

Wisconsin Academy review. Volume 49, Number 2 Spring 2003

Madison, Wisconsin: Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, Spring 2003

<https://digital.library.wisc.edu/1711.dl/M7VWMQPYN447R8P>

<http://rightsstatements.org/vocab/InC/1.0/>

The libraries provide public access to a wide range of material, including online exhibits, digitized collections, archival finding aids, our catalog, online articles, and a growing range of materials in many media.

When possible, we provide rights information in catalog records, finding aids, and other metadata that accompanies collections or items. However, it is always the user's obligation to evaluate copyright and rights issues in light of their own use.

wisconsin academy review

THE MAGAZINE OF WISCONSIN THOUGHT AND CULTURE

Shakin' Up Circus World
with Larry Fisher

Nellie McKay on
The Souls of Black Folk
by W. E. B. Du Bois

The Not-So-Mad
Scientist
Bassam Shakhashiri

POETRY SPECIAL!

Statewide Poetry
Contest Winners

Poets Celebrate
Waters of Wisconsin

Off the Beaten Path:
Readers Tell Their Tales

Price: \$5



New Circus World director
Larry Fisher and a couple
of clowns (they're teachers!)

Photo by John Urban

contents

spring 2003

features



Circus World's new education and outreach efforts are being run by a couple of clowns.

Story on page 25.

The *Wisconsin Academy Review* (ISSN 0512-1175) is published quarterly by the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, 1922 University Avenue, Madison, WI 53726. All correspondence, orders, manuscripts, and change-of-address information should be sent to this address. The *Wisconsin Academy Review* is distributed free of charge to Wisconsin Academy members. For information about joining, see page 9, call 608/263-1692, or visit the Wisconsin Academy website: www.wisconsinacademy.org

Reproduction in whole or in part without written permission is prohibited. Copyright © 2003 by the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters. All rights reserved. Periodicals postage is paid at Madison.

Wisconsin Academy Review

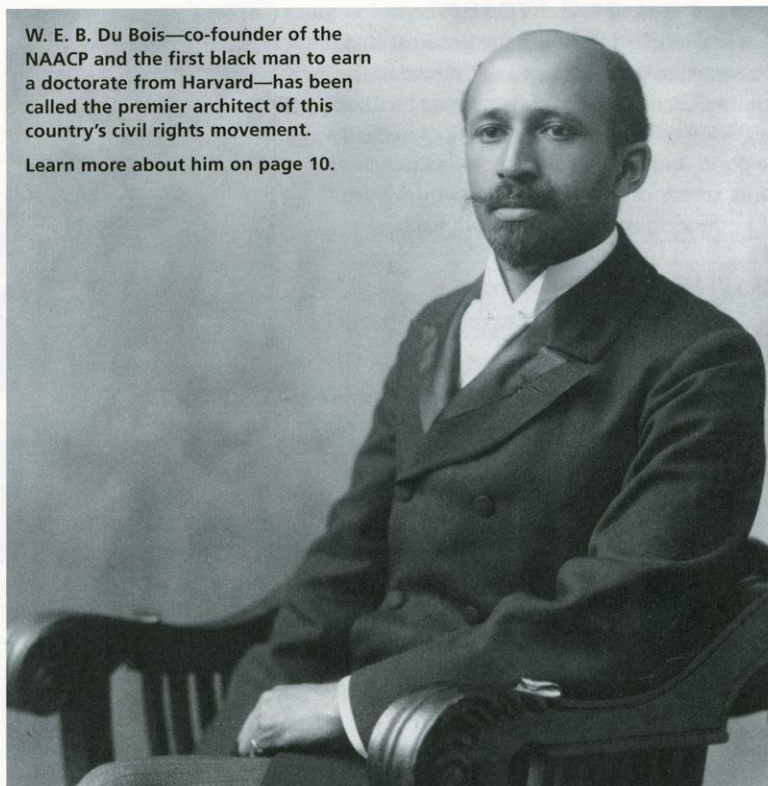
Robert G. Lange, Publisher
Joan Fischer, Editor
Dean Bakopoulos, Literary Editor
John Lehman, Poetry Editor
John Huston, Art Director
Printed by Park Printing House, Ltd.

Editorial Advisory Committee

Paul DeMain, Hayward
Teresa Elguezabal, Madison
Paul Hayes, Cedarburg
Art Hove, Madison
Marie Kohler, Milwaukee
Nellie Y. McKay, Madison

- 10 W. E. B. DU BOIS: MAN OF LETTERS, MAN OF DEEDS**
Nellie Y. McKay on the meaning of Du Bois' work as *The Souls of Black Folk* turns 100. Plus, information about a Du Bois Week this April.
- 16 THE DAMS OF CEDARBURG**
Dam removal is all the rage—but it isn't always right. Paul G. Hayes makes a case for preservation.
- 19 SCIENCE FOR THE PEOPLE**
If you think science is boring, you've never witnessed a chemistry show by Bassam Z. Shakhshiri. The professor himself describes the method behind his "madness." Photos by Wolfgang Hoffmann.
- 25 SHAKIN' UP CIRCUS WORLD**
Circus World's new director, Larry Fisher, is dusting off and buffing up one of Wisconsin's great cultural treasures. Interview by Joan Fischer.
- 33 POETRY SPECIAL**
Read poems by our **statewide poetry contest winners** and by the poets who enlightened the Waters of Wisconsin Forum, including a piece by Wisconsin poet laureate Ellen Kort.

W. E. B. Du Bois—co-founder of the NAACP and the first black man to earn a doctorate from Harvard—has been called the premier architect of this country's civil rights movement.
Learn more about him on page 10.



Special Collections and Archives, W. E. B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst

contents

spring 2003

departments

3 EDITOR'S NOTES

4 UPFRONT

A prairie mural for the Arboretum and a web business based on Jackie Mitchard's new novel.

7 LETTERS

51 IN MY WORDS: OFF THE BEATEN PATH

An invasion of head lice, a skating adventure on thin ice, and a trip to a women's prison are all part of readers' adventures off the beaten path.

56 THE BACK PAGE

Bob Lange brings some of the best minds in Wisconsin to the back page of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*.

Past and Present

What is security? Perhaps the greatest insight into security is in the Latin definition of the word itself, from "securus," meaning "without care." Viewed positively, we think of security as a good and productive force—as peace of mind, freedom from anxiety, freedom from uncertainty, freedom from fear.

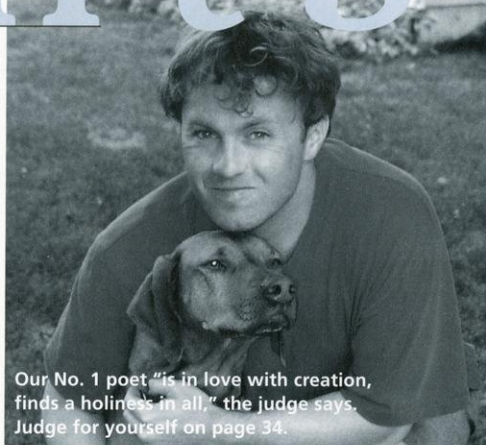
—David J. Behling, writing in the summer 1967 issue of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*.



The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters provides a place where people who care about culture, nature, and the problems of our times can gather for fruitful discourse and meaningful action. Together, we help create a thinking community.

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

Your membership is important to us. Find out how to join on page 9.



Our No. 1 poet "is in love with creation, finds a holiness in all," the judge says. Judge for yourself on page 34.

Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters

Officers of the Council

President: Terry Haller

President Elect: James S. Haney

Immediate Past President: Mary Lynne Donohue

Vice President of Sciences: Millard Susman

Vice President of Arts: Ruth DeYoung Kohler

Vice President of Letters: Paul G. Hayes

Treasurer: Gerd Zoller

Secretary: Frederick Kessler

Councilors-at-Large

Sandra Adell

Jennifer Bakke

Paula Bonner

Roger Bowen

Susan Brant

James Crow

Carol Cullen

Michael Dombek

Robert Goodman

Doug Hastad

Linda Honold

George Kaiser

Carol Knox

John Mielke

Fabu Mogaka

Ann Peckham

Calvin Potter

Allen Taylor

William Walters

Rolf Wegenke

Councilor-at-Large Emeritus: John Thomson

Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters

Officers of the Foundation

President: Thomas Boldt

Treasurer: Daniel Gelatt

Secretary: Nancy Noeske

Founder: Ira Baldwin

Directors

Todd Berry

Marian Bolz

Ody Fish

Gerald Viste

Directors Emeriti

George Parker

Martha Peterson

The *Wisconsin Academy Review* wishes to thank Bruce Jacobs for his generous support.

But seriously ...



One thing I love about Wisconsin weather—okay, one of the very few things I love about Wisconsin weather—is the absolute giddiness brought on by spring's approach. We are all crazy to get outside and moving, to cast off our parkas and be warmed by the sun. It's enough to make me put on a clown suit. It's enough to make me

break out in poetry.

Luckily I have left this last item to the experts. Consider this edition our contribution to National Poetry Month (April, if you didn't know). And I believe we do our state proud. Our lead judge, Doug Flaherty, whose 30 years of poetry assessment includes national contests, had a hard time picking three winners from 345 entries by poets all over Wisconsin. "I am humbled into saying that judging winners in this statewide contest was the most challenging of tasks," he says. "I salute the poetic skill and sensitivity of the women and men poets of Wisconsin."

You may recognize a familiar face among the winners. Eleanor Stanford, of Madison, won third place, same as last year. You know you're really good if you win two years running in a blind competition of 300-plus entries with a completely different panel of judges. Congratulations, Eleanor.

We're also pleased to present "poetry on water," written by the poets who shared their work at the Wisconsin Academy's Waters of Wisconsin Forum last October. Many of the poems celebrate Wisconsin's waters; some of them are heartbreaking (read "Trust" by Ken Haynes on page 44). All of them bring an attitude to poetry best expressed by our first-place contest winner, Temple Cone: "If we come, electric with life, to the words, then we can live in bodies, passions, and thoughts (both our own and others') in ways we've never known before."

IT'S THE YEAR OF WATER—YOW!

A word of warning about 2003—plan to get wet. The first result of the Waters of Wisconsin initiative was to prompt two governors—from opposing political parties—to declare 2003 Wisconsin's Year of Water. This collaborative effort already has citizens and water groups around the state planning and holding a wide variety of activities. Events range from the serious—discussions about such issues as water privatization and public health concerns about contamination—to activities that

add fun to the mix, like group paddling trips, volunteer clean-ups, and restoration projects. Events this spring include a Clean Up Day and River Rally in the Fox River/Green Bay area on April 19; a First Annual Wisconsin Groundwater Festival May 9–10 in Stevens Point; and a Legend Lake Fair on May 3.

Where can you learn more? At the Year of Water website, www.wisconsinyearofwater.org, sponsored by the Wisconsin Academy and Wisconsin's Environmental Decade. There you can find a complete calendar of YOW events and other information pertaining to the Year of Water. Jump on in!

BULLY FOR YOU

Have you (or has someone you love) ever been bullied? Tell us about it. In this edition you'll find the second installment of "In My Words," a department of reader anecdotes on preassigned topics. This quarter we've got "Off the Beaten Path," in which readers describe any experience that took them out of their normal realm (one reader describes a household battle with head lice). For the summer issue, we'd like to present your stories about bullies. They can be anguished, humorous, or anything in between. Nor are you limited to tales from childhood (bullies come in all ages). A few people have told me that, to their eternal shame, they themselves were usually the bullies. What drove you to it? Please submit your entries—600 words maximum—by May 1. See page 55 for details.

FELLOWS AMONG US

What do James Crow, Paul Hayes, and Nellie McKay have in common?

Their writing may be found in this issue—and they're all Fellows of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters. Our executive director, Bob Lange, has plans to make our Fellows—men and women of extraordinary achievement in their fields—part of every edition. Read his column on page 56 to learn more.

Joan Fischer
joanfischer@wisc.edu
608/263-1692 ext. 16

FROM RUSSIA WITH LOVE

The UW Arboretum in Madison will soon have its first-ever theater, featuring murals by a Russian painter who is renowned for his evocative, naturally accurate re-creations of the American prairie.

Victor Bakhtin, who has lived in Wisconsin for nearly 10 years, is already painting the murals in his Sauk Prairie studio. The murals will be four feet tall and total 24 feet long, lining the 30-seat theater, which opens this summer as a visitor orientation and meeting space.

Because the Arboretum engages in prairie restoration, the subject was a natural fit. And Bakhtin, an artist and book designer/illustrator with more than 70 books to his credit in his native country, had drawn director Greg Armstrong's attention with a painting depicting the lost Sauk Prairie. Bakhtin painted the piece as part of an ultimately successful effort to bring prairie restoration to some areas of the former Badger Army Ammunition Plant site.

"His representation of the prairie plants and animals was first-rate, and his capturing of the feel of the prairie was excellent," says Armstrong. "I wanted someone who could capture the feel of the native lands of Wisconsin and be accurate about it."

Bakhtin was born and raised in Siberia, far from the landscape he so lovingly renders. He relishes the artistic challenge.

"It's fun to be a Russian artist for this project; it's exciting to show what you never have seen, trying to depict the American history from the glacier period up to the future, and trying to stay still a responsible artist," says Bakhtin. "I do my best to be an honest historical interpreter." Bakhtin researched his topic carefully in museums and also spent much time talking to Native Americans. Previous projects were also helpful. Years



ago he helped make films about cranes with the International Crane Foundation; in fact, ICF founder George Archibald first encouraged Bakhtin to take up nature painting.

In keeping with the Arboretum's mission, the murals will show a chronological sequence of human relationships with the land. Beginning at the end of the Wisconsin Glacier, the murals take the viewer through the development of Native American culture, the European settlers' rapid conversion of the land for agriculture and urban development, and culminate in the idea of ecological restoration and the return of land to environmental health.

In some ways, that sequence comes full circle, acknowledges Bakhtin.

"I like the very idea of showing how people, using their environment, successfully spoiled it, and how it came to the necessity of changing their mentality in order to survive," says Bakhtin.



Victor Bakhtin at work, shown here with his wife, Maya.





YEAR-ROUND BABY GIFTS



We've all heard of novels that become hit movies. Novels that become hit businesses are much more unusual—but trust writer Jackie Mitchard to come up with a winning idea.

It all started when Mitchard was dreaming up an occupation for a character in a new novel. She decided the character would own a business called Twelve Times Blessed, an Internet-based shop (and also the book's title) that would deliver a gift set for babies each month during the baby's entire first year. The gifts would be seasonally and developmentally appropriate and include comfort items for parents as well. Artful packaging would be part of the gift. A quilted treasure chest bag, for example, would hold the presents, but also be useful for years to come as the child's toy tote.

The idea was way too good to remain fiction, decided some old friends of Mitchard's. Jeanine Piscotti and Rebecca Johnson hopped to the task with plans to open www.twelvetimesblessed.com in March. A year of blessings—12 gift packages—will cost \$500 to \$600, says Johnson. "We want to keep it affordable," she notes. "People can pool together and offer it as a group gift." All products will be environmentally friendly and of high quality, Johnson promises. An example: one set includes a CD of jazz lullabies featuring Wisconsin-based musicians Ben Sidran and Kitt Reuter-Foss.



We talked with Mitchard about the venture she inspired.

How did you come up with this?

My husband thought of it. We were looking for a baby gift on the 'net and found that they were all the same—the white bear, the little shirt, the rattle—and he said, "What about bigger babies? And what about the parents? They're the ones staying up all night." And I thought, yeah, what about that? Wouldn't it be great if the whole first year was a celebration of the new person's life? And so I had [book character] True Dickinson say that.

How did it become reality?

One of my best friends from childhood is an artist and an actor. She also has MS. She wanted a business she could do that would not require walking a long way, that she could do with her brains and her fingers. She got together with some other friends—the link being

me—and they all contributed their various kinds of expertise, which turned out to be amazing. I didn't actually think they could do what True did, such as making the packaging part of the gift—a bath bag with a baby bathing suit in it—but they have.

Will you be involved with the business in any way?

I look at the pretty things and say, "Oh my, I should have another baby!"

How does it feel to give birth to a business?

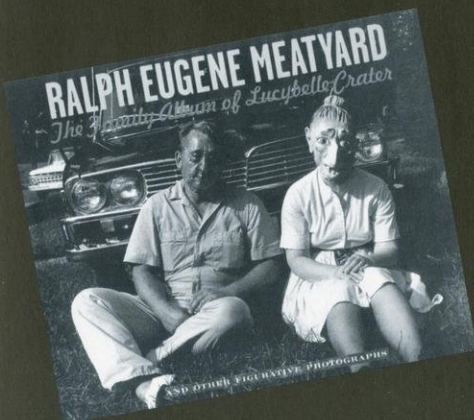
I imagine that it feels like giving birth to a book, laborious and joyful, interesting despite pain.

You've raised about a half-dozen babies, so presumably you're an expert. What items do new parents absolutely, positively need?

Well, they need candles. To soothe them when they have to stay awake all night, so you can read without waking up the baby. They need lotion so they can feel soft, like the baby, lotion that smells good, because not everything about a baby smells good. And music. Ben's music is absolutely enthralling, and Kitt Foss, another dear friend, is singing "Somewhere Over the Rainbow." What could be better? These are jazz lullabies. For cool kids, I guess.

BEYOND BIZARRE

Many people find them weird, disturbing, even grotesque. Photographer Ralph Eugene Meatyard is best known for black-and-white portraits of men, women, and children who look normal from the neck down, but are wearing hideous rubber masks over their heads. Madison photographer and writer James Rhem is one of the world's leading experts on Meatyard, and recently edited the U.S. version of a book he'd published in France: *Ralph Eugene Meatyard: The Family Album of Lucybelle Crater* (Distributed Art Publishers, \$45). Rhem and other Meatyard devotees see vision and beauty in the apparently bizarre portraits. "Everything he did, he did with genius. He was one of the most powerfully original visual thinkers of this century," says Rhem.



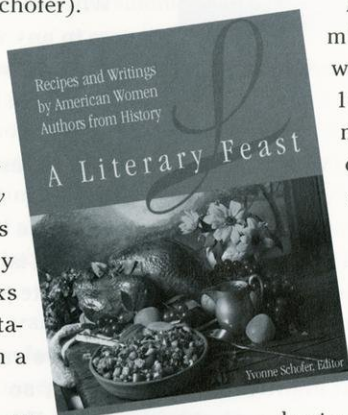
EAT HER WORDS

You may think of American cooking in the 1800s as a rustic affair. Nuts, berries, and mush on corn husks come to mind, with perhaps the occasional bit of game.

Nothing doing—especially not when the cook was also an author, demonstrates a new book, *A Literary Feast: Recipes and Writings by American Women Authors from History* (Jones Books, edited by Yvonne Schofer).

From Louisa May Alcott to Kate Douglas Wiggin, 19th-century American writers found time to describe and prepare sumptuous dishes. *A Literary Feast* collects recipes and food-oriented literary excerpts from cookbooks and novels, providing a tantalizing glimpse into life in a different age.

Think of such dishes as “Bouillon for Parties and Germans” from *Mrs. Rorer’s Philadelphia Cook Book* (1886) or “Creole Chow Chow” from *What Mrs. Fisher Knows About Old Southern Cooking* (1881).



The material was compiled from the Cairns Collection of Women Writers of the UW–Madison Memorial Library and from other cookbooks of the period by researchers Loni Hayman, Joan Jones, and Anne C. Tedeschi. *A Literary Feast* was edited by humanities bibliographer Yvonne Schofer, who oversees the Cairns Collection.

According to Schofer, middle-class women wrote copiously in the 19th century to earn money when few other options existed. Not seeing themselves as artists, they found it easy to go from one form of writing to another. “Since the readership was largely female, the bestsellers by women reflect the concerns of their audience, and describe and celebrate domestic ritual,” says Schofer.

Their efforts are still eminently cook-worthy today.

Joan’s Books = Jones Books

So she didn’t look far for a name.

“It has a nice generic ring to it, and it wasn’t taken,” explains publisher Joan Strasbaugh about Jones Books, an enterprise that realizes her lifelong dream of owning a publishing house.

Strasbaugh started Jones Books last fall after years of working in almost every area of the book business with various regional publishers, including UW Press. “I have always enjoyed the soup-to-nutness of creating a book, from discussing a project with an author to urging people to buy the end results,” she says.

While planning the Jane Austen Festival for the UW–Madison Center for the Humanities a couple of years ago, Strasbaugh noticed “a shocking void”: “I was browsing bookstores for travel guides to Austen’s world and couldn’t find a thing. Eventually I found a wonderful out-of-print book in a specialty catalog.” *In the Steps of Jane Austen*, by Anne-Marie Edwards, had been published in England. Strasbaugh bought the North American rights and is now selling it as her first Jones Book.

Since then she has acquired two more titles, a Madison restaurant guide and the literary cookbook described above. Future projects include a walking tour of Madison, a travel guide to Thomas Hardy country, and a Southern cookbook.

For more information, visit www.jonesbooks.com, e-mail info@jonesbooks.com, or call 608/236-9259.

WHO’S WHO



John Thomson

Occupation: Botanist and UW–Madison professor emeritus.

Years in Wisconsin: Born in Scotland, raised mostly in New York City, has lived in Wisconsin with his botanist/expert gardener wife, Olive, since 1944.

Claims to fame: Known as the “dean of American lichenology” for his ground-laying, comprehensive work in lichen science, which included training other lichen experts from around the country. Founded the Junior Academy of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters, which for years gave high school science students statewide an opportunity to pursue advanced projects. Has also shunned winter migration to Florida in favor of re-creating the tropics in a greenhouse at his home in Mt. Horeb.

Currently working on: At age 90, Thomson just published *The Lichens of Wisconsin* (Wisconsin State Herbarium, \$22), which for the first time in one book covers all 662 species of lichens found to date in Wisconsin. Thomson still spends several days a week in his university office.

Why he loves lichens: “They are very interesting and beautiful plants. Most people don’t realize they’re all over the place in nice, unspoiled environments. You may not notice them in urban areas, but if you look at tree trunks in the forest or in our sandy soils, you’ll see lots of lichens.”

The Lichens of Wisconsin is available from the UW–Madison Herbarium, 132 Birge Hall, 430 Lincoln Drive, Madison, WI 53706, or online at www.botany.wisc.edu/wisflora/

For Single-Payer Health Care

Christopher Queram's facts in his recent article, "Consumer-Centered Health Care: A New and Promising Model?" (*Wisconsin Academy Review*, fall 2002) are irrefutable. I disagree with both his conclusions and his model for change.

A single-payer system is inevitable. It is the only means available to "police" the costs and quality of health care being provided to Americans. Indeed, it is the only way that we ever will be able to encourage and reward excellent health care providers based on consistently optimum medical outcomes.

A single-payer system would encourage competition based on the provision of high-quality health care services. It is unacceptable that Americans incur more deaths, injuries, and illnesses within health-care facilities in any given year than we experienced throughout the entire course of the Vietnam War.

Accountability would become primary in the provision of health care services. Costs would come under control, fraud would be significantly reduced, and pricing would be negotiated with a single large purchaser—the federal government.

Our seniors would no longer have to choose between food or medications. Illnesses and injuries would not force people into bankruptcy. Fraud would be minimized. Consumers would be empowered to assess the quality of health-care through mandatory disclosure of comprehensible medical outcomes, morbidity, and mortality rates.

Health care in the United States is disorganized and dysfunctional. It needs to be transformed systemically. No other human or public service is allowed to function as expensively or inefficiently.

Health care special interests, campaign contributions, and lobbying efforts to retain the status quo are the primary reasons Americans continue to endure an inefficient health care market. Public policy driven by employers and consumers must partner to force change if we are to terminate the national disgrace that we facilitate by our complicity. An efficient health care

system would emerge from the corrupt, costly quagmire that we have tolerated for too long.

Terry B. Brauer
HealthCare Initiatives, Inc.
Portland, OR

Whose Common Good?

The following two letters were addressed to executive director Bob Lange:

I spent the early hours of this cold new year reading the winter *Wisconsin Academy Review* and enjoying nearly every bit of it: the piece on the University of Chicago's publication of *A River Runs Through It*, the Turcotte story, Cofell's poems, the Woodson and Will Allen stories ... This is just a fine issue.

Ah, but then I came to your concluding message on the Back Page. I was disappointed to see your thoughts drift off toward some "honorable task" for the Academy "to support the common good." As you are aware of and indicate, this is an elusive thing at best.

I might go further to suggest that it doesn't in fact exist. One person's "common good" is another person's private hell. History is full of atrocities committed in the pursuit of the common good. Current "leaders" espousing the "common good" include Saddam Hussein, George Bush, Osama bin Laden, Jerry Falwell, etc. etc. Nothing frightens me more than some "majority" deciding what is the "common good" and then moving heaven and hell (and all of us poor minorities stuck in between) to achieve it.

Fortunately the *Review* speaks for itself. Everything in it focuses on individuals doing what they know and love and need to do. Whether it is starting a museum in Wausau, writing a story, publishing a book, writing a poem, developing a farm coop—all of these things have been and are being done by individuals. The thing I love most about artists and scientists is that they work alone (collaborate maybe, but the work itself is a lonely pursuit), and the really good ones are so far outside of perceptions of the "common good" that they can indeed change the world.

Let's set the Academy's "honorable task" to support these solitary, brave,

and adventurous artists and scientists and to hell with the "common good."

Thanks for keeping me thinking,

Bruce Jacobs
Milwaukee

Congratulations on the [winter] issue of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*. I was particularly struck by the ideas in your concluding column titled "The Centrality of the Common Good." As you point out, in our rush to promote values which support the individual, we are occasionally remiss in meeting the Periclean challenge to balance separate individual goods with the common good shared by all.

Richard H. Wells
Chancellor, UW-Oshkosh

Correction

Bob Lange's essay on the common good [in the winter *Review*] raised some good questions, age-old but still relevant. How important are great individuals, such as Pericles, versus mass movements? How do we achieve the common good? What is the common good, anyway?

But I have a quibble. The quote attributed to Alfred P. Sloan should instead be credited (or discredited) to Charles "Engine Charlie" Wilson. Wilson was a marketing executive at General Motors who was pulled out by President Eisenhower and made Secretary of Defense. This appointment was viewed with misgivings by many of us in the academic community because of Wilson's well-publicized disdain for research and development at General Motors and everywhere else: "Research is what you're doing when you don't know what you're doing." His famous gaffe, "What's good for General Motors is good for the country" was made when he refused to sell his stock in GM before joining the Cabinet. It immediately made Wilson the butt of all sorts of jokes, mostly bad. I don't think he was a good secretary, but the country survived. The common good prevailed?

James F. Crow
Wisconsin Academy Fellow
Wisconsin Academy Council member

Please send letters to the Editor, *Wisconsin Academy Review*, 1922 University Avenue, Madison WI 53726, e-mail joanfischer@wisc.edu, or fax 608/265-3039. Letters may be edited for reasons of space or clarity.

Be more natural

learn more at wpt.org

Up North

Wisconsin's north woods and waters offer a feast for the senses and a balm for the soul.

Let the sights and sounds take you there.

Premieres Monday, March 3 at 7 p.m.



photo by Bob Rashid ©2001

Sell your soul.

Truth be told, when a business realizes and reveals its reason for being, it transcends brand building and becomes a cause to be believed in. A cause that moves hearts and minds and markets. Let us help you unearth, communicate and fulfill your deeper purpose. You'll find our strategic thinking and creativity good for business and the soul.

www.goodforbusiness.com | (608) 250-5148



PUTTING IT ALL TOGETHER

\$25
NEW
SPECIAL OFFER



\$25
NEW
SPECIAL OFFER

The Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters provides a place where people who care about culture, nature, and the problems of our times can gather for fruitful discourse and meaningful action. Through our many programs and projects, we help create what Aldo Leopold called a "thinking community." The Wisconsin Academy is an independent, nonprofit organization, separate from state government and the university. We are funded by grants, by private endowments, and by our members. ***Your membership is important to us.***

WHAT YOU'LL SUPPORT

Here are a few Academy projects
(for more, see www.wisconsinacademy.org):

- **Waters of Wisconsin**, a statewide initiative on sustainable water use and management. Our study will lay the groundwork for a new water policy for our state and provide independent, reliable information and recommendations to legislators and the general public. The initiative has already spawned Wisconsin's Year of Water 2003, with a host of water-related activities around the state (see www.wisconsinyearofwater.org for more information).
- **The Wisconsin Academy Gallery**, the only noncommercial gallery in the state to feature different Wisconsin artists every month. In September 2004, the gallery is moving to the Overture Center in downtown Madison, and gallery exhibits will travel throughout the state.
- **Public Forums** on topics of current interest. As of 2004, the Wisconsin Academy will hold weekly forums, readings, and lectures in the Overture Center and bring many of these presentations to other locations around the state.
- **The Wisconsin Center for the Book**, affiliated with the Library of Congress, conducts many programs in support of literature and the book arts. Example: "Wisconsin Authors Speak" brings writers to communities throughout the state.

WHAT YOU'LL GET

- The **Wisconsin Academy Review**, the quarterly magazine of Wisconsin thought and culture, is a free membership benefit. You'll also receive a newsletter about Academy events and activities.
- **Discounts** on Wisconsin Academy events such as our writing contests and public forums.
- **Invitations** to gallery receptions and other special events.
- **Transactions**, a peer-reviewed journal published since 1872. A special issue on Wisconsin's waters (free of charge to members) will appear in summer 2003.

HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

We offer a **special one-year introductory rate of \$25** to readers of the *Wisconsin Academy Review* (regular rate: \$35 for one year, \$85 for three years). There is no obligation to renew after one year.

HOW TO JOIN

Send in one of the enclosed membership cards or contact us at
1922 University Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53726
608/263-1692
www.wisconsinacademy.org

W. E. B. Du Bois: Man of Letters, Man of Deeds

His seminal work, *The Souls of Black Folk*, marks its centennial this year. A Du Bois Week in April will explore the work of one of America's most original and influential thinkers

W. E. B. Du Bois in his office at Atlanta University, 1909.

BY NELLIE Y. MCKAY

Special Collections and Archives, W. E. B. Du Bois Library, University of Massachusetts Amherst

“‘The Old Man died.’ Just that. And not one of us asked, ‘What old man?’” ...

“It’s like Moses. God had written that he should never enter the promised land.”

—Responses to news of Du Bois’ death, recounted by David Levering Lewis in *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race 1868-1919* (1993)

ON AUGUST 28, 1963, on the eve of Martin Luther King Jr.’s historic March on Washington, people around the world mourned the passing of W. E. B. Du Bois. For many, his death symbolizes the end of an era. Du Bois, the premier black intellectual of his century, a giant of prodigious dimensions, had spent

most of his 95 years speaking out, writing about, and doing battle for racial justice and universal acknowledgment of the humanity of oppressed peoples. Some in Washington that day did not think he had really left them. True, his body was lying in state in Ghana, where he died, but his spirit hovered over their gathering. He was a man of letters and action, straightforward and impeccably dignified. Some disagreed with his political ideas and tactics—his unbridled tongue and pen, and his obstinate inde-

pendence—yet almost everyone respected his brilliance, his integrity, and his passion for the work that made him well known on four continents: to excel as an individual and to raise his people.

William Edward Burghardt Du Bois was born in 1868 (three years after slavery was outlawed) in Great Barrington, Massachusetts, the only child of Alfred Du Bois and Mary Silvina Burghardt Du Bois, who was from a New England family dating back to the 18th century.

The textile and paper mills town of approximately 4,000 people had fewer than 30 African American families among its population of mostly Irish Catholics and Czechoslovaks. The Burghardts did service work as domestics, barbers, coachmen, and the like. His mother’s deteriorating health from 1879 until her death in 1885, the disappearance of his father by the time he was two, and the inability of the Burghardt family to help financially were major concerns for the young Du Bois.

Early in his life Du Bois' teachers recognized his intellectual giftedness and noted his academic advances each school year. One high school teacher, Frank Alvin Hosmer, became his mentor and guide. By the time he was a teenager he realized that he was different from most of his peers, but he could take satisfaction in knowing that if the others easily outdid him in sports, he towered over them in schoolwork, and he could believe that his achievements held the key to the life he wanted: one with deep meaning and dignity. Few among the town's families went beyond a year or so of high school, but with Hosmer's encouragement, Du Bois dreamed of college. Hosmer offered him preparation for college and planted the seeds that grew into his brilliant journalistic career by securing him a position as area correspondent for the New York *Globe*, a popular black newspaper. Du Bois relished this job. He ended his high school years in 1884 delivering an oration on Wendell Phillips that the *Berkshire Courier* reported on favorably. He and his mother had set their hearts on his attending Harvard College, but financial restraints made that impossible, and a year after her death, with the help of family and friends, Du Bois went off to Fisk University in Nashville, Tennessee, the most prominent of the historic black colleges in the late 19th century.

DU BOIS DOWN SOUTH

Du Bois enrolled at Fisk in 1885 in a student body of roughly 450. The faculty of 15 were white and male (with two exceptions, one black man and one white woman); northern; deeply religious; and, not surprisingly, staunch abolitionists. Believing that blacks deserved the same education as their white counterparts, they assumed the task of transforming Fisk into a liberal arts college. When Du Bois arrived, the curriculum included Greek, Latin, French, German, theology, natural sciences, music, moral philosophy, and history. The three years he spent there provided him experiences he could never have had in New England. As he was struggling to discover himself as a racial being, he was swept into the

Arguing that no nation was ever uplifted by its uneducated masses, he believed that educated black women and men were morally obliged to perform service that uplifted the race.

maelstrom of race relations in the South. In the difficult and unsettling face-to-face confrontations he had with the harsh realities of southern black life he began to understand what it meant to be black in a white world. No African American was safe from the violence of racism. He spent summers in the hills of Tennessee, living in substandard conditions, teaching school to black youngsters who had no other access to education. He later captured his impressions of the squalor of their lives, their valiant struggles to rise above adversity, and their unfulfilled dreams in *The Souls of Black Folk*.

But there were also aspects of life around him that he welcomed, although some were initially uncomfortable for him. His fellow students simultaneously impressed and disquieted him. On the one hand, he delighted in having a peer group experience with young people of his age and race whose ambitions complemented his own. On the other, here too, in an all-black setting, he knew he was different from the others. He was northern, they were southern, and although in their economic backgrounds they differed from each other, they shared a self-confidence he did not feel. He had been educated with whites and had their education. His Fisk classmates were products of segregated schools, and the poorer ones had gone to the worst of those schools. Du Bois was a year younger than regular college freshmen but had entered as a sophomore. He was shorter than the other men and he felt socially awkward, unworldly, insecure, and incapable of participating in the lighthearted banter of his dormitory mates. But even more than his discomfort in the company of the men, he was overwhelmed by the young women, with their beauty, poise, and grooming.

Unlike those among whom he had grown up, these were "women of color with delicate manners and fine minds" who spoke and dressed beautifully (David Levering Lewis, *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race 1868-1919*).

In spite of early misgivings, Du Bois' college life was full, rich, and rewarding. He had his studies; public speaking; time to contemplate his future; his work on the *Herald*, the school's magazine; and an active social life. By the time he graduated in 1888, his education had altered his religious and philosophical thinking on the world. He went to Fisk a firm Congregationalist, steeped in Calvinism and the Puritan ethic. At Fisk, he discovered science and philosophy, discarded the theological structures of his early life (although not his Puritan ethic), and made the transition from conservative orthodoxy to liberalism. He left Fisk a Victorian, confident that he was fully a "Negro" ready to commit himself to the cause of "racial uplift." The two universities he attended later notwithstanding, he always considered Fisk his true alma mater.

STUDYING THE SLUMS

Du Bois entered Harvard College as a junior in 1888, in a class of 281. In a reversal of the collegiality at Fisk, he could not live in the Harvard houses, and although he attended classes with the students, he made no friends among them. Instead, he resided with an African American family in Cambridge and had a full social life among young African Americans in the area. Several professors, including philosophers William James and George Santayana and historian Albert Bushnell Hart, recognized his superior intellectual abilities and were generous mentors to him.

Later he was fond of saying that he had been at Harvard but not of it.

In 1890 he earned second prize in Harvard's prestigious Boylston oratorical competition and received his B.A. *cum laude* in philosophy. Continuing at Harvard as a graduate student, he received his M.A. in history in 1892 and left for the Friedrich Wilhelm University in Berlin, where he enrolled in the doctoral program. In his two years abroad, he studied history, economics, politics, and political economy. He did all the work for a Ph.D. but, unable to complete his residency for financial reasons, he never received that degree. In 1895, he graduated with a Ph.D. in history at Harvard, the first African American to achieve that distinction. That was also the year that Booker T. Washington, with whom he would later have bitter political disagreements, delivered his Atlanta Compromise speech. In 1896, Du Bois' dissertation, *The Suppression of the African Slave Trade to the United States of America, 1638-1870* appeared as the first volume in Harvard's Historical Monograph Series. His formal education complete, he set out on the mission of his life: to nurture the life of the mind and dedicate his talents to the welfare of his race. His Harvard education enabled him to balance his old and new values, to negotiate the transition from philosophy to history and science, and to recognize that the pursuit of beauty was as necessary as the search for truth. It gave him confidence that he could pursue science and art.

From 1894 to 1896 Du Bois was at Wilberforce University in Cedar Rapids, Iowa, teaching Latin, Greek, English, and German. In 1896, he took a one-year appointment at the University of Pennsylvania to prepare a sociological study of Philadelphia's black population. The result, *The Philadelphia Negro* (1899), was the first scientific investigation of urban African Americans, one still significant in 2003. He lived among and conducted interviews with residents in one of the city's most densely populated black slum areas; historians estimate that in three months of data collecting, Du Bois spent more than 835 hours interviewing approximately 2,500

households. He collected life histories of almost 10,000 men, women, and children. The book was a social studies breakthrough, the first to swing the field away from "armchair celebrations" of 19th-century sociology to investigation and induction. In the interplay between race and economics, Du Bois showed that race was different for black and white people, and that whites, as a group, enjoyed privileges that blacks, as a group, would never have. He agreed that race prejudice was not the single factor that disadvantaged blacks, but insisted that it was sufficiently powerful to be a long-lasting impediment to them.

Du Bois' association with the American Negro Academy (he was a co-founder in 1897), the first major black American learned society in the United States, was central to his development in the late 1890s. This group was made up of artists and intellectuals, men of African descent who promoted letters, science, and arts through scholarly publication; working with black youth; collecting archival materials of importance to African Americans; and disseminating information repudiating received distortions of black life and culture. To Du Bois, they were leaders of the race, the "Talented Tenth." Arguing that no nation was ever uplifted by its uneducated masses, he believed that educated black women and men were morally obliged to perform service that uplifted the race. Between 1897 and 1928, when it folded, ANA membership included many important black leaders. Over its lifetime, ANA members published papers on culture, history, religion, civil and social rights, and the social institutions of African Americans. Through these as well as annual meetings, occasional papers, and exhibits, the organization initiated dialogues in black and white communities that made contributions to the discussion on race and race relations in the United States and Europe. It introduced the concerns and opinions of educated blacks into new venues and gave the ANA a place in the larger history of black America.

Du Bois served as president of the ANA from 1898 to 1903. Unfortunately, those were among his busiest and most

creative years as an intellectual and public figure, and multiple demands on his time limited the attention he could devote to the organization. In 1898 he held a professorship in economics and history at Atlanta University while compiling his book on the Philadelphia study and publishing studies in the *Bulletin* of the Department of Labor. He had also taken over the Atlanta conferences devoted to problems of urban blacks and the planning and supervising of a decade-long series of sociological studies in which scholars examined various aspects of black American life. He had a heavy schedule of public lectures, and his articles on issues of race regularly appeared in the *Atlantic Monthly* and *The Independent*. In 1900 he attended the Paris Exposition, where the exhibit on black economic development that he designed and installed won a grand prize. He used the Paris Exposition as a means to promote the work of the Academy by including its publications as well as a list of its members in the exhibition. In 1903 he resigned the presidency of ANA, although he continued to support the group in other roles.

INCISIVE ANALYSIS

From 1903, when he published *The Souls of Black Folk*, his magnum opus, to the end of his career, Du Bois was a relentless warrior for justice for African Americans and all oppressed peoples. He left behind 16 volumes of sociology, history, politics, and race relations in addition to an autobiography (with another unfinished at his death), five novels (three written in his eighth decade), and hundreds of journalistic essays and poems. His weapons of war in this arena were the well-chosen words that flowed from his pen, his uncompromising language, and the application of his vast scholarly knowledge and acute opinions. He explained, expounded, taught, and prophesied on the state of the world, to all who could see or would listen.

The Souls of Black Folk brought him national prominence and impressed William James sufficiently to prompt him to send a copy to his brother Henry

LEARNING FROM DU BOIS TODAY

A Du Bois Week in Madison, April 7–13, offers scholarly and popular perspectives on Du Bois' life and work. Presenters include David Levering Lewis, Michael Eric Dyson, and Mary Frances Berry.

The Centennial Symposium UW–Madison April 10–12

The Souls of Black Folk celebrates its centennial this year, and across our nation, scholars of many nationalities and backgrounds, white and black, Asian and Native American, are meeting to revisit not only this volume, but also the life of the man: to reevaluate and rethink the meaning of the words he left to us and how best they can serve us in a new millennium.

Professors and students at UW–Madison have taken this occasion seriously. In the fall of 2001, the history department offered a course on Du Bois; in the fall of 2002 and spring of 2003, the Afro-American studies department offered a course each semester for graduate and undergraduate students; and in the spring of 2003, the English department offers a graduate seminar on the topic. Such repetition of an elective course is unusual on this campus, but students are eager to enroll each time there is a chance to do so. Departments and professors are taking advantage of the birthday occasion to ensure that those who wish to take it have that opportunity. It is not a course they will forget.

In conjunction with the classroom experience for students, the Madison community can join the university community to learn more about and honor Du Bois' memory. During the week of April 7 to 13, a number of events on and off campus will highlight his life and his continuing importance inside and outside the academy. For Du Bois did not speak only to academics and intellectuals. He was invested in everyday politics and community issues. April 10 to 12, the departments of Afro-American Studies and English, with several co-sponsors, will host a three-day international symposium at the Pyle Center (702 Langdon St.) devoted to an examination of Du Bois' body of writings. The speakers will be scholars who have studied, written about, and taught his work over many years. All sessions are free and open to the public.

For more information, see the symposium website: <http://polyglot.lss.wisc.edu/aas/dubois.htm> or contact David LaCroix, symposium manager, at ddlacroix@wisc.edu, 608/263-0805.

—by Nellie Y. McKay

W. E. B. Du Bois & *The Souls of Black Folk* 100 Years Later The Second Humanities Biennial April 7–13

The UW–Madison Center for Humanities—the folks who brought us the spirited Jane Austen Festival two years ago—is back, this time with a look at W. E. B. Du Bois that will include hip-hop, movies, choir performances, and accompanying Chapter-a-Day readings on Wisconsin Public Radio.

The Humanities Biennial was designed to complement the symposium with offerings for a more general audience.

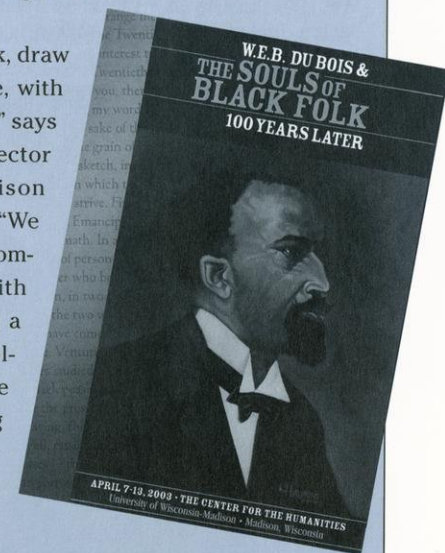
"The Biennial will, I think, draw a broader public audience, with a greater variety of events," says Center for Humanities director Steve Nadler, a UW–Madison professor of philosophy. "We see the two programs as complementing each other, with the symposium offering a more academic and scholarly perspective, and the biennial program bringing to our attention the cultural, social, and political aspects of Du Bois' legacy."

What can the public gain from learning more about Du Bois?

"We can learn a great deal about what is perhaps the greatest problem that America faced in the 19th and 20th centuries, and will continue to face for some time—that is, the problem of race in its many dimensions," says Nadler.

For more information, visit www.humanities.wisc.edu or call the Center for the Humanities at 608/263-3409, e-mail info@humanities.wisc.edu

—by Joan Fischer



(the novelist), urging him to read it. It divides into three parts: history, sociology, and African American spirituality.

The history section, in three essays, covers the period from slavery to freedom and beyond. It is notable for two powerful concepts Du Bois puts forth to form the dominant core of the discourse on black experience outside of Africa. The first, double consciousness, is the special gift of African Americans to see themselves through the eyes of others and thus to be aware of their two-ness: American and Negro. However, this realization yields them no true self-consciousness, only an ongoing struggle to preserve the self from being "torn asunder." The second names the problem of the 20th century: "The problem of the color line—the relations of the darker to the lighter races of men in Asia and Africa, in America and the islands of the

sea." Few can dispute this summary of Western history over the past several millennia.

The sociological section of *Souls*, in six chapters, takes the white reader behind the veil for a close look at African American life in different settings: Georgia and Tennessee among sharecroppers and Atlanta University. The perspective is enlightening. The third section of the book speaks to the power of black art and spirituality. Here Du Bois brings together autobiography, biography, short story, and his reflections on art to demonstrate the unrealized asset that African Americans are to the nation.

The Souls of Black Folk celebrates its centennial in 2003 and remains as vital in today's world as it did 100 years ago. It is the text around which students and scholars in all areas of African American studies come together and share

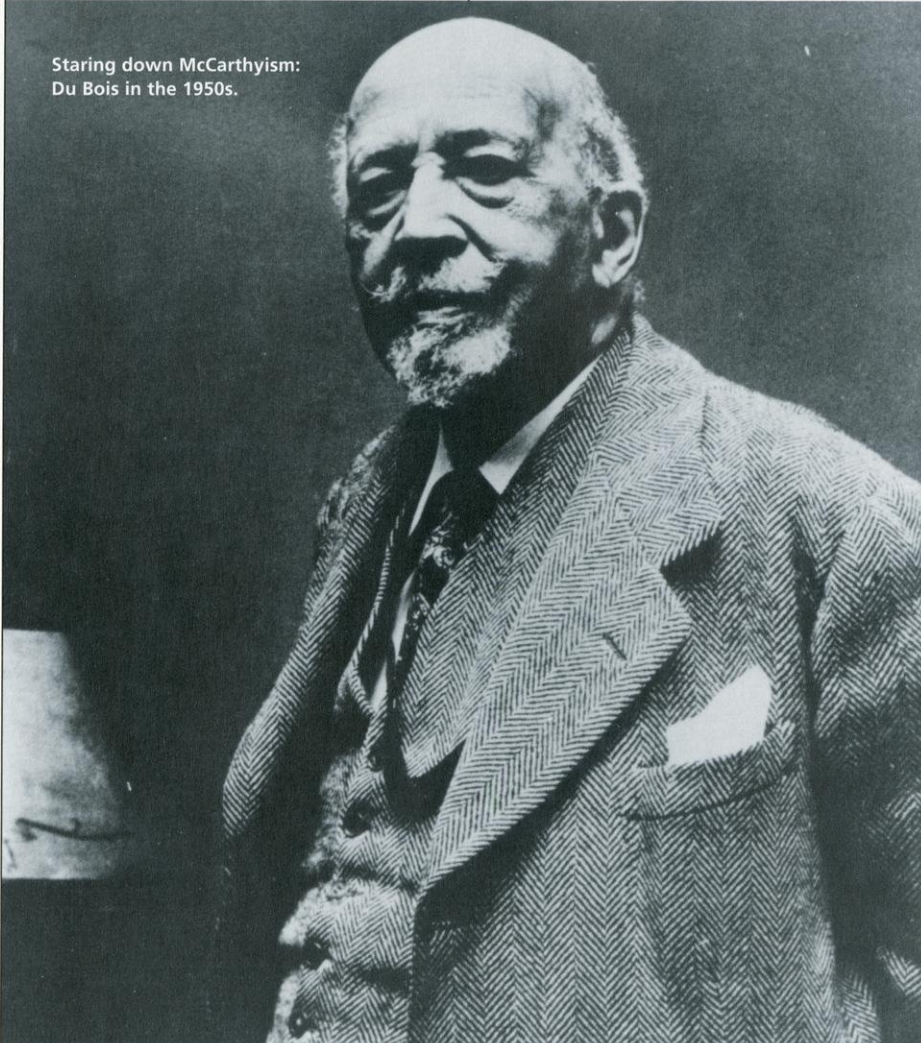
common ground. A brilliant document, written with passion and courage, and without sentimentality, it affirmed and reclaimed the dignity and integrity of the history of a people.

MCCARTHYISM STRIKES

Beyond his writings, Du Bois, no Ivy Tower intellectual, was a political activist in uncompromising pursuit of political and economic rights for blacks. He made that the principle for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), which he helped found in 1910. His leadership within the organization was most visible in his role as its director of publications and research. In this capacity, he founded and edited the organization's monthly journal, *The Crisis: A Record of the Darker Races*. Its essays on politics, education, social uplift, science, and art covered all aspects of black life, from atrocities committed against African Americans to their major achievements. Black literature was prominent in the pages of *The Crisis*: plays, poems, short stories and other prose works. Most of the young black writers who flocked to New York during the Harlem Renaissance first saw their work in print in *The Crisis*. New black visual art was also represented, inside and on the covers of the journal.

Distributed by subscription, *The Crisis* had a wide readership through most of Du Bois' time as editor. At its peak, the December 1917 issue, sales registered 53,750 copies. Du Bois used his editorials to express his uncensored feelings on major social and political issues of the time. He was especially vehement in addressing race and lynching, a stance that brought him into conflict with the NAACP's board members. They criticized his outspokenness, his independence, and his radicalism in favor of more moderate approaches to these issues. The editor and the board struggled over their differences for more than a decade, and Du Bois insisted on being critical not only of the status quo but also of NAACP policies of which he disapproved. The relationship between them ended in 1934 when Du Bois resigned. He was especially pessimistic

Staring down McCarthyism:
Du Bois in the 1950s.



about prospects for successful racial integration in the country and had begun to ponder the merits of African American voluntary segregation as a strategy worth testing. His colleagues disapproved.

At age 66, Du Bois left the NAACP and *The Crisis*, but not the dozens of writing projects, political activities, and public speaking engagements on his calendar. One activity was the Pan African Congress he organized in Paris in 1919. Fifty-seven delegates from the U.S., the West Indies, Africa, and Europe attended. Du Bois was executive secretary. The group called on the Paris Peace Conference to protect the rights of Africans living under colonial rule. At its second meeting in 1921, 113 official delegates called for an international defense of African rights, which Du Bois submitted to the League of Nations. Three additional meetings of the Congress followed, the last in 1945. But the appeals and resolutions the group initiated to world organizations and nations did nothing to change conditions for colonial peoples.

In the 1940s and '50s Du Bois' left-leaning activities and political rhetoric brought him to the attention of the U.S. government. By then, angry and disillusioned, and open in his criticism of U.S. policies that ignored the oppression of people of color, Du Bois' feelings spilled over into issues like world peace. His associations with several peace groups, his campaign to save the Rosenbergs, his sympathetic sentiments toward the Soviet Union and China, and his continuing advocacy of controversial left-wing positions made him an easy target for such attention. In 1951, he and other officials of the Peace Information Center, which called for prohibition of the atomic bomb, were indicted for refusing to register the organization as an "agent of a foreign principal." Had he been found guilty, he would have faced five years in prison and a \$10,000 fine. All the defendants were acquitted at the trial. A year later, refusing to be browbeaten by threats of government reprisals and the black mainstream's distancing itself from him, Du Bois refused to sign a document disavowing membership in the

Communist Party. His passport was revoked for six years on the grounds that his travel abroad was not in the national interest.

Du Bois remained politically active throughout his life. Once his passport was reissued he traveled extensively in Europe and Asia. In 1958 and 1959 he went to England and several other countries in Europe, including East Germany. He also went to the Soviet Union and China, meeting many heads of state. In Germany he received an honorary doctorate of economics from Humboldt University (formerly Friedrich Wilhelm University), and in the Soviet Union, the Lenin International Peace Prize. In 1960 he visited Ghana and Nigeria, and in 1961 he applied for membership in the Communist Party of the United States shortly before leaving for Accra. Kwame Nkrumah had invited him to live there and assume directorship of the *Encyclopedia Africana*. In 1963, on his 95th birthday, Du Bois received an honorary doctorate of letters from the University of Ghana and became a citizen of that nation. From afar, he followed the preparations for the August March on Washington in the United States, and he died on the evening of August 27. His was a race well run for almost a century, a life that left deep impressions on the world through which he passed.

W. E. B. Du Bois was an extraordinary man, an American, and an African American. He is someone we can ill afford to forget, for more than anyone else who has written on the subject of race, he was able to put it into a context that gives us a key to understanding who we were and who we are now as a people. In *The Souls of Black Folk* he informs us that the struggle with double consciousness is one in which African Americans seek to merge the double self (American and Negro) into a better and truer self—not one that wishes to "Africanize America, for America has too much to teach the world and Africa" any more than African Americans would "bleach [the] Negro soul in a flood of white Americanism, for ... Negro blood has a message for the world," a message that should not be lost. As a nation concerned about the total welfare of our

country's future, we need to keep the wisdom in his ideas at the center of our conversations on race relations inside and outside of our borders. Du Bois has much yet to teach us. ▾

Nellie Y. McKay, professor of African American studies at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, specializes in 19th- and 20th-century African American literature with an emphasis on fiction, autobiography, and the writings of black women. She is co-editor with Henry Louis Gates Jr. of the Norton Anthology of African American Literature; author of Jean Toomer, the Artist: A Study of His Literary Life and Work; editor of Critical Essays on Toni Morrison; and co-editor of the Norton Critical Edition of Harriet Jacobs' Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl; Approaches to Teaching the Novels of Toni Morrison; and Beloved: A Casebook. McKay is currently co-editing (with professor Stanlie James) the 20th anniversary edition of All the Women Are White, All the Blacks Are Men, But Some of Us Are Brave.

McKay is a Fellow of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters and a member of the Wisconsin Academy Review editorial advisory committee.

SOURCES

Du Bois, W. E. B. *The Souls of Black Folk*. Ed. David Blight. Boston: Bedford Books, 1997.

Lewis, David Levering. *W. E. B. Du Bois: Biography of a Race 1868-1919*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 1993.

Lewis, David Levering. *W. E. B. Du Bois: The Fight For Equality and the American Century 1919-1963*. New York: Henry Holt and Company, 2000.

Moss, Alfred A. *The American Negro Academy, Voice of the Talented Tenth*. Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1981.

Rampersad, Arnold. *The Art and Imagination of W. E. B. Du Bois*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1976.



The Dams of Cedarburg

Dam removal is a good thing—sometimes. A case for preserving our pioneer dams and the charm, history, and aesthetics that come with them.

The historic heart of Cedarburg:
"Nowhere else in the state,
and probably in the nation
is there a place with four
dams and four stone mills
within a mile."

Shown here: The water of
Cedar Creek flowing over
the Wittenberg Woolen Mill dam.
Buildings of the mill complex are
seen on the far bank.

Photos by Paul G. Hayes

BY PAUL G. HAYES

IT IS A MID-NOVEMBER EVENING and I have just come in from our darkening backyard in Cedarburg. Our yard ends at the north bank of Columbia Millpond, a 15-acre impoundment upon which, as the sun drops behind western clouds, at least 3,000 giant Canada geese float. Having just flown in, they are discussing their day spent in outlying cornfields before quieting for the night.

Each fall, geese crowd onto our pond in the center of town. This is the nuisance species that has forgotten how to migrate, which I therefore surmise is a learned behavior, but they have not forgotten how to flock up in autumn, which I therefore conclude is an instinctive behavior. Some neighbors hate the geese for their noise and droppings. I admire their tenacity in holding onto their territory in the widening suburbs.

When they approach the pond in family-sized squadrons of from eight to a dozen, and set their wings and splash in, setting up silvery bursts of spray, I sense thousands of years of repetition. It thrills me. Others in Wisconsin drive for hours to witness a similar, larger spectacle at Horicon Marsh.

Our impoundment, which we share with 40 other dwellings, lies in the heart of a city whose history predates Wisconsin statehood. It was formed by the first-built of five pioneer dams in little more than a mile of creek. This density of pioneer dams is unmatched elsewhere in Wisconsin and perhaps in the nation. Geology explains it.

Cedar Creek rises in the Cedar Lakes northwest of here in Washington County. Here, the creek is only four miles from the Milwaukee River, but the two streams flow in different directions and will join 31 miles downstream southeast of Cedarburg. At one point they lie within 200 yards of each other before both are turned aside again by dense limestone bedrock.

Before they merge, Cedar Creek must break through the barrier of limestone. It does so at Cedarburg, its water falling about 100 feet in a mile before entering a flat floodplain and sliding quietly into the larger river flowing south to Milwaukee.

Falling water explains this town.

When the first Germans arrived at the place that was to become Cedarburg—so named for the white cedar trees whose roots clutch the limestone along the banks of the creek—they immediately recognized the promise of all that free energy.

Frederick Luening built the Columbia Mill and dam in 1843 and began grinding wheat flour. The Columbia Mill, a rickety

frame building, was razed in the 1960s and the stone Cedarburg State Bank now occupies the site.

Frederick Hilgen and William Schroeder built a second dam and gristmill just upstream in 1845, later quarrying the stone from the creek bed for the stone mill that replaced their original log mill. Marking the geographical center of the city, the Hilgen-Schroeder Mill may have been the tallest building between Green Bay and Milwaukee when it was built in 1855. It is the very symbol of Cedarburg.

The Concordia Mill southeast of Cedarburg dates from 1853. The dam, smallest of the five at only seven feet high and out of sight from the road, was breached a few years ago. History may have recorded its builders. I can't find them.

In 1864, Hilgen, Diedrick Wittenberg, and Joseph Trottman built the Woolen Mill and its dam just downstream from the present Boy Scout Park. In winter, Boy Scout pond is the community ice rink. Today, the Woolen Mill houses a winery, a blacksmith, a restaurant, and many specialty shops. Because of the tourists who are drawn to the complex, Woolen Mill dam may be the most photographed of Wisconsin's 3,600 dams.

In 1871, H. Wahausan and Co. built the Excelsior Mill and dam, later known as the Nail Factory. The dam, at 25 feet, is the highest of the five.

Of five dams and five mills, four dams and four sturdy stone mill buildings remain. In Cedarburg, both dams and mills are treasured artifacts.

There are good reasons for removing obsolete dams in Wisconsin, and those who attended the Wisconsin Academy's successful Waters of Wisconsin Forum in Madison in October heard about them from Todd Ambs, former executive director of the River Alliance of Wisconsin and now administrator of the division of water at the Department of Natural Resources.

Dams interrupt the free movement of stream fish and form impoundments of water that warms unnaturally, enhancing unwanted algae growth. The impoundments can become overwhelmed by carp and fill with contaminated sediments. Dams reduce a stream's capacity to replenish its oxygen supply, essential to biotic health. As dams age, they can become unsound and threaten residents downstream.

For these reasons, the DNR has a policy to encourage their removal. The DNR will financially aid in the cost of dam removal, but it won't aid in dam maintenance, although it requires dam owners to inspect and insure the integrity of dams. Sometimes ownership is difficult to establish.

Even so, fewer than 100 of Wisconsin's 3,600 dams have been removed. There are several reasons. Many dams are still used to generate power or maintain the level of lakes. Also, the job is big and the department is understaffed. Finally, the DNR runs into cranky people like me who value the charm, history, and aesthetics of their pioneer dams.

The question of removing one or more of the Cedarburg dams arises from time to time. Most recently, it was raised in conjunction with the joint effort of the Mercury Marine Corp.,

the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, and the DNR to remove sediments contaminated by polychlorinated biphenyls (PCBs) that a Mercury Marine factory released into Cedar Creek ending in the 1970s.

Preparing for the cleanup, which will begin in 2003 and cost millions, the agencies recently lowered the water level of our pond and inspected the Columbia Dam. To our surprise and relief, inspectors found the dam essentially sound. But we know that is a temporary reprieve.

However, it gives us time to reflect. The DNR is right to insist on safe dams and healthy streams. At the same time, in a state with no fossil fuels of its own—no oil, gas, or coal—the energy that allowed the first settlements to flourish came from falling water. That historic lesson should not be lost on a country now dependent on the Middle East for half of its oil needs.

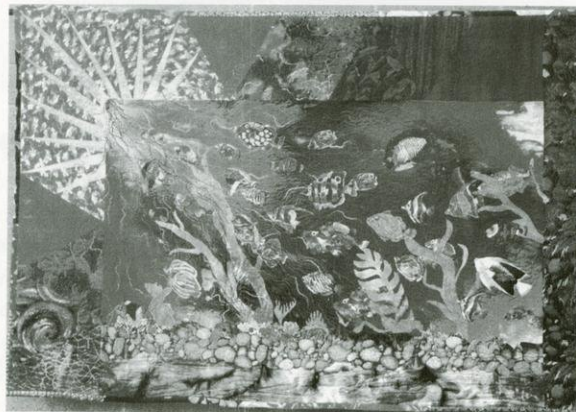
Some pioneer dams and mills should be preserved for their historic, aesthetic, and educational values. Nowhere in the state, and probably in the nation, is there a place with four dams and four stone mills within a mile. Razing them would rip the historic heart out of the city. I propose that we save Cedarburg's dams and mills as special in Wisconsin and promote them as an outdoor museum. ▼

Paul G. Hayes, a veteran science writer, is a Wisconsin Academy Fellow and Vice President of Letters on the Wisconsin Academy Council.

"BREAKING FROM TRADITION"

ART QUILTS BY CHRISTIE BROKISH

FEB. 27TH - APRIL 28TH • PLOCH ART GALLERY
SHARON LYNNE WILSON CENTER FOR THE ARTS



A Partnership in the Arts

The Ploch Art Gallery frequently features artists from the Wisconsin Academy Gallery



SHARON LYNNE WILSON

CENTER FOR THE ARTS

19805 W. Capitol Drive
Brookfield, WI 53045

Located in Brookfield's Mitchell Park, just south of Capitol Drive at 198th.

For information call the Wilson Center at 262.781.9470



if it's in the news **it's on the radio** wisconsin public radio

90.7 WHAD Milwaukee • 91.3 KUWS Superior • 102.9 KUWS Ashland • 90.3 WHBM Park Falls • AM930
WLBL Stevens Point • 88.3 WHWC Eau Claire • 91.9 WLBL Wausau • 88.1 WHID Green Bay • 91.1 WLFM
Appleton • 90.3 WRST Oshkosh • 90.3 WHLA La Crosse • 91.3 WHHI Highland • 91.7 WSHS
Sheboygan • 88.7 WRFW River Falls • 91.9 WHDI Sister Bay • AM970 WHA 90.9 WHA Madison

WISCONSIN
PUBLIC
RADIO
wpr.org

The Ideas Network: we talk about issues that matter to you.

Creating community is a fine art.

mixed media

Combining faculty insights with international travel.

sculpture

Preparing and supporting young minds.

literature

Celebrating UW-Madison and its alumni.

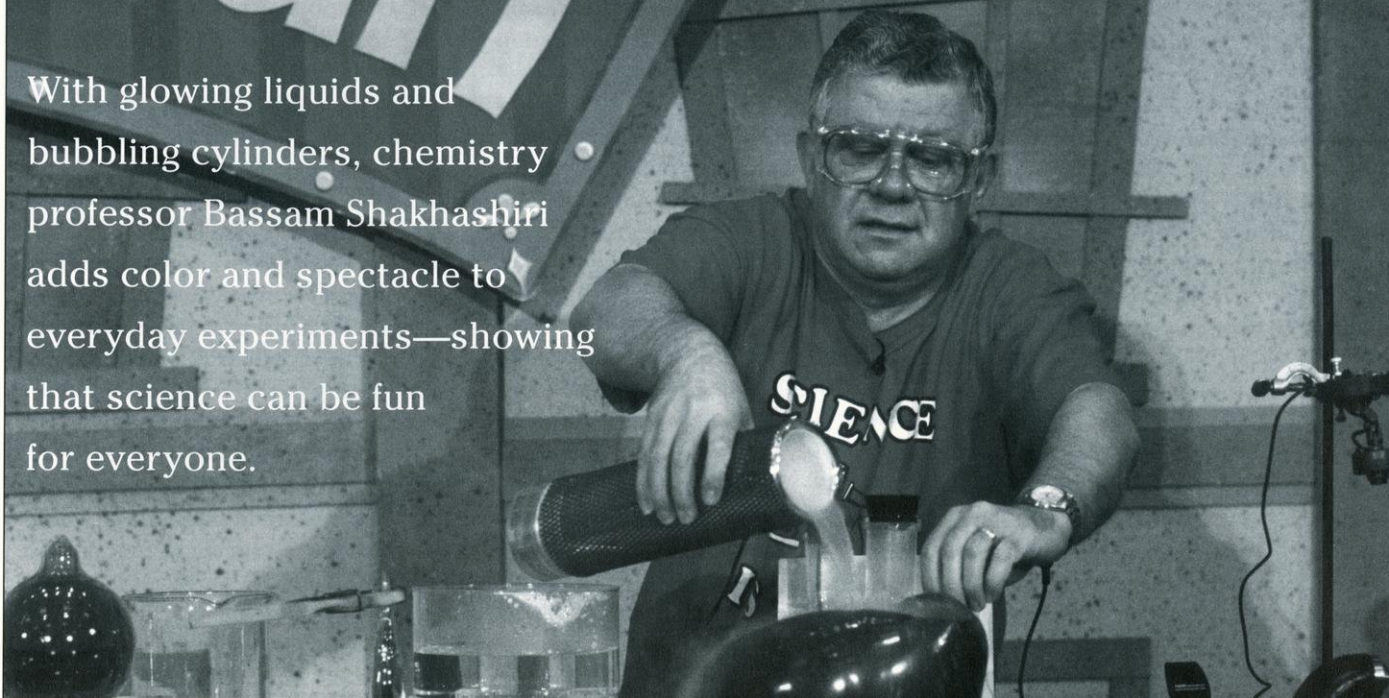
To add your brush stroke, visit uwalumni.com/community.

WAA
WISCONSIN
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

Connecting. Enriching. Serving.

Science for the People

With glowing liquids and bubbling cylinders, chemistry professor Bassam Shakhshiri adds color and spectacle to everyday experiments—showing that science can be fun for everyone.



BY BASSAM Z. SHAKHASHIRI

PHOTOS BY WOLFGANG HOFFMANN

Here the professor collapses a helium-filled balloon with liquid nitrogen. This experiment shows the effect of cold temperatures on the movement of helium gas inside the balloon.

THERE ARE MANY SPECTACULAR EXPERIMENTS in chemistry. When you put them together it is like a magic show. The difference between me and a magician is that I want the audience to understand how the “tricks” are performed. But more than that, I want them

to appreciate the beauty of the phenomenon and the concepts of science involved in the spectacle. I have been using such experiments for years to capture people’s attention. While they are still thinking “Wow! How did he do that?” I begin to deliver a simple lesson that explains a pertinent principle of chemical behavior. There are a lot of future teachers, scientists, entrepreneurs, and engineers out there in the audience, and I want to whet their appetite for more. These demonstrations, which I take to such places as schools, professional meetings, and shopping malls, are part of my quest to make people more familiar with and more curious about science—in other words, more science literate.

Spectacular visual demonstrations and fun hands-on activities became part of my strategy years ago when I first began teaching chemistry to college students. It was a way to put a face on a chemical reaction that otherwise was just a formula in the textbook. Besides instructing, good science demonstrations promote self-discovery; they encourage the audience to evaluate what they see and figure out explanations. They have to formulate questions and then revise their thinking if they don’t come up with the “right” answer, just as a scientist does.

Concern for better chemical education also led me to establish the Institute for Chemical Education at the University of Wisconsin–Madison in

1983. The institute has worked since then with thousands of chemistry teachers, helping them improve their teaching. In 1984, I was invited to serve at the National Science Foundation as chief education officer. Over a six-year period I rebuilt programs and funding for science and engineering education that had been “zeroed out” in the 1980s. Today, funding for those programs—at all educational levels—is just under one billion dollars.

Beginning in the mid-1970s, I worked with many colleagues and collaborators from UW–Madison and other institutions to write a series of chemistry demonstration handbooks that have been translated into several languages. Recently my efforts have also turned to the Wisconsin Initiative for Science Literacy (WISL), an umbrella organization at UW–Madison that oversees several programs aimed at enhancing science literacy and science appreciation. Our “Science Is Fun” lectures are

part of this as well as such offerings as our website, www.scifun.org, which features a “Chemical of the Week”; “Science on the Radio,” in which I talk directly with listeners of Wisconsin Public Radio about selected science and education topics; and our “Christmas Lecture,” which is in the tradition of the great British scientist Michael Faraday and is presented annually on public television. Other WISL programs, which are new, are described below [see sidebar on page 22].

SCIENCE LITERACY AFFECTS DEMOCRACY

First I want to address the question: Why all this concern for science literacy and science teaching? It’s because science and technology are more powerful forces in our lives today than ever before. They give our nation an economic edge in communications technology, agriculture, medicine, and

manufacturing. They make us military giants and powerful partners in world trade. They are forces that contribute mightily to our stability as a nation and, just as importantly, to the personal development and growth of the individual. Because of this, science and technology are also sources of controversy and are increasingly in the public forum as political, social, and ethical issues. Yet how many of us are able to follow or even participate with a rational argument—not just gut feelings—in a debate on cloning, genetic engineering, or computer antiviral systems? We are reaching a point where citizens will no longer be able to fully participate in their own democracy unless they become more science and technology literate. I believe that the attention our society places on science literacy is a measure of our values as a society—and a measure of our concern for democratic dialogue.



Here Shakhshiri adds chunks of dry ice (solid carbon dioxide) to cylinders filled with colored liquids such as grape juice and red cabbage juice. This demonstrates the reactions of carbonated water when mixed with various household items.

Science literacy has been a hot issue since the late 1950s, when Russia launched *Sputnik* and the U.S. began scrambling to catch up. National concern bubbled up again in the 1970s when tests revealed that American students were ignorant of many things scientific and mathematical. Compared to the more advanced and specific knowledge of students in other countries, we had reason to be embarrassed. The debate that ensued in educational circles and that continues today focused on what concepts and facts a science-literate person should know, and how the curriculum should be designed and taught. What would be the indicators of success?

Some educators, meanwhile, pointed out that although cumulative memorization of some essential facts and concepts is essential to being science literate, a realistic and functional science literacy—one that carries over into the adult years—has to look beyond that. Not only does our memory for facts quickly fade if not periodically called upon, but other kinds of science knowledge can have equal or greater value for the majority of people in a democratic society. For example, a simple understanding of key concepts and theories such as photosynthesis, evolution, and entropy can go a long way in enabling us to comprehend many aspects of the world around us. But equally important, an understanding of the process of science—or how scientific knowledge is acquired—gives insight into knowing what science can and cannot achieve and how to question the validity of scientific claims. These are extremely valuable assets in forming thoughtful responses to many of today's science-based dilemmas.

According to *Science and Engineering Indicators 2002*, the biennial report of the National Science Foundation to the president, the science literacy of many adult Americans is sadly lacking. Only about 50 percent of those surveyed by the Pew Research Center knew that the earliest humans did not live at the same time as dinosaurs, that it takes the earth one year to go around the sun, that electrons are smaller than atoms, and that

Only about 50 percent of those surveyed knew that the earliest humans did not live at the same time as dinosaurs, that it takes the earth one year to go around the sun, that electrons are smaller than atoms, and that antibiotics do not kill viruses.

antibiotics do not kill viruses. Less than 15 percent described themselves as well informed about new scientific discoveries and the use of new inventions and technologies. On a 10-question "pop quiz" on biotechnology, 56 percent gave the incorrect answer (true) to the statement "ordinary tomatoes do not contain genes, while genetically modified tomatoes do." Only 36 percent answered correctly (false) the most difficult question on the quiz: "Animal genes cannot be transferred into plants." About 40 percent of the public said that astrology was at least somewhat scientific, and a solid majority, 60 percent, agreed with the statement, "Some people possess psychic powers or ESP."

Gallup polls show substantial gains in almost every category of pseudoscience during the last decade. Alternative medicine, defined as any treatment that has not been proven effective using scientific methods, has gained in popularity. More than two-thirds of those responding to the NSF survey said that magnetic therapy was at least somewhat scientific, although no specific evidence exists to support claims about its effectiveness in treating pain or any other ailment. This generally low level of science literacy is alarming and reflects the influence of the media, the Internet, movies, and other popular sources on the learning and development of attitudes.

Too many citizens have slipped through the cracks when it comes to acquiring a critical broad context of knowledge. Late-night TV host Jay Leno has demonstrated time and again that the average man or woman on the street is *not* the person to answer your basic science questions. (He thanks those

hapless citizens for making the rest of us feel like geniuses!)

What is needed? Perhaps first of all, we need to acknowledge that though the motto on our T-shirts at WISL reads "Science Is Fun," science and math are also complex and complicated. For most of us, grasping some of their concepts requires concentrated thinking. I acknowledge this, and I understand why many people want to push science away.

On the other hand, if one has built a foundation of knowledge of things biological and physical, it is not really so hard to add incremental bits of new science knowledge. In fact, when our skills enable us to successfully grasp and comprehend challenging information and make it our own, we experience what University of Chicago educational psychologist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi has called "a characteristic experiential state" in which we develop a sense of control and of enjoyment. Then, science truly *is* fun; it's both mentally satisfying and confidence building.

PARENTS AND TEACHERS ARE CRUCIAL

A young student's desire or willingness to undertake the hard part of the process, however, depends tremendously on parents and teachers. When parents actively encourage their children's interest in science and math, when they empathize with their child's fear of a subject but stand firm that the subject must be learned, when they take the child to the planetarium or simply listen enthusiastically to a story about the third grade's tarantula, they are making an inestimable contribution.

This job becomes even more important as children enter middle school. As the science and math topics become more challenging, it's the parents who must step in and insist that the child take geometry or physics. We come back to the idea that America's level of science literacy is a measure of our values as a society—and of our concern as parents for our children's futures.

Teachers also are crucial. They can turn students on or off by their attitudes toward the subject and by how successfully they convey the material. Teachers tend to teach science the way they learned it 10 to 20 years ago, often by rote memorization or by a single method rather than by trying out new presentations or a mix of approaches that may better fit the needs and interests of today's students.

It is difficult to teach science well if you are uncomfortable with it yourself. And in America today, that is often the case. According to the National Science Foundation report *Science and Engineering Indicators 2002*, during the past three decades baccalaureate holders with low academic skills have been entering the teaching profession in much higher numbers than their fellow graduates with higher academic skills. Though

it is encouraging that high school science and math teachers are the exception to this trend, it is the elementary school teachers who often are the first to foster—or discourage—a child's early interest in science and math.

But things are changing. More states today demand better science qualifications for elementary grade teachers and administer tests to verify proficiency before hiring. In Wisconsin, high school science and math teachers must have academic majors or minors in the fields they are teaching. Elementary and middle school teachers must complete three courses in physical and biological science and three courses in mathematics and math education methods.

Today most school districts aim to bring their curriculums in line with the *National Science Education Standards*, a document containing grade-by-grade recommendations for science learning. Besides standards for curriculum content, the document—developed by the National Academy of Sciences—also includes standards for science teaching, for the professional development of science teachers, for assessment of science education, and for science education programs and systems at the school and district level.

SCIENCE LITERACY, DEFINED

Ideally, school programs also should be moving closer to the definition of science literacy posed by "Project 2061: Science for All Americans." This program from the American Association for the Advancement of Science states that the science-literate person:

- is familiar with the natural world;
- understands some of the key concepts and principles of science;
- has a capacity for scientific ways of thinking;
- is aware of some of the important ways in which mathematics, technology, and science depend upon one another;
- knows that science, mathematics, and technology are human enterprises and what that implies about their strengths and weaknesses; and
- is able to use scientific knowledge and ways of thinking for personal and social purposes.

According to these criteria, a good science education should convey not only the principles of the subject, but also the truth that science is neither infallible nor rigid.

It is important that people understand that scientific research—though a

Special Outreach Efforts

At the Wisconsin Initiative for Science Literacy we are trying to give new perspectives on science to teachers; to inner-city children; to girls and women; and to artists, humanists, and scientists themselves.

For example, we are in our third year of "Conversations in Science," a series of lectures and discussions that enable local high school and middle school science teachers to interact with UW-Madison's cutting-edge scientists and engineers and to take new ideas back to their classrooms.

We also are exploring new kinds of interactions in our "Science, the Arts, and Humanities" program. Though we seldom think about it, science is crucial

to many kinds of arts—in the making of music, the preparation of paints, the use of light, the writing of stories and of history, for example. Our goal is to engage artists and scientists of various kinds in finding places where science overlaps with arts and humanities and then sharing their discoveries about science and the creative process.

We have plans underway for a series of special Saturday-morning science sessions for middle school and high school students in Madison and Milwaukee as part of our "Science in the City" program. These sessions will involve parents as well as students because parents, too, need to lose their fear of science and discover its excite-

ment. Parent involvement is part of a larger goal of cultivating the whole community's support for science education, particularly in the inner cities where students need all the encouragement they can get.

Some activities, under our "Women in Science" program, are targeting girls and women. Traditionally science is not seen as a woman's area of interest or career choice. We want to encourage the participation of girls and women in science by making them aware of role models, offering them chances to try out science in a supportive environment, and providing mentoring.

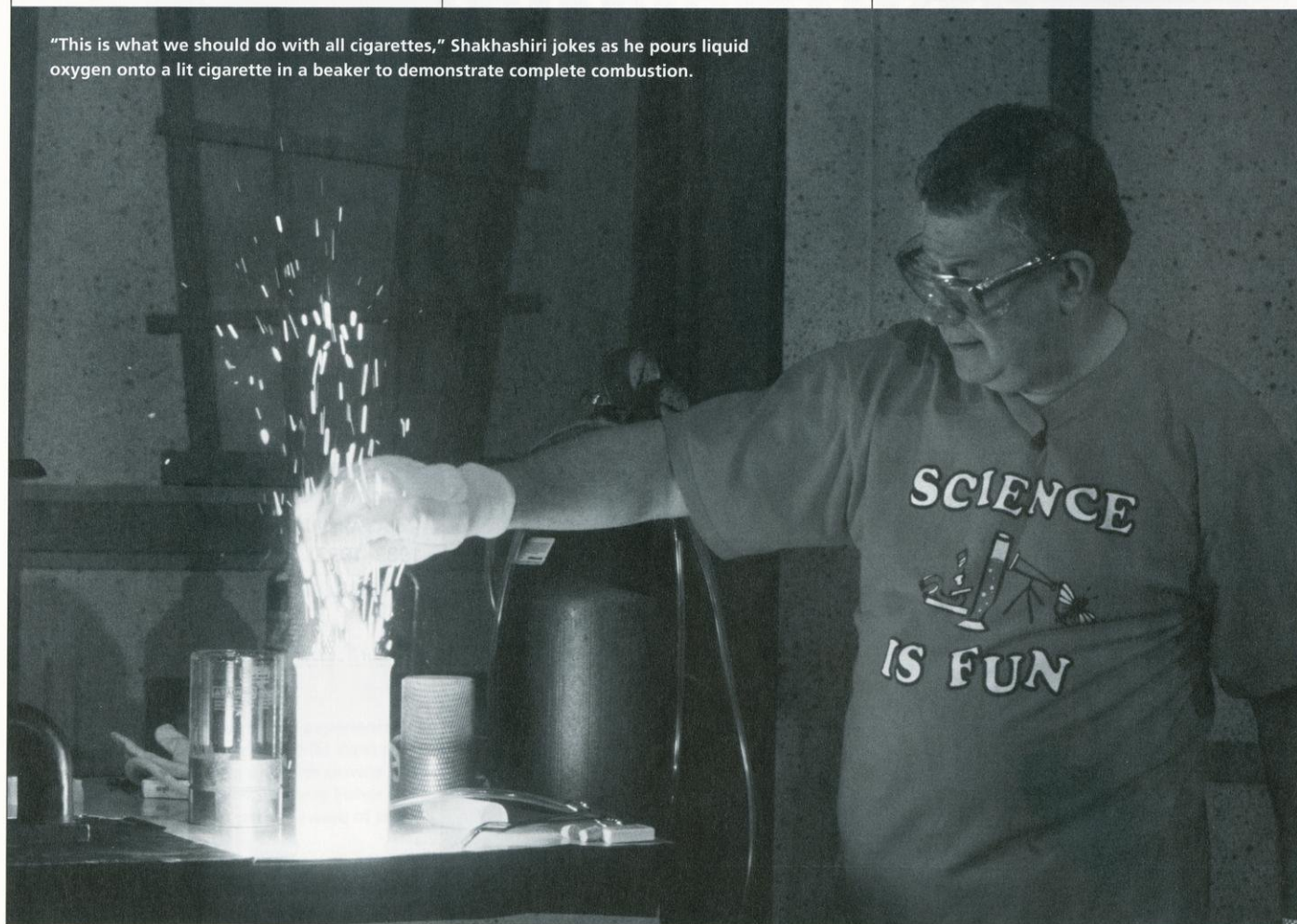
rational, objective, and quantitative process—can, nevertheless, be imbued with the human values and biases of its practitioners and of society in general. If citizens have knowledge of the process of science, they can recognize and challenge weak or questionable arguments, even when they come from so-called experts. Consider, for example, the health research that for many years focused on men's heart problems and extrapolated from that data to generalizations about women's heart disease. In fact, women were also suffering heart attacks and strokes almost as often as men. But at that time men were not only the primary breadwinners but also the majority practitioners of research and medicine, creating a bias. Only in recent years have researchers looked independently at women's health issues and found important differences in how each sex develops heart disease and responds to treatment.

A science-literate person has enough familiarity with the natural world and some of its basic workings to detect and reject shams and unproven conjecture. This is especially important today when people get much of their information from the Internet, a place rich with factual data but also replete with inaccurate descriptions of every color. In the electronic world, where half-formed opinions have equal standing with carefully researched information, we need to know how to separate the true from the false. This task is much easier if we have developed some capacity for "scientific ways of thinking": if we understand the rational process for identifying a question or phenomenon, collecting quantifiable data on the subject in an impartial way, and from that developing a hypothesis that may be tested by further observation and carefully controlled and designed experiments.

When we understand the *process* of science we also understand how new advances in technology (for example, a more sensitive pollution-monitoring machine) can open new avenues of experimentation and produce new outcomes. How often do we hear from our friends "I wish they would make up their minds" when yet another study reports on the risks of hormone replacement therapy for women, or announces revised daily exercise recommendations for adults? The science-literate person may agree that the series of conflicting announcements are indeed tiresome, but at the same time knows that different outcomes are to be expected from experiments that look at new factors or at a larger sample size than the originals. The nature of science is to continue probing for that final and often elusive truth.

Science and technology are powerful forces in our lives. Being science literate

"This is what we should do with all cigarettes," Shakhshiri jokes as he pours liquid oxygen onto a lit cigarette in a beaker to demonstrate complete combustion.



gives us a greater degree of control over those forces, or makes the changes they bring easier to accommodate. At the same time, the science-literate person's life is tremendously enriched by exposure to a variety of subjects that stretch the mind and enable one to understand and appreciate so much more of the world: to comprehend why fog forms on a lake, to understand an explanation of how a bar code scanner works, to appreciate how a suspension bridge stays upright, to recognize basic geologic formations or plant communities as one travels across the country—all these things give a sense of delight in the natural world.

Our schools and colleges should aim for these goals as they upgrade their curriculums. Meanwhile, there is need for other initiatives, such as the WISL, to compensate for the science-literacy deficits within our educational institutions and our general population. At WISL, we are using a variety of programs to develop an *attitude toward science*, among people of all ages, that carries

over to work or school life and enriches it [see sidebar on page 22].

In cultivating this attitude, we require that the scientists/engineers involved in our outreach programs make special efforts to explain their work in an understandable and captivating way and, in some cases, be willing to look at their work in a new light. The research enterprise can sometimes insulate and isolate its practitioners, and these programs offer rich and broadening experiences to the scientists as well as their audiences.

At the Wisconsin Initiative for Science Literacy, we want to spark an interest in science not just among young students but also among teachers, the general public, and professionals. We hope all citizens will adopt and support our efforts to promote greater science literacy among all sectors and age groups, and to attract future generations to careers as the researchers, entrepreneurs, and teachers on whom the future depends. ▀

Bassam Z. Shakhshiri is UW-Madison professor of chemistry and the first holder of the William T. Evjue Distinguished Chair for the Wisconsin Idea. He is the founding chair of the UW System Undergraduate Teaching Improvement Council (1977) and the founding director of the Institute for Chemical Education (1983). He is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science (1986) and a Fellow of the New York Academy of Sciences (2002). He is the recipient of five honorary doctorates and more than 25 awards, including the 2003 AAAS Award for Public Understanding of Science and Technology. Currently he directs the newly launched Wisconsin Initiative for Science Literacy.

SOURCES

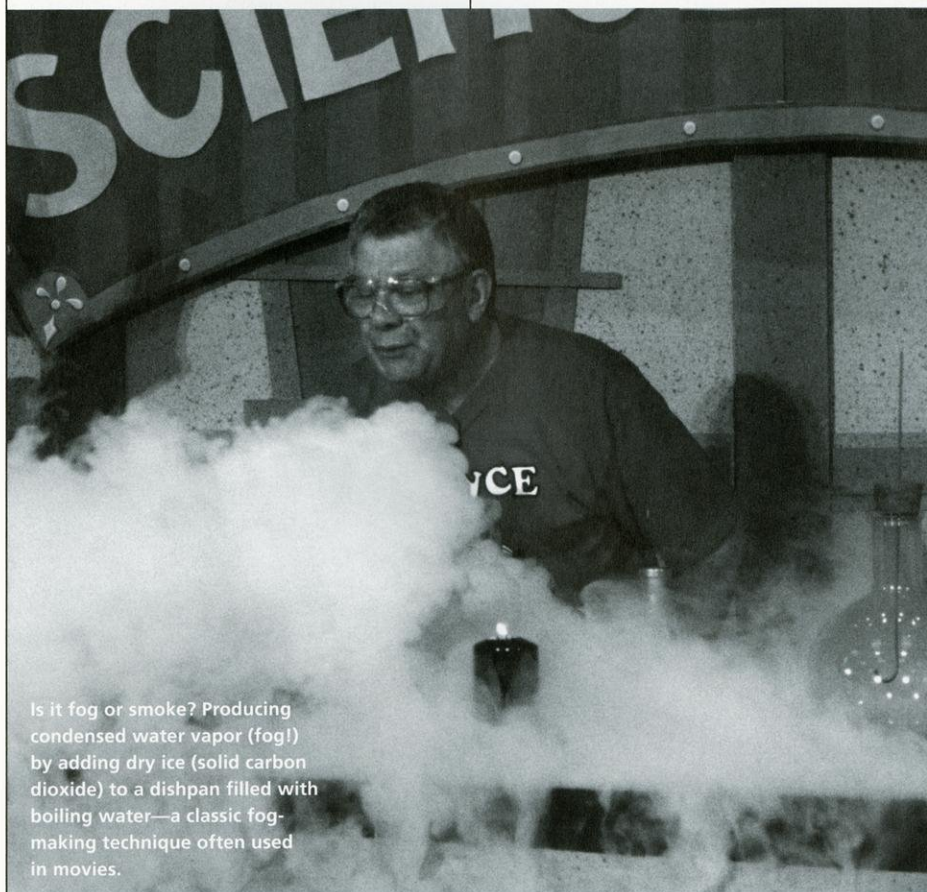
American Association for the Advancement of Science, "Project 2061: Science for all Americans," 1998.

Csikszentmihalyi, Mihaly, "Literacy and Intrinsic Motivation," *Daedalus*, Vol. 119, No. 2 (1990): 115–140.

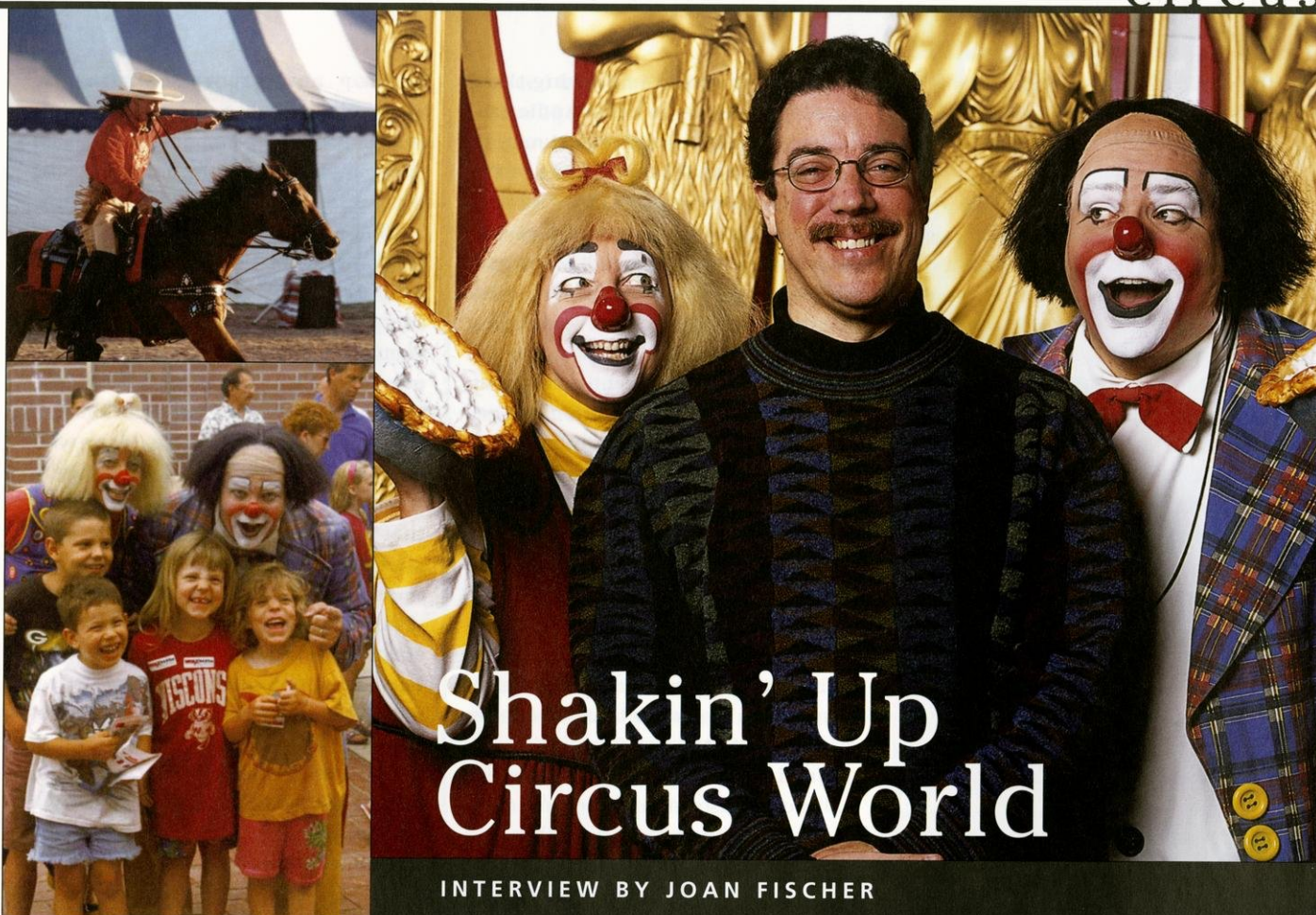
National Research Council, *National Science Education Standards* (Washington, D.C.: National Academy of Sciences, 1996).

National Science Board, *Science and Engineering Indicators 2002*, Vol. 1 (Washington, D.C.: National Science Foundation, 2002) 7–1 to 7–42.

Shakhshiri, Bassam Z., *Chemical Demonstrations: A Handbook for Teachers of Chemistry*, Vols. 1–4 (Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1983–1992).



Is it fog or smoke? Producing condensed water vapor (fog!) by adding dry ice (solid carbon dioxide) to a dishpan filled with boiling water—a classic fog-making technique often used in movies.



Shakin' Up Circus World

INTERVIEW BY JOAN FISCHER

It's a world-class museum and a living circus. Yet many people still view Circus World as something just for kids. Read how new director Larry Fisher aims to revitalize one of Wisconsin's biggest cultural treasures.

Your Circus World experience can include watching a Wild West show or hanging out with clowns (side photos). Director Larry Fisher does so at his peril (beware of pies!).

Photo of Fisher and clowns by John Urban; others courtesy of Circus World Museum unless otherwise noted.

MOST RECENTLY HE WAS DIRECTOR of the Barnum Museum in Bridgeport, Connecticut. Before that, Larry Fisher was a consultant to museums worldwide, including the Smithsonian Institution and Grand Canyon National Park. He also built trains and racing cars in his native California, and worked as an "imagineer" for Walt Disney Imagineering—the people who create Disney parks and resorts from concept through installation.

Now Fisher, 42, has embarked on a project that is no less adventurous—dusting off, polishing, and putting the spotlight on Circus World, Wisconsin's shrine and living legacy to the American circus.

Circus World encompasses much more than most people realize. Its site in Baraboo is located at the original winter quarters of the Ringling Bros. circus, which opened in 1884 and became one of the two biggest circuses in the world.

The museum, founded in 1954, includes an exhibit hall and visitor center displaying rare circus posters from the museum's extensive collection, costumes, props, and other artifacts; a circus wagon restoration center where visitors can watch skilled craftsmen carving and painting; a wagon pavilion filled with circus wagons and trains of every color, size, and description, including stunning goldleaf-covered floats; and a library and research center that is one

of the world's biggest for documenting circus history.

Though in some ways Circus World seems like a land that time forgot—what does the circus mean in an era of movies, cable TV, and a host of other entertainment options?—it is still a slugger for the state economically. Circus World's big events—the Great Circus Parade, the Great Circus Train that wends its way through the state, and the Great Circus Festival—reach more than one million people and in an independent economic impact study were shown to generate \$75.5 million, says Fisher. When museum impact is added to that, the total is more than \$100 million, he notes.

But Fisher thinks the reach and impact of Circus World could go much farther, and he's excited about helping it get there. We talked with Fisher about the “new” Circus World this spring, before the start of what promises to be a busy summer season.

What made you want to take the job at Circus World?

Larry Fisher: Good question! Having spent most of the past decade working with museum institutions on interpre-

tive strategies and improving their capacity to become more audience-focused, I looked at the opportunity to not only develop those strategies but to implement them at Circus World as a potentially rewarding career decision. Circus World has been a pretty successful attraction, and the Great Circus Parade is among the top events of its kind in this country.

However, the full potential of Circus World as a museum institution has yet to be fully realized. I chose to make the move because of the opportunity to help maximize that potential. Of course, I'd be deceiving you if I didn't tell you it is also just a heck of a lot of fun.

What are the main things you hope to accomplish?

First and foremost, we need to reenvision Circus World so that we can be responsive to the needs and expectations of both our core and potential audiences. Museums must become more guest-focused, not only within the museum proper but by embracing alternative strategies that include outreach, education, the web, the media, and more. To achieve this end we need to

develop new program strategies, increase awareness of our institution and its programs, and ensure our sustainability for the future.

What are the biggest challenges you face?

Awareness of what Circus World is! Every day I hear guests of the museum comment on the breadth and scope of our institution. They are awed by the sheer magnitude and beauty of the collections they can see here. Many who come are also surprised that Circus World is a living history museum, and that we not only preserve things but continue to perform traditional circus arts and practice the skills of the many individuals who worked behind the scenes of circus past. However, it is equally astonishing to hear from the number of people who comment on not knowing we even existed. Many of those who do know about the museum hold on to a perception of the experience of 20 years ago and have no idea of the changes that have occurred and are occurring.

Resource development is also a challenge in light of current economic trends and changes in the face of philanthropy. However, we are equally challenged by the many misconceptions about the museum's funding. Circus World Museum Foundation is a private, non-profit 501c(3) organization that has operated the museum under a lease and management agreement with the Wisconsin Historical Society since the museum's opening in 1959. The misconception is that Circus World is supported through taxpayer funding. This is not the case. In fact, less than 2 percent of Circus World's annual expenditures are financed through state appropriations. Our challenge now is to build awareness among potential donors of the programs we offer and the positive experiences we create through our programs and outreach. On a corporate level, we are bringing our unique brand to the table and making available opportunities to support the museum that enhance the corporation's image and provide exposure to a broad and diverse audience.



Restoration of wagons and floats by skilled craftsmen is a Circus World specialty. Soon Mother Goose will be as dazzling as the goldleaf-covered Cinderella (opposite).
Photos by John Urban

Finally, our geography is both an asset and a challenge. Circus World is located in the heart of Baraboo and is adjacent to the Wisconsin Dells. But let's think about the potential of Circus World to reach a broader audience. Tourism is the state's second-largest industry. The greater Wisconsin Dells area attracts millions of guests to our region. Ultimately, many of those guests come or will come to the museum as a result. That is great, and Circus World has the capacity to engage hundreds of thousands of people annually. However, we can't stop there. To reach the largest possible audience, Circus World will expand outreach initiatives to bring some of the magic of circus to our audience. Through traveling exhibitions, collaboration with other cultural institutions, and diverse educational programs, the museum can overcome the geographic obstacles.

The museum has taken some hard budget hits—the annual budget was

reduced from \$5.3 million to \$4 million, with a 20 percent cut in the workforce. How are you going to deal with that?

The budget for 2003 is my budget. While it's true that it's some \$1 million less than last year, we've been able to actually add programming. Our guests will enjoy what they've come to expect, and a whole lot more. And the reason for that is relatively simple: we're taking the museum in a much more guest-focused direction. Everything we do in this year, and in subsequent years, is directed to meet the needs and desires of the guests—and also has to be sustainable over time. What we do has to meet those criteria. And we'll be testing ourselves and keeping that dialogue with our audiences going, too. This new vision has breathed life into the assets of the collection. We're working in an atmosphere that values the resources of this collection, not one that fosters an appetite for more.

CIRCUS TALK

The circus is a subculture with a language of its own. As part of its education efforts, Circus World plans to post bilingual signs around museum grounds—"bilingual" meaning circus talk and English!

backyard—off-limits to the general public. Dressing rooms, ring stock tents or paddocks, wardrobe and costume departments, doctor's wagon, tailor's wagon, the dining facilities, and performers' rest and practice areas were all in the backyard of traveling circuses.

backdoor—performer's entrance to the Big Top.

barkers—a novice's term for what really should be called a talker, spieler, grinder, or lecturer.

bulls—elephants.

butchers—working staff, usually temporary, that work the bleachers under the Big Top selling concessions. Mostly, peanuts, popcorn, lemonade and "floss," a.k.a. cotton candy.

Dirtie Gertie—a term Circus World has coined for its fictional wardrobe mistress.

doniker—a restroom or toilet.

first of May—a newcomer to the business. The term comes from the idea that most traveling shows began their season by going out on the first of May.

gazuny—a young or immature person or working man.

pie car—a dining car on a circus train or the snack wagon or trailer in the backyard.

roustabouts—circus working men on the lot, particularly the Big Top crew.

See www.ringling.com/activity/education/glossary.asp for more circus terms.



What can visitors experience this summer—your debut season—that they wouldn't have experienced last summer?

It's definitely the debut of a new chapter for Circus World. As for summer, the seasonal aspect of tourism in our area is becoming less of a factor in how we approach programming. During 2003, guests at Circus World will have the opportunity to experience a variety of new programs. Many are structured so that children and families can become active participants. For example, children will be able to produce and perform an

imaginary circus using objects one might find in their own backyard, all under the guidance of one of our costumed interpretive staff.

Guests will also have opportunity to explore the circus "backyard," the behind-the-scenes world of roustabouts, butchers, barkers and bulls—you can see this involves becoming familiar with a whole circus language! [See glossary sidebar.] They'll have the opportunity to experience what it's like to be a "gazuny" or to visit "Dirtie Gertie" and try on some wardrobe, or watch clowns

applying their makeup or donning their agent suits, as their costumes are called. As for the Big Top, this year's performance features several traditional circus acts, our resident clowns and singing ringmaster, our high-energy juggler extraordinaire, and a live circus band.

Animals have always played an important role in the circus. This year we are presenting three interpretive programs that focus on animal husbandry and affection training. Our comedy dog act from the Big Top performance will also be a part of a program for children who wish to teach their household pets circus tricks. We've brought a highly experienced trainer of elephants to the museum to guide our elephant encounter program, and we've invited a trainer of exotic white camels to summer in Baraboo while he teaches these amazing animals a routine for a touring circus in 2004.

Throughout Circus World, guests will encounter living history programs, costumed interpreters and role-players who bring to life the stories of the circus and of the Ringling Bros. Circus Winter Quarters National Historic Landmark. Some of these programs will take place in landmark buildings never before opened to the public.

How about your big traveling programs: the Circus Train and Parade?

This year the train will make longer, more meaningful stops in several towns from as far south as Whitewater and as far north as Oshkosh. These stops will include more programming, community involvement, and an increased emphasis on interpreting an event that is the only one of its kind in the world.

After the train arrives in Milwaukee we have more in store at the Great Circus Festival and the Great Circus Parade, with all new entertainment, some special record-breaking surprises, and celebrity appearances. We've also partnered with several legendary Wisconsin organizations to add some new features to the events, including a special celebration of the Centennial of Flight with the EAA Museum. I could go on, but the best



description of what to expect from Circus World is to expect the unexpected!

The circus will no longer self-produce circus performances. Do you see any benefits to that change or is it strictly a loss?

A traditional centerpiece of summer programming—the Big Top performance—has been contracted to a professional circus producer for 2003. This action alone represents a significant expense reduction while retaining the quality of the visitor experience. The audience will enjoy the same superior-caliber performance they've come to expect, with some of the same familiar faces they've seen here at the museum. It's just that this year, the museum won't bear the ever-increasing ancillary costs necessary to actually stage such a performance. Again, if we stay focused on the guest experience, there's nothing but positives that come from that decision.

You are for the first time setting up Circus World as a membership organization. How will this mesh with membership in the Wisconsin Historical Society?

We're very proud of our affiliation with the Wisconsin Historical Society, and we welcome WHS members every year here at the museum. Launching a membership program for Circus World Museum won't conflict with these activities at all. On the contrary, the museum is in a unique position to help raise awareness of the other WHS sites across the state. We are the most-visited site in the WHS family. We're planning to be much more aggressive about helping to spread the word about the Wisconsin Historical Society—starting right in our lobby! Of course, membership at Circus World comes with unique benefits. A membership at Circus World entitles our guests to special opportunities, priority programming, unlimited admission throughout the year, and our publications. Most important, membership at Circus World is a way to directly support the activities of this institution and indicates our guests' commitment to our new education and outreach programs and our new direction.

What role does education play at Circus World?

Circus World Museum has a public obligation to educate. Education, research, and publication of the results were one of the core missions of the museum upon its founding. One of the principal reasons for my coming to Circus World was to establish an effective education and outreach program. I'm very pleased with the results we have been able to achieve in the last eight months and with where we are headed in 2003. We started last year without any formalized program or education function at the museum other than our outstanding performance department. In 2002 our library and archives group produced a highly successful program for schools and the public that we will now offer throughout the year. We've piloted several other programs over the past year with an equal degree of success. For the first time we have a dedicated education and outreach department, headed by Karen and Greg DeSanto [see sidebar on page 31]. We've forged partnerships with the UW system and with the MATC campuses in our region. We've initiated an internship program, a traveling educator program, and a high-school level service program. The museum has been designated as a site for an exciting mentorship program developed at the Henry Ford Museum & Greenfield Village.

Ultimately, education does not just play a role at Circus World—it is why we are here. Museums are called upon more and more frequently to fill an expanding gap in education by providing unique, meaningful experiences that utilize primary sources from our collections and archives. Through these museum experiences we have an unbounded opportunity to capture the students' imagination, instill a sense of awe and meaning that is virtually impossible to achieve in the classroom, and inspire them to future pursuits.



Step right up—and watch the train go by. The Great Circus Train's trek through Wisconsin now includes more stops and more chances to interact with circus folk.



We have a rich circus legacy to preserve in Wisconsin, don't we?

Yes! The role the circus played in Wisconsin—and in America—had a significant impact on the history of the country. In many ways, the role Wisconsin played in shaping the life of this nation is unequalled by any other state. Through the late 19th and early 20th century, Wisconsin was home to the Ringling Bros. Circus—one of the largest companies in the country at the time. Well over 100 circuses have called Wisconsin home. That's more than any other state in the union. Not only was Wisconsin the birthplace of the Ringling Bros. Circus, but the impact of Wisconsin's circuses on America was truly a big deal. There's nothing really unique about a company being described today as "national" or "international"—but the American circus was one of the first industries to have a truly national scope. Brands like "The Greatest Show on Earth" were known from coast to coast, long before mass communication and the technology to deliver it existed. Integrated marketing, modern customer-service principles, and logistics management may all be traced to the American circus.

Do many people come up to you with stories about how they experienced Circus World or the circus in Wisconsin in general, in their youths?

I have yet to meet someone who doesn't have a circus story. It is amazing how the circus or circus arts are a great equalizer. Equally amazing is the number of people who come to me and say, "I haven't been to Circus World since I was a child." Of course I encourage them to return and see how we've grown and changed. But isn't it interesting how as adults we stop pursuing interests because we think they are only for our youth? The world would be a much better place if adults would take the time to go play on a playground, fly a kite, stomp in puddles, or pursue some other interest that they now attribute only to children. Just the other day I spent the better part of a weekend flying kites in Madison. I can honestly say I didn't spend a moment pondering the budget or worrying about foreign affairs or really thinking about anything else other than the pure fun of doing what I was doing at that moment. One of the great strengths of Circus World is that we have something for everybody here, and it can be enjoyed no matter what age the guest is.

What role did the circus play in people's lives during its heyday?

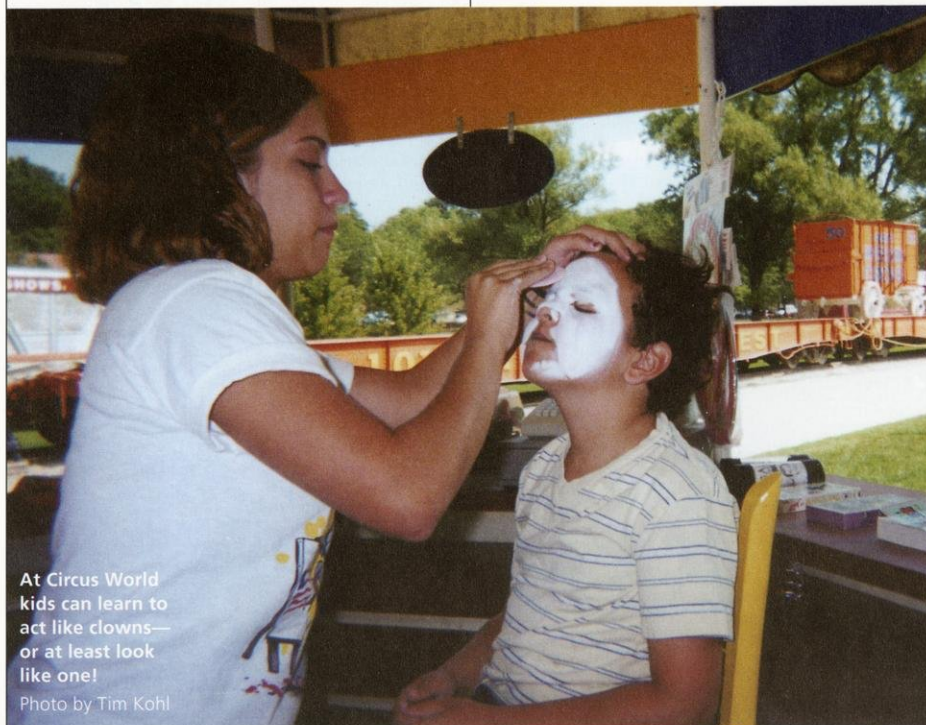
I don't know about saying "heyday" in that circus is alive and well and continues to evolve over time. But before television and radio, in a time where most people still lived their entire lives within 100 miles of where they were born, before the X-Games and reality TV, circus was most of America's living and breathing window to the world.

What did the circus mean for rural or small-town folks?

In many ways, the circus was the world's first information superhighway. The circus brought people of all races and origins together. The diversity of the circus was a reflection of America—all Americans. The circus brought exotic animals to rural America years before the first zoos even existed. Traveling circuses—themselves examples of sophisticated transportation technologies—brought emerging technology to the Heartland. Americans 100 years ago experienced their first electric light, their first car, and their first flying machines when the circus came to town. They experienced living history, art, and culture under the Big Top half a century before the advent of the modern computer.

What's your favorite circus story?

There are so many interesting stories one could spend a lifetime discovering them, so I'll tell you a story that happened to me. When I was about six or seven I went to a circus in Santa Barbara, California, where I grew up. I can recall seeing the big red and white tents set up alongside the freeway at the fairgrounds and the experience of walk-



At Circus World kids can learn to act like clowns—or at least look like one!

Photo by Tim Kohl



One of many beautifully restored wagons on display.

ing to the Big Top with the smell of sawdust, crushed grass, animals, and delicious food. I couldn't begin to tell you what the acts were. In fact, I don't really remember anything about the show itself. But I remember seeing the elephants outside and holding my grandfather's huge hand as we experienced it together. Not long after, he gave me a book titled *Come to the Circus* that I still have today. I had forgotten that book, stashed away among several children's books I have dragged with me for years, until I was asked to come to Circus World. While in Connecticut considering the offer, I recalled seeing the book the last time I had moved so I decided to look for it. I found the book, a little worse for wear but intact, and looked at the cover. To my surprise I discovered that that book was written in 1960 by Charles Phillip Fox, the first director of Circus World. It now sits on a shelf in my office and inside it bears the inscription, "To my good friend Larry Fisher, with best wishes. Chappie Fox, Jan. 2, 2002."

What do you most admire about the Ringling brothers?

The rise of the Ringling brothers is the quintessential American story of the power of a dream, and the determination and grit needed to make that dream a reality. The brothers built their empire literally from the ground up—the ground of their own backyard in Baraboo. They earned enough to reinvest capital in their fledgling enterprise, and worked tirelessly to improve and streamline their business. And when that business became successful, they reinvested again—and continued to pursue their dream. What started as a show in their backyard in Baraboo was, by the beginning of World War I, an entertainment empire that employed more than 2,000 people, and carried them—with hundreds of exotic animals—across the country on two trains with 90 railroad cars each. The most admirable thing about the brothers was their ability to dedicate their lives to the enterprise and to work together as both partners and as a family. The Ringling Bros. took the "show business" and turned it into big business.

Meet the Teachers

Education and outreach efforts at Circus World are headed by a couple of clowns.

Greg and Karen DeSanto share an office, they share a business, and they share the spotlight. It's an enterprise that includes much more laughter than most—they are one of very few professional clown teams working today.

The DeSantos joined Circus World Museum in January as co-coordinators of education and outreach, and now make their home in Baraboo with their young daughter (or "girl clown," as they refer to her). Circus World visitors may recognize them from their performances there over the past five summers, but apart from those stints, their lives have been marked by travel, performance, and travel again.

Now they're ready to share their expertise with Circus World guests year-round. They're helping to develop interactive and educational programming that will transform the museum and shape its future. And they continue to work as consultants for Feld Entertainment, which owns the Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Circus.

Young visitors to the museum will reap the benefits. "We take the elements of the circus and try to incorporate them into what the kids are learning in school," says Greg. "We're asking ourselves, how does the circus apply to what they're doing?"

Greg's been around long enough to know that those connections are there. He graduated from the Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Clown College in 1985 and spent a decade as a producing clown for all three units of the Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Circus, where he wrote and directed the major clown performances. His work has taken him from Madison Square Garden and Lincoln Center to the White House, where he has performed for presidents Ronald Reagan and George Bush.

Karen completed Clown College in 1993 (Greg was one of her instructors). She's toured with the Ringling Bros. Barnum & Bailey Circus and is a

member of the Big Apple Circus' Clown Care Unit, a group of professional performers who bring humor and good cheer to hospitalized children.

"You can learn through everything," says Karen. "What we have is a nice angle, because we're clowns, and we can bring humor into it. And if you laugh while you learn, you retain it. 'Laugh while you learn!' That's a good catchphrase!"



Karen tells the story of a young autistic boy who was brought to a performance at Circus World a few summers ago. The loud music, the dazzling lights, and the confines of the Big Top unnerved the boy, and his father struggled to make him comfortable. The next year the boy wanted to return, and sought out Greg and Karen after the show.

"He hugged us and he said our names right to our faces," recalls Karen. "And his dad just sobbed. This boy has grown so much, and it's all because we, as performers, were able to help open his world. It's phenomenal."

—by Ed Taylor, *Circus World*

How is it for you living and working in Baraboo, as someone who was raised in southern California and just moved here from the East Coast? Do you ever relate to the main character in "Northern Exposure"?

I am enjoying life here. I can relate to Doc Fleischman's experience in that I'm much more visible here, so work tends to be a 24/7 commitment. I occasionally experience that "So ... you came here from back East, huh?" wariness that the doctor endured, and I admit I do go to Madison for sushi several times a month—for me it's the East and West Coast version of Friday fish fry.

But the payoff is Baraboo's almost mythical small-town charm. Sometimes I feel like I'm on a movie set, with the courthouse square and its cannon, with the people who greet you by name in the shops and restaurants, and the wonderful architecture that includes one of the most beautiful theaters in the country, the "Al," as it is known around here [the Al. Ringling Theatre, which opened in 1915]. It's also a great place for getting away on my motorcycle or going for a hike to clear the mind after a day at the office.

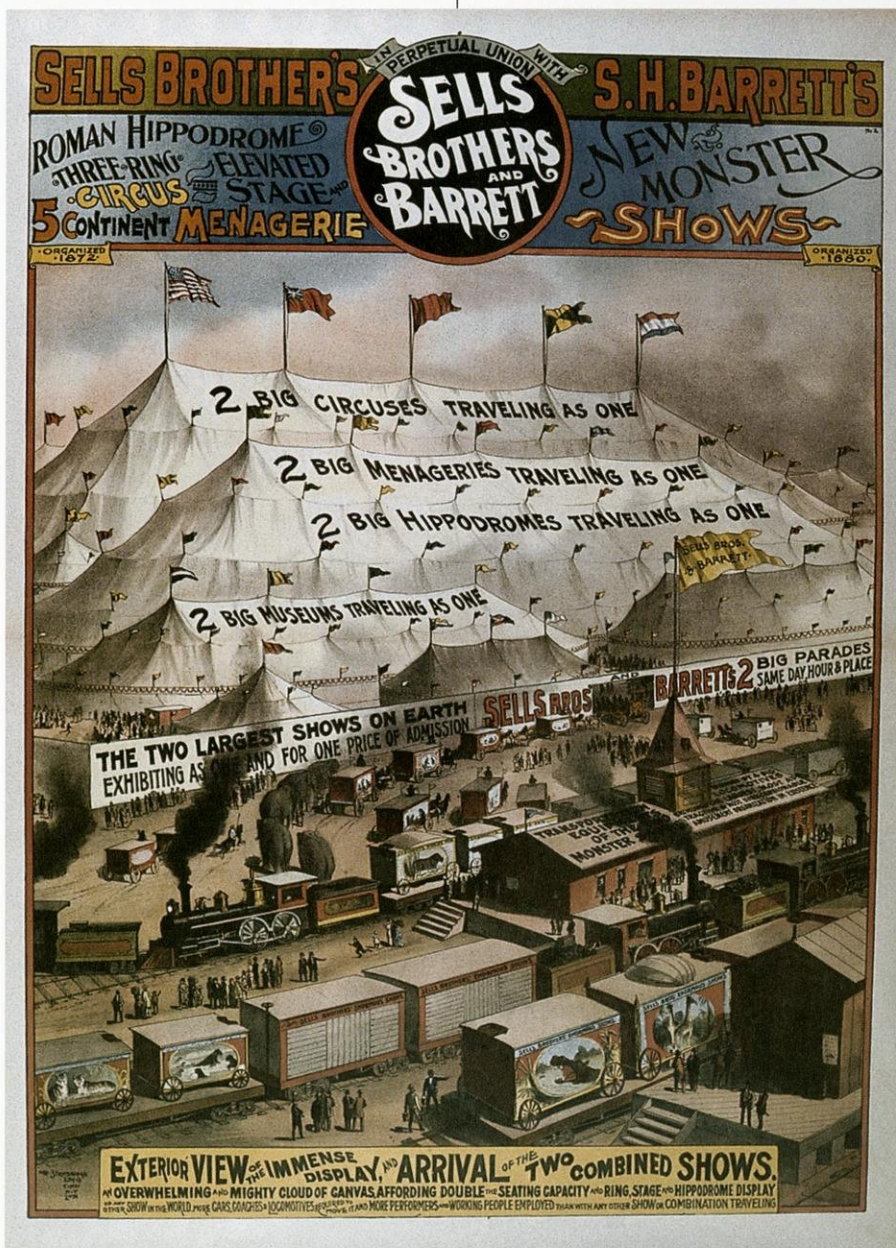
Where do you want to take Circus World? Five years from now, what do you see Circus World doing and providing?

In five years I want to see a Circus World that is responding to its guests' needs to the best of our ability. Audience research and evaluation are critical to the future success of the museum. After all, communities support museums that support communities.

Our present vision for the museum includes restoration and interpretation of the Ringling Brothers Circus Winter Quarters National Historic Landmark. We hope to achieve an immersive experience not unlike that of Colonial Williamsburg or Mystic Seaport in Connecticut. In addition, we are looking at increased access to the museum facilities so our guests can have a more active role in experiencing circus arts and history.

Our wagon-restoration center may expand into producing reproductions for use in outreach initiatives and appearances in parades around the country so that we may better preserve our collections for future generations. We will be continuing to evaluate the potential of traveling exhibitions and educational programs and pursuing those initiatives that are the desire of our audiences. We'll be looking at ways to improve upon the highly successful experiences of the Great Circus Train, Festival, and Parade. We will be exploring new technologies to increase access to our collections and to better equip ourselves for reaching students in the classroom or at home.

The key to where the museum is in five years is our audiences. Circus offers a unique opportunity to entertain and educate, to cross social and economic boundaries with a subject of universal appeal, and to apply an interdisciplinary approach to learning in a unique environment. Overall we want to employ every possible technique, strategy, and technology at our disposal to ensure for future generations that Circus World remains America's Circus Museum. ▀



poetry contest winners

After 30 years of assessing university student poetry portfolios and judging national contests like the Kerouac Literary Award, I am humbled into saying that judging winners in this statewide contest was the most challenging of tasks. The final selection which harvested three winners and 10 runners-up was made only after multiple readings, ponderings, reevaluations, and a wish that I could award first place to the "top" three poems, and grant multiple second- and third- place winners. I am pleased with the selections made by the other judges. Most of all, I salute the poetic skill and sensitivity of the women and men poets of Wisconsin.

—Doug Flaherty, Wisconsin Commended Poet and final judge,
Wisconsin Academy Review poetry contest

Our warmest congratulations to the three winners of the 2003 *Wisconsin Academy Review* poetry contest:

First Prize: Temple Cone, Madison

John Lehman Poetry Award, \$500

CD recording session at Abella Studios in Madison

Second Prize: Ryan G. Van Cleave, Green Bay

\$100 and an overnight stay at Cambridge House Bed and Breakfast

Third Prize: Eleanor Stanford, Madison

\$50 and a restaurant gift certificate

Meet the poets at a reading and reception at Canterbury Booksellers in Madison (315 W. Gorham St.) on Friday, April 11, 6–8 p.m.

We'd like to express our great thanks to contest judges Linda Aschbrenner, Russell King, and Marilyn Taylor, and to our head judge, Doug Flaherty. Without their input of time and wisdom, this contest would not have been possible. We also wish to thank the unflaggingly devoted John Lehman, the *Wisconsin Academy Review's* poetry editor and the sponsor of this contest. Wisconsin poetry has no greater friend! Finally, we would like to thank Abella Studios in Madison and the Cambridge House Bed and Breakfast for sweetening the prizes with their generous gifts.

Last but not least—thank you, poets and poetry fans around the state, for making our annual contest a vibrant event we can eagerly anticipate each spring. You make Wisconsin's contribution to National Poetry Month something our state can truly be proud of.

—Joan Fischer, editor

POETRY CONTEST RUNNERS-UP

These poets' work will appear in the summer issue of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*. They are listed here alphabetically.*

Tom Boswell, Madison
Christine Butterworth, Madison
Robin Chapman, Madison
Amy Crane Johnson, Green Bay
Jackie Langetieg, Madison

Sandra J. Lindow, Eau Claire
C. J. Muchhala, Shorewood
Paula Schulz, Brookfield
Paul Terranova, Madison

* Ten poems were actually selected; two are by poet Paul Terranova. All 10 poems will be published.

First Place

TEMPLE CONE
Winner of the
John Lehman Poetry Award



DOUG FLAHERTY on "Considerations of Earth and Sky"

There is an assured, swift movement here. Even the unrhymed couplets with multiple pauses can't slow down the spiritual gravity of the content. The poet, in the same breath, gives equivalence to a Chevy or the solar system. Like Whitman, this poet is in love with creation, finds a holiness in all. The poet notes how the cows "obey thunder's psalm by kneeling down." Even the "curse" in the last line fails to undercut the solemnity of what the poem says, what the north wind says: "Bless everything well-made." This poem, also.



Considerations of Earth and Sky

Begin talking through the pain, not with it.
Point out the nail in the stranded post,

rusting, fenceless, like despair. Or the cows
who obey thunder's psalm by kneeling down.

Give it a name. Any name. Try creek-flood,
brush fire, snowstorm. You compound suffering

with the plain beauty of a world we're not meant for,
and you get suffering. Compounded.

Try words washed clean as pebbles. Think fjord.
There's a keen redtail up in yonder spruce.

When old men drive by, don't try to match their stares
that measure you like a dipstick does oil;

just notice how the Chevy's prime and rust,
shining through the white paint, correspond

to an Appaloosa's spots. Horse of stars.
Bless anything well-made, the north wind says;

don't romance without a good four blankets.
Hunger's a challenge at first, then a joy,

then a tool you remember to carry
everywhere. Almost ordinary, till one day

you're walking an empty highway, past rockwalls
maybe ten million years old. You look up—

granite stained with bird-lime, lichen, freeze cracks—
and realize you could eat the goddamn clouds.

by Temple Cone

Wharf

Was my father's word. The rain-warped wood,
Like a ladder stretching from the dank sand,
Lured me as a child. Some nights I stood
Watching the far shore, my back to the land.

I'd see oyster scows on the river, home
After a long day scouring empty beds.
Looking for cast-offs, gulls trailed them like foam.
The running-lights flickered a burnt-out red.

The planks were speckled with nettles, ghost-trails
Gaffed and laid aswirl to dry in sun.
A broken road. Ossuary of scales.
Bridge the builder couldn't fit to span

Water the wind wrinkled like a crumpled page.
When winter storms tore gaps as big as boys,
I'd help my father, or rather watch him, patch
Old wood with new. He'd fit blond boards to joists

Stippled with rust-blooms where the nails had been.
Hammer curled back like a bright steel claw,
He squared up wood-screws and drove them clean.
"Better hold," he said. Once, I'd had to bow

Over the edge with him, to scrape barnacles
From a piling. I asked if he worried
The pier wouldn't last. One flick sent shells
Into the waves, and he straightened, a board

Himself. Hand to the sun, his face grew dark,
Fixing me for a moment in his glance.
"It's a wharf," he said, then bent to his work
Again. And I have not forgotten since.

by Temple Cone

*Temple Cone was raised in Virginia and moved to Madison in 1999. He holds degrees in philosophy and creative writing from Washington and Lee University and the University of Virginia, was a teacher and coach at a boarding school in the Tidewater area, and is now pursuing a Ph.D. in English literature from UW-Madison. His dissertation examines the engagement of lyric poetry with ecology in the work of four 20th-century poets. He has won an Academy of American Poets Award and the David and Jean Milofsky Prize (from UW-Madison), and his poems have appeared or are forthcoming in **Southern Humanities Review, North Dakota Quarterly, Green Mountains Review, Southern Poetry Review, The Hollins Critic, and Midwest Quarterly**, among other publications.*

"For me, why I'm drawn to reading poetry is the same as what I gain from writing it," says Cone. "A poem demands that we try living for real, with our bodies, our passions, our thoughts. Otherwise, it's like playing a flute with bad embouchure—the notes are there, but the sound's fuzzy and thin. But if we come, electric with life, to the words, then we can live in bodies, passions, and thoughts (both our own and others') in ways we've never known before."

Second Place

RYAN G. VAN CLEAVE
Second Place
John Lehman Poetry Award



DOUG FLAHERTY on
Ullage—*n.* 1. The amount by which
a cask etc. falls short of being full.
2. loss by evaporation or leakage.

This poem, like all well-crafted poems, is a prayer—
language and emotion far above everyday human
communication. Note the gorgeous language:
“smooth like/a swarm of dragonfly blue.” The slip
into sensuous idiom is surprising, clever, as the
narrator runs a garden hose into the pond to “juice
it up for a few morning hours.” The action is
offbeat, but full of union with the environment.
The language is often masterful. This is a fine poem
to read to someone you love.



Ullage—

n. 1. the amount by which a cask etc.
falls short of being full.
2. loss by evaporation or leakage.

This pond is old as da Vinci's cosmology
or at least the American Civil War
(so the county records claim), but lately
it's been surrendering more and more

of its periphery to brown scrubweed
and sky, the mid-day heat laying waste,
summoning it back to vapor, into clouds
that scud overhead, gliding smooth like

a swarm of dragonfly blue. My wife says
it's natural for things to deteriorate,
but when she's at work, I run the garden
hose down to its dark algae-slicked lips

and juice it up for a few morning hours,
a little pick-me-up for an old friend
who's seen me through existential crises,
arguments with my wife over the vacuum

and my obsession with belts, even the death
of loved ones, close friends, a gerbil named Spud.
Out here, beside the cactus-hued pondface,
it's impossible to be lonely. Its liquid body

is a church that like me during the squirm
of deepest midnight hours, worships the sky,
the scramble of stars, how it all webs together
in the spider-light of forgiveness, a prayer for us all.

by Ryan G. Van Cleave

"Bertie"

Dustin Bertel, a.k.a. "Bertie of Room Thirty,"
 we have wronged you. Caught up in our
 self-important seventh-grade machinations,
 we ignored your lessons in the Doppler Effect,
 didn't listen when you told us that Egyptian
 embalmers used cinnamon to help preserve
 bodies, and that the Aztecs restricted
 the smelling of certain flowers to the upper class.
 Staring blankly at you while hidden earphones
 plugged into Van Halen, Dokken, Alice Cooper.
 Who knows why we stuffed your almond-colored
 hatchback's tailpipe with bananas, and nobody
 can say exactly why we squeezed food coloring
 into the humidors you had in the back of the room
 to assist your allergy-tortured sinuses.
 Because of your expansive science lessons,
 I should've learned that a snail breathes
 through its foot, and that the average
 lightning bolt is only an inch in diameter.
 I am much older now, a teacher too of all
 things, still I pull this memory tight around
 me like torn garment that can't keep out
 the cold. We all have our ghosts, dear Bertie,
 and you are mine—I treasure your quiet certitude,
 the starlike patience of your smile, your faith
 in all things young, foolish, and trivial.

by Ryan G. Van Cleave

Ryan G. Van Cleave has taught creative writing and literature at Florida State University, UW-Madison, and UW-Green Bay, as well as at community centers, prisons, and urban at-risk youth facilities. He currently works as a freelance writer and editor in Green Bay. His work has appeared in the *Wisconsin Academy Review*, *The Iowa Review*, *Ploughshares*, and *TriQuarterly*. His most recent books include a poetry collection, *Say Hello* (Pecan Grove Press, 2001), an anthology, *Like Thunder: Poets Respond to Violence in America* (University of Iowa Press, 2002), and a creative writing textbook, *Contemporary American Poetry: Behind the Scenes* (Allyn & Bacon/Longman, 2003).

"I'm drawn to poetry because it's a challenge to me," says Van Cleave. "I began my writing career writing genre fiction and eventually moved into the realm of aspiring novelist. Somewhere along the way I gave poetry a try, and it didn't come easily. As John Gardner says, 'Poets and short story writers must learn to work with the care of a miniaturist in the visual arts. Novelists can afford to stand back now and then and throw paint at the wall.' I like the element of real craftsmanship and precision that poetry offers. Because it's simultaneously the most concise and the most expansive literary medium there is, it offers possibilities that prose simply does not and cannot."

Third Place

ELEANOR STANFORD
Third Place
John Lehman Poetry Award



DOUG FLAHERTY on "Swimming in Winter"

There is a very strong, assured, mature voice behind this poem. The poem is as much about the suffering of other women as it is a stoical account of the narrator's own battle with being "arthritic and afraid." There is a controlled pathos behind the account of aging and suffering. And the symbols, metaphors, images, so well conceived throughout, are especially powerful at the end of stanza two and again at the close. I hope this winter piece inspires more than one person to write poetry."



Swimming in Winter

The old women in their flowered caps and paneled suits
stride the length of the pool
in slow motion. This is how my own
mind moves these days—arthritic and afraid
of breaking something, laboring in an unlikely
grace.

This morning, I bought a pint
of strawberries, so out of season I don't know
whether to call them late or early. Probably
flavorless, flown in from a country where
the only seasons are mud and war, I thought of you
in your pre-capitalist pea coat, coughing up phlegm
and wandering the muddy moors of your dissertation.

My own days are more about
getting to the end. I do my laps and shower without
talking. The women discuss the cold and other lacks
they've known: the Depression, thinning milk
with water. Despite this intimacy, I know
we won't recognize each other in the street,
with clothes on.

In the evening, I'll leave
the basket on the counter, red nubs in their floppy green
hats. Your pale fingers chopping potatoes and turnips
for the soup, you'll disapprove, and I won't
be able to explain how their seeded tips nosing in
among the winter produce
belied fragility, bright buoys
floating on an icy lake.

by Eleanor Stanford

Brazil Adopts the Automated Ballot

When I turn on the radio this morning, the reporter is remarking that for the first time the naked Yanomami will be voting by computer, while in Florida they're still tallying Tuesday's primary results. I pour myself a cup of coffee and spread my notes out on the table to plan a lesson on *Up from Slavery*. How to teach irony to Wisconsin farm kids? My mind wanders to my grandparents' condo in Boca Raton, Rita smearing cream cheese on the newspaper, saying through a mouthful of bialy, *Oy Abe, what a shanda*. And from there to your grandfather in São Paulo, now brushing his few strands of hair across his pate, leaving his plate of breakfast crumbs for the maid, and ambling down Avenida Lisboa to cast his vote on the new computerized polling machine. In the bedroom, you still have not stirred, sprawled across a mess of bed sheets. I underline a passage where Booker T. extols the virtues of using sheets correctly, and I wonder if in his dreams he too turned and flailed, waking in a confusion of crumpled linens. *The most trying ordeal that I was forced to endure as a slave boy*, he writes, *was the wearing of a flax shirt*. Your grandfather, who ran from the Nazis across the border into France, never tires of relating how the worst part of the war was the rationing of *schlag*, how bitter the coffee tasted without its sweet white foam. My grandparents endured nothing more or less severe than the 1950s on Long Island: Tupperware parties, valium, coffee klatches. The commute into the city, suit and tie, the tightening noose. I watch you daily pull that same thick knot to your own throat. The smell of toast rouses you and you stumble, naked as a Yanomami on election day, into the kitchen, where I'm staring at a page blank as an unmarked ballot, and no lesson at all.

by Eleanor Stanford

Eleanor Stanford is a graduate student in English at UW-Madison. Before that, she taught English as a Peace Corps volunteer in the Cape Verde Islands for two years. Her poems have appeared in *Poetry*, *Callaloo*, the *Atlanta Review*, and other journals. She was also published in the spring 2002 issue of the *Wisconsin Academy Review* as the third-place winner of that year's statewide poetry contest. In another blind judging with a completely different panel of judges, Stanford claims that place again.

HARRY W. SCHWARTZ BOOKSHOPS

75

Bookselling excellence for 75 YEARS

The Harry W. Schwartz Bookshops are proud to sponsor the 2003 Wisconsin Academy Review / Harry W. Schwartz Bookshops short story contest.



Personable, knowledgeable booksellers • *Schwartz Gives Back* community donations program • Author appearances and other events • Gift certificates in any denomination • Reading group, educator, and special order services • Free gift wrapping • Specialty gifts, games, and toys • Storytime for children • Cafés in Shorewood and Mequon • Second Hand book sections at Downer Ave. and Mequon

MILWAUKEE
2559 N. Downer Ave.
(414) 332-1181

SHOREWOOD
4093 N. Oakland Ave.
(414) 963-3111

BROOKFIELD
17145 W. Bluemound Rd.
(262) 797-6140

MEQUON
10976 N. Port
Washington Rd.
(262) 241-6220

RACINE
430 Main St.
(262) 633-7340

Milwaukee's own since 1927 • www.schwartzbooks.com

MADISON REPERTORY THEATRE

2003-2004

Eight world premieres.

**Join us for our
fifteenth professional season.**

For subscriptions and information, call 256-0029.

poetry On water

Prayer
at Fifty

Incessant current.
River of all lives.
Please come to me now.

May your steady strength
that erodes rocks'
centuries-old hardness
release me.

Pull away saturated dead branch
barricade of my own making.
Strip thick sludge
hiding my singular shine.
Unchain stones and boulders
that weigh me down
in this levee
feeling
flow
float
past

not knowing
its grace.

Deliver me
across
endless sea
to places
calling my name.

by Mary Kay Plantes

as an organization that connects people and ideas from different realms of knowledge, the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters called upon poets to take part last October in our Waters of Wisconsin Forum on sustainable water use. Poets were part of every breakout session and every larger gathering, sharing their work as a kind of opening blessing for those meetings. That's unusual for a conference focused on science and policy—but anyone who attended can tell you that the poets gave the occasion a whole new layer of meaning and magic. In fact, many forum participants said the poets reminded them of why they'd entered their professions as water scientists and managers in the first place.

We owe huge thanks to Madison poet and Wisconsin Academy board member Fabu Mogaka, who orchestrated these contributions. We also extend our heartfelt thanks to all the poets who participated. We are pleased to present a poem by each of them in this edition of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*. And you can find more of their poems about water on our website, www.wisconsinacademy.org.

—Joan Fischer, editor

Deeded and Titled

Loosely I call it "my lake"
though under no pretense
of ownership; it is rather
this place that claims me—this water
which calls me to its edge, these paths
which ask for my feet, this rock
which has become my listening place, these trees
which gather me in—a horizontal gravity
strongest at dawn
and at dusk. Of no note or value
to others, nonetheless
my
home
land.

by Kathy Miner

Mary Kay Plantes is a new poet and a business-woman who serves Madison as a strategy consultant. She is a member of the PotLuck Poets.

Kathy Miner is a poet and graduate student in library science at UW-Madison. She is also regional vice president of the Wisconsin Fellowship of Poets.

Wisconsin: My Father's Promised Land

In loving memory of Roosevelt Lorenzo Garrett

When my Daddy had had enough,
He'd pack his rods and reels and stuff.
Off to his precious Wisconsin he would escape.
To a place where he could be honest, open and relate.

My Daddy often spoke of this beautiful promised land.
Where the air was sweet and clean; the trees stood so grand.
The majestic lighthouses and the breathtaking waterfalls,
The movement of the streams where he could hear old man river call.
Where he could sit by the lakes, so crisp, so cold
Paused by the edge of the crystal clear waters with his fishing pole.

My Daddy said Wisconsin was an incredible place,
Where the unobstructed sunshine beams could kiss his face.
The moon was as bright as an opal in the sky at night.
The stars that twinkled like dancing holiday lights.

He would talk to the healing waters for his spirit and his mind
Let his heart synchronize its beats with nature's time.
He meditated by the Wisconsin River to calm his soul
He flowed back to his youth in his thoughts so he never grew old.

This magical kingdom located between the Mississippi River and the Great Lakes
He picked Wisconsin as his refuge; it was not a mistake.
The noise and distraction of the city would cease,
For here, in Wisconsin, he found freedom, solace and peace.

by Deborah Garrett Thomas

Deborah Garrett Thomas, a poet with African and Native American ancestry, is a wife, mother, and grandmother whose love of family is a central theme in her work.

For My Grandson

You ride
in the hammock
of your mother's
hips Hard knuckled
she labors
She opens
the gate for you
Come out
Come out I sing
and my mouth
forms
the purple-plum
circle
of your head
I give you
the name for river
liquid cradle song
water flowing
over stone
You ride the current
rowing hard
toward the light
I make a small boat
of my hands
waiting
to take you in.

by Ellen Kort

Ellen Kort is Wisconsin's first Poet Laureate. "Poetry is a major part of my life," says Kort. "I could give up other things, but I could never give up poetry. It's that powerful core—of every kind of language and writing."

She Wades in the Water

A runaway slave
branded in the face woman
running tired, soon to be caught
by hounds baying in the distance.

She wades in the water to her ankles
and her mind returns her home to African streams
her family drank from and bathed in
with laughter and joy
being cleaned, being satisfied, being family.

She wades in the water to her knees
and remembers bending her body
to swim with age mates in the lake
girls on the verge of womanhood
whispering secrets across the afternoon.

She wades in water to her waist
and the rocking begins
every rocking of the slave ship is stored in her flesh
every rocking that stole her from family and home.
Her tears salted the ocean.

She wades in the water to her chin.
Dare she look down, she chooses death.
Look to the left; men, hounds, chains to capture her.
Look to the right; white cotton fields to shame her.

A runaway slave
tilts her back, braids clinging with water
She looks up to her Creator
and her mouth bursts open
with sacred song to live.

by Fabu

Untitled

Dear Abby:

Please tell me what to do
cause I'm sho' nuf feeling blue
see my lover has gone and left me, drained me dry
please tell me why

It can't be cause I wasn't good to him
for I know I satisfied
any time he needed me, he just came on by

till his soul was cleansed
and his thirst was quenched
and his troubles (were) washed away

I gave, he took, and took, and took
assuming I would stay

I kept on trying to tell him
to treat me nice and good
to cherish what I was to him
just like a good man should

But he just loved me selfish
and dwindled my supply
ignored how much he needed me
and now he's left to cry

Can't help but think how life would be
if he'd of shown he cared
it could have meant the life of him
if loving me he'd dared.

Sincerely,

Water
In Short Supply

by Cynthia Adams

Fabu Mogaka is rooted in the African American experience both as an artist and a scholar. She serves on the council of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters and the Dane County Cultural Affairs Commission.

*Cynthia Adams explores her dual heritage and biracial roots through her work as a poet, singer and songwriter. Adams combines original poetry and song in her artistic expression and recently released a contemporary gospel CD titled **Force of Love, A Live Recording**.*

The Best of Recreations

So, verily, with every difficulty
 There is relief
 Verily with every difficulty
 There is relief
 Therefore when thou art free
 Still labour hard
 And to thy Lord turn thy attention.¹
 So wash the hands to the wrists
 And say, *May these hands be instruments of peace.*
 Then cup a handful of water to the lips
 With the right hand, rinsing the mouth three times:
May this mouth speak only the pleasing words,
The healing words, the truthful words.
 Then lightly snuff water into the nose three times:
May I long for the sweet fragrance of sanctity.
 Then wash the whole face and eyes:
May this face shine with the light of compassion.
May these eyes see the work of the Creator everywhere they look.
 Run damp and refreshing water over the top of the head.
 Pass the wet tips of the fingers inside and outside the ears,
 And over the nape of the neck:
May these ears hear only the resonance of the Creator;
May this neck bend in humility to the One.
 Wash the feet up to the ankles:
*May these feet walk on holy ground.*²

by Fatna Bellouchi

¹ Koran, 94, 5-8

² from Coleman Barks and Michael Green's
The Illuminated Prayer (Ballantine, 2000).

Fatna Bellouchi is a Moroccan poet who has a degree in Anglo-Irish theater. She teaches French in both public and private schools.

Trust

Saturday night in the projects
 The tub filled with brown water
 Incinerators belched black smoke
 On gray buildings, gray pigeons, the gray river

The housing authority would not allow us
 To bathe in tainted water, I believed
 In 1955, kids still swam in the East River
 Dodging buoyant, brown, bulbous balls

Of unmentionable composition
 Toilet paper, small children's toys, very small children
 Missing toothbrushes and other flushed things
 Old timers fished for eels

Strained to remember days when fish hit their lines
 Now seagulls swooped for bobbing morsels
 Flushed pieces of lives shot from portals
 Along the path in the park

That stretched along the river
 I stayed away at low tide
 When the aroma was emphatic
 And sunsets bathed the park in beige

They would not poison
 Then allow us to use and drink
 Tainted water, I believed
 I mattered more than that

by Ken Haynes

Ken Haynes is a poet who is equally at home in cities like New York or in the farmlands of Wisconsin. He writes about the universal African American experience and works as a community program coordinator for Dane County.

Searching for Future (currently lost in the perception of more immediate needs)

Taking,
 moving,
 draining,
 damming,
 changing what has been creating itself since the beginning.

Decisions have been made inside walls of progress with an understanding that is infantile and millenniums away from the intelligence of water.

We continue to experience the erosion of sky; damage is insatiable as it pulls moisture from this heartland of gentle lakes, powerful inland oceans and steady moving waters—the taking is replaced with toxic debris.

We must give back—give back—return to kinder ways of living.

It is the sweet breath of a morning shore that lingers with me...
 in a place where the river tangles with water grasses and remorse,
 as the tender curves of sand and stone remain,
 at a time of day when we are witness to the water spirits as they move rapidly away
 like a dream that almost materialized;
 if not for the sharp intrusion of awareness waking us suddenly to the whispers
 of the futureless stealing our grandchildren's dreams ... *and the sun will rise in spite of it all.*

Two metaphors away from another beginning and I smell the rain on its way.
 The damp fragrance expands beyond the inevitable of our existence, such as it is.
 In the mud of the lake's floor the stories of death and life are slick, dense,
 and absolute in their continuity.
 Some memories are sheets of stone rigid and beautiful in the cracked and undulating surfaces
 that tell stories in a language we must listen with our souls.
The work that is before us is immeasurable and imminent in its need.

Moisture dissipates under the sun into other incarnations
 of feeding life or sliding along stones with a movement that caresses endlessly
 the banks of soil and roots that remember all the winters and storms
 in the way they support the bend and stature of trees
 now reaching towards the stars;
 and you wonder what it is that has so much forgiveness for the foolishness of humans
 who take too much, wait so long, and regret even more as they work to repair the damage done.
*Future and memory are companions to soil and water and it is in their conversations
 where the balance struggles to find its return.*

Birds scratch their honor songs along the horizon of water and the sun's intended arrival...
 and it is faith and future that find me once again
 watching the seep of color now naming itself as new day.

by Karen Goulet

Karen Goulet, a Native American poet, states, "The future of our descendants and the clarity of rain are not commodities and are not negotiable. The return to a balanced existence is our only choice."

The Turtle Club

I joined the Turtle Club
sitting on the boat launch
of Lake Waubesa
Storm clouds swirl around
the circular patch of sky
overhead
Bobber lazily rests
atop slowly moving waters
then suddenly disappears into
the darkness below
excitedly I reel in my catch
cool breezes lift my spirits
as Lake Waubesa
begins her storm dance
Strong waves begin to
slap the shore
daring me to weaken my grip

I turn to my father
who grins
as I raise my pole
to view my prize
eyes forced shut by
the sudden release
of raindrops from swollen clouds
I wipe the water from my eyes
not bothered by its presence
and open my eyes to see what
my hook brought in
laughter plays across my
fathers face
and erupts from his lips.
The rain stops
and the circle of sky now becomes
a prism of light

my dad reaches for my pole
and chuckles as
a turtle plops from his hands
back into the
darkness of
Lake Waubesa
I pick up my pole and
move closer to my father
as we reminisce about
the one that got away
Bobbers floating once again
atop the shimmering
Wisconsin Waters
enticing us to try again

by Hedi Rudd

Lake Monona in Moonlight

1
The moon laughs its lyrics
Onto the page of lake.

2
This company of stars
Practices its grand jetes
On the stage of Monona,
Tripping the light fantastic.

3
The sky's blood orange
Sprinkles its juice.
A blessing? A rusting?

4
Gold at the end of the rainbow?
Come on.
And as for the toothfairies, their union
Is on strike:
Time and a half for all those night shifts.
But I believe this sterling path
Leads straight to Oz.

5
Ducklings of light—
Dart—
Searching from their mother
As she proudly
Beams them from above.

6
Munch: cornflakes on milk in morning.
Dine: moonflakes on lake at midnight.

7
Our moon wrote its thesis
About Japanese aesthetics:
Maki-e gold sprinkled
On lake lacquered black.

8
Nursery schools for
Toddler demons
Serve them luminescent
Black Jello.

9
Some virgin goddess she is.
This Diana flicks her lightning
tongue
Across the lake's skin,
Promising more,
Further down.
10
OK, I'll admit it.
Poets get drunk on moonshine.

by Heather Dubrow

*Hedi Rudd is a Latina poet and coordinator
of the city of Madison's Study Circles on Race.*

*Heather Dubrow is a poet and Tighe-Evans and
John Bascom Professor in the English department at
the University of Wisconsin-Madison.*

undercurrent

bury yourself in now between the hay and the steam
 and try to think about all the angles we have failed to measure
 how the moon swells at the horizon
 almost wet that moon
 it's probably 'cause it gets too close to the pond
 just think about how many grasshoppers have
 added to the toad muscle
 how many dams were built
 how many angles were never measured
 the angle of the muskrat tooth to the tree
 the angle of the bridge to the river

we all remember the day our flags hung in the air
 like deflated circus performers
 this is not that kind of reminiscence
 what we bring to the table
 is the thread of Highway 14
 and the yarn of the Wisconsin River

the highway crosses the river
 in more places than you'll ever remember
 a river has no perfect angles
 a highway counts on them
 a river has smooth corners that the highway will
 never comprehend
 who i want to be and who i became
 is the difference between the highway and the river
 the difference between angles never measured
 and angles measured twice

harmony was somehow lost
 like a loose coin down a moon-littered alley
 but we can find it my friends
 we can find it
 all we have to do is remember the special relationship
 between the highway and the river

the highway is where we want to go,
 where we thought we'd go
 where we want to be
 and the river has no angles
 and the river has no end
 and the river runs fast and free as your mind

you just gotta let it
 and you just gotta figure out
 that there's a flow and an undercurrent

discovery of the undercurrent
 can only be performed with
 a cold toe and an open heart
 discovery of the undercurrent my friends
 that is what we attempt here today

bring together the thread of Highway 14
 bring it together with the river
 where they intersect is life
 where they intersect understanding
 where they intersect is an undercurrent
 uncalculated yet perfect in its tug and direction

don't forget that sometimes the highway cuts down
 through the middle of your heart like a bloody ditch
 find them intersections my friends
 find them intersections
 and find those rivers
 those rivers are your blood
 those rivers is your blood
 is your blood
 is your blood as red as mine
 have you gone further down the road than i
 have you found all of the undercurrents of
 your own blood

where your heart and soul intersect
 is the same as where a river and a highway meet
 and the undercurrent is your unmeasured love
 for water and direction

by james lee

james lee is the winner of the 2002 Wisconsin Academy Review statewide poetry competition. He grew up in rural Wisconsin on his parents' farm, and both the land and water are primary sources of inspiration.

Mendota

Mendota!

Some mornings
on howard temin lakeshore path
where canoes are tethered with chain or steel cable
I see your steamy breath
hovering like a mysterious veil
over your placid waters
that broke as you labored
to give birth to the sun

Mendota!

Some mornings
the rollicking spirits from the north
unleash a storm as they blow their breaths towards you
and turn picnic point into a furious medley of sounds
a tempestuous madness in the trees
churning foam as the waters leap and lash
till the shrillness is blended into a symphony
by the magic wand of John the Man

Mendota!

your book-ends
two institutions
south and north
both strive to find the key
to the innermost quiet center
where our true selves wait to be embraced

Mendota!

above all
we want your vitality restored
your pristine purity

Mendota

we want you back!

by daniel p. kunene

Daniel P. Kunene, a South African poet whose works have been published internationally, is a professor of African languages and literature at UW-Madison. He is also founder of the PotLuck Poets.

The Waters of Wisconsin

The waters of Wisconsin ...

Will always flow
They bring the cargo
On foreign and local vessels
The rails on concrete will move them across the distance
And the semi trailers will haul them
Traversing the highways
Bringing them to their distribution centers
Where your local grocer
Will shelve them
To feed, clothe, and sanitize your life
The waters of Wisconsin will always flow.

Our air-conditioned homes
With ultramodern plumbing
Will bring the waters of Wisconsin
Into our homes
To quench our thirst,
Sanitize our bodies

by Abu-Hassan Koroma (Askia)

Abu-Hassan Koroma (Askia) is from Sierra Leone and is a social entrepreneur, artist, and poet. He is the chief executive and founder of the 21st Century African Youth Organization.

Letter to My Nephew

(for Ken Saro-Wiwa)

The sun is locked in evening, half shadow
half light, hills spread like hunchbacks over
plains, branches bowing to birth of night.
It's an almost endless walk until the earth

opens up to a basin of water. You gasp
even the thin hairs of your forearm breathe,
flowers wild, two graves of man and wife
lying in perfect symmetry, overrun by wild

strawberries. Gently you part the reeds,
water claims the heat from the earth, you
soak your feet, then lie down hands planted
into the moist earth. You glow. Late at night

when you leave, you will fill your pockets
with wet clay. But many years from now,
you will try to find a perfect peace in many
different landscapes, drill water out of memory

to heal wounded limbs of the earth. You
will watch as machines turn your pond
inside out, spit the two graves inside out
in search of sleek wealth. Many years

later, after much blood has been lost and your
pond drained of all life you will wonder, shortly
before you become the earth's martyr, what
is this thing kills not just life but even death?

by Mukoma Ngugi

Mukoma Ngugi is a Kenyan poet and Ph.D.
student in the department of African languages
and literature at UW-Madison.

Fragile Sanctuary

I approach the edge slowly, not wanting
to disturb the peaceful moment; this morning
the blue heron has made this corner
of the pond its home,

legs resting in the water it stands still,
its neck angled toward the water.
I have arrived at the exact moment
when it is listening to the murmur
of the water, decoding its message,

message my humans ears
cannot comprehend.

I stop. Serenity falls over the pond's water
like a protective embrace.
I blink my eyes twice believing the sight
might be just a mirage created by the sparkles
riding atop the soft peaks the ripples make
on the almost still water.

When it becomes aware of my presence,
the blue heron stretches its wings outward,
lifts from the water and flies out
toward the sky, leading me to believe
that defeating gravity's intentions
of keeping us bound to the ground
is within the realm of possibilities.

On the sky, the blue heron flies higher
and higher, blends with the clouds, leaving
behind the memory of a shadow.
I wonder will it find home again?
Does it know where home is?

Near me, the pond returns
to its usual stillness, to its rhythm,
its water attempting to hold on to a fragile
sanctuary where the blue heron
may return should it fail to find its home.

by Nydia Rojas

Nydia Rojas, a Latina poet, has been writing poetry since the
seventh grade. Her work has been extensively published,
including the anthology, **Between the Heart and the Land:
Latina Poets in the Midwest.**

Sacred Water

Performed as a prayer with Native American drumming at the Waters of Wisconsin Forum

"Water of life" is murmured as a pail of water is brought into the sweat lodge to begin a ceremony of renewal and purification. The sweat lodge is a sacred place for those of us who follow this traditional way of life. Water, the fluid of life, is indeed sacred to this ceremony and is sacred in many other ceremonies of native peoples. The Creator gave the people water, along with the land, and all other forms of life, to be taken care of.

The diverting of rivers, lakes, and streams from their natural paths has proven disastrous to many native nations across this country and continent.

Waters from the rivers, lakes, and streams are the keepers of life. The fish, plants, and other life forms that occupy these waters, many of them miniscule, live and give life to water.

Pure water has proven not to be infinite. Industry and its accompanying pollutants have taken a great toll on this gift of life as have others, such as the government Corps of Engineers.

Land flooded by dams has swept away the burial grounds of our ancestors and given rise to hydroelectric plants that have not always been of benefit to our people.

Man has been the force behind this destruction in his various endeavors to harness nature. We have all been the recipients of some of the benefits reaped from these harvests, but all this has come with a price. Native people have too often been the ones paying the greatest price—bearing the brunt of these acts of progress. And so it continues ...

I would like to quote from Winona LaDuke's book, *All Our Relations*:

Environment, culture, religion, and life are very much interrelated in the tribal way of life. Indeed, they are often one and the same. Water, for example, is the lifeblood of the people. I recall taking a draft tribal water code for public input into the five villages on my reservation when I was a tribal sociologist. Protection of the water spirits was a major concern throughout the reservation. And the water spirits varied depending on the water source being a river, a lake, or spring. I reported back to the attorneys, and they laughed at my findings. However, it was no laughing matter a few years later, when an elderly Cheyenne man held off the drilling team of ARCO from crossing his water spring with his rifle. "Today is a good day to die," he said as he held his own hunting rifle before him. He cried when he told how the water spirits sometimes came out and danced at his spring—I cried with him. Indeed, there is a profound spiritual dimension to our natural environment, and without it, the war would not be worth fighting.

These words are from Gail Small, Northern Cheyenne, leader in the native environmental and environmental justice movement.

by Janet Saiz

Janet Saiz is a member of the Ponca Tribe of Nebraska and the dance group, Call for Peace. Saiz has long been active in work on Native American issues and has lived in Madison for 32 years.

Zahf al-Jafáf

(Drought's Crawling Reptile Army)

It rained
and rained
and rained
And suddenly stopped.
The earth echoed for awhile.
Then was silence.
The static hiss of drought
Rattled its snaky husk,
Dragged its desiccated belly
Toward our town,
Wrapped itself around our throats
And plunged its fangs
Deep into a refreshing well of blood.
One drop escaped.
It trickled to the earth,
Tickling the parched grass with its red
And silver tongue.
Faint laughter from the dusty graves
Of our forgotten ancestors arose,
And segued into echoes
Of faint
Distant
Thunder.

by Kevin Barrett

Kevin Barrett, poet and author of A Weird Tour Guide to San Francisco, teaches English, French, humanities, folklore, and Arabic.

IN MY WORDS off the beaten path

For this edition of "In My Words," readers were asked to describe any experience that took them out of their normal realm.

Babe in Arms

Could you tell by the lines on my face that I have been to jail, to prison? By the lines I write? My exposure to lost lives institutionalized brought the power of words, breaking down bars and bringing light still burning.

Many years ago, nearing the end of our 20s and trials of graduate schools, my husband and I decided to procreate after trying to avoid such fate in the years before. Years went by, fallow. We endured tests and measured lovemaking, only to conclude it unlikely that any progeny would follow. Then, in 1974, after having recently moved to Atlanta, I discovered I was pregnant. O joy abundant! Creation, seemingly so new, now.

When I learned I was pregnant, I was working as an instructor in the Fulton County Jail. Surprisingly for me, somewhat a timid soul, I had taken a part-time job teaching writing to women inmates. I loved writing from my earlier years as a creative writing teacher and

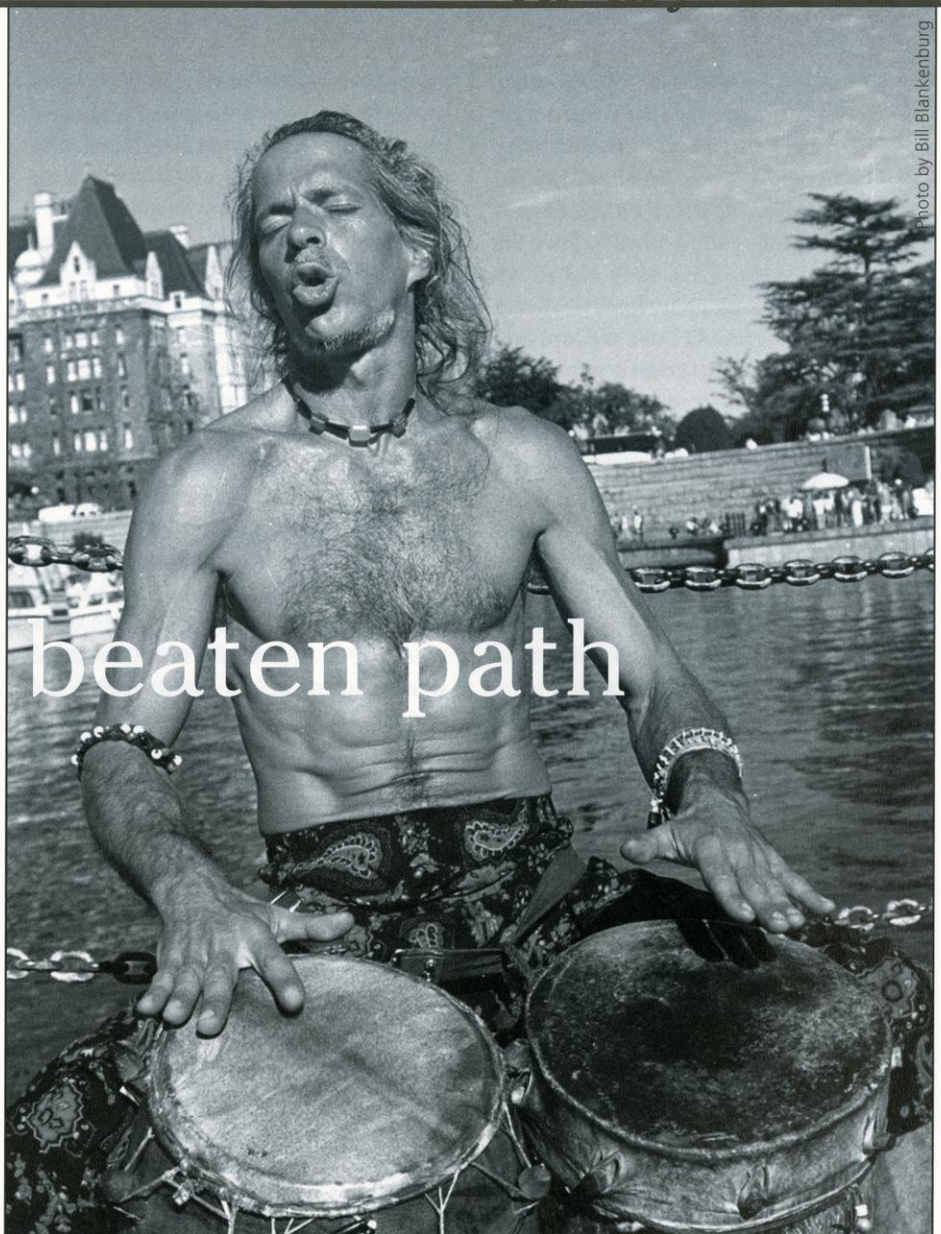


Photo by Bill Blankenburg

decided that the best way for them to learn the elements of writing was by enjoying the pleasures of discovery and expression through language. I would bring in odd things for them to write about: an old baby shoe, a crackled orange, red apples, seashells. The women would write fragments or whole pieces based on their associations, and from week to week the class would be filled with different women: some there waiting without bail for trial, some sentenced there.

My stellar student was Rita. She was a striking-looking, tall black woman with a commanding presence. I didn't know exactly what she was in there for. They warned us not to ask because the admis-

sion tainted the fragile teacher-student relationship with real-world shame. I believe Rita was there for extortion. A lively writer, responsive to my found objects, she would write avidly from class to class, eager to show and tell her results. I was struck by her passion for words and kept touch with a few letters after she was sentenced to a federal penitentiary in rural Georgia.

During the time that Rita was blossoming as a writer, I was growing large with child. I savored the experience and struggled through childbirth, which finally came long and hard, two weeks late. The months went by, and I stayed home with Emily, no longer working at the jail, blissfully maternal.

One day I received a call from another teacher who suggested that we go to the federal prison to visit some of the women we knew who were sentenced there, including Rita. I agreed and wrapped Emily, then about six months old, in my arms for a long hot drive through the Georgia pine forests. We sat in the back of an old Ford wagon, and Emily slept or nursed in my arms. Somehow it didn't even seem strange to me that I would bring her. I never thought twice. Since I was nursing, she came with me everywhere.

We arrived by late afternoon and found the general purpose room for visitations. It was a large room with gray speckled linoleum floors, a basketball hoop at one end, and plastic folded chairs on the side. I looked around for Rita and couldn't find her at first but soon saw her towering over the crowd. She raced over to me and then saw Emily, and reached her arms out to hold the baby.

I responded heartily and handed her over. Rita cooed and grinned joyously while right behind her, little by little, step by step, a line of women began to queue to also hold a child. For the first time I realized that many of these women were also mothers apart from their children, children they missed with aching arms.

So it happened. I didn't let it happen; it just did. Emily was passed from one set of arms to another, each time responding with her great innocent face and wide-eyed smile. And I, in the middle of that room, in the center of such extenuated embrace, lost a certain innocence and found a place right there in line, another mother. ▼

Anne Lundin
Madison

Keeping Ahead of Things

"I had the worst nightmare," I said one morning, to no one in particular. My husband was pouring coffee and our three kids were eating their cereal.

"So did I!" piped up my 8-year-old daughter. She proceeded to upstage me by telling every detail of *her* bad dream,

an epic tale involving glowing eyes under her brother's bunk bed and monsters taking over our house. When she finally finished and caught her breath, she asked, "What was yours about?"

I hesitated; it was almost too awful to say aloud. "I dreamt that the lice came back."

My family laughed. They thought I was kidding, but I'm telling you honestly, this particular dream was equal to a "naked in school" nightmare.

Parasites have never gotten much air-time in my head. I always thought of them as something that happened to other people. So it's not surprising that I wasn't thinking in those terms a few months ago, when my kids and I were standing in line at the middle school waiting to register my sixth-grader. My two boys were poking and hitting each other just a little more than an arm's length away from me; my daughter was glued to my side, her arm around my waist. As the line inched forward I glanced down at her hair and noticed two things. The first was her free hand scratching at her scalp; the other was white specks that looked like dandruff.

Except it wasn't dandruff because *one of the specks moved*.

I wanted to yell, I wanted to scream, and I really wanted to pry her away from my body. Instead I kept strangely calm and whispered in her ear. "Does your head itch?"

She nodded. "I told you that last week."

I felt a guilty pang. I had put her itchy head complaint in the same category as her need to show me every bruise and the dry skin between her toes. Dealing with the kids and their friends all summer long had forced me to establish a triage system for all the verbal shrapnel that came my way. Skin irritations were given a low priority.

Bad call.

The aftermath that followed could have been a real-life "Terminator" movie, if Arnold Schwarzenegger's opponents were really, really small and not inclined to die. My first line of defense was a trip to the pharmacy to buy a product whose name implied this whole thing would soon be over.

"We had lice at my house," the cashier whispered sympathetically. "It's a real pain. I wound up throwing out every pillow in the house just to be on the safe side." A little extreme, I thought. One week later not only would I have thrown out the pillows, I was ready to move and buy a new car.

It's not just that they're hard to get rid of. It's that they're almost impossible to get rid of. They're small, but cunning. They watch while you vacuum, boil combs and brushes, spray furniture, do laundry, and treat every head in the house with toxic shampoos. Meanwhile, they're just somewhere else waiting for you to finish so they can come back.

And they did come back.

"Don't you think this shampoo must be really bad for the kids?" a friend asked while looking at the label. "It's like putting pesticide right on their heads."

"And your point would be?" I asked wearily. I had just put vinyl covers on every mattress in the house and was starting on the pillows. I considered putting plastic over every item we owned, but only as a last resort.

"Who did she get it from?" another friend asked.

"Who knows?" I answered. No one wants to admit to having head lice. Apparently it's in the same category as pinworm, flatulence, and Barry Manilow CDs.

During this whole ordeal I consoled myself with the fact that at least no one else in the family got it. Not that it mattered to my psyche. The power of suggestion led me to experience more itching than my daughter ever had.

The novelty of the crisis soon wore off for my family. I, on the other hand, was vigilant even after the danger passed and our household was completely pest free. I had fought the battle for so long it was hard to let go. I had to work at it.

After a time, throw pillows and stuffed animals stopped looking menacing to me, and combs reverted back to being grooming tools rather than cootie public transportation. I'm almost to the point where I can see two children looking through a book together without frantically gauging the distance between their heads.

My long-term goal is to completely shake the horror of the lice from my subconscious. Because if I'm going to have nightmares, I'd opt for a monster infestation anytime. ❧

Karen McQuestion
Hartland

Something New

"Use it or lose it," continues as a maxim worth a nudge as I approach my 81st year, and the possibility of learning to draw became a new frontier. The description an art class—"Drawing and Writing Poetry in Response to Nature"—in the Summer 2002 University of Wisconsin-Waukesha schedule seduced me like dark chocolate Dove miniatures. But how could I deal with my fear of empty sheets of drawing paper? Of vine charcoal? An all-purpose sketchbook, graphite drawing pencils, kneaded eraser, conte crayons, and, and ...

"I can't draw," I thought. "I can't even do a creditable stick figure on a Post-It note. How can I possibly draw in response to nature, or anything, on blank drawing paper?" With many gulps of indecision, I registered as an audit student for the six-week class.

My 16 classmates' ages varied from 67 years to 20 years. The 20-year-old who had her birthday during the period brought cake and ice cream that we ate while singing to her at the end of class. She wore a slinky long black skirt and a blouse short enough to reveal the mermaid tattoo on her spine. A number of the young women were art majors—some planning to become art teachers. One student showed me her special materials box and suggested that I could just as easily get a fishing tackle box and pay less.

We all had writing and drawing assignments: observations journal writing, drawing and writing to work on outdoors within the Field Station as well as other places of our own choice during the rest of the week. My first drawing experience—everyone seemed ready except me—came within our first class.

Our instructor, Barbara Reinhart, gave us each charcoal and a huge sheet of quality drawing paper, and let us choose from a selection of natural objects—I chose a shell—and told us to "do some mark making."

"What if we're scared?" I asked.

"Try, observe, let your hand and fingers flow."

During that first class, I discovered that the movements needed for the mark making were so sensationally sensual, so playful, and so different from typing words on paper that I felt my inside "proper" self let go. I began looking at everything in an intentional way, a shape kind of way, a mark-making way—sky, clouds, grass, trees, birds, faces, the Scuppernong creek. I let go comparing to be "better than" and grew enough to accept that whatever I dared to draw would be experiments in my new frontier.

Each of Reinhart's drawing evaluations lifted my spirit, my courage, my insight, and, slowly, even my skill.

I found, too, that the drawing and poetry assignments began to complement each other like a warm handshake. One morning during a tour around the Field Station, we found a small hill of sliding stones and sand falling down toward the pond that we were to observe. Within seconds, a young man, baseball cap reversed on his head, put his hand in mine and guided me down. From other parts of that tour, other images were ready to emerge again when the next week we had a writing assignment to write three or more haiku poems.

For my final portfolio, Reinhart wrote: "Time may indeed be a tyrant"—I had done a drawing, "Fear," along with a poem with the line: "*only time, a tyrant*"—"but you show yourself as a gentle rebel—sticking your tongue out and going for the gusto in drawing with many keen visual observations and lots of mark-making variety. I appreciate your contribution to this class and welcome your audit participation in future classes you might enjoy."

"Use it or lose it"—I had gained a new way of seeing the world. ❧

Barbara Bach-Wiig
Waukesha

Life Without Mom

Several times I'd been ready to tell my father that I'd left Tom. Then I'd let the opportunity vanish. Not that it was a secret. Everyone knew, including him, I suspected. But this was not something I was used to discussing with my father. My mother had been our primary parent. He'd been too happy to let her do it all. If she were alive, she would have run interference, conveyed the news about their oldest daughter, then handed him a washcloth to wipe the disappointment from his face.

Now he'd left for Mexico for the winter. Even there I'd call him and when he didn't answer, I'd been relieved. Put it off another month. When he did pick up, we'd talk about something else. The news was now eight months old.

Our routine had gotten ridiculous. Each time we talked on the phone he'd ask, "*¿Como está Tomás?*" And I'd say, "Tom's fine." No lie there. He was fine, as far as I knew.

Finally, I did it. After the usual exchange of, "Were you already in bed?" and, "It's been cold here," I told him.

Without him asking "Why?" I volunteered "Because he doesn't love me." Then I surprised myself again, giving him examples of how I knew it to be so.

He muttered something predictable about acceptance and moving on, blah-blah words reminiscent of the lines on the sympathy cards we'd received after my mother's recent death. Then he added, "*¿Si no se quieren por las buenas, pues por las malas, pa' que?*" In English, something like, *If you can't have a marriage on good terms, what's the point?* He didn't sound surprised, which confirmed my suspicion that he'd known. Made me think that he'd been asking about Tom all this time to nudge me, or maybe to test me, see how long I could go before telling him.

Then I heard him cough, clear his throat at the other end of the thousand-plus miles of fiber optic line. "*Bueno mi hija, usted nomas haga las cosas bien,*" he said. That's when I started to cry. *You be sure to do what's right*, he said. I knew he could tell I was crying but he never acknowledged my tears. And I knew

why. If he did, he'd start to cry himself. He's a cry-baby, my dad, though he can't allow himself because he's a man.

I said, "I'm scheduled in court on Tuesday." When he said nothing, I said, "About the divorce."

He said, "*Lo bueno mi hija es que tú puedes hacer todo.*" Great, he took comfort in knowing that I can do *everything*. But I'm tired of that praise, his expectation. Tired of being the good student, of everyone assuming no one needs to care for me because I can do everything.

"*Pues, despues me avisas,*" he said, "Keep me posted on how things go with Tomás." My sobbing swelled. My mother would have known the right words to make us laugh, finished with the assurance that I was now better off. My father was quiet, though, let me cry and cry as if I were little. *Papi*, I wanted to cry out, *can't you hear me?* Nothing. *Tell me something. Anything.* Still silence.

"Excuse me a second," and I put the receiver down to blow my nose, then dabbed at my eyes with the same tissue and didn't even care. When I picked up again, he was calling me, "*Hija, Tere!*"

"What?"

"*Despues avisame como van las cosas con Tomás.*" He repeated that I should keep him posted of how things go with Tom.

"I've told you all there is to tell. We're breaking up."

"*A bueno.*"

Then I told him I didn't want him giving away my mother's personal things in the house in Mexico until I'd seen what was there. "Did you find her Virgen de Guadalupe medallion?" He said no, that it was probably lost during one of the moves from room to room in the hospital. He said there were earrings and several rings in a small jewelry box, and her quilts, lots of them. "Don't give them away until I see them."

He said, "*Está bién.* When are you coming?"

Before hanging up, he said in a soothing voice I almost didn't recognize: "*No te apures tanto, hija.*" It was another piece of fatherly advice, translates to *Don't worry so much*. But it's the literal meanings that worked wonders for me:

Don't hurry or Don't rush. Don't take on so much.

Felt like he was rubbing my back: *There, there ... slow down ... sh-sh, you'll be fine.* ▼

Teresa Elguezabal
Madison

Icecapade

In memory of Roy Jindra

Every year before Christmas I interrogate my parents about the status of "the river." Is it frozen? Is there any snow on it? I eagerly await the trip back home to Manitowoc County for Christmas festivities, which include venturing out onto the East Twin River behind the house. Growing up, my siblings and I enjoyed many hours exploring it and watching it change from swift and high after the spring melt-off, to slow and low in the summer and fall, to immobile and frozen in the winter. When the timing is perfect, December is warm, except for a few days before Christmas when the weather suddenly turns subzero and freezes the river into a slick, smooth icy sheet that winds for miles.

Christmas 1998 was one of those rare times. On the morning of December 26, I set out on skates with my brother, his two sons, and my wife. I had told family members not to be too surprised if they received a call from somewhere upriver. They were skeptical we'd go very far, but I had other plans in mind, for we had near perfect conditions. Normally open spots were frozen over, so our progress could be rapid. Rounding the first few bends and entering the shelter of the valley was enough to take the initial chill of the 18-degree temperature out of our bones. We passed familiar landmarks: the "point," the "landslide," the "old swimming hole" by the farm where my father grew up. My wife, four months pregnant, knew that little was going to stop us on this bright, beautiful morning, so she wisely turned around and headed back home while we continued.

Soon we were nearing the remains of an old dam and mill. We had explored this site frequently when growing up, so

we quickly hopped over one of the old cement dam gates and entered a cedar forest. We began to hit a few open spots in the ice. Instead of turning around, we viewed these areas as challenges, as tests of our ability to read ice. Do we need to portage around the open spots, or are the frozen areas near the edge of the river strong enough to hold us? This far upriver, the stream was never more than a couple feet deep. But whoever became too bold was in danger of frozen feet. The first person to go through the ice would also have to endure the merciless taunts of the others. At the same time, we all wanted to demonstrate our daring, so we jumped across spots, got running head starts to quickly skim over thin areas, and took turns showing the others the best route.

The ice varied from milky white to crystal clear, the bottom perfectly lit up by the sun. Often, the only way to tell the thickness of the ice, other than chopping a hole in it, was by gauging the depth of the cracks in the ice. We created our own share of cracks, since there were numerous times when our hearts skipped a beat as the ice fissured around us. In several spots we chased fish. At a few places, deer trails served as convenient portages around open spots. Occasionally, we explored tributaries of the river, in one place forming a small frozen waterfall as it fell into the river.

As we neared Tisch Mills we could hear the chimes of St. Mary's church. I took off my skates and walked to the nearby historic corner store, where the surprised owner graciously let me use her phone to call for a ride home. We had been gone only three hours, but given the twists and turns, we probably covered about 15 miles, twice the seven-mile highway distance between the villages. The only people we saw were a couple of children lobbing sticks on the river.

The ride home from my father was filled with the sense of accomplishment, exploration, and interdependence that cannot come from video games or TV. You and your kin, relying on each other, showing each other the way through the countryside on the river that draws you farther and farther away, always won-

dering what is beyond the next bend, looking for the next challenge, perhaps startling some deer or a fox. For many, winter is a season to endure while patiently waiting for warmer weather, but winter can also be a special time to get to know the land. Perhaps we should be more like the Dutch, where they throw a national party in the unusual year when it is cold enough for the canals to freeze. Thousands skate an 11-town route, enjoying the temporary highway and the camaraderie of the event.

The next day a couple of inches of snow fell, and the river became a palimpsest of animal tracks. Any more skating journeys would have to wait until the next year. ❧

*Michael Jindra
Spring Arbor, Michigan*

We Called Him Vonny

I was a child when my father became concerned about my longtime, sullen withdrawal into reading and drawing. When I covered a concrete wall bordering our backyard with colorful, oversized chalk drawings one day, he was surprised and impressed. This feat brought praise from friends and neighbors.

Years later, in the midst of the Depression, my father's respect and support for my talent allowed me to study art at a local college with a highly regarded art department. I rode the streetcar to classes, swaying with the car as it racketed its way through the city toward the East Side and Milwaukee State Teachers College's long red brick building. The classrooms were gray and dull, except for the studios—large rooms with tall easels, paint-spattered and chipped, and high windows that poured in the light in a most exciting way. Here there was a feeling of intellectual energy and freedom—yes, a creative charge in the very air. I felt it keenly even though teachers and students walked about as if nothing extraordinary was happening.

Mr. Robert Von Neumann was my first art teacher. I sensed his sincerity and directness, but he had something more

that brought profound reassurance to me: He was not interested in our grades or our shortcomings, no, he was interested in his passion—painting in particular, and fine art in all its forms—and in how his inspired words affected our work. His desire was that we share in his love for art. Classical art education in Germany and professional experience as a painter gave deep authority to his teaching. Tall, gray-suited, a formal person, he was respectful to students and we to him, but among us, he became “Vonny.”

I hear his voice as I recall a lecture. The screen holds a slide reproduction of a painting by the 18th-century English artist Sir Joshua Reynolds. “Ah!” Vonny says in my ear, “Beauty—full! See this—the way this moves into this—and (moving his pointer) this is in contrast to that.” Smiting the screen triumphantly with his pointer to express his appreciation for the master painter, he glowed down at us. “A little sweet, maybe, but all the same, pretty nice, huh? He’s pretty good, that fella, isn’t he? He can paint, eh?” Vonny said, smiling joyously.

To Vonny, the term “composition” was a vital word, not a technique. His appreciation for the artists who organized the total painting so as to create the unique scene, the image—the essential message—made us see composition as the complex work of intellect and imagination it truly is.

He exposed us to the suffering of other human beings in other times, interpreted by master observers. The German Kathe Kollwitz depicted early death and sorrow among the poor; the Spaniard Picasso excoriated war in his “Guernica”; Rembrandt brought us his deep compassion for all humanity. We were introduced to unfamiliar landscapes, ranging from the gentle country of Corot to Albert Bierstadt’s Western mountain spaces, and to the power of the sea in Winslow Homer and Edward Hopper.

This learning was an exquisite pleasure. As Vonny leaned over the podium, his merry eyes filling with the excitement of the knowledge he was imparting, I often lowered my gaze because of the thrill of happiness surging into my heart. This kindly man, by presenting

the larger realm of art, had taken me off the path of the ordinary and opened up a future of visual riches and artistic exploration. ❧

*Betty Irene Priebe
Brookfield*

Share Your Stories

We welcome your contribution to “In My Words.” Stories should be no longer than 600 words (that’s shorter than some entries in this issue; we are reducing word count to accommodate more contributions). The next topics are:

BULLIES, deadline May 1 (for the summer issue; this is an extended deadline). Here’s your chance to recall, in humorous and/or brutal detail, anyone who had the power to make you miserable. Childhood tales are welcome, but don’t forget that supervisor from your last job ...

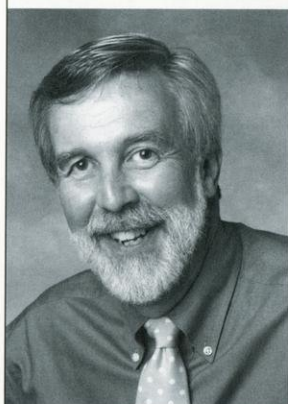
ARE WE THERE YET? deadline June 1 (for the fall issue). Any travel, visit, or vacation story, whether funny, poignant, or just plain harrowing.

RAISED ON THE FARM, deadline Sept. 1 (for the winter issue). Whether you stayed put as a grown-up or left for the city, what did being raised on a farm mean to you or do for you? What are we losing with the changes in farm life?

E-mail submissions are greatly preferred. Please send them to: joanfischer@wisc.edu under the subject heading “In My Words.” You may mail your submission to In My Words, Wisconsin Academy Review, 1922 University Avenue, Madison WI 53726.

We will contact selected authors prior to publication; names may be withheld from publication on request. **We regret that we cannot take phone inquiries or return submitted material.**

The Best and the Brightest



One of the great assets of the Wisconsin Academy are our Fellows—in fact, one of the great assets of the state of Wisconsin are the Academy Fellows. Ever since the inauguration of the Fellows program in 1981, the governing body of the

Wisconsin Academy has recognized as Fellows those Wisconsin citizens—defined as people who presently reside in Wisconsin or have done significant work here—who are truly exceptional in their field, be it science, arts, or letters. Candidates are nominated by any member of the Academy, and finalists are selected by a subcommittee of the Academy Council. Those finalists are then approved by the full Council. Altogether 73 Fellows have been named; 48 are still living.

Even a quick look at the list of Fellows imparts their exceptional nature far better than anything I could say about them. These Fellows clearly do represent Wisconsin thought and culture at its very best.

Who wouldn't welcome the chance to sit down for a conversation with any one of these distinguished citizens?

One of the great benefits of this job as your executive director has been the opportunity to get to know many of the Fellows. Each time I leave a meeting with one of these very bright, opinionated, thoughtful, and creative people, my life has been enriched. I began to ask myself, why are we not giving the Fellows a forum in which they can express their knowledge and thoughts to a wider public? And, more specifically, why should the whole membership of the Academy not have a chance to encounter the thoughts and opinions of these great minds?

So I have decided to expand the reach of this column, the Back Page. In every issue of the *Wisconsin Academy Review*, beginning with the "Second Annual Fellows Recommended Reading List" in the summer edition, we will invite comment from our Fellows to appear in this space. The first formal essay will be provided this fall by Fellow Shirley Abrahamson, Wisconsin State Supreme Court Chief Justice. The Fellows will be given carte blanche to write about whatever they choose—their own field, an issue of the day, a point for reflection, their own personal history. I hope you are as interested as I am to see what our Fellows have to tell us—whatever their topic! I will continue to share my thoughts, too, but only as the spirit moves me.

I look forward to sharing with you this new attempt to expand our own thought horizons—and, as always, to hearing your reactions.

All the best,

Robert G. Lange
Executive Director
rglange@wisc.edu
608/263-1692 ext. 12

Fellows of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters

Shirley S. Abrahamson, Chief Justice,
Wisconsin Supreme Court

Julius Adler, Professor Emeritus of Biochemistry and
Genetics, UW-Madison

George Archibald, Cofounder, International Crane
Foundation

Alfred Bader, Founder, Aldrich Chemical Company

Helmut Beinert, Professor Emeritus, Institute for Enzyme
Research, UW-Madison

Robert Byron Bird, Professor Emeritus of
Chemical Engineering, UW-Madison

Nina Leopold Bradley, Conservationist

Reid A. Bryson, Director Emeritus, Institute for
Environmental Studies, UW-Madison

Nancy Ekholm Burkert, Literary Illustrator

Robert H. Burris, Professor Emeritus, Department
of Biology, UW-Madison

Ferne Caulker, Choreographer,
Director of Ko-Thi Dance Company

Catherine B. Cleary, Former Chairman,
First Wisconsin Trust Company

Arthur D. Code, Professor Emeritus,
Department of Astronomy, UW-Madison

Warrington Colescott, Artist and Printmaker,
Art Professor Emeritus, UW-Madison

James F. Crow, Professor Emeritus, Department of
Genetics, UW-Madison

Hector DeLuca, Professor and Chair, Department
of Biochemistry, UW-Madison

Lukas Foss, Composer, Conductor, Pianist

Raymond Gloeckler, Wood Engraving Artist and Art
Professor Emeritus, UW-Madison

Paul G. Hayes, Journalist, *Milwaukee Journal*, Retired

Sister Esther Heffernan, Professor Emerita of Social
Science, Edgewood College

Geneva Johnson, President and CEO,
Family Service America, Inc.

James R. Johnson, Executive, Minnesota Mining
and Manufacturing, Retired

Roland Johnson, Director Emeritus,
Madison Symphony Orchestra

Samuel C. Johnson, Chairman Emeritus,
S.C. Johnson & Son, Inc.

Ruth DeYoung Kohler, Director, John Michael Kohler
Arts Center

Henry Lardy, Professor Emeritus of Biochemistry,
UW-Madison

Gerda Lerner, Professor Emerita of History, UW-Madison

Harvey Littleton, Artist

Nancy O. Lurie, Curator of Anthropology,
Milwaukee Public Museum

Nellie Y. McKay, Professor of African American Literature,
UW-Madison

Clifford H. Mortimer, Professor Emeritus
of Biological Sciences, UW-Milwaukee

Gaylord Nelson, Former Wisconsin Governor
and U.S. Senator, Founder of Earth Day

Sara O'Connor, Former Managing Director,
Milwaukee Repertory Theatre

Martha E. Peterson, President Emerita, Beloit College

Rev. Francis Paul Prucha, Professor of History,
Marquette University

Sister Joel Read, President, Alverno College

Don Reitz, Professor of Art Education, UW-Madison

Irving Shain, Chancellor Emeritus, UW-Madison

Ben Sidran, Musician, Composer, Producer

Kenneth Starr, Director Emeritus,
Milwaukee Public Museum

Fannie T. Taylor, Professor Emerita of Social Education,
Letters and Science Administration, UW-Madison

James A. Thomson, Professor, UW-Madison Medical
School, and Scientific Director, WiCell Research
Institute, Madison

Ronald Wallace, Author, Poet, Professor of English,
UW-Madison

Lee Weiss, Artist

John Wilde, Professor Emeritus of Art Education,
UW-Madison

Allen Young, Vice President for Collections, Research,
and Public Programs, Milwaukee Public Museum

Frank Zeidler, Former Mayor of Milwaukee

Robert S. Zigman, Chairman, Zigman Joseph Skeen, Inc.



Chemistry professor Bassam Shakhashiri wows crowds with experiments showing that science can be fun.

Photo by Wolfgang Hoffmann

Price: \$5

wisconsin
academy review

1922 University Avenue
Madison, Wisconsin 53726

Periodicals
Postage
Paid at
Madison, WI