

OnWisconsin

FOR UNIVERSITY OF WISCONSIN-MADISON ALUMNI AND FRIENDS SPRING 2019

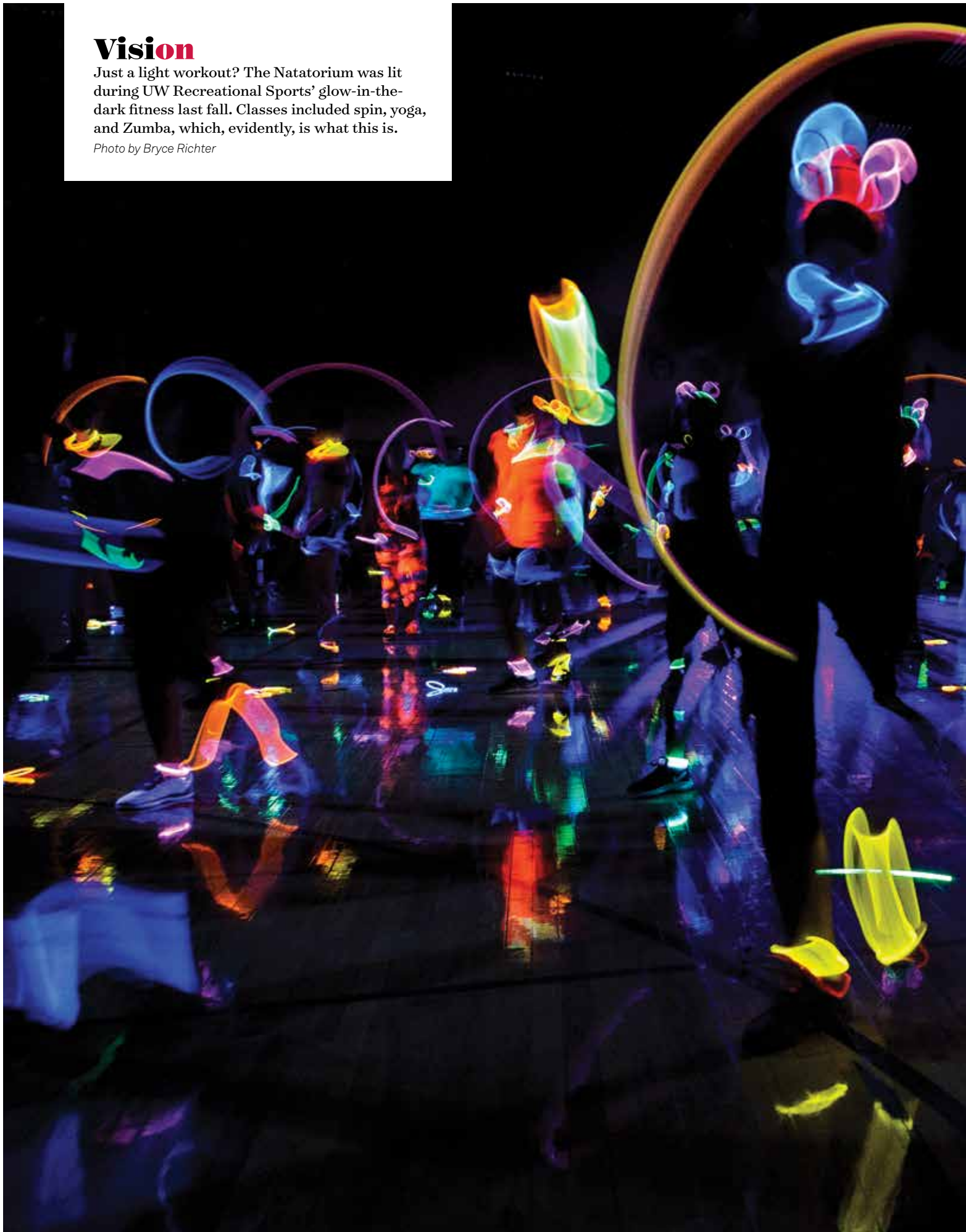
We Need to Talk
Sharing opinions in a
polarized world
Page 22



Vision

Just a light workout? The Natatorium was lit during UW Recreational Sports' glow-in-the-dark fitness last fall. Classes included spin, yoga, and Zumba, which, evidently, is what this is.

Photo by Bryce Richter







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OnWisconsin

An astonishing array of stuff orbits above us. See page 38.

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All about that chair. See page 14.

WISCO INDUSTRIES



SPENCER WALTS

FEATURES

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Sharing what's on your mind — and welcoming the viewpoints of others on contentious issues — is a campus hallmark that could inform the wider world. *By Louisa Kamps*

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No matter how viewers are binge-watching television these days, they might as well call it Badger-watching, given the multifaceted ways that UW alumni are contributing to our favorite shows. *By Kate Kail Dixon '01, MA'07, Addie Morfoot '02, and Jenny Price '96*

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It's getting mighty crowded in space as debris from satellites, labs, and other things shot into Earth's orbit degrade over time and threaten to fall back to where they came from. *By Terry Devitt '78, MA'85*

42 A Good Sport

Wall Street Journal columnist Jason Gay '92 makes no apologies for being a rabid Badger fan — even in a newsroom populated with Michigan alumni. *By Taylor Laabs '14*

44 Free to Be Allee

Allee Willis '69 is more than just the composer of hit songs such as "September" and the *Friends* theme: she also collects kitsch, throws legendary parties, and supports her hometown of Detroit. *By Wendy Hathaway '04*



COURTESY OF ALLEE WILLIS

See page 44.

Cover

Can we talk? Illustration by Tim Bradford/Illustrationweb.

MORE:

STATE STREETS THAT ARE ALSO GREAT STREETS



Although not every street in our state may evoke the same feelings one may have for our capital's most famed thoroughfare, quite a number of Wisconsin's byways are just as exciting places to be. Thanks to a booming economy, abundant career opportunities and low cost of living, no matter what the name of the street you choose, there's never been a better time to make your address in Wisconsin. Wisconsin. It's more **you**.

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The Dark Side of Football

Chris Borland single-handedly gave us beleaguered 49ers fans hope, and then he left, ending our party ["Walking Away from Football," Winter 2018 *On Wisconsin*]. While many were upset, others (myself included) silently applauded his decision, recognizing him as one of the smartest and bravest men in football.

Paul Darbo '72

Fair Oaks, California

I'm writing in response to Preston Schmitt's article on Chris Borland's departure from the NFL. I am sincerely interested in the university's response to the question of the ethics of continuing a Big Ten football program in the face of the emerging scientific evidence regarding CTE. An institution that heralds itself as a champion of progressivism must answer the question: are we going to continue to value revenue and tradition over the long-term well-being of our students? As an alumna, I would be ashamed to support a university that continues to do so.

Mallory Willkom DVM'09

Milwaukee

Master Motivator Mike

Thanks for the wonderful article on Mike Leckrone ["Stop at the Top," Winter 2018]. Mike was a master motivator, marketer, and mentor — a leader whose personality was assimilated by the people he led. He set high standards and never compromised. His dedication and love for his work inspired everyone who marched for him. I am privileged to have been among the first he taught to "stop at the top" in his backyard in August 1969. I am humbled and grateful to call Mike my friend.

Richard James '72

Waukesha, Wisconsin

Good article ... great man. [Mike Leckrone's] influence went way beyond the field; he was also

a wonderful teacher. I never played an instrument and never marched a step, but my first elective as a freshman was Introduction to Big Bands. In the first class, Mike introduced us to his favorite drummer, Gene Krupa, and I was hooked on college! Thanks, Mike.

John Koenigs '78

McKinney, Texas

In Praise of Pet Food

Thank you for the piece on Marie Moody ["Raw Talent," Winter 2018]. I have fed my pups a lot of Stella & Chewy's and often wondered who started it, how it ended up in Oak Creek, how one starts a pet food company, etc. This answered all that and was very interesting to read — it was sort of serendipitous.

Mary Jo Koranda

Sun Prairie, Wisconsin

Alternatives to Hunting

"The Hunt for Answers" [Winter 2018], which proposes hunting as a solution to expanding deer populations, neglects to mention that many wildlife management agencies are currently advancing humane and nonlethal methods of control as an alternative to hunting, which is obviously ineffective. These alternatives should have been explored in the article.

Indeed, the article's romantic promotion of bowhunting as a solution is not only silly, but morally offensive; bowhunting is a notoriously cruel and inhumane practice. Moreover, reference to Marti Kheel '74's incisive critique of Aldo Leopold's romanticization of hunting should be included in any balanced view of the issue.

Finally, it must be said that the main cause of environmental degradation and loss of biodiversity is corporate development — an outgrowth of human overpopulation — not deer.

Josephine Donovan MA'67, PhD'71

Urbana, Illinois

STRIKE



JOHN WOLF

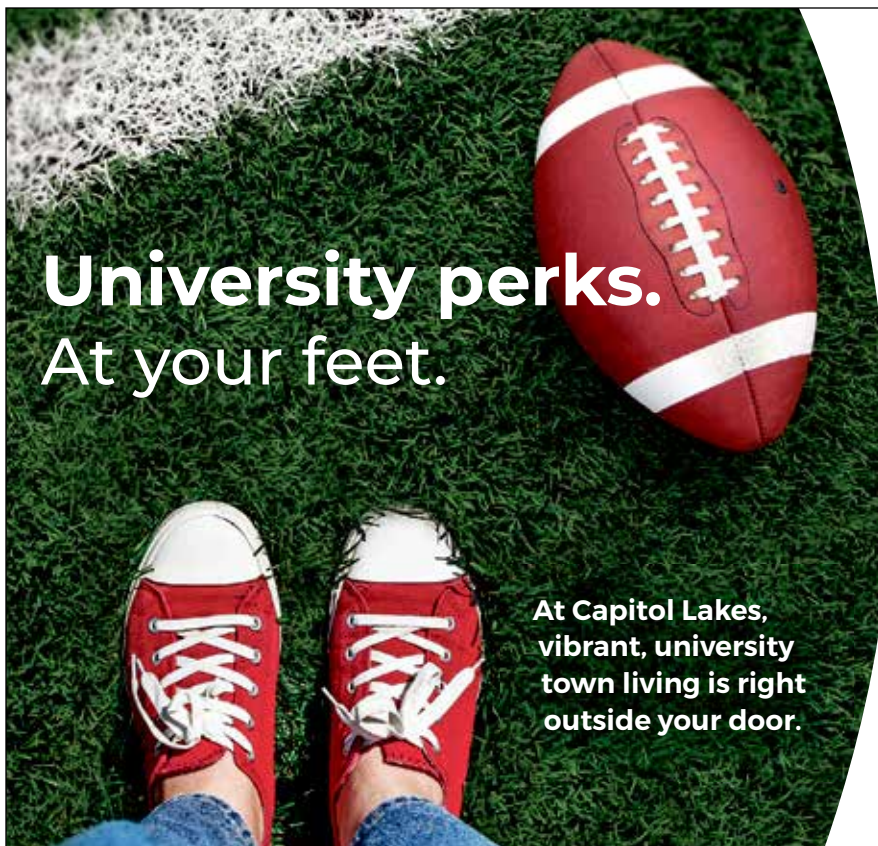
Fifty years ago, black students at UW–Madison, propelled by long-standing grievances and fresh flash points, called for a campuswide student strike until administrators agreed to a series of demands. Thousands boycotted classes, took over lecture halls, and blocked building entrances. In an unprecedented response, the governor sent the Wisconsin National Guard to campus. A new website captures the tumultuous weeks on campus in February 1969 through a timeline of events and an oral history with activists of that time. See news.wisc.edu/black-student-strike.

10 YEARS ON



CHRIS GARDNER, USACE NEW YORK DISTRICT PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The UW is connected to its fair share of miracles. For one, the "Miracle on Ice" (see page 15). And we have Jeff Skiles '84 to thank for his role in the "Miracle on the Hudson." On January 15, 2009, disaster struck US Airways Flight 1549 in the form of geese, which flew into the plane's engines. Skiles, the copilot, helped guide the failing plane onto the Hudson River. Everyone survived. "It's not like I had any oh-my-God-this-is-the-end moment. I just thought: river. Okay, we can do the river," Skiles told *On Wisconsin* in 2009. Read more: go.wisc.edu/hudson.



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CHAZEN MUSEUM OF ART

"If death and eternal judgment can be comedy," Warrington Colescott once said, "then nothing is beyond the comic imagination." The pioneering printmaker and longtime UW art professor, who died in September 2018 at age 97, proved that statement true many times over. His satirical etchings earned national acclaim for their biting wit — ranging from critiques of society and politics to the purely playful and absurd. Themes of warfare permeated his works, a reflection of his upbringing as a son of a World War I soldier and his own army service in World War II. While his irreverence often reigned — "If you attack, do it with skill," he advised — his narrative works could be deeply human and hopeful. "The terrain that really grips me," he said, "is that black zone between tragedy and high comedy, where, with a little push one way or the other, you can transmute screams into laughter and where the rules are no rules."

Warrington Colescott's Sunday Service (2001) was included in the Wisconsin Sesquicentennial Portfolio.

PRESTON SCHMITT '14



CAN WE SEE
INVISIBLE
CURRENTS
BEFORE
THEY
FORM?

WHEN CIVIL ENGINEERING AND CIVIL SERVICE
WORK TOGETHER, WE ARE BOUNDLESS.

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Long-Term Investments

UW, state budget proposals are in play.



FLAD ARCHITECTS

Expansion of the School of Veterinary Medicine, the only veterinary school in Wisconsin, will allow it to serve more farmers and pet owners across the state. The current hospital was built to accommodate 12,000 patients a year; in 2016, it served 26,500.

The only certainty is uncertainty with a divided government, and so it goes for UW-Madison's 2019–21 biennial budget request.

Last August, the UW Board of Regents approved an operating budget request of \$107.5 million in new state funding for the UW System to support high-demand academic programs, with much of the funding tied to performance metrics.

The regents also approved a \$1.9 billion capital budget recommendation (spanning the next two budgets) for the maintenance, renovation, or replacement of campus buildings, including a \$90 million addition to the current UW-Madison School of Veterinary Medicine, which opened in 1983.

"With continued investment from the state, UW-Madison will remain a world-class university in education, health, and research that changes lives and powers Wisconsin's economy," Chancellor **Rebecca Blank** said at the time.

Newly sworn-in Wisconsin Governor **Tony Evers '73, MS'76, PhD'86**, formerly the state schools superintendent, is expected to release his budget proposal in February or March. (It was not available at press time.) The negotiation process between Evers, a Democrat, and the Republican-led legislature could continue through the summer. The budget bill must be passed by the state assembly and senate before returning to the governor to be signed into law.

During his campaign, Evers signaled stronger financial support for the UW System, including funding to fully offset the ongoing in-state tuition freeze that was enacted under former Governor Scott Walker in 2013. The system received a \$36 million increase in the current budget, following a substantial \$250 million cut in 2015. To help generate revenue, UW-Madison has increased tuition for out-of-state students and professional degree programs over the past four years.

"We talked about how what's best for our kids is what's best for our state," Evers said in his inauguration address. "And that means we need to fully fund our public schools at every level ... from all-day pre-K to our university and technical college systems."

PRESTON SCHMITT '14

SPEAK GENTLY, MOUSE SPOUSE

California mice are relatively solitary animals, but put two in a room, and they'll talk each other's ears off. The species will coo, chirp, and bark — and their chatter may speak volumes about relationships. The quality of their conversations after infidelity can help predict which couples are most successful.

"These mice are not gregarious. They're loners," says UW researcher **Josh Pultorak PhD'17**. "They're highly territorial and aggressive — both sexes."

While notorious for their ferocity, California mice are also known for their monogamy. Once they've bonded with a partner, they don't normally mate with another. Pultorak and his collaborators paired up 55 male and 55 female mice, recording their vocalizations. As the pairs bonded, their communication became more affiliative. Then the researchers moved some of the males to live with new females, and some of the females to live with new males. After a week, the unfaithful mice were reunited. The ones that communicated more kindly tended to successfully produce offspring.

"That's a big deal," says Pultorak. "Arguably, it's the whole point of forming pair bonds in the first place."

CHRIS BARNCARD



TENRA/STOCK

BADGER GENIUSES



Sandefur



Parks

Two Badger alumnae — **Rebecca Sandefur '91** and **Lisa Parks MA'93, PhD'98** — are among the most recent recipients of “genius grants” from the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. The grants recognize people who show “exceptional creativity in their work and the prospect for still more in the future.” Sandefur, a University of Illinois sociologist and legal scholar, is promoting a new, evidence-based approach to increasing access to civil justice for low-income communities. Parks, an MIT professor, is an expert on the cultural effects of space-age technologies, especially satellites.

JOHN D. AND CATHERINE T. MACARTHUR FOUNDATION (2)

On “Queue”



UW ATHLETICS/DAVID STLUKA

Former Badger women’s basketball point guard **Shawna Nicols '05** — known today as DJ Shawna — is now the official disc jockey for the Wisconsin Badgers. She deejays at sporting events, including football and men’s and women’s basketball games, and tunes into her skills from the court to read both the players and the crowd. Nicols aims to add to Game Day traditions and create a positive experience for everyone — no matter the final score. Playing to a stadium full of people is, she says, “very surreal. I remember the first day we did sound check at Camp Randall. ... I can’t imagine what it feels like to be Beyoncé, but that was maybe a small sliver of it.”

Nicols regularly plays this selection of songs at games:

- “Jump Around,” House of Pain
- “I Want It That Way,” Backstreet Boys
- “I Wanna Dance with Somebody (Who Loves Me),” Whitney Houston
- “WIN,” Jay Rock
- “thank u, next,” Ariana Grande

Beer Gone Wild



EVILWATA/ISTOCK

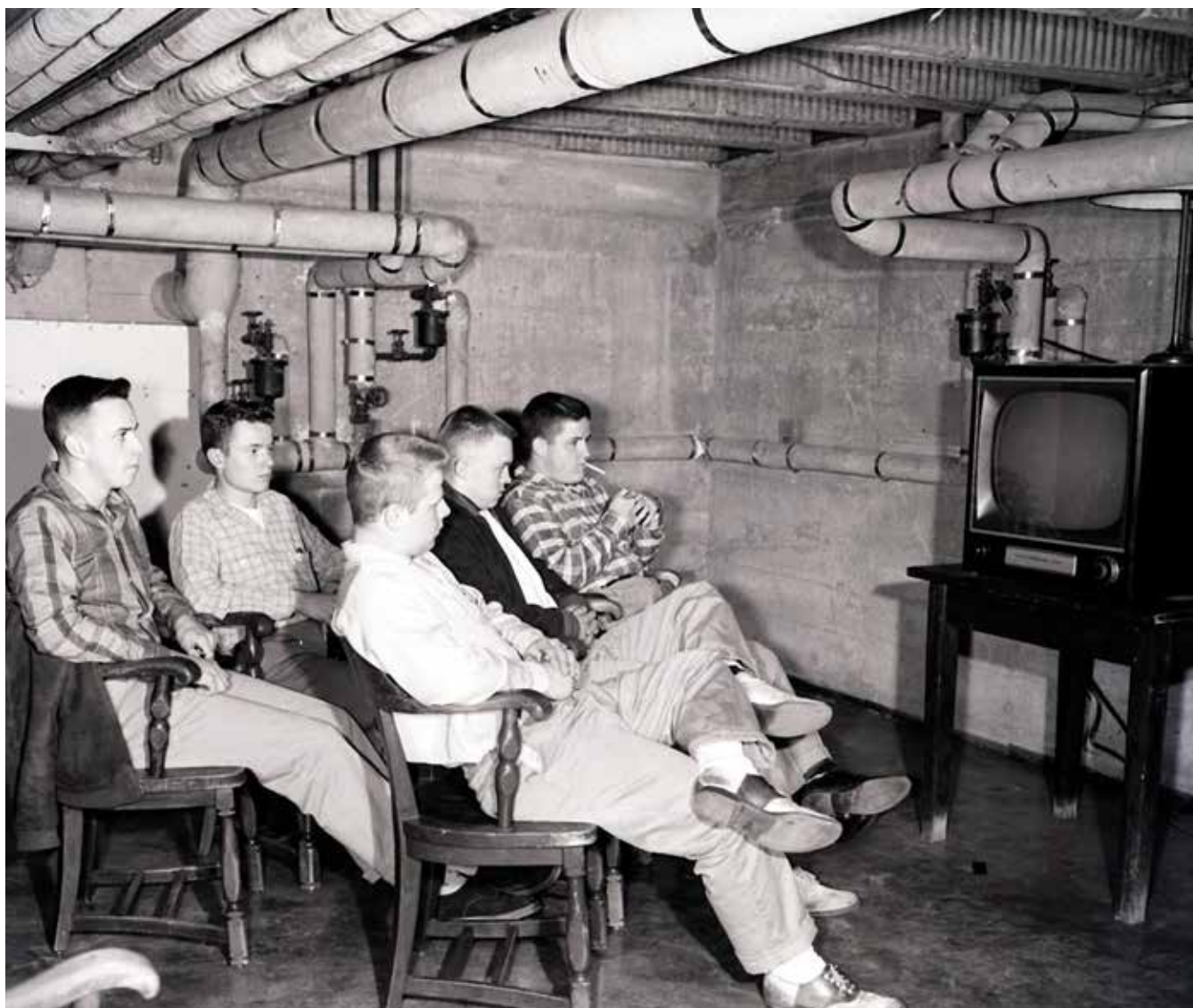
When it comes to beer, UW geneticist **Chris Todd Hittinger PhD'07** goes a little wild — at least with his yeast.

Hittinger studies microbes, and in 2011, he and an international team discovered a yeast species called *Saccharomyces eubayanus*, which is the wild ancestor of what brewers use to make lagers. Ales — an older form of beer — ferment at relatively high temperatures using a yeast called *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*. In the 15th century, brewers in central Europe began looking for ways to work in colder temperatures, and they inadvertently crossbred *S. cerevisiae* with *S. eubayanus* to invent lagers.

After isolating wild *S. eubayanus* with his students in 2014, Hittinger worked with brewers such as Heineken and the Wisconsin Brewing Company to create beers using the yeast’s original form. They take longer to ferment, he says, and have a distinctive flavor.

“They aren’t able to convert sugars as fully as industrial yeasts, so the wild version is sweeter, more cloying,” he says. “It has a spicier flavor, like smoke or cloves. And it has a lower alcohol content.”

JOHN ALLEN



UW ARCHIVES S11742

Ah, the warm glare of a television set — more than matched by the glares on the faces of students as they impatiently wait to be entertained.

TV-watching has evolved on campus, much as it has for people around the country. The first communal sets arrived at the UW in fall 1953, when they were installed in lounges at Memorial Union.

The same year, the UW launched the University Television Laboratory, where students had the opportunity to learn about the medium by producing and appearing on programs called *Campus Newsreel* and *Education on Parade*, which

were then transmitted over closed circuit.

In 1955, University Housing installed the first residence-hall TVs (pictured here), though clearly, the initial TV lounges were not the comfortable dens that more recent students remember. For much of the second half of the 20th century, TV lounges were gathering spots where students forged common experience around watching shows together: *M*A*S*H* or *Dallas* or *Days of Our Lives*. Even as TV sets became more available, individual rooms lacked cable hookups, so the lounges retained popularity as the place to escape the limitations of rabbit ears.

In February 1955, televisions were new amenities in the UW's dormitories. Here, students await a chance to watch a show in one of the men's halls.

But between 1994 and 1996, residence halls installed cable in individual rooms, and the allure of the TV lounge began to fade. Today, many students simply stream programming onto their own digital devices.

According to Brendon Dybdahl '98, MBA'04 at University Housing, staff members are surprised to find that today's TV lounges — which still exist, all equipped with flat-screen, high-definition televisions — have become rather sedate. "The spaces we thought would be louder and more social with TV viewing have turned out to be mostly used for quiet study," he says.

JOHN ALLEN

Calculation Terrace Chairs



PHOTOS BY JEFF MILLER; ILLUSTRATION BY DANIELLE LAWRY

Have a Seat

When gray snow and frigid winter days begin to fade, spring reintroduces some of our favorite things to campus: sunshine, picnics on Bascom Hill, and the iconic Memorial Union Terrace chairs.

The sunburst design — perhaps Madison's most recognizable symbol — sparks fond memories of times spent hanging out with friends and gazing at Lake Mendota's many moods.

Following the Union's years of renovation, staff and student leaders decided to start a new tradition. Since 2016, they've invited eager students and community

members to join the fun of opening the Terrace and populating it with the green, yellow, and orange chairs.

Sometime in early April (depending on the weather, but it's often a little chilly), Union staff puts out a call for Terrace lovers to prepare for the chairs' return. Volunteers line up an hour in advance, waiting for facilities staff to unload trucks and line the chairs up along the side of the building.

With a signal given via megaphone, volunteers carry the chairs down to the Terrace, passing by

The colors of the sunburst chairs were chosen to celebrate the seasons and evoke Wisconsin farming traditions: John Deere green, and Allis-Chalmers orange and yellow.

members of the always-entertaining Badger Band and a very happy Bucky Badger.

The sunburst season has officially begun.

"Terrace season means it's time to start building connections, having a good time, running into past friends, and enjoying some sun," says **Iffat Bhuiyan '18**, last year's Wisconsin Union student president.

The final touch to the day? Free Babcock Dairy ice cream and the first of many relaxing times on the Terrace.

NINA BERTELSEN X'19



ROBERT MANDEL/STOCK

ASK AN EXPERT

What's the Tiff about Tariffs?

"I am a Tariff Man," President Donald Trump famously tweeted in December. That persona is a sharp break from presidents of the past, says **Menzie Chinn**, a UW professor of public affairs and economics. Trump and other protectionists aim to shield domestic industries from foreign competition by putting taxes — known as tariffs — on imports.

Last spring, the administration imposed steep tariffs on imported aluminum and steel, hoping to bolster U.S. industries and employment. An unintended consequence, Chinn notes, is that American companies relying on these materials — notably within the construction industry — now face higher costs. The tariffs also spurred retaliation on American exports. "I think it's a misunderstanding in Trump's mind of what trade protection does," he says. Overall, Chinn and many trade experts predict a net negative effect on U.S. employment.

What worries Chinn most is how the tariffs were implemented. The administration invoked rarely used trade laws administered by the executive branch, leading to short- and long-term uncertainty. In uncertain times, companies delay expansion and lenders give fewer loans, potentially slowing the economy.

In an increasingly global and technological marketplace, products often are made up of many different parts that are shipped from all over the world. Adding even a small tariff on pieces that cross borders multiple times can create a much larger disruption than in the past.

Ultimately, Chinn believes we will come to find that restricting trade is costly.

NINA BERTELSEN X'19

NUMBER 10 HIGH HONORS

The No. 10 jersey of **Mark Johnson '94** is finally where it belongs: hanging from the Kohl Center rafters. The UW women's hockey coach and leading goal scorer in the history of the men's program had his jersey retired in a February ceremony, becoming the first hockey player to earn such honors. Johnson gained international fame in 1980 for his starring role on the "Miracle on Ice" U.S. Olympics team and recently became the all-time winningest coach in NCAA Division I women's hockey. His jersey now hangs above the rink that bears the name of his late father, Hockey Hall of Fame coach Bob Johnson. "As I've told people for many years, hockey has been good to my family,"

Johnson says.



JEFF MILLER

NEWS FEED

UW history professor John Sharpless, known for his conservative faculty voice and sense of humor, retired in December after 43 years of teaching. Sharpless, who twice ran for political office, left lasting words with his students: "Get off your butts and make it better."



A team of UW engineering students is taking a shot at the Base 11 Space Challenge, a national contest with a \$1 million prize for the first student-led team to design, build, and launch a liquid-propelled rocket into outer space by 2021.



A new campus initiative, the Culture Keepers/Elders-in-Residence Program, is seeking to improve the experience of American Indian and Alaskan Native students by hosting Native elders on campus for extended visits. Activist Ada Deer '57 visited campus in November as the inaugural participant.



MICHAEL P. KING

HOLD THE ANTIBIOTICS
A team of researchers reports that mice recovering from heart attacks are more likely to die if treated with antibiotics, a common intervention in hospitals. Hospital patients are often dosed with broad-spectrum antibiotics, which can be indiscriminate and eliminate not only bad microbes, but also the ones we depend on to stay healthy. Scientists in Taiwan and at UW-Madison treated mice with antibiotics and found that they had a reduced immune response after a heart attack.

TERRY DEVITT

COOL COWS On hot days, the cows at Rosy-Lane Holsteins in Watertown, Wisconsin, are given cool showers while they're being milked. It's a strategy for promoting cow comfort that Jennifer Van Os (above) has learned by visiting milk producers around the state since joining the Department of Dairy Science as an assistant professor last spring. "It's very nice to work with a farm where the things we're looking at were their idea," she says. "It's not some zany idea that we came up with in the university and now we're trying to get people to adopt it."

COURTSIDE



In a rare lawsuit between universities, a federal district court ordered the Wisconsin Alumni Research Foundation (WARF) to pay \$31.6 million to Washington University in St. Louis for violating a royalties contract. The dispute dates back to the 1990s, when both institutions contributed to research that produced a drug to treat kidney disease. The judge ruled that WARF's long-standing patent and licensing agreements did not properly compensate Washington University for its research contributions and that WARF concealed important information about the agreements. The decision came on the heels of another big loss for the research foundation: Apple Inc. convinced a federal appeals court to dismiss \$506 million in damages previously awarded to WARF for a patent infringement on a computing technology used in iPhones and other products.

NEWS FEED



Former UW Chancellor Donna Shalala was sworn in as a member of the U.S. House of Representatives in January after winning Florida's 27th congressional district seat. Shalala, 78, became the second-oldest freshman U.S. representative in history.

UW-Madison has announced an enhanced recruitment program to help diversify faculty. The Target of Opportunity Program (TOP) will provide increased financial support and resources to departments looking to recruit people from backgrounds underrepresented in their academic areas.



The President's Oak lives on. Thanks to the foresight of Michael Yanny '79, who took a small branch from it in 2013, a graft from the tree was planted near Washburn Observatory in a ceremony last October. The ailing 300-year-old tree, by far the oldest on campus, was felled in 2015.

JEFF MILLER; BRUCE RICHTER

At a Badger men's basketball game, you'll find Otto Puls '55 on the court — but not shooting hoops. Instead, he'll be wearing stripes on the sidelines, tallying points as the team's official scorekeeper — a post he's held for 55 years. Puls, a retired pharmacist and lieutenant colonel in the United States Army, played baseball for the UW and had a brief minor-league stint with the Baltimore Orioles. He has officiated basketball and Big Ten football, including two Rose Bowls, and he's a member of several Halls of Fame, including the Wisconsin Football Coaches Association and the Wisconsin Basketball Coaches Association.

How did you get started with scorekeeping?

John Erickson, the ex-coach, came to me one day and said, "You know, I need [an] official scorer, I need a timer, and I need somebody to put the score up on the board." That was when we were at the [UW] Field House, and that's all there was. ... It was just three [of us] to begin with.

What does scorekeeping entail?

I keep track of fouls, players playing, [and] how many points they score, and I don't have anything to do with how often they shoot, or whether they have an error, or anything else. That's all the stat people. At halftime, and then at the end of the game, all of the people in the stats crew bring a sheet over to me, and I have to okay that sheet. ... It becomes more complicated than it used to be — all you did was the scoreboard, you wrote it down, and you were God. That was it. Nobody else was going to argue with you.

You're also the team's equipment manager and referee at practices. What is it like for you to work with the players?

I treat [the players] the same way I do [my own kids]. They appreciate me more after they leave. They see me every day here at practice. Sometimes they get mad at me, but when they leave they really appreciate what I've done and what I'm trying to do. When I call a foul, it isn't because I [want] to — it's because of the fact that you did something wrong. That's what they think is nice about it — they really thought that I was honest with them.

How did officiating at the Rose Bowl compare to scorekeeping at a Final Four tournament?

The Final Four was more fun. There was less pressure on me. My family had said the same, too, that you don't go to the Final Four very often, and boy, when you go, you better enjoy it, and boy, those two years (2014 and 2015) were just heaven.

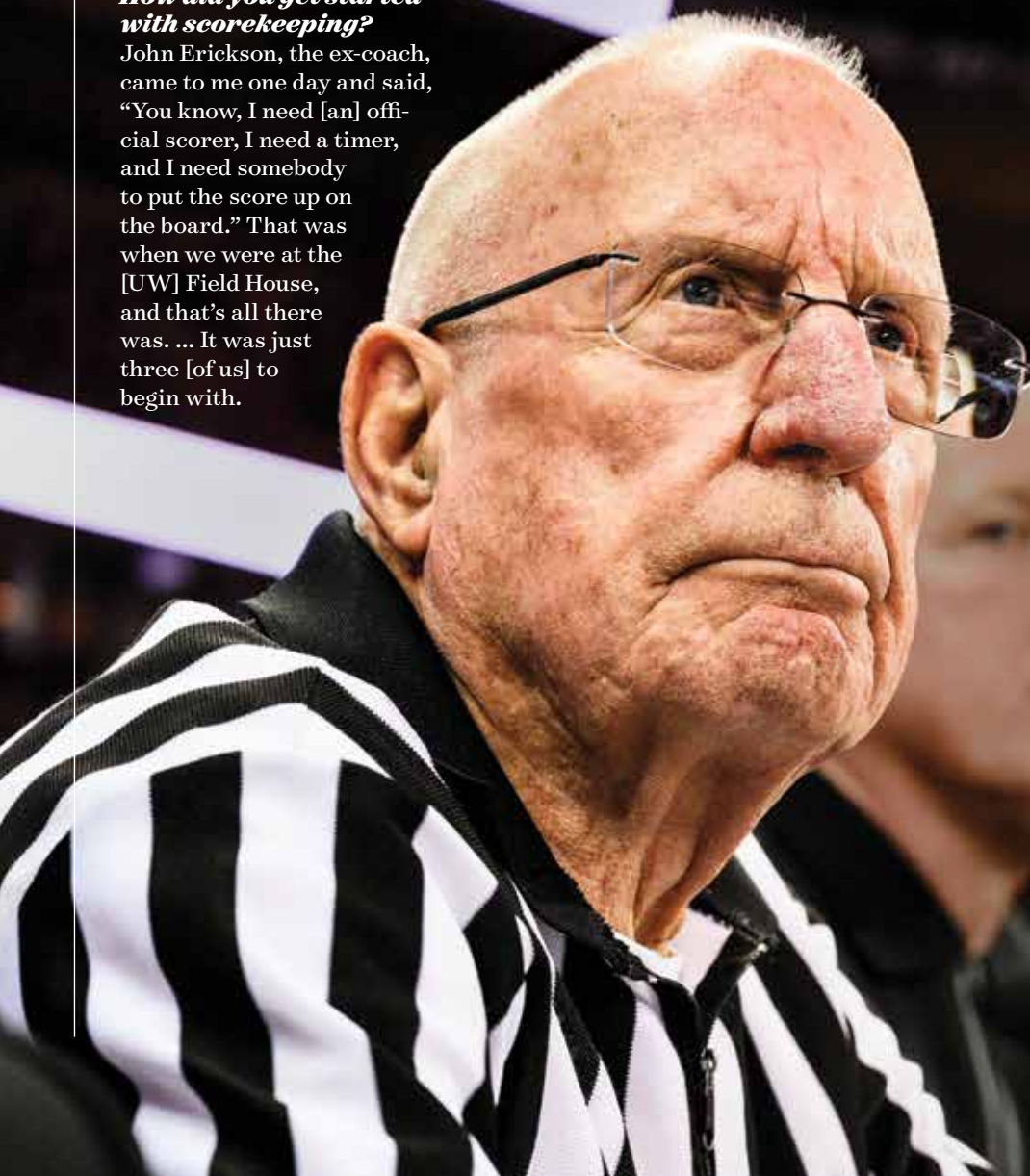
What's kept you going through it all?

The love of sports. I'm a sports nut.

You must be!

I do not remember the last time I missed a [Badger men's basketball] home game. ... And I'll bet you, if they look in the archives, I don't even know who I replaced back in '64. I don't think there's anybody in the administration that has been here that long, so they can't help me. And I'm not here for stats, you know. In fact, I think [that's] pretty neat, if you're going to write that down.

*Interview conducted, edited, and condensed by Stephanie Awe '15
Photo by Jeff Miller*





TOM CAW

For 12 consecutive years, retail sales of vinyl records have increased in the United States.

This growth, as documented in Nielsen Music's 2017 U.S. year-end report, is especially apparent during Record Store Day (RSD), an event celebrated by independent record stores each April to promote vinyl sales.

"[Our] attendance for RSD has grown every year," says Dave Zero, owner of MadCity Music on Madison's east side, which has participated in the event since it started in 2008. He keeps tabs by tracking the store's increasing RSD sales numbers.

On campus, staff members at Mills Music Library have noticed students' growing interest in vinyl in recent years. **Tom Caw**, the music public services librarian, says staff and librarians across the country have reported an increase in people requesting, listening to, or checking out long-playing vinyl.

"I think part of the allure for the vinyl listening experience is that it's a physical interaction with a device, and I think people are used to having access online to streaming media," Caw says. "The inter-

New York Recording Laboratories (NYRL) — a subsidiary of the Wisconsin Chair Company of Port Washington, Wisconsin — was created to promote the chair company's phonographs. Pictured above are two of NYRL's Paramount Records, which were made of shellac instead of vinyl.

active physical experience is something you can't replicate online."

The library's record collection is robust: it includes about 50,000 individual titles (plus another 30,000-some duplicates) that are 33 1/3 and 45 rpm (revolutions per minute), as well as some 100,000 78 rpm records.

A subset of these items, part of the library's Wisconsin Music Archives, represents the state's music. Among this collection are 78s from Paramount Records, one of four record labels produced between 1917 and 1933 by the New York Recording Laboratories.

Well known for its blues and jazz series, Paramount Records' discography contains music with connections to UW-Madison. Recordings include those dating back to the 1920s from the Wisconsin U Skyrockets — directed by **Jesse Cohen '24** — and from the Haresfoot Recording Orchestra, part of the UW's Haresfoot Club that existed from the late 1800s to the mid-1960s. The archives' collection preserves a unique compilation of Wisconsin-centric music.

STEPHANIE AWE '15



JEFF MILLER

Legal Advocates

A restraining order is often a first line of defense for domestic-violence victims seeking protection from an abusive partner. But the process for obtaining one under traumatic conditions can be overwhelming — especially for victims who can't afford the costs of a lawyer.

The UW Law School (at right, above) has stepped in to address this gap in legal services, with plans to open the VOCA Restraining Order Clinic with federal funds secured by the state justice department from the 1984 Victims of Crime Act. The clinic partners with domestic-abuse agencies in the Madison area and southern Wisconsin that will refer women who need help.

Law students must make a semester-long commitment, during which they will complete two or three cases with supervision and mentoring from licensed attorneys. And the experience will broaden their understanding of the physical, psychological, and economic challenges victims face, says **Marsha Mansfield '77, JD'84**, a family law clinical professor and the director of the school's Economic Justice Institute.

That insight is a critical part of doing domestic-violence work. "Working with victims of sexual assault and domestic violence requires a deep empathy and understanding of trauma," Mansfield says.

TAMMY KEMPFFERT



@ODIETHETUFFYCORGI

ON, WOOFSCONSIN!
Who let the dogs out? It must've been Bucky. This past fall, pooches were spotted on social media sporting their Badger red and were featured on the UW–Madison News web page, coupled with the hashtag #OnWoofsconsin. These pups, such as Odie (above), epitomize the Wisconsin spirit (and look mighty cute doing so). U-Ruff-Ruff!

NEWS FEED

NFL star and former Badger J. J. Watt x'12 will return to Camp Randall to deliver the charge to UW graduates at the 2019 spring commencement ceremony. Watt rose to prominence off the field for his efforts to raise more than \$40 million for Hurricane Harvey victims last year.



The Kohl Center unveiled its new Legends Walk in October with honorary floor plaques in the concourse. The inaugural class: former U.S. Senator Herb Kohl '56, the arena's lead benefactor; former men's basketball coach Dick Bennett; former women's basketball coach Jane Albright; and former men's hockey coach Jeff Sauer.



The Wisconsin School of Business has hired Vallabh Sambamurthy to serve as its next dean. Sambamurthy is a professor and associate dean at Michigan State University, where he oversees the MBA program. Former dean Anne Massey resigned in December 2017 following a controversial proposal to drop the UW's full-time MBA program.

Contender *Gabbie Taschwer*

Gabbie Taschwer '18 doesn't quite walk on water, but she's almost that good.

At the Show Ski World Championships in September 2018, she and her U.S. teammates became the first female water-skiing trio ever to perform a triple helicopter spin in competition.

The trick involves sailing off a ski jump, spinning 360 degrees in the air, and sticking the landing in unison. It had never been attempted — let alone accomplished — by three women during any tournament in the world, according to Gerry Luiting, a U.S. team coach and a chair for the International Waterski and Wakeboard Federation. “The crowd gave them a huge standing ovation, and that doesn't happen at the world championships unless it's pretty amazing,” he says. “It's analogous to a standing ovation at the Olympics.”

There is no shortcut to learning the helicopter spin or any other trick, Taschwer says.

“It's just a lot of crashing until you figure it out. It's a high-risk sport, but high reward, too.”

Luiting praises Taschwer as among the best water-skiers in the country. She does it all: swivel skiing, barefoot skiing, pyramid formations, jumps, and tricks. “I've watched her since she was a little girl,” he says.

“She doesn't see being a woman [as] a barrier, and that's awesome. She essentially does all of the traditional girl acts in the show and many of what traditionally have been guy acts.”

“She is truly fearless,” adds **Julie Patterson PhD'18**, one of Taschwer's teaching assistants at the UW who later became a friend. “She has motivated girls across the world to break down all boundaries in the sport of water skiing.”

Taschwer's connections to the UW and the sport run deep. She grew up in nearby McFarland, learning to ski on Lake Waubesa at age three with her parents, both former professional water skiers. Her father, **Jeff Taschwer '84**, is now a pharmacist at the Middleton Memorial Veterans Hospital in

Lakes are a familiar backdrop in Taschwer's life. She first learned to water ski as a three-year-old, going on to make history in world competition.

Madison. Her mother, Lori, works on campus for a surplus equipment program, SWAP.

Gabbie started skiing as a paid performer with the Tommy Bartlett Show in the Wisconsin Dells when she was a high school freshman. She continued to ski there through college and also competed nationally with the volunteer Mad-City Ski Team. As a member of the UW's Water Ski and Wakeboard team, she placed third overall for women skiers at the 2018 collegiate conference tournament.

Although competing in world-class competitions as a student was often tricky, Taschwer graduated in December with a degree in kinesiology after three and a half years. She wanted to finish school as quickly as possible to maximize her years of professional skiing in peak condition. To stay on track, she took summer courses and studied between performances on the docks of the Tommy Bartlett Show.





For her final kinesiology practicum, Taschwer combined her schoolwork with her passion and volunteered with Colsac Skiers, Inc., a water ski school on Lake Wisconsin for children and adults with disabilities, including veterans injured during military service. “It was so wonderful to give others an experience that means so much to me,” she says.

In March, she will start as a full-time water skier for the highly acclaimed Holiday Park Ski Team in Germany, following in the wake of her parents, who skied with the team decades ago.

Taschwer rarely gets nervous as a performer these days — with the slight exception of that triple helicopter spin. “I tried to tell myself it was just another ski show, but I had a few butterflies,” she says. “It was pretty cool to make history.”

DOUG ERICKSON

PHOTO BY BRYCE RICHTER

Worrier for

In a polarized world, UW-Madison fosters

On a warm autumn afternoon when I needed it badly, I got a shot of hope for the future of conversation. Pulling up a chair at the Memorial Union Terrace and eavesdropping there under the old oak trees, I heard brilliant debate by research scientists about the best way to get a stubborn gene to express. At another table, there was virtuosic smack talk accompanying a game of cribbage. These lovely (loud!) sounds are ear candy after the deafening silence of being among too many people staring at their phones. They confirmed for me that the great collegiate tradition of chewing the fat with friends lives on.

But I still worried about our collective capacity to have deep conversations about tough topics with people who aren't already our friends or colleagues and who we suspect see the world from a different perspective. Research shows that, for the first time in more than two decades, members of both political parties have strongly unfavorable opinions of their opponents. And our society is highly subdivided in other ways, so that



Debate

BY LOUISA KAMPS

tough conversations.

people often end up congregating almost exclusively — in real life and through online communities — with others who share the same racial, religious, and demographic profiles.

Luckily, though, many at UW-Madison are actively seeking, encouraging, and developing the ability to discuss difficult topics fruitfully. Students are seeking out opportunities to talk through some of the biggest matters on their minds, and they (like many faculty members) are eager to argue respectfully and learn more about what they don't understand. And those of us eager to reclaim conversation — the face-to-face kind — as a means for sifting through the complexity of contemporary life and building bridges can learn a lot from *listening* to what people on campus are doing.



FIRESIDE CHATS

Later last fall, I joined the student-run Afternoon Conversation Series, a regular all-comers-welcome meetup held beside the flickering hearth of the Prairie Fire coffee shop inside Union South. I found about a dozen undergrads and graduate students listening intently as the day's invited guest, Sumudu Atapattu, director of the UW Law School's Research Centers and a specialist in international environmental law, spoke in soft, serious tones about the impacts climate change is already having on daily life in places vulnerable to rising sea levels, including parts of Alaska.

Though the legal and human rights implications of climate change Atapattu detailed were sobering, the students present seemed undaunted, going on to pepper her with thoughtful questions about how they might help push for change. One young woman wondered if she could combine her interests in law, science, and economics in a career. Absolutely, Atapattu says. If we're going to meet the challenges of climate change, "all of those disciplines need to learn how to communicate with each other."

Last year the group also discussed the status of the young immigrants known as DREAMers and international women's health. After the conversation, one of the group's organizers told me that the aim of these intimate talks on serious topics is to give students a chance to interact with professors without "the usual intimidating student-teacher power dynamics."

THE ART OF ARGUMENT

UW mathematics professor Jordan Ellenberg is a fellow at the Wisconsin Institute for Discovery and professional-grade curator of talk — one of those classic social network figures who's as comfortable discussing baseball and James Baldwin as he is breaking down the intricacies of multivariable equations. Over tea at a café near campus last spring, Ellenberg says that, for him, a key benefit of working at "this gigantic, multifarious institution" is having many opportunities to chat and mind-meld with researchers working in far-flung disciplines, who often shed surprising new light on his work, and he on theirs. But he also enjoys the "intellectual exfoliation" he receives as a result of speaking with other faculty members who aren't afraid to challenge conventional wisdom and "push you to expand and enlarge" how you view an issue.

One such stimulating loofah figure Ellenberg always likes being "a little conversationally scraped by" is Harry Brighouse. The UW philosophy professor has argued on his popular blog and at various campus gatherings on teaching methodologies that the standard, top-down instructional model many American college classrooms follow does students a disservice. Research shows that college students (and adults generally) can pay attention to a single speaker for only about 20 minutes. So Brighouse makes a deliberate point of beginning classes with a short lecture, but then largely ceding the floor to his students.



To keep the conversation on track — or to redirect when one or more students begin to dominate a group discussion — Brighthouse continues to dole out questions carefully. And he has his students — most of whom are accustomed to socializing mainly with their dorm and apartment mates — introduce themselves to each other over and over. It's a strategy inspired by his own experience as an undergraduate at King's College London, where he not only took all of his classes with the same group of people, but lived and ate meals with them, too, sparring over philosophy and history all the while.

And his chief aim, he explains, is to help students burn through shyness to become friends and strong intellectual debate partners for each other.

"Some of my students come to college *reeeeeally* reluctant to argue. But even they will eventually say, 'What are we going to argue about next?' They're really hungry for this," Brighthouse says.

DESCRIBE YOUR PATH

In his cozy office decorated with vintage school maps and a stellar collection of LEGO *Star Wars* ships, Greg Downey, associate dean for the social sciences in the College of Letters & Science, keeps a small conference table. Students know they can sit down and discuss their aspirations and future plans, bouncing ideas around until they land on ones that feel, if not perfect, then good enough for now. And it's here — as well as in the college's popular Taking Initiative professional planning course, which Downey leads, and its new SuccessWorks career center — where Downey and his colleagues are invested in helping students get hands-on experience and find the right words to describe their evolving skills and interests to prospective employers.

Companies consistently report that they consider strong verbal and written communication skills essential for hiring, and there's evidence from social psychology showing that creating an overarching narrative (aka storyline) for your life helps people gain healthy perspective and move ahead fruitfully. Downey has each of his students develop a "two-minute career story" and practice delivering it with classmates. Some struggle with the assignment. Maybe they've heard that speaking about your accomplishments amounts to bragging, or they're still not entirely sure what they want to do with their lives, Downey explains. But once they hear other students sharing similar stories and realize that it's okay to be still exploring options and just say this plainly, they usually get more comfortable.

But there are other reasons why he thinks it's important for him, and faculty and staff at colleges everywhere, to be available to speak with students about whatever's weighing on their minds. "UW



students are accomplished and goal-oriented," Downey says. "If you set them a task, they will work through it." But he and other campus advisers have also realized — partly in light of the fact that the number of college students seeking treatment for anxiety and depression has shot up in recent years — "that we need to be continually active in encouraging our students to talk with us, and talk with each other," he says.

Beyond managing coursework, many students today face "family pressures, peer pressures, [and] pressures from jobs. Technology pervades their lives, and while sometimes it helps them cope, sometimes it ratchets those pressures up."

GROUP DYNAMICS

More and more, students and faculty are seeking out and welcoming conversations where they can feel not only free, but encouraged to unfurl — working through difficult thoughts together with others in an unhurried way, saying things they’ve never said (or thought) before, opening up new doors of understanding to combat distrust.

Last fall, the UW released its Campus Climate Survey, which found that, while most students find the campus to be a safe, welcoming, and respectful place, students of color and from other historically disadvantaged groups consistently rated the climate less favorably overall than students from majority groups did. And since then, the work of various UW discussion programs created to foster greater equality, inclusion, and understanding across differences has taken on new urgency.

One such program, run by the UW School of Education’s Department of Counseling Psychology, is Diversity Dialogues. When it started almost 15 years ago, the big, burning divide that students wanted to discuss was the difference between students from the Midwest and the coasts. But now that issues of racial discrimination, gender nonconformity, and economic disparity have shot to the forefront of national news, students from different racial, ethnic, gender, and class backgrounds are eager to meet and talk about how these dimensions have shaped their experiences and perceptions.

UW professor of counseling psychology Steve Quintana, who directs Diversity Dialogues, says that one of its primary objectives is to help students recognize that all people (not just those who are obviously similar to them) are “living rich, interesting, and complex lives.” The theory behind deepening social understanding is that it makes it easier for people to understand and appreciate (if not always love) why others

may act a certain way or hold a certain view.

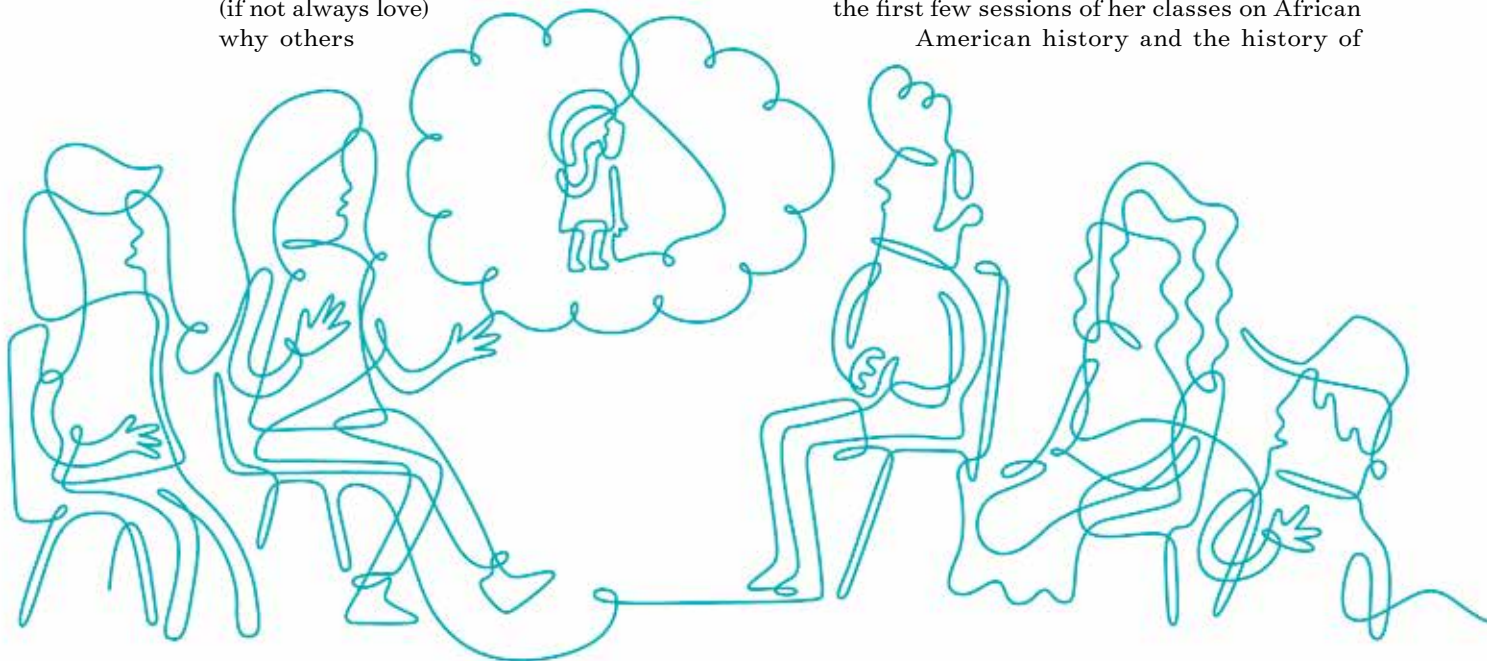
To help students who typically have never met before they start talking, Quintana and other dialogue facilitators give participants different cues, such as asking them to describe pivotal childhood experiences or their own negative or positive experiences of diversity. A running rule is that no one can interrupt whoever is speaking for at least 90 seconds. Facilitators also work to sustain a respectful balance by reminding participants that every person’s perspective and personal experience are valid.

They also point out that mixed-company conversations on race, in particular, have a tendency to become “one-sided white confessionals,” wherein white students wax on describing their guilt over certain societal privileges they’ve enjoyed, at the expense (in terms of comfort) of black students in the group. But just naming the potential dynamic up front and noting that it can place additional burdens on black students is a surprisingly effective way of keeping it at bay, Quintana says.

After they’ve participated in the program, many students tell him that learning how to trade notes on class, race, sexuality, and other topics in a calm, non-adversarial setting (unlike so many of the combative finger-pointing sessions we see on TV today) made them feel more flexible and open — and eager to keep speaking with people who aren’t obviously like them. Getting new “windows into the depths of people’s experience is rewarding,” Quintana says. Once they’ve realized that everyone has an interesting story to tell, students often say they’re more likely to break the ice with strangers in everyday settings.

COMFORTABLE WITH UNCOMFORTABLE

UW professor Christy Clark-Pujara often spends the first few sessions of her classes on African American history and the history of



slavery speaking with students about why it's important for them to be able to discuss race together, even though it's a subject many of them have been told to avoid. And she explains that "it's okay to feel uncomfortable in this class, and even a good thing, because that's where you learn and grow." Clark-Pujara knows most of her students have so far been taught only the scantest rendition of black American history: "First there was slavery. That was bad, but some people were nice. Then there was Martin Luther King and the Civil Rights movement, and now everything's fine." But then she begins fleshing out that time line with stories that fly in the face of certain well-oiled myths, including the myth that slaves did little to resist their circumstances.

"When you look at the primary documents, the history of slavery becomes a history of great resistance — not only physical, but moral, emotional, and cultural resistance," Clark-Pujara says. She also disproves the folkloric belief that Wisconsin was always free of slavery. French-Canadian trappers brought slaves with them when they settled here in the early 1700s. When Southerners — including Henry Dodge, two-time governor of the Territory of Wisconsin — arrived in the early 1800s to mine for lead in the southwestern part of what later became the state, they had slaves with them, too.

At some point during the semester, students of different races overflow with "indignation" over never having been given an inkling of this richer, more complicated history. Clark-Pujara is there for all of it, ready to help them talk through and process "the terribly uncomfortable" fact that the "economic ascent of the United States rests on the backs of enslaved black people." Empathy is a major theme in the class, she adds.

As we neared the end of our own conversation, Clark-Pujara pulled out two thank-you notes she had just received from students who'd taken her Introduction to African American History course. Each described a different way in which the class and Clark-Pujara's teaching had changed not only their minds but their lives. The notes were beautiful. And they reminded me why talk, at the UW and everywhere, is so vital to staying alive and engaged: our world is never going to be perfect, and individuals and systems will inevitably let us down. But we should by no means withdraw and give up.

By debating and grappling with new ideas together with others, in real time — riding tides of confrontation without getting too rattled, watching one another's faces light up and fall and light up again — we get to take another look at what we think, and make it better.

But we can't get there through silence. ●

Louisa Kamps is a freelance writer based in Madison.

FIRST, LISTEN

UW political science professor Kathy Cramer '94 spent several months between 2007 and 2012 zigzagging around rural Wisconsin, visiting more than two dozen small communities. On her driving tour, she stopped at gas stations, restaurants, houses of worship, and other places locals gathered to natter and "invited myself into their conversations," as she told a group of alumni last spring. A Grafton native, Cramer also noted with a laugh that her strong Wisconsin accent — "which I've been told I have" — might have helped her make inroads. In the small-town coffee klatches, Cramer heard men and women voicing hurt and "generally this sense of feeling as though they're not [being heard]" by politicians or receiving their "fair share of respect from people in cities like Madison, who they perceive as looking at them as — and I put this in their quotation marks — 'country bumpkins.'"

Cramer's research on public opinion and the breakdown of social bonds and trust across the state became the basis of her 2016 book, *The Politics of Resentment*. It has been heralded as both presaging and retrospectively explaining the rightward-tipping political dynamics seen in Wisconsin in recent years and across the U.S. since the 2016 election.

But "one of the great experiences of this project" for her personally, she says, "was understanding the value of allowing myself to listen without the intent of trying to come back with some great response. In this moment politically, that act of listening to others is really unpalatable for many people, but it's probably more necessary than ever." And, Cramer adds, while the UW has always had "a strong tradition of communicating knowledge outward toward the public," she's proud of doing her part to uphold the school's equally important role of "putting an ear to the ground to learn from the people of this state and elsewhere, so we can be better scholars and a more fully public institution."



Black-ish, an ABC sitcom starring Anthony Anderson and Tracee Ellis Ross, has earned critical acclaim for both entertaining viewers and educating them on issues of race, class, and culture.

THE GOLDEN AGE OF TV IS NOW

Badgers who work behind the scenes to create and produce must-see content reflect on how they got their start, what it's like to work in the business, and what they're binge-watching.

BY KATE KAIL DIXON '01, MA'07, ADDIE MORFOOT '02, AND JENNY PRICE '96

In the age of peak TV, more is more.

We can watch our favorite shows anywhere, anytime, and on any number of devices. And that's a boon for the people full of ideas who are always aiming to give us new material, from YouTube videos to prestige dramas.

"There are all these incredible writers to tell their stories and so many more places to tell them," says Jenny Fritz '95, comedy development executive for ABC Studios and part of the teams behind shows including *Black-ish*, *American Housewife*, and *Speechless*.

UW-Madison alumni are plentiful among the creative forces at broadcast networks, cable channels, and streaming services. We caught up with some of them to find out more about the past, present, and future of TV.

JOSH SAPAN '75

President and CEO, AMC Networks Inc. (AMC, SundanceTV, IFC, WeTV, and BBC America)
Known for: *Killing Eve*, *Mad Men*, *Breaking Bad*, and *The Walking Dead*

Appointment TV when you were a student?
Laugh-In

College lesson that still resonates?
Running the New Utrecht Film Society, where we showed American classics and foreign films; acting in the Broom Street Theater; and writing for a literary publication called *El Quijote*, edited by the late Morris Edelstein.

First job in TV?
Working a teleprompter machine on a soap opera.

What are you binge-watching right now?
Killing Eve on BBC America.

Go-to device to watch shows?
In order of priority: TV, iPad, phone.

What do audiences want most?
Storytelling with great narrative qualities.

Most important element of a good show?
Characters and story that capture what is essential about human beings.

LIBBY GEIST '02

Vice president and executive producer, ESPN Films and Original Content
Known for: ESPN Films 30 for 30 (including *O.J.: Made in America*)

Appointment TV when you were a student?
I remember in the early years watching *Jackass*, which really shows how sophisticated my taste was back then. Later in college I watched *The Sopranos* and *Friends*. I remember thinking that I had to get to a friend's house by 8 p.m. or whatever time it was so I could see those shows.

College lesson that still resonates?

I was a political science major, and what I learned from that was that I did not want to be a lawyer and I did not want to be a politician. My dad [Bill Geist] was working for *CBS Sunday Morning* when I was in college. I knew that he had a really fun career and that he loved what he did. He met interesting people. I always took my communications classes really seriously because, in the back of my mind, I knew that [television] was somewhere that I might end up, and now here we are.

First job in TV?

I spent summer 2001 and a holiday month interning at *Late Night with Conan O'Brien* in Manhattan. There were a lot of McDonald's and Starbucks runs, but I would also sneak into the writers' room and listen to them work. I looked at those writers and could not believe that the fun that they were having was a real career.

Go-to device to watch shows?

My television. I still watch plenty of DVR, and my kids, husband, and I watch a lot of Netflix.

Currently binge-watching?

The last thing I binged was Netflix's *Wild Wild Country*. My husband teases me and says, "Oh, are you going to watch another dark documentary tonight?" People really love true crime right now, and I also do, but when there's just no relief from it, I have to walk away. So I like something that's entertaining and has great characters. I loved *Big Little Lies*.

What do ESPN audiences want?

I think in order to attract people initially, you need a big name or a big topic that will really reel people in — and then you show them that it's really high quality or that there are contextual layers to the story. I love that element of surprise. People think they know a story, and then we can completely tell it in a different way or give details that audiences never knew about.

What will TV look like in 10 years?

I think the unscripted bubble will burst. There's so much content out there that it's really hard for anything to break through anymore. Eventually the "Let's just do a ton of stuff and hope something sticks" model won't be sustainable. So on the unscripted side of things, hopefully it will be fewer but bigger, which is certainly the direction we're going in at ESPN. That, I believe, will ultimately be a more sustainable model.

ADAM HOROWITZ '94 and EDWARD KITSIS '93

Writing partners and showrunners
Known for: *Once Upon a Time* (ABC)

Appointment TV when you were a student?
Kitsis: For me, *Northern Exposure*, *Beverly Hills 90210*, and *Seinfeld*
Horowitz: *L.A. Law* and *Star Trek: The Next Generation*

College lesson that still resonates?
Horowitz: David Bordwell's class that we took together [Communication Arts 354: Film Genres]. He opened us up to so many different kinds of film.
Kitsis: That basis in film history really gave us a context for everything we've done since.

First job in TV?
Kitsis: I was an assistant to movie producer Joel Silver, who produced *Lethal Weapon* and *The Matrix*. And Adam was —
Horowitz: A post-production assistant. I helped the people who edited the film on a television series called *Tales from the Crypt*.

Go-to device to watch shows?
Kitsis: If we're traveling or on location, iPad is definitely a go-to. But I think we're so old-fashioned in how we watch TV. Maybe through Apple TV or an app, but we definitely both still like to sit on the couch and stare up at the TV.
Horowitz: On location, iPad. At home, Apple TV — on the TV on the wall, just like has been done for 90 years. Except for the Apple TV part.

Currently binge-watching?
Horowitz: Right now, we're in preproduction on our show *Amazing Stories*, for Apple and Steven Spielberg. When we're in this kind of intensity, I am mostly watching sports. But the last show I binged, my wife and I just finished *Billions*.
Kitsis: *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* and *Killing Eve*. I couldn't get enough of both of them.

Best part about being a showrunner?
Kitsis: The greatest thing is getting to wake up every day and ask the question, "Wouldn't it be cool if...?" To have an idea and then bring it to life ... being a showrunner really allows us to guide that process.

What inspires your work in fantasy, horror, and science fiction?
Horowitz: The commonality is character-based storytelling. With inter-genre storytelling, in our experience, it really only works if you are telling grounded, human-emotional stories.

JUSTINE NAGAN '00

Executive director, American Documentary;
executive producer, *POV* and *America ReFramed*
Known for: Bing Liu's *Minding the Gap*

College lesson that still resonates?
My filmmaking production class, which J. J. Murphy taught, is one. We were still shooting and editing on 16 millimeter, which I learned a lot from. The thing that I still think about from that class is the importance of critique and having an environment where people can hear constructive criticism and make their films better.

First job in TV?
I did every media internship possible. I worked for the *Badger Herald*. I interned for Michael Feldman ['70]'s public radio show, *Whad'Ya Know?* I did morning camera for the ABC News affiliate, but only lasted about three months. Getting up at 3:30 in the morning and moving one of the giant studio cameras around was a trip. Eventually I got the internship at Wisconsin Public Television, which taught me how to produce.

Go-to device to watch shows?
I use a Roku at home.

Currently binge-watching?
HBO's *Insecure*, PBS's *Victoria*, and, with my kids, *MasterChef Junior*.

How do you select projects?
We try to really program films that immerse the audience in a story and bring them in through characters who move you and pique your interest. We try not to tell people how to feel about things.

Why are documentary series so popular?
I think it's because of what's happening with scripted series. It's been this monumental evolution in content storytelling. So I think it's a natural evolution both creatively and financially for docs to go into multipart series.

Your approach to storytelling?
POV is 31 years old this year. For many years of *POV*'s existence, the broadcast was the highlight of a film's release and now it's a highlight. We are really focused on broadcast, streaming, and community engagement.

Why are we seeing so many reboots?
Part of me wonders if it's because it has been a crazy couple of years, and our country is so divided and fragmented — people want what's safe, known, and comfortable.



NETFLIX

With an atypical storyline, Netflix's Atypical explores the life of a teenager on the autism spectrum. The show's producer, Mary Rohlich '03 (above foreground, with the show's team as a scene is being filmed) says her job is making others' vision come to life.

AMY ZVI '98

Executive producer and manager, Thruline Entertainment
Known for: *I Love You, America*, with Sarah Silverman

Appointment TV when you were a student?

In our sorority house, we always watched *Friends* on Thursday nights. One of my roommates had the entire *My So-Called Life* on VHS. I fell in love with that show.

College lesson that still resonates?

One of my favorite [classes] was Scandinavian Literature: The Stories of Hans Christian Andersen. These are children's stories that had very strong political undertones. I guess we do see that in television now.

First job in TV?

I got my start at Bragman Nyman Cafarelli, a PR firm. I was an assistant for two publicists, and I straddled the talent side and the television side. I ended up becoming vice president, and I stayed there for 11 years.

Go-to device to watch shows?

At home, usually a smart TV. When I'm traveling, I'll watch on my iPad.

Currently binge-watching?

Season two of *Ozark* — loved season one. I love *The Handmaid's Tale*, *The Americans*, *Game of Thrones*. *Killing Eve* is next. I'm a huge *Big Brother* fan.

How did you react to being nominated for an Emmy?

It's a really exhilarating feeling, especially when it's a show you've poured your soul into. I cried, and I called Sarah [Silverman] first, and told her, and screamed. At this time in history, both television-wise and political-wise, I think it's a really important show, and I'm so proud of it.

MARY ROHLICH '03

Independent producer
Known for: Netflix's *Atypical*

Appointment TV when you were a student?

24. I lived in Orchard Court with five other roommates, and other friends within the courtyard. We would always order Pokey Stix. I would make everybody be totally quiet and turn off the lights and not talk because you couldn't pause the TV back then.

College lesson that still resonates?

I took a film production class — you had to shoot everything and edit it, and wear many hats. I was not someone who thought of myself as a director or a writer. I ended up making documentaries. My fears about not being able to do something led to what I really love doing and finding my path as a producer out here.

First job in TV?

I was a temp receptionist at MGM [Studios]. That led to an assistant position in development at MGM.

Go-to device to watch shows?

For my personal time, I still watch on TV. We use various forms of streaming: Amazon Fire, Apple TV.

Currently binge-watching?

Season two of *Ozark*. A Netflix show called *Terrace House*. It's a Japanese reality show that has a small cult following out here. Just recently, *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel* — I was a little behind on that.

Universal lesson of producing?

Working with the writers and directors and doing everything you can to help make their vision come to life in a way that is safe and responsible — creating a good environment for them to be able to do their job.

BEN RELLES '97

Head of unscripted programming, YouTube Originals

Appointment TV when you were a student?

A lot of comedy. Thursday night lineup of *Seinfeld* and *Friends*. Staying up to watch *Mr. Show* at 12 a.m. on HBO. I remember thinking, “*Simpsons* is funny.” And *Beavis and Butt-Head*.

College lesson that still resonates?

In a journalism class, the creators of *The Onion* came in and gave us an hour of their time. They had so much passion for creating comedy that pushed the boundaries. They were so fearless in their comedy.

First job in TV?

In 2007, I made a video about Barack Obama called “I Got a Crush on Obama.” At the time, I was working at a marketing agency. That video got over 50 million views in the first couple of weeks, so I quit my job to start making YouTube videos full time.

Go-to device to watch shows?

I am watching a lot of television on my phone and a lot of YouTube on my TV. I have gotten in the habit of saving my YouTube videos in “watch later” playlists, and then watching them on TV when I get home.

Currently binge-watching?

The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel. Big fan of that show. I binge-watch some of my own YouTube originals — *Cobra Kai* and a new series called *Origin*. Older shows, too, like *The Leftovers*. I ended up watching all three seasons with my wife in a weekend.

What are YouTube's advantages in the market?

When a show idea comes in, we can get a quick sense of how much the topic or the talent resonates on YouTube. But more important than the data is understanding whether the idea itself feels like it's something that's original and can break through an environment where there's thousands of original shows a year.

CAROL KOLB '95

Writer and producer

Known for: *Brooklyn Nine-Nine*, *Community*

Appointment TV when you were a student?

We would watch *Mr. Show*, the sketch show. Before that, in high school, *Late Night with David Letterman* was my favorite show ever.

College lesson that still resonates?

I just loved going to college. I extended it out; I kept changing my major. I had an English degree, and I liked creative-writing classes. I got a Latin minor for absolutely no reason. I loved digging hard into a subject.

First job in TV?

I was a freelance writer with *The Onion*, which was in Madison at that time. I worked there for over 10 years. I was editor-in-chief, then I went over to the video department, and we had a TV show.

Go-to device to watch shows?

Apple TV, always. I watch Netflix and Hulu. I buy shows because I don't have cable. I also get subscriptions, like HBO.

Currently binge-watching?

Ozark. For some reason, we're on a *Love Boat* kick. I love *BoJack Horseman* — that's my favorite comedy. *Baskets* — it's so weird and so funny.

What is it like being a part of shows with devoted followings?

These aren't the shows that win Emmys, but I don't care about that as much as I care about people really caring about the show. I think it does provide some energy because you know that people love it.

KELLY KAHL '89

President, CBS Entertainment

Appointment TV when you were a student?

We would head out to bars on Thursday nights, but it had to wait until *L.A. Law* was over.

College lesson that still resonates?

The introduction to the history of broadcast law and the early days of the broadcasting industry. The industry is changing before our eyes, and knowing what these laws are, and what they mean, can really help somebody navigate and understand what's going on today.

First job in TV?

I was an intern at Lorimar Television. At that time, they made shows like *Dallas*, *Knots Landing*, *Full House*, and *Family Matters*.

Go-to device to watch shows?

Everything. I still think there's nothing better than watching on a big TV, but I'll watch on my computer, my iPad, and sometimes on my iPhone. It depends, really, where you are and what the circumstances are.

Currently binge-watching?

I'm watching a lot of CBS shows, *Young Sheldon* being one of my personal favorites. Also, a show on YouTube called *Cobra Kai*, a reboot of *The Karate Kid* that is also really, really good.

What will TV look like in 10 years?

I think we're reaching the point where there are so many shows that curation is going to be important. Nobody can really watch all these shows. We're probably going to plateau in terms of the number of shows — at some point, the economics get a little weird. The networks are still going to be around and will still command the lion's share of the audience, because they're going to do shows with big appeal. But there will certainly be pockets of personal shows.

Why is CBS doing reboots (such as *Hawaii Five-0* and *Magnum P.I.*)?

CBS has a very rich history of shows, many of which people consider all-time TV classics. There's material to be mined there, and there are shows that people kind of look fondly back at. With maybe 500 scripted shows coming out in any given year, anything you can do to get people to sit up and notice, or have some recognition of a show, is important. We feel like there are new stories to tell and contemporary themes that we can add to an older, beloved show.

JENNIFER CARRERAS '04

Vice president of comedy development, ABC
Known for: *Single Parents*

Appointment TV when you were a student?

Friends was still on the air. That was the show that we would watch religiously, as a group, all together, always.

College lesson that still resonates?

I took a class [on poet Emily Dickinson] that stood out to me in terms of storytelling. It wasn't new media, and it wasn't television or film — I was an English major. But that sense of discovering character and getting to know the details of beautiful storytelling stuck with me.

First job in TV?

Between my junior and senior year in college, I interned at Michael Douglas's production company, Further Films. My first paying job when I came out to Los Angeles was as the receptionist at a literary agency.

Go-to device to watch shows?

There is a big part of me that still loves to come home and just put on the television. I watch big-screen TV as much as possible.

Currently binge-watching?

Honestly, oddly, a lot of cable dramas. We watched *Killing Eve*. We just finished *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, which I thought was excellent.

What stands out in a successful pitch for a new show?

It has to have compelling characters. Funny is really helpful. I know that sounds like the obvious, but you do — you want a laugh, and for ABC specifically, it really needs to have some heart. The combination of comedy and heart is really important for us. That's the television I like to watch, and I think that's what we've had success doing.

How do you know whether a show is successful?

Ratings are still a discussion, but not nearly as important as they were before. Part of it is what the ratings are, but also viewer engagement across social media. There are a lot of different ways to look at things, to see how the audience is responding.



JENNY FRITZ '95

Comedy development executive, ABC Studios

Appointment TV when you were a student?

My senior year, the O. J. Simpson trial began. Television capitalized on this gruesome, sordid story — every channel was showing it. We watched *Friends*, we watched *Seinfeld*. And I would be remiss if I didn't mention *ER*.

College lesson that still resonates?

Professor Julie D'Acci [MA'71, PhD'88] — she talked a lot about character. That has always been my North Star. You start with good characters, you define them sharply, you give them unique characteristics, and people will want to invest in whatever it is they are experiencing.

First job in TV?

I was a summer intern at Creative Artists Agency. I pushed a cart and delivered mail, I listened a lot, and I asked a lot of questions that you can get away with asking when you're in high school.

Go-to device to watch shows?

I sometimes watch cuts on my iPad and my phone, because that's part of my job, and there's an immediacy. But in terms of enjoying a show as a viewer, for me, it's still television and in my home.

Currently binge-watching?

Ozark. I don't watch more than two episodes at a time. I like to contemplate things, specifically if it's drama or thriller. I watch a lot of the ABC lineup. Off network, it's a tie between Amazon and Netflix, with HBO thrown in for whenever they actually do bring back *Game of Thrones*.

What do you love about your work?

I'm in television to tell great stories. The best of television should reflect what's going on in our world, socially, culturally, even sometimes politically. To see yourself, or your neighbor, or your family reflected on television is very, very comforting and important right now.

Killing Eve, a thriller on BBC America starring Jodie Comer and Sandra Oh, earned multiple awards nominations, the nod for a second season, and status as a popular pick for binge-watching.

MARK BANKER '95

Head writer, DreamWorks Animation
Known for: Netflix's *The Epic Tales of Captain Underpants*

Appointment TV when you were a student?

I remember living in a seven-bedroom house with seven or eight guys. As a group, we never missed *Beverly Hills 90210* and *Melrose Place*.

College lesson that still resonates?

[Professor] Tim Allen, Integrated Liberal Studies. In the first class, I walked in, and he had *Horton Hears a Who?* on four screens. He gave an hour-long lecture on the biological impact of *Horton Hears a Who?*.

First job in TV?

While I was at Wisconsin, I started working for *The Onion* as an ad rep. Then Scott Dikkers [x'87], one of the owners, pulled me aside and said, "I hear you telling jokes around here. You should be writing for us."

Go-to device to watch shows?

TV should be watched on a TV, in my opinion. I have a 65-inch, so it's hard to beat that.

Currently binge-watching?

Ozark is one of my favorites. *Better Call Saul*. We just started *Maniac*. Just finished the first season of *Fargo* — little late to the party. *Forever* on Amazon — my wife was the flight attendant at the end of the pilot. *The Handmaid's Tale* made me subscribe to Hulu.

What's changed about developing animation for TV?

Streaming has become such a significant venue. DreamWorks Animation made over a billion-dollar deal with Netflix to provide 12 or more series. If you look back five years ago, Netflix wasn't really even much of a factor. You had Cartoon Network, Disney, and Nickelodeon all slugging it out.

How does streaming influence your writing?

One of the mandates we had was to make our show mildly serialized. What happens on Netflix is you're watching, it ends, and then five seconds later, a new show will start. They want to create a seamless viewing experience from episode to episode. We do try to write to reward people that are watching episodes back-to-back.

LISA HELLER '90

Executive vice president of HBO
documentary and family programming
Known for: *The Jinx* (2015 Emmy for best documentary or nonfiction series), *The Sentence* (2018)

College lesson that still resonates?

I took a TV production class that I remember vividly. For the whole semester we had to write, produce, direct, and star in a mashup episode of a show, and we did *The Wonder Years*. I remember it being shockingly hard to get a 10-minute piece of fake *Wonder Years* done. It was an amazing window into what it takes to make TV. I would also say that I took my first women's studies class in Madison. Once I took that class, I found that I never looked at the world the same way again.

First job in TV?

I worked at Wisconsin Public Television. I was a grunt. I tried a little bit of everything. I did the teleprompter and ran it backwards once, during a live [show]. I powdered Dave Iverson's nose. The job really made me realize what I was *not* good at.

Currently binge-watching?

Recently I watched five episodes of *Succession* in succession until four in the morning. The other thing my family is binge-watching is *Veep*, because my kid just discovered it. My son also just discovered *The Office*. So we've gone through every single season of that show. The other thing I really like is *Better Things*. It's a working moms' kind of show.

Go-to device to watch shows?

The binging on the older shows is done on a good old-fashioned television. *Succession* and *Better Things* I watch up close and personal via either a computer or an iPad on my belly.

Why are documentary series so popular?

I guess truth is having a moment, right? You just can't write some of this stuff. It's as dramatic, as exciting, as engaging and compelling as fiction. Real people are amazing.

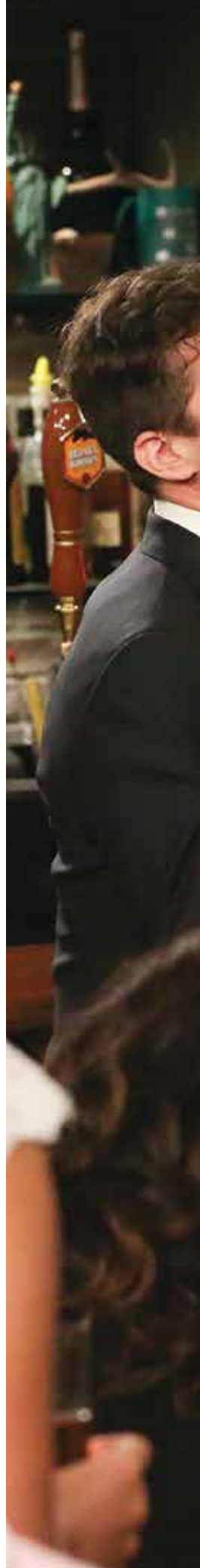
What do you look for in a documentary?

It's not a science. Curating excellence is not something that you can learn in the class. It's something you feel. If I'm doing my job right, the films on our slate make you feel something and move you.

What will TV look like in 10 years?

Oh, I have no idea, but I can't wait to see.

Interviews have been edited and condensed for clarity.





Brooklyn Nine-Nine writer and producer Carol Kolb '95 cut her comedy teeth as a freelance writer for The Onion. Canceled by Fox after five seasons, the show was quickly picked up by NBC for a sixth and began airing in January.

NETWORKS TO NETFLIX

Derek Johnson's office in Vilas Hall is home to a collection of *TV Guide* magazines, passed down over the years among communication arts faculty. For the students who take his class on the television industry, they may as well be in a museum. The UW associate professor, who recently edited a book on the sea changes in TV (*From Networks to Netflix: A Guide to Changing Channels*), is constantly revising his course to keep pace.

"I remember having to program VCRs," says Johnson. "But if I don't start with Netflix, it's increasingly difficult for the average undergraduate, who's 18 to 22 years old, to get their bearings."

Johnson works backward from there, explaining the older models of the industry upon which Netflix and other streaming media outlets are based, down to an explanation of how over-the-air broadcasting works.

"It's not a way that they're currently thinking about television," he says.

The connection between younger viewers and TV's past is a research interest for Johnson, whose next book will examine a trend he's witnessed in his own home: parents sharing old episodes of '80s and '90s programming with their children. "I share *Star Trek* with my daughters. My wife shares *Full House*. Many viewers have nostalgia for old shows, and it's a feeling that they want to share," he says.

"There's a strong trend in the industry of relying upon and enlisting an older generation to be part of that almost evangelical push to say to new viewers, 'Hey, check this out,'" Johnson continues. "We assume that these older shows that are now on Netflix appeal to the people who were watching when they were first airing. But the sense I'm getting is that the undergraduates are all watching *Friends*."

JENNY PRICE '96



SPENCER WALTS

FROM TOOLBOXES TO HUMAN ASHES, THE CATALOG OF COSMIC JUNK KEEPS GROWING.

BY TERRY DEVITT '78, MA'85

In September 1962, a 20-pound hunk of a Soviet spacecraft, still hot, landed in the middle of a Manitowoc street, rocketing Wisconsin into the space age. It wasn't so much a sign of things to come on Earth, but it was a glimpse of what was to come in space: it was going to get crowded up there.

Just 60 years ago, the environment around our planet was pristine. But now there is an eclectic constellation of stuff. The list includes wrenches, toolboxes, and cameras left behind by astronauts, along with abandoned and broken satellites, spent rocket parts, and the cremated remains of celebrities and rich people (including *Star Trek* creator Gene Roddenberry). At least 23,000 other objects larger than a baseball, not to mention the millions of bits of debris too small to track, are speeding like shrapnel through space.

Also in orbit, of course, are plenty of working satellites. And their numbers continue to grow at an astonishing pace as the world's spacefaring nations take advantage of new rocket technologies, miniaturization, and plummeting costs to seed space with more and more satellites.

"Satellites are in the background of just about everything we do in our daily lives. Modern-day America is tied to satellites. They are infrastructure," explains space debris expert Lisa Ruth Rand, a science historian who was an A. W. Mellon postdoctoral fellow in UW-Madison's Center for the Humanities from 2016 to 2018.

Within the next few years, the number of satellites in orbit may climb by as many as 20,000. This year alone, scores of small satellites have been lifted into Earth's orbit, and the deployment of thousands more is already in the works. One ambitious proposal from the aerospace company SpaceX calls for placing as many as 12,000 small satellites in low-Earth orbit to create internet service networks.

Sometimes, the orbits of the things we launch into space — such as the bus-sized vacated Chinese space lab that came blazing back to Earth in April 2018 — degrade, and those objects streak through the atmosphere, often disintegrating and burning up. Cosmic debris also crashes into oceans and, occasionally, terra firma. But as the space around Earth gets more congested, the risk of debris crashing into spacecraft or working satellites (used for weather, navigation, communications, science, and defense) becomes significantly greater. In June, the Trump administration announced a space policy directive intended to prevent more collisions in the increasingly crowded orbits around the planet.

The first documented space wreck occurred in 2009, when a collision over Siberia between a defunct Russian military satellite and a commercial communications satellite created some 2,300 pieces of junk large enough to track by radar. The event inspired Rand, who once harbored aspirations to be an astronaut and grew up in Jacksonville, Florida, with a ringside seat for rocket and Space Shuttle launches from America's "Space Coast." She began to examine our legacy of space junk as an environmental issue, work she continued during her UW fellowship, cosponsored by the Department of History and the Nelson Institute for Environmental Studies. She is now hip deep in writing a book on the history of galactic garbage.

The saga is riveting: a tale of rocketing technological sophistication, Cold War clashes, cultural iconography, geopolitical maneuvering, and environmental hubris. Take, for example, Project West Ford. Initiated by the U.S. Air Force and MIT's Lincoln Laboratory in the early 1960s, the aim was to fill space with millions of needlelike dipoles — magnetized wires — that could serve as emergency reflectors or antennae for radio signals in the event of a nuclear attack. The Air Force launched a test version and successfully used it to transmit cross-country signals, but the full-fledged project never followed. A few clumps of the project's copper dipoles remain in their polar orbit 2,250 miles above Earth.

"Beginning with Sputnik, there's been a pretty high awareness of the dangers of polluting space among scientific, government, and lay communities," notes Rand, who holds research appointments at the Smithsonian National Air and Space Museum and the RAND Corporation. (RAND stands for Research and Development. No relation to the historian.)

The first encounter with space junk for many was the world's first baby step into space. Those who were alive when the first Sputnik was slung into orbit in 1957 remember dark nights in the backyard waiting for the "satellite" to pass overhead. What we were in fact seeing, says Rand, was the second stage of the rocket that carried Sputnik aloft. For the backyard observer, the satellite was too small to see.

Since then, the space around our planet has accumulated a cloud of orbiting debris. One early American satellite, Explorer 7, launched in 1959, carried the flat-plate radiometer, the world's first space-based climate experiment. Devised by UW weather-satellite pioneer Verner Suomi and engineering professor Robert Parent '39, MS'49, the radiometer was used to establish the critical role of clouds on climate and showed that Earth absorbed more of the sun's energy than previously thought. The experiment aboard the 70-pound satellite paved the way for all future studies of weather and climate from space. Six decades later, it's still in orbit.



COURTESY OF THE RAHR-WEST ART MUSEUM

In 1962, two Manitowoc police officers found a piece of Sputnik 4 that landed in the middle of a city street.

50 years ago, the UW was a force behind the launch of the Orbiting Astronomical Observatory-2 (OAO-2), the first successful space telescope. Read more: news.wisc.edu/reaching-for-the-stars/.

Another UW contribution to the clutter around Earth is the Orbiting Astronomical Observatory-2 (OAO-2), the first successful space telescope. Launched in December 1968, OAO-2 carried Wisconsin-built telescopes that opened a new astronomical vista by providing access to light waves such as ultraviolet, which are blocked or absorbed by the atmosphere. This led to a raft of discoveries, including the identification of hydrogen halos around comets. Contact with OAO-2 was lost in January 1973, ending the mission and relegating it to the catalog of lifeless objects that circle our planet.

"[OAO-2 is] listed on various websites and apps that keep track of satellites, but I've never succeeded in seeing it fly over," says Jim Lattis MA'87, PhD'89, a UW historian of astronomy and director of the university's astronomy outreach outpost, Space Place. "It isn't particularly bright."

The observatory and its launch of space astronomy was an early milestone in the scientific community's abiding interest in the environment immediately above our planet. For astronomers, programs such as Project West Ford were a threat, seeding space with objects that would reflect light and radio waves, wreaking havoc with astronomical observations.

Vigorous lobbying to impose some international regulation of Earth's orbit was the prelude to the first space treaties. The effort spurred one annoyed diplomat to scrawl a hand-written note on a State

Department resolution, discovered by Rand during her research, describing astronomers as “a noisy and parochial group.”

But sooner or later, depending on altitude, everything comes back to Earth. Many objects spend only a short time in space, a few years to mere days. Objects in very high geostationary (matching Earth’s rotation) orbits — 22,000 miles and above — would be there for thousands of years, except that international convention requires that maneuverable satellites in those high orbits be brought down when their missions are complete. Although various schemes have been proposed to clean up space — nets, harpoons, robotic arms, space tugs — “we often allow outer space to clean up our mess for us. Earth orbit, like the ocean and the atmosphere, is a waste sink,” Rand says.

Certain orbits, especially geostationary and polar orbits for large maneuverable satellites, are a precious and finite resource. There are “good orbits” to be in, notes UW meteorological satellite guru Steve Ackerman. For example, key weather satellites are lined up in less-cluttered orbits, keeping them safely away from other working satellites to ensure they can avoid collisions and do their jobs.

Right outside Manitowoc’s Rahr-West Art Museum, in the middle of one of the Wisconsin city’s busiest thoroughfares, is a brass ring set flush in the pavement. Placed by the International Association of Machinists in 1963, the plate-sized ring marks the spot where, in the early morning hours of September 5, 1962, two city patrol officers making their rounds discovered a piece of steel embedded three inches deep in the pavement of North Eighth Street. It was from an unmanned Soviet spacecraft — dubbed Sputnik 4 in the West — rumored to be carrying a prototype spacesuit as a test for crewed flights. Its flight went awry due to a bug in the guidance system, and instead of a planned, controlled glide to Earth, the ship was boosted to a higher orbit. The seven-ton spacecraft eventually re-entered the atmosphere, where most of it vaporized — except for a few bits that landed in Wisconsin.

Although Rahr-West is dedicated to fine art, the museum has a small display of artifacts — a cast replica of the spacecraft fragment, pictures, and newspaper clippings — to memorialize Manitowoc’s unique place in the history of the space race.

“Being able to recover part of a spaceship was a rare thing,” Rand says. “It is one of the few pieces of space debris — outside of the space shuttle *Columbia* accident — that has been recovered on American soil.”

The remains of Sputnik 4 became a Cold War prop as the United States sought to return the debris to the Soviets on the floor of the United Nations, demonstrating for all the world that early Russian

spaceflight technology didn’t necessarily match the nation’s boasts.

The only other confirmed example of space junk found on American soil is also the only documented case of space debris striking a human. In January 1997, Lottie Williams was hit by a bit of fabric debris from an American Delta II booster rocket while walking in a Tulsa, Oklahoma, park. “Lottie was lucky,” according to one 2014 account: she was hit by the smallest piece of wreckage from the disintegrated rocket. A 66-pound titanium pressure tank was recovered in Texas.

For Rand, a visit to Rahr-West — where museum curator Adam Lovell places a thin file of letters, reports, and yellowed newspapers on a conference room table for her perusal — is another opportunity to research her story of space debris. The museum, for its part, takes full advantage of its proximity to Sputnik 4’s ground zero. Each year in early September, the museum hosts Sputnikfest, a quirky celebration featuring a Ms. Space Debris pageant (a contest open to any “human life-form,” in which Rand has twice placed as runner-up).

The crash of Sputnik 4 into one of Manitowoc’s busiest streets decades ago is a convenient touchstone for Rand, who came to the UW in 2016 after completing her doctorate in history and sociology of science at the University of Pennsylvania. The debris that falls from space, she has learned, is almost never recovered, instead burning up or falling in the oceans that cover most of our planet. Exceptions include the U.S. space station Skylab, which re-entered the atmosphere in 1979, pocking the Australian Outback with at least 22 tons of wreckage in 500 pieces — some the size of a loveseat.

And then there’s the example of Kosmos 954, a nuclear-powered Soviet reconnaissance satellite launched in 1977. A malfunction prevented the satellite from safely shedding its uranium-powered reactor core, and when it re-entered the atmosphere in 1978, it scattered radioactive debris over 48,000 square miles of Northwest Canada.

The incident prompted an exhaustive international air and land sweep to find and scoop up large pieces of radioactive debris — one reportedly so hot that a few hours of exposure would have been fatal.

International incidents created by stuff that falls randomly from the sky date almost to the beginning of the Space Age. In 1960, Rand notes, a failed rocket launch from Cape Canaveral resulted in debris raining down on newly Communist Cuba. A piece of debris supposedly struck and killed a cow, inspiring the first student-led anti-American demonstration there. The United States reportedly paid \$2 million in compensation for the beaned bovine. It was a gift, too, for headline writers: the “Herd Shot Around the World.” ●

4,600
satellites in
Earth’s orbit
(2,000 are
operational)

500,000
pieces of debris
tracked as they
orbit Earth

**17,500
mph**
The speed at
which debris
travels

\$4,995
The price Celestis
Memorial Space-
flights charges to
launch remains
into Earth’s orbit.
Previous custom-
ers include:

**Gene Rodden-
berry**, *Star Trek*
creator

Gerard K. O’Neill,
space physicist

Timothy Leary,
psychologist and
writer

**James “Scotty”
Doohan**, actor

**L. Gordon “Gordo”
Cooper Jr.**, astro-
naut

Terry Devitt is UW–Madison’s director of research communications.



Jason Gay and his son, Jesse, take a break at a favorite bakery in their hometown of Brooklyn, New York.

A Good Sport

For columnist Jason Gay '92, Wisconsin is never far from his thoughts.

BY TAYLOR LAABS '14

Even though his words show up in black and white, it's clear through his columns that Wall Street Journal sports writer Jason Gay '92 bleeds cardinal red. You may have caught one of his typically hilarious columns this past October titled "Wisconsin Must Beat Michigan to Save the World," which reiterates his faith in the football Badgers and disses their opponents.

Gay was involved in theater at UW-Madison, and his passion for the dramatic is evident in his coverage, whether he's writing about the Badgers, the Olympics, or the Tour de France. He authored the best-selling book Little Victories in 2015 and the following year was named Sports Columnist of the Year by the Society of Professional Journalists. Through it all, he still finds time to revere Barry Alvarez and despise the Michigan Wolverines — two themes that consistently appear in his writing.

How did your experience at the UW prepare you for a career in writing?

Oh, gosh. I wish I had some great story. Truth is, I wasn't such a great student at Madison. I did enjoy the beer! My career is an accident. The *Journal* should fire me, honestly.

Where was your favorite place to write on campus?

In my room, at 4:30 a.m., with a morning deadline approaching. I had a big, square Mac with a disk drive. I sound like I am 97 years old.

You're an avid cyclist and often write about it. Did Madison's prominent biking community influence that passion?

I bought a Trek Antelope mountain bike — white with radioactive green — at Yellow Jersey on State Street. I loved that bike with all my heart, even when someone stole the rear wheel outside class. I am still trying to find that wheel.

Your column tends to be a torchbearer for Badger athletics on a national stage. When you were a student, UW football and men's basketball were in poor shape. How exciting has it been to cover the Badgers' continued rise?

It feels like I am getting away with something. I'm grateful to all the Badger fans out there who read it and share it with their friends. I'm also grateful to the millions of [readers] who despise the University of Michigan.

Are there any interoffice tensions between Badgers and Wolverines in the Wall Street Journal newsroom?

Well, to them, there's no rivalry. They believe they are better than me.

Give me your guess on which Badger team will be next to win a national title.

I think we are going to win every title for the next 10 years. Barry told me to say this.

On to something more serious: with the current polarizing influence of politics and social media, do you feel like your role and responsibility as a journalist has changed?

There are plenty of people out there being terrible to each other. I just want to make you snort milk out of your nose at breakfast.

What advice would you give to young writers and reporters looking to break into the increasingly volatile media market?

Stay away from people who went to Michigan.

Interview has been edited and condensed.

On his website, jason-gay.com, Gay shares his personal list of little victories:

1. Putting on pants before 2 p.m. on a Saturday
2. Agreeing on where to go for brunch
3. Surviving your family vacation
4. Making it through the office holiday party
5. When they play "I Will Survive" at weddings
6. Soup



If you've heard the theme song from Friends or the hits "September" or "Neutron Dance," you're familiar with the work of Allee Willis. "I'm someone," she says, "who could write a melody to a spoon falling on the table." (Songfacts.com)



FREE TO BE Allee

*Songwriter Allee Willis '69
defines work as whatever
makes her happiest.*

BY WENDY HATHAWAY '04

When the UW Marching Band asked her to conduct the 2010 Homecoming halftime show, Allee Willis '69 — the musical mastermind behind the lasting hit song “September” — confesses she had no idea what she was doing.

Though she loves music, she's had no formal training. And it wasn't until she walked through the tunnel and onto the field at Camp Randall Stadium, sporting her signature sunglasses and inimitable fashion style, that she realized things had changed — dramatically — since she attended games with her sorority sisters in the late '60s.

“I'm thinking there will be 12,000 people, which is still pretty overwhelming,” she laughs. “There were 80,000 fans!”

But with the same can-do, devil-may-care spirit that's marked her professional success and survival for five decades, Willis embraced the moment.

“It was an absolute blast! I have no idea how to read sheet music, so I started flailing my arms,” she says. “And it turned out pretty amazing.”

Willis is a two-time Grammy award winner (for the music and lyrics to Broadway's *The Color Purple* and the *Beverly Hills Cop* motion picture soundtrack) who scored a spot in the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 2018. She's been nominated for a Tony (*The Color Purple*) and an Emmy (the *Friends* theme song); sold more than 60 million records; collaborated with everyone from Bob Dylan to James Brown and Cyndi Lauper; and also pursued her passions in painting, sculpture, multimedia design, furniture making, set design, digital video, and social-networking technology.

“I change careers a lot,” she says.

Quirky and candid, Willis has a keen sense about the creative projects that will make her happy — and the courage to say *no* and move on to something new if they won't. Just recently, she wrapped a string of one-woman shows and was busy collaborating with pioneering musician Beatie Wolfe and preparing to host another of her legendary parties.

“My parties are performances. They take months of planning, gathering, building, and working on how music fits in,” she explains. “I absolutely love what I do.”

Party, Protest, Participate

Willis's first step on her winding career path was in advertising, writing copy for record labels after graduating from the UW. The School of Journalism's academic reputation and the university's active social life made Wisconsin a clear choice for the Detroit native and pop-culture junkie.

Studying, parties, protests — Willis participated in everything she could during her four years in Madison. She joined Sigma Delta Tau, whose national office named her its Outstanding

Alumna last year, and socialized with fellow Carroll Hall residents.

“I started off a sorority girl ... and ended up marching and demonstrating,” Willis says. “I knew I was going to a great school at a time of revolution. I got the best of all worlds.”

Although she preferred record shops to live shows, Willis was tuned in to Madison's music scene and knew of the influential artists on campus just a few years before her, including Boz Scaggs x'66, Ben Sidran '67, and Steve Miller x'67.

For a music fan from Motown, the next step was obvious: New York City. Within a month of beginning work as a secretary at Columbia Records and its Epic label, she landed a promotion to the advertising department and a chance to work with artists she idolized — Barbra Streisand, Laura Nyro, and Janis Joplin (who passed away shortly after Willis began working there). It was “an incredibly exciting job to have landed directly out of school,” she says.

After a few years, Willis turned her attention from writing liner notes to writing songs, a major leap of faith for someone with a deep devotion to music — and absolutely no experience.

“I jumped in,” she says of her first — and only — album, 1974's *Childstar*. “I had never, ever performed before. I had been in one school play, and I literally played a tree. No lines, no nothing.”

Although she didn't plan on a career in music when she was growing up, Willis says it's easy now to see how her Detroit childhood helped shape her journey. Her informal musical education consisted of sitting on the front lawn of Berry Gordy's Motown Records, soaking up the sounds that would become groundbreaking hits as they seeped through the walls.

Some of Columbia's other releases overshadowed *Childstar*, notably Billy Joel's *Piano Man* and Bruce Springsteen's first two albums. Willis calls it a blessing in disguise. It took only four live shows for her to realize performing held no joy for her. In fact, she describes her first show, playing for a crowd of 10,000, as “horrifying.” The record label dropped her a few months later.

Hoping to cheer her up, a friend dragged Willis to a recording session — “the last place you want to be when you lose your own deal,” she says — and unknowingly reignited her career. The singer was Bonnie Raitt, a rare fan of *Childstar*, who sent Willis home to write her a song. “Got You on My Mind” appeared on Raitt's 1974 album *Streethlights*, and Willis hit the road as a backup singer.

Success didn't come overnight, however. For nearly four years, Willis checked hats at a comedy club and hung posters for a cabaret. Her social circle included singers Barry Manilow, Melissa Manchester, and Bette Midler, whose career was the first to take off. There were days when her only meal came from the backstage green room at Midler's

604

songs/titles are registered under Willis's name in the BMI database.

60 million

copies of her hits have been sold.

1992

saw the debut of willisville, which became the first social network in cyberspace — years before Facebook, MySpace, and Twitter.



shows.

"You're young. You're excited. You all believe you're gonna be stars, and you don't even consider the possibility it won't happen," she says. At the beginning of 1978, Willis was living on food stamps. By the end of the year, she had sold 10 million records.

September to Remember

Her big break occurred when a mutual friend introduced Willis to her all-time favorite singer, Earth, Wind & Fire founder Maurice White, who called on her to help the band flesh out the lyrics to a new song. "September" reached number one in the *Billboard* R&B singles chart, and the band asked her to cowrite music and lyrics for their next album. *I Am* went double platinum and included "Boogie Wonderland," a hit Willis loves because of its unique arrangement and complex lyrics. "That was just an incredible gift," she says.

Willis spearheaded a tribute to Detroit called "The D," which recorded more than 5,000 people at 70 singalongs across the city. "I will do anything for Detroit," she says of her hometown.

Once Willis broke through with one of the coolest groups on the planet, the calls kept coming. She was writing more than 100 songs a year at one point. "I was a machine," she says. But she quickly grew bored and knew that she couldn't keep it up indefinitely.

Years of artistic torment followed. "Writing a song is very much dependent on who I am working with," Willis explains. "If it's someone I love, who's talented, I can have a great time. But a lot of the time, they need help writing and basically you're a babysitter. I spent a lot of my career doing that. It's why I got on so many records, but it made me absolutely hate songwriting."

Willis also tired of seeing her male peers promoted to producer roles, while many women with equal success, or more, were denied the same opportunities.

"Women have never had a big voice in music," she says. "More power started to come with

ALLEE ON HER HITS

"A lot of times, you're not the best judge of your own stuff. Songs you think are brilliant never get cut. Songs you think are crap someone does magic with. They're all my babies."

"September" by Earth, Wind & Fire (1978)

"My favorite of all ... and it literally gets bigger every single year, recently exploding again on the *Billboard* Hip Hop charts, knocking Eminem out of the number one position. I see the effect it has on people. I don't think I've ever been to a wedding where it isn't played, a bar mitzvah, a graduation party. It brings so much joy to everyone, and that's an unbelievable experience."

When Taylor Swift covered the iconic song last year, Willis gave a characteristic review during her own live performance a few weeks later: "It was as lethargic as a drunk turtle dozing under a sunflower after ingesting a bottle of Valium, and I thought it had all the build of a one-story motel, but, I mean, the girl didn't kill anybody." Willis later walked back her critique.

"Neutron Dance" by the Pointer Sisters (1983)

Willis won a Grammy Award for Best Score Soundtrack for Visual Media for this song, included on the *Beverly Hills Cop* soundtrack.

"As I watched it through the decades, and then finally started to perform it, it's absolutely the most fun thing. I've come to appreciate it."

"What Have I Done to Deserve This" by Pet Shop Boys, featuring Dusty Springfield (1987)

"This is the most typical song of mine. It has five separate musical sections that most songwriters would have split into five separate songs. I wrote that with Pet Shop Boys and constantly pushed that this needs to remain together as a whole. ... It took almost three years convincing them. If anyone knows my writing, you can tell I wrote that one a mile away."

"I'll Be There for You" by The Rembrandts (1994) (Also the theme song to the hit TV show *Friends*)

"I didn't even like the song. But it has such a place in pop culture, it makes me very happy that I wrote that."

Beyoncé and Taylor Swift, but before that, you had to fight for every inch."

In the 1980s, Willis tried to rally her fellow songwriters to unionize, but there wasn't enough interest from other writers, male or female, in going up against decades of tradition.

"I just wanted to express my creativity. The easiest way to do that was to just start doing things other than music," she says.

Early Adopter

Willis continued to write, but chose her collaborators more carefully.

In 1991, she became fascinated by technology and the boundless possibilities of the budding internet. She spoke at the first Digital World conference in 1992, along with the founders of AOL and Intel. In 1997, she addressed Congress on the topic of artists' rights in cyberspace. And she spent years developing willisville — an early social network populated with fanciful fictional characters who acted as guides into cyberspace and interacted with humans — more than a decade before the invention of Facebook or Twitter. (She says of today's social media platforms: "They're a necessary evil. There are incredible things that have come out of them, and hideous things.")

Also an early adopter of eBay, Willis discovered some of her now-favorite kitsch collectibles on the online auction website. Vintage clocks, collectible lunchboxes, and decorative ceramics fill her historic pale pink home in Los Angeles (known as Willis Wonderland, after her hit "Boogie Wonderland") and populate her Allee Willis Museum of Kitsch website, ostensibly one of the largest collections of kitsch in the world.

Last year, Willis wrapped one of her most ambitious projects, a tribute to her much-loved and often maligned hometown of Detroit. Willis and collaborator Andrae Alexander wrote "The D" and recorded more than 5,000 people at 70 singalongs across the city. Aside from \$15,000 raised in an online crowd-funded campaign, Willis financed the entire six-year project.

"I will do anything for Detroit," she says.

The feeling is mutual. Her hometown honored her with a Distinguished Achievement Award in 2018. "To be acknowledged by the Detroit Music Awards, which is a major thing in Detroit, was as thrilling as the [Songwriters] Hall of Fame," she says. "This whole year has been completely unexpected and amazing."

Willis is an enterprising entertainer seeking out what makes her, and the world, happy — and having a blast doing it.

"I'm always excited. That's the key. You gotta remain curious," she says. "And if it's not working for you ... get off your ass and do something else." ●

Wendy Hathaway '04 is a writer living in the Madison area.

On Alumni

Alumni News at Home and Abroad

COURTESY OF WAA: ORANGE COUNTY CHAPTER



From left, Renee Tuzee '88; WAA Chief Alumni Officer Sarah Schutt; Virginia Porter '58, MM'60; and Lea Davis enjoyed dinner at the Orange County Founders' Day.

The Scoop on Founders' Days

If you've ever wanted to time-travel back to college to enjoy a great class and rapport with fellow Badgers, you can: simply attend your local Founders' Day.

The UW has been celebrating Founders' Days since 1924, sending faculty and alumni speakers to chapters around the world to commemorate the institution's first class in 1849.

Chris Davis '79, president of the WAA: Orange County chapter, says his group has found that tasting events are popular with alumni, whether "beer or wine or chocolate or cheese." Last year, the chapter invited food-science professor **Scott Rankin** to speak about cheese. "When you're far away from Wisconsin," Davis says, "that's the guy you want." Rankin provided a selection of artisan cheeses from Wisconsin, and alumni had a chance to sample them during the happy hour and after Rankin's talk.

Attendees also heard from WAA Chief Alumni Officer **Sarah Schutt**, participated in a silent auction to raise money for scholarships, and applauded **Matt Gunderson '85** when he received the chapter's Badger of the Year award.

"Go to Founders' Day," urges Davis. "It's one of the best opportunities to meet a wide group of Badgers."

Some of the speakers for the 2019 Founders' Day events include comedian **Charlie Berens '09** (Los Angeles); science-fiction writer **Kevin Anderson '83** (Pikes Peak, Colorado); and **Gina Bryan '99, MS'02, DNP'12**, a clinical professor in the School of Nursing who will speak about opioid addiction (Brown County, Wisconsin).

Chancellor **Rebecca Blank** will travel to Beijing and Shanghai in May to headline events in China. Other international Founders' Days are scheduled for Mexico, Singapore, India, Denmark, Pakistan, and eighteen other countries.

See uwalumni.com/foundersday to learn about your local event.



DIVERSITY DISPATCH

Badger Vibes, the newest e-newsletter from the Wisconsin Alumni Association, celebrates the diverse UW experience by sharing stories of alumni, students, and faculty of color. Check out past issues at uwalumni.com/news-stories/badger-vibes, and email diversity@uwalumni.com to subscribe.

74

Founders' Day celebrations in 2018

15

International Founders' Days

4,328

Attendees

\$14,272

Raised for local chapter scholarships

RECORD CLASS GIFT

The Class of 1968, which celebrated its 50th reunion on campus in October, set the record for the highest amount ever donated as a class gift: \$837,000. Donors **John '55** and **Tashia '55 Morgridge** have agreed to double the amount to support UW scholarships through their matching program.



JEFF MILLER

The Wisconsin Union has hosted hundreds of weddings during the past 90 years.

Just hours after she said, “I do,” during her March 2018 ceremony, **Jenelle Selig Olson ’15** and her new husband and college sweetheart, **Erick Olson ’12**, were twirling around the dance floor of Great Hall in Memorial Union. Little did she know her husband had planned for a special guest to stop by their reception: Buckingham U. Badger.

“Bucky was definitely a highlight,” Jenelle says. “Not knowing he’s coming, and then [you] turn around and some Bucky is there dancing with you — that’s just awesome. Also, you can’t beat the Terrace.”

The Union’s first wedding, between **Fang Chu** and **Tsao Shih Wang ’27, MA’28, PhD’29** in May 1929, was likely a smaller affair. Nowadays, Union

WHAT’S YOUR FAVORITE UW TRADITION?

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weddings are so popular that the UW has two full-time wedding planners and an intern who coordinate the days’ many facets.

Hopeful couples enter a lottery 18 months in advance. When their names are pulled, they can pick from available dates and venues — Tripp Commons, Great Hall, or Varsity Hall at Union South. During the academic year, school events take priority, but the Union can host up to nine weddings in a single summer weekend, notes **Hattie Paulin**, the Union’s wedding director.

Leading up to the event, Paulin sends checklists, arranges tastings, and sometimes plays therapist to stressed-out couples and family members. The Union only requires that couples pay a small event fee and use its catering services. Everything else can be customized, from the chef preparing family recipes to the waitstaff

dressing as Disney characters.

The Union was the first venue Jenelle considered after she and Erick got engaged. Because she served as Paulin’s intern while she was earning her engineering degree, Jenelle knew how much care Union staff put into planning and executing a wedding day.

“The staff knows the true meaning of having a wedding there, and what it means to me and my family, and it was just a huge weight off my shoulders,” Jenelle says.

Of course, there are always last-minute glitches that no one anticipates, Paulin says. But with a game plan and some professional guidance, couples are able to enjoy a day dedicated to their love story.

“The couple can sit back and look and say, ‘Wow, this is awesome,’” she says. “‘This is exactly what we wanted it to be.’”

NINA BERTELSEN X’19

50s

Jeanne Berry '55 and **Michael '56 Schmitz** of Thiensville, Wisconsin, recently presented a gift of \$500,000 to the Charles E. Kubly Foundation — dedicated to raising awareness of depression, supporting suicide prevention, and promoting improved access to mental health services — to establish the Joey Schmitz and Charlie Kubly Endowment Fund. The fund honors the memories of the Schmitzes' son, Joey, and their friends' son, Charlie, who lost their lives by suicide.

A member the UW's first group of female cheerleaders, **Virginia Kehl Mackesey '56** of Dunwoody, Georgia, was recognized at a Badger football game last September. "I wanted so badly to be young again and to be a part of it. Have them lift me up, and do all that stuff. What we did was very mild by comparison," Mackesey told Madison's NBC15. Mackesey studied dance while at the UW, and her family's Madison-area business, the Kehl School of Dance, began in 1880 and continues toe-tapping today.

Due to reasons surrounding his health, **Don Bauder '59, MS'61** of Salida, Colorado, has retired from his "love/addiction": writing and reporting. The author and reporter served as editor of the *Daily Cardinal* while at the UW, a stint that eventually bloomed into a career filled with investigative business reporting. He worked for *Businessweek* magazine, the *San Diego Union* (later *Union-Tribune*), and the *San Diego Reader*. "Working for the *Reader* was the highlight of my career," he wrote in his retirement announcement last fall.

Bruce Ellig '59, MBA'60, who resides in New York and is the former worldwide head of human resources at global pharmaceutical company Pfizer, was selected in 2018 as the Top

Lifetime HR Executive of the Year by the International Association of Top Professionals for his leadership and commitment to the industry. He also was awarded the Albert Nelson Lifetime Achievement Award by Marquis Who's Who for his contributions to his profession.

Stephen Isaacson '59 of Highland Park, Illinois, was a member of the UW bowling team that won the National Intercollegiate Bowling Championship in 1957. He also is an inductee in the United States Table Tennis Hall of Fame, along with **Malcolm Anderson '60** of Bradford, Massachusetts. Isaacson was a two-time U.S. Intercollegiate Table Tennis Champion in the 1950s. Anderson, having taken more than 60,000 photos of table-tennis players throughout his tenure, served for more than 20 years as chair of the photography committee for the United States Table Tennis Association (now USA Table Tennis) and was on USTTA's executive committee for 10 years. Thanks, Mr. Isaacson, for writing in!

60s

Recently appointed to the boards of directors of the Northland Tutoring Center and the Lake Minnesuig Association in Wisconsin is **Donald Maypole MS'61**. Maypole retired from the University of Minnesota-Duluth in 2000 as professor emeritus, and then taught for six years at universities in Latvia, Lithuania, Ukraine, Czech Republic, and Portugal. He is a three-time Fulbright Award winner and a retired lieutenant colonel who served as a jet fighter pilot in the Air National Guard, USAF, and NATO. While an undergraduate at Idaho State University, he was a smokejumper in the United States Forest Service.

In August, New York Governor Andrew Cuomo named **Alicia Suskin Ostriker**

MA'61, PhD'64 the State Poet 2018–20, making her the 11th in the state's history. The honor included the New York State Walt Whitman Citation of Merit for Poets. A Jewish National Book Award recipient and two-time National Book Award finalist, Ostriker also is a professor emerita of English at Rutgers University, the distinguished poet-in-residence at Drew University, and chancellor of the Academy of American Poets. She has authored numerous poetry collections that address themes of family, personal growth, Jewish identity, and social justice.

Longtime boys' tennis coach at Neenah (Wisconsin) High School **Thomas Berven MS'67** was honored at a dedication ceremony last fall after retiring in the summer. The school's tennis courts were named after him, recognizing the 48 years he spent as the team's head coach. During his tenure, the team won 41 conference championships and five Wisconsin Interscholastic Athletic Association state championships.

You may know **Dale Chihuly MS'67** for his renowned glassblowing work, but he's also noted for collecting everything from accordions and old cameras to vintage Christmas tree ornaments. This array also includes automobiles, and Chihuly recently donated three of his personal cars to the LeMay-America's Car Museum in Tacoma, Washington. The cars included a 1972 Citroën DS 21 Super 5 Pallas, a 1958 Ford Fairlane 500 Skyliner, and a 1967 Volkswagen Type 2 double-door camper.

Famed musician **Ben Sidran '67** recently donated his personal archives — nearly 100 boxes of materials — to UW-Madison Libraries, including items such as correspondence, music manuscripts, and unedited radio interviews. "All my

BOOK NEWS?

See page 60.

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memories — of discovering jazz, studying history, raising a family, writing books — everything of importance to me, really, happened in Wisconsin,” said Sidran to UW–Madison Libraries in May. “I am happy and proud to have my work live on at the University of Wisconsin.” He also recently sold his collection of about 2,500 compact discs to a Madison music retailer.

In 2018, **Rick (Richard) Lathrop '68** of Portland, Oregon, celebrated 25 years of involvement in Global Service Corps, an organization providing volunteer service-learning opportunities in multiple developing countries. Lathrop is founder and executive director of the organization.

70s

Jon Tuttle '71 and his wife, **Becky (Rosanne) Marrese Tuttle '77**, have retired from Jon's longtime family business, Tuttle's Hometown Pharmacy, in Fort Atkinson, Wisconsin. The drugstore had been owned by Jon's family for nearly 90 years, running through three generations. A new owner expects to retain the Tuttle's name for the business.

We give a Badger round of applause to **Jill Geisler '72**, the Bill Plante Chair of Leadership and Media Integrity at Loyola University Chicago, who has been honored with the President's Recognition award from the American Society of News Editors. The accolade recognizes Geisler's leadership and efforts to support journalists from underrepresented communities and to promote a strong and independent press.

Congratulations, **George Meyer JD'72**, who was inducted into the Wisconsin Conservation Hall of Fame in 2018. Meyer worked for the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources for more than 30 years, taught environmental studies courses for two years

at Lawrence University, and served as executive director of the Wisconsin Wildlife Federation for 15 years.

The War at Home, a 1979 documentary codirected by two-time Oscar nominee **Glenn Silber '72** of Santa Fe, New Mexico, recently underwent a 4K restoration and was screened at the New York Film Festival in October. The film, which sheds light on the anti-Vietnam War movement in Madison, was also rereleased in select theaters across the nation last fall.

The National Energy and Utility Affordability Coalition awarded **Edward Gingold PhD'73** — who has been a staff attorney at the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission in Washington, DC, for about 40 years — its Lifetime Service Award. The award, presented this past June, is given to an individual who brings dedication and positive change to the field.

“Everything of importance to me, really, happened in Wisconsin.”

Ben Sidran '67

RenewAire, an energy-recovery ventilator manufacturer based in Madison, has promoted **Chuck Gates '75** from president to CEO. Gates cofounded the company more than 30 years ago.

Jim Janik '78, MS'82 has retired from his position as CEO and president of Milwaukee-based Douglas Dynamics, a manufacturer of commercial vehicle attachments and equipment. Janik was named CEO in 2000 and chair in 2014, and he will now hold the executive chair role. Since joining the company in 1992, Janik has seen it grow from 250 to some 1,700 employees, with sales increasing from about \$34 million in 1992 to nearly \$500 million in 2018.

Certified hand therapist

Linda Klein '78 is serving as president of the American Society of Hand Therapists. (Broadly speaking, hand therapists are occupational or physical therapists who are proficient in treatment of the upper limb, and they may achieve advanced certification as certified hand therapists.) Klein has been supervisor of hand therapy at Hand Surgery Ltd. in Milwaukee since 1991. She also has provided continuing education courses and has written five book chapters on topics pertaining to the field.

Barb Cadwell '79 and **David '79, MA'87 Perkins** of Blue Mounds, Wisconsin, delivered their last community-supported agriculture (CSA) share this past winter. The couple, owners of Vermont Valley Community Farm, served the greater Madison area for 24 years. They started the farm with 50 members and have now fed more than 25,000 Dane County residents. Barb will be retiring from her agricultural work, while David will continue farming the land at Vermont Valley. He also will continue the farm's organic seed-potato business with their son, **Jesse Perkins '05**.

Andrew Rensink '79 has joined New York City-based ChemioCare USA as its chief manufacturing officer. The biotech company focuses on reducing chemotherapy-induced side effects through transdermal patch technology. Rensink brings more than 30 years of experience — 13 of them in transdermal development and manufacturing.

Mount St. Joseph University in Cincinnati announced last July that **H. James Williams MBA'79** agreed to a five-year extension to his contract as president of the university. Since Williams became president in 2016, the university has seen enrollment growth, the launch of a new physician assis-

Recognition *Nancy Baym*

tant program, and increased graduation and retention rates. He created a strategic vision called Transformation 2025 to help enhance student experiences and outcomes.

80s

This past July, **Daniel Piette '80** was named CEO of Bluware Corp., a technology development company based in Houston. He previously served on the board of directors of Petroleum Geo-Services, a Norway-headquartered business with a presence in 25 countries. Piette also is a member of the Campaign Steering Committee for the UW's College of Engineering and serves on the board of visitors of the UW's Geological Engineering Program.

John Schmitt '80 of Mount Horeb, Wisconsin, who appeared in the Winter 2012 issue of *On Wisconsin*, continues to volunteer for Living Water International (LWI), an organization that aims to bring clean water to communities in need. He now represents the state of Wisconsin for LWI and was recently part of an effort to drill a well in Honduras (while sporting his Badger baseball cap). He also is helping plan LWI's trip from the Madison area to El Salvador this fall.

Patrick Halter '81, MBA'83 has been promoted from COO to CEO for Principal Global Investors, an investment management firm based in Des Moines, Iowa, that oversees about \$430 billion in assets in more than 80 countries. He joined the firm in 1984 in commercial real estate and has held a variety of leadership positions within the business.

Having served at North Central College in Naperville, Illinois, for more than 25 years, **Heidi Matthews '81**, a professor emerita of kinesiology as well as the inaugural and former dean of the School of Education and Health Sciences,



KELLY DAVIDSON STUDIO

FROM SUPERFAN TO ACADEMIC

As a student, **Nancy Baym '86** followed her favorite bands around the country, exploring the relationship between musicians and fans first-hand — long before she knew it could become a career. She became friends with R.E.M. frontman Michael Stipe, and during a spring break trip to Nashville, she and her roommate gave Alex Chilton (a member of the '70s power-pop band Big Star) and his bass player a ride to Memphis. "While we were awestruck at this legendary musician," she says, "we realized how human he was. And that relationship always stayed with me."

During Baym's doctoral program at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, she focused on analyzing audience subcultures. She later worked as a communications professor at Wayne State University and the University of Kansas before becoming a principal researcher at Microsoft Research New England.

Baym channels both her interest in communication and her passion for music into her new book, *Playing to the Crowd: Musicians, Audiences, and the Intimate Work of Connection*. She interviewed bands and artists such as UB40, the Cure, Billy Bragg, and Nacho Vegas. She chose musicians "to illustrate the wider phenomenon where social media has made people feel the need to be maintaining quasi-intimate relationships with customers or those they might do business with in the future."

It's no longer just a one-way street where fans buy albums and engage with musicians only at meet-and-greets or concerts, she says. Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram have torn down that barrier to create a new kind of artist-audience relationship.

One conclusion from the book: "You don't have to think of audiences as potential friends to think of them as coparticipants in creating new social and moral orders through your interactions."

Baym has mined this field before, in her 2015 book, *Personal Connections in the Digital Age*. It applies more than 20 years of her research on how social media and internet culture have influenced our relationships with one another. "It's a more nuanced conversation on how we respond to new technologies and what happens to language and identity when we increasingly talk with each other online," she says.

As for her next project, she will only say it's focused on Microsoft Office's paper-clip mascot Clippy, a chatty digital assistant that was discontinued in 2007 and "has found an afterlife as a meme on craft sites such as Etsy."

DAVID SILVERBERG



WEATHER GEEK

Chris Burt '83 was drawn to the UW in 1973 by its world-renowned meteorology department. Although he'd been studiously recording the weather since age six, at UW–Madison, his scholastic dreams stalled against the rigors of meteorological math. So he left school for a brief stint in farming and then toured Asia. Smitten by Thailand, he reenrolled at the UW in 1979 to earn a degree in international relations. After graduation, he entered the travel guide business in Bangkok just as Thailand became a popular tourist destination.

Burt jumped into the U.S. market with the Compass American guide-book series and sold that venture to Random House in 1992. He moved to the Bay Area and remained as publisher until 2001, when he reconnected to his weather enthusiasms. Burt created an extreme weather guide, working from a photocopied 1971 compendium of record-breaking weather compiled by one of his mentors. He updated the data and packaged it as *Extreme Weather: A Guide and Record Book*.

First enchanted by epic snowfalls, Burt's passion now includes the outer limits of all climatic events. He survived Bangkok's biggest rain event — 16 inches in 10 hours. "My house went underwater," he recalls. "I remember sitting in my bedroom, and the house was literally shaking from the intensity of the rainfall."

But that's nothing: "I'd love to have been in Unionville, Maryland, when that one and a quarter inches of rain fell in 60 seconds," Burt says of a record-holding 1956 storm. "I just can't imagine what that would be like. That's just ridiculous."

The book helped launch him from meteorological dropout to a blogger at Weather Underground, a popular website for weather junkies. One of his blog posts even led to the World Meteorological Organization (WMO) overturning a 90-year-old statistic of the hottest temperature ever measured on Earth (136°F at El Azizia, Libya, in September 1922).

Burt's investigation found critical flaws in how the heat was measured, prompting the WMO to conduct its own investigation and confirm his findings. The record fell by default to the 134°F observed in Death Valley, California, on July 10, 1913. The upset led to national media coverage and landed Burt an ad hoc membership on the WMO's World Weather and Climate Extremes Committee.

"The increase of extreme weather events is definitely not our imagination," Burt warns. "The heat waves are definitely as extreme as they have ever been in history and more frequent all over the world."

ERIK NESS

has been recognized with the Harold and Eva White First Citizen of the College Award. The award honors those who exemplify the best of the college. Last year, Matthews also received the Great Lakes Athletic Trainers Association Outstanding Educator Award, and North Central College held a dedication of the Heidi M. Matthews Athletic Training Facility.

Dick (Richard) Palmersheim Jr. '81, MBA'84 has been appointed president and CEO of Perlick Corporation, a Milwaukee-based manufacturer of commercial bar and beverage systems, residential undercounter refrigeration, and brewery fittings. Palmersheim brings to this role more than 35 years of experience in executive management and has held roles at companies such as Caterpillar and S. C. Johnson & Son.

Dick (Richard) Cates PhD'83 has retired from his post as director of the Wisconsin School for Beginning Dairy and Livestock Farmers, which is part of the UW's Center for Integrated Agricultural Systems. He has taught nearly 600 students through the school since 1995. Cates will remain active in the community through organizations such as the Southwest Wisconsin Community Action Program. He also drives an ambulance for the Spring Green (Wisconsin) Fire Department and Emergency Medical Services.

Thomas Drolsum x'83 of Jefferson, Wisconsin, has taken part in an important piece of history: his name appears on a memory card inside the Parker Solar Probe, a NASA mission that has traveled through the sun's outer atmosphere. Last March, NASA invited the public to send in their names — now Drolsum's joins more than 1.1 million names aboard the probe. Launched this past August, the probe is on a multiyear mission to study the sun, and it is the

closest that any spacecraft has gotten to the star's surface.

Margaret Halpin

Dohnalek MS'84, PhD'88

has joined Valensa International — a manufacturer of nature-based product formulations with headquarters in Eustis, Florida — as chief scientific officer and as senior vice president of research and innovation, bringing about 30 years of expertise in leading nutritional innovations for Fortune 500 brands. Among other positions, Dohnalek previously served in head roles at PepsiCo and Pfizer. She is named on six U.S. patents and has coauthored 18 research papers related to nutrition.

Daniel Katz '84, MA'86

has been appointed as the new arts and sciences dean at Alfred (New York) State College. Katz, who was previously the chief academic officer for two colleges, has aimed to focus on the needs of first-generation college students. "I am especially happy about working with diverse, curious, and ambitious students from all over New York State — even my hometown of Brooklyn! — and beyond," he said of his new post.

Architecture and engineering firm Mead & Hunt, headquartered in Middleton, Wisconsin, has selected

Andrew Platz '84 as its new CEO. He also continues to be president — a position he has held since 2011. Platz joined the company in 1985 as a project engineer.

In her recently published memoir, *The Shape of a Hundred Hips*, **Patricia Cumbe '87** of Minneapolis describes belly dancing's role in her recovery from sexual assault. "Belly dance is how I gained confidence and compassion for my lost sense of self," she says. Cumbe notes that the book addresses several contemporary concerns, including campus sexual assault, working-class families, female

identity, and artistic expression.

Seventy-nine: Timothy Gillham '87's unofficial

winning percentage during his college fencing career. In 2018, the former fencing team captain was named to the UW Athletic Hall of Fame — the first of his sport to be so honored. Among his accolades, Gillham captured the Big Ten Championship three times in epee (one of three disciplines in fencing). Thank you, **Neil Payne '61**, for sharing this news with us.

Stepping into the positions of president and chief commercial officer at Enstor Gas, based in Houston, is **Masoud Kasraian '88, MS'90, PhD'93, MBA'98**. Enstor owns and operates underground natural gas storage facilities on the Gulf Coast and in southwest regions of the country. Before joining Enstor, Kasraian was chief commercial officer at Leaf River Energy Center.

Duane Knudson PhD'88 of San Marcos, Texas, earned the American Kinesiology Association's 2018 Jerry R. Thomas Distinguished Leadership Award and will receive the Society of Health and Physical Educators' 2019 American Scholar Award in April. Knudson also serves as president-elect of the International Society of Biomechanics in Sports.

The University of Alabama-Birmingham has promoted **Patricia Drentea '89** to a full professor position in sociology. Meanwhile, her husband, **Paul Tybor '88**, has celebrated more than 20 years at the professional services firm Ernst & Young, where he is an IT asset manager.

William Graham III '89 has been named CEO of Bel Brands USA, a company based in Chicago with brands such as The Laughing Cow and Mini Babybel. He was most recently president of Materne North America and has spent three years on the

national board of directors for Big Brothers Big Sisters.

90s

When **Jonathan Dobbs x'90**, an EMT volunteer and a retired owner of a medical-products company, found out on a visit to McCarthy, Alaska, that the small community had lost its only ambulance to vandalism, he stepped in to help. Dobbs purchased an ambulance in northern Wisconsin, and he and a friend drove and ferried the vehicle to McCarthy. "I think it's hopefully going to reenergize our community," McCarthy resident Tamara Harper told the *Anchorage Daily News* last May.

Yan Wang MBA'91, PhD'93 is now CEO of Cyto-vance Biologics, a biopharmaceutical contract manufacturer based in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and president of sister company Scientific Protein Laboratories. Wang has been a member of the company's board of directors since 2015 and brings more than 20 years of experience in the pharmaceutical industry to the position.

Serving in the new role of chief diversity officer at Constellation Brands, a producer of brands such as Corona Extra and Svedka Vodka, is **Kris (Kaneenat) Pitakskul Carey '92**. She also maintains her position as a senior vice president at the Victor, New York-based company. Carey is a member of the company's Women's Leadership Development Program, is a past fellow of the national organization Leadership Council on Legal Diversity, and was a recipient of the Legal Champion Award from the Illinois Diversity Council.

Sassy Cow Creamery in Columbus, Wisconsin, which is owned by brothers and third-generation farmers **James '93** and **Rob '96 Baerwolf**, celebrated a decade of operation in 2018. The creamery

X-PLANATION

An x preceding a degree year indicates that the person did not — or has not yet — completed that degree at UW-Madison.

OBITUARIES

Brief death notices for Wisconsin Alumni Association® (WAA) members and friends appear in *Badger Insider*, WAA's magazine for its members. You may also submit full-length obituaries (with one photo each) for online posting at uwalumni.com/go/alumninotes.

sits between the brothers' two farms — land that was purchased by their grandfather in 1946 — and sells milk and ice cream products in both Wisconsin and northern Illinois.

Kathleen Demet '94 has been named partner and chief marketing officer for Chicago-based independent investment and advisory firm RMB Capital, which has about \$9.3 billion in assets under management. Demet, who joined the RMB team in 2010, has been engaged with the business since 2005 and has worked for the firm's brand strategy and communications partner.

Jennifer Thelen Cresson '96 of Sun Prairie, Wisconsin, is a founding partner of Sunseed Research LLC, a market-research firm that has been recognized on the 2018 *Inc.* 5000 list, which annually ranks the 5,000 fastest-growing privately held companies. Sunseed was ranked at 4,613.

Diane Laatsch Erdman '96, DPM '97 of Hartland, Wisconsin, was named the 2018 Wisconsin Pharmacist of the Year by the Pharmacy Society of Wisconsin. Erdman, who works for the faith-based health care organization Ascension, was nominated by her colleagues and peers.

This past October, **Michelle Seifert Dorsey '97, MD '01**, the chief of radiology at the Phoenix VA Health Care System, relocated to Washington, DC, where she is spending 12 months after earning a White House Leadership Fellowship. The White House Leadership Development Program harnesses the top talent across government employees to support the implementation of key priorities and address critical challenges.

Renée Trilling '97, an associate professor of English at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, has been awarded the university's

Campus Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching, which honors her innovative approach to teaching and her contributions to education beyond the classroom. She also was recognized with the Dean's Award for Excellence in Undergraduate Teaching for the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and she was the keynote speaker for the college's spring 2018 honors ceremony.

Pinnacle Climate Technologies in Eden Prairie, Minnesota, has welcomed **Ryan Damask '98** as its new CFO. Pinnacle designs and manufactures heating, cooling, and ventilation products through several brands. Prior to joining the company, Damask was the CFO at Archway Marketing, Inc., and Subsidiaries.

“Suddenly, the whale just swam off. ... It was like magic.”

Lesanna Lahner MPH'11, DVM'11

Luther College professor **Jodi Enos-Berlage PhD'98** is involved in a water-quality research project that received a grant from the Iowa Center for Health Effects of Environmental Contaminants. The project investigates water-borne disease-causing agents, and the grant will allow researchers to quantify levels of harmful bacteria and viruses in both ground and surface water in Winneshiek County, Iowa.

For his 65th birthday, **Steve Rankin '98** went big: riding his bicycle from Seattle to Boston with an international group. During the recent journey, he racked up more than 4,300 miles.

00s

Fourth-generation Badger **Hans Obma '02** has been putting his UW language studies to work in recent character roles on cable and network television shows. He is German-speaking Adrian

on *Better Call Saul*, the prequel to *Breaking Bad*. Among other roles, Obma was Gregor, a Czechoslovakian warlock on *The Vampire Diaries*, and Dobroslov Charmain, a Croatian patient on *The Resident*. He also was recognized in 2018 as Outstanding Featured Actor by the Stage Scene LA Awards for his portrayal of a British character, Christopher Wren, in *The Mousetrap* at Crown City Theatre in Los Angeles. “Foreign characters are a good way for me to combine joy and work,” Obma says.

Ashoka, a nonprofit with global headquarters in Arlington, Virginia, that supports leading social entrepreneurs, named **Rachel Armstrong '03** to its 2018 class of fellows from the United States. The lifetime, nonresidential fellowship celebrates social entrepreneurs for their innovative solutions. Armstrong is founder and executive director of Farm Commons, a nonprofit based in Duluth, Minnesota, that specializes in sustainable farm law.

A few years ago, **Paul Andersen '04, MAcc'05** of Minneapolis started a pickleball company, Amazin' Aces. (Pickleball is a paddle sport that is a mix of tennis, badminton, and Ping-Pong. Pickles aren't part of the game, but the company asserts that, although there are differing accounts, it is believed the game was named after the creator's dog, Pickles.) “I was working a corporate desk job and left to follow my dream of starting my own business, and it's been a really wonderful ride,” Andersen says.

Dan Ruch '04 is CEO and founder of Rocketrip, an enterprise travel company based in New York City that rewards employees for being cost-conscious while traveling for business. The company, founded in 2013, has been received coverage in the *New York Times*.

That's a lot of Badgers!

Elizabeth Berglund Hall MA'98, PhD'03; Mark Hall MA'98, PhD'04; Anne Theobald MA'05, PhD'11; and James Pfrehm PhD'07 are coauthors of an intermediate French textbook. Elizabeth is an assistant professor at the University of Virginia; Mark teaches French at the Collegiate School in Richmond, Virginia; Theobald is an assistant professor at Hillsdale (Michigan) College; and Pfrehm is an associate professor at Ithaca (New York) College.

Michael Stauder MD'07 has been named associate professor of radiation oncology at the University of Texas MD Anderson Cancer Center in Houston. He also is a member of the Morgan Welch Inflammatory Breast Cancer Research Program and Clinic, along with several national and international radiation therapy-related societies and organizations.

Neil Berg '09 joined a panel at the UCLA Hammer Museum this past fall to discuss the impact of climate change on the Los Angeles water supply. Berg is the associate director of science at the UCLA Center for Climate Science.

10s

Virginia Tech's College of Natural Resources and Environment has welcomed **David Carter '10**, who is now an assistant professor of silviculture in the Department of Forest Resources and Environmental Conservation. He also is a codirector of the Forest Productivity Cooperative, an international partnership among several universities in the United States, Brazil, and Chile that is committed to creating innovative solutions to improve productivity through sustainable forestry practices.

Amy (Amelia) Evans PhD'10 has recently taken on a post as associate professor at Hazelden Betty Ford Graduate



PRISCILLA PRIEBBE

COUNTRY PLAYMAKER

Long before she led the UW women's hockey team to two NCAA Division I championships, goalie **Alannah McCready '10** was a member of several boys' youth hockey teams in Blaine, Minnesota.

"When I was growing up, there were no girls' teams for me to play on," says McCready. Her persistence to follow her passion and play anyway — a virtue that would serve her well off the ice, too — eventually led to a full athletic scholarship with the Badgers.

After graduating, McCready got a job doing PR for a sports management company in New York. She loved it, but her interest in music — something she's pursued since she was young — felt like her true calling. At the UW, she spent her few spare moments writing songs.

Her uncle Willie Wisely, a recording artist in Los Angeles, recommended her to Nashville music producer Dan Hodges, who in turn reached out to her with an opportunity to record some tunes.

"I was looking for validation that I was going to make the right decision," McCready says. "I knew that if I didn't take that opportunity when it came available to me, that I might not ever do it. So I wanted to jump in, full force ahead, and see if I could make it happen."

She decided to move to Atlanta to pursue music full time. Several years and two albums (including last year's *Ricochet Heart*) later, McCready is touring and making good on that goal.

"I've gotten messages from people [about] how the songs have impacted them," she says. "That's what we do it for." Many of these songs, such as "Enemies with Benefits," draw from her own romantic history. That's especially true for her 2015 debut album, *Love Hangover*.

"In college I had some tough relationships," she says. "So the first album really pulls from those relationships."

McCready gained something else from her college days: the self-discipline she learned from playing hockey.

"When you're an athlete, you have to be very self-motivated and very disciplined with your everyday schedule," she says. "[This] really helped in transitioning to be a musician, because being an independent musician is all self-driven. If you don't do it yourself and motivate yourself, it's not going to happen. No one's going to do it for you."

JOSHUA M. MILLER



BETHANY GOODRICH

FISH STORY

Nic Mink '02, PhD'10 is mad as halibut, and he's not going to take it any more. Mink likes fish. But he very much prefers his fish to be good fish. The world has too much bad-tasting seafood, he argues, and it doesn't have to be that way.

"Seafood is a \$20 billion industry," he says, "and yet out of every 10 pieces of fish you buy at the grocery store, how many are bad? How many are just okay? Maybe 5 out of every 10? Why do we put up with this?"

To address this deficiency, Mink founded Sitka Salmon Shares, a community-supported fishery (CSF) that delivers seafood straight from the Alaskan boats to subscribers around the country.

Though he describes himself as a fishmonger, Mink didn't study mongery at the UW, nor did he study aquaculture or economics. He earned his bachelor's and doctorate in history — in particular, environmental history — and in his academic life, he teaches part time at Knox College in Illinois. But between grad school and teaching, he moved to Sitka, Alaska, to live out the Wisconsin Idea.

"I wanted to take my intellectual endeavors out to do good," he says. "That really resonated with me. I wanted to see environmental studies in real life. The humanist in me wanted to learn about food and food systems and food justice."

One of the things he learned was that fisheries tend to commoditize their products: that fishermen usually sell to just a few large corporations that value quantity over quality. Mink wanted to bring a different model — one that valued quality, connected fishermen to consumers more directly, and ultimately gave diners a better meal. He wanted, in other words, to bring to seafood the same ethos that underlies community-supported agriculture (CSA).

In a CSA, consumers buy shares in a local farm, which then supplies food directly to them. After returning to the Midwest, Mink founded Sitka Salmon Shares, which, similarly, sells memberships to consumers around the nation. Fishers in Sitka, who have an ownership stake in the business, deliver high-quality fish — not just salmon, but also cod, crab, halibut, and more. The company flash-freezes the fish and ships it to subscribers.

"It's an artisanal product," Mink says, and, at typically \$18 or \$20 per pound, the price reflects it. "But it's worth it. We have fish that are substantially different than what you'd find even at a Whole Foods. We see this as an everyday luxury item."

JOHN ALLEN

School of Addiction Studies in Center City, Minnesota. The school specializes in addiction counseling to improve recovery from alcohol and drug abuse.

Sara Jerving '10 has joined the staff of *Investigative Post*, a nonprofit news outlet based in Buffalo, New York, where she primarily covers environmental issues. She has reported from more than a dozen countries; has been published in the *New York Times*, the *Wall Street Journal*, and the *Los Angeles Times*; and previously worked as part of a team at HBO's *Vice News Tonight* whose work was nominated for an Emmy in 2018. She also was a finalist for the Livingston Awards for Young Journalists that same year.

The Seattle Aquarium's first full-time veterinarian, **Lesanna Lahner MPH'11, DVM'11**, founded the nonprofit Sealife Response, Rehabilitation, and Research (SR3) in 2016 — with a new facility expected to open this spring. She has cared for numerous sea creatures, and she and SR3 staff have focused on the endangered orca population and sea star wasting disease. In 2017, Lahner also helped save a gray whale calf stranded on the beach. "We pulled and pulled and pulled," she told *Carleton College Voice* in 2018. "Suddenly, the whale just swam off. ... It was like magic."

A 2018 Rona Jaffe Foundation Writer's Award recipient is **Lydia Conklin MFA'12**, who also is a 2018–19 Creative and Performing Arts Fulbright Scholar in Poland. The writer's award, which includes a stipend, is given annually to six female writers who demonstrate excellence and promise in the early stages of their careers. Conklin has been working on *Rainbow Rainbow*, a collection of short stories; *Cat Monkey Horse*, a novel; and a graphic novel based on her comic series,

Lesbian Cattle Dogs.

Poet and former First Wave student **Danez Smith '12** of Saint Paul has received the Forward Prize for Best Collection for *Don't Call Us Dead*. At age 29, Smith is the youngest recipient of this prize, was listed on *Forbes's* 2019 30 Under 30 list, and was a 2017 National Book Award finalist. Smith's third collection, *Homie*, is expected to be published in 2020.

Andrew Pikturka '13 is one of three recipients of the Stanford Graduate School of Business's 2018–19 Stanford USA MBA Fellowship. The school will provide assistance with tuition and fees to each recipient over a two-year span. The fellows must then return to the Midwest within two years of graduation, obtaining a professional role that contributes to the region's economic development. Pikturka aims to return to Wisconsin to launch his own technology venture.

We give a Badger high five to **Joonsung Oh '17**, who was chosen by the Knowles Teacher Initiative as a member of its 2018 Cohort of Teaching Fellows. The five-year fellowship supports early-career high school math and science teachers by providing grants for expenses associated with classroom materials, professional development, and leadership activities, among other benefits. Oh began teaching at South San Francisco High School in 2018.

Pao Vue '03, PhD'18 is one of the first Hmong Americans to earn a doctoral degree in his field, geography. "I think it does bring a sense of pride and joy to not only my family but my lineage and my relatives," Vue told the UW–Madison Graduate School. He hopes to continue his focus on conservation within his field.

Meanwhile, Class Notes/Diversions editor Stephanie Awe '15 will make it to the gym ... tomorrow.



COURTESY OF WHEELS UP

A HIGH FIVE TO WHEELS UP

Entrepreneur **Kenny Dichter '90**, whose company, Wheels Up, is forging a growing niche in the private aviation world, has a favorite weekend destination: Dane County Regional Airport in Madison.

In fall 2018, Dichter hopped aboard one of his company's aircraft from Westchester County Airport to attend to a slew of Badger home games.

"It's less than three hours, door-to-door, from my home to State Street in Madison," he says. "I saw three wins this year."

Dichter, who met his wife, **Shoshana Kamis Dichter '92**, on campus, has maintained a close connection with the university since his graduation. In the early 2000s, he reached out to young alumni to raise \$1.5 million to renovate the university football offices. This year, he partnered with the Office of Admissions and Recruitment to fund the Fly High Fund, which will support digital outreach to students of color to encourage them to apply.

"Wheels Up believes in colleges and universities, and the alumni connection," Dichter says. "Having a more diverse student body is a good way to create new perspectives and new ideas on campus."

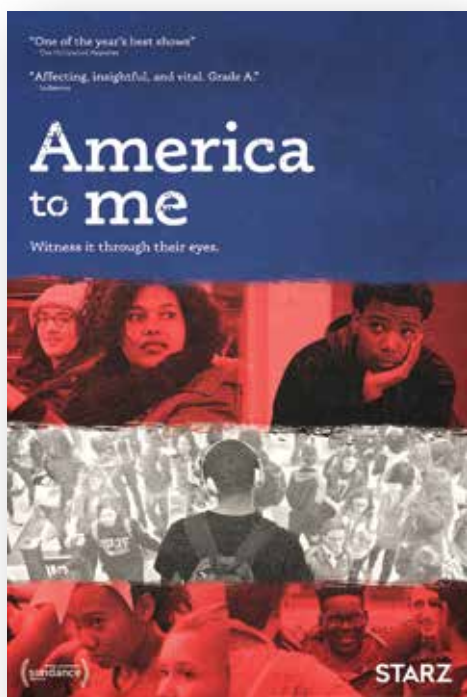
Wheels Up is Dichter's latest venture. The membership-based company has a fleet of close to 100 aircraft, and almost 5,000 members who pay \$17,500 their first year, and \$8,500 a year after that, for access to private flights. It's a business model that provides the benefits of owning a private aircraft without the capital costs. Unlike its competitors, Wheels Up requires no commitment to a minimum number of hours in the sky.

"We're more Netflix than NetJets," says Dichter, mentioning another American company. "The subscription model has resonated with the private flying set."

Wheels Up also partners with ESPN's *College GameDay*, which includes a segment featuring celebrities and cast making winner predictions: the celebs are filmed arriving on Wheels Up planes each Saturday.

Dichter has always worked for himself, dating back to his Madison days when he had a retail shop on State Street called Bucky's. Since graduating, he has created several companies, built market share, and then sold them. He founded Wheels Up in 2013, three years after he sold his first aviation company, Marquis Jet, to Berkshire Hathaway. His earlier companies included Tequila Avi6n, which was featured on the HBO show *Entourage*, and a sports marketing firm.

DAVID MCKAY WILSON



AMERICA TO ME

DONALD STOVALL



Jessica Stovall '07 (left), who started work toward her doctorate at Stanford University last fall, previously spent more than a decade teaching at Oak Park and River Forest High School in the Chicago area — the setting of the documentary series *America to Me*, which premiered on the subscription streaming service Starz this past August. **Justine Nagan '00** (see page 31) was an executive producer of the series.

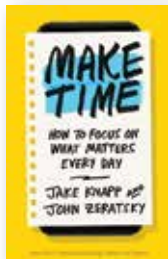
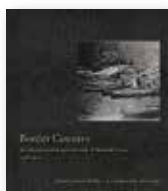
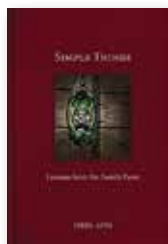
America to Me was created by Academy Award-nominated filmmaker Steve James. Filmed over the course of the 2015–16 school year, the series looks into the lives of the school's students, teachers, and administrators as they work through racial and educational inequalities.

Stovall, a UW Chancellor's Scholarship graduate and a Fulbright Distinguished Teacher Award recipient, starred as a subject in the documentary. In an interview with UW–Madison last summer, she said the series provides an example of what is going on in schools across America.

When asked what steps society can take to help close the racial achievement gap in the U.S., Stovall pointed out the importance of talking about race and how race has impacted lived experiences and outcomes. "We need to have some really honest conversations about what's going on in the classroom, which is why I wanted to be part of the documentary," she said.

Submit your book news at uwalumni.com/go/bookshelf, and read more about works by Badger alumni and faculty at goodreads.com/wisalumni.

UW professor emeritus **Jerry Apps '55, MS'57, PhD'67** reflects on growing up in rural Wisconsin in *Simple Things: Lessons from the Family Farm*. The book, which is the fourth in a Wisconsin Historical Society Press collection of memoirs by Apps, takes a close look at the author's childhood and shares life lessons that are applicable to all readers.



In *Border Country: The Northwoods Canoe Journals of Howard Greene, 1906–1916*, **Martha Greene Phillips '64, MS'72** of Portage, Wisconsin, shares the journals of her late father, **Howard Greene 1915**, on his journeys through the forests of Wisconsin, Minnesota, and Michigan. Greene Phillips spent years researching her father's adventures.

Joseph McBride x'69, a professor at San Francisco State University, appears in Orson Welles's last feature film, *The Other Side of the Wind*. The motion picture, about a director who struggles to finish a new project in his final days, was shown at the New York Film Festival and premiered on Netflix last fall. The movie was in storage for years following Welles's death in 1985, and McBride was a consultant for the film upon its revival.

KateLynn Hibbard MA'88's *Simples* is a collection based on research into the history of women's experiences on the American prairie during the 19th and 20th centuries. Using free verse and poetic form, the collection examines the lives of settlers and indigenous women in the Great Plains. Hibbard resides in Saint Paul.

Author **Andrea Bahe Debbink '05** and illustrator **Emily Kilsdonk Balsley '01**, both of Madison, have created the children's book *Spark: A Guide to Ignite the Creativity Inside You*. The guidebook, published by American Girl, provides fill-in-the-blank, do-it-yourself opportunities for readers to explore their interests, make mistakes, and have fun while learning what it means to be creative.

New York Times best-selling coauthor for *Sprint: How to Solve Big Problems and Test New Ideas in Just Five Days*, **John Zeratsky '05** of Green Cove Springs, Florida, has rejoined coauthor Jake Knapp to write *Make Time: How to Focus on What Matters Every Day*. The book strives to help readers allot time in their lives for the things they care about, offering a "customizable menu of bite-size tips" that adjusts to individual lifestyles.

Honor Roll *The Original Restoration Ecologist*

Bring up conservation in Wisconsin and you'll often hear the name **John Curtis MS1935, PhD1937** along with such innovators as **Aldo Leopold**.

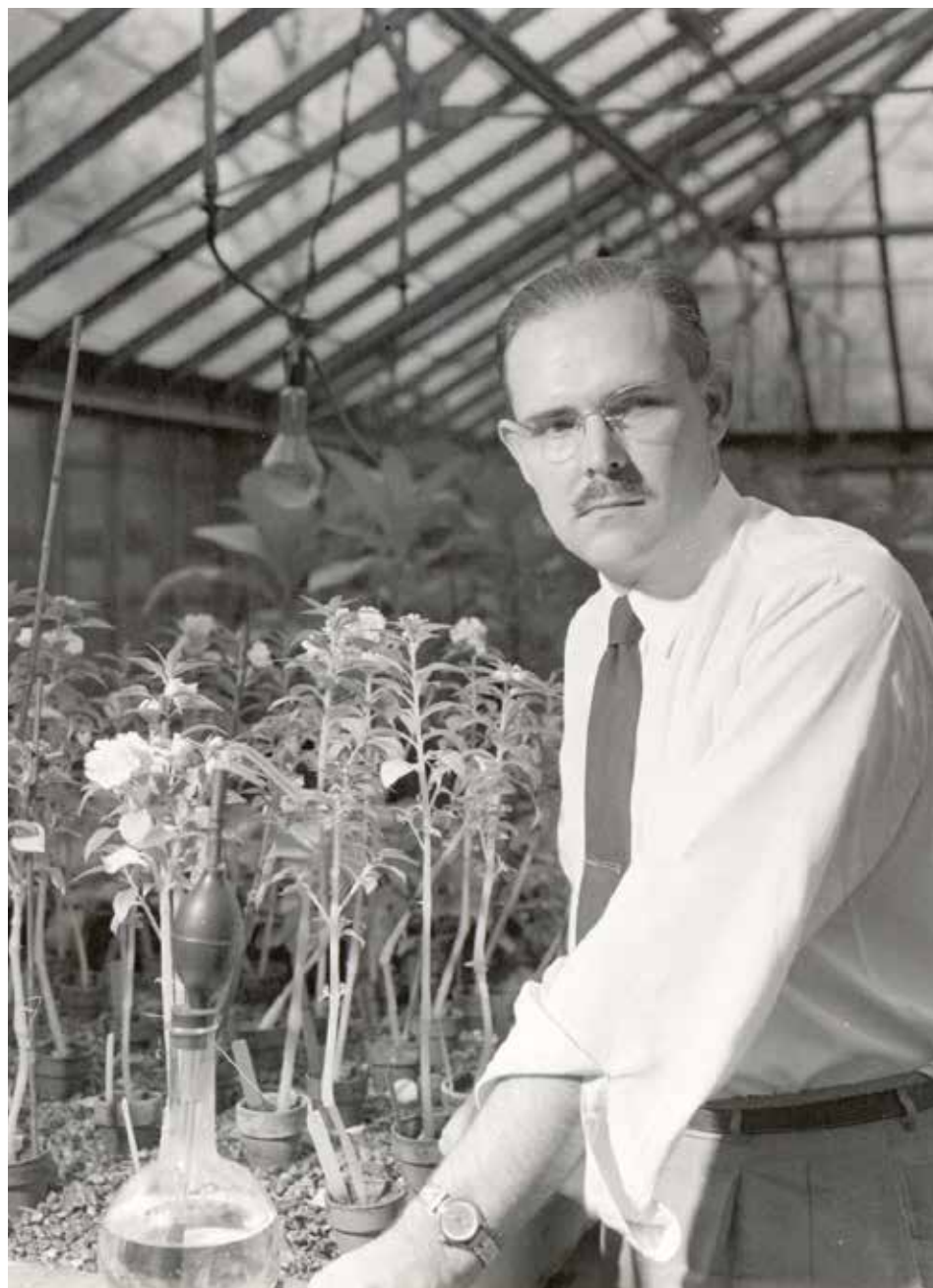
A professor of botany, Curtis was a pioneer of restoration ecology before the term existed. In his relatively short career, the namesake of Curtis Prairie at the UW Arboretum dramatically changed how we study plants respective to their surroundings, and he inspired the protection and restoration of hundreds of Wisconsin's natural areas.

While growing up in southeastern Wisconsin, Curtis was fascinated by the precise conditions orchids needed to thrive, and his doctoral work at the UW focused on the flower's physiology.

After graduating in 1937, he began working at the university and remained on the faculty throughout his career, taking leave during World War II to serve as civilian research director in Haiti, searching for alternate sources of latex when fighting in the Pacific rendered rubber plants inaccessible. While in the Caribbean, Curtis noticed that introduced species had destroyed many unique native species; once home, he was inspired to learn what's needed to protect the balance of Wisconsin's natural plant communities.

Curtis and his colleagues and graduate students spent years conducting massive field studies at sites where Wisconsin's prairies once thrived. Their findings, and the revelation that natural communities had indeed drastically changed since pioneers had settled the state, informed his 1959 book, *The Vegetation of Wisconsin: An Ordination of Plant Communities*, sometimes called the "bible of Wisconsin plant ecology." Many of those carefully curated field data are still used today by the Plant Ecology Lab and researchers worldwide to assess ecological change.

Those studies also led Curtis



John Curtis, shown here in his lab in 1951, introduced the concept of burning prairie as a means of restoration. The Arb conducted its first burn in the 1940s.

to develop theories about an innovative technique to restore prairies — prescribed fire — which is now widely used in ecological management.

Curtis was inspired by the vision that fellow conservationist Aldo Leopold had for the UW Arboretum: to reconstruct a sample of what Dane County looked like before agriculture became widespread in the 1840s. He proposed using some of that new space as an outdoor lab to

examine how communities of plants cooperate.

When Curtis died in 1961, at age 47, the Friends of the Arboretum at the group's inaugural meeting dedicated the 60-acre prairie that now bears his name. Curtis Prairie is the oldest restored prairie in the world and is home to hundreds of plant species. The site supports research on everything from climate change to pollinating insects.

WENDY HATHAWAY '04

UW ARCHIVES S04992



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DESTINATION: ALUMNI PARK

Photo: Joe Leute

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CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: JEFF MILLER (3); BRYCE RICHTER



Summer at the UW Arboretum attracts traffic of many kinds: bicyclists, runners, and learners. Participants in a 2017 bumblebee monitoring workshop (above) photograph the buzzing bees for surveying.

An outdoor marvel, the UW Arboretum, located about four miles south of the main campus, hosts hundreds of thousands of visitors per year. Springtime blooms provide the perfect photo op: Arb staff members issue photo permits, and 51 were used for one-time sessions in May 2018 alone.



Fall colors make autumn a popular time at the Arboretum. Plus, the nature facility's tour of Madison's Lost City, held each year in late October or early November, typically draws about 100 attendees.



Winter's frosty weather may deter some visitors, but the season attracts cross-country skiers and snowshoers. The Arboretum also hosts a New Year's Eve night walk — one of its highest-attended events each year.

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