n 1899, the creation of the UW Graduate School was five years away, and the Red Gym was five years old. William McKinley was president of the United States, Jell-O and aspirin were invented, and the Wisconsin Alumni Association published its first journal for UW graduates, fittingly called the Wisconsin Alumni magazine.

It was not until the magazine got its start that the alumni association truly came into its own and found a focus for its activities, now that it had a vehicle to mobilize Wisconsin graduates.

For one amazing century, On Wisconsin Magazine has connected alumni with each other, with the university, and with the many ways that UW—Madison has helped to shape our modern world.

Through twenty-one editors and several changes in size, publishing frequency, style, and name, the magazine has kept alumni up to date on university happenings. It has met the challenge of conveying “what the university really is and what it really does,” a charge outlined by university president Charles Adams in its first issue. Indeed, our readers have great faith in the magazine and its publisher, WAA, to keep them informed.

It was not until the magazine got its start that the alumni association as a formative influence on America was first flown hour.

The airplane was first flown by the Wright brothers in 1903.

1906 15 states had automobile speed limits of 20 miles per hour.

1924 The University of Wisconsin Alumni magazine was first flown by the Wright brothers in 1903.

1924 The UW’s Harry Steenbock discovered that irradiating food with ultraviolet light increases its vitamin D content.

1924 The 1899 baseball team was quite a dapper crowd.

On Wisconsin! On Wisconsin!
I am, in the heart of Oregon’s great outdoors, in the Cascade mountains, forty miles from another cabin and sixty miles from a railroad. Congratulations on the best issue of the Alumni Magazine I have ever seen, and I haven’t missed an issue for twenty years.”

Letter writer Margaret Purcell ‘25 said her issues were even of interest to students of other institutions. “When I was attending George Washington University during the past semester, I ‘screwed up courage’ enough to bring my ‘Mag’ to classes with me. It was not long before I had a group of interested spectators waiting each month to see my copy, and I was always proud to show it.

I need not add that pictures of this great institution “out west” were sought with avidity.” By the twenty-fifth birthday, the Alumni Magazine had become a powerful tool for shaping opinion. (Not by coincidence does the term “magazine” also refer to a place to store ammunition.) In 1925, when the legislature was threatening to reduce the university’s budget, and the overcrowded campus had not received any building funds for more than a decade, a special article detailed the crisis. The magazine stated none too subtly that in 1924, Wisconsin resident spent twice as much money on candy and chewing gum as the university received from the state; about eight times as much for “pleasure automobiling.” Tax-payers could afford these luxuries, went the reasoning, but they could not afford to support their state university.

Walter Frantsch ‘24, the late campus benefactor and printing scion, temporarily joined the editorial staff to help produce a university handbook, which was included in the next issue and distributed throughout the state. It continued to hammer on the crisis theme, with a cover exhorting alumni to “Do Your Utmost for Wisconsin,” and proclaiming, “the time to pussyfoot is past.”

The legislature relented and appropriated a respectable operating budget, as well as $1.5 million for a building fund.

In 1928, the Wisconsin Alumni Association moved out of its quarters on State Street to the Memorial Union, and magazine headquarters moved with it. As the Rearing Twenties came to a close, the publication again turned to the pool of recent grads and found an editor in Harry Thoma ‘28, who had been president of his class and editor of the Bajic. Aided by a long tenure that lasted from 1929 until 1942, Thoma brought more credibility to the magazine and presided over a period of much change. As he took office, the stock market had crashed, and soon the Depression began to affect the university. Enrollment dropped, and Thoma and others solicited alumni help to build up a student loan fund.

Thoma changed the name of the monthly from the Wisconsin Alumni to the Wisconsin Alumnus; and in the late thirties, the Alumnus began to focus on the new ROTC program and its U.S. involvement in World War II seemed increasingly likely. Articles also alluded to secret projects in the chemistry and engineering labs.

The February 1942 cover featured university president Clarence Dykstra commissioning four young second lieutenants. For several years, the magazine was dominated by articles about Badgers and alumni in the service and lists of those who had been killed in action. In 1942, the editor himself left for active duty. For the remainder of the war, the Alumnius was headed by Jeanne LaMereaux Leonard ‘40, and then by Polly Coles Haight Burgess ‘39. Paper shortages cut the magazine back to twenty-four pages, but the alumni association did its part to build morale by sending free magazines to all the badger men and women who were serving overseas.

Once the war was over, Clay Schoenfeld ’41, MA ‘49, another former (visiting) editor, assumed the editorship and promptly took advantage of the end of rationing. He returned the size to forty pages and introduced more feature stories with colorful photos. The UW was bustling, as enrollment mushroomed from 11,000 to 25,500, and new campus offices were set up virtually overnight to accommodate the influx of veterans.

In a fiftieth-anniversary edition, editor Schoenfeld wrote that the magazine had “remained steadfastly an alumni publication rather than simply a university administration publication, stooping neither to petty criticisms nor to insipid praise.” Best of all, the Alumnius earned many national awards for editorials, features, and art during this era, and was named one of the “ten best alumni publications in the country” by the American Alumni Council in 1948 and 1949.
of thing.” Apparently, powder puff football took a great deal more exertion than, say, giving birth.

To commemorate the first time Wisconsin went to the Rose Bowl, the magazine printed its January 1955 issue with rose-scented ink. Editor George Richard ‘47 covered topics such as the UW’s civil defense plan, which was slated to house and feed nearly five thousand evacuees on twenty-four hours’ notice, and the installation of milk vending machines on campus. The machines boosted the university’s milk consumption so much that the magazine speculated that the milk break would become as popular as the coffee break. It was during the Richard era that the Alumnus got a new cover, which included a much larger central image designed to be “less strain on the bifocals.”

The magazine reported that in the fall of 1955, a new course was offered — housekeeping. “It’s not an actual course,” ran the report, “but men living in dormitories will undertake a predetermination lesson in bed making and housekeeping. Each resident will be responsible for keeping his room clean at all other times and for making his bed at all times.” The new plan eliminated the once-a-week cleaning of individuals’ rooms by maids, something provided only for men’s dormitories. The sixties brought yet another decade of massive change to campus. Chronicling the rising protest movement fell to Arthur Hove ’56. Like most of the editors before him, Hove was a one-man publishing machine, handling all the editing, layout, photography, proofreading, and Class Notes writing for eleven issues per year. He developed the publication’s photos in his bathroom at home. One of Hove’s goals was, “as objectively and comprehensively as possible, to tell our readers what was beginning to happen as the antiwar movement grew in size and culminated in the bombing [of Sterling Hall].”

There are always people who frown on covering any news that can be construed as negative, says Hove, who is now retired from his most recent position as a special assistant to the provost. “And I never believed that — that our readers want to know what was going on,” he says. “What we tried to do was provide our readers with enough information to make up their own minds.”

In addition to the challenges of “feeling the excitement that came with the times and finding a way to pass that electricity on to the readers,” Hove was challenged with describing the new “multiversity” and the growing complexity of academic life that it represented. As campus research began to play a more important role in the national economy, the university was expanding its mission to become a major force in transforming day-to-day life.

And then there was the building program. “In the sixties,” says Hove, “you couldn’t build the buildings fast enough, and there was an explosion of our enrollment, going from roughly fifteen thousand at the end of the 1950s to well beyond thirty thousand by the middle of the sixties. Everything was happening at once, everywhere!”

Hove has a favorite anecdote from those tumultuous years. One day, a group of students were marching from the Memorial Union to the engineering campus to protest military recruiters there. Hove and a few other reporters walked along with the group, and then decided to get ahead of them, the better to see what would happen once the protestors arrived. “So we started walking really fast,” says Hove, “and this fellow who was one of the organizers who was in the front said, ‘Hey, you guys, slow down, slow down!’ That fellow was of the university as student riots continued. In an article titled “They Never Tried That Stuff in My Day,” Murphy presented the reality of a new campus no longer governed by in loco parentis.
1975–1999 Editor Tom Murphy, now a painting instructor and artist, brought a folksy, conversational tone to the magazine and portrayed the post-sixties legacy by featuring contemporary campus photography and art. As had editors before him, he gave students a forum to write about various topics ranging from Big Ten athletics to the not-so-glamorous world of being a TA.

In the late seventies, the magazine hit on TV. “Cheers” was a Saturday Night Fever, its theme song. On Wisconsin alumni flocked to movies, from midnight screenings to rap鱼 hook and dance all night. Bus Stop, and The Hustle, the latter persisted right up until the lake had started to melt, and had to be rescued when their section of frozen real estate became an island. It’s inspiration that reminds us how wacky Badgers can sometimes be (see the late seventies).

Long-time reader Fannie Taylor ’38, who was a professor of social education on campus and the director of the Wisconsin Union Theater, says that over the years, the magazine has increased its coverage of student problems of higher education, rising tuition costs, and drug abuse. The magazine continued to win national awards, including one from Harper’s Magazine for a story by the editor on Gertrude Stein’s visit to campus in the thirties. When he began in 1968, says Murphy, “I had the luxury of writing primarily about a smaller university that had a more familial feeling.”

During the mid-eighties, enrollment maxed out at forty-five thousand, and Murphy admits that he had to re-establish an intimate tone with that large a campus. It can be hard to keep the sense of tradition and campus lore, and yes — even campus identity. That challenge has fallen to the magazine of the nineties. It’s been an eventful decade, one wrought with much discussion about race, diversity, and inclusivity. The magazine has featured contemporary alumni ranging from author Stephen Ambrose ’57, PhD ’65 to movie producers David ’70 and Jerry ’72 Zucker. And the magazine has an increased in letters to the editor in the last several years, striking a chord with articles ranging from pain management to the history of WHA radio and high-tech teaching.

In 1996, the Alumni House was remodelled into the stunning Below Alumni Center, which, unlike the previous building, has real windows that display a much broader way. The University of Wisconsin-Madison as a life-long resource.”

One reader wrote, “Not too many years ago, On Wisconsin was a publica-
tion displayed on the coffee table so all one’s friends would know you

Wisconsin is a world-class institution, and its magazine should reflect that.” In celebration of the university’s sesquicentennial, the joint production effort expanded from its original two issues to encompass the entire magazine. The fall of 1998 marked the debut of the new On Wisconsin, which has been renamed as a quarterly, expanded from forty-eight to sixty pages, and is now sent to every UW-Madison graduate. The redesign included a new cover design, new departments, and an upgrade in paper stock. Pigorsch is now co-editor along with Cindy Fuss of the university’s Office of News and Public Affairs. Thanks to this arrangement, On Wisconsin, which is still published by the Wisconsin Alumni Association, now reaches more alumni than ever before — some 265,000 — giving it the largest circulation of any alumni magazine in the country.

With this increase in distribution came a renewed promise to “publish a magazine that engenders feelings of pride, strengthens connections with our alumni and other key constituents, and increases awareness of the University of Wisconsin-Madison as a life-long resource.”

On Wisconsin has always been a read-cover-to-cover magazine with fascinating, well-reported articles that I truly look forward to.”

What more can be added? Tell us what topics will continue to make you look forward to On Wisconsin. Write us at 650 North Lake Street, Madison, WI 53706, or e-mail us at WAA@badger.alumni.wisc.edu.
Wisconsin printmakers collaborate to create an enduring tribute to the state’s sesquicentennial.

By Susan Pigorsch ’80

When David Prosser, Jr. JD’68 walked into the a.g.b. graphics workshop on Madison’s South Park Street, the Wisconsin supreme court justice had no idea that he’d change the lives of the proprietors — and the history of Wisconsin printmaking — for years to come.

“I was just astounded at what I saw,” Prosser recalls of that January 1997 visit. He’d only intended to look at the work of one of his favorite artists. But upon seeing the rest of the fine art produced by master printer Andrew Balkin ’71, MA’76, MFA’77, he blurted out an idea: “Why don’t you do a portfolio in honor of Wisconsin’s sesquicentennial?”

Prosser had sponsored the legislation to create the Wisconsin Sesquicentennial Commission, but the former speaker of the state assembly hadn’t a clue as to what it takes to bring fifteen artists with Wisconsin connections — including those of international renown — together for a project of this scale. He didn’t know then that most other states had only managed to commission a medal or a stamp in honor of their statehoods, and that a collector’s portfolio of fine art prints was basically a three-quarter-million-dollar undertaking requiring an enormous investment of time. Each artist’s work could take up to five months to create and prepare for printing, and then ninety minutes to ink the plates and run just one print through the press. For an edition of portfolios with individual works by fifteen artists, that’s 2,812 hours in press time alone.

Perhaps contrary to good reason, Andrew Balkin and his co-publisher, Renee Koch Balkin ’77, ’87, jumped at the opportunity.

For nearly twenty years, they’ve been pursuing perfection, producing fine art prints with invited artists in their unassuming, but well-equipped, workspace. “Our publishing is a searching,” says Andrew Balkin. “If an artist is willing to collaborate with me, ideas will evolve as fine works of art.” So fine, in fact, is the emerging reputation of his printshop that even Bruce Nauman ’64 — one of a handful of America’s most successful artists — has signed on as a contributor to Wisconsin’s Sesquicentennial Portfolio.

At first impression, Seattle artist Munio Makuuchi MFA’75’s sesquicentennial commission doesn’t look like much. After all, plate number one in his twenty-two-by-thirty-inch print reveals little more than scratchy lines made on a piece of copper, surrounded by a few stenciled fish. But by the time printers Rick Love and Nikki Vahle Schneider MFA’98 make a second impression, the Japanese-American’s mythical tiger muskie begins to leap forth from a Northwoods lake. It arches toward an unknown orb, soon to become — after a third and fourth time through the press — the moon, lit by the strobe of the aurora borealis. Into the curve of the fighting fish appears a female, round with child.

People often don’t know the difference between an offset poster and a handmade, hand-printed etching,” says Renee Balkin, co-publisher of Wisconsin’s Sesquicentennial Portfolio. “Once they see the succession of proofs — and the many steps it takes not just in the platemaking process, but in the printing process as well — they get a better insight into this Old World tradition.” Alumnus and artist Munio Makuuchi (opposite) first drew his concept celebrating Wisconsin’s wildness with drypoint on mirrored copper. With his keyplate (top left) complete, he collaborated with master printer and publisher Andrew Balkin to bring his idea to life. The alchemy of Moon Catchers was created with eight inks on four plates pulled through Balkin’s press four times to build a lasting impression on paper.

Wisconsin printmakers collaborate to create an enduring tribute to the state’s sesquicentennial.

“People often don’t know the difference between an offset poster and a handmade, hand-printed etching,” says Renee Balkin, co-publisher of Wisconsin’s Sesquicentennial Portfolio. “Once they see the succession of proofs — and the many steps it takes not just in the platemaking process, but in the printing process as well — they get a better insight into this Old World tradition.” Alumnus and artist Munio Makuuchi (opposite) first drew his concept celebrating Wisconsin’s wildness with drypoint on mirrored copper. With his keyplate (top left) complete, he collaborated with master printer and publisher Andrew Balkin to bring his idea to life. The alchemy of Moon Catchers was created with eight inks on four plates pulled through Balkin’s press four times to build a lasting impression on paper.
Following the “recipe” of master printer Andrew Ballin (center), Rick Love (left) and Nikki Vahle Schneider spend 90 minutes to prepare and pull each print of Makuuchi’s Moon Catchers at the a.g.b. workshop on Park Street. When the complete the Sesquicentennial Portfolio — 125 prints of each of fifteen invited artists with Wisconsin ties — they will have spent 2,612 hours at the press. And that’s after Balkin has spent months with each artist, experimenting with the components of their images to achieve depth and emotion.

There’s sort of an understanding that the value of the sesquicentennial prints will actually double between the time they’re purchased and the time they’re produced,” says David Prosser, Jr. JD’68, the Wisconsin supreme court justice who inspired the idea of a fine art project to commemorate Wisconsin’s 150th anniversary. “I’m not sure if that’s totally accurate. But by the time several years go by, there’s absolutely no question that this will be true.” The portfolio will probably have more than doubled.”

A longtime print collector, Prosser recalls the story of the New Republic magazine, which issued a portfolio that would be free to people who bought subscriptions in the early part of this century. “Edward Hopper produced a print for that portfolio,” Prosser explains, “and so did John Sloan, among six or seven others.” The magazine’s subscription drive fell short of expectations, but now those prints are worth thousands. “You couldn’t get the Edward Hopper print alone for less than $15,000,” says Prosser. “That is, if you could even find it.”

The escalating value of art is also nothing new to master printer Andrew Ballin ’71, MA’76, MFA’77, who is creating Wisconsin’s Sesquicentennial Portfolio with fourteen other artists who accepted his invitation to join this collaborative effort. His first fine art collection, agb 1 x 16, which sold to subscribers for $2,075, included a print by the recently deceased Chicago artist Roger Brown. “Now that print is worth $3,000 alone,” says Prosser, adding that the Jim Nutt print in agb Evore is probably selling for $3,000 and maybe more.

In other words, the $7,500 subscription price to Ballin’s Sesquicentennial Portfolio may lure investors as well as art lovers. — S.P.
plates with Charbonnel inks from France. Using squeegees and small rollers, the printers apply the color, pushing ink into the lines of previously etched copper with a squeegee to apply premixed Charbonnel inks, pushing color into the lines of previously etched copper. Once the inked plate and the slightly dampened art paper are put in register on the press bed (left), two tightly woven blankets are stretched over the paper to hold it snugly against the plate as Schneider cranks it through the press — four times in total for this image.

In today's fast-paced marketplace, printmaking is anything but quick. Here, alumna Nikki Vahle makes the point. Using squeegees and small rollers, the printers apply the color, pushing ink into the lines of previously etched copper. Once the inked plate and the slightly dampened art paper are put in register on the press bed (left), two tightly woven blankets are stretched over the paper to hold it snugly against the plate as Schneider cranks it through the press — four times in total for this image.

A half-dozen prints are in various stages of creation. Professor Emeritus John Wilde ’42, MS’48 is taking an octogenarian’s view of Wisconsin art history. Known for his often-serie focus on how humans fit into the evolving, natural world, he is sketching ever so finely on glass — and then with various techniques on copper — a group portrait of seventy-five of the state’s leading artists. Many of them are Wilde’s friends and colleagues, mentors or graduate students. He captures the state’s muse, from the past to the present — from Frank Lloyd Wright x1890 to Alfred Sessler, who founded the printmaking program at UW-Madison, to Frances Myers ’58, MS’59, MFA’66, the current chair.

Myers, in fact, will be expanding on her previous work involving architecture and Wright for this project, focusing on Madison’s new Monona Terrace Convention Center. “I’ll also be blending in writings by and about Wright and his philosophies,” she says, in a vein similar to her widely exhibited work, Shop’s Clothing. Her spouse, Warrington Colescott, who is known for incorporating the rauous spirit of his native New Orleans into colorful and acute social commentary, will take on another uniquely Wisconsin icon: the Green Bay Packers. Several watercolor studies are already under wraps.

But not all prints in the collection will be so blatantly Badgeresque. Like Maekazuchi, children’s book illustrator Nancy Ekholm Burkert ’54, MS’56 is drawn to the mystique of the Northwoods, but depicts it through a child’s eyes. Tom Uttech, who studied with Nancy’s spouse, Robert Barker ’52, MS’55, at UW-Milwaukee, will celebrate the Northwoods through a haunting image of howling wolves.

Balkin has also been experimenting with some textures and patterns for UW Professor Michelle Grabner, who often incorporates ordinary objects, such as wallpaper patterns and banded weaves, into minimalist auras, elevating the everyday. And the master printer himself will likely contribute to the collection something abstract, nonobjective, and incredibly complicated to print. “Aqua-tints are Andy’s specialty,” says Myers, “and the more complex, the better.”

A Wisconsin Sesquicentennial Portfolio has always liked his own space, recalls Colescott. He remembers the math-major-turned-artist as quiet and “nearly incurable,” while his output was prodigious. “I talked technique, materials, ideas, art history; anything I could think of to establish a dialogue,” Colescott writes. “Nauman’s dialogue was with his work” — and also, with his jazz music. The artist has said that he valued his professors — Sessler, Santos Zingale MS’43, and Colescott among them — because they “held the belief, nurtured in those years, that art should be socially relevant.”

Will it still be relevant here in fifty years, encouraging a bicentennial print portfolio? We expect that the Wisconsin Sesquicentennial Portfolio will put it on their hit list. [55]

[55] Susan Pigorsch ’80 is lucky to claim a family member among Wisconsin’s printmaking mafia — and to have a Wisconsin-made etching in her home.
Ten years ago, Doctor Linnea Smith went on vacation to the rain forest. Today, she’s still there, practicing medicine in one of the most underserved areas of the world.

THE CALL OF THE AMAZON

BY NIKI DENISON

Have you ever enjoyed a vacation so much that you fantasized about packing up and moving to the place of your dreams? Linnea Smith ’81, MD’84 has actually done it.

Drawn to the Amazon on vacation in 1990, this physician left behind a successful practice in Prairie du Sac, Wisconsin, to take up medicine in one of the most underserved areas of the world.

Smith had vacationed in Africa and Egypt before, but nothing had prepared her for the Amazon. She was entranced by beautiful blue morpho butterflies with their five-inch, iridescent wingspans. She fell blissfully asleep in an open-air, thatched lodge during a torrential rain, waking in the morning to a cacophony of jungle sounds — squawking, screeching, grunting, and moaning — and such heavy condensation dripping from the trees that it sounded as if it were still raining. Occasionally, a falling branch would crash to the ground, triggering a crescendo of shrieks that would rise several decibels in indignation, then stop just as abruptly as they started. Smith and the other members of her tour group swam in the warm, muddy river, hiked in the forest, played Tarzan on a huge vine, napped in hammocks, and fished for piranhas.

At the end of about two months, she realized she wasn’t anywhere near ready to leave. It was partly her fascination with a life that begins at dawn and ends at sunset, where fire must be kindled before breakfast can be prepared. And it was partly the people, whom she describes in a book she has written, La Doctores, as “warm and hospitable and handsome — beautiful women, winsome children, and chiseled men, with high cheekbones, ebony eyes, flashing smiles, and a love of dance . . . . They treat me with a mixture of friendship and respect that makes me feel loved.” And there’s no doubt that the astonishing variety and “general weirdness” of the Amazonian flora and fauna had her completely captivated.

Teeming with wildlife, the largest rain forest on earth boasts more species of fish than the Atlantic Ocean and one-third of the earth’s 8,600 bird species. It harbors more types of primates than anywhere else in the New World, as well as an estimated 29 million species of insects, 80 percent of which are as yet unknown to science. The plant diversity is staggering, and all the more noticeable because trees do not grow in stands of the same kind, but in a wonderful riot of different varieties all together.

Within a few minutes’ walk of Smith’s practice (now known as the Yanomoni Clinic), there is a tract of land less than two acres in size with the greatest density of species diversity ever recorded — some three hundred types of trees.

With no electricity, running water, or staff — and with scant knowledge of Spanish, her patients’ native tongue — Smith began treating everything from malaria to machete cuts without the aid of running water, electricity, labs, or staff — and with scant knowledge of Spanish, her patients’ native tongue.

The Explorama Lodge, where she had stayed during her vacation, offered to supply her meals for free and gave her the use of a small, thatched room for her “clinic.” She began treating everything from malaria to machete cuts without the aid of running water, electricity, labs, or staff — and with scant knowledge of Spanish, her patients’ native tongue.

Within a few minutes’ walk of Smith’s practice (now known as the Yanomoni Clinic), there is a tract of land less than two acres in size with the greatest density of species diversity ever recorded — some three hundred types of trees.

Because of the lack of roads in the Amazon, Smith had to travel fifty miles by dugout canoe to reach the nearest doctor. When she reluctantly returned to the U.S., Smith arranged to take a three-month leave-of-absence from her practice, even though part of her was thinking, “When I go down there, I’ll come to my senses and realize that it’s not nearly as romantic a place once I’m not on vacation, and it won’t be enchanting anymore.” A few months later, she headed back to Peru, armed with not much more than a bottle of prenatal vitamins, a small microscope, a stethoscope, a few doses of antibiotics, and her sense of humor. Since the competition was minimal, she jokes, her practice grew, and soon she was seeing one hundred patients a week.

The Explorama Lodge, where she had stayed during her vacation, offered to supply her meals for free and gave her the use of a small, thatched room for her “clinic.” She began treating everything from malaria to machete cuts without the aid of running water, electricity, labs, or staff — and with scant knowledge of Spanish, her patients’ native tongue.

At the end of about two months, she realized she wasn’t anywhere near ready to leave. It was partly her fascination with a life that begins at dawn and ends at sunset, where fire must be kindled before breakfast can be prepared. And it was partly the people, whom she describes in a book she has written, La Doctores, as “warm and hospitable and handsome — beautiful women, winsome children, and chiseled men, with high cheekbones, ebony eyes, flashing smiles, and a love of dance . . . . They treat me with a mixture of friendship and respect that makes me feel loved.” And there’s no doubt that the astonishing variety and “general weirdness” of the Amazonian flora and fauna had her completely captivated.

Teeming with wildlife, the largest rain forest on earth boasts more species of fish than the Atlantic Ocean and one-third of the earth’s 8,600 bird species. It harbors more types of primates than anywhere else in the New World, as well as an estimated 29 million species of insects, 80 percent of which are as yet unknown to science. The plant diversity is staggering, and all the more noticeable because trees do not grow in stands of the same kind, but in a wonderful riot of different varieties all together.

Within a few minutes’ walk of Smith’s practice (now known as the Yanomoni Clinic), there is a tract of land less than two acres in size with the greatest density of species diversity ever recorded — some three hundred types of trees.
DAN PETERSON (2)

ON WISCONSIN

jungle-borne afflictions such as piranha pneumonia, or worms, or attending to cases, treating a child with diarrhea, 225 patients.

one Madison state employee’s annual United States. And for the equivalent of the cost of one transplant operation in the clinic’s entire annual budget is less than Project, a nonprofit organization started with donations to the Amazon Medical no salary, and the clinic is run entirely with minimal resources.

and to be able to make a relatively large fill the urgent need in this remote area do. She finds it profoundly gratifying to idea that there was anything she couldn’t nurture to parents who never gave her the

entered medical school at the age of 36 and to own her own business and then specialized in internal medicine, which focuses only on adults, her obstetric training was a little more than the aver-
age person’s, but not too much. “Imagine having someone in front of you who is going to die,” she says deci-
sively, cruelly, “and you decide to cut them open and take a baby out and man-
age it to do so successfully and sew them back up again, and both the woman and the baby survive.” Contrary to popular belief, in medicine “there are very few instances when you can say with 100 per-
cent certainty this person would have died had I not done this.” In this case, she knew with absolute certainty that she had saved two lives.

And she had done it in spite of mis-
erable light and semitropical conditions. Smith quickly learned that in her primi-
tive new practice, for most routine med-
ical procedures, clean had to substitute for sterile. Surprisingly, she found that despite these less-than-perfect conditions, most people healed quite well.

For the first several years that she was in the Amazon, Doctors Smith was in danger of being overwhelmed by the effort of running a one-woman operation. She was constantly on call, with the potential for emergencies to arise at any hour of the day or night. She did not have a nurse to perform all the functions taken for granted in the U.S., such as checking patients in, taking their blood pressure, and helping with chores.

Since she was also lacking a pharma-
cist, she had to procure and bottle any medications she prescribed, as well as func-
tion as the janitor. Every morning, she would have to sweep up the bugs and debris that fell from the thatched roof, and when babies peed on the floor, she’d have to stop what she was doing and wipe it up. This was a common occurrence, she says, since diapers are not a feature of life in the Amazon.

But fortunately, help was on the way. When Smith returned to Wisconsin for a visit, a member of the Duluth, Minnesota, Rotary Club heard her inter-
viewed on the radio. The end result was that a group of Rotarians agreed to fund a staff position so that Smith would have some assistance. She recruited and trained a young local man named Juvencio, who, despite his sixth-grade educa-

tion, now has skills approaching the level of some Peruvian physicians. He can exam-
in and diagnose patients, prescribe medicine, administer an IV, assist with surgery, suture wounds, and perform many more essential functions. But even better than that, the Rotar-
ians eventually traveled to South Amer-
ica and built a new clinic — small and simple, but with the incredible advantage of having solar panels to power lights, and a well and pump to provide running water. On subsequent visits, the Rotarian relief squad also built a house for Smith and for patients’ families, and made sev-
eral other improvements.

It’s not exactly the Mayo Clinic, but Smith still feels guilty when the Explo-
rama tourists exclaim how noble she is to have forsaken her comfortable lifestyle for a thatched hut in the remote jungle. She quickly sets them straight. “I tried to attempt to live a much simpler life than the second half of twentieth-century North America tends to push at you,” she says. “And that’s not any giving up of things on my part. It’s just that I don’t want them to begin with, so that doesn’t really count as sacrifice.”

In the States, Smith used to buy most of her clothes and furniture at Goodwill, and she says she doesn’t miss the things that most people would miss. “I’d rather not be one of the crowd, and so if I make things or scrounge them, then they’re less likely to be what everyone else has got, and I find them more interesting.”

There are some things she misses about Wisconsin, though — such as, of course, cheese. She travels back to the state at least once a year so she can have Swiss, Parmesan, and provolone, as well as delicacies such as ice cream, bacon, and asparagus. She enjoys seeing friends, riding her motorcycle in the rolling hills west of Madison, and indulging herself in trips to K-Mart, since even this unmat-
erialistic idealist admits that there are some items that you just can’t get in Iquitos, the largest city near her clinic.

Her biggest worry is whether the clinic will continue to exist when she leaves or retires, and she hopes to set up a group of volunteers who can eventually relieve her. Although several U.S. doc-
tors have flown down to help her for brief periods of time, they cannot legally practice medicine alone without a Peru-

The Amazon Basin is a place so vast and remote that it still hides an esti-

mated fifty-odd tribes of indigenous people who live in isolated pockets of the rain forest and have yet to be contacted or discovered by the outside world.

this license only after seven years of wrangling with a bureaucracy as tangled as the jungle vegetation itself. (Given the fluid state of Peruvian law affairs and the remote location of her clinic, she escaped censure during the interim.) Although Smith recently found a Peruvian doctor who relieved her for seven weeks this summer, enabling her to make her longest visit home ever, it is hard to find one who is willing to stay in the rain forest permanently. “It’s like ask-
ing someone from Manh-
hattan to move to Appalachia,” she says.

Smith is not sure how long she’ll be staying there. It could be her whole life, she says, or maybe ten, “or maybe I’ll stay there for another twenty, or maybe tomorrow I’ll get tired of it all and go home. If you’d asked me before I left Wisconsin on my vacation where I was going to be practicing, I would have said Wisconsin, for the rest of my life. And then a week later, I said, ‘Well, maybe I’ll stay there, or move to Peru.’ I’m clearly not a very stable person,” she says, laughing. “Who knows what I might do next?”

Without question, Smith’s presence has improved the quality of life for the ribereños, or river people, whom she treats. Before she came, if they needed to see a doctor, they had to rely on the river taxis that ply the Amazon, taking any-

where from six to nine hours to make the fifty-mile trip to Iquitos. “If you happen to be sick on Wednesday night,” she says, “there might not be a boat till Friday morning.” There is now a physician at a government clinic halfway between Smith’s clinic and Iquitos, about twenty-five miles away. But that’s still a long way to go in a place with no roads.

Smith makes sure to charge her patients in Wisconsin on my vacation of an estimated six to ten dollars — for treatment, so that

Smith originally treated patients in a small, thatched room in the Explorama tourist lodge. Every morning, she would have to sweep up bugs and debris that fell from the thatched during the night. But thanks to Rotary Club members from the U.S., Smith now has a clinic (far left) that boasts solar power and a well and pump that provide running water — rarities in the remote jungle. Now, it’s only when it’s very dry, and the well runs dry and the clinic must fall back on buckets of water from the Amazon, purified by chlo-

dine. Although La Doctora didn’t know Span-
ish when she first arrived, she can now communicate quite well with her patients. Besides treating common children’s ailments such as diarrhea and worms, she sees every-
thing from malaria to machete cuts, with a few piranha bites and leprosy cases thrown in.
they don’t become dependent on her. She’s not sure if her presence has been particu-
larly disruptive to their lifestyle, she says, because their lives were already disrupted when the Spaniards first came down the river centuries earlier. And they are bound to be influenced anyway by such things as the MTV and U.S. movies that they may see in Leguía. “I have never seen these people encounter. ‘But that happens all over the world, and I don’t know that you can do much about it,’ she says. ‘You can’t really say. Don’t cut your rain forest, and keep hunting with a blow gun. Now we’re going to go home and live with this hot and cold running water and watch our televisions, but we’d rather you remain primitive and stay colorful.’ Unfortu-
nately, colorful, in most Third World places, usually equates with poor.

There are some villages where Explorama has opted to stop taking its travelers, she says, because after a while, the children began asking for candy and other little gifts that they had learned to expect from the tourists. “And then after a while, they’re asking for candy in English, and then after a while, they’re getting kind of obnoxious if they don’t get it, and that sequence is sort of sad to see,” she says. On the other hand, ecotourism brings clean, pollution-free diesel, which allows the village to continue existing that desperately need the money. If one could imagine a world in which modern culture did not encroach, she says, the native people would be better off with- out tourism. ‘But the world’s going to encroach no matter what you do, so what you get out of tourism is a measure of prosperity for those who are close to the tourism industry.’

Smith thinks that all Americans should be required to go to a developing country so they could gain a greater appreci-
ation of how truly wealthy they are. “And I do think that they have the same opportunities as we have, so that they could have a higher standard of living if they wanted to,” she says. For instance, she ticks off the kinds of soap found in the typical American home: shampoo, hand soap for the bath- room, dishwasher soap and regular dish soap for the kitchen, possibly pumice soap out in the garage, laundry soap, and so on. “You know, they use one kind of soap,” she says.

“How many pairs of shoes do you have?” she continues. “Can you tell me off the top of your head? Down there they could tell you. They’ve got one pair of shoes or two pairs of shoes or no pairs of shoes. The tourists come down and there’s not a single person who’s got less than $100 worth of stuff on them. If they’ve got a video camera, they’ve got $1,000 worth of stuff, just walking around, glasses, ear-
rings, wedding rings, watches, $70 hiking shoes, you’ve got L.L. Bean vests — no one down there will ever have $100 worth of stuff that they own, let alone on them at one time.”

In the U.S., she says, those who are able to work hard are usually able to bet- ter their circumstances, unless they face the barriers sometimes imposed by race, gender, or disability. “But down there,” she says, “you can be as bright as you want, as hardworking as you want — and you’ll spend your life in the sugar cane field. I don’t know how you improve that distribution of resources, but the United States has not got a clue as to how wealthy it is.”

Another thing Smith has gained is a greater appreciation for U.S. efficiency. When she came home a few years ago to get her driver’s license renewed, the whole process took about twenty-five minutes. In Peru, she says, this task could span several days, ending stand-
ing in line for hours, going to several locations to get a photograph taken, get fingerprinted, and take a physical exam and driving test, only to come back with all the papers three days later to find out that “you can’t do it at one o’clock because they close by then.

“You get to appreciate the infrastruc-
ture that makes it possible in the U.S. for us to do our work,” she says, “and not be spending half of our time just running around trying to get the typewriter fixed or whatever.”

In fact, when Smith comes home now, she doesn’t always do things effi-
ciently. She’s found herself on the road, heading to the store to find out if they have a particular item, and “all of a sud-
den I realize, ‘Wait a minute, I don’t have to drive thirty miles — I can telephone and ask them,’ but I’ve forgotten that.”

“Don’t this drive her nuts?” “Yes, of course,” she admits. “But there are things about the U.S. that drive me crazy. The materialism, the amount of stuff that we have, the amount of stuff that we think we need, the prices of everything, the pace of everything.” There is way too much advertising and way too much violence here, she says. “You don’t get teenagers going into the schools with machine guns in Peru. And part of that is because of the way the U.S. gun laws are and the way our history is. And part of it is that we’re rich and bored.”

In the United States, she says, the focus is on having things. ‘And to me, who is Robert Louis Stevenson, who said that the point isn’t the getting there, the point is making the journey. To me, life is not having things, life is doing things. I find it more interesting to do things.”

And to me … the point isn’t the getting there, the point is making the journey. To me, life is not having things, life is doing things. I find it more interesting to do things.”

Traditional ways have not completely disappeared in the Amazon, and that includes the use of shamans for treating disease. Dr. Linnea Smith counts the traditional healers among her friends. Although they lack modern methods, she believes that they retain a comforting aspect in their healing rituals that Western medicine has lost — an emphasis on treating the whole person.

Linnie Smith, who has been practicing medicine in the remote Amazon jungle for nearly a decade, says that many of the local people still rely on shamans for whatever ails them.

Smith has a friendly relationship with these traditional healers, whom she mostly sees in social situations. Some of them send their patients to her for particular ailments, but others treat things that she wishes they wouldn’t. One example is a woman with tuberculosis from the nearby Yagua tribal vil-
dage. “They don’t really believe in or understand germ theory,” she says. “And her family treated her for years with witch doctors. I finally talked them into going to the government program where tuberculosis medicine is supplied free, but she doesn’t take it.” It’s probably too late for her, says Smith. “I don’t like to see people dying, especially from diseases that are treatable. But the alternative would have been to kidnap her and force her to take treatative medicine to make her own choices. Everybody has a right to live any way they want to.

A few years ago, Smith saw a five-year-old with what she thinks was an intestinal obstruction. “It could have been any number of things, but most likely it was a bulous of worms, a big ball of intestinal parasites,” she says. Her mother brought him in when he’d been sick for three or four days. His belly was very distended, she says, and he was so backed up that he wasn’t even throwing up anymore. “He was just kind of drool-
ing from his mouth and nose.” As she was preparing to insert a tube to decompress his stomach, she died. “And he had been treated by a local healer who was giving him thimerosal by mouth. It’s a disinfectant, a preservative,” she says. “It’s not appropriate treatment.”

Smith acknowledges that there are things that modern medicine can’t cure, either. “And there are some things that the shamans are very good at, and there are certainly some things that are not on anybody’s formulary that the shamans are using that are valid.” For instance, they’ve got good remedies for fungal infections such as athlete’s foot, which are common in warm, humid climates, and there are several plants that they’ve used for centuries for birth control.

“Most nontraditional medicine focuses on taking care of the whole person, whereas Western medicine takes care of the disease,” she says. This Western physician believes that the shamans are very good at the spiritual aspects of medicine — at the hand-holding or comfort aspect. Where modern medi-
cine tends to focus on prescribing a pill or ordering an X-ray, she says, traditional treatment includes a fair amount of ritual. “It often involves dark rooms and attention focused on the patient, and there are chants or music or drums, there is smoke medicine, there is medicine given,” she says. “If you feel bad, what’s going to make you feel better? If somebody gives you a pill and says, ‘Take this,’ or if somebody sets you in a place, focuses all their attention on you for an hour or two, dances around you, and conducts ceremonies that are centered on you? Obviously that is very important to people.”

Unlike traditional societies, says Smith, in the modern world, we’ve gotten away from the metaphysical, and the only thing we believe in is the physical. “If you can’t weigh it, mea-
sure it, and put it on the computer screen,” she says, “it isn’t real. We’ve gotten to where we sort of poo-poo the meta-
physical aspects and don’t really believe in them, but I think they’re still there, and I think they still affect our lives.” — N.D.
Either the millennium will dawn, or it won’t. Either the world will be thrust into a computer-crashing, humanity-crushing chaos, or it won’t. Either life will go on, or it won’t.

We really have no way of knowing what will happen when the calendar turns over on January 1, 2000. For every prediction, there’s an antiprediction. For every person toasting the new millennium, there’s another one pointing out that the millennium doesn’t actually begin for another year. The only thing we can say with absolute certainty is that we’ll trade in a one with three nines for a two with three zeros. And maybe it’s as simple as that; all the hoopla — the hype about millennia that has seemed to last a millennium on its own — is just about the fact that the year 2000 has a bunch of zeros. But zeros can be cool.

So you want a lot of zeros? How about the eight zeros found in the year 600,000,000?
If the year 2000 fills us with wonder for its flat-out evenness, then 600,000,000 should be infinitely awesome. And for Sean Carroll, it is. While pop psychologists dwell on the short-term paranoia of 2000, Carroll is transfixed by what happened to the planet between six hundred million and seven hundred million years ago, when evolution had barely taken a step and the future of the animal kingdom was buried in the DNA of a few primitive organisms.

Reaching that far into the past isn’t easy. Barely any fossils exist from the period, and Carroll’s only guide to learning the secrets of evolution lies in the genes of creatures that can trace their roots to that time. So why does he persist? “We’re drawing a picture of something no one else has seen,” he says. If you were to climb into an intellectual time capsule and surf the eras, you’d find a lot of UW-Madison professors with interests strewn across the time continuum. Their curiosity has led them to explore the ins and outs of the animal kingdom and created the various branches of modern genetics.

For Carroll, however, there’s one period in particular that stands out in his mind. It’s the period between sixty-five and seventy million years ago, when the dinosaurs roamed free and the land, where centuries later, North Africa wasn’t the desert it is today. The first T. rex fossils were discovered in 1921 at a site near the village of Hell Creek in what is now Montana. In 1923, the same year Carroll was born, the site was publicly announced. Over the years, Hell Creek has become a major source of dinosaur fossils. By 1970, scientists had discovered that the area contained the remains of hundreds of dinosaur species. The site is now a protected area, and fossils are still being discovered there today.

Climate models are often used to forecast future conditions, but John Kutzbach ’60, MS ’61, PhD ’66 and Zhengyu Liu have discovered an interesting world of information by pointing that technology toward the past. By modeling the conditions of six thousand years ago, they have uncovered startling facts about the nature and dynamics of ancient Earth. For example, they have discovered that the Sahara Desert was much larger and that the Mediterranean was a much larger body of water than it is today. In addition, they have found evidence that the Earth’s climate has been much more variable in the past than it is today. This research has important implications for understanding how the Earth’s climate will change in the future and how we can best prepare for those changes.

In the Beginning

Looking deep into space, as UW-Madison astronomers gaze upon the universe in its infancy, possibly within one billion years of when the Big Bang is believed to have begun, they see a time that is not unlike the present. With the aid of the Hubble Space Telescope, Carroll has been able to peer sharply at places so far away that what we see today actually happened around ten billion years ago.

Such time travel offers UW-Madison astronomers a glimpse of the universe in its infancy, possibly within one billion years of when the Big Bang is believed to have begun. And with WIYN, a high-power, ground-based telescope shared among UW-Madison, two other universities, and a national research center, they are exploring properties of the most ancient stars in our neighborhood — celestial archaeology that may help us understand our own corner of space.

65,000,000 years ago

When Craig Pister hikes the buttes and prairies of the American West, his mind drifts to a time when this was the land of giants. A veteran of more than a dozen digs in search of dinosaur bones, Pister has helped to unearth two of the UW-Madison geology museum’s current treasuries. His 1996 expedition recovered bones from a triceratops and a tyrannosaurus rex, both of which had been buried for some sixty-five million years.

Restoring the fragile bones is the next challenge for the museum. While the T. rex may be too brittle for display, the triceratops will eventually join a trio of three-foot edmontosaurus skeletons as the chief attractions at the museum, which, thanks to director Klaus Weastphal, Pister, and a score of staff and volunteers, is an example of how the modern alphabet to an unknown ancient Greek. Powell, backed up by archaeological evidence, traces the roots of the modern alphabet to an unknown fan of Homer who, so moved by the lyrical oral poetry, tried to write it down. It’s such a controversial notion that scholars are still debating it. There’s one point on which they agree, however: who ever hatched the Greek alphabet — the first to capture the sound of words — set into motion the titanic thrust of Western civilization.

200 B.C.

Although the hymns and poems that form the heart of Hinduism had been passed on orally for possibly one thousand years, it was during this period that they began to be transcribed. And because they were written in Sanskrit, many UW-Madison students and faculty now turn themselves in the ancient language so that they might plumb the lyrical and spiritual works for themselves.

1200s

In his history of science courses, David Lindberg argues that today’s students are in the great deal a year away from the thirteenth century. It was then that students in Paris and Oxford began reading the works of the Greek masters, which had been lost to Europe for more than eight centuries. Preserved by Islamic scholars who valued Aristotle’s teachings on medicine and science, the texts eventually found their way into Latin translation, and thus into the minds of thirteenth-century students. The resulting intellectual eruption gave life to all kinds of academic disciplines — from physics to philosophy — and paved the way for Galileo, Copernicus, and a chorus of scientists and thinkers who were inspired to wonder why.

1492

One of the most memorable years in history — how does the school rhyme go? — 1492 symbolizes a period of European exploration and, some would say, exploitation. No figures from the era are more enigmatic and controversial than that of Christopher Columbus. Helping to demystify Columbus is Margarita Zamora, a professor of Latin American literature who has surveyed Columbus’s writings to paint a fuller picture of the man who sought to find the New World. Rather than depicting Columbus as the hero that so many consider him to be, Zamora considers a wider definition of discovery — a process of knowing that she says still influences our thinking today.

800 B.C.

If you think that all is clearly quiet on the classics front, meet Barry Powell. The professor has kicked up major dust clouds in recent years with his theory that modern writing began with one ancient Greek. Powell, backed up by archaeological evidence, traces the roots of the modern alphabet to an unknown fan of Homer who, so moved by the lyrical oral poetry, tried to write it down. It’s such a controversial notion that scholars are still debating it. There’s one point on which they agree, however: who ever hatched the Greek alphabet — the first to capture the sound of words — set into motion the titanic thrust of Western civilization.

800s

Beginning at this point in history and continuing for several centuries, Vikings invaded and settled parts of northern England, where centuries later, Howard Martin MA ’87, PhD ’91 would grow up speaking a language deeply colored by their presence. Now UW-Madison’s Dan’s of continuing studies, Martin has maintained a lifelong fascination with the Viking influences on his native country, writing several papers on how English has been infiltrated with Old Norse influences. (The words law, skin, skirt, flat, and anger are just a few examples.)
When Spanish explorers arrived on the coast of South America in this year, they found the land dominated by the Inca Empire, a civilization that accomplished remarkably advanced feats in engineering and architecture. The Europeans and their diseases brought about an end to the empire, but anthropologists such as the UW’s Frank Salomon find plenty of enduring reasons to study Inca culture. One example: Inca villagers have long used elaborately knotted cords, called khipus, to record dates, measures, and other numeric data. Not only have the khipus preserved thousands of years of history, but they’re Y2K-compliant, more than we can say about our “advanced” information storage.

Around this time, American colonists stopped eating, and started dining. The differences are subtle — using forks instead of hands to eat, cooking meals instead of meats — but important in the eyes of Ann Smart Martin, a professor of art history. Studying the artifacts of everyday American living in her specialty. Martin notes that as Americans began to shake off their coarse life of survival and to engage in finer living, they gained a taste for the material possessions — and lost the Inca dependence on the khipus.  Inca villagers have long used elaborately knotted cords, called khipus, to record dates, measures, and other numeric data. Not only have the khipus preserved thousands of years of history, but they’re Y2K-compliant, more than we can say about our “advanced” information storage.

The Here and Now

History needn’t always be so . . . dusty. Sometimes the past can be a lens for seeing events of our own time. Professor Colleen Dunlavy uses research on the development of business and technology to help inform our understanding of the way things are today. She’s writing a book, for example, about the history of shareholder rights, in which she documents how small shareholders once held greater voting power than they do today. By looking back, she hopes to suggest that present-day circumstances — such as wide public investment and mass communication made easy through the Internet — might warrant a more democratic way of doing business.

The Land Beyond

We’ve already met professors who put important experiences of the past under the microscope to search for understanding. But there are others who train their minds on the indistinct future. They spend their days trying to foresee the world ahead, to divine how they might make it better.

These people are solving problems before they even emerge, like Glenn Bower MS’84, PhD’92, who is helping a team of engineering students convert a Chevrolet Suburban from a gasoline-guzzling behemoth into a vehicle that runs on clean, alternative fuel. Or Judith Kimble, a biochemistry professor who is part of a team studying the way human organs grow and form, with the hope that one day researchers will be able to develop transplant organs in the laboratory. Or Jake Blanchard, a nuclear engineer who is developing micro-scale nuclear batteries to power a breed of intricate tools that don’t exist yet, but will.

And, although her primary interest is to question the need for all the prognosticating whirling about the dawning of the new millennium, dance professor Li Chiao-Ping is compelling us to think about what lies ahead with Fin de Siècle, a “futurist ballet” that portals our obsession with the new millennium and speed.

The End

Finally, a wild card. Paul Boyer doesn’t really fit neatly into our time continuum. He doesn’t know when the world will end, but he’s interested in people who think that they do.

From the Millitaries, who predicted the return of Jesus Christ in 1843, to present-day prophecysayers who believe the end is coming any day now, many people have, at one time or another, felt the hot breath of the apocalypse on their cheeks. Boyer, a history professor and author of a book on prophecy belief, has studied this kind of thinking, and he cautions against dismissing believers as misguided. “They’re not simply a group of kooks on the fringes,” he says, pointing out that belief in a divinely foreordained end of the world is actually quite widespread. “Most people aren’t obsessed with it,” he says, “but the underlying tension about our future has colored the way people have perceived the threat of nuclear war, conflict in the Middle East, and the globalization economy.”

And, lest we forget, Y2K. As you might imagine, Boyer is busy keeping tabs on the worldwide hula-baloo. He’s even looking forward to Y2K’s Eve. “When your car’s odometer flips over to one hundred thousand miles, it’s a meaningless moment in a way,” he says, “but it’s still exciting to look at all those zeros.”