



# The Common Times

Volume II, No. 3

November, 2004

Please welcome our guest editor, Donald Smith, who agreed to take over in my mid-November absence. I will return in December. In the meantime we bring to our readers a medley of racy reports and tall tales.

## Holiday Highlights

Once again a few neighbors will gather for a **Thanksgiving** potluck—the feast in past years has been memorable.



Friday, December 3, is the date of the **Annual Holiday Sing**. John Reed will again lead us in close harmony, and we will enjoy seasonal refreshments to get the holidays started.

On **New Year's Eve**, we'll drink a cup of kindness for Auld Lang Syne at the annual Dec. 31 party.

## Art for Art's Sake

The Art Committee thanks the residents for the favorable response to the temporary exhibit of works by Emil Weddige. Please keep in mind that if you imagine one of them belonging in your own home, you can act on that fantasy! A price list of the works available for purchase (all but two on display) is ready for you in Alisande's office. All proceeds

aid students from EMU and UM.

On the fourth floor of Woodbridge North hang two magnificent molas, on loan from the collection of Ed Thomas. And here in this issue is a brief narrative by Ed recounting the voyage that led to their acquisition. We hope that upon reading this story, you will feel inclined to stop by and have a look at these examples of a wonderful and traditional art form.

*Leonore Gerstein*

## The World of Books

There are lots of new books in the library. You can spot them easily by watching for the “new” sticker on the book spines. One of popular categories in the non-fiction area is the “UC Authors” shelf. Please consider donating any books you have written. Your neighbors would enjoy reading them! Just leave them on the “Donation” shelf. Feel free to autograph them.

*Ellen Stross*

## Grounds and Gardens

Our woods are looking great this fall and the Grounds and Gardens Committee would like to thank those Commoners who did such a great job of cutting and pruning on a Saturday morning last month, especially Bill Kinley, Bill Stebbins, Joe White, Karen Gotting, Ruth

Lehman, Fred Lim, Claude Morehouse, Glenina Nolte, Brad Perkins, Katie Stebbins Tom Powell, Fran Weeks and Mary White.

*Betty Graham*

## Theater in the Stars

The Advisory Council on Film Studies has planned an exciting program for the fall and winter months. Classic films selected for showing include:

- November 21 ~ *A Night at the Opera* (1935).
- December 19 ~ *Babette's Feast* (1988)
- January 23 ~ *Fanny and Alexander*
- February 27 ~ *Mildred Pierce* (1945)
- March 27 ~ *The Odd Couple* (1968)
- April 24 ~ *Chariots Of Fire* (1981)

All performances will begin at 7:00 pm. We hope you can come.

## Asa Gray Lecture - 2005

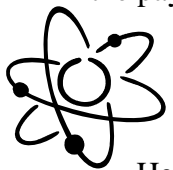
The 2005 Asa Gray Lecture Committee has begun meeting in preparation for the spring 2005 lecture. We have identified several outstanding speakers and are in the process of identifying one of them who would be both available and eager to deliver the lecture. The name of the speaker and the date of the lecture will be announced shortly. Committee

members for 2005 are: Betty Graham, Mary Kinley, Frieda Morgenstern, Tony Morris (Chair), Donald Smith, Mary White, and Alisande Cutler (ex-officio).

Tony Morris

## People in the News

That man so diligently washing wine glasses so they wouldn't break in the dishwasher at a recent Common Time is a most welcome new resident, **John Swinton King**, a UM emeritus professor. John studied politics at Princeton, worked in applied physics at John Hopkins during the war and earned his PhD in physics at Michigan in 1953. He later was at GE's Knolls Atomic Power Lab where he was made Manager of Submarine Reactor Physics. Coming back to Michigan in 1959 and, in his own words, "succumbing to an irresistible offer of twice the work at half the pay," he became a full



professor and chairman of the department of nuclear engineering.

He has served on various scientific committees, including the National Research Council.

He and the former Elizabeth Chickering were married in 1943 in Detroit. She died in 1985. Their son, John, Jr., who lives in England, has a PhD in chemical physics and is an editor; daughter Frances is an editor and writer living in Marblehead, Mass., and daughter Elizabeth is a sculptress in Richmond, VA.

There are four grandchildren, two of whom are adopted from China. *See elsewhere in this issue for John's views on moving into UC.*

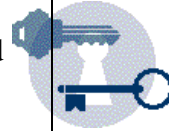
Lots of good wishes for emeritus professor **Al Feuerwerker** are due: 1) he and his colleague, Ernest Young, were honored by their former students at a two-day symposium, sponsored by the Center for Chinese Studies, on the Social, Economic and Cultural History of Modern East Asia; 2) a surprise announcement at the symposium that a scholarship had been established in their names for graduate students in modern Chinese history; 3) Al's birthday fell on the second day of the symposium, "my 39th, same as last year" he assured me.

**B. Joseph White**, interim president of the U. of M. when Lee Bollinger left and Mary Sue Coleman succeeded him, is off to the University of Illinois early next year as their 16th president. Joe has roots in Michigan, having been born in Detroit, growing up in Kalamazoo, and getting his doctorate in business administration at the U. of M., with stops along the way for his B.S. at Georgetown, his master's degree at Harvard. His wife, Mary, whom I interviewed because Joe was out of town, said they were both thrilled with the move, and we at University Commons are happy to know they are not giving up their Ann Arbor digs (that could be taken literally as Joe has helped

Commons Workdays Outdoors).

We wish them all the best.

Frieda Morgenstern



## First Impressions

As must be true for most of us, "moving in" is never easy. Everything is NEW- the space, the appliances, the heating routine, the house rules (written and unwritten), and a hundred new faces. After resolving the family memorabilia of 40 years in a home across the river (with great help from my children), I felt finally a sense of triumph to be landed in the Commons. But in the next weeks triumph gave way to a new challenge—to civilize a naked apartment. In the spirit of the Commons, I knew I should treat this as a mere detail and act accordingly- join committees, eat dinners, meet 100 new people, know the routine—but for me in truth it was a new hill to climb. And there were some minor disappointments: the night glare of the great globes on the common terrace masked the natural beauty of twilight and dawn; there was neighborhood noise we house owners had not yet lived with; there was no broom closet; parking was not a straight shot up your own driveway; newspapers had to be fetched, etc. But the hundred new faces began to belong to some extraordinary people, all with past accomplishments, and yet



all with a gracious and supportive attitude toward all comers, new and old. Although Blue Hill had worked hard to display in advance this spirit of the Commons, newcomers have only to begin to know these people to recognize the strength that is here. It is impossible not to get a smile of greeting, not to find willing guidance about an unfamiliar routine. Some wonderful people here have already invested hours of their time to make my arrival easier. It is a faster pace than complacent newcomers (like myself) might have been accustomed to, but I am lucky to be here. I believe it was the right move, and look forward to the time when I am really "up to speed."

*John King*

### Looking Back



We have spent time lately going through minutes and correspondence related to the

development of University Commons. It's been fun, boring and, occasionally, sad: sad, of course, because many of the original group didn't make the move with us. It was interesting to see the names of people involved at different stages in those early years. Names were mentioned for a meeting or two, others worked on a specific project and some dropped out and returned later, and a few persevered.

There is much we have enjoyed here, particularly the renewal of old friendships and the making

of new friends. Other things, some big, some relatively small, that we like: neighbors who respond with help both with and without being asked; opening the door and finding the New York Times; enjoying the outside without working to maintain it; the fat squirrels fed by Betty Graham; the red-tailed hawks that nest nearby and watching their babies develop flying and hunting skills; and remembering a herd of nine deer gathered at dusk on New Year's Day 2004. A list from each of us could go on and on. Very deeply, we hope the sense of community so desired in the planning and felt keenly by us will also be here in the future for many University of Michigan families and friends.

*Margaret and George DeMuth*

### Lend Me Your Ears

Thanks to Chuck Kelly and Diane Kirkpatrick, our Shakespeare Reading Group has started off with much interest and enthusiasm. The first play we read, *Julius Caesar*, was a great success as a result of the involvement of the entire group and the bravura readings by Cathy Marcus, Bill Kinley, Marian Orso and Ed Marcus. Bea Lawrence was the facilitator for the discussion.

Our next play is *Much Ado About Nothing*. The facilitator is Frieda Morgenstern. Scenes will be read by Steve Stanton, Bea Lawrence, Elizabeth Dexter and Anneliese Bowlby. This comedy will be a good change of pace from the heavy tragedy of *Julius Caesar*.

Future plays to be read include *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and *Romeo and Juliet*, as well as others. Both of these plays will be performed on campus in February.

The Bard continues to excite and delight as we step into a world of magnificent literature and



universal ideas. So much of Shakespeare's works are still applicable to our lives today, and we look forward to our entrance into the world of "to be or not to be," "the quality of mercy," "all the world's a stage," "the fault, dear Brutus, lies not in our stars, but in ourselves that we are underlings" and so many more. What a wonderful world!

*Bea Lawrence*

### Seafaring for Art's Sake

The molas described by Leonore in her column were acquired by me and my former wife directly from women of the Cuna Tribe on the San Blas Islands off the north coast of Panama. To reach the islands, we took a very small plane from Panama City over the Darien jungle and landed on a narrow strip at its very edge. We were then transported by a Cuna male in a large wooden dugout canoe to the Cuna island



women who were waiting in their village with their molas. No coca cola here! In addition to some molas, I bought a

native spear which I had to hold upright during the bumpy return flight to Panama. Its tip came to about two inches from the overhead fuselage but with great fortune I got it back to Ann Arbor without sticking something or someone.

*Ed Thomas*

## A Caribbean Christmas

We were on the Mandalay, a three-masted Windjammer ship, fifty-six passengers. We lay anchored off the island of Mayreau in the West Indies, and it was Christmas Day. There had been an elaborate brunch, we had lazed on the beach, dinner had included turkey and all that goes with it. It was Holly's birthday and there had been champagne. The final celebration was to be singing on the main deck after dinner.

Last year many of us had tried the same thing *ex tempore* but this year we practiced.

Someone had brought a book, someone had hand copied the words of standard carols and the captain had Xeroxed them. We had chosen the keys, not too high, not too low, and set the chords. I was the only soprano but we had recruited others who were willing to confess that they could sing: an alto who is a choir director, and her tenor husband; a tenor who for years sang with the Chicago Symphony chorus and has perfect pitch; a bass who had a cold but managed anyway; another bass from England who knew the



words better than the rest of us and who had been busy explaining to us about Boxing Day, which is a holiday in the Caribbean and all the stores close.

Central to the whole effort were Steve and Pat, R and B singers from



California who had brought their travel guitars. There were also Hank from Phoenix on the captain's big guitar, Nigel, West Indian Chief Engineer, who is a phenomenal jazz guitarist, and Troy, the little steward with the round head and wide smile who had his own bongo drum.

Up on the main deck, when it was time, we arranged two benches in a vee shape so the players could see each other, and the people sat on swimming mats or stood along the rails.

We announced that this was not a performance but a group sing and that we expected to hear from them all. We began and there were enough of us and we were close enough together that the sound was satisfying and didn't just fly away into the black night.

When it came to *Adeste Fideles*, several others knew the Latin words and sang along with us. *Silent Night* had a duet verse in German (and I sang my words with confidence because Anneliese had coached me before I left) and a verse in French from two Canadians. It went well, there were compliments and we felt we had the proper spirit.

Then the musicians began to jam. Nigel likes to improvise on *Summer Time*, and I got to sing it. We ended with Steve and Pat doing their *Christmas in the Trailer Park* song: "Kill a tree, kill a tree for Jesus/ Drag the thing home/ spray it with white foam/ smother it with decorations/ Nana's homemade creations/ Cause it's Christmas time/ in the trailer park." The verses are about the joys and trials of family Christmas and it ends with a long Amen.

I have not had many singing experiences as nice as this one, and I wrote it all down while it was fresh. That was December 25, 2003, and I wanted you all to know what it was like, now that it is almost that time again in 2004.

*Ann Woodward*

*The editorial staff hopes you will have a meaningful Thanksgiving. Please send me your news for the next edition of The Common Times*

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