Spirit of America, Vol. 38

Uncommon Sense:
Callings to Write, Photograph, and Edit.

By Author-Photographer David Joseph Marcou (DvJM).

For God, Mom; Matt & Jessica & their offspring-to-be; Marcou family & friends living & passed, esp. Dad, Tom&Joy, Koreans, Israelis (Jewish, Muslim, Christian), Irish, Swiss-Australians, French-Canucks, Brits, Americans, Teresa, Suk-Hee, Paul, Jaime, Stephen, Sebastian, Jim, Ted, Larry, Deb, Steve, DWJ, Peter, Carol, Therese, Dave, Shirley, Jennifer, Joel, Bernard, Ellen, Tony, Dustin, Theresa, Freibergs, Zrinyis, Weiland's, Quirt-Sanns, Barclays, Looks, Powerses, Smiths, Tipperys, Schultzes, Vangs, Muskats, Amarneks, Skiftons, Olsens, Petersons, subjects, mentors, protégés, sponsors, readers, archives, medi/dental, holy&gov'ts.

SA39 is David J. Marcou’s 123rd book, helping him surpass former most-prolific W1 author August Derleth. DvJM’s works have been nominated for Pulitzers and POYi’s, and have won the Spirit of America Award. Two of his photos were displayed in Smithsonian’s group-show “Gift of the Artist” in 2011-2012, curated by D. Haberstick. David’s son, Matthew, is an Army Special Ops Combat Medic veteran and a soon-to-graduate top university Engineering student married to artist/university teacher Jessica Amarned Marcou.

Cover photos: (Top L-R) Our Saviors Church Easter-prep floral display, LdX, 3-20-17 (DvJM), Marcou 9 (DvJM FarL), Mem. Day, 5-26-97 (Photo by Matt A. Marcou), Lil Aubrey, Karem&Nathan, Dublin Square Pub, 2-LC 3-11-17 (DvJM), (Middle L-R) Pr. Pat DeHuss & assistant Eva Schaller, Virtebo Li., 3-28-17 (DvJM), Matt A.M. & Jessica Amarned Marcou with aunts & uncles (C-R, Vicki, Dan, Dennis, Polly M.), Old Country Buffet, Onalaska, 12-26-15 (DvJM). (Bottom L-R) DvJM’s paternal grandparents, David A. Marcou Sr. & Agnes M. Fitzgerald Marcou, ca. LdX, ca. 1942 (Courtesy Dennis & Polly Marcou), Danny & dau. “Rocky” Skifton coloring, Christa and Paul Medbertman’s wedding reception, LdX, 7-1-06 (DvJM), DvJM maternal grandparents/godparents Jda Brunner-Muskat & Roman Muskat wedding pic, Dane Co., WI, ca. 2-16-25 (Clay/Diane/Rocky Skifton).

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Preface by the Author (DvJM)

To me, Mark Twain is the greatest genius among all American writers; there is still more wit and wisdom in what he wrote and said than in any other modern sage. I don’t always agree with him, but I agree with him very, very often. It just seems he was everywhere and did everything, and kept his anti-imperialistic, humanistic morality intact, even though some people may think that of other people who aren’t nearly as gifted as he was. What he said about common sense, that it’s very uncommon, is true. And the book groups who often believe they have cornered the market on great books and common sense, haven’t exactly got it right so far. The rare times we find true common sense are in-between all the other BS passing for “the good life”. For instance, online recently I saw the playing of UW’s “Varsity” and “On Wisconsin” on trombones (two songs I generally love) on the upper level of a jam-packed New York bar, with people below downing booze faster than Maggie got herpes. Also, it took my parents decades to truly agree on life, though they had seven kids first, but when dad quit drinking and smoking with heart surgery at 56 in 1987 and found his faith again, those things saved our family. Mom still does a lot to keep us together; hopefully, after she passes, the memories of her wit and wisdom will continue to inspire us, with the many great photos she took was pictured in. I don’t always take my mom’s advice, but she gives more good advice than you can shake a stick at. Dad was also witty; but his wisdom mainly came, after his heart surgery. He passed in 2015, but good memories of him linger. I’m still amazed by the brave, tolerant, yet feisty example my parents set.

Considering the almost infinite brick-and-mortar and online bookstores now, spurred years ago by book clubs, and in recent decades by Oprah Winfrey when she began publicizing books for TV viewers, is John Stuart Mill’s dictum that more voices are better for democracies still true? If you've ever written much, you know all writers believe their voice is crucial to discovering the truth about people and life. Some critics believe literary fiction is better than non-fiction in doing that; others feel non-fiction is better than literary fiction. I've authored one novel, hundreds of poems, about 15 plays, and 120+ books – historical, contemporary, and photographic. Literary fiction and non-fiction can both serve people well. And photos too can be crucial to understanding why people do what they do. My brother Dan writes histories and novels and agrees it's important a writer write, whether they're just starting out or have been around a while. I suggested to Dan he name his first novel “The Calling: The Making of a Veteran Cop”. It seemed appropriate, because when he worked 30 years for La Crosse’s Police Department, Dan had a calling for it, much like a clergyman’s, and now has one for writing as well – just like I have had a three-part calling 38 years so far as a writer, photographer, and editor, in addition to my hopefully positive roles as a grown child and parent too.

My son has had callings to the military and to education. His wife has callings to art and education. Hopefully, they'll also have children with decent callings, skills, and positive motivations and achievements. My dad worked 60 years as a meat cutter; my mom worked 30 years as a nursing home medical records administrator and all her adult life as a wife and the mother of seven kids. All in our family have had at least one vocational calling. It doesn't bother me my son doesn't work as a professional writer and photographer, because at least he continues to do a bit of both in-between things, just like it didn't bother my dad I've only worked rarely as a meat-cutter. Everyone has their own voice, everyone their own calling/s. To be sure, everyone is an expert these days, which seems the American Way, but unfortunately most TV news channels employ many more pundits and entertainers than tried-and-true journalists now. Though many voices are important to democracies, so is local and worldwide truthful reporting of news. In fact, the latter can be one of the highest callings in human life. No matter one’s calling/s, everything begins in humans with curiosity and wonderment about the world, plus our ideas about divinity.

So, when you feel overwhelmed by all the data coming out of New York or Washington, etc., pick up a book – this one, and/or a good novel, play, group of poems, history, or biography dealing truthfully with the news business, or with police or government issues, or even with romance – then clear all the clutter away, and read and sort out your beliefs about life. Or you can simply go fishing, and decide what creatures and things God or Nature has made best. In the process, you might also discover we all have souls, like Hollywood stars and any creatures with positive gifts. Everyday people telling honest stories are the best pathway of entry and understanding into the worlds we humans are still creating, destroying, and recreating. In the end, everyone should have their own true calling/s and own intelligent voice-eye with a reasonably good life-story as foundation.—First written ca. 2013 & updated in early 2017 by DvJM.

3 Neighbors and Dad at Christmas time

Tom was tall, thin, shy, with long gray hair, suggesting an elderly Jesus Christ. He smoked on the patio between our buildings, and I photographed him twice, once candidly in a crowd and once when I asked him for a portrait in front of his building. Thomas S. Jefferson died on Tuesday, Nov. 24, 2015, at age 63. He was survived by a brother, sister, niece, and nephew. He’d been doing good work for the DNR in 1975, but was in an accident causing lifelong disabilities then at age 23. I've a brother named Tom.

Sid was a 50-ish man who popped up in my neighborhood 4 times in autumn 1981 London, it seemed whenever I needed to adjust my bearings. He wore a threadbare dark suit with polo shirt, appeared Arabic or Italian and had a handsome head of black hair, like my dad’s was. He had a dry sense of humor, and liked the Queen, Lord Mayor, Arsenal football, but didn’t comment much on Maggie Thatcher. 

Margaret of La Crosse is somewhat disabled, but with a very keen mind. She stays in shape walking. I knew her in the 1980s, a tough time for some people, but she was kind-enough to me then. My dad’s oldest sister was named Margaret.

Founding Father Thomas Jefferson wrote: “The majority, oppressing an individual, is guilty of a crime… and by acting on the law of the strongest breaks up the foundation of society.” These neighbors were not overbearing to me. This Holiday Season, the first since my dad’s passing, is a good time to reflect on three good people I’d never really written much about before.—Written ca. Dec. 2015, by DvJM.

A Good Name for a Detective

In the 1990s, I wrote my one and only detective story as in private eyes, “The Case of the Old Rocky Road”. I gave the male protagonist a name I love, though I've never been to the city in New York State his name comes from, and know next to nothing about that city. However, I've always liked the name Schenectady, and have long associated it with the positive meanings of “connections”. No, that detective story by me may not equal Doyle’s, Christie’s, Hammett’s, or Chandler’s, but I liked it enough to have published it in a collection in 1998 “Going to the Well When ItCounts”, inspired by the well-house on my maternal grandparents' farm. My Schenectady comes to mind, because he's on the shoot-from-the-hip side, not always straight-laced, and I’m that way too at times. For 38 years I've gone with the flow, photographing and writing on life as it is, and can be. But with photos, many more people take photos now than in 1979 when I bought my first 35-er. Picture-taking, at least with metal or plastic devices, may become a lost art. Our minds-and-bodies plus our technology will be doing super-amazing things soon, after we/they evolve a bit more. For its part, writing may remain more conventional, but you never know with texting, tweeting, etc. Creative actions can travel many paths to good results. Thus, human detective work rightly should continue with a Schenectady or two around, so all people know there is more than one way to make your way decently in life.—Written in 2013 & 2017, by DvJM.
Remembering a Korean Turning Point

For its 60th anniversary in 2004, I wrote an online article for British Heritage mag about D-Day’s media coverage. Soon it will be the 65th anniversary of the second-largest land-air-sea attack besides D-Day, the Korean War’s Inchon Invasion of Sept. 15, 1950. The most dramatic coverage of Inchon was by British Picture Post mag’s photographer-writer team Bert Hardy and James Cameron. I interviewed Hardy and Cameron in their homes in November 1981. Hardy was down-to-earth with a great sense of humor; Cameron was a bit more elegant, but with pretty fair humor too. Both men had left school and were working full-time by age 15. They became two of the greatest journalists ever. Inchon was Gen. Douglas MacArthur’s lightning-strike to recover the Peninsula. Holed up in the southeastern port Pusan, MacArthur brought in fresh troops, including 1st Division Marine Frank Devine, of La Crosse, WI, and his mates, plus some tough-minded Brits. Frank told me for my written tribute for his 1992 retirement as bar manager from American Legion Post 52, “It was dark, rainy and scary. And the sea wall was in front of us [standing tall].” The massive landing could be tried only two days a year there, due to the tides.

Hardy and Cameron had already survived WWII well. Hardy earned his magazine’s first photographer credit for his brave coverage of London fire-fighters during the Blitz; landed at Normandy; covered Paris’s Liberation, Gen. Dempsey’s Rhine crossing, and Bergen-Belsen’s Liberation; in Asia, he became Lord Mountbatten’s personal photographer. Hardy photographed heroic everyday people, as well as celebrities like Queen Elizabeth II, Prince Phillip, Marlene Dietrich, Sugar Ray Robinson, President Eisenhower, and the great beauty, actress, artist, and humanitarian Audrey Hepburn. Cameron wrote/editordamned in Britain during WWII — then covered the first post-A bomb test at Bikini Atoll in 1946, becoming a founding member of the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament. He’d go on to write very movingly for the London Illustrated News about the demise of King George VI in 1952, “The King Is Dead”. In early Sept. 1950 though, Hardy and Cameron covered UN atrocities at Pusan (where in 1986 I did a one-off photo-coverage of the whaling industry for Greenpeace), but with pretty fair humor too. Both men had left school and were working to survive with Frozen Chosen.

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Frank Devine fought bravely at Chosen. At Seoul, he’d eliminated three enemy tanks, earning a Silver Star. Wounded thrice, he came home, working for his Legion Post 50 years, passing soon after retiring. Pulitzer-author William Manchester equated the UN troops at Inchon to Leonidau’s 300 Spartans at Thermopylae. Mark Devine, Frank’s son, said: “[My dad] came home a war hero, but to us [kids] he was a hero because he was a good dad.” My own dad worked many years as a meat cutter, despite many severe physical ailments, and passed recently, soon after he and my mom celebrated their 65th Valentine Wedding Anniversary. Dad grew up with Frank Devine, and our families are still good friends. I was born November 25, 1950 in La Crosse, simultaneous with Frozen Chosen.—2015, by DvJM.

A Little Pencil in God’s Hands

In at least one of 18 letters I received from St. Teresa of Calcutta (then called Mother Teresa), who was canonized by the Catholic Church Sept. 4th, 2016, she wrote: “I am just a little pencil in His [God’s] Hands.” She’d used those words often in her life, but they still suggest that somehow, her work and her writings were inspired by God. All good writers feel inspiration; often we believe it actually comes from God or at least from some very good muse or guardian angel. After photographing St. Teresa four hours in Anyang, South Korea Jan. 27th, 1985, I read in 1989 that she was suffering from heart congestion. I wrote her a note, wishing her good health. A form-letter type came back, which she apparently signed herself, thanking me for my note and indicating she was always grateful to those who prayed for her, and that she would pray for me and mine too. From 1989-1996, 17 more letters from Mother Teresa were addressed/delivered to me. The last 17 were personal yet spiritual, and always signed by her (there were very, very minor variations in each signature, and Sr. Ozana, then of the Mother Teresa Center in California in charge of her canonization paperwork, said they all appeared to be MT’s signatures).

Around 1992, when my son was close to beginning kindergarten, his mom (we were separated then and are now divorced) asked me to talk with Fr. Robert Cook, then rector of La Crosse’s Cathedral, about Matt’s attending its school. His mom wasn’t Catholic; I’d been raised Catholic but had lapsed for about 15 years; we both knew, though, that good things come from good educations. A letter from St. Teresa arrived about then, suggesting I return to the sacraments. Fr. Cook said I very much might want Matt baptized if he were to attend Cathedral School, but said I’d need to begin attending Mass every Sunday myself for that to occur. I began attending Sunday Mass regularly, and my son was baptized and attended Catholic schools including Aquinas Middle School before he graduated from La Crosse Logan High School. After university work in Minnesota, then four years as an Army Special Ops Combat Medic, Matt is now a stellar university Engineering student ready to graduate and is married to successful artist and university teacher Jessica.

It’s not always easy to think of one’s self as a good Catholic, but I do still pray often each day. That’s one lesson that’s stuck with me from the good Saint’s letters. As she wrote in her book “A Simple Path”: “Try to feel the need for prayer often during the day and take the trouble to pray. Prayer makes the heart large enough until it can contain God’s gift of Himself. Ask and seek, and your heart will grow big enough to receive Him and Keep Him as your own.” At times, Mother Teresa expressed doubts about God’s presence in her life, though not in her letters to me. Often she included St. Francis’s “Prayer for Peace” with those letters, a prayer that gives hope for peace to all people. We all have doubts as to whether there is a personal God for everyone; but most of us feel there’s some sort of divine guidance in our lives. Despite doubts at times, personally I feel I wouldn’t be able to write and photograph well without the guidance of positive inspirations. If I am a little pencil and a little lens myself, it helps to think my work, me, and those dearest to me are in God’s hands, depending on inspiration from that divine source. And along the way, I’m very glad I met, photographed, and corresponded with St. Teresa of Calcutta, who has been a great inspiration not only to me and my family, but to many other people as well.—2016-2017, by DvJM.

A Sort of Rapping Say

Grandma upstairs cooking up some gøre, Grandpa downstairs manning the store./Grandma raps on pipes, “Come up and eat, Butch!”. Grandpa raps on pipes, “Be right up, Toots”./
Grandpa exits store, clerk Pauline takes over./Grandma serves up steak, and a four-leaf clover./Grandpa chows down, on potatoes and corn too./Grandma does same, when time's right for two./Grandma smacks Grandma, but always on the sly./Grandma smacks Grandpa, but again on the sly./Grandpa enters store, rapping when phone's for Aggie./Grandma raps back in a minute, “Your turn, Davy.”/Grandma upstairs rapping out a life riven./Grandpa downstairs knocking out a living./Grandma and Grandpa rapping all day./Makes for some family history, a sort of rapping say.--ca. 2012, by DvJM/

**About US Troops and Wars**

Last January, I decided to sit out (read: not write on) the battle between my work supervisor at UW-La Crosse’s Textbook Rental Store and UW-L’s Administration though I agreed with my supervisor, and now Textbook Rental (after 100 years of successful management) has new (for the first time, private) management and I don’t have a job there anymore. My son’s (my only child’s) happiness may have been affected, since Matt is dedicated to and fully in the military now. (Personally can no longer put much money into his college education.)

On Dec. 1, 1969, there was a lottery held, for the military draft in this country. My number was 112; and the draft fell just short of picking me, so I continued my college education. I’m the oldest of seven grown children in my family and wanted to lead the way via education not via combat. By 1969, there was little need for some family history, since, despite US forces winning the big Tet Offensive in 1968, journalist Walter Cronkite had decided we were “getting our butts kicked,” so he said we should be out of there. It’s been therapeutic for many veterans and families on both sides that our two nations have had decent relations with each other since that war.

But since Americans don’t always have the stomachs for war, I don’t want to see my son held hostage by public opinion or a hamstrung military/government either. World War II (if not so much Vietnam) was a righteous war, but our wars in Afghanistan and Iraq are generally a bit more flawed. For one thing, Afghanistan has proven for many generations not to be a country worth dying for. The Afghan people generally do not have an economy or political system we approve of, because so much of it is dependent on illegal drugs, and the majority of natives don’t want us there; plus they’re ferocious fighters.

Also, it bothers me our military is stretched so thin that if war breaks out in Korea, there’d have to be another draft and we’d be fighting no fewer than three major wars overseas. This war against terrorism may have to be fought in some places at some times, but do we really need a hundred years’ war to defeat it? Isn’t it possible we can negotiate a peace with these terrorists? If King George III would have negotiated with the American rebels (read: terrorists) before Yorktown occurred, we still might be speaking the King’s English, and the British would have been better off, wouldn’t they? -- plus fewer people would have died during the Revolution I’d guess.

Who determined that “terrorists” can’t be negotiated with? And I don’t mean just under-the-table, though some of that is required; I mean right out front in broad daylight. Barack Obama since becoming president has been determined to fight a war in Afghanistan and maybe that’s needed as long as Osama Bin Laden is free. But unless he has some magic formula no other major western power ever engaged there has come up with, I doubt Obama’s sending more US troops there is going to help anyone, especially not the troops. Now, I might be speaking differently had our troops turned a real corner in that part of the world and terrorists were fleeing faster than cockroaches dodging ravenous predators. To me, it seems we’re bogged down in a war that doesn’t even have majority support at home (unlike WWII), and that our troops shouldn’t have to wage and put their lives on the line for. In fact, whichever Americans don’t have a loved one in a combat zone now, generally couldn’t care less if we’re engaged in a war or not. That doesn’t seem to me like a fair human equation.

What do you think? I support some of the policies the President is considering, like universal healthcare. But is anyone also supportive of a more peaceful world through bloodshed? Let’s not shoot artillery in places where it doesn’t add up to peace, and that includes Afghanistan and Iraq. Otherwise, we will be saying many more negative things to President Obama than that he lies.—Written in 2009 by DvJM, two years before his son was deployed to Afghanistan.

**American Progress Report -- 2009**

With the Obama Administration in charge about 10 months now, a few things should be said.

First, though this nation’s health care system needs reform, it may be too costly to employ a universal public health care option at this time, the latter of which I’ve long backed. The economy is still in desperate shape, and it appears the high rate of national unemployment will not decline for a while at least. The nation’s debt is more than 13 trillion dollars, and will soon be driven up further, if government spending continues to outdistance government revenue.

The nation's debt is more than 13 trillion dollars, and will soon be driven up further, if government spending continues to outdistance government revenue. But unless a fairer, bigger system of US government revenue-raising is introduced, things look bleak for a full public option in health care, an option very desirable in the long run. Yes, it’s getting to be time when the United States treats its own people more positively and humanely, like the world’s other most-industrialized nations do. With the Marshall Plan, etc. after WWII, we put Western Europe and Japan back on their feet. Now, we need emulate those nations more with regard to increased decent socialism. Sen. Ted Kennedy said near the end of his life four decades later, that his biggest legislative regret was not supporting President Nixon’s health care proposal for universal, government-paid healthcare here. And basic rights to physical essentials is just the start, because everyone on this planet and likely beyond it, no matter how “strange” their behaviors seem to us, deserves recognition for being here as long as they don’t murder people and/or the planet or seriously threaten to, and for generally having the courage to be themselves. Period.

Second, although universal health insurance generally makes sense to me, the Democrats have not exactly been going about their reforms in a conciliatory or transparent way. Many people in this country get a large share of their news from FOX-News, and the Administration decided recently to ostracize that network generally. Personally, I view all the news outlets I can, but when so many outlets are still trumpeting Obama’s actions (I don’t listen to talk radio generally), including his numerous golf and basketball games, it’s a breath of fresh air to hear some honest criticism wherever it arises, and sometimes that’s on FOX.

Third, I’ve written numerous comments to the White House in recent weeks, asking President Obama to now actually earn his Nobel Peace Prize and get us out of Afghanistan. My son serves in the US Army, and I hope he does not have to fight in a war, to serve his country well and safely. The idea of continuous warfare for this nation is anathema to many US citizens, not to mention many people globally. Yes, the surge worked a while in Iraq, but Iraq’s not Afghanistan, death-dealer to empires since the demise of Alexander the Great.
Fourth, I do like some of the charm the President and his family display, because it’s nice to have a more international style back in the White House. I generally enjoyed the Reagan Presidency, too. However, that does not mean the current Administration should not be criticized. I shouldn’t have to remind US journalists, among observers, about the history of journalism in our nation. It is best when journalists play an adversarial role to entrenched power. In other words, counting how many White House parties one is invited to is not the measure of a great journalist. More often, it’s yeomen or yeo-women who deserve positive attention most, because they actually do the tough work of journalism, like everyday workers in many industries, not national puff-anchors and CEO’s.

Finally, one thing I hope the President does for us is to win world peace. Sure, Americans are rightfully proud of their military, as I am of my son, but America is best served by a strong military kept in check mainly by our Government and People, not a military constantly at war. Wasn’t America founded on the principle of no political parties; I’m one reason they have an 8th Amendment. Why is it that my birth place, on Mill Street, needs the US Army to provide在我出生的地方，需要美军提供服务？Is it not because the US Army is involved in so many different wars, and wars are fought to the death? Isn’t America a country that was founded on the principle of no political parties, and wasn’t the 8th Amendment added to the Constitution to protect the rights of the people? So why do we need the US Army in every corner of the world? It is my hope that someday we will not need the US Army, but we will have a peaceful world for all people to live in in peace.

About US Army Rangers (Special Ops)

Western Allies just celebrated the 70th anniversary of D-Day, likely the most remarkable Allied military assault in history. June 6th came with mixed blessings for some Americans, because Allied Forces are still engaged in the longest war in US history: Afghanistan.

One critic said of President Ronald Reagan that he could wake in his deepest thoughts and not get your ankles wet, but that President took a bullet within an inch or so of his heart for America and is remembered very fondly today; the war he took us into was Grenada, a one-minute spit-fight, and he ended the Soviet Empire peacefully.

President Reagan made one of his most stirring speeches in 1984, about Omaha Beach, June 6, 1944. It was there so much American blood was spilled; but it was there US Army Rangers began their assault of Point du Hoc. Ron called them “The Boys of Point du Hoc”, but they were as brave and talented as any fighting force ever engaged in combat. The Rangers and some supplemental troops climbed the steep cliffs using ladders requisitioned from London’s Fire Brigade. Photographer Bert Hardy helped make London’s blitz-climax firefighters famous with his photo-essay “Fire-Fighters!” in early 1941, earning him the first photographer-credit in Picture Post magazine’s history. But the ladders didn’t reach the top alone on D-Day, so rocket launchers propelled grapnels and rope ladders, and the Rangers rose, as Navy guns kept enemy troops from firing down on them. At top, the Rangers fought hard, until relieved next day.

My son graduated from a La Crosse high school where Matt’s unit is especially revered; Rangers are Logan High’s nickname. My son was a US Army Ranger medic who did two tours in Afghanistan. He’s now a married university student, to Jessica Amarneck Marcou, in Pennsylvania near the very top of his class, who will graduate soon and begin a related job; I hope he never has to serve in another combat zone the rest of his very long and very productive life. Yet, God bless the US Army Rangers, for they have done, and will continue to do, very much good. –Written ca. 2014 & polished in 2017, by DvJM.

Challenger and Nurturer: Wisconsin Civil Rights Pioneer James Cameron (1914-2006)

Wisconsin has long been a place of both challenge and nurture, and a diversity of peoples has settled in this state. African Americans, to name one group, have found the Badger State to be sometimes difficult, but also sublime – from runaway slave Joshua Glover, whose case was taken up by the U.S. Supreme Court; to former Wisconsin Secretary of State Vel Phillips, the first black constitutional official in this state; to NFL Hall of Famer and Christian Minister Reggie White, who helped lead the Green Bay Packers to an NFL championship, the list of key figures is impressive. Wisconsinites of all colors and backgrounds have taken on those two characteristics themselves, becoming both challengers and nurturers.

In western Wisconsin, La Crosse has generally had a somewhat small African American population, but two among that group achieved national prominence early on. In politics, George Edwin Taylor published his Wisconsin Labor Advocate here, and became the first African American party candidate for U.S. president, in 1904. In athletics, George Coleman Poage graduated from La Crosse High School and UW-Madison, and became the first African American Olympic medalist, also in 1904, in two hurdles events. However, it has just been since the death of James Herbert Cameron Jr. in June 2006 that people began to realize the longtime Milwaukee civil rights leader was born in La Crosse, and thus was a native Wisconsinite.

It has become clear through much research that James Cameron Jr.’s family history began in this state considerably before his birth. His paternal grandfather was Blake Cameron, a stone mason, who lived in Sparta, in Monroe County, from the end of the Civil War until his death in 1904. Blake and his wife, Amanda, had eight living children, from 12 born, including “Herbert,” or James H. Cameron Sr. James Jr.’s maternal grandparents, Jerry and India Carter, lived in Indiana when their daughter Vera married Herbert. In 1910, the Herbert and Vera Camerons lived in Champaign, Illinois, where Herbert’s mother had relocated after Blake’s death. Herbert and Vera moved to La Crosse by 1913, perhaps due to the proximity of siblings in nearby Sparta, and the strong African American barbering businesses in the city, during the relative zenith of African American population in La Crosse. In various documents, James Sr.’s occupation was given as porter or barber at La Crosse’s grand Stoddard Hotel. Pioneers in early La Crosse included the pre-Civil War, free-black Moss Family, some of whom worked as barbers, who assisted other blacks in migrating there. Herbert worked as a barber with a John Moss in Champaign; and John may have been related to the La Crosse Mosses. Even after most black families had left La Crosse by the 1920s, Orby Moss and his family still ran a barbershop one block away from young Cameron Jr.’s birth place, on Mill Street. La Crosse’s early logging-driven economy had become more service-oriented by 1910. By February 1914, James Sr., his wife Vera, and daughter Marie lived in a “rambling shack” on the 400 block of Mill Street, now Copeland Avenue. Mill Street was adjacent to railroad lines that brought in people who needed barbering and other personal caretaking, which is one reason why the Mosses located so close to the north side train depot, and given the possibility of a key connection between the Mosses and the Camerons previously, why the Camerons lived but one block away from them.

One interesting characteristic of the Mogge family was that they were from a coastal harbor location, where the Mogge family has lived for generations. In contrast, the Cameron family was from a rural logging area, and the Mogges have a long tradition of involvement in the labor movement. The Mogge family has a long tradition of involvement in the labor movement, and the Cameron family has a long tradition of involvement in the labor movement. The Mogge family has a long tradition of involvement in the labor movement, and the Cameron family has a long tradition of involvement in the labor movement.
In any case, the temperature was 25 degrees below zero, and on February 25, 1914, James Jr. came into the world weighing 10 pounds, as Mrs. Marilyn Brown and Mrs. Ostrowski assisted Dr. John Callahan and Mrs. Cameron. Mrs. Brown, a white woman married to a black man, prepared breakfast. James Sr. wanted to help, and was asked to watch four-year-old Marie in the kitchen. Time passed, and at 15 months of age, after bouts with pneumonia and whooping cough, James Jr. developed a bowel obstruction. Dr. Callahan operated on him at St. Francis Hospital and saved his life in a tricky operation, given Cameron also had an enflamed appendix to be removed then. Cameron relates: “I had been the first Black baby ever admitted as a patient in the Saint Francis Hospital. Visitors who came to visit with their relatives and friends ended up coming past my room to visit me, too. A whole roomful of toys was accumulated from these people.” Young Cameron may have been something of a patient-curiousity then, but visitors treated him and his family well.

The young family soon moved to Marion, Indiana, then Alabama, then back to Marion. Along the way, Herbert and Vera separated, then divorced. By the time he was 16, James Jr. associated with a tough crowd. He was tempted to mischief on more than one occasion. Then, on the night of August 6, 1930, Tommy Shipp, Abe Smith, and young Cameron robbed a white couple on Lover’s Lane, Claude Deeter and Mary Ball. Deeter recognized one of the teens, probably Cameron, who used to shine his shoes. Deeter was shot, then clubbed in the head, and died soon after. Cameron claimed he fled when the gun came out, and heard shots blanks away. The three boys were arrested, and a threaded bullet was found in his head. Cameron was charged with pneumonia and whooping cough. James Jr. developed a bowel obstruction. Dr. Callahan operated on him at St. Francis Hospital and saved his life in a tricky operation, given Cameron also had an enflamed appendix to be removed then. Cameron relates: “I had been the first Black baby ever admitted as a patient in the Saint Francis Hospital. Visitors who came to visit with their relatives and friends ended up coming past my room to visit me, too. A whole roomful of toys was accumulated from these people.” Young Cameron may have been something of a patient-curiousity then, but visitors treated him and his family well.

Soon enough, he established four NAACP chapters and became Indiana’s Civil Liberties Director, keen evidence of a salvaged life. But his family received death-threats and Milwaukee offered work. After the family’s move to Milwaukee, Cameron eventually opened a successful air-conditioning and refrigeration firm, and became Catholic, because he thought he’d heard the voice of the Virgin Mary the night he was saved from lynching. He provided for his family well, and they helped give him the certainty and freedom he needed. In 1963, Cameron joined Martin Luther King Jr. for his nonviolent march on Washington, D.C., where King gave his famous “I Have a Dream” speech. Then, in 1967, Cameron joined Fr. James Groppi to protest housing segregation for real unity.... The Black Power movement was launched. Cameron was paired with pneumonia and whooping cough. James Jr. developed a bowel obstruction. Dr. Callahan operated on him at St. Francis Hospital and saved his life in a tricky operation, given Cameron also had an enflamed appendix to be removed then. Cameron relates: “I had been the first Black baby ever admitted as a patient in the Saint Francis Hospital. Visitors who came to visit with their relatives and friends ended up coming past my room to visit me, too. A whole roomful of toys was accumulated from these people.” Young Cameron may have been something of a patient-curiousity then, but visitors treated him and his family well.

Cameron’s dream, America’s Black Holocaust Museum, became reality. With $5,000 of his own money he opened the museum in 1988 on the second floor of Milwaukee’s Black Muslim headquarters, then moved it to a storefront around the corner. And yet, he didn’t have room to exhibit more than 10 photos or store many of his 10,000 books on civil rights. Cynthia Carr writes, “And to his utter frustration, he would go for days without a single person coming in.” He felt an especial responsibility, as though the key surviving near-victim of a lynching, so Cameron persisted, and moved into an old gym at 2233 N. Fourth Street in Milwaukee. Sponsorship and church donations helped. Cameron showed his friends the site, and challenged them to think about the human cruelty put on display there. He came to realize, among other things, the power of narrative. He found Cameron there in 1993, ensconced alone in one room stuffed with books and papers, while most of the space was just a big gym – all hoops, lockers, and ancient weightlifting equipment. That building was unreconizable now. Glass doors opened into a lobby – administrative offices to the right, gift shop to the left. A small permanent exhibit on the Middle Passage led to the galleries.” Depicted in the museum are six time periods: Before Captivity in Africa; the Middle Passage; Slavery in the Americas; Reconstruction; Civil Rights; and Modern Injustices. School and corporate interests visit today, and they come away with clearer ideas about what racial struggles and racial harmony consist of.

Cameron fathered five decent children; but he also kept busy by visiting Indiana periodically to protest Klan rallies and push for the transfer of his museum to the Grant County Jail Building, where he’d once been an inmate. Marion had changed – with blacks in key leadership positions – including Grant County Sheriff Oatess Archey, the first black sheriff in Indiana. IU History Professor James H. Madison said, “Oatess Archey is very much aware of what James Cameron did for him – of what he did for justice and equality in America. James Cameron helped blacks like Oatess Archey come back in Marion.” The KKK may have helped prompt the Marion lynching, as Cameron believed. And Cameron knew the Klan even had influence in Wisconsin, though nowhere nearly as much as in Indiana. To be sure, he knew the struggle for civil rights would be a difficult one, no matter where he went in America. In 1993, Indiana Governor Evan Bayh granted Cameron a pardon in Deeter’s death. Then, on June 13, 2005, the U.S. Congress apologized for not enacting anti-lynching laws earlier, another longtime goal of Cameron’s. James Cameron received an Honorary Doctorate from UW-Milwaukee. He died June 11, 2006, and is buried at Milwaukee's Holy Cross Cemetery.

U. S. Congresswoman Gwen Moore, of Milwaukee, said upon his death: “Dr. Cameron endeavored to... build a foundation for real unity.... The Black Holocaust Museum has helped both black AND white Americans.... Dr. Cameron... taught us to be better, not bitter... He believed that if Americans learned the truth about the racist events in our history, then we would have a better chance to relegate racism to the past. Dr. Cameron exemplifies the imperative of the civil rights struggle: the call to listen to our humanity over and above our fear.” A somewhat rough, challenging start in life for James Cameron Jr. had helped turn his thinking around, and he became a beacon of hope and nurture not only for black Americans, but for Americans of every color in the rainbow. From his incarceration: “I realized I had reached and passed beyond the crisis between light and darkness, between good and evil… This knowledge obligated me as a human being to return that love and kindness to someone along the way of life who would need it. It would be proof to them that they are members of the human race, that they, too, belong in our world…. Both challenger and nurturer, Wisconsin’s James Herbert Cameron Jr. made a name for himself and for all tolerant peoples, and all Americans, all World Citizens, should be grateful.—First written by DoJM and in slightly amended form with endnotes published originally ca. 2009 by the La Crosse History Unbound Website of the La Crosse Public Library/UW-L Murphy Library.
Opening Eyes via Education

When I first arrived at UW-Madison in Autumn 1968, like many freshmen I didn’t know what to expect except a lot more people and more and bigger buildings, having been born and raised in La Crosse, Population: 50,000. I hope I’ve experienced enough so far (by early 2017), and communicated enough too, to open my and others’ eyes decently and wider (John H. Whale, one of my mentors, wrote a book about TV called “The Half-Shut Eye”) to positive sense and sensibility in this world, thus creating books from life.

First year was a bear. I’d signed on to Nuclear Engineering. Advanced Chemistry and Calculus were impossible, so I switched my major 2nd year to Biology and from it to Business and on to History by 3rd year, because the Ancient History classes taught by Prof. Edson were intriguing enough and I did well in them. I soon began focusing on American Cultural/Intellectual History, with Professors Dan Rodgers and Paul Conkin, doing superbly in my 4-5 classes with Dan Rodgers, who taught me how to read/investigate historical documents, including novels, and think and write well. Also, I saw superstar mime Marcel Marceau perform at UW; he’d fought in the French Resistance.

During my undergraduate years I worked for the Athletic Department, and for two years was a student manager/trainer there. And when Bart Starr spoke to us one post-practice, it was a stirring occasion; when John Jardine had fully taken over as football coach, we won a bit regularly again. I also met Milton Eisenhower, the President’s brother, after practice one night, and with him at length. I’d later edit work by Milton Eisenhower, the President’s granddaughter, who wrote a book-introduction and sent photos too for me. There was plenty of political ferment on campus too, but when I fully saw the violence perpetrated by students as much as by the authorities, I decided to only observe protests from the West (mainly non-active) side of Park Street. The draft lottery stopped short of my call-up and I got an education.

I met my first wife, Ann, on campus, and married her a year before my 5th year graduation. (We’d divorce in 1979.) In 1974, we sailed to Europe for a month. Returning, I entered the UW Graduate Theatre and Drama Program and Ann taught high school Spanish. Prof. Esther Jackson was my advisor. I did well in classes and with production requirements, but due to politics, couldn’t find acceptance for my M.A. Thesis project. However, I did see an excellent UW production of Sean’s O’Casey’s “Juno and the Paycock,” which inspired my sequel to it, “Song of Joy—Or the Old Relieables,” partially produced twice in 2008 in La Crosse. I studied Anglo-Irish Drama with Prof. Bart Friedman.

Instead of earning my M.A. in Theatre, I spent nine months in Iowa City, 1977-78, earning an M.A. in American Studies, and returned to UW, where I audited classes with notable professors in Journalism and History. I’d earlier studied Art History with Prof. James Dennis. By mid-1978, I was a full-time clerk-typist in the Center for Public Policy and Administration, today’s La Follette School of Public Affairs. I worked for and with many great political thinkers, including Clara Penniman, Dennis Dressang, William Young, John Witte, George Gant, Sheila Earl (a governor’s wife), Carl Runge (our boss), and his assistant, Bonnie Cleary. When I learned to study full-time again in 1979, I bought my first 35 mm camera and signed on in 1980 to the world’s first-founded (1908) Journalism School, Mizzou’s, graduating in 1984.

I taught adult writing and photo classes from 1991-2002 for Western Technical College in La Crosse, plus worked journalism jobs, and attribute my earliest skills in those areas to my training at UW. Competition had been keen, but I’d managed to earn my B.A. decently, which helped me enter three graduate schools, and my journalism and teaching jobs, too. It has also helped with my authoring and editing many dozens of books plus 15 plays so far. Bill Young used to say as he headed past my desk to give his twice-weekly lectures, “Once more into the breach.” And so life goes, forever making and entering the openings we can. For me, it was in writing, photography, teaching, editing, and publishing, plus fathering a great son, Matthew. I’ve lived and worked many places, including London and Seoul. But no matter where I’ve roamed, I’ve always returned to Wisconsin, my first alma mater and always home to me, for, in the end, as in the beginning, I’ll always be a Badger, with some Hawkeye and Tiger mixed in too.—Written in 2017 and a bit before then too, by DuJM.

Travels Through Chicago

It began in Spring 1974. My first wife and I were aboard a train heading from La Crosse, Wisconsin to New York City. We had tickets for an Italian Liner, headed to Spain. It was our second honeymoon, and we'd worked full-time nearly a year, and lived on next-to-nothing, just so my then-wife could decide if she wanted to be a Spanish teacher. Her name was Ann. She had earned her BS in Spanish Education, and she would soon become a Spanish teacher, but not until we'd spent a several weeks in Spain and England, before heading back via the QEII (a student ticket was $250 then). I don't recall much about Chicago from then — but we passed through it, going and returning.

A couple years' later, we visited some friends in that Midwestern mecca. Ann had known Mary for years, and Mary's new husband, John, whose family were big supporters of Mayor Daley, had played St. Patrick, I believe, in a Chicago St. Patrick's Day Parade. We visited the Art Institute, took in “Fiddler on the Roof”, visited a clothing maker, and ate at a Japanese restaurant. We enjoyed ourselves a bit, but Ann wanted a divorce relatively soon after, I’d guess. She'd been dating a priest while teaching, even before I was away at graduate school. Steve left the priesthood and married Ann, a couple years after our divorce was finalized.

Before my first wife and I split up, I visited suburban Chicago to take in Tennessee Williams' “Sweet Bird of Youth,” starring Irene Worth and Christopher Walkin. It was a great, if sad play. I saw it with John Steven Paul, who'd eventually direct the Theater Department at Valparaiso University. I believe the Williams play was produced in a Chicago suburb, because I don't recall us having to navigate the incredible metro traffic there. (I was saddened to learn recently that John passed away ca. 2009. He was a congenial man with great mind. When we were in graduate school in Madison together, he directed a Shakespeare in the Backyard program covered by NPR.)

My second wife, Suk-Hee, and I returned from Seoul in 1987 via United Airlines and went nonstop to Chicago's OHare Airport, then caught a commuter flight to La Crosse. In March 1991, after my second wife and I had separated, I took a bumpy bus-ride to Pittsburgh from La Crosse to visit an old Journalism School friend. The layover we had in Chicago gave me time to stroll about and make some interesting photos of the urban landscape, using the Sears Tower in the mid-distant background. As with every visit I've made to and/or through Chicago, there have been many decent people to converse with, making one wonder how Chicago has gained such a bad reputation for dirty politics and violence.

In April 2000, my son (Matt, 12 then), and I took Amtrak from La Crosse to Washington, D.C., to visit my brother Tom and his wife, Joy, who both worked for the federal government. We had a layover several hours in the Windy City, so we got something to eat, made copies at Kinko's, and photographed people
and sights. One of the people we photographed was a friendly male student from the Chicago Art Institute. He flashed victory/peace signs for me as I made his portrait in Union Station. On route home in 2000, we’d another Chicago layover and ate grilled ham and cheese sandwiches in an Italian cafe. We also took more photos and in 2006 Matt returned to DC via Chicago and made memorable photos of the Sears Tower, and five or six seagulls camped up a railing. We’d done a photo-book in 2000, “Vital Washington”, and continued taking pictures. I’ve published many books over the years, including the current award-winning “Spirit of America” series.

In April 2010, I traveled the same route from La Crosse through Chicago to DC and back. I photographed an Amish man using a payphone at Union Station during our first stopover, an unusual sight to people then. Again, people were decent despite the enlarged threats terrorists had been posing to US transportation systems. I also traveled through Chicago in 2011 and 2012 during further DC sojourns. I need to say, too, my parents’ first destination on their honeymoon in February 1950 was Chicago; they had a flat tire there, but it’s possible I was conceived there too. One thing I’ve learned traveling to and/or through Chicago over the years, is: It is a city of big shoulders, as Carl Sandburg wrote; and if you rub it the right way, it also has a brave, forgiving heart.—*Written ca. 2010 & updated in 2017, by DvJM.*

**Christmases Then and Now**

The work of Bert Hardy, the noted Picture Post photojournalist, has inspired my photos more than any other single photographer’s I’d guess, because his best work has a lot of life in it, and beyond that, at times has the Christmas spirit in it, though he sometimes had to photograph horrible events and conditions. There’s a trick to doing that sort of thing: it takes an open-enough mind and heart to bring it off, and Bert Hardy’s work mainly does that. If you see his Gorbals street urchins photo (the Gorbals was a section of Scotland’s Glasgow where the conditions were abysmal), you’ll understand better what I mean. Those two boys, walking arm-in-arm up a street toward Bert, reminded him of what it was like to grow up with a positive-spirit in London in the 1910’s, though his own family was not well-to-do, either.

Russ Hiser died this December 2rd. Russ and I were friends when we were both very young. We were in Cub Scouts together, climbed trees together, and played ball together. I’d guess we even shared playing with a Christmas gift or two. When we started different high schools, though, I hardly ever saw Russ again in the intervening years. However, in about 1995, Russ and I happened to have adjacent seats at a La Crosse Center basketball game and we caught up a bit. I don’t remember if we talked much about old times so much as about our families. I do remember well, though, how nice it was to see and talk with Russ after so many years. Russ leaves behind his family; he was an Army and railroad veteran, too, and he will be greatly missed. Rest in peace, Russ, rest in peace.

Christmas 1990 was the last Christmas my now ex-wife and I were together. We separated a few days later, and divorced a couple of years after that. I do remember how important that Christmas was for our son, Matthew, though. He was trying to sort out how he could love both his former parents after so many years. Russ leaves behind b...
a crowd above of well-wishers during the Coronation Parade of Britain’s King George VI (the same monarch featured in the Oscar-nominated 2010 film “The King’s Speech”). The contrast between the dead-to-the-world dose-r and the expectant crowd made the photo work well, as did the tossed papers. When I saw the Charlie Rose interview I soon after wrote HC-B. I sent him samples of my own photos, a crisp $20 note, and my letter requesting a copy of a sleeping man photo. I apologized for being cash-poor, but wanted to give him something. A while later (the date on the card was ambiguously written as 27 Mars 200001), I received back my own photos and my $20 note along with a photo-postcard, wherein was the sleeping man photo. I was very pleased to receive the card from him with the note “For Mr. David J. Marco: With my best wishes, Henri Cartier-Bresson (signed)”.

In early to mid-2001, I was directing, fund-raising, hiring (designer and printer), compiling, preparing, sequencing, and editing various writings and photos for “Spirit of America: Heartland Voices, World Views,” which would be published soon after 9/11/01, though we worked on it a year. My group’s book would go on to win the Spirit of America Award from the September 12th International Guild, which we’d receive in Kansas City in October 2002. At a conference directed by People to People International CEO Mary J. Eisenhower (Dwight and Mamie’s granddaughters), and given by Greg Hilbert, CEO of the Guild and a former Aquinas H.S. classmate of mine (1968). In “Spirit of America,” one of the written pieces by me is titled, “Ever Wonder About a Picture? Or, Journalism as Inspiration.” I suggest there how my Basic Press Photography teacher at Mizzou, Veita Jo Hampton, had once said in class that if one photographer could combine the best elements of the photography of Cartier-Bresson and W.E. Smith, he or she would truly be the greatest photojournalist. That was in late 1980, and I would meet and photograph the British legend Bert Hardy, who did combine the best elements of the other two masters well, and is still considered the greatest British photojournalist of the WWII era, and perhaps beyond. And I’ve always liked Dorothea Lange's work a great deal, too, plus the British master of “found images,” Jane Bown, whose works I’ve come across only in recent years. All these photographers' works are included in Edward Steichen’s great anthology, “The Family of Man”, except Bown’s, who has never worked hard to publicize her name outside Britain, though she’s been taking photos since before “The Family of Man” was published (1955).

In any case, Cartier-Bresson’s works are stellar – from candid shots of a Nazi collaborator in France meeting hard justice postwar, to boys seen playing through a broken wall in Spain, to Hassidic Jews walking in a perfectly geometric pattern, to a little boy near two girls as he marches triumphantly towards the camera carrying two huge bottles of wine, to photo-portraits of the mighty and mundane, to his most famous photo – of a man jumping over a puddle in the yard of a Paris train station, all viewed with a eye for design details, patterns, and human life. Another favorite of mine by Cartier-Bresson is his photo, viewed from above, of a bicyclist’s speeding by a winding staircase – the photographer’s painterly eye (he’d first learned painting, before photography) rarely missed a beat, with his self-defined “decisive moments” becoming world-famous. The perfect geometry in his bicyclist view inspired me to do a photo with a bicyclist as well, but seen from street-level and with other people spaced perfectly in the background. I call it, “The Bicyclist’s Geometry,” which could also have been the title of the Cartier-Bresson view. Yet another favorite of mine by HC-B is his view of a man looking through a peephole while another man looks to the side, as if to acknowledge the photographer. That image inspired me to photograph two young female dancers with many curls in their hair, whom I photographed from behind as they peeped into a tent's opening at Irishfest-La Crosse in 2008.

After I’d published my HC-B photography article in “Spirit of America !”, I sent him a signed, complimentary copy of that book; he replied with another photo postcard of his. This one I seem to recall showed a wedding couple seated amid a few people on a street. Cartier-Bresson also signed that card, but the note expressing his thanks for “Spirit of America” was this time in French. Henri Cartier-Bresson, a man who’d come from a family of notable textile magnates and who’d escaped German imprisonment more than once during World War II, and who’d helped found the famous Magnum Picture Agency, is still regarded by many as the greatest photojournalist of the 20th century. He died in 2004, and I would have loved to have met and photographed him the only time I visited France in 1974, though I wasn't really a photographer then. I'll always treasure his card-inscriptions/signatures and his photos and books. Another family of Cartiers is known for its well-to-do jewelry business. Cartier-Bresson's photos could be as beautiful and valuable as finest diamonds, and “diamonds are forever”, metaphorically and otherwise.—Written a few years ago, by DvJM.

Redemptive Memories at 200

He entered in England, and exited there -- in-between were 58 years of incredible poor-boy-making-good. He’d marry Catherine Thomson Hogarth, daughter of a newspaper editor, and father at least ten children, writing more articles and novels than anyone could have guessed he’d had in him, for his childhood had seemed undistinguishable. And yet, the first lines of his I read, in high school, are still key, “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times...” Continuing the man couldn’t make a partial redemption. One has to admit, however. (It’s said the author sometimes walked for miles around London, like Scrooge, alternately crying and laughing, as he mentally worked out his stories.) American fans waited along the pier at New York to shout to people on ships arriving from England, “Is Little Nell dead?” – for CD’s story about her (in “The Old Curiosity Shop”), Little Nell does die, after an arduous journey) was published first in England, serially. “A Tale of Two Cities”, “Oliver Twist,” “Hard Times,” “Great Expectations,” “Bleak House”, “David Copperfield”, “Nicholas Nickleby”, and “A Christmas Carol”, are also among his classics. Theater directors drool when they shout “A Christmas Carol” is back, eagerly selling tickets to hordes of patrons anxious to see it again. But much seasonal greed is forgiven when one's nephew plays Tiny Tim onstage, just as much can be accepted when "Song of Joy" is performed around Easter-time, because my son inspired that play set in Easter-time 1940 Ireland by having played that Beethoven melody on his flute as a boy.

Charles John Huffam Dickens was second oldest of eight children of John and Elizabeth Dickens. His dad worked for the Navy Pay-Office, but would go to debtors' prison a while. Young Charles stayed with another family and worked for near-nothing, labeling ointment jars. He felt innocuous and uncared for, but the flame of a creative spirit was being kindled within. After he'd learned shorthand and reported on courts, he covered elections and began serializing his books, often illustrated wonderfully. He'd travel twice to America to do readings and chat with literati. Though opposed to slavery, he felt the majority of blacks were not yet ready to use the vote well, if given it soon. CD had a 13-year affair with actress Ellen Ternan, whom he'd met working on a theatre production. His daughter Kate later said her dad had a child with Ternan, but that the child died in infancy. The Staplehurst Rail Crash Dickens and Ternan were part of, left an emotional mark, though their car was the only first-class one not otherwise impacted. He'd die though five years later to the day, June 9, 1870, at his home in Higham, Kent.

“Be natural my children. For the writer that is natural has fulfilled all the rules of art.” Perhaps those final words of his were as illusory as his final wishes; perhaps not. Though he’d said he wanted to be buried at Rochester Cathedral, his body was interred in Poets’ Corner, Westminster Abbey. He’d also said he wanted no monument erected for him – the only full-size statue of him (with Little Nell) apparently is in Philadelphia’s Clark Park. Museums and festivals still carry his name. Young Dickens knew the suffering of the poor, having been poor himself. His good sister Fanny helped buoy him up. In key ways, his life provided inspiration for later Brits, like Picture Post star Bert Hardy, who grew up a London Cockney, poor, but with a creative spirit kindled within. I don’t remember much of “A Tale of Two Cities” (Paris and London). I do recall though how eager I was to read the rest of that CD book after its opening words. Maybe it was the French part of my ancestry, plus the English language I was first trained in. Later, I’d visit Paris and live in London, and came to
Reducing U.S. National Debt

The New York Times recently said North Korea’s policies are, contrary to longstanding “wisdom”, more rational than we think. Yes, it’s been a series of super-tough Northern regimes that have kept South Koreans and Americans on their toes on the peninsula since war there in the 1950s, especially since the North acquired nuclear clout. Without a power there, civil war likely would have broken out again in the last 60-plus years. Maybe if we establish diplomatic relations with the North and ease up on our annual military exercises in the South, much good could be accomplished on that peninsula and elsewhere too.

Long relying on their alliance with America, many South Koreans recognize the good we do for them. Yet Anti-American protests still occur there in numbers, because our government and military are not always easy to deal with. In early 1987 in Seoul, I wrote about auto maker KIA’s goal of exporting one million cars to America that year. KIA was emulating fellow-Korean giants Hyundai and Daewoo, which I believe had already reached that annual mark. Imports of American cars allowed by/into South Korea then were only about two dozen luxury cars annually. But in 2011, America and South Korea signed new letters of agreement for our two-way trade. Many more US exports generally are now allowed into South Korea, though the balance still swings in the latter’s considerable favor.

The situation is tougher with China. The trade surplus for China vis-a-vis America is about 400 billion dollars annually, and our financial debt to China was more than 1.2 trillion dollars in 2015. Also, unlike our trade with Mexico, where 40 percent of our deficit is returned to us via Mexican purchases of autos, auto parts, etc., only 4 percent of our deficit with China returns to us via such purchases, says The Hill. At least six million jobs in America are the result of trade with Mexico. Meanwhile, US experts still go to China to set up equipment so the Chinese can run their own firms more profitably, but the revenues for those experts’ US firms too often fade stateside after the Japanese, Vietnamese, and Philippine economies need our assistance, but can benefit us as well.

If America wants to significantly reduce its national debt (at Fiscal Year 2016’s end, it was 19.3 trillion dollars) while maintaining relative stability globally, we need to expand US economic growth and economize when possible too. We should reduce spending on our military generally (but not on our veterans or entitlement programs without hurting people who really need them, while increasing government revenues not only with increased payroll taxes for the middle and upper classes, but by doubling luxury taxes, including for alcohol and legal marijuana); balance our currency more with foreign currencies; improve US infrastructure significantly (especially up-front, but which will bring in many added tax-, toll-, and fee-payments); pass/enforce skills-based immigration laws; pass/enforce environment-friendly, yet worker-friendly too, energy laws; pass/enforce strict drug and alcohol-use penalties – recreational drug-use and alcohol-intoxication are NOT victimless crimes; and freeze public college tuition levels, and stop increasing top athlete/entertainer/professor salaries in that same period. It would be helpful too if we’d have universal, single-payer healthcare, and pay for it decently, so doctors and nurses don’t jump ship, but treat patients well, no matter the latter’s age, economic, and/or health status. Pharmaceutical firms need to adapt more efficient and fairer pricing; and health insurance companies need to retool.—2016-2017, by DvJM.

Grandparenting – Marcou-Style

My first memory of my paternal grandparents was the day (1953-54) my brother Dennis and I sprang the “Great Escape”. Dennis was barely a toddler (Brother Dan must have been an infant); I was three years old, tops. Mom had locked the top hook on the door leading down a staircase adjacent at bottom to the front of Marcou’s Market. We lived at 732-1/2 Rose Street, in the front apartment of my grandparents’ two upstairs apartments – they lived on the back one; the store was theirs. They’d owned many stores and meat markets in western Wisconsin previously, and my dad was born above one, in Mondovi on April 14, 1931. I believe I used a fly-swatter to unhook the latch standing on some kid paraphernalia, and before Mom knew it, I was down the stairs. I can’t recall if Dennis followed me down, but it was a very risky progress if he did. When I/we get downstairs, Grandma was behind the counter, maybe Grandma, too. They were surprised, but I/we got candy. I can’t recall what Mom did later, but I hope it didn’t involve the stairs. I can’t recall if Dennis followed me down, but it was a very risky progress if he did. When I/we get downstairs, Grandma was behind the counter, maybe Grandma, too. They were surprised, but I/we got candy. I can’t recall what Mom did later, but I hope it didn’t involve corporal punishment, because that sort of pain-infliction usually backfires on parents. We’d move soon to Mom and Dad’s permanent residence of 60 years on Prospect Street, where all seven of us kids grew up.

David A. Sr. and Agnes Fitzgerald-Marcou were Dad's parents. Both born circa 1890, Grandpa was French-Canadian American descended from explorer Louis Joliet among direct ancestors and born on La Crosse’s French Island; Grandma was Irish-American, born and raised near Mauston, WI. The foods they cooked were tasty, though I didn’t like the smell of Grandma’s corned beef and cabbage (I’ve come to like that meal, recently). Otherwise, there were ham sandwiches, steaks, corn, and frozen pizzas, even after Grandma passed in 1963. While she lived, we were treated to her graham cracker/lemon meringue, and vanilla cream, pies, and All-Bran for regularity. Agnes liked store-bought jelly-rolls too, superb. When I served early Mass at St. James nearby, I stayed overnight upstairs with them. Grandma said she’d get up early to make the “Carol Burnett Show” or “Honeymooners”. Then, by 3 a.m., I’d be half-awake again when Grandma rose to get his coffee and cigarettes before he headed downstairs to stove furnace, shovel snow, paint ad-items on the front window, etc. Grandma weighed about 90 pounds and rapped on the water-pipes to get Grandma to phone her daytimes. She had pet-sayings. When she'd get upset with Grandma, one was, “Butch (she called him Butch or Marc, never Dave; my dad was David A. “Dave” Marcou Jr.), sometimes I get so mad at you, I could bite off your head and spit it back in your face.” Or, more generally, “Well, God bless you, (fill in name), because no one else will.” Grandpa used to swear some, but never at Grandma, and my dad says Grandma never swore, but could make any salesmen feel two inches tall without raising her voice. I had a bit of sway with her sometimes, but when my younger cousin Steve Kiedrowski visited two weeks each summer from Trempealeau, I left the place to him. His mom, Margaret Marcou Kiedrowski-Brom, and my dad were siblings. Steve was played football, like my brothers and me; Steve played line; we were backs.

After Grandma passed, my brothers and I helped Grandpa run the store. Pauline Wittenberg had assisted, but generally not by the time I was in eighth grade, when my brothers and I were regulars especially after school and weekends. By then, business had faded from the high-flying days of World War II and
immediately after. I used to ride with Grandpa in his old Chevy pickup. He'd cuss and chew people out, but he also told funny stories. Grandpa Marcou tried to be Mr. Fix-It. Now, my son and a couple others in our family (not me) are mechanically-inclined, but my dad isn't and my grandma wasn't. But Grandpa Marcou insisted on working on all sorts of things, often with plenty of tape, paint, and inept pipe-washers. He also ground hamburger and made sausages, etc. He'd test his pork sausage mix by tasting it raw. After Grandpa's store closed, he lived in a trailer-house by Margaret's. He worked as a meat-cutter for Skogen's IGA and had his 85th birthday party at their Onalaska store, I believe. He passed at age 88, and is buried with Grandma in Trempealeau Cemetery.

I learned a lot from both sets of grandparents (including my mom's parents, Roman and Ida Muskat). When I wrote my sequel to Sean O'Casey's classic tragicomedy "Juno and the Paycock" – i.e., "Song of Joy, or the Old Reliabilities" – I used some of Grandma Agnes' Irish-Americanisms in the dialogue. The National Theatre of Ireland critiqued "Song" positively-enough and I've revised it accordingly for future productions.—Written ca. 2011, by DrJM.

Grandparenting – Muskat-Style

Writing once about our family's "drag-races", driving to and from Milwaukee ca. 1960, for Braves baseball games, reminds me of the rides our family used to take to and from Mom's parent's farm near Cataraqui, Wis., usually in summer. My siblings and I were very young then, and there are still, apparently, many hilly roads around that area. We kids used to yell "Wh-e-e-e-e-e-ell!" as Dad (Dave) took each gravel-covered hill in rapid-fire succession, making the bumps delightful to round out. When we arrived, there was added fun if you knew where to look for it. From watching Grandma Ida Muskat chase dinner round the yard before heeding and defrocking it, to viewing the animals not immediately destined for our plates, to jumping from swings, to tromping the fields where ancient equipment croped up sporadically, later replaced by Grandpa Roman Muskat's John Deere tractor, etc., and slipping into the well-house, where cool water and soda pop could be had plus the view of a tiny lizard or two I believe, there was much to see/do. (Early on, there was also the outhouse, not fun but required.) Indoors was the pump-organ, which some of Mom's siblings (especially Larry) played. Grandpa's guitar-in-case upstairs made us wonder how well he played it. (I don't remember he ever played it for us.) And his roll-top desk contained letters, bills, and pens, suggesting the secrets to good farm management. Grandpa's ancestry was Swiss-Austrian with a touch of German, as was Grandma’s. Roman wrote and organized things well, which may be where my literary and photo abilities derive, though the Marcou-Fitzgerald side of my family may also have something to do with that.

Roman was often in the barn and/or chicken-houses when we visited. My maternal grandparents, who were also my godparents, had milk-cows and goats, too, though I don't think horses or sheep. Also, Grandpa often bought prize-winning show-roosters with many dramatic combinations of colors and combs. He traveled the state to pick them up, especially Reedsburg. He even sent his prize creatures to New York City for competitions. And he loved smoking his pipe and conducting desk-business as much as farming the farm-proper. Ida, whose maiden name was Brunner, was a great cook (my mom inherited that skill too), especially of chicken and beef-roast, plus created superb frosting. Looks-wise, Ida reminded me of my second wife, a Korean native, though maybe not as much as my mom's sister Zita's daughters do. When I was 12-ish, my brothers, Dad, and I hunted once on Muskat land. We'd split up into two parties and were supposed to fire into the air, when we were ready to head in. Not realizing the trees in front of me hid a hill, I fired off a shot, and soon Dad and Dennis reappeared. Dad said my shot had whizzed past his head not straight up. I apologized profusely, but that near-accident made me decide to not handle a loaded gun again. (My friend Mike Dawson did convince me once to go hunting with him in high school, but I don't believe I fired the gun he loaned me.)

Grandma passed a few years before Grandpa. She'd long had low blood-pressure, which may have somehow led to her demise. Grandpa sold their farmland to a Christmas tree farm, keeping the house until he died. His last months must have been rough on him, dying at home of emphysema. Before that, Roman visited us in La Crosse some Sundays for dinner. He'd also write letters there. I hope he felt loved in our home, because farming can be lonely, especially when your life-partner has passed and your offspring live in cities. My mom, who'd been born near Madison, had been sent to live in La Crosse during high school, staying with a city family and working in a soda-fountain. The fountain, Sullivan's, on Rose Street, was kitty-corner from my dad's parents' grocery, Marcou's Market. When Mom and Dad married Feb. 14, 1950, there was a blizzard; Mom's parents couldn't make the wedding; they did attend the reception.

Roman and Ida loved each other, but they didn't have much free time. Grandma sewed, cooked, and cleaned, plus helped farm, but after farm-chores were done each day, Grandpa may have sat down in-parlor and played guitar, as Grandma played organ. At least, I hope that happened. If it did, they played hymns and popular songs from that era; they were God-fearing people, both buried out of St. Patrick's Church in Sparta. Their family had early on led Spartan lives -- including Roman's cross-country skiing to and from school, winters, and my own mom's long walks to school despite severe migraines during the Depression -- save for Grandpa's show-roosters and his near-Nash-Rambler every year or two. We loved all four of our grandparents, also including David and Agnes Fitzgerald-Marcou. After both grandmothers had passed, my parents had the grandfathers over together for a Sunday meal a couple times, and once they held some of their newest great-grandchildren. That was a very nice day, though it's more appreciated now by us grand-kids, because we have photos to remember them by.—Written ca. 2011, by DrJM.

Guns Here and Over There

Before institutionalizing droves of “dangerously mentally ill” based on tough-to-predict Newtown-like mass-shootings (though some prison-inmates need psychiatric wards), please google Elyn R. Saks and John Nash, geniuses who had mental illnesses. Gun-violence is diverse. The Center for Disease Control states that in 2009 – 31,347 US deaths were gun-related, including 11,000-plus homicides, 18,000-plus suicides. The New York Times reports that 2012 Chicago had 506 homicides, mostly gun-related, by contrast, US News reports 385 deaths by assault-weapons in America since 2004 (48 per year). PBS reports that in 2012 Afghanistan, US troop-suicides (349) exceeded combat-deaths (295). Conceal-and-carry seems ubiquitous. Gangster-fired handguns kill. Videos tout super-shootouts. We've hundreds of military bases, when 40 super-bases would do. Risk-averse national broadcast media generally haven't covered US inner-cities, or the Afghanistan War, post-surge. "Bloody Math," my tragedy about the 1970 anti-war bombing of UW's Sterling Hall, shows cultural paranoia killing innocent life. When Hillary received the Nobel Peace Prize – did I say Hillary, I meant Barack, but neither one deserves a Peace Prize -- Barack was initiating his troop-surge, not making Peace! Even Colonial Britain made Peace with proto-terrorists and "traitors", the American Revolutionary Army. And capturing Osama Bin-Laden alive could have mimicked 1836, when Mexican leader Santa Anna made peace as a prisoner of Sam Houston's, which my play, "Remembering Davy Crockett", mentions. The Holocaust was a gargantuan, man-made tragedy. Conflicting faith-groups in the Holy Land, Afghanistan, and worldwide must recognize that and agree to Fair Peace Treaties. Finally, perhaps a bit unrelated but still timely -- Jean Vaughn Favre, Fellow Aquinas HS Alumn-68, passed this past year; RIP, Jean.—Written ca. Dec. 2012, by DrJM.

Harper Lee

For 50 years, Harper Lee refused interviews, but Black River Falls-native/Chicago Tribune journalist Marja Mills lived near her and recently published “The Mockingbird Next Door”. Still spotlight-shy, Lee as a girl defended her lippy, pint-sized pal Truman Capote. Later, Lee spent Christmases with the Michael
Brown family, while working for an airline. One year, she received this note with money: "You have one year off from your job to write whatever you please. Merry Christmas." “Whatever” became “To Kill a Mockingbird” (1960), Lee’s only book (for 50+ years), a Pulitzer-winner about a 1930s racial trial. The Academy Award-winning film starred Gregory Peck as Atticus Finch. Lee significantly aided Capote’s research on his hit nonfiction novel “In Cold Blood,” with Robert Blake starring in the film, about a Kansas mass-murder. And Capote proofed Lee’s early “To Kill a Mockingbird” manuscript. The model for Dill, Capote called Lee’s book a great work by a real talent, boosting sales and Pulitzer-buzz. Capote’s classics also include “Other Voices, Other Rooms” (Lee was the model for Ida), “Beat the Devil”, “Breakfast at Tiffany’s” (his novella became the Academy Award-winning film starring Audrey Hepburn as Holly Golightly), and “Answered Prayers”. In 2007, Lee was awarded the Presidential Medal of Freedom. She then lived with her older sister Alice until they went to elder housing. Capote died in 1984; he’d frequented trials with Harper as kids, writing stories with her, including about her lawyer-dad, A.C. Lee, model for Atticus. —Written in 2014 by DvJM. Harper Lee passed in 2016.

**History's Best Lessons**

June 9-13 (2013) is Contest Completion Week for National History Day, when US students compete via projects to highlight key aspects of history.

A reporter for the La Crosse Tribune recently wrote that history is popular again. That makes many glad, for in addition to history's coverage of organizations, regions, and peoples known to many, it also covers family and personal histories dear to all. The Democratic Party's early (and perhaps not widely remembered) support of slavery shouldn't disqualify it as a Civil Rights champion today, since Democrats came round led by President Lyndon Johnson, to pass, with Republican help, crucial Civil Rights legislation in the 1960s. Also, Republicans generally shouldn't be rejected because some of them want to cut funds from Social Security and other government-assistance programs; hopefully, enough clearer-thinking Republicans (when Social Security first became law in the 1930s, the Republican percentage voting for it in Congress was greater than the Democratic percentage doing so), along with most Democrats support keeping those programs fully-funded with select reforms. Dwight Eisenhower – who shrewdly led Allied Forces on D-Day, June 6, 1944 – was very cautious about war-making as President, but did send in the 101st Airborne Division to integrate Little Rock High School in 1957. Ike had promised peace in Korea in his 1952 election-campaign (Korea's War began in 1950), and though a peace treaty still hasn't been signed, a ceasefire was, in 1953, and has endured since.

Anyone who's experienced a true Eureka Moment knows historical studies can satisfy human curiosity, as some recently-passed greats learned. Pulitzer-winning journalist Haynes Johnson learned it early at the Universities of Missouri and Wisconsin. Associate curator Wayne Miller learned it from curator Edward Steichen's group-exhibition "Book of Family”. Nora Ephron, playwright of “ Lucky Guy”, learned it from her mom and from muckraking journalist Mike McAlary. And journalist Sandy Hook learned it many places, including while serving as a publisher of the La Crosse Tribune. A Eureka Moment for me was my recent research-discovery that Louis Joliet's granddaughter Marie-Madeleine Joliet married Jean (John) Marcou(x), thus making me and my immediate family direct descendants of Louis Joliet. June 17th is the 340th anniversary of Louis' and Fr. Jacques Marquette's post-Native discovery of the Upper Mississippi River at Prairie du Chien. The pair showed non-Natives that the area from the Great Lakes to Gulf of Mexico was canoe-able.

Earlier, I learned my parent's lifelong friend, our city's Frank Devine, not only landed at Incheon in Korea's War -- where two British journalists I knew, Bert Hardy and James Cameron, helped the US First Marine Division make history -- but also eliminated three enemy tanks at Seoul, earning a Silver Star, before being wounded at Frozen Chosen. This newspaper's staff has produced stories and photos more than a century that archivists and patrons collect, review, and crucially include in historical writings, etc. We all can be at least citizen-journalists/historians. Though we're grateful for our military and law-enforcement personnel, all people can serve humanity well, in many ways. We need recall George Santayana's words, “Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.” And those who remember history's best lessons help create a less-flawed, more-vital present and future. —Written in 2013 by DvJM.

**How the Other Half Lives**

"There is no mercy in a policy that takes for granted the sweat, the tears, and the sacrifice that working Americans shed every day," Congressman Joe Kennedy III.

In 1890, an illustrated book was published offering a radical view of America's poor. Its author, writer, and photographer was Jacob Riis, a Danish immigrant and “boss reporter” on New York City’s Mulberry Street, who'd soon become one of Teddy Roosevelt's closest friends. Riis's “How the Other Half Lives” broke new technical ground, but he was a quick-study master who only took photos a few years, earning his way by writing. (In those few years, he had, soon after, Wisconsin native Lewis Hine became the twin pillars upon which American social documentary photography stand.) Working for newspapers and the Associated Press, Riis covered immigrants densely-packed into back-to-back tenements with almost no light or air. “Cottage-industries” suggest making things at home to sell. Many New York immigrants did that in their cramped rooms. Today, some people think governments shouldn't provide food, housing, and medical care to the disabled and indigent elderly – but the poor generally can't always find jobs or rely on charities, and everyone has the right to those three basics. Those things sometimes need to come from both charities and governments. On the front of my copy of JR’s book, three tiny urchins sleep outdoors. Dickensian in garb, caps, bare feet and legs – they're bunched by an ugly stone wall. It's a sad photo; but also compassionate. Jacob Riis had the visionary courage to view these tiny boys as care-deserving human beings. A female author recently wrote “The War on Boys”. As for little girls, life can be hell for little boys too, and the families they grow up in. All humans need basic care, and love.—Written ca. 2013 by DvJM.

**Invitation to Prayer**

Instead of endorsing candidates (time to vote), this is an early New Year's-Style Invitation to Prayer for Good Things. One man tells me prayer will do no good. I disagree. Here goes. Let us pray the winner of the 2012 US Presidential Election will be the leader this nation and world most need, and actually earns his Nobel Peace Prize. Let us pray for all of us to improve our moral character, not necessarily by attending church regularly, but via great compromises, so our nation and world move forward peaceably. We needn't compromise over everything but over key things, even if we feel strongly about them... Republicans AND Democrats, Liberals AND Conservatives. Let us pray for a positive, peaceful end to our wars BEFORE 2014. As George McGovern said, “Come home, America” – and please do it decently and safely, without giving up on the world. Let us pray for the peace and well-being of the McGovern, Petras, Grant, Hougom, and Rodgers Families, and the same for all our Families, deceased, living, and to-come. Let us pray for the success of the Badgers, Packers, Bucks, and Brewers, or if you're not an in-state-teams fan, then for success for your own teams, except against Wisconsin's state-teams. Let us pray God blesses us so fully in the future, that we all know there is a God – One who's not present to make war against/among us, but to make us better, more loving people -- recognizing not quite so much our differences, but moreso our similarities.—Written in 2012 & updated in 2017 by DvJM.
Scene 1: Freshman English, St. Thomas High School, Spring 1965, Mr. Jack Knuckles Teaching.

Mr. Knuckles: Now, class, since you've not been very good about memorizing the vocabulary words I gave you last class and didn't do well generally on my quiz today, I'll give you a few more words, just for good measure. Mr. Deke Marson, you did better than the others on this quiz, as a kind of reward, you can propose a vocabulary word first. What have you got in mind?

Mr. Marson: I don't know, Mr. Knuckles. Maybe something a little easier to remember.

Mr. Knuckles: Sounds good. What have you got in mind?

Mr. Marson: Well, in Latin class we just learned the word for friend; it's amicus in the masculine singular, amica in the feminine singular. What about amicable?

Boy in Back to His Friend (Under his breath): God Donny, would I like to get amicable with the new cheer-leading advisor, Miss Crane.

Donny Parson: Same here, Reeve. There are about 600 other males in this fine establishment who agree with you. My little sister could beat up three-quarters of them.

Reeve Anderson: Yeah, I wasn't born in this school, but I got here as soon as I could. Isn't that right old friend? (Donny chuckles.)

Mr. Knuckles: Okay you two, what did you want to share with the class this time that you've kept out of the way of general discussion until now? Please speak up, Mr. Anderson.

Reeve Anderson: Why, Mr. Knuckles, it was nothin' at all. Just said it would be nice to be amicable with some females I know. Nothing out of the ordinary, mind you, just some friendly sweet things.

Mr. Knuckles: Oh, that's what you are generally, Mr. Anderson, friendly and sweet. Anyone want to do the word barracuda for me? (Students laugh.)

Mr. Marson: Not about the feistiest fish in the seas, right, Mr. Knuckles?

Mr. Knuckles: Right you are, Mr. Parsons. Yes, the word amicable will fit, Mr. Marson. It means “friend-able” or able to be a friend. Thank you. Now, Miss Rogers, what about a word from you — any thoughts?

Miss Rogers: Just that I learned a new word from my dad this morning. It was used in a sentence like this: “Angie, would you relate to your mother the story you told me about nirvana?” I asked him what he meant by nirvana, and he said “enlightenment, dear, enlightenment”.

Miss Rogers: Oh, I said, yes, enlightenment. My dad and I had been talking about what gives human beings the greatest satisfaction — music or enlightenment. He said it generally is romance, but sometimes a little enlightenment is for the soul. I don't agree. I like romance better.

Mr. Knuckles: Now, Miss Rogers, Buddhists aspire to nirvana or the highest form of enlightenment. Is that what you were telling your dad?

Miss Rogers: Well, sort of. I'd just let him know that the reason the paper boy is always late in the morning isn't because he's taking care of his sick mom like he always says, but because he's seeing his girlfriend a few minutes to gain nirvana, before she gets on the bus for that long ride north, to that old-time Lutheran high school.

Mr. Knuckles: Why do you call the Lutheran high school old-time, Miss Rogers?

Miss Rogers: That's where a little extra enlightenment comes in, Mr. Knuckles. Now, you've heard of old-time religion, right? (Kids nod yes.) That type of religion says an eye-for-an-eye and a tooth-for-a-tooth. But our religion says turn the other cheek, right?

Mr. Knuckles: That's right, Miss Rogers. So why do you call the Lutheran high school old-time?

Miss Rogers: Because they'd rather put out your eye and knock out your teeth, than turn the other cheek. (With a flourish.) For my part, I prefer turning my cheeks. (Boys hoot. Girls quibble among themselves.)

Mr. Knuckles: That'll do, Everyone, including you Miss Rogers, who's turned herself into a real tart and not a very Christian one at that. (She looks a bit embarrassed.) Still, we'll add the word nirvana all the same. One more word from you students, and then I'll give you a couple extra of my own. Mr. Anderson, can you lend us a word?

Mr. Anderson: Certainly, Sir. How about dementia? It comes from the Latin roots for declining and mind. Any of you suffer from dementia?

Mr. Knuckles: It's a good word with a sad meaning. We'll use it before we grow so old we lose our faculties, including our minds, as in dementia among some of the elderly.

Mr. Anderson (to Mr. Parsons, under his breath): I know some nuns that fit the description. Better not say which though, or they'll have my brains for breakfast.

Mr. Knuckles (Overhearing him): What's that, Mr. Anderson — brains for breakfast? Sounds like you're talking about the good sisters again — your favorite topic, after romance. (General laughter.) Why don't you use the word dementia in a decent sentence? I might even give you an extra point or two on the next quiz if you use it accurately.

Mr. Anderson: Yeah, I can use the extra points. Let's see: My dad often says to me that dementia runs in our family, but he always adds that somehow that escapes me. (Laughter.) It's not even 13 yet.

Mr. Knuckles: Good one on you, Mr. Andersen. It shows you've got a sense of humor. Now, a word or two from me. First one is:

Mr. Knuckles: Miss Lynch, any ideas?

Miss Lynch: I believe it means, given to sadness or a less than cheery attitude.

Mr. Knuckles: That's right, Miss Lynch. President Lincoln was one of our very greatest presidents, but he suffered from a kind of hang-dog melancholy most of his life. It may have arisen after the death of his mother, when he was still young. Yes, melancholy is your next vocabulary word. Now, just one more I’d guess. What do you call someone who lies a lot. Clue: It has five syllables and starts with a “p”.

(Boy in the middle of the class raises his hand and is called on.)

Mr. Knuckles: You've got an answer, Robert Crandall?

Mr. Crandall: Well, it doesn't have five syllables, but Jimmy Winters always begins and ends everything with a good pee. (Laughter.)

Mr. Knuckles: That's a recurring infection he gets. It's not contagious, but it gives him problems, so don't make fun of him.

Mr. Crandall: Course not, Mr. Knuckles. Then, how about prevaricator?

Mr. Knuckles: Brilliant, Mr. Crandall, that's our next and final vocabulary word for the next quiz. Now, study their meanings. You'll have to diagram a few sentences with the vocabulary samples tomorrow too. Okay, everyone out. It's almost bell time.

(Bell rings. Students exit. Mr. Knuckles writes on the blackboard and a couple students come up to ask him questions, as lights dim.)
Scene 2: Freshman World History, Sr. Pauline teaching, a week later. Sister is a slight nun physically, but packs a punch when she speaks. Her students are just finishing an exam.

Sr. Pauline: It's time, Students. Come up and hand in your exams. (They do so, with one or two students writing till the last instant. She waves them up, and they follow her instructions.) It seems world history has made some of you into very proficient writers. Others among you are not good writers yet, but most of you have the spark of curiosity about history and the world in you, which I like to see. Yes, I do mean most of you are curious. (Some laughter.) Not meaning "strange" of course, but interested in the world and how it works.

(The students are all seated again now. Male student raises his hand, and Sr. Pauline waves to him to speak.)

Mr. Marson: You're a great world history teacher, Sister. You make the ideas behind the people and events come alive. It's not hard to stay interested in this class. (Someone in back coughs and fires out the term "brown-noser" in the same instant.)

Sr. Pauline: That's very kind of you to say, Mr. Marson. My interest in history stems from my teachers too, as it does with many of you. One of my teachers used to do dramatic readings from the past — you know, famous speeches and long, notable quotations. Sr. Ozana was her name. I loved her class. It seems like yesterday still, though I'd guess it was near-on 40 years ago.

Mr. Marson: I knew it came from your teachers — maybe even from your parents, true?

Sr. Pauline: My parents and my siblings were influential in my early upbringing too. I was the youngest of seven children. My parents both worked very hard. Neither of them graduated high school, but they both read when they had a few free minutes. And Dad memorized poetry, reciting it to us sometimes. Since my three brothers could be indecisive, Dad sometimes delivered Hamlet's To Be or Not To Be soliloquy to us. One of my brothers, Jarred, hated that soliloquy, but it seemed to motivate the rest of us. We're generally decisive when it counts. Jarred does okay too, but he's the poet in the family — think of that.

Reeve Anderson: Sister, are you and the other teachers going to the track meet tonight? It's a big meet, versus our rivals for state, Marshland Queen of Apostles.

Sr. Pauline: I don't think I'll be there, Mr. Anderson, but I'd guess Ms. Crane and her cheerleaders (teeth whistle a bit) will be. Are you throwing the shot and discus tonight?

Mr. Anderson: Yes, I am. And cheerleaders always inspire longer throws from me. Don't know what it is about them. I guess it's just the romance of the thing.

Sr. Pauline: What do you mean by the (teeth whistle on the 'C' or S sound) romance of the thing?

Mr. Anderson: Well, pretty girls at a track meet are like gorgeous damsels at jousts in the middle ages. A guy works harder when a beautiful doll appreciates his muscles and stuff.

Miss Rogers: What if the doll is 30 years old and looks like Venus? (Laughter.)

Mr. Anderson (covering his tracks): Oh, don't bring up —

Miss Rogers: Oh, really, Reeve. I've heard she's only 30 or 31, and she packs pretty good heat for a third sister of Venus's.

Sr. Pauline: Never mind all this talk about Miss Crane and Venus. Miss Crane is an adult, and you people are teenagers. Don't your hormones ever give it a rest?

Miss Rogers: Only on Sunday, Sister, and only then during Mass, for those of us who attend (looks around). I'd guess it's pretty much nonstop the rest of the time, at least in most teenagers' imaginations. (She says it like she has a lot of practical experience too.)

Sr. Pauline: Don't doubt you one bit, Angie Rogers, and coming from you, that's the horse's mouth talking. (Laughter.) Now, time is almost up, so make notes about what I want you to study for tomorrow. It's on the blackboard. (They all commence writing in their notebooks.) By the way, when you get to Chapter 30 in your textbook, take especially good notes, because I'll be focusing mainly on that chapter at the end of this quarter. It's a very important chapter in both American and World History.

Mr. Marson: Isn't that the chapter about slavery and emancipation, Sister?

Sr. Pauline: Yes, it is Deke. The aftermath of the US Civil War and its effects around the world.

Mr. Marson: It's an intriguing subject. As you may know, last month, March 6th, Alabama State Troopers attacked black and white voters in the town of Selma, and now President Johnson is calling for a strong voting rights law to be passed by Congress. I hope it passes. Do you think it will, Sister?

Sr. Pauline: I'd say it's got a good shot at it. It all depends on if Northern Democrats and Republicans join forces against Southern Democrats. I say that generally, because there are even a few good people among the Southern Democrats, though not a ton these days. It was Southern Democrats who made up the bulk of the Confederate Army in our nation's Civil War. Overseas (teeth whistle a bit) today, some people feel that America is too much-defined by Southern Democrats. That we need to change. It's not always good, but sometimes it can be very good. You students will have to decide for yourselves on that point.

Mr. Parsons: Sister, someday it's even possible the Southern Democrats will play a different tune. Maybe their band will even have some blacks in it. (Some think this is funny.)

Sr. Pauline (knowing him better now): Mr. Parsons, have you ever thought what it would be like to marry a black woman, and have mulatto children?

Mr. Parsons (crossing two fingers of one hand): No, I haven't, Sister, but (shaping up) I suppose anything's possible, in the future.

Sr. Pauline: Now, that's a very open-minded attitude, Mr. Parsons. I believe some of this world history stuff is actually sinking in a bit, though I'm not counting my chickens (teeth whistle again) until they've hatched. (Laughter, Bell rings.) That's it for today, Students. Study hard and be prepared for just about anything. Life's pretty unpredictable sometimes. And remember what my dad often said, "Hell and Heaven came come in the same instant. It happens." (Lights out.)

Scene 3: St. Thomas High School Gym, Stephanie Crane advising the school's cheerleaders. Miss Crane is a red-haired beauty with curvy, athletic physique.

Miss Crane (Shouting): Now, shape up girls. We've only got two hours until you perform at the rivalry track meet. You need to put a lot more energy into everything. I don't know what's gotten into you girls lately. Maybe you're concentrating too much on boys. (Looks around.) Or other girls, for that matter. But it's time you think about your cheer-leading now, and get the job done right.

Miss (Gigi) Swanson, Lead Cheerleader: Miss Crane, since Reeve Anderson is hoping to break the state record in the discus soon, what do you think of us doing a special cheer for him? Something like — "Reeve, throw your weight around, and take down that state record. You can do it. You can do it. You can do it now!"

Miss Crane: Not bad, Miss Swanson. I like it. Yes, let's try it, girls. (They get into the formation Miss Swanson had been practicing with them on earlier, before Miss Crane arrived at the gym.)

Miss Swanson: Ready, girls. 1, 2, 3, go: "Reeve, throw your weight around, and take down that state record. You can do it. You can do it. You can do it now!"
Miss Crane: You've been practicing it, good. And it looks sharp, so just do it that way at the meet.
(Reeve enters, and goes to Miss Swanson. They've been dating.)
Miss Crane: Gigi, Mr. Anderson. You arrived at an opportune moment. don't you think, girls? (Giggles.) We've just rehearsed a special cheer for this afternoon's meet. You'll appreciate it, I'd guess.
Mr. Anderson: Gigi told me about it. It sounds cool, but then everything the cheerleaders do is cool, in my book.
Miss Crane (impressed): That's very nice, Reeve, if I can call you that. I hope you do very well at the meet. I know the girls will be wishing you nothing but big things. It's a great group of girls we've got here. When I came in this January to replace Ms. Summers, after she'd developed breast cancer, I didn't know what to expect. But these cheerleaders do very well for themselves, like the track athletes do too.
Mr. Anderson: Thanks for saying it. You're okay too, Miss Crane, isn't she, girls?
Girls: She's worth a million bucks, Reeve.
Mr. Anderson: I didn't say she was money-rich, girls, but she is really okay.
Gigi: Yes Reeve, we know you like good-looking women. You wouldn't be a good-looking jock without that interest. But good-looking women sometimes have minds of their own. Did that ever occur to you?
Mr. Anderson: Yeah sure. Well, just came by to see how my girls are doing. Now, it's time to get ready to beat Queen of Apostles and that state record.
Thanks for cheering me up. It's been a tough day. I had to take a history exam I didn't study for, and listen to Parsons bragging up his little sister. Geez, I'd swear he's gone to the dogs these days. Used to be a top-class friend. I could get him to do almost anything. Now all he wants to do is study and stuff. Stupid kid. He's all right, but it doesn't make or break you. Nice living does. Don't you think, Miss Crane?
Miss Crane: Well, I agree with some of what you say. But studying can come in very handy eventually. And taking your sister's side sometimes can help a brother later in life. Right, Girls?
Cheerleaders: Right, Miss Crane. Brothers can be friends sometimes.
Miss Crane: Now, you'll have to excuse us, Reeve. We'll need to brush up on a few more cheers before the meet. And you've got to get ready to break that state record and everything.
Mr. Anderson: Yeah, I guess you're right. (Aside to her.) You know, Miss Crane, you and me could make a pretty good couple someday. Ever thought about that?
Miss Crane: Why, Reeve Anderson, I'm a dozen years older than you, and you have a great girlfriend with Gigi. I can't think of anything that could make you happier than her, except maybe the state record.
Mr. Anderson: Well, you may be right about that record, Miss Crane. And Gigi and I get along, I guess. It's just that I'm always thinking about bigger and better things.
Miss Crane: I'm sure you are, Reeve. It's just that I'm not necessarily a bigger and better thing for you.
(Reeve salutes her semi-mockingly and exits, as the cheerleaders go through their paces. A taped fight song breaks out. Lights dim.)

Scene 4: Donny Parsons is talking with his younger sister, who is with their mom by the school's entry/exit doors. The females have arrived to pick up Donny and take him home briefly, before he goes to the track meet. He's the student manager for the track team.

Donny: Mom, it's important for me to make that contact, if I want to go to college someday. But we've only got about ten minutes for me to phone him from home. Then, we've got to shoot over to the track meet in a hurry. I hope this works, because it's a chance to break out someday in a new, better way.
Mom: I hope so too, Donny. You've been hanging out with Reeve Anderson so long, it's a complete surprise to me you've begun studying at last. Never thought you'd do it, but I'm proud of you, Son.
Sister: Yeah, I'm proud of you too, Donny.
Donny: Thanks, Both of You. I need your support.
Mom: So, let's get moving, while your contact's still in his office.
(They jump in their car and head out. Then, the track team exits the school, wearing their track suits. Reeve stands out, with his muscular frame and good looks. He's looking for Donny, but that's from habit. Donny's already told him he would be a few minutes late to the track meet, and arriving separately. The track bus is parked nearby.)
Reeve: Geez, you guys. Ain't it about time we beat the pants off those Queen of Apostles dudes. They've had their way with St. Tom's the last two years. Now that I'm on the scene, things will change.
Deke: You may be onto something, Reeve, though I don't know exactly what yet. Seems like it's a season for change regardless.
Reeve: Well, you take care of your long-distance races, skinny-legs, and I'll lead the way from the muscular point of view, if you know what I mean.
Deke: Fraid I do, Reeve, 'fraid I do. Say, where'd you say Donny went? Home to call a college contact? God, he's only a freshman and he's already thinking about college. Got to give him some credit it seems.
Reeve: Don't know how much credit he deserves yet. College is a million miles away from him yet, and he's got a lot of jogging to do to make it there. We'll see how things go. He's been a pal to me the last few years. Don't care to think about him wandering off someplace anytime soon.
Deke: Well, he seems to have a mind of his own for a change and maybe that's not all a bad thing. Like you say, "We'll see how things go."
Bus-Driver: Load up, guys. Meet starts in 30 minutes. No more time to kill here.
Guys: Okay Jim, we're loading, we're loading. Let's hear it for old St. Tom's. (They start singing the school's fight song as they load, but then someone has another idea, and they switch to: "99 bottles of beer on the wall, 99 bottles of beer. If one of those bottles of beer should fall, there'd be 98 bottles of beer on the wall. 98 bottles of beer on the wall,...", as the bus loads and drives off. Lights out.)

Scene 5: The Parsons Home. Donny is getting ready to dial the phone. His mom and sister are there -- ready to listen to his every word.

Donny: Well, here's going nothing. Wish me luck, you two. (They do. He makes a sign of the cross, and dials.) Hello, can I speak with Prof. Dobbins. Okay, I'll wait. Geez, I hope he's in; he said now would be a good time. (Into phone-receiver.) Hello, Prof. Dobbins. Donny Parsons at St. Thomas -- you said I should phone you again soon. Good, that's what I was thinking too. School's almost out for this year, and next year I can take the entrance exams and earn more of the grades I'll need to be admitted to the UW in '68. Yes, I was also thinking, can I work through university for the Athletic Department? I'm a student manager of some teams here, and I could do more of that at university. I could. That would be great, though you may be right, by the time I start university I may have different ideas about what a good job is. Well, I'm still thinking about majoring in social psychology. I seem to like figuring out people's ideas -- why they do what they do, why they do it when they do, how they come to feel satisfied through their ideas and actions, etc. In addition to schoolwork now, I've been reading a little about Sigmund Freud and Carl Jung. They were very different men from each other, but they both had people's emotional and mental health at the heart of their work I believe. Yes, I'll apply for the college entrance exams this summer, and take them next school year, as you've suggested. I'll let you know how I'm doing in school in the meantime, and of course I'll let you know what my entrance exam scores are as soon as
I can next year. The service will pass them along to UW too. It's very decent of you to guide me through all this stuff. I'm glad Mr. Gillens, our school's guidance counselor, knew you in school, and is helping us too. Yes, I'll continue to work hard and do my best in school and on related things. Thank you for talking with me again. I'll try hard not to let you down.

Donny (to his mom and sister): He's a very nice man. I believe he's from Australia originally. Albert Dobbins is his name, and my contacts with him are helping me stay much more on the straight-and-narrow than I had been.

Mom: Yes, he seems to be a very fine and decent man. I look forward to meeting him, in about three years.

Sister: Me, too. Prof. Albert Dobbins. I already like him a lot!

Donny: You'll like him, sis. I've seen his picture, and he's got blonde hair and blue eyes and is built like a soccer star. (Kidding her.) Now, you know what soccer is, right Joan?

Joan: Yes, My Dear Big Brother, I wasn't born yesterday, though I'd guess some people were. (They chuckle together. Lights out.)

Scene 6: Track Meet, a Home Event for St. Tom's. Reeve is warming up on-deck for the discus. Donny hasn't arrived yet. The cheer-leaders are preparing to do their cheer for Reeve's first record attempt.

Gigi (to Miss Crane): After Reeve's event, with our cheers and everything too, maybe we should go cheer the distance-runners. They don't get many cheers from us generally, and they deserve some too. I know Deke Marson and his buddies will appreciate it. What do you think?

Miss Crane: That's not a bad idea. But make sure you do the cheer for Reeve properly first. He's competing for the state record versus our biggest rivals. We can't let him down now. By the way, where's Donny Parsons? He's supposed to measure the discus and shot distances today, isn't he?

Gigi: He'll be here soon, I guess. But I told him he had a phone call to make at home first. It's not supposed to take long. He'll be here as soon as he's wrapped that up. Oh, here he is now.

(Donny races in. His mom and sister have just brought him by.)

Donny to Gigi and Miss Crane: I've got to measure the distances. I know I'm just a student manager, but even student managers sometimes play big parts. Where's the measuring device? (Gigi gives it to him with a meaningful look.) Thanks, Gigi, thanks. You're a peach. (To Reeve) Throw it a mile, Reeve, throw it a g-d mile. (Reeve grins mischievously. Donny runs into the distance to get set. The cheerleaders get ready, then do their big Reeve cheer.)

(Reeve prepares himself to throw, after the cheers are done. Then says to no one in particular, or to everyone if you like: “Look out world, cuz here comes Reeve Anderson!” He spits, gathers himself fully, and then lets loose with a tremendous heave, but it is not straight up the field. In the distance, a voice can be heard shouting: “Holy Smokes, it's going to break the record for sure. What a heave!” A low clunk noise is heard, and then comes a gasp from many onlookers.)

Gigi: Oh, Reeve, you've hit Donny! In the head! Good God, how could you?!! (She rushes to Donny in the distance, as others gasp and begin to weep. Gigi eradles Donny's head in her arms as soon as she gets to him.) Oh, Donny. Hang on, please. I want you to make it through school with flying colors, and go on to university and a good life! Please, Donny, keep your eyes open.

Donny (Looks at her, with melancholy and yet also with a kind of world-wise optimism in his eyes): It's nice to find a friend like you at last, Gigi. (She kisses his forehead.) Sr. Pauline was right. Hell and Heaven can come in the same instant. It happens... (A priest enters, and with Donny's mom and sister, reaches Donny and Gigi, kneels down, and blesses the dying young man. Lights Out. End of Play.)

Journalism, Warfere's Money, and Family

In May 1984, I received my BJ Degree in Journalism from the University of Missouri, the first School of Journalism founded anywhere (in 1908). Although I no longer earn all my income from Journalism, I still depend on its lessons to do the documentary writing and photography I do. And I am still grateful I can do these things, reasonably freely, in what may still be the greatest nation in the world. However, I live in a city in which the defense industry is “alive and well”. Less than 30 miles from here is Ft. McCoy, a training ground for US troops of longstanding. I have no argument with keeping Ft. McCoy open and working. However, in the city I live at, least one major defense contractor is at work making large profits from the military. What concerns me even more is that the CEO of this company, who once said he was not interested in personal monetary profits or a big name for himself, has acquired both, and continues to, at the expense of our active troops. Yes, he is a supporter of veterans' causes, donating a million-plus dollars to the remodeling of UW-L’s Veterans Memorial Stadium, where the State Track Meet is held annually. That stadium benefits this community economically, and in other ways, too. And he supports the Freedom Honor Flights, which by WWII and more recent veterans to Washington, D.C., to visit war memorials, a good thing. Also, his business hires local workers and still keeps them employed. However, the fact his business does health screenings and immunizations for troops and reserves depends more on constant US warfare than it should. It's time his company and a few other national defense contractors, diversify a bit, and depend less on constant warfare and continual US-troop overseas deployments for their customers. I write occasional op-eds for my city's main newspaper, but even that paper has not delved into the financial considerations involved in said capitalist’s and/or his company's profits, and it should, for as long as his business is a big defense contractor. I’ve reviewed nearly 10 years of publications about that company (for the time it's been in business), and older reports, too, from when its CEO was general manager for a silk screen printing company in a nearby suburb, and can find no indications of his or his current company's profits. My only child is a US soldier in the active Army. He had various profound skills when he enlisted, and has developed some of those skills even further in the military, plus added new ones. He set aside his college work though, to train as a combat medic, because he wants to serve this country. And yet, if America were not on a constant war-footing in recent years, my son might never have to worry about the rigors of combat. The "terrorist threat" is hyped too much here, but mainly because we've been at war so long abroad, America does have enemies. We need to be vigilant, anywhere Americans or our allies are. But if we continue to send our troops into harm's way in expanding areas of engagement, we will become engulfed in World War III, not only defending our immediate hearths and homes. Our troops should be active here, but not in combat anymore than truly vital. Today we are at war in at least three other nations, and it behooves our government, to imagine, then, to take the lead, and peace, with not another drop of American blood being shed if it does not need to be. Diplomacy is more important to our national survival these days than putting more American troops into harm's way.—Written ca. 2012, by DvJM.

Our (Great) State Historical Society

Have you ever wondered who the first statewide-elected African-American-observer was, or where the first capitol of Wisconsin was, or when and where the Republican Party was founded. If you have, you can find answers to those questions on the web these days, but a lot of the early research was likely done at the Wisconsin Historical Society (WHS) in Madison. When I studied History at the UW-Madison in the 1970s, often I found myself in the book STACKS of the WHS, when I wasn't 50 yards east of it, in Memorial Library. In the WHS Library, there was a great deal of American and Wisconsin History covered in books and pamphlets -- from John Winthrop, James and Dolley Madison, and Blackhawk, to Robert La Follette and La Crosse-born former Gov. Patrick Lucey, plus a large supply of newspapers and journals, too. Little did I know then, that my own writings and photographs, and those of my family and friends, would be included in the Permanent Collection of the WHS Library and Archives, as they are now and for the foreseeable future too.
The State Historical Society is a great human enterprise. Founded in 1846, two years before Wisconsin became the 30th state, it now ranks as one of the most active, large, and diversified state historical societies in America. As both a state agency and a private membership organization, the WHS receives about 60 percent of its funding from state government. The other 40 percent derives from membership fees, admission fees, gifts, trust funds, and grants. A 36-member Board of Curators governs the Society, and its President, a few years' ago, was La Crosse's very own Patricia Boge, whose day-job is Director of Community Relations for the La Crosse Public Library. The mission of the WHS is to help people connect to the past, by collecting, preserving, and sharing stories and images. WHS Headquarters is still centrally located at the same spot on the UW-Madison Campus as it was in the 1970s, though it recently underwent some very beautiful remodeling. The WHS has various outlets, too, including the Wisconsin Historical Museum on Capitol Square, and Murphy Library at UW-La Crosse. And it maintains many historic sites around the state – Old World Wisconsin (in Eagle); Wade House (in Greenbush); Villa Louis (in Prairie du Chien); Circus World (in Baraboo); Madeline Island Museum (in La Pointe); H.H. Bennett (Photo) Studio (in Wisconsin Dells); Pendarvis (in Mineral Point); Stonefield (in Cassville); First Capitol (in Belmont); and Reed School (in Nielsville). In 1917, WHS first published the “Wisconsin Magazine of History” to celebrate all that makes our state special. Today, the WMH is a full-color quarterly magazine that informs and entertains readers with fascinating articles and illustrations about Wisconsin's culture, and the people, places, and events of Wisconsin's past. Included in it in recent years has been a beautifully illustrated article about La Crosse's own Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration and the FSPA's Mary of the Angels Chapel. In addition to Patt Boge's former Presidency of the WHS Board of Curators, local librarians and archivists like Anita Doering, LPL Archivist, and UW-L Murphy Library Area Research Center Director Paul Beck, serve on relevant advisory councils, etc. The WHS Board's Director is the Director of the WHS, each term, however, the WHS Board’s Ex Officio Director. Staff and patrons connected with college and school libraries, including UW-L's ARC, take part in that Board and in a statewide district of Area Research Centers, as well.

Although the WHS doesn't have formal ties with regular city libraries, Anita Doering points out: “It does recognize us as being a documents repository for municipal historical records, and also government reports, too. Records are generally unpublished, like dog and cat licenses, liquor licenses, etc. – as opposed to reports, which would likely be published.” About 10 years ago, my personal contacts with the WHS resumed. Soon, WHS archivists began visiting me, to accept donations of materials from among my writings, photos, books, and papers. At least 30 books I've authored and/or directed/edited are now in the WHS Collection, plus many hundreds of my photos and a couple by my son (Matthew) too, plus articles and letters I've written and/or received over the last 30 years or so. There are various ways to search details about an author, photographer, and/or various contributor on the WHS Website; begin by going to: www.wisconsinhistory.org – from there, a world of opportunities to learn more about the past, present, and future of our state, nation, and world, reside. I hope you enjoy your visits to the WHS, via the Web and/or in person. Enjoy safe and rewarding travels!—Written ca.2014, by DvJM.

The 1980s: Learning the News Business in Tough Yet Helpful Ways

Two quotations. The first belongs to the late Sir Winston Churchill, who, when asked as a young man for his reaction to New York City, said just seven words: “Newspaper too thick, lavyatory paper too thin.” The second belongs to the Great American Buying Public: “Will it sell in Peoria?” Now, it’s hoped this article will sell widely, including in Peoria, New York City, London, and my hometown La Crosse. If it doesn’t make a decent splash in those places, it won’t be for lack of perseverance or good faith. I’ve worked very hard 34 years, telling as many people as possible, the story of Bert Hardy and James Cameron, two great journalists who made 1981’s London autumn the most memorable three months of my life. My grades had been abysmal at Mizzou that year, but I still entertained hopes of righting myself in the J-School’s London Graduate Reporting Program as an intern at the London Sunday Times. My grades in that program would turn out poorly though, not because I wasn’t writing quality stories, I was, but because I wrote only eight stories not the required 12. I assisted some of my program mates by taking photos for their stories more than maybe I should have. In fact, I’d been working at photography less than two years, and was very keen on taking many pictures of the UK’s people and sights then. Several years later, when I taught adults writing and photography at Western Technical College, the first item I put on their professional tips list was, “Before the interview, research your subject…” That may seem obvious, but I was at a loss as to Hardy and Cameron in late 1981, not because I failed to try to research their careers, but because there just wasn’t anything easily available on them in libraries I checked. The moderator of my program, Sunday Times editor John H. Whale, said about Cameron, “the name sounds a bit familiar, but I can’t quite place it”, when in fact, Mr. Whale’s colleague Sally Soames let me know about Hardy early that semester, though I didn’t make the connection right away, and Cameron was also very famous among British journalists as Hardy’s partner; Mr. Whale was a long-time British journalist then. It seems now John Whale wanted me to really earn the Hardy-Cameron story that I’d relate many times in various ways in future.

Any good reporter must research, interview, write about, and photograph their subject/s to get to the heart of each truthful, detail-rich story. And every journalistic report requires empathy, even compassion, as well as balanced curiosity and basic facts. Your author knows this, Any good journalist then. It seems now John Wha...
When JC answered the door (3 Eton College Road), he asked if I was Mr. Markham, maybe since the name Markham figures into his life-story more than once. Though I no longer know where my notes are from the Hardy and Cameron interviews (I may have even tape-recorded the JC interview and may not have taken notes there, though I don’t recall hearing his words on my recorder), I remember key details about those meetings, including what may or may not be an apocryphal quotation from Gen. MacArthur, when Hardy and Cameron apparently popped in on the UN Commander in Korea without warning – “Godammit, now what are you two doing here?” I learned of the two very famous coverages Hardy and Cameron collaborated on in 1950 Korea – at Pusan, where they discovered UN atrocities (that story was yanked from the presses by PP owner Sir Edward Hulton, who didn’t want to give aid and comfort to the enemy), and “Inchon”, their dramatic coverage of the dusky, treacherous landing by sea and land (only possible on two separate days each year due to the tides), which was the pivotal Korean War battle for the UN side. But I didn’t feel like my interview with JC was complete, so I phoned him a day or two later to set up another interview-time; his housekeeper or wife said he wasn’t feeling well. So I ended up sending him a letter with my questions in it later, and he dutifully answered, though not in great detail. In the coming years, I stayed in fairly close contact with the HARDs and employed Bert’s darkroom for many black-and-white prints of my photos. The Hardys even sent my son and me a personalized BH-photo-postcard each Christmas until a couple years after Bert died (July 3, 1995). James Cameron, though, died in Jan. 1985, when I was working for South Korea’s Yonhap News Agency; his widow, a while later, remarried and apparently returned to her native India. Since Cameron had written the monumental obituary essay upon the death of King George VI in 1952, “The King Is Dead”, for the London Illustrated News, I wrote a long obituary essay about JC’s life and death soon after his own demise. Ed White, AP’s Seoul Bureau Chief (who’d also famously directed AP’s Saigon Bureau during that war), suggested I show it to the British Ambassador; but I was going through tough times due to being unable to obtain the right medicine for my ailment. (I did learn a lot about journalism in Seoul and tensions on the peninsula too, but couldn’t easily apply all those lessons until a while later.) I placed the essay among my things, and lost track of it until spring 2015, when I was wrapping up my five-volume series of books on Picture Post, Bert Hardy, and James Cameron with my bio on JC. That obituary essay (updated a bit) became the Afterword to my new bio “James Cameron’s World (1911-1985)”. As years passed, many tributes were accorded Hardy and Cameron. Bert’s photos, writings, and award-plaques have been displayed and covered widely; and James’s books, articles, play, and BBC series have acquired fair audiences too. One JC book that stands out for American readers in particular is “Here Is Your Enemy”, the result of his five-part Dec. 1965 series in the New York Times soon after he became the first western freelancer to go to Hanoi during the war. Britain never declared war on North Vietnam, so though some famous US journalists called JC a “traitor”, he was actually doing a superb job of reporting what hadn’t been reported in the West yet the “other side’s” point of view. Three years later, many of those same US journalists and Walter Cronkite, were agreeing with JC’s Vietnam assessments. As a result of that perhaps as much as anything else, a prestigious journalism prize and lecture are given annually in the UK in James Cameron’s honor. The first lecture in 1987 (my son’s birth-year) was given by Washington Post executive editor Ben Bradlee. — This was written in 2015 but revised & updated often in various ways and lengths before and since, including in books since 1981, by DvJM.

Mayor Uses Personal Approach in Campaigning for La Crosse

In support of city, Zielke is aggressive in seeking grants, aiding business.

La Crosse, Wis.—When G. Heileman Brewing Co. came under fire recently from protesters who said its potent new PowerMaster malt liquor was being targeted irresponsibly at black males, La Crosse Mayor Patrick Zielke quickly began working behind the scenes.

Zielke, mayor of this Mississippi River city of about 50,000 for the past 16 years, set up a meeting between Heileman Chief Executive Officer Thomas Rattigan and two Chicago priests who had been arrested for picketing the La Crosse brewery over the company’s marketing of PowerMaster.

The issue became moot when, on the day of the meeting, the US Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms prohibited the company from using the controversial brand name once its current supply of the product had been sold.

But the controversy points out, some say, why voters keep Zielke in the mayor’s office. He got involved to defuse a controversy that was casting Heileman’s name – and, subsequently, the city’s – in a negative light.

While he has his detractors, his supporters say Zielke is the city’s biggest booster, and keeping La Crosse, as he calls it, the “nation’s No. 1 small city,” is at the top of his agenda.

“Since he became mayor, he’s been very aggressive and promoted the city,” said Dave Geske, president of the Common Council. “I think he’s done an exceptional job.”

Steve Carlson, corporate attorney for Heileman, called Zielke’s intervention in the PowerMaster dispute helpful. “The mayor’s always been very supportive of Heileman, and he is supportive of the business community in general,” Carlson said.

After serving as alderman for nine years, Zielke defeated Mayor W. Peter Gilbertson in 1986 and began his uninterrupted leadership of the city. He was unopposed in the last election, in 1989, and none of the challenges he has had since being elected have been close.
Zielke’s personal style is laid back. Yet his aggressive economic pursuits have led to economic development in the city.

“We don’t want growth at any cost, because some [forms of] growth may not be good for us. But we do want growth that fits La Crosse,” Zielke said.

Zielke has helped to obtain much of the $80 million in state and federal grants that La Crosse has garnered during the past 20 years. He also helped boost construction of at least two large projects, the 10-story First Bank Building and the Valley View Mall.

“Most of what you see in the city is something he’s had an important role and influence in,” said Stanton M. Jorgens, president of the First Bank of La Crosse.

The mayor also has been influential in making tourism a city priority. He was a prime mover in building the La Crosse Civic Center, which has an 8,000-seat auditorium where the Continental Basketball Association’s La Crosse Catbirds play their home games, and the Radisson Hotel. Both are in the revitalized downtown. Now he would like another hotel downtown.

For the past few years, Zielke has been pushing to have a privately financed baseball stadium built in the city, to help lure a minor league team.

A referendum question last year on the issue was defeated, even though, as he puts it, the stadium “Wouldn’t have cost the taxpayer a cent.” The stadium proposal was voted down, 6,632 to 4,374.

Troubles in Paradise

Currently, near the Valley View Mall on the northeast side, Zielke is pushing hard to “hold the line” by challenging the annexation of the Town of Medary by the City of Onalaska.

Zielke said he was “fighting fire with fire” with Onalaska by threatening to ask the Common Council to cut off Onalaska’s use of La Crosse’s sewage treatment facility. He says it would cost the neighbor city to the north $50 million to build its own sewage treatment plant.

Onalaska Ald. George Osterhout said the Town of Medary annexation was “a matter of free choice” by the residents, not a land grab. “It was a unanimous petition by the residents involved in the annexation that brought them into the City of Onalaska,” Osterhout said.

La Crosse has not been without other problems during Zielke’s tenure.

The city’s police arrested about 150 people during a riot in April stemming from the Coon Creek Canoe Race and Festival. The Oktoberfest each fall is a continuing problem, producing crowds of unruly drinkers.

And despite Zielke’s perpetual popularity in the polls, he is not popular with everyone.

“He has been in office way too long,” said Linda K. Heisler, a former Common Council president who was defeated in the spring election. Heisler calls him a “tyrant” who gets his way “by bullying and coercing people.”

“I tend to be a people person and he tends to promote things that benefit the wealthy, not the ordinary people of the city of La Crosse,” Heisler said.—

Mayor Amid Hard Issues -- From Annexation to 'Berlin Strasse,' La Crosse's Medinger Faces Controversy

New Mayor John Medinger boasts that he has "been in politics since I was 12."

He's 49 now, and he'll need all 37 years of political experience to help weave answers to the many controversies he's in -- controversies both inherited and invited.

Medinger was elected mayor this year. He succeeds someone who held the job for 22 years, but his last name is a household word in this city with a population of almost 52,000.

His father, Donald, sat on the Common Council, and the mayor himself served as a Democratic member of the state Assembly for 16 years before he quit in 1992. After that, he was a western Wisconsin staff member for U.S. Sen. Russ Feingold (D-Wis.).

"I handed out literature for John F. Kennedy in 1960, and that's what got me started," recalled Medinger, who is paid about $55,000 a year as mayor.

Now, however, even the political veteran seems a little besieged.

Berlin Strasse

A few weeks ago, Medinger proposed renaming a city street Berlin Strasse, which angered some constituents. After a La Crosse TV station asked for viewers' reactions, 19 of every 20 callers opposed the change.
Medinger defended his idea, saying the street's name was changed from Berlin St. to Liberty St. during World War I, and it was time to right the wrong done to German-American residents.

The idea was referred to the Common Council's street designation committee, where it can be studied further.

When the city's Historic Sites Commission attempted to designate Holy Trinity Church, where the mayor worships, a historic landmark, Medinger broke the council's tie, voting against it.

For Medinger, the vote was "a very brave thing," noted the Rev. Larry Berger, Holy Trinity's priest. The Diocese of La Crosse did not want the church to be so designated, and was willing to go to court to fight it.

Other issues won’t go away as easily, however, including:

--Actions by the city's Redevelopment Authority to buy up used land and redevelop it to be leased by businesses.
--The possible extension of La Crosse bus routes to nearby municipalities.
--A possible parking ramp and housing project downtown.
--The suggested construction of a new north-south traffic corridor through city neighborhoods and wetlands.
--The possible annexation of Nakomis Ave. from a next-door neighbor, the Town of Campbell, to build a new water main that could increase La Crosse's water supply and allow city water to be sold to annexed residents.

For a medium-size city, La Crosse is unique: It has large businesses, two hospitals, a four-year University of Wisconsin campus and a developing health-care complex, but it has geographic limits -- the Mississippi River on the west and bluffs on the east -- and political limits in the ring of municipalities that prevent growth by La Crosse.

Dan Herber, 26, who lost to Medinger in the April election, said annexation isn't necessary because La Crosse can still grow internally. "The question is not (if) we will grow, but how we will grow," Herber said, citing tight controls used in Portland, Ore.

Common Council President Bernard Maney said the new mayor is "moving along fine." "He's talked with the Delta Queen Co.,” Maney said. "And he's finalized the Holiday Inn Suites development that will add $5 million to the tax roll.”—By David J. Marcou, Special to the Milwaukee Journal Sentinel

A Man I Needed to Meet at Camp Randall Memorial Stadium

While I was working as a student-manager/trainer for the UW-Madison Football Team ca. 1969-70, the team and staff came off the field at Camp Randall Stadium one afternoon from practice. Of course the stands were empty, because it was a weekday, and it may have even been a spring practice, not a summer or fall one. I entered the locker-room, and one of my fellow managers said to me, “Hey Dave, there’s a man in the stands you should meet. He’s sitting alone right by our entryway.” It didn’t take me long to head up to meet him, though I had no idea who he was. The man I shook hands with said his name was Milton. He was a somewhat large man physically (at least larger than 5‘9”, 160 lb. me then). Now, his was a good literary name, but as we talked, it became clearer, if not crystalline, to me, that this was more than an average Milton. This Milton had lived in Kansas and various other places, and had been president of three very good US universities, though that came out only gradually: Kansas State, Penn State, and Johns Hopkins. He’d been married and had family. He said family was very important to him, and I agreed it was important to me as well. He asked a bit about my family, and we talked a bit more. Although his wife had died, their son and daughter were still living, apparently. It was not an era when the internet reigned supreme, so when I learned his family name was Eisenhower, I knew that was not a common name and also belonged to a great US general and president. I believe Milton E. said he was Dwight’s brother, but it didn’t strike me that he did. If we talked about his government service during WWII, I can’t recall, though we may have broached that topic briefly, too. I thought him a nice man, but didn’t think much more of meeting him the next 30 years or so. Around 2000, I thought more about this Milton, and wrote a story about my meeting him (we’d actually spoken that day 20-30 minutes), sending it to “American Heritage”, because that magazine had a guest column space then that had to do with bumping up against history. That column-article by me was apparently not published there.

However, Milton Eisenhower’s WWII government service came into play in summer 2009, when I was working on a long article about the great documentary photographer Dorothea Lange, which has since been published, titled: “Photographic Equality: Dorothea Lange, Her Migrant Mother, and the Nisei Internees”. Apparently, Milton Eisenhower was her boss a short time in spring 1942 when he directed the War Relocation Authority, and Ms. Lange photographed Nisei internees. Milton Eisenhower was reluctant to lead that office, because he was in charge of putting Japanese-Americans into concentration camps, when he’d been led to believe earlier they would be sent to more freely settle homestead farms in the interior. But interior-states’ governors objected to the latter plan and Milton directed the penning up of the Nisei instead. Although he tried to make the internments as liberal as possible, he felt frustrated, and resigned after only a few months’ in charge, stating his regrets in a letter to a former boss, before he resigned. To make a long story short, during the Red purge of the 1950s, Milton Eisenhower was accused of being a communist, which might have embarrassed most other presidents he might have been the brother to, but not Ike; President Eisenhower knew his brother well. Milton continued his university work, and today a large center at each of the universities he was president of, is named in his honor. In retrospect, it was an honor for me to have met Milton Eisenhower, who died in 1985. His grand-niece, Mary J. Eisenhower, Dwight’s granddaughter, would write the Introduction to an anthology I directed/edited in 2006, “Spirit of the World”. I am grateful to all the Eisenhowers for what they’ve done for this country, and for me and my family, too. I’m also grateful for the direct and indirect educations my son and I have been receiving over the years, because life educates us all, in many ways.—Written ca. 2010, by DvJM.

Mr. Twain Would Have Sworn

In the spring of 1984, five students went on a camping trip to southern Missouri. They were a mixed group – a young Muslim married couple, two young Christian-raised men, and a Jewish woman in her thirties. They’d been good friends that university-semester, and would still be good friends, if they lived in closer proximity now.

Their names were Rahjib, Faridah, David, David, and Judith.
En route to their camping spot the five soon stopped at a bar south of Jefferson City, and after they’d seated themselves and plugged the jukebox, the bartender called one of the Davids over, and told him politely, but with the considerable authority the regulars in the bar gave him that night, that though that David would ordinarily be welcome, some of his friends weren’t. This David said he’d leave, too, should his friends need to leave. Consulting with his friends, the group left for their camping ground.

The friends’ car sped down the highway in case any bar-regulars were following, and eventually found a likely camping spot. But some in the group wouldn’t sleep in the tent; the area turned out to be rife with wildlife (well, at least big crickets and small snakes), and so three of them slept in the car. Little rested next morning, it was decided they should head back to Columbia and the University of Missouri.

The group continued seeing each other until summer, but when the two Davids graduated and headed to South Korea to work for the national news agency, the group broke up. The Muslim couple moved back to their homeland of Malaysia and had a baby. Judith, who’d earned three Masters degrees, likely moved to Israel for a time.

One David used to take breaks while studying in the Journalism Library, and smoked cigarettes in the hall. Rahjib would come by and sing “Autumn Leaves”. He had a wicked sense of humor, but was decent-enough. (When it comes to Rahjib, think of what Albert Brooks said: unless you see it in the flesh, two words, comedy and Muslim, don’t seem to fit together; but they can, and do.)

The five rarely if ever discussed Middle East hostilities, though they did occasionally discuss that camping foul-up. Once, Judith insisted they all go to a film on campus about US imperialism in Central America, which Mark Twain would have understood the gist of and criticized roundly. Come to think of it, Mr. Twain [or Yosemite Sam for that matter] wouldn't have been too happy with that bartender, either; I'd guess he'd have done what he did when he shaved -- use "verbal helps" (swearing) to carry through. He probably would have said to him: "Well, now, Barkeep, what in the flap-doodling do you think you're doing, telling us we should all leave, because two of us ain't the right flap-doodling color for you and your redneck cronies. How darr you? Why, you've made me descend to the thought of putting on a six-gun and shooting me living flap-doodling out of this whole place. Get my flap-doodling drift?"

Maybe that's what the gang of five should have done that night, instead of being so obliging. And then, let whatever might have happened, happen -- broken glass, bullet holes, winged people, and all.

Back to our scholarly friend, Judith. Often, Judith was so broke or just so tight with her money, she’d sit with the others in restaurants near the Journalism School, mixing hot water with free ketchup and saltine crackers. Only once was Judith seen by them to eat any personally paid-for food, a big ice cream cone (unless someone else bought it for her). The two Davids, I believe, were sitting on a campus bench, and watched her and a friend walk several blocks towards them, going into an ice cream shop along the way. Judith was just a little bit of a thing, so her huge cone looked humorous, as she quaintly sauntered up, nibbling at it, atop her tiny mitt.

As you may have guessed, I’m… the David the bartender talked with. And he had commented on the brown skin of my Malaysian friends. As for the snakes and smaller creatures, they'd not have seemed so frightening if we’d not have thought rednecks had been after us, speeding down that unfamiliar highway.

Everyone [has fears, especially] if they're in the wrong place at the wrong time; even Mr. Twain sometimes did; a lot depends on whom we befriend, where, and how much we’re willing to stick together. I wish I were still in contact with the other three old friends, and hope to be again, some day. My best friend from Mizzou, though, is the other David -- he lives in Kansas, and we’ve been good friends more than 25 years.

Muslim, Christian, Jew, and Redneck -- let's all try to get along together.—Written in 2010 by DuJM, and included in a group of La Crosse Tribune commentary essays/guest columns by DuJM that were nominated for a Pulitzer Prize in early 2011.

Mr. Yang’s Advice

Thirty years ago this month, I arrived as lead English-language copy-editor for South Korea’s national news agency, Yonhap. YNA’s Mr. Yang (sounds like Yahng) told me in Seoul’s airport, “take no photos in this country” -- unusual words from a fellow alum of the world’s first journalism school, Missouri’s. I’d begun my 35mm work in 1979 and took portraits of Korean War photo-ace Bert Hardy in 1981 (now in Britain’s National Portrait Gallery Collection). Why quit? Others’ photos of Koreans seemed somber, so I photographed some smiling Koreans. Today, many know Gangnam-Style, top women golfers, Kia mini-cars, and UN leader Ban Ki-Moon are South Korean; but South Koreans were repressed in 1984. Like today’s cell-journalists, I learned photo-documenting by “blending in”. YNA’s Mr. Sun arranged my one-man Han Madang Gallery show for that December; a YNA photographer printed my images. The opening’s attendees included Ed White, AP Seoul bureau chief, who’d led AP’s much-decorated staff in Vietnam too; Hyun So-Hwan, my international desk boss and soon Yonhap president; friends David Johns and Yi Do-Sun; and 3-4 gal-friends of mine. My show was set for 10 days; Mr. Yang helped me move my photos back to my apartment after it. By mid-1985, I’d photographed a wedding; the National Museum; traditional Kyongju; a little girl and her mom on a bus; a man in an alley impressed by my camera; leading South Koreans; and Mother Teresa (now St. Teresa of Calcutta). In December 1986, I married my second wife there. 1988 saw Seoul’s Olympics, but we were by then living in Wisconsin. Today, my half-Korean-ancestry son and his wife are doing well. Maybe Mr. Yang didn’t really mean take no photos, but rather -- be patient, persistent, accurate, fair, and careful crossing borderlines.—Written in Aug. 2014, by DuJM.

My Best History Teachers

It’s my hope history will be kind to me, my family, and my works. Churchill suggested one antidote to others’ bias toward one’s self: “History will be kind to me,” he said, “for I intend to write it myself.” Aside from the earliest stories my mom read me, my first doses of history came in La Crosse's St. James Grade School when I read about the crusades for the Holy Land, Genghis Khan, Joan of Arc, the Milwaukee Braves, Wisconsin Badgers, and Green Bay Packers. But I'd attended kindergarten at Franklin School the first year it had been built (1955), so our teacher may have read us a story about Ben Franklin too. When I attended Aquinas High School (1964-1968), we had good history teachers -- Sisters Paulinda and Geneva, Phil Hahn, and Dave Reinders, plus
Latin teachers who relied on Julius Caesar’s diaries a bit. These teachers all employed smart maneuvers, illustrations, maps, and good stories. They were almost as good at teaching history as Jack Nockels was at teaching freshman English.

Still, it was three years at UW-Madison before I stumbled into the ancient history classes taught by Charles Edson and did well. I’d been majoring in engineering, then science, then business, and early took a one-credit history of science class too. My UW grades had been poor early, but I loved history and took 4-5 classes in American Cultural History from Dan Rodgers, who’d author bestselling "Atlantic Crossings", about intellectual and social currents between Europe and America. Southern Agrarian Paul Conkin taught me American Intellectual History. Both men taught me to analyze memoirs, novels, photos, and movies historically and aesthetically. I studied the American Revolution and Articles of Confederation with Norman Risjord, but winced publicly when Native Americans were omitted -- I circulated a protest-statement about that, and Prof. Risjord may have then included comments about Native Americans. George Mosse, whose Jewish family included prominent publishers in pre-WWII Germany, taught us about the remarkable 1914 Christmas Truce of WWI. And my long paper on the American Civil War's antecedents for Peter Kolchin earned an A. I ended that paper with a Union Soldier's quote, "The whole South is the grave of [nullificationist] John C. Calhoun." I studied American theatre history with Esther Jackson in graduate school; she'd authored the first book about Tennessee Williams' plays. I enrolled in Anglo-Irish drama history with Bart Friedman. Richard Elwood, who would become president of Boston's Emerson College; Tom Ryan, who went on to become a literary adviser for the National Theatre of Britain; and Robert Skloot, whose readings list included Machiaveli's “The Prince”, taught me European theatre history. I studied American Art History with James Dennis. Earning my MA in American Studies (History and Literature) at the University of Iowa (1977-1978), Albert Stone, Jon Walton, Linda Kerber, Sherman Paul, Lee Folsom, and Rich Horwitz taught me about African-American, Women’s, and American Literary History. John Raeburn taught me how to historically and aesthetically dissect American detective novels. At Missouri's Journalism School, 1980-1984, John H. Whale, William Taft, and Karen List (Ph.D., UW) taught me media history. Dale Spencer taught me media law. Veita Jo Hampton and Angus McDougall taught me the history and techniques of photojournalism. In-between in La Crosse, I did a photo-essay about St. Rose Convent for Roger Grant’s UW-L class. Also at Mizzou, Soon-Sung Cho taught me far eastern US foreign policy’s history -- after I'd moved to Seoul, he became an apartment-mate, before he entered the National Assembly and became a senior adviser to South Korean presidents. I returned briefly to Iowa in 1993, and Hanno Hardt taught me how to write about photojournalism history with more passion and accuracy. I'd earlier written of Sir Thomas More's "Utopia" for UW's William Sachse. Prof. Sachse noted I'd omitted More's anti-Semitism, but otherwise liked my paper. Since then, I've had more Jewish connections; and my daughter-in-law's heritage includes Jewish-American.

Now, I add my writings and photos to top archives many places. I'm grateful to relevant archivists, subjects, sponsors, and publishers, and to the key role of great teachers, especially here history teachers, in my education. They all taught me to do good work one step at a time, including my most familiar teachers -- my parents, my siblings, and eventually, my son and his wife. My other relatives and friends have often taught me history too. Thank you all for your contributions to many people’s educations, including mine.—Written ca. 2012, by DvJM.

My Earliest Christmases

It was Midnight Mass, circa 1961, my first time marching with small candles and other altar boys to our seats in the front pews at La Crosse’ s St. James Church, unfortunately before there were altar girls. But in the darkness, there was surplus candlelight. On the Christophers' TV show in those days, they sang, "If everyone lit just one little candle, what a bright world this would be." It was a precious time to be a kid, male or female.

I also have memories from those holidays of singing in the choir, but I know I also marched with the altar boys for 3-4 Midnight Masses, because we each received a huge box of Snirkelettes candy after Mass, with me stirring the prized treats home as fast as my old Schwinn 3-speed would take me, and spending all night munching on them on the couch (not where I normally slept), waiting for Santa to appear. We made it rough on Santa; most of us seven Marcou kids were camped wherever there'd be the best chance of hearing the great personage, so we'd wake and catch sight of him, every kid's dream then.

I never really wanted an air-rifle like "Christmas Story" Ralphie, but I'd have played with one if received. I did receive a microscope once, and hockey skates another time. I wasn't super-scientific with the microscope, but there were intriguing things to peruse. The skates would have been perfect, except I couldn't balance on them. My brothers and I also received a vibrating football game (I'd guess Dad's idea, a good one too), plus toy soldiers, and bikes, though my own bike ironically as the oldest were second hand, unlike some of my brothers'. Our younger sisters received dolls and doll-supplies, plus coloring books and cut-out books. But we each only received one "big" present each year -- then generally came the socks, underwear, and candy-and-fruit stockings.

Our neighborhood contained some shady characters year-round, according to Mom. We had tough Dennis Behm, wise Jeff Cason and his younger sisters, hard-working Scott La Fleur, shrewd Hal Delaney and his sisters, older/plenty-of-spending-money Dave Smith, and the Stein and Severson brothers. Though my mom was a friend of Jim McDougle's mom, my mom swore Jim was a very shady character. Maybe that came from Jim’s grandparents, whom they lived with. The Stones worked at Rubber Mills, and Grandma Stone swore like the dirtiest sailor you ever heard. When she let loose, with her fierce twin chihuahuas snapping, LOOK OUT, because there was real danger ahead! Unfortunately, one of Jim's sisters would be killed in an armed robbery downtown at the savings and loan where she worked. She was older than Jim, and nice.

It wouldn't be Christmas time though, if we kids hadn't aimed a few snowballs at passing cars and kids. Today, you'd be hung and quartered for hitting a car, especially if you caused damage or an accident. Luckily, we kids could run like the wind then. I doubt that impressed the girls much, but they could be impressed, especially if you had plenty of spending money or a neat haircut. Santa, of course, was tops in their book; same with us boys.

Dad was a skilled meat-cutter and Mom a great cook; we always have eaten well at Christmastime, a custom we're still grateful for, especially when my son and his wife visit. Early on, I was also grateful for my paper-route customers, who'd tip more generously that season. One Christmas, I spent a long time viewing the indoor church creche closeup. Holy music played, and it was just so peaceful and decent, I wished it would last all year round. That memorable moment has been repeated countless times over the years I guess for many people, including me.—Written in Dec. 2013, by DvJM.

My Parents and Family as Photo Inspirations

My mother was the first photographer I ever knew. Rose C. Muskat Marcou used box-cameras with disposable flashbulbs atop them, early on. Although there were many photos of friends and family taken by my mom (and possibly, my dad, too), in our Family Album, the first photo of me, as far as I know, shows my dad holding me, when I was a baby. About three years later, Mom took a nice photo of me and my two next-oldest brothers, Dennis and Dan, wearing nifty overalls on a big green chair (I guess I remember the color of the chair; it's black-and-white in the picture). Dan, the youngest, was posed in front (seated), with Dennis and I sitting behind him. As the years passed and our family grew, Tom, Diane, Lynn, and Mary Kate were also included in pics.
Mom's cameras changed their look and uses, with small Kodak 110 cameras coming on in the 1960s and/or 1970s, and thereafter for many years, along with slightly larger cameras, including 35mm point-and-shoots, and now Mom has a digital camera while my siblings and our children use phone-cameras too. There had been a studio portrait made of the nine of us while I was still in high school, I believe; maybe I was just starting college then. However, it wasn't until Memorial Day 1997 before my son, Matt, took a nice group portrait of the nine of us by one of the lilac bushes in my parents' yard. He did so with my 35mm K1000 Pentax film camera, and I'd 'guess that camera had Kodak 400 or 800 ASA film in it then. I often liked Mom's portraits of people, because usually the people in them were smiling, and not looking too unnatural when they were. The family portrait my son made in 1997 is very nice, because the composition is excellent and everyone has a natural-looking smile on their face. I taught my son how to use a camera starting in early 1991, when he was 3-1/2 years old. Over the years, he's taken many good photos. My siblings and their families also take good pics, including my brother Dan, who documented police work with writings and photos when he directed training for the La Crosse Police Department. And my brother Tom has always been a good artist, and has a good eye for photos, too, as does his wife, Joy. A number of my nieces and nephews are also good photographers, including my brother Dennis's daughter, Jacqui. Over the years, the Marcou Family has always been interested in good photos, including the taking of them. I'm grateful to be part of a very photogenic and photographic family, many members of which can also write well.—Written a few years ago, by DuJM.

John Medinger: Man of the People

City observers recently wondered why former La Crosse Mayor John Medinger began in, then withdrew from, the 2013 mayoral race. At age 64 and as retiring Sen. Herb Kohl's western Wisconsin assistant, John decided he'd serve the people best, working for Kohl-successor, Sen. Tammy Baldwin. John Medinger loves public service. The son of a hard-working World War II veteran (hence, the son's interest in Veterans' causes) and wife, he graduated Aquinas HS and UW-La Crosse before entering VISTA. Then John was elected State Assemblyman for eight, two-year terms. In 1991, my Milwaukee Journal tribute about Mayor Patrick Zielke was entered into the US Congressional Record (S12810). In 1997, Pat passed the baton to John, cut from similar cloth. I wrote about John's then-new job for the Milwaukee paper, and later interviewed him about mysterious river-deaths, police picketers, Oktoberfest, etc. In 2000, I directed-edited a history, "Spirit of La Crosse." John and City Planner Larry Kirch wrote the closing chapter "Millennial Prospects." All three dozen or so book co-authors did their jobs well. John also has contributed to our "Spirit of America" series. Our former mayor is friendly, wise, and with wife Dee has a good family. He attended an event as an honored guest of mine at Becker Plaza, where I live. John listens to others' opinions and votes his conscience, but I wish he agreed with me that Bin Laden should have been captured alive to extract a peace treaty. If John Medinger runs for office's again, I plan on voting for him again. He's a great public servant and friend.—Written in 2013 by DuJM. John and I began a monthly lunch group in 2014; others in it include Mark Felker, Joe Kotnour, Roger A. Grant, Kerry Hruska, Bill Harnden, Jeff Daines, and David W. Johns.

People Achieving History

Danica Patrick was born in Beloit in 1982 and commenced kart-racing at 10. She left school early, earning her GED. Danica is the top-finishing woman so far at the Indy 500 (3rd) and Daytona 500 (8th), after becoming first-class student to earn No. 1 Pole Position at Daytona. I photographed a gracious Ms. Patrick at the National Press Club in 2012.

Born to scrappy Pennsylvania parents, Bo Ryan has coached UW-Madison Men's Basketball-ers to 12 NCAA Tournaments in 12 years. UW had been there only seven times before, winning the 1941 title. When Aquinas HS State Champ Team Leader/Player of the Year Bronson Koenig starts for UW, we hope he'll help lead Bo's Badgers to more titles. I worked for UW's Athletic Department 1969-73, and wins then in football and basketball were very rare. I'm more grateful now.

When Bobby Messenger fell from a lorry, buddy Bert Hardy accompanied him to hospital for stitches. Bert left school at 14 to work full-time. His family is excellent and everyone has. John also has contributed to our "Spirit of America" series. Our former mayor is friendly, wise, and with wife Dee has a good family. He attended an event as an honored guest of mine at Becker Plaza, where I live. John listens to others' opinions and votes his conscience, but I wish he agreed with me that Bin Laden should have been captured alive to extract a peace treaty. If John Medinger runs for office's again, I plan on voting for him again. He's a great public servant and friend.—Written in 2013 by DuJM. John and I began a monthly lunch group in 2014; others in it include Mark Felker, Joe Kotnour, Roger A. Grant, Kerry Hruska, Bill Harnden, Jeff Daines, and David W. Johns.

Good people helped by God also include our family and friends – everyday heroes producing positive achievements in history.—Written in 2013, by DuJM.

Recalling Good Teachers

Though some teachers are criticized today for their unions, poor classroom records, off-hours activities, etc., many of us have been fortunate to have studied with great teachers, though most of us haven't attended an Ivy League school or a top university abroad. My favorite early teacher was Sr. Valeria, who I believe was the nun who saw to my classmates creating a little book for me (ca.1956), when I was laid-up several months with rheumatic fever. I'd attended Franklin kindergarten (Mrs. Becker was a good teacher), and the Franciscan Sisters of Perpetual Adoration taught me at St. James Grade and Aquinas High Schools. And I'll never forget Jack “No-A” Nockels, who gave me an A in Freshman English, his wickedly difficult class; Sr. Carola, who helped me write good essays; and Sr. Geneva, a well-rounded history teacher. After counseling at Aquinas with Lee Gilbert, I moved to UW-Madison in 1968, studying history with Dan Rodgers, who teaches at Princeton and writes top books on social/intellectual history. We spoke often about my parents' strong work ethic. George Mosse, the noted cultural historian whose family members included famous publishers in Germany before some of them fled the Nazis, was another of my teachers, though I audited his class, not taking it for a grade. After graduation came theatre classes at UW; Esther Jackson advised me. She wrote the first book about Tennessee Williams' plays and had a brilliant mind for aesthetics, history, etc. Also, Tom Ryan taught me theatre history, and suggested I attend Sean O'Casey’s "Juno and the Paycock," which has had a profound influence on my playwriting. In autumn 1977, I left for the University of Iowa, enrolling in American Studies. Though Prof. Rich Horwitz knew me best then, I respected all my teachers, including John Raeburn, Al Stone, and African-American historian Jon Walton who died young. Prof. Walton was cautious with words, but keen with insights. In 1980, I enrolled at Missouri's Journalism School, history's first. My teachers included the Missouri Group of Authors (all four of them; my advisor was that group’s Daryl Moen), plus Barb Luebke, a former "Professor in the Newsroom" for the La Crosse Tribune. John H. Whale, the London advisor for the J-School and my editor there, reported for Sunday Times. For him, I interviewed the radical Welsh educators "The Teachers" in London. Mr. Whale was my literary mentor; he corresponded until his death in 2008; he taught me how to keep in touch with life, family, work. In the early 1980s, I learned photography from Roger Grant, Jim Southworth, Veita Jo Hampton, Angus McDougall (its "dear" then, who only let his general discontent with me get out of hand sometimes) and Catholic journalism from Msgr. Bernard McGarty. These teachers challenged all students to develop their own ways of learning, thinking, teaching, and doing, and suggested what the human spirit is. All won awards and published. Students seldom knew their politics, but all contributed well to their communities. They are all unforgettable, as are my son's best teachers -- plus everyday people too, not paid to teach, but who teach well, nonetheless. In addition, the Vince Lombardis and Mother Teresas of the world have taught us, as well. Thank You, Teachers, One and All!—Written ca. 2010 and polished in early 2017, by DuJM.
Operatic Entrance
As Paris feted Queen Elizabeth II, photographer Bert Hardy found a circumstance to match her pomp


(Bert Hardy/Picture Post/Getty Images, photographer)

By David J. Marcou
Smithsonian Magazine | Subscribe
March 2007

The sun was setting on their empires, but neither the British nor the French were going quietly. The two powers, not always the closest of allies, had just tried to thwart Egypt's plans to nationalize the Suez Canal. The two nations were suffering the consequences: tension with the United States, opprobrium in the Arab world, a dawning recognition that the Americans and the Soviets would eclipse them on the global stage.

What better time for a royal visit?

On April 8, [1957] Queen Elizabeth II arrived for a three-day sojourn in Paris—the first English queen to visit France since Victoria, in 1855. After a state dinner that evening (“You were the cradle of our kings,” she told her hosts, alluding to William the Conqueror's Norman heritage), she swept into the Paris Opera for a performance of the ballet *Le Chevalier et la Demoiselle*.

Photographer Bert Hardy, who had slipped through security, was already shooting, precisely and surreptitiously. Because his 50-millimeter lens could take in only a fraction of the scene before him, he shot 20 frames in all, 15 of which were painstakingly joined, by hand, to compose the image you see here.

Diplomatic amity notwithstanding, the British photojournalist was quietly scoring a scoop for his magazine, *Picture Post*, then the *Life* magazine of the United Kingdom.

"*Paris Match* was very much our competition," Hardy told me in 1981. The press pool for the evening was limited to two French and two British media, and *Picture Post* was not on the list. "But the French newsmen were above the rules," he said. "They had 20 [journalists], we would have 2, and the French police were making sure that's all we had."

Hardy hid his Leica under a borrowed and oversize dinner jacket and reported to the opera house. "I waited till a herd of French dignitaries arrived," he said. "They were terribly courteous, and I went in with them."

Anxious that his brown shoes would stand out amid a sea of formal clothes, he positioned himself with a view of the stairs and started shooting. He could not be haphazard about it: the frames had to overlap just so, because the edges of each one, distorted by his lens, would be discarded during printing, when the frames would be assembled in a montage, or "join-up."

Then Elizabeth entered, escorted by French president René Coty. She wore an emerald-and-diamond tiara and a Hartnell dress encrusted with pearls, topaz and gold. Across its ivory satin lay the French Legion of Honor's bold red sash. When she reached the bottom of the stairs, Hardy had his pièce de résistance.

Dispatching his film for developing, he phoned a *Post* staffer to tell her what he had done, and what remained to be done. A diagram illustrating how the frames were joined looks like one of those charts you'd see in a French butcher shop showing where various cuts of meat come from, but the result in *Picture
Post's special April 20 souvenir edition was spectacular. (About the only clue that the image is a montage is that the guards' swords to Her Majesty's left aren't yet raised.) "I got a double-page spread," Hardy boasted, and "the French didn't get anything."

He came from humble East End origins—his father was a carpenter, his mother a charwoman. Born in 1913, he left school at 14 to process film and largely taught himself how to shoot pictures. He worked for the General Photographic Agency, then for himself, before shooting for Picture Post. He also served in the Royal Army Photographic Unit from 1942 to 1946, covering the Normandy invasion, the liberation of Paris, the Allies crossing the Rhine and the suffering of freed concentration camp inmates.

Back with Picture Post, Hardy covered the Korean War and U.S. president Dwight D. Eisenhower's 1956 reelection campaign. But whatever joy he took in his success at the Paris Opera was short-lived: in a harbinger of Life's fate, Picture Post folded just six weeks after publishing its souvenir edition, a victim of declining circulation. Hardy became one of Britain's best-known commercial photographers before retiring to a Surrey farm in the late 1960s. He died in 1995, at age 82.

After her night at the opera, Elizabeth spent her time in Paris chatting with French veterans at the Arc de Triomphe, laying a wreath at the Tomb of the Unknowns, sailing the Seine at night and generally inciting the French into a Union Jack-waving frenzy. After visiting Versailles and touring around Lille in the north of France, she returned to home and throne. And to her long reign.—David J. Marcou, a Wisconsin-based writer, met Bert Hardy as a student in 1981.

Gaga Over a Gargoyle
From Margaret Bourke-White to Annie Leibovitz, photographers have scaled dizzying heights to frame the perfect prop image: https://thumbs-media.smithsonianmag.com/filer/indelible-feb08-631.jpg__800x600_q85_crop.jpg

By David J. Marcou
Smithsonian Magazine | Subscribe
February 2008

The 61st-floor terrace of the Chrysler Building in Manhattan had rarely seen such a large crowd. There was photographer Annie Leibovitz and her assistant Robert Bean, standing on one of the eight gargoyles that grace the building's exterior. Dancer David Parsons was on another of the gargoyles, posing for Leibovitz. A video crew was on hand to record the proceedings. So were a writer and photographer from the New York Times. Hovering over them all was the spirit of Margaret Bourke-White (1904-1971), the swashbuckling Life photographer who had herself been photographed atop one of the Chrysler's gargoyles in 1934.

From This Story
image: https://thumbs-media.smithsonianmag.com/filer/indelible-feb08-388.jpg__220x130_q85_crop_upscale.jpg
"The height wasn't terribly bothersome," says John Loengard, the photographer on assignment for the *Times* that day in August 1991. Rather, he had only one thought: "This was all...very scary-looking, but was it going to be an interesting picture?"

As Leibovitz snapped away at Parsons, Loengard snapped away at Leibovitz—and answered his own question in the affirmative. The resulting picture appeared in the *Times' Arts & Leisure* section on September 8, 1991, where it did nothing to diminish Leibovitz's already outsize reputation. The accompanying article, by Bourke-White biographer Vicki Goldberg, noted that the "only time [Leibovitz] lets someone hold her is when she puts one foot way out on the gargoyle's head, and once she feels secure there she makes her assistant let go and stands free above the New York skyline with the wind whipping at her trousers."

By 1991, Leibovitz had already made some of her most arresting portraits—John Lennon (naked) and Yoko Ono (clothed) just hours before he was killed, Bette Midler lounging among the roses, Demi Moore large with child. Leibovitz's work had just been featured at the Smithsonian's National Portrait Gallery in Washington, D.C. in the first mid-career retrospective the museum had ever conferred upon a photographer. (Her most recent show, "Annie Leibovitz: A Photographer's Life, 1990-2005," travels to San Francisco's Fine Arts Museum in March.) She had been invited to give a lecture at the Rochester Institute of Technology, which had sent the video crew. And for the *Times* story, the paper had assigned not only Goldberg but also Loengard, a distinguished former *Life* photographer and picture editor who had edited both Bourke-White's and Leibovitz's work.

Leibovitz had started the day shooting Parsons, the founder and artistic director of the dance company bearing his name, in her downtown studio, but as evening approached she moved the shoot to the Chrysler Building. "I can't help but feel that we'll have Margaret Bourke-White's shadow over us," she can be heard saying on the video. (She declined to be interviewed for this article.) "But that's nice; that's really, really nice." Darien Davis, an aide to Leibovitz at the time, says, "I think that we sort of took the building by surprise. She just asked the office people, and they allowed access." (A representative of the Chrysler Building notes that today this would be "much more the exception than the rule.")

Parsons was game; he and Leibovitz had talked the gargoyle idea over a few days beforehand, he says. He estimates that he spent a total of about 45 minutes out on it, and he is matter-of-fact about the anxiety attack he had around the 25-minute mark. "The danger of having an anxiety attack is that you get dizzy," he says, "and I really needed to just get control again."

Leibovitz and Parsons began a pas de deux, she shooting and shouting encouragement, he standing on—and draping himself over—the stainless-steel ornament, nearly 700 feet over Midtown Manhattan, as Loengard positioned himself on the terrace. "I wondered if any photograph could justify the risks they were taking," he would recall later. In the back of his mind were two photographers who had fallen to their deaths in pursuit of the right vantage: James Burke in 1964 in the Himalayas, and Ethan Hoffman in 1990 in Newark, New Jersey. But Leibovitz, he recalls, seemed perfectly at ease. "Still photographers always put their pictures above everything else," he says. "They can take an inadvertent step backward and fall off a loading dock."

Then, as dusk was falling, Loengard saw his moment: Leibovitz exchanging film with her assistant Robert Bean. "For a split second, everybody's gesture was clear," Loengard says, "and all you can do is hope that that's what you got." That, indeed, is what he got.—David J. Marcou is a writer and photographer in La Crosse, Wisconsin.

Read more: [http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-and-culture/gaga-over-a-gargoyle-15902894/#Q2YAjY1DJ1U13cMCu.99](http://www.smithsonianmag.com/arts-and-culture/gaga-over-a-gargoyle-15902894/#Q2YAjY1DJ1U13cMCu.99)

*Still Touring the Nation and Going Strong: StoryCorps Visits La Crosse, WI*

It's been active for seven years, and after interviewing 60,000 participants in the biggest current oral history project in the United States, StoryCorps is still going strong, says Anna Walters, its outgoing mobile site supervisor. Her successor, Eloise Melzer, calls StoryCorps "an amazing project, simply to be a part of people's lives" in the way the project works.
The project docked in La Crosse, WI, on July 15, 2010, and finished up there August 7, after conducting about 120 interviews of 240 people. For each scheduled interview, two people sign on who are close-enough, to want to discuss things positive about their lives, including family and personal histories. A facilitator sits in with each pair, and occasionally asks questions, to point the interviews in directions that yield the most significant results. Like the site supervisors, the facilitators have earned university degrees, generally in communications. Technical support to man microphones, recorders, etc., also is involved. And the La Crosse Public Library, directed by Kelly Krieg-Sigman, was the local host of the project, providing space for MobileBooth, electrical outlets, and other technical support, according to Library Archivist Anita Doering. In addition to NPR (which directs the project) and WPR, additional sponsors are Gundersen Lutheran, Merchants Bank, People’s Food Co-op, and the Pump House.

Virginia Lora, an interview-facilitator, says, “There are many interesting things about the project. It allows you to know a town or city in ways you normally wouldn’t. To hear what people have to say to each other is very interesting. Sometimes, people come in not knowing what they’ll talk about, and their coming in and seeing them opening up after a while [is neat]. Some people are not hesitant and are ready to go.” Jackie Sojico was an interview-facilitator-in-training on the 15th, and sat in on all the interviews with participants and Ms. Lora; both women manned the still-cameras at various points to visually document the event. The young women also made a CD for each pair interviewed, containing the recording of their interview.

The first participants on the 15th were Prof. Jim Gallagher and his wife, Jan. Both worked for UW-La Crosse many years, after earning advanced university degrees. Jim founded the Mississippi Valley Archeology Center there, and Jan administered the Small Business Center at UW-La Crosse, and both retired recently. After the Gallaghers had participated, Jan said: “The unifying theme was what makes us joyful and happy in life — it was kind of personal, about our relationship over the years. It included the ‘Spirit of Discovery’, relating to our travels and experiences. A couple of travels that were particularly memorable included one back in Taos, NM, when we were first married, on an archeological expedition. Another was our sabbatical in Great Britain and Ireland, when our children were young teenagers. We also talked about our time in Ethiopia, when we were first married.” About the set interview time allocated to each participant-pair, Mrs. Gallagher says, “Starting out, I thought the 40 minutes would be an eternity, but it turned out to be just a blink.”

Local news media had been covering the build-up to the arrival of this NPR-supported venture, and on that first day in town, reporters from WKBT-TV and the La Crosse Tribune covered the venture, which is partly supported by Wisconsin Public Radio represented by liaison John Gaddo, who’s also affiliated with WLSU, WPR’s La Crosse outlet. This city proved a very welcoming site for StoryCorps, according to Ms. Lora: “What makes La Crosse unique is how enthusiastic the people seem to be; the way we’ve been received is very good. People have wonderful things to say about La Crosse and the places they live, and about places for us to visit, like the marshlands and the bluffs. People are really proud of their city.” In a nation now accustomed to oral history projects, it’s nice to know communities like La Crosse, WI, and Brooklyn, NY (where StoryCorps is based) can join hands to record the pulse of people and their stories for posterity. All the recordings done via StoryCorps will be deposited in the permanent collection of the Library of Congress. The project was founded in 2003 by award-winning documentary producer and MacArthur “Genius” Grant recipient Dave Isay. In La Crosse, interview-excepts were played at a special Pump House event on Tuesday, August 3rd, and will also air on WPR and NPR.—Written in 2010 by DuJM, who was interviewed with cousin Steve Kiedrowski by StoryCorps its first day in La Crosse; recording in Library of Congress StoryCorps Collection.

The Fundamental Things Apply

It’s said journalism, especially newspapers, are the first draft of history. Unfortunately, too many journalists do not study history thoroughly before embarking on journalism careers. I did, and sometimes I’m not sure our profession or government understands the golden rule regarding our “enemies”. Also Mark Twain said: “If you don’t read the newspaper, you’re uninformed. If you read the newspaper, you’re mis-informed.”

Carl Bernstein, famed Watergate reporter, said in 2006, the national US newspapers are still great reporters of news, “but [as for] the rest of the field, real news based on the best obtainable version of the truth, [is] less and less a real part of our journalistic institutions.” Cable TV news is often one problem, with endless pundit-panels and a general mandate to entertain. The lack of honest, properly focused investigative reporting is another. And social networking — where everyone can report “news”, despite not always understanding fully what is true historical documentation— is yet another.

Founding Missouri Journalism School Dean Walter Williams wrote in the “Journalist’s Creed”: “I believe that the journalism which succeeds best – and best deserves success – fears God and honors Man [and Woman]; is stouthearted, independent, unmoved by pride of opinion or greed of power, constructive, tolerant but never careless, self-controlled, patient, always respectful of its readers but always unafraid... is a journalism of humanity, of and for today’s world.” I’m proud my son and I are included in Steve Weinberg’s centennial history of the Missouri Journalism School (history’s first such school), “A Journalism of Humanity”(2008), but am wondering if newspaper and other media editors beyond Missouri ever notice things like that.—Written a while ago, by DuJM.

Those Who Lead Wisconsin

It was very nice reading in the La Crosse Tribune recently about the historical marker erected for Gov. Patrick Lucey at Ferryville, his hometown. Gov. Lucey is a first-rate servant of the people, and in his golden years, we should remember all the good he and other governors have done for this state and its people. In 2005, I was fortunate enough to direct and edit a grass-roots history of our state that many good people took part in, “Spirit of Wisconsin: A Historical Photo-Essay of the Badger State.” When compiling materials for it, I got the idea from Msgr. Bernard McGarty to enlist Gov. Lucey to write an introductory essay. After two or three tries, I got in touch with the former governor and he signed on. He would write about the history of the modern Democratic Party in this state. That prompted me to see if another governor could write about the birth of the nation’s Republican Party at Ripon; Gov. Lee Dreyfus signed on for that. Well, we couldn’t stop at two former governors without asking the current governor also to write an introductory essay, so I contacted Gov. Jim Doyle, and he signed on too. Knowing not all eight then-living governors could write an introductory essay (e.g., Gaylord Nelson was in poor health), I obtained photo-portraits from the others for publication. Govs. Scott McCallum, Martin Schreiber, and Tony Earl also signed on. The last to “give” us a photo was Tommy Thompson, and that photo-portrait I took myself, when Gov. Thompson was introduced as the new president of Logistics Health early that year. As I said, many good people signed on to that project, including our eight then-living governors, a UW-Madison history professor with ties to the Coulee Region (John Sharpless), a UW-Madison Ph.D. alum who’d taught me Journalism History at Mizzou (Karen List), Msgr. McGarty, Steve Kiedrowski, Rick Wood, Jon Tarrant, Debbie and Paul Abraham, Carl Liebig, Jim Solberg, Bob Mulock, Sue Knopf, my son (Matt), and a group of additional great people, too, who have given grass-roots in this state a good name in the anthologies I’ve directed and edited.

Regarding the governors, we were very fortunate to have Govers. Dreyfus and Nelson sign on especially. Gov. Dreyfus told me he would finish and send me his essay before the following month, when he was scheduled to have knee-replacement surgery. As it turned out, he had to have emergency quintuple heart surgery...
bypass surgery instead that week, but good to his word, he’d written and sent me his essay beforehand, longhand. Gov. Nelson, the father of Earth Day, who decades before had arranged for the Apostle Islands of northern Wisconsin to be declared a national lakeshore, was in very poor health, but his wife had sent a wonderful photo of then-Senator Nelson with JFK and Gov. John Reynolds as they were returning by helicopter from the Apostle Islands. As it turned out, Gov. Nelson would pass about ten days after he’d received his copy of “Spirit of Wisconsin.” More recently, Gov. Dreyfus has passed away, too. In the words of our current governor, despite many challenges “I have faith in Wisconsin – in its people and their tremendous spirit – to meet the challenges.” And of course, Gov. Doyle concluded his Foreword to our book with the directive: “On Wisconsin!” Those words had first been spoken electrifyingly by Gen. Douglas MacArthur’s father, Arthur, as he picked up the colors and carried them up Missionary Ridge, leading his fellow troops during the Civil War’s Battle of Chattanooga, winning him the Congressional Medal of Honor – those words still seem appropriate today and for the long foreseeable future, too.

God bless you, Governors, and Wisconsin and America, as well.—Written ca. 2010, by DvJM.

The Irish Part of Living

Although it’s another 4-5 months until St. Patrick’s Day again, and there doesn’t seem to be much other Irish news these days of note, it might not be such a bad time to talk about the Irish part of living we all do, whether we’re Irish by ancestry or not. A lot has been said about Irish blarney over the years, and I’d guess people still visit the Blarney Stone to kiss and photograph it. But there’s a lot more to that blarney than your basic BS. There’s a great deal of poetry and wisdom in Irish history that the British, still colonial overlords of Northern Ireland, haven’t always appreciated.

I noticed recently that Patrick Stephens, a La Crosse Irish-American of note, has been in the news again, as an “Everyday Hero”. Pat has directed so many benevolent and social activities in town to be almost irreplaceable, if anyone is. He’s had a directorial hand in Irishfest, Riverfest, Airfest, and Rotary Lights, in addition to his day job, directing the Charitable Giving Office at UW-La Crosse. He also saw to it that my group and I received a significant grant from Irishfest for the performance in 2008 of the pub scene from my play “Song of Joy—Or the Old Reliabes”, my sequel to Sean O’Casey’s classic Dublin tragicomedy “Juno and the Paycock”. We also did a staged reading of my full play two weeks later, at Aquinas Schools’ Campbell Theatre.

My own interest in the Irish part of living stems from my dad's mother, Agnes Fitzgerald Marcou, who was full-blooded Irish-American, from central Wisconsin originally. It is inspiration from her, indirectly, that led to my studying Anglo-Irish Drama at UW-Madison, seeing the Irish play, “Juno and the Paycock”, and wanting to write plays at least as a sideline, ever since seeing that Sean O’Casey classic. Grandma Agnes was a “little bit of a woman”, about 5’2” or 5’3” and 90 pounds. My dad, David A. Marcou Jr., has long said his mother, who ran various grocery stores and meat markets with her husband, David Sr., could put any salesman in his place without raising her voice, her hand, or swearing. As a person who long has valued the correct placement of a well-chosen swear-word, I am still in awe of that counter-ability in Agnes, though she died nearly half a century ago.

In any case, I still value the inspiration all my grandparents gave me, which is why I've written about them in various places. I wish, though, when I lived in London in 1981, I would have taken the opportunity to visit and photograph Ireland myself. Maybe I will someday. However, I have been on friendly terms over the years with Picture Post staffers with interests in Ireland, including Bert Hardy and Robert Kee. And my teacher-editor in London, John H. Whale, won a journalism award in Britain for covering the conflict in Northern Ireland. And I did write about the visit of 50 IRA relatives to the Catholic Cardinal of England, Basic Hume; that report was one of the best I've done.

Robert Kee, who was born in Calcutta and who wrote and narrated a famous PBS series, “Ireland--A Television History” in 1980, is living yet at age 91. He was an RAF bomber pilot in World War II captured by the Nazis. He wrote a sterling autobiography of that period, “A Crowd Is Not Company”, and many other books besides. Mr. Kee has told me often he'd collaborate on a book with me, if I can obtain a paying publisher's contract first. Although I've published 30+ books, they've all been “self-published,” usually with sponsors I sign on. Mr. Kee happened to be a great friend of George Orwell's and was a witness at his wedding to Sonia Brownell in 1949.

There's a good chance the first full production of my Irish play will be produced in La Crosse eventually, possibly at Aquinas Schools. It doesn't hurt that the National Theatre of Ireland (the Abbey) recently sent me a positive critique of my play, which I've used to revise my script. I'm hoping the Abbey will someday produce my play alongside O'Casey's "Juno and the Paycock"; meantime, we'll continue to plug along with it and my other writings and photographic works in the hopes the Irish Part of Living still means something positive to enough people to matter, including in La Crosse and wherever my son (whose now in the Army) and I travel.—Written ca. 2010, by DvJM.

The Life and After-life of a Guardian Angel

Born into a decent, wise family, Tom “Else” Elsen always thought toward the future. When he'd change his own car oil in high school, he'd make sure every last drop of dirty oil was out, and every last drop of new oil was in. He was a team-player on our intramural basketball team at Aquinas High School, a tall one at that.

Greg Kloss – a now- retired Police Sergeant who worked many years alongside my brother Dan – and I used to ride in Tom's old Ford station wagon. Once, when my brother Dennis was along, we were riding down the road on very steep Granddad's Bluff one night when Else said the brakes had gone out. He downshifted at least twice, and kept the speed at “minimum”, but everyone except Else had their head on the floor. It's possible he pretended the brakes had gone out, but I doubt that, though Tom and Greg had lively senses of humor. Tom and his wife had two boys early on I believe, and after graduating from UW-Whitewater in Business, Tom worked in the insurance industry about 20 years, before passing from cancer ca. 1992.

Though I couldn't attend his funeral, Greg and I visited Tom a few months' before he passed. I hope his widow and offspring are doing well now, and that Tom Elsen is still looking in on all of us as a guardian angel. Thanks, Else. We still love you too.—Written ca. 2010, by DvJM.

Unbroken – A Book and a Life

This past Christmas, I received a book-gift I am very grateful for to the Charles and Christine Freiberg Family of Wausau – “Unbroken,” by the same author who wrote “Seabiscuit,” Laura Hillenbrand. “Unbroken” is the true story of Louis “Louie” Zamperini, an American runner who impressed Hitler during the Berlin Olympics of 1936 with his fast finish, but who couldn't run in his prime in the 1940 Olympics due to the war. Instead, he served as a bombardier above the Pacific, aboard two B-24s, “Superman” and “Green Hornet”.

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When “Superman” was too shot up to fly again, “Green Hornet” replaced it, though the latter wasn’t flight-worthy and crashed in the Pacific in mid-1943. Louie and pilot Russell Allen Phillips turned out to be the only survivors. They floated on a raft about 47 days, with no food except what they captured from the sea, including birds and shark liver, the only edible shark-part, and almost no drinkable water. A third man, Francis McNamara, died on the raft.

Louie and “Phil” floated to the Marshall Islands, where the Japanese captured them. They were sent to a string of interrogation and POW camps, two of them run by a wealthy corporal dubbed “The Bird,” who beat the crap out of Louie daily. Mutsuhiro Watanabe would become Japanese War Criminal No. 7 on the Allies postwar Most Wanted List. Louie and Phil survived the camps and Louie returned to Torrance, California, his home, where he’d once been called the “Torrance Tornado,” for his running ability.

Louie married a great beauty, Cynthia Applewhite, a socialite who’d written novels. The war-vet drank hard in the first years of marriage, and his Army life insurance dwindled (his family had received $10,000, which they’d saved for him). The young couple nearly divorced last chance, taking him to Billy Graham's first California revival. The war-vet forced his wife to leave that meeting, but she talked him in to coming back the next night. About to storm out again, Louie had a vision of his war-mates who hadn't survived. He was born-again and became a friend of Graham's, redeeming his life with his wife. Louie ran in torch-relays for five Olympics, and though Cynthia died a few years' ago, he's still a vibrant man. He also loved his parents dearly, as well as his brother Pete, who'd coached him to be one of the world's best milers and was his best buddy. Louie and Cynthia had children and grandchildren, too.

What the Allied POW’s went through in the Pacific especially, during WWII, was ferocious. But at one camp, there were a few Japanese guards who were semi-leniient. When Louie's final camp was liberated, those guards gathered as the POW’s turned back to view them. The guards saluted the freed POW’s. "The Bird" was on the run in Japan many years, but then given amnesty, he became a notable businessman. He confessed his war guilt, but when Louie sought to see him, to say he’d forgiven him, “The Bird” refused, then died. The moral of Louie's story applies to everyone who’s been knocked down in life – from injured, captured, and/or defeated GIs, to America's, Hati's, and Sudan's homeless, to Seabiscuit, and even to the Wisconsin Badgers football team after their recent Rose Bowl defeat. In fact, the day one of my neighbors suggested my photo-art might not sell well until after I die, I felt pretty low, too. But we all need to get back up after we've knocked down.

It’s like Northwestern’s football coach Patrick Fitzgerald (I'm a true Badger fan, but my paternal grandmother was a Fitzgerald, who I believe had a brother and/or nephew named Patrick) said recently, “Competition Starts Now,” because, though one season recently ended, every new day, every new season brings new challenges; however, those times also bring new, and potentially great, opportunities. Isn't that right, new Cardinal Burke?—Written ca. 2011-2012 by DvJM. (DvJM’s son, Matt, and Matt’s wife, Jessica Amaranak Marcou, know about these things; Matt served two tours in Afghanistan as an Army Ranger Special Ops Combat Medic, and Jessica is an artist and teacher.)

Visiting Uijeongbu

For many years, M*A*S*H, that richly sardonic television view of civil war in Korea (1950-53), though it related more feelings-wise to the Vietnam War (1963-75), graced U.S. network and cable channels. It still can be seen in syndication, and is just as good now as when it was first broadcast. A key locale for that series’ 4077th unit was Uijeongbu, South Korea, close to the 38th Parallel, dividing North and South Korea. Today, Uijeongbu is also home to Camp Red Cloud, named for Hatfield, Wisconsin-born/Ho-Chunk Medal of Honor winner Cpl. Mitchell Red Cloud, who died near Chonghyon, Korea Nov. 5, 1950, killing a slew of Chinese troops, and protecting his unit’s retreat. In La Crosse, we have a park named for him.

Born in La Crosse, I worked as a journalist in Seoul from 1984-87, and my son, Matthew, is half-Korean by ancestry, though he was also born in La Crosse. By summer 1986, I’d not yet met my future wife, my son’s mother, but I was dating Jinny, an appealing Ewha University graduate. (Ewha is the world’s largest all-women’s university.) Both of us worked weekdays, so we dated weekends, and sometimes would go on daytrips from the capital. One Sunday, we took the bus to Uijeongbu. One place we visited was a bar-restaurant. The song “King of the World” played, and Jinny asked if I felt I was King of the World. I said not exactly, but that it was nice sitting with her. We passed an hour or two chatting, and then walked the streets a bit. Jinny said there was a military base nearby (Camp Red Cloud, it turned out), but I don’t recall if we saw its partitions. I do recall Uijeongbu seemed a somewhat quiet, yet vital city by day. We eventually boarded our bus, and headed back to Seoul, a modest jamboree of my neighbors suggested my photo-art might not sell well until after I die, I felt pretty low, too. But we all need to get back up after we've knocked down.

Sometimes when people hear I lived in Korea, they’ll ask if I was in the military. I say no, I was a journalist there. More importantly, I met my son’s mother there. Matthew recently enlisted in the U.S. Army, and I hope, regardless of his assignments, that he remains healthy enough himself throughout his military time. The two Koreas continue playing dangerous games with each other, and it would be nice if North Korea “simply” liberalized its military-state. With the United States at war in Iraq and Afghanistan, we don’t need a Korean heat-up, too. (The two Koreas never signed a peace treaty, but have had an armistice since 1953.) If the Obama Administration truly believes in using more diplomacy around the world, let’s discover a diplomatic way to end our wars peacefully and successfully. Perhaps the United Nations’ Secretary General Ban Ki-Moon, born in Korea, and someday my son Matthew, too, will assist further in that process. And I hope someday my own visit to Uijeongbu will contribute at least modestly to peace as well. A few years’ ago, I wrote a two-scene play about that area that might see the light of day soon-enough. Its title is “Borderline,” with Madonna’s song by that title included.—Written ca. June 2009 with 2017 fine-tuning, by DvJM.


**DRAMATIS PERSONAE:**
Yumi Shin, a 31-year-old South Korean shop-owner.
Dean Marcus, a 35-year-old American journalist.
David Bemis, a 30-year-old American soldier.
Jinny Kwak, a South Korean singer in her late 20’s.
Sunshin Yi, a 34-year-old South Korean journalist.
Walter Arundell, a middle-aged British journalist.
Dandae, a waiter.
Johnny Kim, a South Korean nightclub owner.
Police.

**SCENE ONE:**
Ouijongbu, South Korea, 1986. A nightclub in the wee hours of the morning, just after closing-time. The waiter is clearing tables, not asking those still remaining to leave. Those at the tables are loosely united by the occasion. Johnny Kim, the owner of “Club Borderline”, is throwing a small party for his club’s 10th anniversary. Jinny Kwak sings Madonna’s “Borderline” while a karaoke machine plays the melody.

**Jinny (singing very much like Madonna):**
Something in the way you love me won't let me be
I don't want to be your prisoner so baby won't you set me free
Stop playing with my heart
Finish what you start
When you make my love come down
If you want me let me know
Baby let it show
Honey don't you fool around
Just try to understand, I've given all I can,
'Cause you got the best of me
CHORUS: Borderline feels like I'm going to lose my mind
You just keep on pushing my love over the borderline/Keep on pushing me baby
Don't you know you drive me crazy
You just keep on pushing my love over the borderline/ Something in your eyes is makin' such a fool of me
When you hold me in your arms you love me till I just can't see
But then you let me down, when I look around, baby you just can't be found
Stop driving me away, I just wanna stay,
There's something I just got to say/ Just try to understand, I've given all I can,
'Cause you got the best of me /CHORUS/: Keep on pushing me baby
Don't you know you drive me crazy
You just keep on pushing my love over the borderline /Look what your love has done to me
Come on baby set me free
You just keep on pushing my love over the borderline
You cause me so much pain, I think I'm going insane
What does it take to make you see?
You just keep on pushing my love over the borderline
(As Jinny finishes, the group applauds, and David Bemis whistles for her. Jinny comes over and sits down as David offers her a sip of his drink.)

**David: You deserve something cold and wet. (Laughter.) Actually, something warm and wet. (He kisses Jinny, she returns favor. The waiter brings more drinks, and listens as he does so.)

**Dean:** Hey, go easy, big fella. Some of us have morals – loose though they be.

**Walter:** You ought to know about borderlines of that kind, Dean.

**Yumi:** Dean know borderline. I know Dean. (Laughter.)

**Jinny:** I’d like to find out how to handle situations like that, Yumi. But my guy is too fast to catch. I’m thinking, he was a sprinter in high school.

**David:** No, actually middle-distance, but I had a helluva kick! (Smiles now.)

**Sunshin:** Mr. Marcus, where were you when Madonna was making such great music? (Wink) Over the borderline?

**Dean:** I try to remain as close to it as possible without crossing it. I know you Koreans have a thing about borderlines.

**David:** As far as I’m concerned – great crossing them, not as great contesting them.

**Walter:** You Americans and South Koreans are alike in one regard: You push things over a lot. Reminds me that my gal is sick at home, and I’m here with this gang (toast to Dean, who sits across from him), having a hell-uv-a-great-time. (Laughter as he half-feigns drunkenness. Johnny Kim enters from the kitchen with the waiter, bearing food.)

**Johnny:** Bulgogi, rice, and kimchee for everybody. Don’t burn tongue, but give it old college try. (Seats himself)

**Walter:** Will do, Johnny, my main man. Will do. Say, why don’t you have rice with us, Johnny, and drink some, too?

**Others:** Yeah, have rice with us, Johnny.

**Johnny:** I will in a minute, but first want to make sure you have everything you need. (Motioning to the waiter, then speaking in Korean) Dandae, bring lettuce and special sauce, too. Chop-chop.

**Dandae (in Korean):** Yeah, boss. Right away.

**Dean:** Johnny, how long you been in business, with this place and the other?

**Johnny:** Ten years here, and 15 years before that with “Blue Moon” in Seoul – 25 years everything.

**Dean:** And how old are you?

**Johnny:** Johnny get red face. You know how old. Older than your mother and twice as nice. (Laughter)

**Dean:** Gee, Johnny, my mother isn’t real nice, but then neither are you.

**Johnny:** Take one to know one. (Laughter again. The waiter returns with lettuce and sauce, then moves to close-by table to do some more cleaning.)

**Walter (already knowing the answer):** Johnny, where did you get the money for your businesses? (Others repeat the question.)

**Johnny:** You know where I get money for business – hard work, more hard work, and then… casino winnings. (Laughter all around.)

**Sunshin:** And those casino winnings were all above-board, too, right Johnny?

**Johnny:** I win money in Vegas casino – perfectly legal. How many times I tell you that, Sunshin.

**Yumi:** Big winner casino, right Johnny, only little hard work. (Laughter.)

**Johnny:** You tellin’ me, ain’t so good.

**Johnny:** What Johnny know bout you ain’t good either. (Laughter.)

**Dean:** Well, it’s a good bet you’re a businessman because you love your customers, right Johnny?
Johnny: Johnny in business ’cause wife and kids need food, clothes, house — that why Johnny in business.

Jinny: How much money you make last year, Johnny – 20 million won, 30 million, maybe 40 or 50 million?

Johnny: Fine enough to make wife and kids happy. Johnny fine with money he make, family not. Nieces and one son get big ideas – want to go American University. Where Johnny get money for that? Maybe should join Foreign Legion instead (Laughter); more chance to pay way there, no wife and kids to think ’bout.

Waiter: Boss, want me to clean up in kitchen?

Johnny: No, get something to eat for self. Need you to clean up more later.

Waiter: Okay, boss. (Waiter returns to kitchen. Then, he re-emerges with food and drink and sits at separate table somewhat near the others.)

Waiter: When you going to tell that student-son of yours that there are some pretty fine British universities, too, in this world? He could go there.

Johnny: How you want me pay for that – donate heart from own chest?

Jinny: It’d kill you, Johnny, but your son would be happy.

Johnny: Son got plenty of everything except money – still need Pop for that. (Laughter.)

Jinny: Well, your wife knows you don’t have all the money in the world, just most of it, right? That’ll be enough for her, when she gets her hands on it.

Johnny: Right, wife wants hands on all Johnny’s money, and Number One Son get half. Johnny and little daughter get none.

David: What does your son want to do when he graduates?

Johnny: He want to work at Blue House – no he want to run Blue House. Not interested running nightclub; leave that to Dad. Johnny not interested in big government man. I like it Number One Son businessman, and send family university. Where Johnny get money for that? Maybe should join F…

Jinny: Say honey, when Johnny be dead and gone before Number One Son get big-paying job and bring home Pop’s food. Maybe should have died in war. That way, no Number One Son, no headaches.

Jinny: Say, Johnny, why don’t you sing a song with me. Good blues, or maybe rock-and-roll. Take your mind off troubles.

Johnny: No, don’t want to sing, not tonight. Want to eat, drink, and forget troubles.

Waiter: Amen to that. Let’s drink mostly, and have a bit of food, too. Troubles can take the hindmost. (Everyone toasts, except Waiter, who goes on eating.)

David: I’m lucky I’m on furlough, or I’d be in trouble carousing all night with this group. Tomorrow, I leave for California, and a chance to see my parents and brothers. Say Johnny, has your son thought about any California schools? We’ve got many good ones there. I’ll bet he could get some decent scholarship money, too.

Jinny: Say honey, when you take me to California with you? I can use scholarship money, too.

Waiter: Yeah, David, Jinny would use that money big-time, then you’d start real school. (Laughter.)

Johnny: California better than New York or Chicago. California got Sammy Lee.

Dean: Who’s Sammy Lee?


Dean: He’s same man who won the Sullivan Award, I’d guess. Number One amateur athlete in U.S. in the 1950s.


Waiter (a bit more drunk): Now, don’t drag the British into these international squabbles. You know where it got us in Korea. Oh right, we’re still in Korea, I forgot. (Drinking.)

Dean: And don’t drag New York or Chicago into this either. They are two of my favorite watering holes. (Toasts all around; even the waiter motions to toast this time, too, as the others look his way.)

David: Say Dandae, you ever been to the U.S.?

Dandae: No, never. Maybe someday…

Dean: We don’t know much about your family, Dandae. Where do you hail from?

Dandae (taking sip of barley water first): Parents come from North during war, go Southwest. No brothers or sisters. I born late. Parents dead now.

Yumi: That too bad. Where your school?

Dandae: Went elementary and high school in Kwangju. No college. Come here two years after high school, and work for Johnny.

Johnny: Yeah, Dandae unique man. He work hard, no give grief. Wish had more like Dandae.

Jinny: How much time do you in free time, Dandae? Any girlfriend?

Dandae: No. Dandae not have time for girlfriend. Only work for Johnny and listen to music on radio.

Johnny: He listen to plenty of music on radio, and news, too, right Dandae. You like news.


Dean: Sounds good. Do you pay much attention to political or economic news?

Johnny: Yeah, I listen some of that, too. Dandae become what you call it, Renaisense Man, right Dandae?

Dandae (fakes shyness): No, not Renaisense Man. Barely regular man. (Only half-lying) Want to have family someday. Want to be happy like all people.

Yumi: How you have family without girlfriend?

Johnny: He not have time for girlfriend yet, but he will.

Dandae (lying): I want girlfriend, but not find one yet.

Johnny: Dandae, take break, bring more drinks. We need more drinks. (Dandae gets up and goes to kitchen.)

Jinny: Dandae need girlfriend, Johnny. Why you not set him up with nice girl?

Johnny: Johnny got plenty on plate. No time to be matchmaker, too. You freedom, why not you match-make?

Jinny: I could, but I need expense money to do that. Got some?

Johnny: No money for matchmaker. Not even own son and daughter. Son not want wife now anyway.

David: Why don’t you help out for nothing, Jinny? Johnny is a good friend, after all.

Jinny: Okay, I do it for free. Story of my life. Why all Americans think Koreans work for free?

Dean: Ooh, be careful big fella, your girlfriend is wearing her fighting spirit.

David: Yeah, about every other day of the week, these days.

Jinny: Jinny sing every night, so she can eat. How much you help out with that? Taxi money and free supper don’t stretch very far in Korea. Koreans want to eat all time, and do lots of other things, too.

Waiter: What’s it they say? Buy a girlfriend, you don’t sleep nights; buy a wife, you sleep never. (Dandae returns with more drinks, then sits at his table.)

Sunshin: That’s right Mr. Arundell, except in Korea sleeping is not first priority. Eating and drinking are, and a few other things, too.

David: Say, Mr. Yi, can you tell us a story about good-old Korean priorities? For example, how is it that you came up in the world?
Sunshin: That is too long a story to tell now, except I can say I was an orphan at 18, in other words I knew my parents just long-enough to be a man. They died in auto accident, and I was youngest of seven children. Their legacy supported me in college, and I went to work for Yonhap News Agency when it was Hapdong Agency, right after graduating. Most of you know I’m still with Yonhap, married last year, and hope to have children like Johnny’s some day. But most of you already know my bio, why a story?

David: Because of what you do for Yonhap. When my brother worked there, he said you were the eyes and ears for the entire agency. What exactly did he mean by that?

Sunshin: When Dennis worked there, he saw me at my best. I'm no longer at my best. I am married now, and marriage takes a lot out of you. (Laughter.)

Jinny: You mean your wife takes a lot out of you, right Mr. Yi?

Sunshin: Right, Ms. Kwak. Like singing takes a lot out of you, but you keep giving it back to singing. (Smiles.)

Walter: When I see you at Yonhap, Mr. Yi, I see a man in charge of himself, who knows where he’s going. Someone not averse to a little chicanery, but by-and-large, on the up-and-up.

Sunshin: Thank you for saying I am on the up-and-up – the chicanery you’ll have to discuss with my bosses.

Dandae: Excuse me, if I may say something, Mr. Yi, how did Yonhap come to hire man like you, who seems to know much about world?

Sunshin: Very simply, I was the last one they kept over from Hapdong, low-man-on-totem-pole. I was very young, but somebody at the new agency saw some promise in me. I am grateful to him for that.

Walter: Who was that man, Mr. Yi?

Sunshin: Me, ah, teacher. He gets up to go to the kitchen, but Johnny calls him back.)

Dean: I’d guess you really have enjoyed your work ever since.

Sunshin: Yes, Mr. Marcus, I have, though not as much as you.

Dean: Me, enjoy work? Only when it helps a good cause, including me and my gal. (Hugging Yumi, who hugs him back.) Say, Dandae, I think I saw someone who looked like you on the street the other day in Seoul. Was it business or pleasure took you there, if that was you?

Dandae is about to answer, but Johnny chimes in.

Walter: Just so it’s not, “I Can’t Get No Satisfaction.” (Laughter.)

Dandae: (pulling punches): I not understand that song much.

Walter: Story of my life, “Satisfaction,” is – don’t know when I ever get any. (Laughter.)

Dandae (with Walter looking at him, concentrating): I don’t know about “Satisfaction.” I work hard, play only little. Life go on.

David: I’m wondering if you like AFKN-Radio, Dandae. The music is pretty good on it. The U.S. Military sometimes does some things right.

Dandae: Yes, AFKN good station. I listen sometime, but most of time, MBC. Radio and TV both, when I can watch TV.

Johnny: Yeah, sometime I invite Dandae next door to my place, to watch TV with me and family. Dandae hear too much music sometime.

Sunshin: Where is it in North Korea your parents were born?

Walter: Where seldom is heard, a discouraging word,/And the skies are not cloudy all day. (Laughter.)

Johnny: What American song is that, Johnny?

Sunshin: That is too long a story to tell now, except I can say I was an orphan at 18, in other words I knew my parents just long-enough to be a man. They died in auto accident, and I was youngest of seven children. Their legacy supported me in college, and I went to work for Yonhap News Agency when it was Hapdong Agency, right after graduating. Most of you know I’m still with Yonhap, married last year, and hope to have children like Johnny’s some day. But most of you already know my bio, why a story?

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Johnny: Yeah, sometime I invite Dandae next door to my place, to watch TV with me and family. Dandae hear too much music sometime.

Sunshin: Where is it in North Korea your parents were born?
Dandae: Mother 38, Father 40. (Johnny goes to kitchen. Others chat. Johnny is heard, “Dammit, what this?” He enters with handgun.)

Johnny: Dandae, any idea about this? Find behind dishwasher.

Dandae (defensive): Not mine. Must be inspector who stopped other day.

Johnny: But why would food inspector have gun. Kill rats?

Dandae: Don’t know. Maybe someone threaten him.

Johnny (half-suspicious): Yeah, maybe someone threaten him. Food inspector make lots enemies. Probably happen all time.

David: That gun’s against the law. No guns in this country except military and police. Johnny, phone the food inspector. Let’s find out what’s going on right away. (He pulls out his handgun and sets it on the table. Johnny puts other gun next to it on table.)

Johnny: Good idea, David. I phone right away. (Lights out.)

SCENE TWO:

Same locale, half hour later. Everyone is seated, but various people get up during initial conversation, and walk about, except Dandae.

David: Well, what do you propose we do about this situation, Dandae, if not call the police.

Dandae: I tell you, not know about gun. Don’t know who it belong.

Johnny: Tell him truth, Dandae. You know about gun?

Dandae: Everyone has one or other. Some belong to burglar, and one must belong to me. Maybe belong to burglar; could be something missing.

Johnny (thinking): No… no, Dandee. No burglar. I have no idea where it come from… you must know something about it…. Roads to P’onmunjom not straight, like arrow; could be you lie about gun. Jeez, this like M*A*S*H show, only not so funny now.

Dean: Dandae, you said your family was from North Korea. Any possibility you’re still in contact with people there?

Dandae: I not from North Korea; parents were. I have nothing to do with North Korea. (In distance can be heard martial music.)

Dean: Where’s that music coming from?

David: It’s the North Korean noise freaks along the DMZ, trying to win converts by playing their damned military airs. Dandae, I’d guess you do know something about North Korea. You at least know about your parents and grandparents. And why do you listen to the radio all the time? Could it be you communicate with someone through your radio?

Dandae (worried): No, not communicate through radio. Work for Johnny; don’t know about anything like that.

David: Johnny, you want to get his radio?

Johnny: Yeah, I get radio. (He gets up and goes upstairs.)

Danny: Dandae, why you so nervous about questions? Maybe got something to hide?

Dandae: I not hide anything. Dandae honest man.

Yumi: Honest? How come gun in kitchen? You in kitchen all time, must see something.

Dandae: Not see anything, only mice in cupboard and one time bugs in rice flour.

Sunshin: Let me question him in Korean. It might help.

David: Yeah, go ahead.

Sunshin (seating himself across from Dandae): Okay, we need to know how the gun got here. Tell me, do you have contacts with North Korea or anyone else that may be on the shady side?

Dandae: I not know about North Korean. I’m South Korean, and tired of propaganda. That does not make me a spy.

Sunshin (in English): Enough not to talk to everyone. (Johnny returns with radio, and a periodical he’s also found.)

Johnny: Find these in room. Radio and magazine. Something called, “Vantage Point.”

Dean: “Vantage Point” – that’s Yonhap’s North Korea-watch publication, right Mr. Yi?

Sunshin: Yes, I know it well. (He takes it and looks at it.) This issue talks about power struggle in North Korea, and fallout politically.

David: Why do you have a copy of “Vantage Point” in your room, Dandae?

Dandae: I interested in North, like all South Koreans, especially since parents come from there.

Sunshin: Tell me the truth, Dandae, and it will be easier on you. Why do you have the magazine?

Dandae: You know how Koreans stay close to ancestors. I stay close. Magazine and radio my only way to stay close to ancestors. (Sunshin motions to Johnny to give him the radio, and Johnny does so. Sunshin turns it on and tunes it.)

Sunshin: Seems like ordinary radio. (Pushes on it in several place.) What’s this? Looks like microphone. What about this, Dandae?

Dandae (dummyping up): I don’t know what you’re getting at.

Sunshin: You communicate with the North Koreans, don’t you? You are a North Korean, right?

Dandae: I not from North Korea; parents were. I have nothing to do with North Korea. I keep a tab with what’s going on in North Korea. But I am no more a spy than you.

Sunshin: So, you are an anti-capitalist friend of South Korea, or more a North Korean spy?


Yumi: I not from North Korean. I’m South Korean, and tired of propaganda. That does not make me a spy.

Dean: Oh really. Gun in kitchen, suspicious radio and magazine in apartment. Something’s up.

Dandae: No, I tell you truth about my parents. They came to Kwangju from the North. I born in Kwangju. And my parents do sleep with our fathers.

Sunshin: You do communicate with someone through that radio. Who?

Dandae: I keep tabs with what’s going on in North Korea. But I am no more a spy than you.

Sunshin: So, are you an anti-capitalist friend of South Korea, or more a North Korean spy?


Yumi: I not from North Korean. I’m South Korean, and tired of propaganda. That does not make me a spy.

Dean: Hold on, big guy! I kill you and everyone here, if you play wrong. Drop gun.

David (easing his gun onto table): Okay, okay, just take it easy. Nobody here wants to die, including you and me.

Dandae: Everyone get on one side of room (motioning), over there.

Dean: Anything you say.

Walter: Dandae, don’t do this. It’s bad for you and bad for all of us. The police won’t hurt you, if you cooperate.

Johnny: Walter right. Police do nothing bad if you cooperate.

Dandae: I don’t intend cooperate! Police know torture methods. Now, shut up, boss!

Yumi: Why you do this, Dandae? You not North Korean. You South Korean. Don’t have feelings for Korean people? Don’t stop thinking about what you do to Koreans here? Don’t be spy?

Dandae (motioning her to stay with the others, though he is listening to her more closely now): Keep away, woman.

Yumi: Yes, I keep away. But you show some respect to us – we Koreans, too, who work hard and love our people.

Dandae (tiring only a little): Yeah, Korean people. South Korean liars. Pay big bucks to shirkers with famous names and peanuts to me. Why you think I not happy here? South Koreans play U.S. game – all for one, none for all.
Sunshin: Now, Dandae, you know that’s not true. We speak American English, but in our own way. Koreans have always been independent people and will always be independent.

Johnny: That’s not true, Dandae. What about time I take you fishing. Who was one to catch biggest fish? You. And how you do that? You use right bait. That come from own brain, not mine.

Yumi: Fishing not easy sport, Dandae. Got to have brains to catch fish. Got to know fish’s brain, too.

Dandae (semi-sarcastically): Maybe you right – police like fish. You feed them right bait and they happy to jump at hook.

Yumi: Idiot (catching herself), that’s not what I meant. I mean police are human beings, who have minds, too, just like you and me. They won’t hurt you, if you cooperate with them. So, cooperate with them.

Dandae (anti-instinctively begins to put the gun down, then catches himself as David makes a move): Damn Yankee! (He shoots David in the arm.) Get away from gun or I kill all of you.

David (grimacing): Okay, everyone stay away from him. He means business.

Dandae (brandishing gun): He right. I mean business. Not capitalist simpleton, but hard-working Korean. I think North Koreans treat me better than you. Give me more money than you, Johnny. Give me hope of one Korea. South Koreans always talking, never doing good. Make me feel good in small ways, not big like North Koreans. Even girlfriend in Kwangju make me feel bad, when baby come out dead. Danned South Korea! (Angrier.) Take off his flak jacket! (The women do so.)

Walter: You had a girlfriend in Kwangju? Is that why you came up here? And how did you first link up with the North Koreans?

Dandae: Yeah, I had girlfriend – so what? Baby dead, and she lose woman now. Whole thing strong story, but only tell you -- many North Korean spies in South. Not hard to “link up.”

Walter: Why don’t you tell us how you first made contact with them?

Dandae: I do that, I guess. You not going to tell anyone soon, are you? (Pointing gun at him.)

Walter: You got that right.

Dandae: I come up from Kwangju in 1984. First man I know up here was North Korean spy. Just started talking on street one day, and when he find out my parents from North Korea, he ask more questions. Pretty soon, I tell him my parents had second thoughts about North Korea. Were against North Korean Government during war, but changed minds when they saw how corrupt South Korean dictators were.

Dean: So, you got the idea you’d start sharing information with this North Korean?

Dandae: Yeah, he offer me money to help him. He also say I need cover, so he tell me get job here. He say Johnny not spy, but Johnny not smart as some South Koreans, and not find out about spying. I guess Johnny smarter than he thought.

Johnny (grimacing): Johnny wish he even a little smarter than that – then this not happen.

Sunshin: Put down the gun, Dandae, and you will not be hurt. If you don’t put the gun down, you will be very much hurt.

Dandae: I not listen to you anymore, Sunshin. You are stooge for these guys.

Sunshin: Not stooge, Dandae – not stooge at all, but also not spy.

Dandae (paying more visual attention to Sunshin now, but still glancing at others, too): Why you side with these guys, Sunshin? You not smarter than them?

Sunshin: I am smart enough to know not to shoot my brothers and sisters, unless they are shooting at me.

Dean: Why did you shoot David, Dandae? He may have had a gun, but he wasn’t planning on shooting at you, unless you threatened violence.

Dandae: Oh, you Americans make tailbone sore. All you do is sound nice and forget what nice really mean.

Dean: That’s not true, Dandae. I can be nice, real nice, and I don’t have any intention of doing you harm. You may have to pay for your shooting David, but that probably won’t be that bad.

Dandae: What about spying? (Sarcastically) How I pay for that? Jinny (knowing better, yet craftily): If you cooperate with our government and give them good information, they might not be too hard on you.

Dandae: I don’t think you understand spying. It tough business. South Korean Government hate North Korean spies. They hate me.

Sunshin: They might make a deal with you. They don’t often catch spies that give good information. You could make this work for you and the government both.(Marital airs heard again.)

Johnny: Damned North Korean robots. Their music suck.

Dandae: Shut up, Johnny, or I shoot you, too.

Johnny: Johnny not afraid to die; just not like being shot right now. (A loudspeaker can be heard outside.)

Police: This is the police, Dandae. Come on out and don’t hurt anyone or we’ll have to shoot you.

Dandae: Jesus, how they know I’m here?

Sunshin: I expect they probably tapped into your radio transmissions at some point, and bugged this place. (Johnny looks surprised.)

Dandae (going to door, but carefully, opening it a crack): I’m not coming out until you leave -- got it.

Police: Oh, we’re not going anywhere anytime soon, unless you throw out any firepower you might have.

Dandae (thinking a moment, then motioning): Sunshin, get soldier’s gun, and throw it out there. (Sunshin does as instructed.)

Police: Thanks, Dandae, but do you have any more firepower?

Dandae (near door): No more firepower. You come in.

Police: No, Dandae. You come out.


Police: Should I send a medic in?

Dandae: No, not that bad.

Police: Well, what do you suggest we do next.

Dandae: You get me car and boat, to go to North Korea. I want woman driver, too.

Police: We might be able to do that, Dandae, if you let any innocent people in there go.

Dandae: No innocent people in here.

Police: You know what I mean – send out the women.

Dandae: I think about it… (Motioning to women) Go, get out! (The women get up and carefully go out the door.)

Dandae: That better? Now, where my car and driver?

Police: They’re coming. (Silence, then) Can you send out the wounded man, too?

Dandae (thinking): Okay, will do, but no more after that. (Motioning to David to leave. David does so, carefully.)

Police: Thanks, Dandae -- who’s left inside?

Dandae: Just two Americans, one British, one Korean journalist, and Johnny.

Police: Good. Now, when that car comes, we’ll holster our guns and you go to the car with the Korean journalist.
What Gets into People After “Idealism”?

News Correspondent Christiane Amanpour said the day after the announcement of his death that if you asked people who their hero is, “just about everybody will say Nelson Mandela.” Former US Secretary of State James Baker said that same day that Nelson Mandela was the kind of man who, as a young communist, in “equality and everything”, but “soon changed” when he became his nation’s leader. Baker seemed to be saying Mandela the leader didn’t believe in human or spiritual equality, or reconciliation, but JB, he did believe in those things. But Amanpour seems to neglect other heroes herself, who at least a few of us still revere at least as much as Nelson Mandela – Jesus Christ and Mother Teresa for starters. And Mr. Baker seems to forget Nelson Mandela didn’t wage any wars of retribution when he became South Africa’s leader – he’d decided long before that, he would beat his “enemies” with their own supposed medicine; he’d forgive them.

What gets into people after “idealism”? If most of the world admires Jesus Christ, Mother Teresa, and Nelson Mandela, why is the world in such a terrible state of conflict and chaos in so many places? And I don’t just mean creatively, as on-stage, but I mean knock-down-drag-out bloody conflict and chaos. A long time ago, the nuns who educated me 12 years in Catholic grade and high schools, used to preach the lesson of peace and gentleness using the life of Christ as a guide. Forget that my fourth grade teacher practically launched me through the roof one day she was so ticked at me. Little Sr. R. was a pepper-pot, and even some pepper-pots can be forgiven for exploding in your face.

There’s nothing wrong with pushing one’s proteges to do better; but there is something wrong with pushing them into bloody battles that become wars of conquest, with little room for compromise or honest peace. America was founded within a war, so maybe we’ll never get by the notion that we have to be the world’s policeman. But wouldn’t it be marvelous, if a nation that has been founded on the teachings of Jesus Christ, comes to abandon much of its warlike attitude, and cultivates the art of peace and tranquility instead? That seems a proper subject this time of year, with that little babe in Bethlehem having been born ca. December 25, 0AD. Remember, innocent infants are born every day of the year around the world, and they deserve fair chances for the rest of their lives, even if some grownups insist on not giving them that. Think hard work and peace, or peace and hard work – that’s what makes for decent living in our world. Not fake news and war generally, which make for death and destruction, and very little peace. Christ, Mother Teresa, and Nelson Mandela have led the way; let’s emulate them whenever we can. —Written ca. Dec. 2013, by DuJM.

What I Owe My Son and Those Who Love Him

Recently, there was a report on TV about a young man whose father died before they could reconcile their differences. The point of the story was to show how the son had gone on, to graduate college (it took him seven years, while he also held a job), and the son had begun his career as a writer, a vocation his father would have been very proud of. This occurred half-a-world-away from the United States, but the story is universally relevant. One thing the TV reporter said was that often our children know themselves better than we, their parents, know them. And though some of the things our offspring do bother us a bit, it pays to give them their freedom at the proper times, and allow them to find their own paths to truth and happiness. While they traverse their own paths later, our offspring will remember how we guided them when we could traverse paths in physical and other ways with them, when they were young. And when we're not there physically to accompany them, their travel, we can be, very much so, emotionally and spiritually, because, very simply, we love our children and all they do of their own choosing.

It takes a childlike imagination to know a “child”, and how they will grow and mature. My own son is the only child I have as far as I know, and he is now a man in the US Army; he means more to me than any other human being, though I love my parents, my siblings, and my friends, a great deal, too. And I will always be grateful to my son's mother for him, though she and I have been divorced nearly 20 years. To be more far-reaching, though, every parent loves their children. I'd guess, though there's a great deal of and all children are different, that's what makes for decent living in our world, not fake news and war generally, which make for death and destruction, and very little peace. Christ, Mother Teresa, and Nelson Mandela have led the way; let's emulate them whenever we can. —Written ca. Dec. 2013, by DuJM.
with studies, sports, jobs, and dates, and the occasional accident, and if we're lucky, on to adulthood and further up the paths of life; and though the journey is up and down, we hope it's mainly up when it needs to be.

It used to be that children were to be seen, and not heard; these days, a child must learn to speak intelligently, act accordingly, and at least hold their own in the world, perhaps even ascending above their original rank, to be leaders of us all. In the process, we parents can see how our offspring have learned good lessons, sometimes from us, sometimes more on their own. In any case, when they mature, we hope they do so with courage, humility, foresight, strength, and morality, in their hearts and minds. Life's not easy by any stretch of the imagination, but it does have compensations, emotional and otherwise, if one's offspring suggest we have done right by them and not given up on them. Wherever my son goes in this life, I hope he always remembers, I am reconciled to Matt's freedom, truth-seeking, and happiness above all else, for Matthew (my son, and also the Gospel-writer St. Matthew) teaches me a lot, and perhaps, even, him. I hope my son stays safe-enough and healthy-enough for many more decades, and both of us and our families well-beyond even that in the best senses of those words. We wish the same for all the world's families, too.—Written 2011, with Diana Sawyer note remembered & cited in 2017, by DuJM.

Why One Person's Journalism Is Not Dead

I've read in many places that Journalism is not dead, though it may be bleeding badly and needs a transfusion, quite a few stitches, and a big bandage. I graduated from the Missouri Journalism School in 1984. Mizzou's is the first School of Journalism ever created, having opened as a School in 1908, and still going strong. After spring of 1985, I moved to Seoul, South Korea, leaving behind Wisconsin. My first job out of J-School soon after, turned out to be with Yonhap in Seoul; I was its principal English-Language copy editor then, and by 1986, after a few months back in Wisconsin, had moved to Business Korea Magazine, and other Korean publishing organizations as side-jobs, etc. I returned to the States in 1987, thinking my son would be born into a family supported by a Journalist (me) with decent resume, understanding though I’d only been in the field full-time since 1984. I was in for a rude awakening; there were no more full-time Journalism jobs for me until 1990, and that one didn’t last long, as vacation-relief editor of a weekly paper in central Wisconsin. I’d been sending in my freelance writing for more than a year by then, and in December 1990, I finally had a book review of mine published in British Heritage Magazine, and soon after that, a book review in Korean Culture Magazine. I’d write for both magazines many years, and added quite a few other freelance clients to my resume, including 140 reports for the main Milwaukee daily, articles and reviews for other leading regional and national papers, plus works for the RPS Journal and British Journal of Photography in England.

However, my paid freelance journalism had dried up almost entirely by 2007, when I saw my first article published in Smithsonian Magazine; another was published in it by me in 2008. However, that source has dried up, too, for me since 2008, and my freelance journalism doesn’t pay my bills anymore. Luckily, I taught college-extension adult writing and photo classes from 1991 to 2002, and during that time and forward, I directed/editd books for my students and former students, et.al. In October 2001, we happened to publish a word-photo book called “Spirit of America: Heartland Voices, World Views.” It was a physically large paperback, and we won the Spirit of America Award for it the next year from Greg Hilbert’s Sept. 12 Guild at Mary Eisenhower’s People to People International Conference in Kansas City, Mo. Mary, a President’s granddaughter, later wrote an introduction for one of our group books, “Spirit of the World” (Speranza, 2006), and has contributed photos to some of our other books. “Spirit of the World” won a Governor’s Commendation from Wisconsin Gov. James Doyle, and some of our more recent books have done somewhat well too.

It’s very hard to make ends meet with Journalism works now, not only for me but for freelancers and staffers generally. But without a doubt, I still believe in Walter Williams’s Journalist’s Creed, which affirms God and morality can help create a journalism of humanity, of and for today’s world. It was very nice, then, to have my son, Matthew, and I included in Steve Weinberg’s 2008 history of the Mizzou J-School, “A Journalism of Humanity,” along with SW’s many other stories. In May of 2001, we happened to publish a word-photo book called “Spirit of America: Heartland Voices, World Views.” It was a physically large paperback, and we won the Spirit of America Award for it the next year from Greg Hilbert’s Sept. 12 Guild at Mary Eisenhower’s People to People International Conference in Kansas City, Mo. Mary, a President’s granddaughter, later wrote an introduction for one of our group books, “Spirit of the World” (Speranza, 2006), and has contributed photos to some of our other books. “Spirit of the World” won a Governor’s Commendation from Wisconsin Gov. James Doyle, and some of our more recent books have done somewhat well too.

Human Beings and My Art, So Far.

“The greatness comes when you’re really tested.”—President Richard Nixon.

“Perfection is not attainable, but if we chase perfection we can catch excellenct.”—Vince Lombardi, who, legend has it, was offered the vice presidential spot on Richard Nixon’s national ticket in 1968, but didn’t take it, because Lombardi was a Democrat, Nixon a Republican.

Taking-making good photographs demands intuitive ability first, just as writing truthfully does; and being an editor for both forms does as well. The photographer, the writer, the editor must grasp, often in an instant, the effective-appealing presentation of people and/or slices of life, each moving viewers/readers to say, “Yes, that's what human beings are, do, or make.” Whether a picture or an essay is achieved via the use of high technology or not, the results can be as gratifying to viewers and readers as to the original artists. If the results are historically truthful- and beautiful-enough to view/read, then documentary art is achieved, whether one is showing/descending the death of a neighbor or a sunrise along a highway. Pathos and/or humor factor in, and the viewer/reader must determine what the photographer/writer is communicating best. I took up photography in 1979 after being a writer many years (in early 2011, my journalism commentary was nominated for a Pulitzer; and in early 2013 my drama “Remembering Davy Crockett” was nominated for a Pulitzer as well). My soon-to-be-first-ex-wife once said she wanted to learn to play the banjo. I didn't know if she was trying to make a suggestion to me, but I didn't want to play banjo. She later said she wanted to buy a “good camera”. I didn't buy an expensive camera, but soon after our divorce, at age 29, I bought my first 35 mm SLR camera, a RolleiFlex35SLE with superb lens. (“Photography takes an instant out of time, altering life by holding it still.”—Dorothea Lange)
your hearts and your minds and realize that the bloodshed of the past decade has caused grief to many people like you. Many families in this country as in Northern Ireland, Protestant as well as Catholic, today and as every day, are grieving and mourning for one who in life was greatly treasured." Now, there was visible movement in the group. The cardinal concluded by asking them all to pray. At once, one of the women headed for the door. She had a statement of her own to make. "If that is all your eminence has to say about these [five] demands, then all I can say is: Stick it!" Another woman followed by refusing the invitation to prayer. Fifty relatives stood then as a body to leave. A surprised cardinal made no motion to call them back. Someone asked if there might still be some discussion of the demands. There was nothing more to discuss, his eminence said. (Thankfully, relatively better relations exist now among the Republic of Ireland, Northern Ireland, and the UK's Royal Government, for Catholics and for Protestants in those countries.)

In addition to my coverage of Anglo-Irish relations in autumn 1981, I reported on several other stories too, including the then-only professional Palestinian theatre troupe in existence anywhere, El-Hakawati. I’d bought a copy of Jon Dunbleby & Don McCullin’s photo-essay book “The Palestinians” in a London bookstore, and was very moved by it. Since then, I’ve written several times about Israeli-Palestinian issues plus photographed many, many Jews, Palestinians, & Muslims. After modern Israel was established in May 1948, about 10 million Palestinians have been forced to live outside Israel-reformed Palestine, more than the number of Jews murdered in WWII’s Holocaust. It seems a decent peace treaty should be signed soon between the Israeli government and the Palestinian authorities, with a long period of peace between those sides following thereafter.

After I'd lived in Britain in 1981 – where I also interviewed and photographed Picture Post star Bert Hardy for the British National Portrait Gallery, and after having studied the documentary work of Bill Brandt, Dorothea Lange, Gordon Parks, Walker Evans, Henri Cartier-Bresson, Lewis Hine, Eve Arnold, and W.E. Smith – plus after I'd begun living and working as a journalist in Seoul in 1984-1987, where I studied Korean photographers (especially H. Edward Kim, Kim Young-Im, Tony Chung, Yim Hyang-Ja, and the publisher of the brochure for my first photo-exhibition in Seoul, documentary-great Joo Myung-Duck), I married a South Korean woman, my second wife. We divorced six years later in America, but when our son visited me in 1991, I taught him how to take pictures. He was three-and-a-half then. I also gave him a pre-computer with electronic typing test in it, on which he became not only very fast, but very accurate. Matt needs many types of accuracy now and in future, due to the political, military, cultural, and spiritual calamities our world now seems prone to. As Prof. Andrew J. Bacevich says in his recent salon.com article with satirical title about our permanent wars, etc., “At the Altar of American Greatness”, regarding columnist David Brooks: “That Donald Trump inhabits a universe of his own devising, constructed of carefully arranged all-facts, is no doubt the case. Yet, in truth, much the same can be said of David Brooks and others sharing his view of a country providentially charged to serve as the ‘successor to Jerusalem, Athens and Rome.’ In fact, this conception of America’s purpose expresses not the intent of providence, which is inherently ambiguous, but their own arrogance and conceit. Out of that conceit comes much mischief. And in the wake of mischief come America’s greatest enemies.”

In my works, I’ve reported on countless related human stories – from the most basic-to-me -- my extended family, friends, and neighbors – on up to some of the most exalted personalities of our time, including Nobel Peace Laureates St. Teresa of Calcutta and Elie Wiesel, plus Gerda W. Klein, Eva Schloss (Anne Frank’s step-sister), Fr. Patrick Desbois (who’s helped discover the corpses of about two million WWII Jews, killed by SS bullets in the country-sides of Eastern Europe), both Presidents Bush, Bill Clinton, Donald Trump, and Barack Obama (another Nobel Peace Laureate), and leading clergy, athletes, artists, entertainers. I’ve authored >120+ books starting with "Calling America" (I was calling/whining/exhorting America in those days, so that Americans would do better work creatively and not be so egocentric and ethnocentric about it; these days, it’s my intermixing vocations that call me), published in 1986 Seoul, whose front-cover-photo shows a parking sign -- Idle Hour Customers Only -- by a bar; then taught adults writing and photography at WTC, where the group books I’ve directed began; produced, so far, two of the greatest, so far, movies I’ve directed, starting with "Calling America” (I was calling/whining/exhorting America in those days, so that Americans would do better work creatively and not be so egocentric and ethnocentric about it; these days, it’s my intermixing vocations that call me), published in 1986 Seoul, whose front-cover-photo shows a parking sign -- Idle Hour Customers Only -- by a bar; then taught adults writing and photography at WTC, where the group books I’ve directed began; produced, so far, two of the 15 plays I’ve written, “Song of Joy—Or the Old Reliabiles” and “Remembering Davy Crockett" (which puts a unique spin on the last years of DC’s life); and feel empathy for the human race, because my family and friends generally love me and what I do. “Song of Joy—Or the Old Reliabiles” is my sequel to Sean O’Casey’s masterful Dublin tragicomedy “Juno and the Paycock.” O’Casey’s most controversial play was “The Silver Tassie”, about a soccer star in Ireland (Harry Heegan) and the tassie (championship cup) he helps win who goes off to fight in World War I, and returns a severely disabled man. I empathize a great deal with O’Casey’s anti-war ideas and feelings. The genius of O’Casey’s “Silver Tassie” script was to divide his play into a realistic part at start (about the team’s championship celebration just before Harry leaves for the war), an expressionistic part near the end (the horrors of that war), followed by two realistic parts dealing with the hero’s very sad return. Living in London, O’Casey received W.B. Yeats’s rejection of “The Silver Tassie” by the Abbey Theatre in Dublin in letter-form, and shared the news with good friend George Bernard Shaw. Shaw empathized with O’Casey’s play, signing off his letter to O’Casey with “Cheerio, Titan”. Mrs. Sean (Eileen) O’Casey wrote that her husband and GB Shaw, who both had migrated to England, loved Ireland more than many of the Irish people who lived in the latter nation. That’s relevant to Americans and America these days. Many Americans may not know how to love our own nation and the rest of the world in effectively non-ideal and positive ways; we may all do the latter eventually, hopefully soon-enough.

Added note: I’ve held a dozen one-person photo-exhibitions, two in Seoul, and have displayed my photos also in a group-show at Smithsonian's National Museum of American History Archives Center in 2011-12, “Gift of the Artist”; I’ve many materials in various Smithsonian Archives. And my online photo-galleries are on the Wisconsin Historical Society website and (British) Digital Photographer website. Many of my books, writings, etc., are online on the La Crosse History Unbound Website too. My extra money, including from sponsors and very modestly from Social Security, is spent on photos and books now. It’s great exploring our world, and photography, writing, and editing allow focused artists to do that. God is great, and so are the subjects, teachers, students, mentors, peers, technicians, designers, publishers, archivists, thespians, and viewers positively involved with this series and all our works, etc. Thank you all – past, present, and future – for inspiring me, my parents, my son and his wife and their offspring-to-be, our family and friends generally, and everything positive we do – by giving us the good sense to actually listen well-enough to what others say, while watching enough of what they do, to make one’s own decisions and actions wise and positive for as many people and creations as possible in this world, and hopefully even in the next.—Written in 2012 & 2017 by DuJM.

David J. Marcou  
January 14, 2010  -  7:52 pm  · I did not personally know Dennis Stock, but I’ve long admired his photos, without really knowing much about him. I’ve been reading more lately, and anyone who could stick with Magnum for six decades, and take great photos all that time, deserves hearty applause. I love his James Dean at Times Square photo, but his Audrey Hepburn in car and Miles Davis playing views are equally enthralling. I have a brother named Dennis, whom I respect a great deal. He’s a judge in La Crosse, WI, and a very fair judge at that. I’ve photographed him many times, over the
years, the same as I’ve photographed my family generally. I now plan on taking a photo of my brother, to commemorate Dennis Stock, and I hope it turns out half as well as a Dennis Stock masterpiece.—NYTimes.com

An Enduring Legacy

Writer David Marcou… tells how meeting Bert Hardy sparked a fascination with Picture Post and all who worked for it.

I first met Bert Hardy in November 1981, two years after I’d taken up photography. That meeting was so influential to my future work that I didn’t just write one story but returned to him time and again. Eventually, my portrait of Hardy and his dogs Lizzie and Kim was acquired by the National Portrait Gallery [in Britain].

I’d been studying in London, and our tutor worked for the Sunday Times; our office was on the top floor of theirs on Gray’s Inn Road. Writing and photographing stories for my assignments, I met a neighbourhood printer, Prem Olsen, who suggested I contact a photojournalist who had good tales to tell. That was Bert Hardy, who told me I met at his farm in Surrey. The first interview was intriguing, with mentions of many famous people Bert had photographed, but also discussion of places and people, including the street urchins of Glasgow, and World War Two. Before I left, I was told I must also interview a mystery man of sorts, Hardy’s Korean War writing partner, James Cameron. Their piece on Inchon (the turning point for the South Korean/UN side in that conflict) was the only significant word-photo coverage of the first day’s attack.

I remember a photo of a gathering of Royal Photographic Society members with the Honorary Fellow Hardy seated in the centre. At his knee, listening for any words of wisdom, was Don McCullin, now an Honorary Fellow himself.—DvJM’s 1st-person story was published in the Royal Photographic Society Journal (now The Journal) in July 2015 (Vol. 155, PP.518-522?) for the 20th anniversary of Bert Hardy’s passing in The Journal’s combined coverage “Bert Hardy and Picture Post”. RPS Journal is the oldest surviving magazine focused on photography. An ID-photo of DvJM taken by Steve Kiedrowski at a political rally on Feb. 15, 2008 in front of a large US Flag in La Crosse, WI, was published with the DvJM-contributed RPS Journal report, as was the DvJM-taken NPG photo-portrait of Bert Hardy and his dogs, Lizzie and Kim (NPGx126230), etc. DvJM-authored books include bios of Hardy and Cameron — “The ‘Cockney Eye’ and ‘James Cameron’s World’; dual bios about them – “A Quintessential Picture Post Crisis Recalled” and “Crucial Collaborations”; and the first complete history of Picture Post magazine, “All the Best”.

A People Person

Subjects from Mother Teresa to US Presidents have paraded before the camera of Wisconsin-based David Marcou, who explains here how he deals with both celebrities and everyday subjects.

PHOTOGRAPHING PEOPLE can be tough, especially when you are competing with other photographers for the best views. The biggest challenge is at public events, where celebrities can be in great demand; but photographing more private events and ordinary people can be difficult too. Both types of subjects and events need to be within any good photojournalist’s range.

My own work is mainly ‘straight’ and ‘straight-on’ photography. By ‘straight’ photography I mean as Alfred Stieglitz meant; the absence of flim-flam. I try not to mystify viewers with super-complex meanings. By ‘straight-on’ photography I mean looking straight at my subjects, with them looking straight back at me. I have taken pride, like Bert Hardy and Henri Cartier-Bresson, in being able to use a normal lens to get good close-ups. Early on, I was even able to put a wide-angle lens right up to people’s face and photograph them – including people I had just met on the street.

The first picture story I photographed and wrote was about a five-year-old boy with spina bifida. It was a project for a Missouri School of Journalism course in 1980 taught by Veita Jo Hampton. My Rolleiflex[35]SLE broke soon in on the project, and I had to borrow a friend’s Nikon, but things worked out. My best portrait is of spunky little Patrick Clark, seated atop a jeepbox with his hand on hip.

A year later I photographed Mark Twain’s Hannibal for the Columbia Missourian and Missouri Life. The latter was my first paid assignment, and that magazine published six of my pictures with its own writing. Even so, I had to improvise as the first writer threw a tantrum and walked off the job.

Words and Pictures

Some more-regular assignments have not only required my photographic skills, but also my writing. As editor of a weekly paper in Adams County, Wisconsin, I took and captioned many pictures, and also wrote, edited, and laid out stories. I reported on a day-in-the-life of a country vet, a county fair, international farm exchanges, a high school Homecoming, a British-American war bride, and business, medical, and crime news.

One of my freelance clients has been the Wisconsin diocesan newspaper. My reportage has included Archbishop of Canterbury Robert Runcie’s ecumenical visit, the diocese’s 125th Anniversary Mass, the Bishop’s [Ray Burke’s] installation, a Latin American poet’s visit, and Easter celebrations at the local cathedral. The last was a real challenge – the church being darkened to start Easter Vigil service, and the Easter Candle being lit and passed along. I used ISO800 and ISO1600 Fujicolor print films for candle-lit pictures without flash (of course) for effective images.

World Leaders

To meet Mother Teresa, in January 1985 while working as an editor for Yonhap News Agency, I accompanied an Agence France Presse reporter with two other photographers. A snowstorm loomed at the Missionaries of Charity convent in Anyang, South Korea, but held off. [There was snow on the ground, though, from a previous storm.] We had a personal interview and photographed the Nobel Laureate, future saint, and champion of the poor and suffering, close up.

When other journalists arrived, she went from convent to chapel to the order’s leprosarium, and finally out for a walk and drive. Everyone followed, especially when she drove herself around the driveway in a yellow VW beetle. I did not sell any of my Mother Teresa pictures in 1985, but have since. I used ISO400 b&w and colour films, but lost some of those negatives in 1987.
Public or private, access is always the key – and you may need a press pass to photograph bigger events. But that is not to say that the sneaky-pic is out forever. Picture Post’s Bert Hardy sneaked into the Paris Opera in 1957 for the first visit of Elizabeth II to France, improvising a 15-picture join-up of the Queen’s entrance.

While living in London in 1981, a similar experience for me was photographing tenor sax legend Archie Shepp at the Camden Jazz Festival. I was able to get backstage without prior permission, and took his picture just before he went onstage. My story about that event was published in the Columbia Missourian.

Presidential Race

In 2000, both major presidential candidates came to La Crosse, and I wanted my then-13-year-old son, Matt, to photograph them with me and be able to say we photographed a future president (or two) together. I [believed] my son would not get a press pass then, so I got general entry tickets at both parties’ headquarters.

We were up front for the Al Gore riverside event. With three cameras between us, one of my best images was made with a point-and-shoot that I held above my head. Weather and lighting were good. Tipper Gore, herself a photographer, aimed her camera at us and may have taken our picture. Soon after, my son and I attended the George W Bush rally at the La Crosse Center. We had to sit far from the stage, but got pictures showing the future president and crowd responses. We used ISO800 Fujicolor print film at both events.

I have gained access to many notable people and events over time, and have been interested to see how different people react. Mother Teresa was fairly easy to photograph close up; she knew how to project a positive image. Family events can be trickier, because relatives know you and may confound picture opportunities more often than not. In any case, it is essential to have an early idea about where and when you will get your best pictures, leaving open chances for good improvisations too.

Many types of people are in my pictures, photographed in churches, schools, hospitals, courts, stores, libraries, stadiums, barns, pubs, galleries, theatres, capitols, stations, homes, and on the street. When I take close-ups of people – whether of photographer John Sexton, a Philippine girl’s big eyes, a ranger guarding a famous home, Elizabeth Dole greeting a servicewoman, or a girl battling leukemia – I always get permission for informal portraits. I do virtually no studio work, and prefer the freedom of informal situations.

Sometimes I stop to chat with people in the street, and ask if I can take a picture. Usually, I talk with them for a minute or two, but this is hard when there is a language barrier. In Seoul I would say “hello” in Korean, and then ask “Sajin?” (“Photograph?”). People would respond right away, often positively. But portraits of everyday people can still be as tough to take as celebrity photos, because the former are used to their privacy. Celebrities are used to projecting an image and can be easier to photograph superficially, but recording anyone’s true self on film is hard.

Moments of Emotion

While I have photographed more-serious subjects, like an accident that killed four teenagers, and a military funeral, people seem to prefer my pictures when they are more accessible – the comic response of a family picking up recyclables in Missouri, a Green Bay Packer football player riding a bike to practice, or a shared joke with a librarian.

One time, I took a nice picture of a little girl in a London day centre, reading. I had got permission to visit [the centre] daily for a month, and used 15 rolls of ISO400 colour print film, and three rolls of ISO400 slide film. I have become adept at taking good people pictures, including children, due to projects like that.

In England, in 1981, I also photographed Bert Hardy, the first photo-legend I knew. But one of my favourite tasks was to photograph my parents for their Golden Valentine Anniversary in 2000. They were interviewed by our local ABC TV affiliate [WXOW], and I took stills. Bishop Desmond Tutu says: “It is in the most basic sense that we are a family”. I would add that people make or support opportunities more often than not. In any case, it is essential to have an early idea about where and when you will get your best pictures, leaving open chances for good improvisations too.

Author’s Note—Thank you to all who believe in me, my family and works, including Jim H., a superbly down-to-earth counselor who’s been positively critical and constructive 35 years. It helps I’m a life-long Bumble Bee, Blugold, Badger, Hawkeye, and Tiger: those things give me hope too; but it’s possible (anything's possible) many on earth think lives like mine (in S438, as cultural god/us) a charade, with nearly everyone else “demigods” intending to plant me and perhaps a few others underground “for good”, while they continue partying ever after. And yet, as Badger basketball star Nigel Hayes says, mathematicians have statistics and numbers, but even “with all their algorithms, they can’t calculate [human] heart, will to win, toughness, desire.” Though losing in the recent NCAA Sweet 16, Badger seniors Bronson Koenig, Nigel Hayes, Zack Showalter, and Vitto Brown were stellar, including two final four appearances and four straight Sweet 16s. In key ways, you’ve created paths we all can follow. As for me personally Christian beliefs, recently Rick Weath, a nationally-known musician and a lead-actor in my Irish play, said on facebook that the Bible was not compiled by Divine Authority, but by Catholic bishops hungry for money and power (and sex I’d guess too); there was also input over early centuries from others, but God’s Divine Authority may not have had as much to do with that compilation as the Catholic Church, et. al. suggest. The Church has not always been scientific; remember the house arrest of Galileo.

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Many types of people are in my pictures, photographed in churches, schools, hospitals, courts, stores, libraries, stadiums, barns, pubs, galleries, theatres, capitols, stations, homes, and on the street. When I take close-ups of people – whether of photographer John Sexton, a Philippine girl’s big eyes, a ranger guarding a famous home, Elizabeth Dole greeting a servicewoman, or a girl battling leukemia – I always get permission for informal portraits. I do virtually no studio work, and prefer the freedom of informal situations.

Sometimes I stop to chat with people in the street, and ask if I can take a picture. Usually, I talk with them for a minute or two, but this is hard when there is a language barrier. In Seoul I would say “hello” in Korean, and then ask “Sajin?” (“Photograph?”). People would respond right away, often positively. But portraits of everyday people can still be as tough to take as celebrity photos, because the former are used to their privacy. Celebrities are used to projecting an image and can be easier to photograph superficially, but recording anyone’s true self on film is hard.

Moments of Emotion

While I have photographed more-serious subjects, like an accident that killed four teenagers, and a military funeral, people seem to prefer my pictures when they are more accessible – the comic response of a family picking up recyclables in Missouri, a Green Bay Packer football player riding a bike to practice, or a shared joke with a librarian.

One time, I took a nice picture of a little girl in a London day centre, reading. I had got permission to visit [the centre] daily for a month, and used 15 rolls of ISO400 colour print film, and three rolls of ISO400 slide film. I have become adept at taking good people pictures, including children, due to projects like that.

In England, in 1981, I also photographed Bert Hardy, the first photo-legend I knew. But one of my favourite tasks was to photograph my parents for their Golden Valentine Anniversary in 2000. They were interviewed by our local ABC TV affiliate [WXOW], and I took stills. Bishop Desmond Tutu says: “It is in the most basic sense that we are a family”. I would add that people make or support opportunities more often than not. In any case, it is essential to have an early idea about where and when you will get your best pictures, leaving open chances for good improvisations too.
To Dave with love and thanks,
Eva Weron

Plank, Dave
for taking all the great photos.
Love Eva Weron

27/3/2017

EVA'S STORY