bees and brought it inside to a sunny warm corner in the winter. It was several years before it bore flowers and then lemons. Now bountiful fruit results from the pollinated flowers. He went to Vietnam, and when he returned from the war he found the lemon tree in bone-dry earth. It had been neglected in his mother's dark basement the entire time he'd been gone. Lovingly he gave it water and brought it up into the sunlight. It revived, a very hardy tree now some 45 years old.

My grandson and I planted a Marsden lemon tree seed in soil we gathered from a log decaying in the little woods by the Yahara River that my apartment overlooks. Our planter was an eggshell from the Pecatonica Valley Farms eggs we had for breakfast. Marsden gave me a recipe for lemon meringue pie that my granddaughter and I followed using ingredients purchased from the Farmers' Market.

The Farmers' Market on the Square has table displays, too, calling for political and social action or sometimes simply advertising local arts performances. Years ago I stopped at the Family Farm Defenders table and met John Peck. I had inherited a one-sixth portion in my mother's family farm. During a visit to my farm I found the earth rock hard between the rows of corn and soybean plants. My mother used to delight herself by picking up a handful of soil, letting it run through her fingers, saying to me, "Look, Marion, such good earth, so friable!" Not any more. During her long decline with Alzheimer's, mom worried over her earth, reminding me, "They don't make that stuff anymore." She was in the minority in a joint tenancy of relatives who were happy with the way the farm manager cash rented, mining the soil for a dependable yearly profit. I'm sure my mom would have joined the Family Farm Defenders, which describes itself as "a nonprofit activist organization made up of farmers and concerned consumers seeking ways to bring fair prices back to farmers and to insure safe and sustainably produced food for consumers."

John Peck introduced me to dairy farmer John Kinsman from LaValle, Wisconsin. John Kinsman apparently is the man responsible for Wisconsin consumers and then the world knowing about rBGH, Monsanto's genetically engineered bovine growth hormone, being injected into cows to increase milk production.

John Kinsman has many stories, but the one he heard from an "untouchable" of India is very sad. This story illustrates the destruction of the culture in agriculture by the herbicides marketed by corporate agribusiness. The Indian farmed in the untouchable community using saved seed of a grain as humble as his people, long presumed to be at the bottom of the Indian caste system. Their traditional method of sowing, cultivating, and harvesting was thousands of years old when an herbicide was introduced not long ago. Tragically, the "weed" that was killed had provided the nourishment for a group even lower than the untouchables, who gathered their harvest of "weeds" among the untouchables' grain crop. An ancient way of living was destroyed in a season. Those people are gone. Around Wisconsin and around the world farm communities are suffering from international trade policies that expend local farmers to benefit corporate agribusiness.

I learn from the stories the farmers tell as I fill my market basket. Food is not just about supplying bodies with energy and pleasure. The customs involving agriculture determine issues of economic and social justice. Farm workers should earn a living wage. Every customer in a community should have means and access to sufficient safe and nutritious food. The relationship between farmers and market town is one of people knowing and caring for one another. Human warmth and relationships with history strengthen people and save the land. I am devoted to a butternut tree and generations of hens I will never meet, but I know their stewards. I am humble before the awesome power of community when individuals love land, its bounty, its cycles, and one another. ✺

Marion Stuenkel, a retired civil servant with the state of Wisconsin, is currently a Simple Living War Tax Resister in Madison. As a daughter, mother, and grandmother loving people, earth, and ideas, she believes that individual choices nurture economic and social justice.

You can learn more about the Dane County Farmers' Market at www.madfarmmkt.org.

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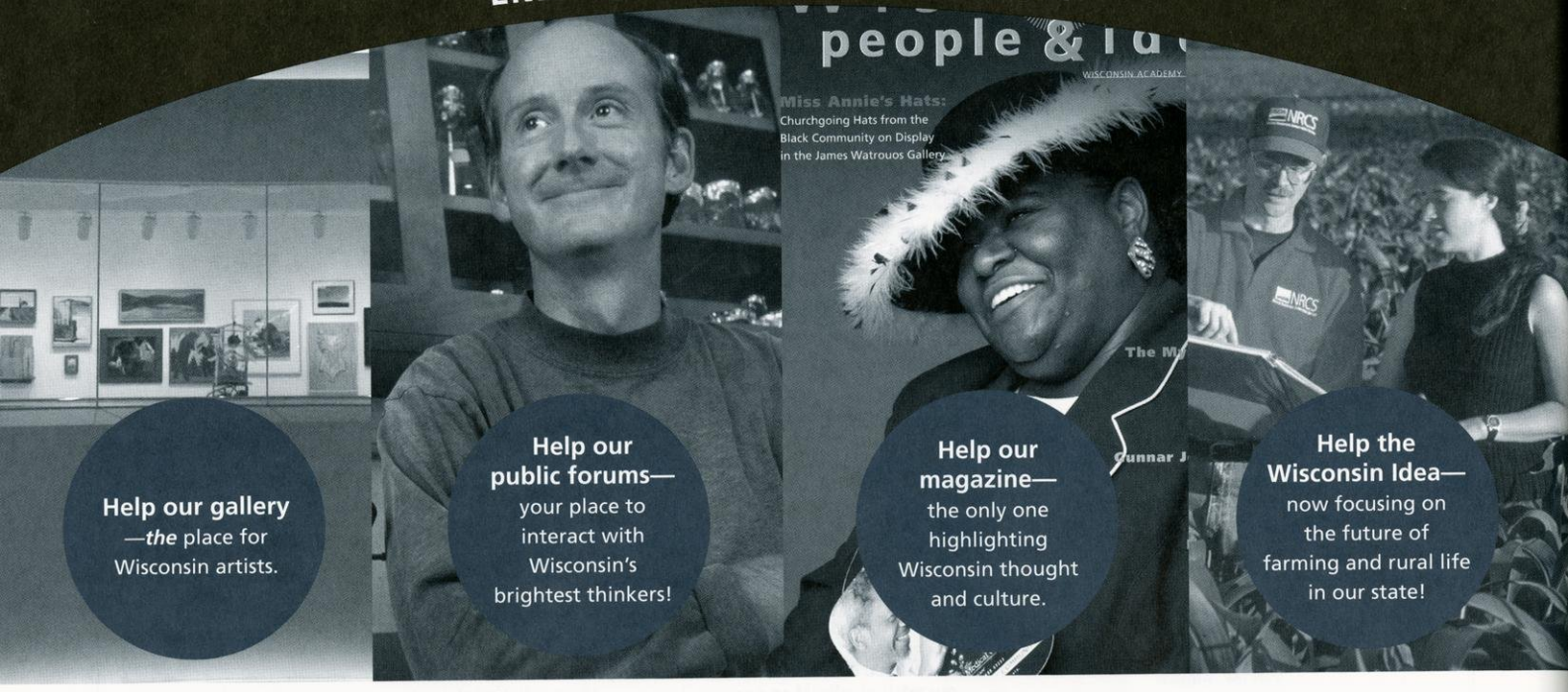

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The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters connects people and ideas from all areas of knowledge and all walks of life to celebrate thought, culture, and nature in our state and help solve our common problems. We offer solid information straight from the source in all fields of human inquiry and provide a community where citizens and experts can exchange ideas.

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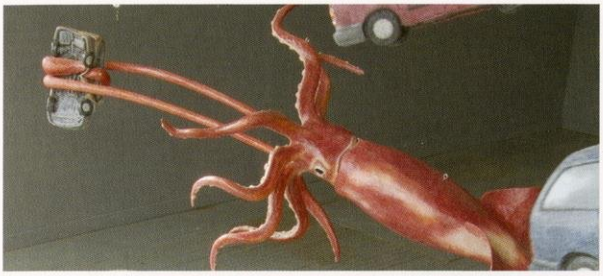


Jeremy Wolf, *Picking Off a Windstar,* 2006

Jeremy Wolf: All Natural

Through October 14

Milwaukee artist Jeremy Wolf has filled the James Watrous Gallery with an installation of both moving and static sculptures depicting animals interacting with human-made objects such as cars and submarines. Wolf's large-scale sculptures are made almost entirely out of paper.

Aaron Bohrod: A Life and Still Life

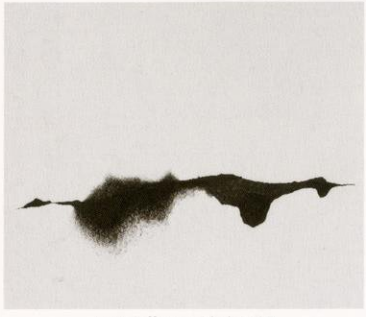
October 30–December 30

Opening reception Friday, November 2, 5:30-7:30 pm
Gallery talk by Robert Cozzolino begins at 6:30 pm
Lecture by Tom Lidtke Sunday, November 18, 2 pm

This exhibition explores the diversity and evolution of Aaron Bohrod's art using paintings, photographs, objects, and ephemera drawn from the archives of the Bohrod family and other local collections. One of Wisconsin's most important artists, Bohrod is represented in many public and private collections. This exhibition reviewing his varied and colorful career coincides with what would have been Bohrod's 100th birthday on November 21, 2007.

Aaron Bohrod, *Oakdale Avenue at Night* (1942)

Kim Cridler, *Night 2,* 2005



Amy Ruffo, *Untitled,* 2005

Kim Cridler and Amy Ruffo

Side-by-side solo exhibitions

January 15–February 24, 2008

Opening reception Friday, January 18, 5:30–7:30 pm
Artists' talks begin at 6:30 pm

Kim Cridler builds monumental grid-like steel sculptures that often reference iconic vessel forms. Cridler then adds sensuous detail to these vessels using materials such as beeswax and hair. Amy Ruffo's spare, elegant graphite and ink drawings explore the character of line. Ruffo's semi-abstract works are based on her photographs of landscape.

More information at www.wisconsinacademy.org

***Self-Portrait (The Art of Painting),* by Aaron Bohrod, 1958, 12 x 9 inches**

A profile of the artist accompanies an upcoming Wisconsin Academy exhibition honoring Bohrod's centennial.

Price: $5

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