

"Wild air, world-mothering air,  
Nestling us everywhere . . ."  
"We shall not cease from exploration . . ."  
"Forward, forward let us range  
Let the great world spin forever down  
the ringing grooves of change" . . .  
"where thro' gleams that untravell'd  
world/ Whose margin fades for ever and  
for ever when we move. . . We cannot rest  
from travel" . . . "our wings are wet with ranging."  
--Medley of Hopkins, Eliot, Tennyson

THE EMPTY NEST NEWSLETTER  
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## TOM CREATES CD; KARL PLAYS CLARK

The Capital Times

Friday, October 24, 2003\*



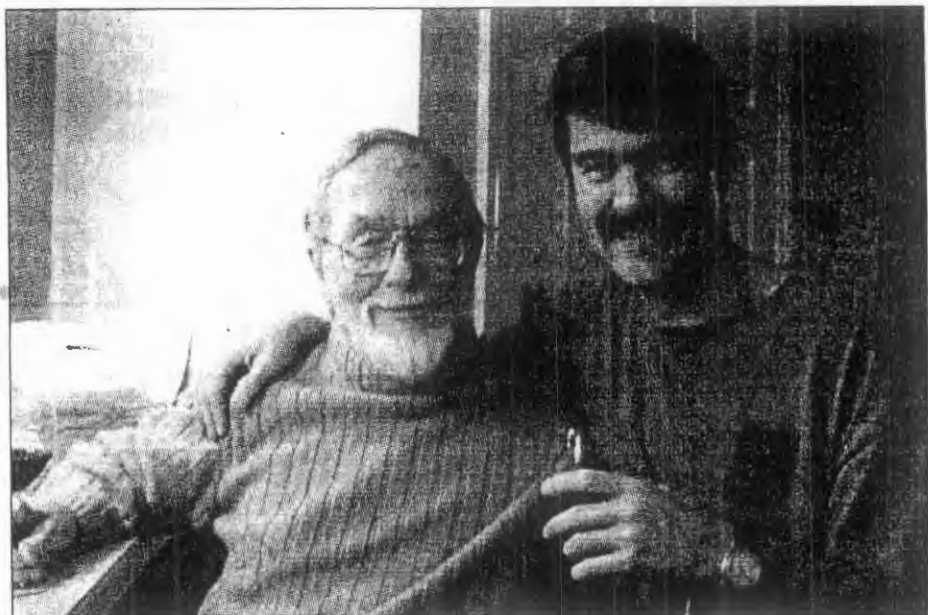
ASSOCIATED PRESS

The valley where the Niobrara and Missouri rivers meet is seen from a hilltop at Niobrara State Park in northeast Nebraska in September. This is the area where the youngest member of the Lewis and Clark expedition almost died of starvation when he got lost for 16 days.

## Exploring EXPLORERS

Madison native  
builds re-creation  
of Lewis & Clark  
journal on CD

Thomas Schmidt, a Madison native and veteran researcher of the Lewis and Clark trip, has created a two-CD re-creation of the expedition's journal. Leading listeners, as Clark, is his father, Karl, well-known to Badgers for his Wisconsin Public Radio "Chapter a Day" readings.



JOAN SCHMIDT

See EXPLORERS, Page 2

# Explorers

■ Continued from Page 1

A year before the bicentennial of their departure, we're already in the middle of something like a Lewis and Clark craze. Now a Madison native, a veteran researcher of their trip, has created the next closest thing to Lewis and Clark virtual reality.

"Listening to Lewis & Clark: Dispatches from the Voyage of Discovery" is a two-CD re-creation of the expedition's journal, adapted by Thomas Schmidt. The 2 1/2-hour set, which sells for \$21.95 and is being released by Bridger Press, was produced in Madison. More than a recorded book but not quite an audio drama, it features original music and sound effects that inspire visions of the explorers' trek. "Listening to Lewis & Clark" is performed by Wisconsin Public Radio veterans Jim Fleming and Karl Schmidt, Tom Schmidt's father.

Lewis and Clark ... hip? This year alone, a dozen books about the expedition have come out, recounting how President Thomas Jefferson long considered an exploration of what Tom Schmidt calls a vast blank spot.

"The best maps of the day showed the Rocky Mountains as a theoretical line down the middle of a white expanse of — they knew not what," Schmidt says. "They knew the longitude at which the continent ended and the ocean began," and that was about it.

And so, on May 14, 1804, Capt. Meriwether Lewis and William Clark set out to find a land route to the Pacific Ocean, to explore the area bought in the Louisiana Purchase. They and their Corps of Discovery started at St. Louis, went up the Missouri River, crossed North Dakota, and with the help of their legendary American Indian guide, Sacagawea, climbed the high Rocky Mountains and traveled down the Columbia River to the Pacific. Despite

many near-misses, the expedition returned to St. Louis on Sept. 23, 1806, having lost only one man during the entire expedition.

It's the third Lewis and Clark project for Schmidt, who wrote the 1998 "National Geographic Guide to the Lewis & Clark Trail" and in 1999 co-authored "The Saga of Lewis & Clark: Into the Uncharted West." He spent 18 months reading the expedition's unabridged journals and personally driving, hiking, paddling and camping along the trail.

He graduated from West High School in 1977 and from the University of Wisconsin-Madison in 1983. After working as a news and feature reporter for The Milwaukee Journal, Schmidt wrote for the National Geographic Society's book division for six years, before being tapped to write its Lewis and Clark guide, which historian Stephen

Ambrose said he "recommended without reservation."

Today, Schmidt lives with his wife and two children in Bozeman, Mont., where he's working on several new guides for the National Geographic Society.

Schmidt's books and Ambrose's 1996 bestseller "Undaunted Courage: Meriwether Lewis, Thomas Jefferson and the Opening of the American West" have since been joined by countless others. Just in 2003 have come books focusing solely on topics such as the expedition's food, geology and maps. There's been the inevitable Ken Burns PBS documentary, and even a recent "Lewis & Clark for Dummies."

Perhaps one reason for the explorers' new popularity has more to do with ourselves than with their Corps of Discovery. We're reinterpreting their challenges to mimic our own.

Thus a massive Time magazine special report in 2002 was able to analyze why the two were the perfect "co-CEOs."

Schmidt sees a greater fasci-

nation, though, thanks to a reappraisal of Lewis and Clark as inadvertent cultural anthropologists.

"With our generation," he says, "I think, we are seeing the West partly through the eyes of those who lived here for thousands of years before Lewis and Clark — the American Indians. "And that enriches the expedition. We no longer see it from simply the Anglo point of view."

The journals, he says, were written "in such fascinating detail that it isn't dry. You've got the concrete facts, concrete descriptions of the land, and descriptions of the people they met. For most of us, that's a rich rediscovery of a frontier. I think that from our perspective now, we have a hunger for new frontiers."

There's humor in Schmidt's audio re-creation, and plenty of high adventure. Listeners vicariously join Mandan Indians for a winter buffalo hunt, battle grizzly bears, and make an ar-

duous 18-mile portage around the Great Falls of the Missouri River, all with appropriate sounds.

**S**ales for the CDs, first released in April at sites along the expedition route, have exceeded expectation, Schmidt says.

"People seem to be very hungry for something they can just pop into their CD player as they see some of the Lewis and Clark trail — or just cope with commuter traffic," he says.

Schmidt continues to explore that trail as a personal guide for others, and he hopes to put together another CD inspired by the expedition, a collection of authentic American Indian songs the explorers would have heard.

Schmidt voices linking commentary in the recordings.

Leading listeners, as Clark, is Karl Schmidt, well-known to Badgers for his Wisconsin Public Radio "Chapter a Day" readings.

"It's almost like a documentary with narration, because everything is taken from the journals," Karl Schmidt says of the project. "It was a real blast to do it. I got acquainted with my kid in a way I hadn't been before."

Tom Schmidt notes, however, that he isn't a complete stranger to audio drama. He worked with his father on National Public Radio's long-running "Earplay" dramatic series. "Until my voice changed," he adds, "at which point there were many more child actors far more qualified."

"Listening to Lewis & Clark: Dispatches from the Voyage of Discovery" is \$21.95 and is available at bookstores and from Bridger Press, [www.bridgerpress.com](http://www.bridgerpress.com).

## NEWS BITS + PIECES

Spfld. This joke is funny if you've read my "Paradise" in *More Stories*, when Grandma Eve packed up a barrel of our toys and sent them to our cousins in Wyoming -- including Pat's precious "Bizzy Lizzie" doll! And you know what? Jerry & Karla don't even remember those toys. VT. Danari's is now the pleased owner of a sweet pea-green kayak! Easy to paddle, easy to transport, sleek & shiny, a pure delight! Rena Cress came home, but left her heart in France. The heart came over in October. She's going to Paris after Xmas, but's coming again in Feb., & she's applying to teaching in France after she graduates in June. Guess who's studying French: her mother! Gillian figures she'll make it. (Maybe I should, too!) Egypt. That's where Jackie & Megan will be for 17 days after Christmas. Weir! Iatched onto a Beloit College class. New Year's on the pyramids! Ask the sphinx! Florida Phil Higley of American Breeders Service turned 100 this June! He & Dad were on the first ABS board with Rock Prentice and Howard Greene. Oregon Barbara's thorough reports assure us that Craig's prostate cancer is responding well to treatment.

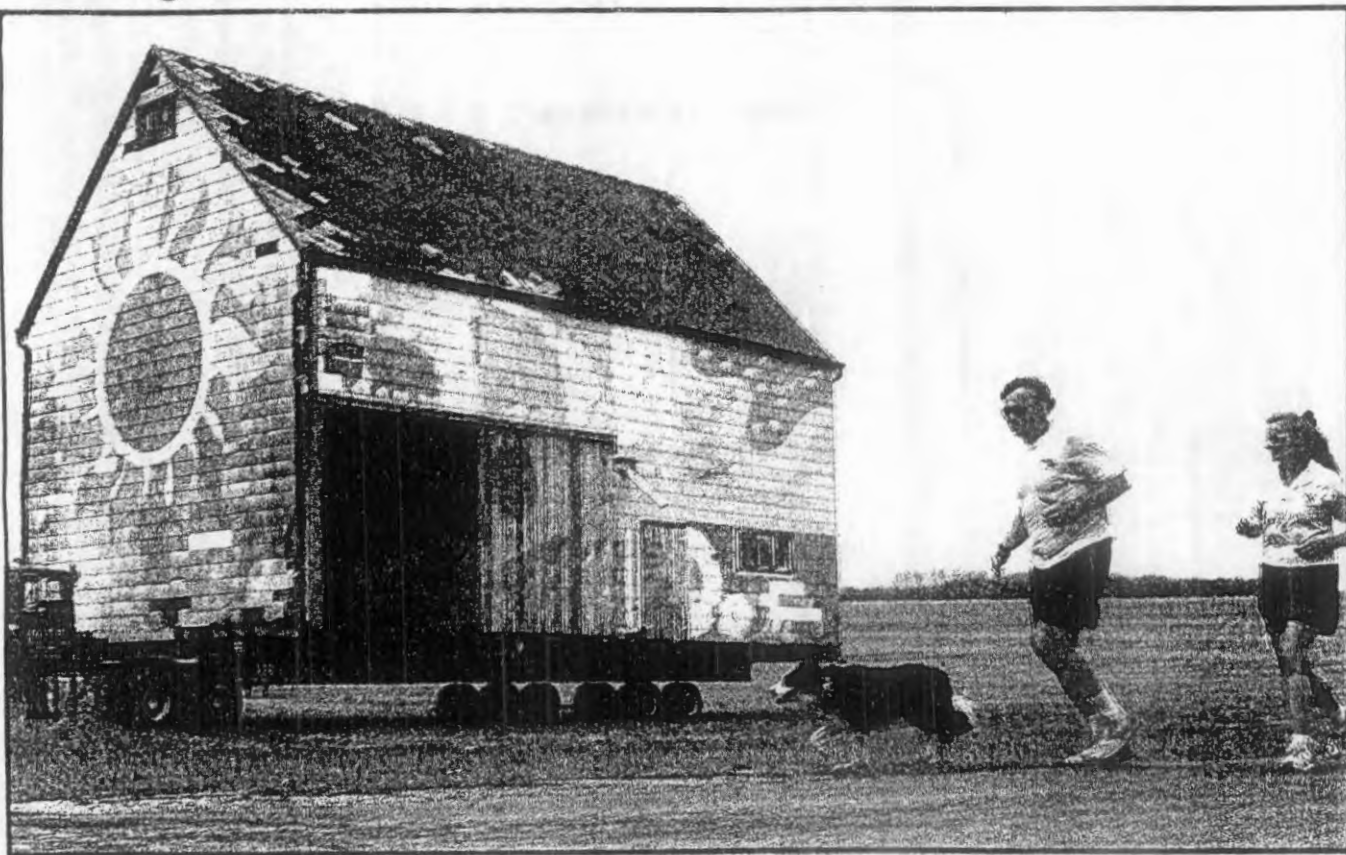
\* actually, not so funny!



"Grandma had a favorite doll when she was your age. But, with no explanation, that doll was taken away from her and sent to live with some cousins in Wichita."



## Moving on



Staff photo by Jim Urquhart

Beloiters Craig and Betty Gronau and their border collie Jazmyn make their way past a corn seed house from the Dougan family farm on Colley Road in Beloit Monday. The seed house, which is on a trailer, will be moved to

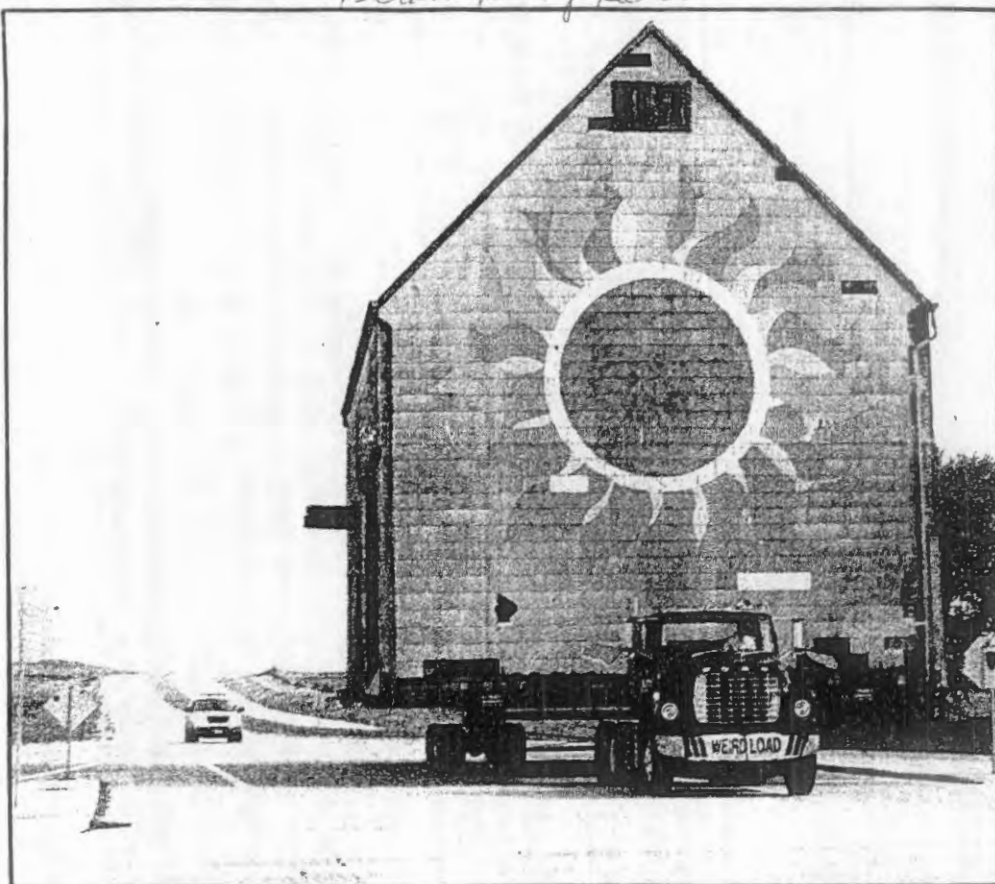
preserve it from development that is taking place in the Gateway Project. The structure, which was painted by a Beloit College art class, will be moved to Stateline Road by Beloit-based R.J. Hallett House Moving firm.

The seed house is now at Gene Shepherd's seed place; he farmed Chez Nous from Dad's retirement till last year. We're planning to repaint Frank Boggs's sun-burst, maybe more. When Chez Nous house moves to near Clinton (to a family with 4 kids!) that'll make front pages too, and Brad Ewald is going to film it. It's up on girders, ready to go, waiting for the ground to freeze. Sad, but wonderful!

Hi to ALL!

--There is too much material to go into one newsletter, I must get out issues more frequently! This space (hah) is for a personal hello--and good wishes --after I say we have had grievous deaths... our beautiful, beloved Roberta DeKay; and Marion Levin's dear daughter and son-in-law. Also colleague Bill Miller. But we rejoice in Hap Hornbostel's marriage to Linda Reinhardt!

## On the move *Beloit Daily News 6-11-03*



Staff photo by Jim Urquhart

Crews from Beloit-based R.J. Hallett House Moving carry a seed house down Gateway Boulevard in Beloit Tuesday. The seed house, which was painted by a

Beloit College art class, was moved from Colley Road to County P east of Interstate 90 to make way for development in the Gateway Project.



## UIS Writers Publish Novels

I've trumpeted my own books aplenty in this newspaper; last time I trumpeted Rodd's Capital Murder. This issue I feature LaVerne and Carol, and talk about others' writings, too: But first an article from:



# CAPITAL INVESTMENT



A Newsletter of the U of I Foundation and  
Private Giving in behalf of the

UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS AT SPRINGFIELD

that says good things about my students' work, and also trumpets me as a teacher! Martha's book, Dispatch to Death, is now out; many of you are receiving it for Christmas; she dedicates it to me. Also, Gary Smith's Blood Shadows, some haunting, some hilarious stories he's written over the years in my classes, many published separately, which he's pulled together into a book. (Some of the plays weren't with me.) He dedicates to a friend, then adds, "with special thanks to Jackie Jackson--writer, teacher, friend--who opened the closet door, coaxed forth Denise, Elmira, Finn, Fergus, and all the others--gave us the courage to take a front row seat in her classroom--loved us--and made us proud." Christy Cameron has a very funny romance that will be published soon. Jeanne Handy's environmental essays are finding their way into magazines, and she just had a lovely, poetic feature in Illinois Times, on Lincoln Gardens. Yosh Golden's Asian-American stories, with her birth at Manzanar prison camp, and her mother's friends and family obliterated at Hiroshima, are shaping up into a book. So, in the idiom of this newsletter, many birds are coming home to roost, and I have some promising new students, too, from my last class this fall--which may well be my last UIS class. I tell my students that I see myself as a midwife, though Carol Manley says she thinks I'm sometimes a sperm donor. I do want to say: I have been particularly blessed to land in a job which I have loved and where I could be effective--which is denied to so many people--and that, as many of you know, I owe to Bill Perlmutter, one of the primary shapers of the nascent SSU, who said, "Let's get you professional." To him I am forever grateful.

**H**ad Jackie Jackson focused on what was wrong with Martha Miller's work rather than what was right, the former student's novel, *Nine Nights on the Windy Tree*, would never have been finished, much less published.

For her former student Rodd Whelpley, Jackson's persistence made all the difference. Even after she had retired, the UIS English professor kept driving him to produce new chapters until his mystery, *Capital Murder*, was solved. *Capital Murder*, which tells the story of a detective who's out to find the murderer of a state senator's stepdaughter, was published this year. The novel is the first written by Whelpley, who edited UIS public policy books and acted as a contributing editor for *Illinois Issues* magazine.

Miller and Whelpley are just two of the many writers the UIS professor emerita has helped shepherd creative works to publication. In fact, the final novel-writing class Jackson taught at UIS before her retirement in 2000 led to the publication of three, and soon perhaps four, full-length books. And during the class, Jackson herself worked on her second memoir collection,

*More Stories from the Round Barn*, which was published in 2002.



"I don't know how I got so lucky as to be in one of Jackie's classes," says Miller, a Springfield writer who now has to her credit several works of fiction and writing awards. "I'm a bit dyslexic so I was a terrible speller, but Jackie would ignore it and focus on what was good about what I was writing."

Jackson looked beyond bad spelling, sloppy or single-spaced papers, to find what Miller calls "the meat and potatoes."

Miller, who has retired from a bank job and now makes her living by writing and teaching writing, says, "She has a really good eye for knowing what is the important element in the writing. The first thing I had published was at her suggestion. She said, 'You know, this is good enough to publish.' I sent it out and they snapped it up."

Cont on p. 6.

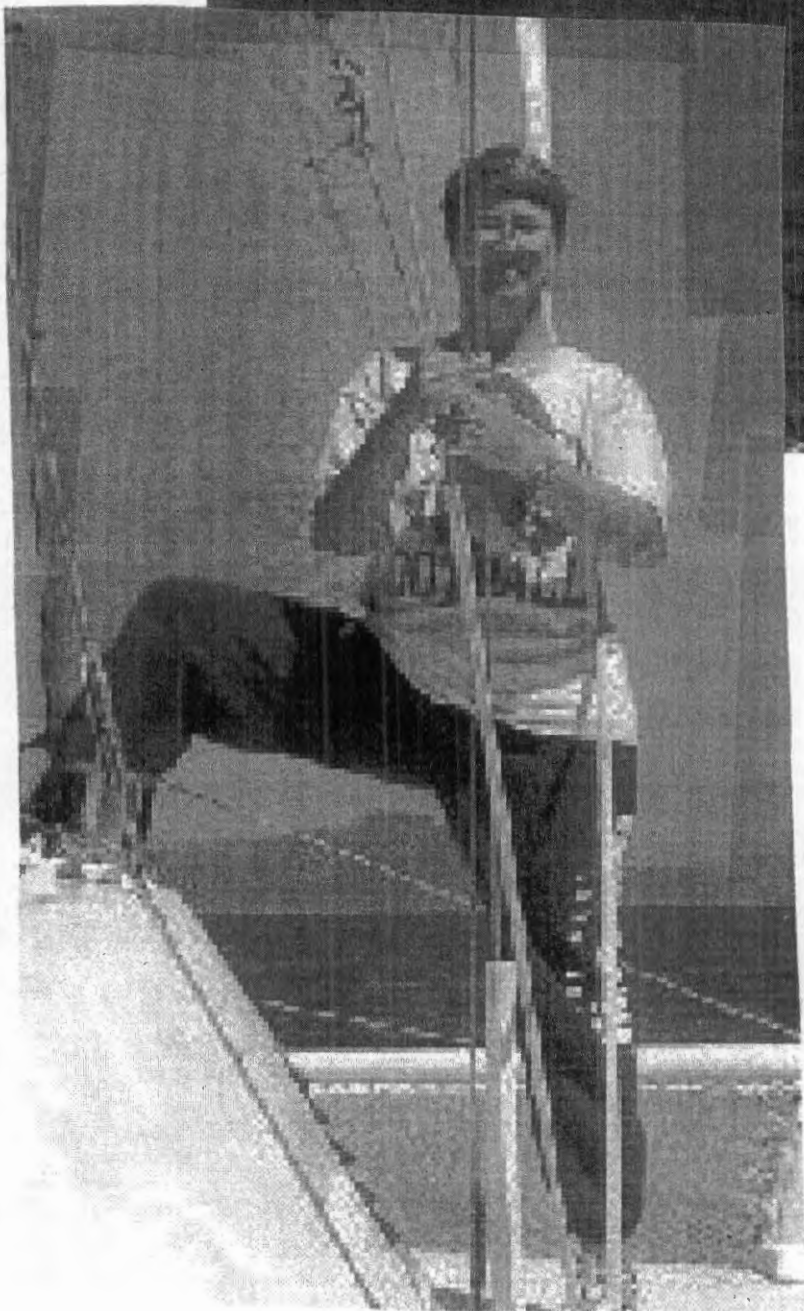
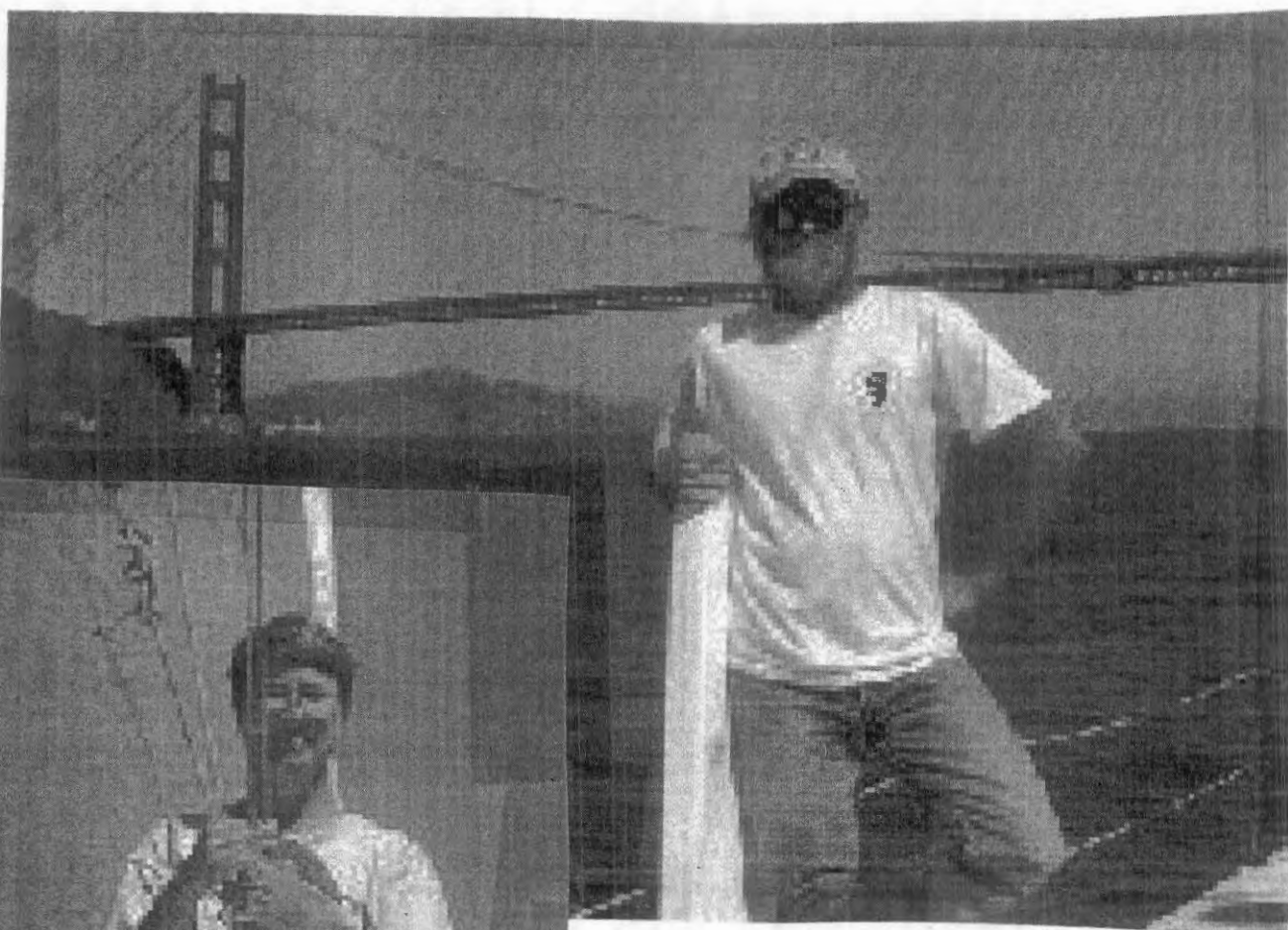
(I have looked at this one too dark.)



"How are the sailors home from the sea ..."



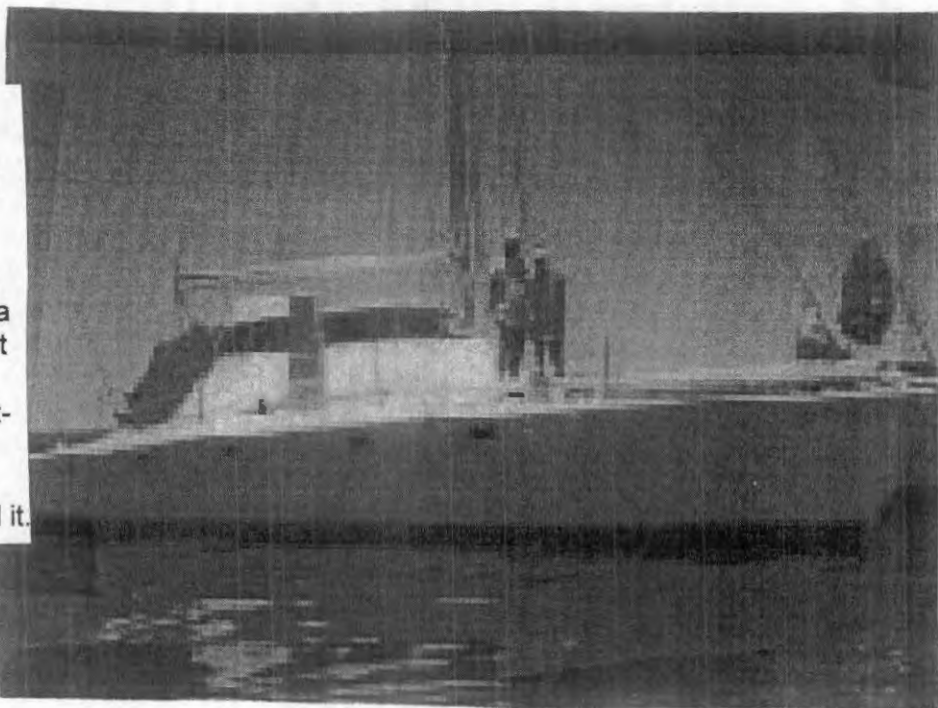
... but they had us worried for a while!



THIS OLD BOAT ...

(Ed's Dream Boat!)

I give up. How to chronicle the **Adventure of the Summer** when it took Gillian dozens of dense pages! A thrilling saga! So I'm going for pix, and saying that it was hot, hot, hot in Mexico fitting out the boat, and they ran into lots of problems, and improved their Spanish, and outran a hurricane on the way up the Baja coast, and traveled with whales, but safely got to San Francisco, and are still good buddies! They will now put in lots of effort fixing the catamaran up so it is in **really** good shape, and what adventures then? If you want the whole boggling story, email Gillian and she will send it.



Gillian @ netfeed.com.  
(Gillian Ferranto, P.O. 7049  
StateLine NV 89449)

Con't from p. 4

*Nine Nights on the Windy Tree* was written under Jackson's guidance. The murder mystery, which features one of Miller's nontraditional heroines, a young, black, lesbian lawyer who is a recovering alcoholic/cocaine addict, was picked up by New Victoria Publishers, Inc., in Vermont, published in 2000, and has since been translated into other languages.

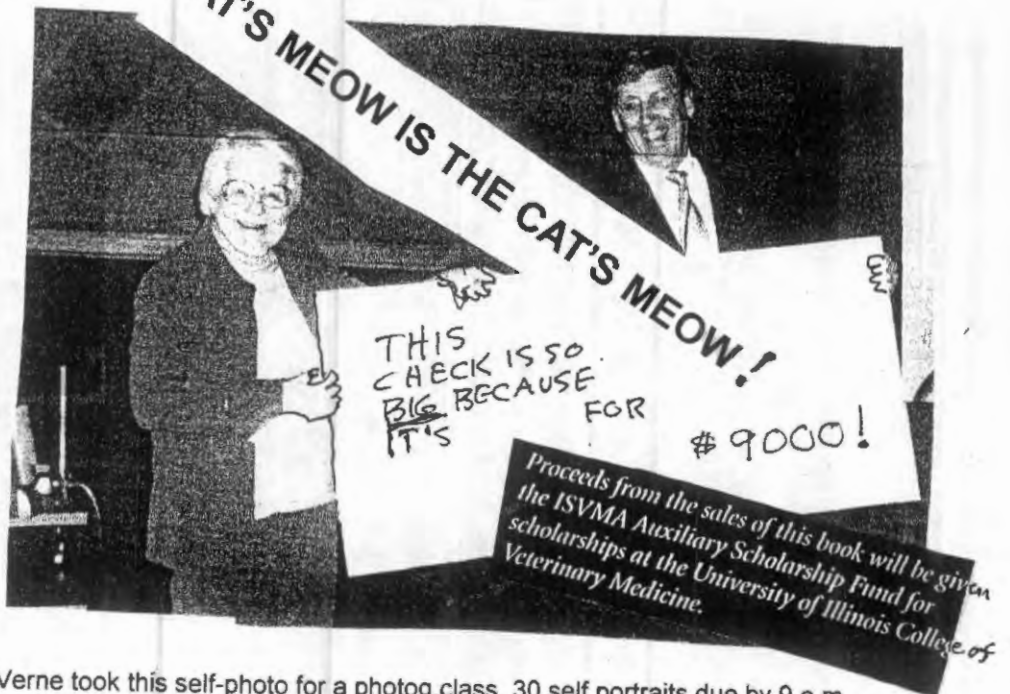
Miller inscribed a copy of the novel for Jackson as follows: "The best thing that ever happened to me was when you took me under your wing. One red pencil and this book wouldn't have gotten written. Thanks for all you taught me and for being my friend."

Miller's next mystery, *Dispatch to Death*, which features a 47-year-old female cab driver who stumbles into a murder mystery, is due out in the fall. It is one of the novels produced in the last novel-writing class of Jackson's. Also published was LaVerne Smith's memoir: *The Cat's Meow: The Story of a Veterinary-Girl-Friday-Wife*. Jackson's copy of the book is inscribed: "To Jackie, the greatest friend in my writer's world, a fairyland she helped me enter."



### About the Author

LaVerne Smith writes from the view of a wife assisting her husband who practiced veterinary medicine from their home while they raised five children and trained live-in interns. She declares her life had never a dull moment. She earned a bachelor's degree at age 68 and has visited all 50 of the United States.



LaVerne took this self-photo for a photog. class, 30 self portraits due by 9 a.m. She was getting pretty frazzled! This is probably #29. I love it! Writing this book was tremendous therapy for Laverne, for J.J. was slowly dying of Alzheimer's, and she got down so much richness of their happy life together. Earlier, I called on both of them for vet advice for my Round Barn books.

The heady news on **Carol Manley**, who's finally completed her M.A. (kicking and screaming all the way), is that this fall, in the **Writers Digest** competition of some 20,000 entries, **SHE WON**, in her division of Short Fiction, **1st Prize, 3rd Prize, an Honorable Mention**, and in Creative Nonfiction, an **Honorable Mention**. Her M.A. Writing Portfolio is 280 pages and Razak, her advisor, is delirious. Me, too!

**Update on Stories and More Stories:** They both seem to be doing okay; I got a nice royalty check, and there have been good area writeups though not the wider publicity for More that there was for Stories. My conclusion is, it hasn't been much reviewed. People enjoyed Jim Fleming's reading over Wisconsin Public Radio, and bought books! A number of readers have told me they think book 2 is better than the first. And I sell a lot out of my trunk. Here's ordering data again: Bookstores; Northwestern U. Press; the Internet. But if you buy **from me**, I offer 60% of list (which is \$30) plus postage, no tax or handling. I'll bill you when I send the book(s). Great gifts!!

Order Blank for More Stories (\$18.50) (or for Stories --\$18.50 hardback, \$10 paper) from JJ:

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