Macalester Today May 1990

Macalester College

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CZECHOSLOVAKIA
The curtain rises

‘On the Rainy River’: Fiction by Tim O’Brien

The new Hungarian revolution
LETTERS

We welcome readers’ opinions of recent articles. Please send letters intended for publication to Letters to the Editor, Macalester Today, Public Relations and Publications Department, Macalester College, 1600 Grand Ave., St. Paul, MN 55105-1899. We reserve the right to edit letters for conciseness and clarity.

Religion and doubts

I enjoyed the religion article. It’s nice to know others have/had the same doubts. So how do you raise your kids?

Leslie Tannahill Udenberg ’86
Chatfield, Minn.

Macalester should repent

I find myself saddened to the point of tears after reading the February issue of Macalester Today, especially where it says [in a comment by one student about religion] that "Macalester students don’t believe in God." My concern in addition to the abortion issue (I am 100 percent pro-life and so is God) is how far the college has backslided spiritually.

I am not a graduate, but I did attend parts of two years. My class is 1927. Macalester was strongly a Presbyterian school at that time. We had Bible reading and chapel each morning, as I remember. Dr. Wallace, professor [Glenn] Clark, Grace Whitridge, and other faculty members no doubt have turned over in their graves many times in recent years, to say nothing of John Knox.

The Bible is still the word of God and no one gets to heaven without being born again. Why are other world religions being taught at Macalester? Macalester was known as a Christian college—but not any more.

As I see it, Macalester needs to repent and get back to the word of God—the Bible. I am writing this because I am a loyal son. How about asking Billy Graham to visit Macalester?

Orville Morton ’27
Duluth, Minn.

Appalled by picture

I am one of four brothers who graduated from Macalester, one of whom was awarded an honorary doctorate by the college. We were appalled to see the picture of Macalester students [May 1989 Macalester Today] at the April 9, 1989, abortion rally in Washington, D.C. Your picture did not reflect the feeling of a great number of our alumni toward this inhuman and barbaric procedure which destroys human life in a woman’s body. It certainly is not fit for our great nation as we approach the 21st century.

Reuben B. Meckel ’33
Roseville, Minn.

Make abortion unnecessary

I was delighted to see in the November issue of Macalester Today that Macalester students are actively involved in the pro-choice movement in the Twin Cities.

Abortion is a private, personal matter between a woman and her physician.

Lisa Donaldson Erickson ’77, M.D.
Rochester, Minn.

Several letters concerning abortion could not be published in this issue for reasons of space. They will be printed in the August issue.

— the Editors
About This Issue

A huge crowd gathers in Prague's Wenceslas Square last November during the peaceful revolution that brought down Czechoslovakia's Communist regime. Photo by Jan Sibik. See page 16.

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Reader's Digest stock sale benefits Macalester fund

The decision by the trustees of the DeWitt Wallace Fund for Macalester College to sell to the public some of its nonvoting stock in the Reader's Digest Association has brought changes to the Wallace Fund, which provides substantial support for Macalester.

The initial public offering of Digest stock last February will enable the fund to diversify the investments on which its future depends, and may generate some additional income.

Large share of 'endowment'

The importance of the Digest stock to Macalester is simple: two-thirds of the college's endowment has been in the form of nonvoting shares of Reader's Digest Association common stock. This stock was given to the fund by the late DeWitt Wallace, founder of the Reader's Digest magazine and long-time benefactor of Macalester. The stock has been held not by the college itself but by the fund, an independent foundation established by DeWitt Wallace for the college's benefit.

Because the assets are not managed by the college, they are called "funds functioning as endowment." Their value was recently estimated at about $200 million. Macalester College's trustees, meanwhile, directly manage an endowment of about $70 million.

The Reader's Digest Association, historically a privately held company, made a public offering of new stock when Macalester and six other nonprofit organizations (including New York City's Metropolitan Museum of Art and the Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts) offered some of their stock on the open market on February 15. Macalester agreed to sell 23.5 percent of its stock, or 2.5 million shares, at a price of $20 per share as part of the offering.

Sale allows diversification

The stock sale is important chiefly because it has given Macalester an opportunity to diversify the investments on which it relies.

"It is risky for a college to have two-thirds of its endowment funds dependent upon the performance of a single company," said Macalester President Robert M. Gavin, Jr. "The Reader's Digest has been a very successful company; even so, in the last five years alone the estimated value of the stock held for Macalester has varied between $15 million and $200 million." An endowment diversified among a variety of investments provides greater stability and security.

As a result of the stock offer, the DeWitt Wallace Fund was able to convert a portion of its Reader's Digest stock into assets which will complement the college's current endowment—a portfolio of invested funds set aside specifically to generate steady, long-term income for the college. As with Macalester's other endowment holdings, each year a specified percentage of earnings—approximately five percent of the Wallace Fund's value—will be allocated to be spent by the college. By this formula, five percent of the approximately $50 million in net proceeds, or $2.4 million, would be available annually to support college activities. Last year the shares generated dividends of $1.4 million for the college.

Selling stock on the open market also established a per-share value that applies to the eight million shares of Reader's Digest stock still held for Macalester. The value of those shares will fluctuate with the stock market and with the company's performance.

Cautious plans

"The college will be very cautious and systematic about incorporating projected new revenues into its budget," Gavin said.

"Historically, the income from the Reader's Digest stock has been used to support priorities established by DeWitt Wallace, in recognition of the work of his father, James Wallace [a professor of classics and the college's fifth president]: academic excellence, internationalism, and an economically diverse student body.

"Specifically, these funds have supported new course development, faculty sabbaticals, faculty international study and travel, a distinguished visitor program that annually brings several eminent..."
scholars to campus, and financial support for more than 500 students each year," Gavin noted.

Proceeds of the stock sale, reinvested in a more diverse portfolio, will be used first to endow activities already under way at the college—items already occurring in the college's annual $34 million operating budget or capital projects already being planned, according to Gavin.

Over time, however, should the value of the stock hold up well, it will enable the college to act upon some of the priorities for which need has long been identified, but for which resources have not been available. The college's regular planning process will play an important role in establishing specific plans, Gavin said.

Priority needs identified

Noting that the college has a historic and continuing commitment to academic excellence, a multicultural and global outlook, and service to the community and society, President Gavin has proposed that continued leadership in those areas will require a variety of steps, including the following:

□ Diversifying the curriculum and the faculty by adding new faculty positions. Gavin believes that the college's curriculum should retain its coverage of Western viewpoints while adding a broad range of additional perspectives. For example, the religious studies department, with only three regular members, cannot hope to teach all of the world's significant religions, and yet understanding different faiths is essential to interpreting global events. Likewise, the college's language and culture programs are strong, but should be expanded to include more regions of the world. With virtually all 122 faculty positions currently filled, and more than 90 of them tenured, new perspectives can be added only through new positions, he said.

□ Significantly restructuring existing departments and divisions to enable faculty to recombine their teaching efforts in more meaningful ways.

□ Redesigning academic buildings to accommodate the new faculty, their research interests, and the restructured departments.

□ Maintaining an aggressive program of financial aid to ensure the continued presence of a diverse student body, a priority confirmed in the college's long-range plan and consistent with the goals of the DeWitt Wallace Fund for Macalester College.

□ Expanding and upgrading student residential and recreational facilities (a need also identified in the long-range plan).

Competing for students

"While the Reader's Digest stock sale represents the potential for enhanced annual income, Macalester's agenda will require a significantly larger endowment as well as expanded alumni giving through the Annual Fund, continued success with corporate and foundation grants, and aggressive capital fund-raising efforts," Gavin commented.

Macalester competes for students with the other top liberal-arts colleges in the nation. Many of those colleges spend $3,000-$4,000 more per student per year than Macalester.

"They can do so because they charge more for tuition, pay out less in financial aid, and draw income from significantly larger endowments than does Macalester," Gavin said. "An enhanced endowment, should that come to pass as a result of the public sale of Reader's Digest stock, will enable Macalester to begin to close that gap."

Gavin said that "the continued wise management of these endowed funds, combined with creative planning, will balance the historic mission of Macalester and tomorrow's challenges. Support from an expanding number of devoted alumni and friends makes Macalester's leadership role among the nation's finest small liberal-arts colleges more attainable than at any time in the college's history."

—N.P.

Julian Bond addresses large audience

Julian Bond, a veteran of the civil rights movement of the 1960s, discussed the issues that continue to confront people of color when he spoke to a large audience at the Macalester gymnasium Feb. 28. Bond, a founding member of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee and a former Georgia state legislator, is currently a visiting professor at Harvard University. About three weeks after his Macalester appearance, Bond married Pamela Sue Horowitz '68, a Washington attorney whom he first met at Macalester in the 1960s.
Macalester leads colleges in NSF laboratory grants

Macalester received more grants from the National Science Foundation’s Undergraduate Instrumentation and Laboratory Improvement (ILI) program than any other undergraduate liberal-arts college in the country in 1989, the foundation has reported.

The six grants will add a total of $163,280 in support to six academic departments, providing sophisticated instrumentation for faculty and student projects. The projects, listed with their faculty directors and funding amounts, include:

- $32,309 for a tissue culture facility for performing procedures essential to the discipline of immunology. To be introduced to all biology majors, the equipment will also be used by senior-level students doing research in immunology, cell biology, developmental biology, or neuroscience. The project will be directed by associate professor of biology Janet Serie.
- $26,140 for equipment that employs optical fibers as a medium for studying basic optical phenomena such as guided waves, nonlinear effects, sensor applications, and communication techniques. Implementing a major revision of its intermediate and advanced laboratories, the physics department is taking advantage of faculty expertise to introduce laboratory projects based on modern optical techniques and phenomena. The project will be directed by physics professor Raymond Mikkelson.
- $31,022 for a computer laboratory for the geological sciences. A network of eight Macintosh computers will be used by students in all geology courses to construct simulations of geologic processes, analyze and interpret geologic data, and develop their own classification schemes for fossils, minerals, and rocks. The project will be directed by geology professor Gerald Webers.
- $29,000 for an advanced computer science lab to support research in programming languages and software design. The lab will enable each computer science major to carry out a year-long independent research project—designed as a “capstone experience”—with a faculty member during his or her senior year. The lab will also be used in two junior-level software-oriented computer science classes. The project will be directed by computer science professor G. Michael Schneider.
- $29,676 for equipment to incorporate experiments using gas chromatography/mass spectroscopy techniques for chemical analysis and structure determination into organic chemistry courses. The equipment will also be used in advanced courses to study industrial wastes and biological fluids, and in other faculty-student research projects. The project will be directed by chemistry professor Fred Stocker.
- $163,280 in support to six academic departments, providing sophisticated instrumentation for faculty and student projects. The projects, listed with their faculty directors and funding amounts, include:

Watch for alumni survey

All alumni can expect to receive a survey in the mail from the Alumni Office this fall. The survey will enable the college to publish a new Macalester College Alumni Directory, superseding the 1986 edition.

The directory will include alphabetical, geographical, and class lists of all alumni as well as information on Macalester’s Alumni Association, the Alumni Board, alumni award recipients, and alumni clubs. It will be available next winter for purchase at a moderate cost.

The survey will also help make sure that Macalester Today and other college information are sent to the correct addresses.

Catherine Reid Day leaves to take job in public radio

Catherine Reid Day, Macalester’s vice president for development, resigned March 15 in order to accept a position as senior vice president for planning and development at American Public Radio in St. Paul.

During her five years at Macalester, Day led the successful $15 million library campaign and greatly increased the college’s success in securing support from national foundations. In addition, she increased alumni involvement through reunion- and Annual Fund-giving and through expanded activities around the nation and the world. She also expanded the college’s public relations effort in all media.

“Catherine Day made a number of substantial improvements and contributions to Macalester,” said President Gavin. “American Public Radio is fortunate to have her leadership. We wish her the very best in the next stage of her career.”

David Griffith, director of development, is assuming the position of acting vice president while the college carries out a search for Day’s successor.
The curious case of the mystery prints

Macalester, quite literally, a place for discovery.

Twenty-five rare prints by European and American artists were discovered in the former Weyerhaeuser Library mending room just before the building's renovation entered its final stage in December 1988.

The prints were found in the gutted basement of the old library by four members of the art department—professors Stanton Sears and Jerry Rudquist, lecturer Ruthann Godollei, and senior technician Mark Holte—acting on a tip from the college's physical plant office. "We wanted to make sure that valuable stuff didn't get thrown away," says Sears. Among dusty magazines and photographs they found a locked and damaged cabinet. Praying open one of the drawers revealed a solander box (a special carrying case) that contained 25 prints in nearly perfect condition. The woodcuts, lithographs, and etchings, representing artists from the 16th century to the early 20th century, had apparently remained sealed in the broken cabinet for years.

Godollei notified Macalester art gallery curator Cherie Doyle, who sent the prints in the spring of 1989 to Richard Campbell, head of the print collection at the Minneapolis Institute of Arts. Doyle was cautious about publicizing the find before the works were authenticated. "I thought that they were re-strikes," she says, explaining how later versions of prints can be produced without an artist's direct involvement, thereby lowering their market value. Campbell authenticated the prints.

"Prints" in this sense are different from today's commercial offset posters, says Godollei, a specialist in printmaking. To create an original print, an artist makes an image on a surface and remains present during the printing process (usually one print at a time). Some prints are extremely rare, with only a few in existence.

Some of the artists represented in the collection are certainly familiar—Whistler, Goya, Corot, and Daumier, among others—but Godollei recalls that even members of the art department were not especially impressed until an independent appraiser placed a $10,000 price tag on the collection. She considers it "a rock-bottom estimate."

"Prints have had a huge boom in price, like the antiques market," she says, noting that a much higher price would probably be set during an auction.

The works are relatively small. Camille Corot's 1866 Environs de Rome is the largest, measuring 12½ by 9 inches, while Hans Sebald Beham's Title Page from The Apocalypse, done in the early 1500s, is just 2½ by 2½ inches. Some prints have been cut from books, a few are hand-tinted, and one—the Daumier—is part of an 1842 French newspaper. No one is sure when or how Macalester obtained the prints, but those who have seen them agree they constitute a single collection due to the wide range of styles and time periods represented. While such collections were used in colleges throughout the country to teach art history classes before the advent of photographic slides, no record of such a collection at Macalester exists. And no one can explain how the prints ended up in the mending room of Weyerhaeuser Library.

Gallery apprentice Sigrid Danielson '89 is researching the collection in preparation for a formal show sometime next spring. She suspects that they were brought to campus as a collection in the 1920s or '30s. "Those were big years for print collecting," she says, pointing out that the latest date on a print from the collection is 1923. That was also a period when Macalester was expanding its humanities courses under the leadership of President John Carey Acheson.

The prints are a major acquisition for the gallery, which relies on donations in order to increase the permanent collection. Doyle, who is on child-bearing leave from the gallery, says that the art department and the gallery must now decide whether to keep the prints or sell them.

Acting curator Bill Brooks hopes the prints stay at Macalester. The college's current holdings include a 60-piece collection of African art and a variety of Japanese prints.

While the prints' history is mysterious and their future uncertain, Godollei is one of many who are enchanted with the discovery. "It's the idea of picking up something that was done fresh in the 16th century," she says. —Kevin Brooks '89
Eight Macalester athletes win All-Conference honors

Even though the Macalester winter sports teams failed to finish in the top half of the standings in the always competitive Minnesota Intercollegiate Athletic Conference (MIAC), it was a winter filled with accomplishments for standouts in each sport. Eight Mac athletes won All-Conference honors, either through voting by league coaches, as in the case of basketball, or by high MIAC finishes in individual swimming or indoor track and field events.

The men’s and women’s basketball teams each had one All-MIAC performer. Jon Dean (Fridley, Minn.), a sharpshooting senior forward, led the men’s team in scoring with an average of 15.6 points per game. He also made an average of 3.7 three-point shots per game—the third-highest figure in the nation among Division III players.

Macalester’s representative on the women’s All-Conference squad was sophomore guard Jane Ruliffson (Fargo, N.D.), who, like Dean, was one of the top outside shooters in the league. Ruliffson was her team’s leading scorer in all but four games and finished second in the MIAC in scoring with 18.8 points a game.

Four track-and-field athletes finished in the top six or better at the conference indoor championships in early March to earn All-MIAC status. Junior Karen Goodrich (McMinnville, Ore.) made All-Conference in three events. Her best event was the 55-meter hurdles, where she finished fifth with a school-record time. She also came in fifth in the 300- and 400-meter dashes. Three members of the men’s team received All-Conference certificates. Mac’s top finisher was senior middle-distance standout Tom Swanson (Washburn, Wis.), who took third in the 800-meter run, losing a photo finish for second. Sophomore Mike Nakagawa (Honolulu) took fourth in the 55-meter hurdles and senior Gary Carlson (Red Wing, Minn.) placed sixth in the 35-pound weight throw.

In swimming and diving events, Leo Pearce (Oak Park, Ill.) of the men’s team and Sarah Smith (St. Paul) of the women’s squad earned All-MIAC honors by finishing in the top three. Pearce was third in both one- and three-meter diving, and Smith finished third in the 1,650-yard freestyle. Both qualified for the national championships.

It was a difficult winter for Macalester’s teams, which lacked either the depth or experience to finish in MIAC’s upper division. The swimming teams, under first-year coach Bob Pearson, were low in numbers and could not move among the league leaders despite outstanding performances from the likes of Smith and Pearce as well as Chad Baasen (Hutchinson, Minn.), Charlie Cauthorn (San Antonio, Texas), and Wendy Petropoulos (Huron, Ohio). The men’s team was especially hurt by the knee injury of freshman Ed Buhr (Fresno, Calif.), a potential conference champion. The men’s and women’s track teams are very strong in the freshmen and sophomore classes, giving men’s coach Tim Pilon and women’s coach Vanessa Seljeskog high hopes for the future.

The women’s basketball team, under fourth-year coach John Hershey, managed a very respectable 11-14 record despite a small bench and a lineup without any seniors. In addition to Ruliffson, the Scots had two of the best rebounders in the league in juniors Sue Mahoney (Stillwater, Minn.) and Jen Downham (Minneapolis), and one of the best defensive players in junior guard Michelle Peterson (Maple Grove, Minn.). Men’s basketball coach Doug Bolstorff celebrated his 250th coaching victory at Macalester at the Hawaii Loa Tournament in December, but the season finished on a disappointing note as the Scots lost their final eight games to finish with a 7-18 record.

In other sports news, Gary J. Etcheverry, assistant football coach and defensive coordinator for the past eight years at Southern California’s Occidental College, was named head football coach at Macalester. He began his duties April 16. Etcheverry fills the vacancy left in December by Tom Hosier, who is now head football coach at Winona State University in Winona, Minn.

—Andy Johnson
On the Rainy River

A writer remembers the summer of 1968, when he found himself in desperate trouble. A month after graduating from Macalester, he was drafted to serve in Vietnam.

by Tim O'Brien

Starting on the next page, we present a chapter from Tim O'Brien's acclaimed new book. Here, he explains why a man named Tim O'Brien is a character in the book:

The Things They Carried is a work of fiction. Though the main character carries my own name, and though I share with him a few items of personal history, the events in the book are almost entirely invented.

Personally, I can't see that it matters in the least—what counts is the artifact, the work itself—but nonetheless, with this book in particular, people seem interested in knowing what's "real" and what isn't. As with all fiction, the answer is simple: if you believe it, it's real; if you don't, it isn't. In my view, a work of fiction must have the immediate, participatory qualities of a dream. The fiction must feel real, because dreams are real. (It would be a lousy dream—a non-dream, in fact—if you were constantly to pause and think, "Hey, none of this is happening.")

Stories, like dreams, are a variety of reality, another dimension, and one major objective of most storytellers is to create and sustain that alternative reality by drawing on a number of traditional literary devices: description, dialogue, plot, characterization, and so on. By using my own name in this book, along with a few autobiographical details, I hoped to add one more device to the bag of dreaming aids. The idea was simply to encourage belief, to generate a sense of immediacy and urgency, to ease the reader into a new, invented reality.

As a writer, I live in a borderland between two worlds. There is the world of fact. There is the world of imagination. For a short while, as you read The Things They Carried, I hope you'll enjoy exploring the strange frontier where one world blurs into the other, where the impossible becomes probable, where spirits talk, where a dead little girl can smile and sit up and say, "Timmy, let's go ice skating."

Tim O'Brien '68, a native of Worthington, Minn., served as a foot soldier in Vietnam in 1969-70. His books include Going After Cacciato, which won the 1979 National Book Award in fiction. He lives in Boxford, Mass.
This is one story I've never told before. Not to anyone. Not to my parents, not to my brother or sister, not even to my wife. To go into it, I've always thought, would only cause embarrassment for all of us, a sudden need to be elsewhere, which is the natural response to a confession. Even now, I'll admit, the story makes me squirm. For more than twenty years I've had to live with it, feeling the shame, trying to push it away, and so by this act of remembrance, by putting the facts down on paper, I'm hoping to relieve at least some of the pressure on my dreams. Still, it's a hard story to tell. All of us, I suppose, like to believe that in a moral emergency we will behave like the heroes of our youth, bravely and forthrightly, without thought of personal loss or discredit. Certainly that was my conviction back in the summer of 1968. Tim O'Brien: a secret hero. The Lone Ranger. If the stakes ever became high enough—if the evil were evil enough, if the good were good enough—I would simply tap a secret reservoir of courage that had been accumulating inside me over the years. Courage, I seemed to think, comes to us in finite quantities, like an inheritance, and by being frugal and storing it away and letting it earn interest, we steadily increase our moral capital in preparation for that day when the account must be drawn down. It was a comforting theory. It dispensed with all those bothersome little acts of daily courage; it offered hope and grace to the repetitive coward; it justified the past while amortizing the future.

In June of 1968, a month after graduating from Macalester College, I was drafted to fight a war I hated. I was twenty-one years old. Young, yes, and politically naive, but even so the American war in Vietnam seemed to me wrong. Certain blood was being shed for uncertain reasons. I saw no unity of purpose, no consensus on matters of philosophy or history or law. The very facts were shrouded in uncertainty: Was it a civil war? A war of national liberation or simple aggression? Who started it, and when, and why? What really happened to the USS Maddox on that dark night in the Gulf of Tonkin? Was Ho Chi Minh a Communist stooge, or a nationalist savior, or both, or neither? What about the Geneva Accords? What about SEATO and the Cold War? What about dominoes? America was divided on these and a thousand other issues, and the debate had spilled out across the floor of the United States Senate and into the streets, and smart men in pinstripes could not agree on even the most fundamental matters of public policy. The only certainty that summer was moral confusion. It was my view then, and still is, that you don't make war without knowing why. Knowledge, of course, is always imperfect, but it seemed to me that when a nation goes to war it must have reasonable confidence in the justice and imperative of its cause. You can't fix your mistakes. Once people are dead, you can't make them undead.

In any case those were my convictions, and back in college I had taken a modest stand against the war. Nothing radical, no hothead stuff, just ringing a few doorbells for Gene McCarthy, composing a few tedious, uninspired editorials for the campus newspaper. Oddly, though, it was almost entirely an intellectual activity. I brought some energy to it, of course, but it was the energy that accompanies almost any abstract endeavor; I felt no personal danger; I felt no sense of an impending crisis in my life. Stupidly, with a kind of smug removal that I can't begin to fathom, I assumed that the problems of killing and dying did not fall within my special province.

The draft notice arrived on June 17, 1968. It was a humid afternoon, I remember, cloudy and very quiet, and I'd just come in from a round of golf. My mother and father were having lunch out in the kitchen. I remember opening up the letter, scanning the first few lines, feeling the blood go thick

behind my eyes. I remember a sound in my head. It wasn't thinking; it was just a silent howl. A million things all at once—I was too good for this war. Too smart, too compassionate, too everything. It couldn't happen. I was above it. I had the world dicked—Phi Beta Kappa and summa cum laude and president of the student body and a full-ride scholarship for grad studies at Harvard. A mistake, maybe—a foul-up in the paperwork. I was no soldier. I hated Boy Scouts. I hated camping out. I hated dirt and tents and mosquitoes. The sight of blood made me queasy, and I couldn't tolerate authority, and I didn't know a rifle from a slingshot. I was a liberal, for Chrissake: If they needed fresh bodies, why not draft some back-to-the-Stone-Age hawk? Or some dumb jingo in his hardhat and Bomb Hanoi button? Or one of LBJ's pretty daughters? Or Westmoreland's whole goddamn family—nephews and nieces and baby grandson? There should be a law, I thought. If you support a war, if you think it's worth the price, that's fine, but you have to put your own life on the line. You have to head for the front and hook up with an infantry unit and help spill the blood. And you have to bring along your wife, or your kids, or your lover. A law, I thought.

I remember the rage in my stomach. Later it burned down to a smoldering self-pity, then to numbness. At dinner that night my father asked what my plans were.

"Nothing," I said. "Wait."

I couldn't make up my mind.
I feared the war, yes, but I also feared exile.
I was afraid of walking away from my own life,
my friends and my family,
my whole history, everything that mattered to me.

I spent the summer of 1968 working in an Armour meatpacking plant in my hometown of Worthington, Minnesota. The plant specialized in pork products, and for eight hours a day I stood on a quarter-mile assembly line—more properly, a disassembly line—removing blood clots from the necks of dead pigs. My job title, I believe, was Declotter. After slaughter, the hogs were decapitated, split down the length of the belly, pried open, eviscerated, and strung up by the hind hocks on a high conveyer belt. Then gravity took over. By the time a carcass reached my spot on the line, the fluids had mostly drained out, everything except for thick slabs of blood in the neck and upper chest cavity. To remove the stuff, I used a kind of water gun. The machine was heavy, maybe eighty pounds, and was suspended from the ceiling by a heavy rubber cord. There was some bounce to it, an elastic up-and-down give, and the trick was to maneuver the gun with your whole body, not lifting with the arms, just letting the rubber cord do the work for you. At one end was a trigger; at the muzzle end was a small nozzle and a steel roller brush. As a carcass passed by, you'd lean forward and swing the gun up against the clots and squeeze the trigger, all in one motion, and the brush would whirl and water would come shooting out and you'd hear a quick splattering sound as the clots dissolved into a fine red mist. It was not pleasant work. Goggles were a necessity, and a rubber apron, but even so it was like standing for eight hours a day under a lukewarm blood-shower. At night I'd go home smelling of pig. I couldn't wash it out. Even after a hot bath, scrubbing hard, the stink was always there—like old bacon, or sausage, a dense greasy pig-stink that soaked deep into my skin and hair. Among other things, I remember, it was tough getting dates that summer. I felt isolated; I spent a lot of time alone. And there was also that draft notice tucked away in my wallet.

In the evenings I'd sometimes borrow my father's car and drive aimlessly around town, feeling sorry for myself, thinking about the war and the pig factory and how my life seemed to be collapsing toward slaughter. I felt paralyzed. All around me the options seemed to be narrowing, as if I were hurtling down a huge black funnel, the whole world squeezing in tight. There was no happy way out. The government had ended most graduate school deferments; the waiting lists for the National Guard and Reserves were impossibly long; my health was solid; I didn't qualify for CO status—no religious grounds, no history as a pacifist. Moreover, I could not claim to be opposed to war as a matter of general principle. There were occasions, I believed, when a nation was justified in using military force to achieve its ends, to stop a Hitler or some comparable evil, and I told myself that in such circumstances I would've willingly marched off to the battle. The problem, though, was that a draft board did not let you choose your war.

Beyond all this, or at the very center, was the raw fact of terror. I did not want to die. Not ever. But certainly not then, not there, not in a wrong war. Driving up Main Street, past the courthouse and the Ben Franklin store, I sometimes felt the fear spreading inside me like weeds. I imagined myself dead. I imagined myself doing things I could
not do—charging an enemy position, taking aim at another human being.

At some point in mid-July I began thinking seriously about Canada. The border lay a few hundred miles north, an eight-hour drive. Both my conscience and my instincts were telling me to make a break for it, just take off and run like hell and never stop. In the beginning the idea seemed purely abstract, the word Canada printing itself out in my head, but after a time I could see particular shapes and images, the sorry details of my own future—a hotel room in Winnipeg, a battered old suitcase, my father’s eyes as I tried to explain myself over the telephone. I could almost hear his voice, and my mother’s. Run, I’d think. Then I’d think, Impossible. Then a second later I’d think, Run.

It was a kind of schizophrenia. A moral split. I couldn’t make up my mind. I feared the war, yes, but I also feared exile. I was afraid of walking away from my own life, my friends and my family, my whole history, everything that mattered to me. I feared losing the respect of my parents. I feared the law. I feared ridicule and censure. My hometown was a conservative little spot on the prairie, a place where tradition counted, and it was easy to imagine people sitting around a table down at the old Gobbler Cafe on Main Street, coffee cups poised, the conversation slowly zeroing in on the young O’Brien kid, how the damned sissy had taken off for Canada. At night, when I couldn’t sleep, I’d sometimes carry on fierce arguments with those people. I’d be screaming at them, telling them how much I detested their blind, thoughtless, automatic acquiescence to it all, their simple-minded patriotism, their prideful ignorance, their love-it-or-leave-it platitudes, how they were sending me off to fight a war they didn’t understand and didn’t want to understand. I held them responsible. By God, yes, I did. All of them—I held them personally and individually responsible—the polyestered Kiwanis boys, the merchants and farmers, the pious churchgoers, the chatty housewives, the PTA and the Lions club and the Veterans of Foreign Wars and the fine upstanding gentry out at the country club. They didn’t know Bao Dai from the man in the moon. They didn’t know history. They didn’t know the first thing about Diem’s tyranny, or the nature of Vietnamese nationalism, or the long colonialism of the French—this was all too damned complicated, it required some reading—but no matter, it was a war to stop the Communists, plain and simple, which was how they liked things, and you were a treasonous pussy if you had second thoughts about killing or dying for plain and simple reasons.

I was bitter, sure. But it was so much more than that. The emotions went from outrage to terror to bewilderment to guilt to sorrow and then back again to outrage. I felt a sickness inside me. Real disease.

Most of this I’ve told before, or at least hinted at, but what I have never told is the full truth. How I cracked. How at work one morning, standing on the pig line, I felt something break open in my chest. I don’t know what it was. I’ll never know. But it was real, I know that much, it was a physical rupture—a cracking-leaking-popping feeling. I remember dropping my water gun. Quickly, almost without thought, I took off my apron and walked out of the plant and drove home. It was midmorning, I remember, and the house was empty. Down in my chest there was still that leaking sensation, something very warm and precious spilling out, and I was covered with blood and hog-stink, and for a long while I just concentrated on holding myself together. I remember taking a hot shower. I remember packing a suitcase and carrying it out to the kitchen, standing very still for a few minutes, looking carefully at the familiar objects all around me. The old chrome toaster, the telephone, the pink and white Formica on the kitchen counters. The room was full of bright sunshine. Everything sparkled. My house, I thought. My life. I’m not sure how long I stood there, but later I scribbled out a short note to my parents.

What it said, exactly, I don’t recall now. Something vague. Taking off, will call, love Tim.

I drove north.

It’s a blur now, as it was then, and all I remember is a sense of high velocity and the feel of the steering wheel in my hands. I was riding on adrenaline. A giddy feeling, in a way, except there was the dreamy edge of impossibility to it—like running a dead-end maze—no way out—it couldn’t come to a happy conclusion and yet I was doing it anyway because it was all I could think of to do. It was pure flight, fast and mindless. I had no plan. Just hit the border at high speed and crash through and keep on running. Near dusk I passed through Bemidji, then turned northeast toward International Falls. I spent the night in the car behind a closed-down gas station a half mile from
the border. In the morning, after gassing up, I headed straight west along the Rainy River, which separates Minnesota from Canada, and which for me separated one life from another. The land was mostly wilderness. Here and there I passed a motel or bait shop, but otherwise the country unfolded in great sweeps of pine and birch and sumac. Though it was still August, the air already had the smell of October, football season, piles of yellow-red leaves, everything crisp and clean. I remember a huge blue sky. Off to my right was the Rainy River, wide as a lake in places, and beyond the Rainy River was Canada.

For a while I just drove, not aiming at anything, then in the late morning I began looking for a place to lie low for a day or two. I was exhausted, and scared sick, and around noon I pulled into an old fishing resort called the Tip Top Lodge. Actually it was not a lodge at all, just eight or nine tiny yellow cabins clustered on a peninsula that jutted northward into the Rainy River. The place was in sorry shape. There was a dangerous wooden dock, an old minnow tank, a flimsy tar paper boathouse along the shore. The main building, which stood in a cluster of pines on high ground, seemed to lean heavily to one side, like a cripple, the roof sagging toward Canada. Briefly, I thought about turning around, just giving up, but then I got out of the car and walked up to the front porch.

The man who opened the door that day is the hero of my life. How do I say this without sounding sappy? Blurt it out, I guess. The man saved me. He offered exactly what I needed, without questions, without any words at all. He took me in. He was there at the critical time—a silent, watchful presence. Six days later, when it ended, I was unable to find a proper way to thank him, and I never have, and so, if nothing else, this story represents a small gesture of gratitude twenty years overdue.

We spent six days together at the Tip Top Lodge. Just the two of us. Tourist season was over, and there were no boats on the river, and the wilderness seemed to withdraw into a great permanent stillness. Over those six days Elroy Berdahl and I took most of our meals together. In the mornings we sometimes went out on long hikes into the woods, and at night we played Scrabble or listened to records or sat reading in front of his big stone fireplace. At times I felt the awkwardness of an intruder, but Elroy accepted me into his quiet routine without fuss or ceremony. He took my presence for granted, the same way he might've sheltered a stray cat—no wasted sighs or pity—and there was never any talk about it. Just the opposite. What I remember more than anything is the man's willful, almost ferocious silence. In all that time together, all those hours, he never asked the obvious questions: Why was I there? Why alone? Why so preoccupied? If Elroy was curious about any of this, he was careful never to put it into words.

My hunch, though, is that he already knew. At least the basics. After all, it was 1968, and guys were burning draft cards, and Canada was just a boat ride away. Elroy Berdahl was no hick. His bedroom, I remember, was cluttered with books and newspapers. He killed me at the Scrabble board, barely concentrating, and on those occasions when speech was necessary he had a way of compressing large thoughts into small, cryptic packets of language. One evening, just at sunset, he dropped a key in my hand. I remember smiling at him. I also remember wishing I hadn't. The old man shook his head as if to tell me it wasn't worth the bother.

"Dinner at five-thirty," he said. "You eat fish?"

"Anything," I said.

Elroy grunted and said, "I'll bet."

All I wanted was to live the life I was born to--a mainstream life—I loved baseball and hamburgers and cherry Cokes--and now I was off on the margins of exile, leaving my country forever, and it seemed so impossible and terrible and sad.
pointed up at an owl circling over the violet-lighted forest to the west.

"Hey, O'Brien," he said. "There's Jesus."

The man was sharp—he didn't miss much. Those razor eyes. Now and then he'd catch me staring out at the river, at the far shore, and I could almost hear the tumblers clicking in his head. Maybe I'm wrong, but I doubt it.

One thing for certain, he knew I was in desperate trouble. And he knew I couldn't talk about it. The wrong word—or even the right word—and I would've disappeared. I was wired and jittery. My skin felt too tight. After supper one evening I vomited and went back to my cabin and lay down for a few moments and then vomited again; another time, in the middle of the afternoon, I began sweating and couldn't shut it off. I went through whole days feeling dizzy with sorrow. I couldn't sleep; I couldn't lie still. At night I'd toss around in bed, half awake, half dreaming, imagining how I'd sneak down to the beach and quietly push one of the old man's boats out into the river and start paddling my way toward Canada. There were times when I thought I'd gone off the psychic edge. I couldn't tell up from down, I was just falling, and late in the night I'd lie there watching weird pictures spin through my head. Getting chased by the Border Patrol—helicopters and searchlights and barking dogs—I'd be crashing through the woods. I'd be down on my hands and knees—people shouting out my name—the law closing in on all sides—my hometown draft board and the FBI and the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. It all seemed crazy and impossible. Twenty-one years old, an ordinary kid with all the ordinary dreams and ambitions, and all I wanted was to live the life I was born to—a main-stream life—I loved baseball and hamburgers and cherry Cokes—and now I was off on the margins of exile, leaving my country forever, and it seemed so impossible and terrible and sad.

I'm not sure how I made it through those six days. Most of it I can't remember. On two or three afternoons, to pass some time, I helped Elroy get the place ready for winter, sweeping down the cabins and hauling in the boats, little chores that kept my body moving. The days were cool and bright. The nights were very dark. One morning the old man showed me how to split and stack firewood, and for several hours we just worked in silence out behind his house. At one point, I remember, Elroy put down his maul and looked at me for a long time, his lips drawn as if framing a difficult question, but then he shook his head and went back to work. The man's self-control was amazing. He never cried. He never put me in a position that required lies or denials. To an extent, I suppose, his reticence was typical of that part of Minnesota, where privacy still held value, and even if I'd been walking around with some horrible deformity—four arms and three heads—I'm sure the old man would've talked about everything except those extra arms and heads. Simple politeness was part of it. But even more than that, I think, the man understood that words were insufficient. The problem had gone beyond discussion. During that long summer I'd been over and over the various arguments, all the pros and cons, and it was no longer a question that could be decided by an act of pure reason. Intellect had come up against emotion. My conscience told me to run, but some irrational and powerful force was resisting, like a weight pushing me toward the war. What it came down to, stupidly, was a sense of shame. Hot, deep, piercing, stupid shame. I did not want people to think badly of me. Not my parents, not my brother and sister, not even the folks down at the Gobbler Cafe. I was ashamed to be there at the Tip Top Lodge. I was ashamed of my conscience, ashamed to be doing the right thing.

Some of this Elroy must've understood. Not the details, of course, but the plain fact of crisis.

Although the old man never confronted me about it, there was one occasion when he came close to forcing the whole thing out into the open. It was early evening, and we'd just finished supper, and over coffee and dessert I asked him about my bill, how much I owed so far. For a long while the old man squinted down at the tablecloth.

"Well, the basic rate," he said, "is fifty bucks a night. Not counting meals. This makes four nights, right?"

I nodded. I had three hundred and twelve dollars in my wallet. Elroy kept his eyes on the tablecloth. "Not enough," I said.

"You know what we forgot? he said. "We forgot wages. Those odd jobs you done. What we have to do, we have to figure out what your time's worth. Your last job—how much did you pull in an hour?"

"Not enough," I said.
“A bad one?”
“No. Pretty bad.”

Slowly then, without intending any long sermon, I told him about my days at the pig plant. It began as a straight recitation of the facts, but before I could stop myself I was talking about the blood clots and the water gun and how the smell had soaked into my skin and how I couldn’t wash it away. I went on for a long time. I told him about wild hogs squealing in my dreams, the sounds of butchery, slaughter-house sounds, and how I’d sometimes wake up with that greasy pig-stink in my throat.

When I was finished, Elroy nodded at me.

“Well, to be honest,” he said, “when you first showed up here, I wondered about all that. The aroma, I mean. Smelled like you was awful damned fond of pork chops.” The old man almost smiled. He made a snuffling sound, then sat down with a pencil and a piece of paper. “So what’d this crud job pay? Ten bucks an hour? Fifteen?”

“Less.”

Elroy shook his head. “Let’s make it fifteen. You put in twenty-five hours here, easy. That’s four hundred and five bucks total wages. We subtract the two hundred sixty for food and lodging, I still owe you a hundred and forty-five.”

He took four fifties out of his shirt pocket and laid them on the table.

“Call it even,” he said.

“No.”

“Pick it up. Get yourself a haircut.”

The money lay on the table for the rest of the evening. It was still there when I went back to my cabin. In the morning, though, I found an envelope tacked to my door. Inside were the four fifties and a two-word note that said EMERGENCY FUND.

The man knew.

Looking back after twenty years, I sometimes wonder if the events of that summer didn’t happen in some other dimension, a place where your life exists before you’ve lived it, and where it goes afterward. None of it ever seemed real. During my time at the Tip Top Lodge I had the feeling that I’d slipped out of my own skin, hovering a few feet away while some poor yo-yo with my name and face tried to make his way toward a future he didn’t understand and didn’t want. Even now I can see myself as I was then. It’s like watching an old home movie. I’m young and tan and fit. I’ve got hair—lots of it. I don’t smoke or drink. I’m wearing faded blue jeans and a white polo shirt. I can see myself sitting on Elroy Berdahl’s dock near dusk one evening, the sky a bright shimmering pink, and I’m finishing up a letter to my parents that tells what I’m about to do and why I’m doing it and how sorry I am that I’d never found the courage to talk to them about it. I ask them not to be angry. I try to explain some of my feelings, but there aren’t enough words, and so I just say that it’s a thing that has to be done. At the end of the letter I talk about the vacations we used to take up in this north country, at a place called Whitefish Lake, and how the scenery here reminds me of those good times. I tell them I’m fine. I tell them I’ll write again from Winnipeg or Montreal or wherever I end up.

Even in my imagination, the shore just twenty yards away, I couldn’t make myself be brave. It had nothing to do with morality. Embarrassment, that’s all it was.

On my last full day, the sixth day, the old man took me out fishing on the Rainy River. The afternoon was sunny and cold. A stiff breeze came in from the north, and I remember how the little fourteen-foot boat made sharp rocking motions as we pushed off from the dock. The current was fast. All around us, remember, there was a vastness to the world, an unpeopled rawness, just the trees and the sky and the water reaching out toward nowhere. The air had the brittle scent of October.

For ten or fifteen minutes Elroy held a course upstream, the river choppy and silver-gray, then he turned straight north and put the engine on full throttle. I felt the bow lift beneath me. I remember
the wind in my ears, the sound of the old outboard Evinrude. For a time I didn't pay attention to anything, just feeling the cold spray against my face, but then it occurred to me that at some point we must've passed into Canadian waters, across that dotted line between two different worlds, and I remember a sudden tightness in my chest as I looked up and watched the far shore come at me. This wasn't a daydream. It was tangible and real.

As we came in toward land, Elroy cut the engine, letting the boat fishtail lightly about twenty yards off shore. The old man didn't look at me or speak. Bending down, he opened up his tackle box and busied himself with a bobber and a piece of wire leader, humming to himself, his eyes down.

It struck me then that he must've planned it. I'll never be certain, of course, but I think he meant to bring me up against the realities, to guide me across the river and to take me to the edge and to stand a kind of vigil as I chose a life for myself.

I remember staring at the old man, then at my hands, then at Canada. The shoreline was dense with brush and timber. I could see tiny red berries on the bushes. I could see a squirrel up in one of the birch trees, a big crow looking at me from a boulder along the river. That close—twenty yards—and I could see the delicate latticework of the leaves, the texture of the soil, the browned needles beneath the pines, the configurations of geology and human history. Twenty yards. I could've done it. I could've jumped and started swimming for my life. Inside me, in my chest, I felt a terrible squeezing pressure. Even now, as I write this, I can still feel that tightness. And I want you to feel it—the wind coming off the river, the waves, the silence, the wooded frontier. You're at the bow of a boat on the Rainy River. You're twenty-one years old, you're scared, and there's a hard squeezing pressure in your chest.

What would you do?

Would you jump? Would you feel pity for yourself? Would you think about your family and your childhood and your dreams and all you're leaving behind? Would it hurt? Would it feel like dying? Would you cry, as I did?

I tried to swallow it back. I tried to smile, except I was crying.

Now, perhaps, you can understand why I've never told this story before. It's not just the embarrassment of tears. That's part of it, no doubt, but what embarrasses me much more, and always will, is the paralysis that took my heart. A moral freeze: I couldn't decide, I couldn't act, I couldn't comport myself with even a pretense of modest human dignity.

All I could do was cry. Quietly, not bawling, just the chest-chokes.

At the rear of the boat Elroy Berdahl pretended not to notice. He held a fishing rod in his hands, his head bowed to hide his eyes. He kept humming a soft, monotonous little tune. Everywhere, it seemed, in the trees and water and sky, a great worldwide sadness came pressing down on me, a crushing sorrow, sorrow like I had never known it before. And what was so sad, I realized, was that Canada had become a pitiful fantasy. Silly and hopeless. It was no longer a possibility. Right then, with the shore so close, I understood that I would not do what I should do. I would not swim away from my hometown and my country and my life. I would not be brave. That old image of myself as a hero, as a man of conscience and courage, all that was just a threadbare pipe dream. Bobbing there on the Rainy River, looking back at the Minnesota shore, I felt a sudden swell of helplessness come over me, a drowning sensation, as if I had toppled overboard and was being swept away by the silver waves.

Chunks of my own history flashed by. I saw a seven-year-old boy in a white cowboy hat and a Lone Ranger mask and a pair of holstered sixshooters; I saw a twelve-year-old Little League shortstop pivoting to turn a double play; I saw a sixteen-year-old kid decked out for his first prom, looking spiffy in a white tux and a black bow tie, his hair cut short and flat, his shoes freshly polished. My whole life seemed to spill out into the river, swirling away from me, everything I had ever been
or ever wanted to be. I couldn't get my breath; I couldn't stay afloat; I couldn't tell which way to swim. A hallucination, I suppose, but it was as real as anything I would ever feel. I saw my parents calling to me from the far shoreline. I saw my brother and sister, all the townsfolk, the mayor and the entire Chamber of Commerce and all my old teachers and girlfriends and high school buddies. Like some weird sporting event: everybody screaming from the sidelines, rooting me on—a loud stadium roar. Hotdogs and popcorn—stadium smells, stadium heat. A squad of cheerleaders did cartwheels along the banks of the Rainy River; they had megaphones and pompons and smooth brown thighs. The crowd swayed left and right. A marching band played fight songs. All my aunts and uncles were there, and Abraham Lincoln, and Saint George, and a nine-year-old girl named Linda who had died of a brain tumor back in fifth grade, and several members of the United States Senate, and a blind poet scribbling notes, and LBJ, and Huck Finn, and Abbie Hoffman, and all the dead soldiers back from the grave, and the many thousands who were later to die—villagers with terrible burns, little kids without arms or legs—yes, and Bobby Kennedy was there, and a couple of popes, and a first lieutenant named Jimmy Cross, and the publisher of this story, and the last surviving veteran of the American Civil War, and Jane Fonda dressed up as Barbarella, and an old man sprawled beside a pigpen, and my grandfather, and Gary Cooper, and an old man nodded as if he already knew. He was the true audience. He was a witness, like God, or like the gods, who look on in absolute silence as we live our lives, as we make our choices and fail to make them.

"Ain't biting," he said.

Then after a time the old man pulled in his line and turned the boat back toward Minnesota.

I don't remember saying goodbye. That last night we had dinner together, and I went to bed early, and in the morning Elroy fixed breakfast for me. When I told him I'd be leaving, the old man nodded as if he already knew. He looked down at the table and smiled.

At some point later in the morning it's possible that we shook hands—I just don't remember—but I do know that by the time I'd finished packing the old man had disappeared. Around noon, when I took my suitcase out to the car, I noticed that his old black pickup truck was no longer parked in front of the house. I went inside and waited for a while, but I felt a bone certainty that he wouldn't be back.

In a way, I thought, it was appropriate. I washed up the breakfast dishes, left his two hundred dollars on the kitchen counter, got into the car, and drove south toward home.

The day was cloudy. I passed through towns with familiar names, through the pine forests and down to the prairie, and then to Vietnam, where I was a soldier, and then home again. I survived, but it's not a happy ending. I was a coward. I went to the war.
Czechoslovakia: The Curtain Rises

If all the world's a stage, Czechoslovakia's best-known playwright and the country's actors performed their most memorable work last year. A Czech journalist who was a fellow at the Macalester-based World Press Institute in 1989 describes the role that artists played in his country's pro-democracy movement.

by Radek John

Playwright Vaclav Havel, the leader of Czechoslovakia's pro-democracy movement, gives the V-for-victory sign at a meeting held shortly before the fall of the Communist old guard. At left is Alexander Dubcek, the leader of the "Prague Spring" who was ousted by the Soviet invasion in 1968.
As a student at the Film Academy in Prague in the mid-1970s, I lived around the corner from Vaclav Havel, the playwright. Returning from school, I would often see police cars in front of his apartment. More than once I saw Havel and the dissidents associated with him being loaded into special police trucks, under arrest. Like other students, I thought of approaching Havel, of engaging him in conversation. But we knew that to do so would lead to our expulsion from school.

Last December, a few weeks after his most recent arrest, Havel was elected president of our country. He was the first non-Communist president of Czechoslovakia since 1948. He had achieved the stature of a folk hero for all of us who did not have his courage, his willingness to repeatedly suffer for freedom and democracy. For 40 years, politicians had failed to reform our political life. So Havel and other writers and artists, who are traditionally very serious in my country, formed a new political force. This new wave of artists-turned-politicians destroyed the Communist dictatorship in a mere 10 days of peaceful revolution.

For many years, Havel was better known in Czechoslovakia for his courage than for his prose because his works were banned from 1969 until late 1989. I did not hear his name until I attended the Film Academy, the school that led the student strikes last November. But our teachers didn’t tell us about Havel; to do so would have cost them their jobs. Rather, samizdat, or underground, copies of his work circulated among students. Typed by hand, they were passed among friends, who would read them in a single night because so many others were waiting. Loss of sleep seemed a small price to pay for knowledge. Even people who knew Havel’s work in the 1970s and ‘80s did not know what he looked like. No photographs of Havel were ever published, not even in samizdat. It was an absurdity—like a situation in one of his plays.

Havel began to write not only plays but sharp analyses of the political situation in Czechoslovakia. His most famous was his letter to President Gustav Husak. It was such a perfect analysis of the human situation in a Communist world that some of us copied parts of it, a risky thing to do if the authorities found his words in our homes. The letter to Husak made Havel the “most dangerous” dissident. The Communists persecuted him even more.

In 1977, Havel and other dissidents founded the human-rights group Charter 77. He was one of the main authors of the document establishing the group’s goals for the country. In response, the authorities pressured Czechoslovakia’s leading artists—especially popular actors—to denounce Charter 77. Most complied, despite their admiration for the group. To refuse would have been the end of their careers. Weary of Havel’s attacks, the regime sentenced him to prison for five years. After several months, the authorities offered to release him if he would emigrate to the West. Havel refused. He would not abandon his colleagues who were still struggling for democracy in the streets or in jail.

The story of Havel’s heroism slowly spread throughout Czechoslovakia, though not in the official media, of course. We got our information by radio from Western European countries and by TV from West Germany and Austria. The Voice of America and Radio Free Europe, broadcasting in the Czech language, helped a lot, too. Havel became famous even to people who had never read his works.

In the plays he managed to turn out between terms in jail, Havel also demonstrated that he was a great artist, a loving custodian of the Czech lan-

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Radek John, who lives in Prague, has been a reporter since 1981 for Mlady Svet (Youth World), a prestigious Czech news magazine for youth. His major report in 1983 on the drug problem in Czechoslovakia opened the topic to public discussion there. He later developed the article into a best-selling book. John, who holds a master’s degree in script writing and dramaturgy, is the author of two other books and co-author of five screenplays. He was one of 10 foreign journalists who traveled throughout the United States for five months in 1989 as fellows of the World Press Institute, which is headquartered at Macalester. He returned to Prague last December.
One reason the revolution succeeded was that the Communist hard-liners, unlike artists, are not used to working over the weekend. We were lucky that the riot police made their brutal assault on the peaceful students on a Friday night.

A youth carrying a Czech flag reads the notices on the wall of the Prague subway last Nov. 24, one week after police brutally attacked student demonstrators. The large notice near the top right says: “Prague, we are with you.”
Demonstrators hold up the Czech flag during a rally at Wenceslas Square in Prague last November. The rallies drew ever-increasing crowds.

Havel's artistic work also helped him to be independent in another sense. The Communists knew that opposition could not arise if nobody had money to be independent of the corrupt socialistic system or any resources to influence other people; that is why they nationalized all private enterprise. Artists were the only exception. As Havel's prestige rose, his plays were performed in America, Austria, and West Germany, and he received royalty payments. Unlike many other intellectuals in Czechoslovakia, he did not need to work as a window washer or do other menial jobs to support himself but could focus on his artistic work and political activities.

The revolution that began last November was sparked by general condemnation of police violence that had been used to crush a student demonstration for freedom on Nov. 17. One reason the revolution succeeded was that the Communist hard-liners, unlike artists, are not used to working over the weekend. We were lucky that the riot police made their brutal assault on the peaceful students on a Friday night. All the key hard-liners had left Prague for the weekend on Friday afternoon, and government and Communist party offices remained closed Saturday and Sunday. Those two days were all that Havel and others needed to establish the Civic Forum (an umbrella group for the opposition), begin the actors' strike, and announce a nationwide general strike for Nov. 27. When the Communists, who underestimated the unrest in Prague, started work Monday morning on a response—including the possibility of using force against the people—it was too late for their actions to succeed.

Actors, managers, and directors went on strike at theaters, television and radio stations, film and dubbing studios. Theater performances in Prague were canceled but the doors were open to all who wanted to know the latest news from the streets. Evening after evening, the actors read statements by supporters of the democracy movement. My wife, Zlata Adamovska, who is an actress, took part in this action at a theater in Prague's Wenceslas Square. At the time, I was in Denver on my travels with the World Press Institute, working as a reporter for a month at the Rocky Mountain News, but we spoke often on the telephone. I feared that the government would use violence against the people—the "Chinese solution."

At the beginning of the revolution, people outside Prague could get little accurate information. They received only Rude Pravo, the Communist newspaper. TV and radio were full of lies. Even the army soldiers remained ignorant, locked in their barracks. Because of their popularity with the public, actors played a major role in spreading the revolution outside Prague. Their strike committees went into the countryside to try to convince people to join the pro-democracy movement. The People's Militia—the Communists' private army—tried to prevent actors from traveling by private car to the small cities, factories, and agricultural companies. Some were arrested as they tried to talk with people in the countryside.

Later, pamphlets—probably produced by the secret police—were distributed around the country announcing how much money each of these actors earns. The goal was to arouse envy and isolate the striking actors. In fact, actors in Czechoslovakia don't earn a lot of money compared with Western actors, and many of them had to borrow money to survive the strike.
Theater performances in Prague were canceled but the doors were open to all who wanted to know the latest news from the streets.

Above: police confront peaceful student demonstrators in Prague last Nov. 17, the largest anti-government rally in more than 20 years. The banner in front says: "We don't want violence." The students lit candles to call for "more light," a metaphor for more democracy. Minutes after this photograph was taken, police attacked the demonstrators. General condemnation of the police assault turned opposition to the Communist regime into a mass movement. Top right: a view of the police from the other side. Bottom right: an apprehensive look over the police shields.

When I returned to my country Dec. 20 and learned more about what had happened, I wondered how my brittle, slender wife had the strength to do what she did day after day, night after night, with the constant threat that the Communists would use a bloody solution to destroy the opposition. But there was a collective power—a power in unity—among all the actors who went through it. Not one actor in Prague refused to join the strike.

When Czech television broadcast a live, 12-hour debate in the parliament about Havel's presidential candidacy, most of the members of parliament, knowing the public eye was upon them, voiced their support for Havel, too. Just a month before, many of these same politicians had denounced Havel as an enemy of the state. It was troubling to see such hypocrisy, of course. But it was gratifying to watch the power of the people make itself felt in parliament for the first time in nearly half a century.

Before his election, Havel said he considers himself a writer first and a politician second. When he took office, he named his main advisers immediately: one scriptwriter, one actor, and one member of Charter 77. It's wonderful to have creative people leading the state rather than professional politicians. The battle for democracy in Czechoslovakia is not over. But every day the democracy movement gains ground while the Communists retreat.

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Teaching people the nuts and bolts of politics can be an eye-opening experience in a country that hasn't had a free election in 45 years. An American political consultant describes what Hungarians are learning about democracy—and what he learned about them.

by Peter Fenn

It was 8 years old in 1956 when Hungary attempted its last revolution. I remember the Cub Scouts meeting at a friend’s house when his mother turned on the television. It was all there in black and white—the tanks, the shootings, the crowds in the streets, the repression, the violence. Our parents’ concern was reflected in their questions to each other. What would the United States do? What would the Russians do? Would we go to war?

As I was flying to Hungary last December on my first trip to that country, I could not help but contrast those memories with what’s happening today. Hungary is now in the middle of a much different, non-violent revolution—a revolution that has engulfed all of Eastern Europe. The rapid pace with which Communist governments fell, the Berlin Wall tumbled, and the barbed wire of the Iron Curtain was dismantled could not have been conceived ten years ago, even ten months ago. We are not just on the verge of a whole new world, we are absorbed by it. The force with which democracy has taken hold gives a new meaning to the practice of politics, to the sharing of freedom across the globe.

I was honored to be part of an international delegation invited to help Hungary’s new political parties prepare for democracy and organize for the

Peter H. Fenn ’70 is a political media consultant and campaign strategist for Democratic candidates. His trip to Hungary was sponsored by the National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI), an arm of the bipartisan National Endowment for Democracy. Former Vice President Walter F. Mondale ’50 is chairman of NDI, which works in foreign countries to encourage the process of democracy and the spread of democratic institutions. On behalf of NDI, Fenn has also traveled to Northern Ireland, working with the non-violent, Catholic party, as well as to Spain and Nicaragua. He and his wife, Alison Seale Fenn ’72, live in Washington, D.C.
March 25 parliamentary elections, the first free elections since 1945.

Hungary, a nation of about 11 million people that is roughly the size of Maine, is like a sleeping bear awakening. Those with any memory of free political activity or elections are over 60 years old. Today, the country has 53 parties, although fewer than 10 were expected to win seats in parliament. Hungarians are excited yet apprehensive. Everyone is feeling their way: reformed Communists have become the Socialist party; rural activists have reconstituted the Smallholders party; young, aggressive Hungarians have formed a movement, the Alliance of Young Democrats (FIDESZ); leftist intellectuals have formed the Alliance of Free Democrats (SZDSZ); early opponents of the Communists formed the Hungarian Democratic Forum (MDF); and the Social Democrats and Christian Democrats, who both existed in pre-1948 Hungary, have organized again.

The National Democratic Institute for International Affairs (NDI) sent our delegation to Hungary to assist the parties in their efforts to identify their vote, communicate their message, raise funds—the nuts and bolts of politics. Our group—a dozen pollsters, media consultants, organizers, and officeholders—was divided up and assigned to several parties. I was teamed with the Social Democrats, headed by Anna Petrasovits, a dynamic, 37-year-old economics professor at Karl Marx University in Budapest. She has been organizing over the past year and was elected president of the party at its first conference last November. Anna, who has two children, has been putting in 16-hour days, seven days a week for months to build the party.

When I arrived, the Social Democratic party, successor to a pre-World War II party, was barely five weeks old and had little money, no grassroots organization, and not one member who had ever been a candidate for office. The group of us who flew in from Washington, armed with our briefing books, American training manuals, and plenty of enthusiasm, quickly confronted the hard reality—this was not St. Paul. Ready to discuss the importance of phone banks in organizing for the election, I discovered that only 15 percent of the homes in Hungary have phones. Ready to prepare party members for the rigors of door-to-door campaigning, we learned that Hungarians are fearful about opening the door to a stranger—the memories of secret police knocking in the middle of the night are too strong. And we were all set to teach them about the use of computers to maintain lists of supporters, petition signers, and prospective voters when it became clear that these techniques had "Big Brother" connotations to the average Hungarian.

We conducted two day-long basic political training sessions with the Social Democrats, one in Budapest and the other in Debrecen near the Soviet border. In Budapest, of the 60 or so participants, only two were women. Male domination of politics is common in Eastern Europe, but Anna’s new political leadership gives hope that things are slowly changing.

I began the seminars much as I do with a candidate in the United States. I went through an exercise in which all the participants analyze the strengths and weaknesses of the major parties, including their own Social Democratic party. This proved revealing for two reasons. First, it greatly...
enlivened the group, who had come prepared to listen to hours of lectures and take notes in the Communist educational style. Second, their analysis of all the parties was insightful and realistic.

The Social Democrats' questions and comments showed a certain skepticism about their ability to effectively organize, recruit candidates, and overcome two generations of one-party rule. "Can we really make democracy work here after all this time?" was an often-heard remark.

I could see their desire not to fall into "politics as usual," not to seek power for power's sake, not to create a system where the winners get the spoils. To Anna and others I talked to, the March 25 elections were very important. But the process of democracy, the building of a new order while holding true to principles, was paramount.

In Debrecen, Hungary's second-largest city, we had a more rural audience, many of them older people from the surrounding countryside who remembered the Social Democratic party before World War II. We held our seminar in a once-elegant hotel that was being restored to its pre-1950s state. As the construction workers' hammers and saws went into action, even though it was Sunday, I joked that maybe it was the Communists' way of disrupting our session. A month after our return to the United States, documents were leaked from the Interior Ministry that indicated several of NDF's training sessions—including our seminar in Debrecen—were infiltrated by the government. The opposition parties' phones were tapped and a great effort was made to gather intelligence on their political activity. The scandal, which led to the resignation of the interior minister, showed that old habits die hard.

Nonetheless, as one Social Democratic leader told me, "You Americans have a 200-year history of freedom. But for us in Hungary it is encouraging that spying, phone tapping, infiltration are now taboo when only a year ago they were standard operating procedure."

When I returned to Hungary in February, I spent more time doing true political consulting work. Just as I would with U.S. candidates, I advised Social Democrats about how to schedule a candidate's time; get free press coverage; develop brochures, posters, TV and radio spots; come up with a theme or message that would move voters; and target segments of potential voters such as the elderly, factory workers, and urban residents.

I met first with pollsters—a pair of young, bright, able, politically astute Hungarians who had started their business a few months before in a hallway of an old building. They had plenty of enthusiasm, an independence of spirit, and a true sense of entrepreneurship manifested by long hours at work. There was no doubt in my mind that I was meeting with the future "Gallup pollsters" of Hungary.

They showed me interesting results: 37 percent of Hungarians said they would not vote in the March 25 elections. They were scared, cynical, anti-politics, did not want to "get involved," or some combination of these. Another 25 percent were unsure who to vote for, confused by all the parties and attempting to sort out the differences between them. There was residual support for the old Communist party—now called the Socialist party—but it appeared from the polling that the Socialists would get only 10 percent of the vote.

For all the parties, the most difficult problem was to gain recognition and communicate a solid message about who they were and what they stood for. The concern I heard most often from Anna Petrasovits was that her Social Democrats must not imply that they could accomplish more than was possible. She was concerned that her party be responsible, especially when it came to the issue of the economy, and prepare Hungarians for difficult days ahead.

In discussions with Anna, who was herself a candidate for parliament, and other party members, I could see their desire not to fall into "politics as usual," not to seek power for power's sake, not to create a system where the winners get the spoils. To Anna and others I talked to, the March 25 elections were very important. But the process of democracy, the building of a new order while holding true to principles, was paramount.

The commitment to this new, exciting revolution was especially strong in a small town we drove to four hours from Budapest. As the very popular spokeswoman for the Social Democrats, Anna campaigned here for the party. She held a crowd of 200 people for three-and-a-half hours in a dramatic dialogue about Hungary and its future. She visited the
local Catholic priest and had lunch with townspeople—events that could never have taken place even a year ago.

On the way back to Budapest, late at night, we stopped at a country restaurant. We thought it would be a quiet place to talk over the events of the day. Just as Anna, her husband, two assistants, and I sat down to dinner, a band began playing for a wedding party in the back room. It was wonderful 1960s music—the Beatles, the Rolling Stones, and other groups familiar to all of us—as well as Hungarian music. The five of us spent the evening laughing and dancing and sharing stories about growing up during the Cold War on opposite sides of the world. I felt lucky to be there, to be a part of their exciting struggle, to be helping in a small way. And most important, I could not help but come away with a better understanding of what freedom and democracy are all about. There is much that the courageous people of Eastern Europe have taught us this past year. It is clear that in the coming months and years there will be a lot more for us all to learn.

Editor's note: More than 70 percent of Hungary's eligible voters cast ballots in the March 25 elections. The newer parties—the center-right Hungarian Democratic Forum and the center-left Alliance of Free Democrats—combined to get nearly 50 percent of the vote. Anna Petrasovits's Social Democratic party, successor to an historic party, came in sixth. Other elections are scheduled and the process of combining parties and coalition-building is expected to continue the move toward democracy in Hungary.

A witness at the wall takes history in her hands

Linda M. Sorenson '74 will never forget the young German she saw chiseling away at the Berlin Wall as if in a frenzy. He had cut himself and blood was streaming from his thumb, "but he wouldn't give up. It was obviously his mission to chisel off a piece."

Sorenson took many photographs of the wall. One shows British Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd visiting the wall; another shows graffiti scrawled in one corner: "Make love, not war." But she took none of the young man. "It was too personal," she said. "I just couldn't interrupt that private moment."

Sorenson, who lives in White Bear Lake, Minn., is the publisher and co-author of The Organic Puppet Theater, a book that uses puppet characters to teach children good health habits. She went to Europe last November to work on foreign translations of the book and to attend an international educators' conference. By chance, she flew into Frankfurt a few hours after the Berlin Wall was opened. A week later, she detoured from a trip to the World Health Organization in Geneva so she could see the wall.

That morning in Berlin, she bought the last roll of film in a store crowded with East Germans on a shopping spree. "It was like going to the mall the day after Thanksgiving—it was just pandemonium," Sorenson recalled.

It was different at the wall. "I remember so clearly the clank of hammers and chisels against the wall in the bright sunshine, and the smiles of people. There was just this quiet jubilation."

Sorenson came away with her own piece of the wall, chipped off by another German with a chisel. "He was just chopping and little pieces would literally fly into your hands," she said. "It was history flying into your hands." —J.H.
Two alumni lend students a hiring hand

Kristin E. Midelfort '74 at the Children's Museum in St. Paul. Using Macalester students as interns helps her get more accomplished and "also provides us with a fresh infusion of enthusiasm and interest," says Midelfort, who is director of development at the museum.

by Terry Andrews

Charles D. Ballentine '69 often employs Macalester students as interns at the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities Area in St. Paul, and for a good reason. "I use them as a way to get more work done," he says.

Kristin E. Midelfort '74 says that Macalester students help her get more accomplished at the Children's Museum in St. Paul. "But using interns also provides us with a fresh infusion of enthusiasm and interest," she adds.

Ballentine and Midelfort are two of the more than 250 employers in the Minneapolis-St. Paul area who each year use 275 to 300 Macalester students as interns, helping both themselves and the students. They work through the Macalester Internship Program, which began 20 years ago. It is designed to offer students "a form of independent learning as part of the career development process," says Denise Ward, internship coordinator.

"Some students take part for career experiences; others to gain access to technical equipment we don't have on campus; others to gain access to populations-like the homeless-to see up close what it is they're studying in class," Ward says.

At Macalester, more than half the students serve as interns at some point during college, and many have more than one internship. Nearly all receive college credit for their work, and about 40 percent are paid. Students who sign up for internships are matched with an employer who will provide the kind of experience the student is seeking.

The program also has national and international listings. During 1989-90, Macalester students held internships in such U.S. cities as Washington, D.C., and New York, and in such countries as Switzerland, Honduras, and Egypt.

Midelfort, who was never an intern during college, firmly believes in the Macalester Internship Program because it offers students a chance to test the waters when choosing a career and see the practical applications of their major. She is director of development at the Children's Museum, a job she happened upon after working for a few years and considering several career directions. "I thought I'd never find a job I'd like. And it never occurred to me that I'd have another career besides art," says Midelfort, who graduated with a B.A. in stu-
Charles D. Ballentine '69 of the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities Area in St. Paul with Janet Reif '90, left, of Chicago and Amy Munson '90 of Roseville, Minn. "As a student," he says, "you can find out what you want to do or what you don't want to do. An internship really is a preview of coming attractions."

MAY 1990

Charles D. Ballentine '69 of the Metropolitan Council of the Twin Cities Area in St. Paul with Janet Reif '90, left, of Chicago and Amy Munson '90 of Roseville, Minn. "As a student," he says, "you can find out what you want to do or what you don't want to do. An internship really is a preview of coming attractions."

dio arts from Macalester and received an M.A. from the University of Minnesota in sculpture and drawing.

At the Children's Museum, she began employing interns from Macalester in 1985 and has used seven so far. Their majors have included psychology, anthropology, art history, political science, and English. "We had important jobs to be done that needed follow-through, time commitment, and personal input, the kind of thing that was more than a volunteer could do. Interns often work 15 to 20 hours a week, either in public relations or education," Midelfort says. They are paid $500 for 150 hours of service.

Her interns tackle a variety of projects. One studied museum memberships, both locally and nationally, to help improve the Children's Museum membership program. Another developed a questionnaire for teachers who brought students to the museum for field trips. A third looked at traffic patterns in the museum to help determine which exhibits were the most popular.

"I consider an internship to be a partnership between the student and the instructor," Midelfort says. "We have goals we want accomplished, and they also have goals. My responsibility is to their education. I make a pact with my interns: They won't be stuffing envelopes all the time, but they will be doing that some of the time, because we all do."

Midelfort says that while many colleges have internship programs, what distinguishes Macalester's is the support it receives from faculty and the Career Development Center. "Teachers come here to visit and see the student on the site." In addition, "students from Macalester have a commitment to work in the community and tend to be independent thinkers."

Ballentine is manager of research and long-range planning at the Metropolitan Council, a regional planning agency for a seven-county area. He has used six Macalester students as interns since 1976, a year after he began working for the council. The interns—from disciplines as diverse as math, geography, English, chemistry, history, and political science—help to collect information requested by council policy-makers. For example, interns have done surveys of household size to help state government determine how to distribute state aid, and have researched the number of apartments converted into condominiums to determine the impact on affordable housing.

Ballentine, who earned a B.A. in English at Macalester, says that for the students, "it's not just a work experience—they're also learning about public policy-making at the regional level. There are a lot of interesting issues [in the Twin Cities area]: the dome stadium, light-rail transit, where to place a new airport. They're on the cutting edge of policy-making when they're here. They can attend staff meetings to see how the process works."

When he was a student, Ballentine had an internship as a teacher's aide in a St. Paul elementary school. "That fit with what I wanted to do at the time, which was teach. [The internship program] is a way for students to test areas of employment and broaden their working skills. The cornerstone of the Mac experience is that community involvement. As a student, you can find out what you want to do or what you don't want to do. An internship really is a preview of coming attractions."

Using Macalester interns is a way for Ballentine to contribute not only to the college but to the community. "It gives me a high level of satisfaction to be able to use these students," he says. "I have a fondness for Macalester, and it makes sense for me to be involved in this way."

If you would like to use a Macalester student as an intern in your office, call the Career Development Center at 696-6384.
Look ahead, look back
during Reunion Weekend

The theme of this year’s Reunion Weekend June 8–10 is “Journeys Forward, Journeys Past.” Alumni will have the chance to consider several important issues facing the world in the years ahead while they revisit the campus and share memories with college friends. A quick look at some of the events planned:

FRIDAY, June 8


9 a.m.: The newest alumni—a panel of 1990 graduates—tell their stories of life at Macalester and their plans for the future.

10:30 a.m.: History professor Peter Weisensel discusses the changes in the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe and how they will affect the United States.

2 p.m.: Author Paul Light ’75 offers a perspective on the Baby Boomers, the generation born between 1946–1964.

3:30 p.m.: Faculty members Diane Glynce and Cynthia Goatley share insights from their journeys into playwriting.

SATURDAY, June 9

7:30—9 a.m.: All-class breakfast.

9:15 a.m.: “Medical Ethics: In the Eye of the Storm,” a panel discussion with alumni physicians and other experts.

11:15 a.m.: Minority alumni look at “Developing Minority Leadership on a Predominantly White Campus.” A minority alumni luncheon follows at 12:15 p.m.

6–7 p.m.: Members of all classes gather under the tents on the lawn for social hour.

7 p.m.: Class parties begin.

8:30–10 p.m.: Concert with Dewey Decimal and the Librarians, a folk group that first made a stir in 1963–64 and returned to be the hit of last year’s reunion.

9 p.m.—midnight: Dance to the Dixieland music of the Mouldy Figs at the Student Union’s Cochran Lounge, or join grads from the past six years at a Recent Grad Party and Dance at the gymnasium.

SUNDAY, June 10

8:30—9:30 a.m.: All-class breakfast.

10 a.m.: Worship service at Weyerhaeuser Memorial Chapel with a sermon by the Rev. Harry Morgan, former director of the World Press Institute.

11 a.m.–1 p.m.: All-class brunch.

During the weekend, alumni will also have the chance to tour the campus, take in a Minnesota Twins game, browse in the new library, get some financial-planning tips, and hear alumni authors read their works, among other activities. Programs for alumni children between ages 8–17 begin at noon Friday and continue through Saturday. A final printed schedule will be available at the hospitality center in the Weyerhaeuser Administration Building.

For more information, call 612/696-6295.

Three alumni from 1979 get together at their 10th reunion last year.

Remembering Mary Gwen

As part of Reunion Weekend, alumni of Drama Choros will present “A Tribute to Mary Gwen Owen” on Friday, June 8, at the Janet Wallace Fine Arts Center. A gala buffet dinner begins at 6:15 p.m., followed by a Drama Choros production at 8 p.m. The legendary professor of speech and drama, who established the dramatic-reading group in 1931, taught at Macalester from 1928–1968. She died last year.

Several alumni wrote Macalester Today to share their reminiscences of her:

□ “Good morning, Miss Owen” was the greeting we used when addressing Mary Gwen Owen. She abhorred ‘Hi’ and insisted that at least you must come up with ‘Hello.’ Now it is a habit which I use in honor of Miss Owen and in memory of my years at Macalester.”

—Andrea Meidinger Van Horne ’62

Southern Ind.

□ “In September 1959, I, a Mac freshman to be, walked down the alley behind Kirk Hall and Old Main. With some anticipation, I headed into the campus and met Mary Gwen, robes flowing, on a walk up from the old World War II huts below Old Main. She greeted me by name! How she knew it, I don’t know, and then she recalled with pleasure her recollections, two decades before, of my aunt, uncle, and father. In that instant, Macalester became my home.”

—Keith L. Ironside, Jr. ’63

Portland, Ore.

□ “How many white, Republican Presbyterians do you think there are in this world?”

“That is the first thing I remember Mary Gwen Owen saying. It was the fall of 1953, and I was a freshman at Macalester receiving orientation. We heard from President Turck, dean Dupre, the registrar, and then this dynamic, crazy lady was standing in front of us, challenging us, entertaining us. That day I registered for Drama Choros, and for three of my four years at Macalester I spent Tuesdays and Thursdays in the Little Theater. I learned to write thank-you notes and say ‘nyew,’ not ‘noo,’ and ‘arange,’ not ‘orange.’ She told us it was OK to be born in the Midwest but we didn’t need to sound that way.

I remember Drama Choros bus trips through South Dakota. I remember speech department receptions that we were ‘cordially invited and required to attend.’ I remember sitting in the lobby of the Little Theater and watch-
an office door burst open and a cyclone in a red smock pinning another article from Saturday Review to the bulletin board, underlined strongly in red, just so we wouldn't miss the point.

"The last time I saw her was commencement of 1984. I was there for my son's graduation, she was there to watch her grandson graduate. She and I had both aged a good deal and she didn't really remember me, but I remembered: Drama Choros, the Little Theater, a red smock. I remember, too, how often she quoted Carl Sandburg: 'Someday, they'll give a war and nobody will come.' Thank you, Mary Gwen Owen, for the vision of a compassionate, peaceful, caring world. In that vision you will always be alive."

—Patricia Cramer Schlick '57
Wauwatosa, Wis.

Three alumni recognized as Distinguished Citizens

Three alumni will receive Distinguished Citizen Citations at the annual alumni awards ceremony at 5 p.m. Saturday, June 9, during Reunion Weekend. The citations, given by the Alumni Association's board of directors, were created in 1949-50 to honor alumni who exercise leadership in civic, social, religious, and professional activities.

This year's Distinguished Citizens are:

- John P. Gallos '49, a well-known Twin Cities television personality who has served as a talk-show moderator, newscaster, sports reporter, and weatherman. For 20 years, beginning in 1957, he hosted one of the most popular children's programs on local TV in the role of "Clancy the Cop." In 1963 he began hosting "Sunday Morning with John Gallos," a religious and public affairs series that is now the longest-running local TV show in Twin Cities history.

- Paul C. Light '75, associate dean and professor of political science at the Hubert H. Humphrey Institute of Public Affairs at the University of Minnesota. He has been a special adviser to Sen. John Glenn, chairman of the Governmental Affairs Committee for the 100th Congress, and director of studies at the National Academy of Public Administration. Among his books are Artful Work: The Politics of Social Security Reform and, most recently, Baby Boomers.

- Robert N. Gardner '40, a professor, coach, and administrator for 39 years at Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, until he retired in 1986. Gardner, the only minority student in his freshman class at Macalester, was recognized as one of the best running backs in the state conference throughout his college career. He was named to Macalester's Athletic Hall of Fame in 1987. At Lincoln, he served as coach of football, wrestling, boxing, soccer, and cricket, and chaired the athletic department from 1977 until his retirement.

At the same ceremony, Alumni Service Awards will be given to:

- The Rev. Richard C. Norberg '39, who retired as senior minister of the University Congregational Church in San Mateo, Calif., in 1983. He was the leader of the 50th reunion gift committee in 1989. He is married to Eleanor Westen Norberg '39.

- George A. Mairs III '50, a partner in Mairs and Power, an investment counseling firm in St. Paul. He served as a trustee from 1975-84 and became an honorary trustee in 1984. He was a member of the Committee on Major Gifts in 1978 and a member of the Macalester Associates in the early 1960s. His father was a Macalester trustee for 53 years.

Alumni clubs on the move

More than 100 alumni, parents, and students attended the third event in the "Leading Edge" series for Twin Cities alumni—a March 8 gathering at the Walker Art Center in Minneapolis. Jerry Fisher '59, history professor and director of the Japanese Studies Program at Macalester, led a panel of experts in a discussion of education in Japan and the United States.

Twin Cities "Recent Grads" (alumni from the past five classes) and the Alumni Board hosted four gatherings in the Alumni House in late February and March to inform graduating seniors about the Alumni Association and what it can do for graduates.

Also in March: David J. Deno '79 hosted a dinner and program at Burger King headquarters in Miami for President Robert M. Gavin, Jr., area alumni, parents, and friends. Kathryn Morz Gerber '71 hosted a new-student event in Ames, Iowa, that featured Charles Bruner '70, a retiring state representative. The Macalester Concert Choir tour in late March provided the occasion for alumni gatherings in River Falls, Wis.; Rochester, Minn.; Decorah, Iowa; Chicago; Des Moines, and Omaha.

Events for new students

Each summer, alumni throughout the country offer prospective new students a taste of college life through informal gatherings. These range from tours of the Los Angeles Zoo (planned for August) to sailing trips and picnics in San Francisco, harbor cruises in New York, and a day on the beach in New England.

Although many of these events were still in the planning stages as Macalester Today went to press, watch for your invitation to meet new students and other alumni and parents in:

- Los Angeles—Robert M. Rudd '84, contact
- San Francisco—Alan R. Hyden '78, Kurt D. Winkelmann '78
- Eugene, Ore.—Wendy L. Butler-Boyesen '72
- Seattle—Catherine W. Trost '80, H. Regina Cullen '73
- Denver—Carol Anderson Milanesi '68, Caryn Davis Hanson '71
- New York—Kim E. Walton '79, Jeff A. Wagenbach '85
- New England—John R. Burkhardt '81, Patricia R. Hurley '82
- Washington, D.C.—Betsy J. Rosen '85, Kevin O'Connor '77
- St. Louis—S. Ellen Krout-Levine '81, Kenneth F. Schwartz '80
- Atlanta—Stella Lorberbaum McHugh '74, Jerrold L. Miller '72
- San Diego—Liz Throop '80
- Twin Cities—Diane Hedstrom Wiesman '80, Elizabeth MacKnight Haan '43
- Philadelphia—Michael E. Corby '77, Joan Nelson Delapp '40
- Detroit—Paul A. Gillin '79
- Bismarck, N.D.—Rita M. Fox '78
- Cleveland—Sara E. Stashower '76
Most people looking for peace in 1966 wouldn't have gone to Vietnam. But it was there that Lance Woodruff '64, covering the war as a photojournalist for the U.S. National Council of Churches, found inspiration for his forthcoming book, Hoa Binh: Dreams of Peace.

Today Woodruff lives in San Francisco. He runs his own photography and freelance writing firm, Worldwide Documentations, and works for the Tenderloin Times, a community newspaper which focuses on Indochinese refugees and Vietnam veterans living in a poverty-stricken area of the city. Thoughtful and soft-spoken, Woodruff carries within him many images from 10 years of working with news organizations in Vietnam and Thailand.

He took most of the 100 photographs in the book in Vietnam and Cambodia during the 1960s and '70s; some document the plight of 1980s refugees in the United States. The photographs—both color and black and white—were the basis of his 1987 "Dreams of Peace" exhibit on Capitol Hill and at the Vietnam Memorial in Washington, D.C.

"I went to Vietnam [in 1966] and my intention was to write the Great American Novel. I went to see and experience the war, and when I got there what I saw and what I experienced was more than I could deal with at the time," he says, speaking from his studio in the Marina district. "I continued to write, I continued to photograph, but it was as if I was not even present in my own life in some way....There were traumatic experiences along the way that I lost awareness of just because they were too difficult."

Besides coming face to face with scenes of death in the battlefield, Woodruff photographed bizarre contradictions. At the South Vietnamese command post in a Danang museum he saw "statues of ancient Hindu gods with bandoliers of machine-gun cartridges, hammocks strung between sculptures more than a thousand years old, bikinis painted on voluptuous bare-breasted goddesses."

One day he unexpectedly received a letter from former Macalester President Charles Tutck asking him to find Tutck's grandson, a U.S. Marine stationed in Danang, and make sure he was OK. He was, and during that time in Danang Woodruff captured one of his most striking images: a statue of Ganesh, the elephant-headed Hindu god known as the Remover of Obstacles, with rifles on each shoulder. It was the centerpiece of his Washington exhibit.

Woodruff has written that the theme for Dreams of Peace was born in Danang in 1972 when he saw a painting in a cafe of a young woman asleep and imagined that peace was in her mind. Part of the book's title, Hoa Binh, refers to a town in Vietnam; it is also Vietnamese for peace. But Woodruff knows that peace is not always a simple idea. At Macalester, the history and political science major went to Africa with the Student Project for Amity Among Nations (SPAN) program.

"I spent months in Dar es Salaam, the capital of Tanzania. That's Arabic for 'Haven of Peace,' but Dar es Salaam came to be the port of exit for the slave trade in East Africa....All countries define peace in their own terms....My book, although it centers on Indochina, has some significant asides in relation to Africa and Central America."

One who shares Woodruff's dreams of peace is South African Bishop Desmond Tutu, a man Woodruff greatly admires. "For me, he is symbolic of a person of faith in a world that is both troubled and full of opportunity....His love and concern for justice extend to all people, not just those of his own race or political or religious views," he says. After covering Tutu's trips to California during the past five years, Woodruff asked if he would write the introduction for the book. Tutu agreed.

While reluctant to interpret his own work ("a photograph is many things to many people"), Woodruff hopes that his photographs "come to life" for viewers, becoming "a collection of images that will evoke feelings and associations."

Last summer he returned to Vietnam and Cambodia for the first time since the 1970s, taking his two teen-age sons, Christian and Alexander. A religious man, Woodruff went to Roman Catholic cathedrals in Hanoi and Saigon, a Quaker meeting in Phnom Penh, communion at his former Anglican parish church in Bangkok, and Buddhist temples and pavilions to pay respect to victims of the Khmer Rouge. He describes the trip as a kind of spiritual homecoming for him and a cultural seminar for his sons.

Woodruff is now planning another kind of homecoming—at Macalester's reunion weekend in June. He may have the opportunity to show some of his portfolio then. If all goes as planned, Hoa Binh: Dreams of Peace will be available by Christmas.

—Kevin Brooks '89
A marketing director races to accomplish Olympian feats

D. Jane Eastwood '73, director of marketing for the U.S. Olympic Festival—'90, in her office at the Minnesota World Trade Center in St. Paul. "I want this to be one of the most memorable events of the decade," she said in an interview in her office at the Minnesota World Trade Center in St. Paul. "I think people will really get a kick out of the festival; they will enjoy it tremendously. It is the opportunity to see the Olympians of 1992 and 1996."

Established in 1978 as a kind of training ground for U.S. Olympic athletes, the festival is held every year that doesn't have an actual Olympic Games. This year's festival will take place at sites throughout the Twin Cities area, including the Macalester Field House (badminton, July 7-10; fencing, July 13-15, and the fencing portion of the modern pentathlon, July 12). Macalester will also house more than 1,000 athletes in its residence halls.

Competition among U.S. cities to host the festival has become increasingly keen, and it was a coup for Minneapolis and St. Paul in 1987 when they won the honor. At the time, Eastwood was working in the city of St. Paul's economic development department, and she directed the city's joint bidding effort with Minneapolis. In her eight years as a city employee, Eastwood worked on similar projects—helping St. Paul win an "All-American City" award in 1983, for example, and helping bring the state's World Trade Center to St. Paul. So when, in the autumn of 1988, the U.S. Olympic Committee was putting together a staff for the Twin Cities event, Eastwood left city government to join the newly created office.

"I didn't think I had the right kind of background" for the festival job, she says, "but I had the marketing sensibility—that was really what I like to do. And that turned out to be much more important than having an existing knowledge of sports."

Amateur sports has become an industry, just like professional sports, Eastwood says. "Olympic athletes now command appearance fees, and we have licensed merchandise just like the NFL and major league baseball. [The Olympic Festival is] a springboard to attracting other major amateur sports events here, like the World Cup in soccer, or Olympic trials, or world or national competitions. By hosting an Olympic Festival, you pretty much set yourself up as being capable of hosting many other types of major sports events—the Pan American Games, the Olympic Games, other multi-sport and single-sport events."

Eastwood, who lives near Macalester with a 17-year-old cat named Amy ("who wishes I didn't work so much"), was putting in 12-hour days and 16-hour weekends last February. On this particular day, with tickets going on sale shortly, her attention was devoted to a contest to name the festival's mascot. In addition, Rainbow Foods, one of 13 $300,000 sponsors, had just begun a promotion involving Olympic pins. And an educational program centered on the Olympics was to be launched in April, cosponsored by Xerox and the Minneapolis Star Tribune.

Although Eastwood says none of these ideas originated with her, she was responsible for making them reality. "It's more the twists and turns on an idea, not so much the actual idea itself," she says. "I try to match up the right kind of people or company with a specific idea—and to find a way to finance it."

Where will Eastwood be during the festival? Her work with the festival's merchandise program—selling pins, T-shirts, caps, mugs—will probably keep her mostly behind the scenes. But as a sea kayaker as well as a runner, Eastwood will try to catch the canoe-kayaking events at Lake Elmo (July 7-8) and Taylors Falls (July 9). "It's virtually impossible to attend all the events, even if you run around all day," she says.

—Rebecca Ganzel
Bob Long puts Twin Cities in forefront of recycling

With the help of Bob Long '81, the Twin Cities have become leaders in efforts to end what Long calls "the wasteful ways of our 'throwaway society.'"

Long, a St. Paul city councilman who won a second two-year term last November, gained national attention in 1989 for sponsoring an ordinance banning plastic food containers that cannot be recycled. Minneapolis approved an identical ordinance. He appeared on ABC's "Good Morning America" to discuss the regulations, was quoted in the New York Times, and wrote a guest column on the issue for USA Today.

The ordinances require that by this July, all food and beverages sold in the Twin Cities must be in "environmentally acceptable" packaging. With some exceptions, the packaging must be recyclable, returnable, or degradable.

The ordinances, Long said in his guest column, "are intended to allow consumers to be environmentally conscientious" by letting them purchase food and beverages in returnable or recyclable packaging. Reducing the volume of plastics has at least two benefits, Long said. One is to reduce the environmental threat plastics pose in landfills; the other is to reduce the high cost of disposing of plastics.

Before the St. Paul and Minneapolis councils approved the measures, the plastics industry mounted an advertising campaign against the ordinances. But the campaign backfired with an outpouring of public support for the measures. Phone calls to council members were 15-to-1 in favor. "That told us the marketplace was out of step with consumers," Long said.

As a councilman, Long has also been involved in efforts to oppose increased air traffic over St. Paul's Highland Park neighborhood. And he has joined a Minneapolis council member in proposing to ban cigarette vending machines from many public accommodations in the Twin Cities in order to help prevent minors from smoking. The proposal quickly

Macalester was also important to Long's political development because the college shaped his thinking about community involvement. Over lunch at a downtown St. Paul diner, Long, who retains the enthusiasm and boomy voice of his college days, recalled that it was not "well-accepted to be political at Macalester" in the late 1970s and early '80s. But he said he "sort of stumbled" into his first race as Community Council president in his sophomore year, his first year on campus.

Among the achievements he's most proud of as CC president was reworking the student government constitution. During his term, the CC added advocates for women as well as minority and international students. He also was active in establishing the Anti-Apartheid Coalition and in organizing a 1980 forum on divestiture of college investments in companies doing business with South Africa.

Since he left college, his career has mirrored the breathless, highly visible pace he established while at Mac. Long, who went to law school at the University of Minnesota, spent a year working for then-mayor George Latimer before being elected to the city council. Latimer, quoted in a profile of Long that appeared in the Minneapolis Star Tribune last year, said Long "has the right stuff. He's got intelligence and energy. On balance, he has a tremendous future."

Long, a DFLer, admits that some day he would like to run for another office. But he is aware of the strain that politics, and political ambition, places on a family. Long and his wife, Karen, have a son, Nicholas. His son's birth nearly two years ago is partly responsible for Long's realization that politics "is a temporary part of your life. I'm strongly aware of the need for balance between political involvement and family stability."

Then there is the question of political timing. Long said he once thought, naively, that a political career could be planned. "You can't plan this stuff," he said. "To plan it out is a waste of time."

— Chris Hertinger
Music Man

Music matters to Lih-Chenh Chen '90 of Honolulu, even when he's not performing as first violinist in the Macalester Symphony Orchestra. He plans a career in orchestra management. Before his graduation in May with a B.A. in economics and business and a minor in music, Lih served as a student conductor with the orchestra, manager of instrumental ensembles, and head recording technician in the music department. He also sang with the Festival Chorale and the Traditions, played in the Pipe Band Drum Corps, served as music director of the Pep Band and classical music director of the college radio station.

Lih is among the roughly 70 percent of Macalester students who receive financial aid, which is made possible by the Macalester College Annual Fund. Your gift can make a difference.