



“Thinking together, independently” - Alexander Meiklejohn



The Children of Kathmandu

Libraries in Nepal: An ILS Graduate's Rural Evaluation Tour

By Kate Fenner

You never know where your ILS degree is going to take you. Mine took me up into the Himalayas to visit remote Nepali villages and evaluate a rural library network. Not something I could have foreseen eight years ago as an undergrad at UW but I guess that is why I chose this flexible, comprehensive degree.

After dabbling in dolphin training and adventure travel operations, I came to work for an international nonprofit organization called Rural Education and Development (READ) Global, based in Washington, D.C. READ combines education and enterprise to increase rural prosperity, making villages viable places to live thereby stemming the flow of urban migration.

Continued on page 5



INTEGRATED LIBERAL STUDIES

“Thinking together, independently”
- Alexander Meiklejohn

Fall 2009 • 228 North Charter Street • Madison, Wisconsin 53715 • Phone (608) 262-2190 • ils.wisc.edu

Inside This Issue

Letter from the Chair	1
What? Tear Down the Meiklejohn House?	2
Alumna Spotlights	2
Alumna Spotlight: Abbie Steiner	3-4
Libraries in Nepal: An ILS Graduate's Rural Evaluation Tour <i>Continued from back cover</i>	5
Charles Anderson Podcasts on the Web	6
An ILS Alum Witnesses History: The Obama Inauguration	7
Faculty Notes	8
Celebrating Harold November	9
The ILS Bookshelf	10
The New Face of ILS	10



ILS is an official affiliate of the Wisconsin Alumni Association.

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

By Craig Werner

Transitions are a major theme in Integrated Liberal Studies. From antiquity to the Renaissance to modernity; from Neo-classicism to Romanticism; from Newton to Einstein, Hobbes to Rousseau, Mary Wollstonecraft to Sojourner Truth. We phrase the shifts differently depending on what questions we're asking, the conversations we're in. Whatever we're looking at and thinking about, we come back again and again to the balance between continuity and change. One of the things I've loved most about my four years as Chair has been the way seeing the program as a whole has expanded my awareness of how the pieces of the ILS puzzle fit together into a wonderful mosaic.

“Almost every traditional department is now engaged in some form of interdisciplinary research and teaching.”

As I hand the keys to the metaphorical car — I think of ILS as a fuel-efficient hybrid — to Cathy Middlecamp, I want to offer a few reflections on the changes I've seen over the decade and a half I've taught in ILS. (Let me pause for just a moment to direct your attention to the article in this newsletter celebrating the 98th birthday of Harold November, whose involvement with ILS is still growing strong after more than eight decades!) In my much more limited time hanging around MJ House, there have been some obvious changes: the arrival of a brilliant new set of colleagues, the evolution from a mostly male faculty to one which reflects the world a bit



more faithfully. Some of the changes have been structural: the establishment of the capstone seminar and the growth of the annual banquet into a memorable celebration of student accomplishments.

The biggest change, however, concerns the relationship between ILS and the intellectual life of the university as a whole. In the early 1990s, ILS had interdisciplinarity more or less to ourselves. (Apologies to the exceptions, including my “home” Department of Afro-American Studies.) That's no longer the case. Almost every traditional department is now engaged in some form of interdisciplinary research and teaching. What used to be walls have sprouted doorways. The hybrid units known as “clusters” bring scholars and students from different disciplines together with the intention of fostering

Continued on page 6

What? Tear Down the Meiklejohn House?

Not to worry!

Some of you may know that for a short while, we feared that the wrecking ball was imminent. We were to pack our suitcases, and a new campus building was to go up where the Meiklejohn House once had stood.

Happily, this was not — and is not — to be the case. We are staying put and expect to keep our house for some years to come. Better yet, we are renovating our classroom and office spaces!



To this end, check the photo of the living room: The floors have been stripped and sanded, the walls have a new coat of “vanilla” paint, and a new LCD projector is mounted on the ceiling for class presentations and evening films.

Yeah, we know. The photo shows only a bare room, and no furniture.

But by the time you read this newsletter, the Meiklejohn House will be ready for students with new furniture, tables, couches and chairs.

We have many to thank for the renovations - our students for their help and willingness to move furniture, our ILS faculty for their donations of time and money, our alumni for gifts to the ILS Program, and also our Dean and his wonderful administrative staff in the College of Letters and Science for their financial help, know-how in building renovation, and ongoing support of our program.

Cheers! And please come by and see for yourself.

Alumni Spotlight

Nathan Bard

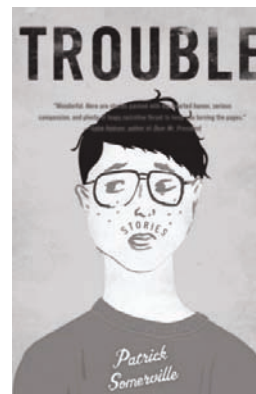
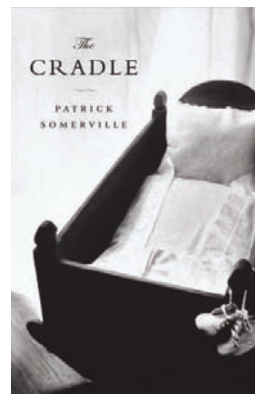
Nathan Bard has finished his master’s joint degree in Agronomy and Agroecology at UW. His thesis was on “The Mechanical and Thermal Suppression of Kura Clover Living Mulch for Corn Production: An Agonomic and Biophysical Analysis.”

Charlie Housiaux

Charlie Housiaux spent last year teaching sixth- and seventh-grade language arts at Ransom Everglades School in Miami, Fla. He absolutely loved the teaching environment and plans on staying in education for a while. A highlight from his school year was teaching the Hero’s Journey cycle in conjunction with Susan Cooper’s *The Dark is Rising* series. During the summer, he attended the Klingenstein Summer Institute at the Lawrenceville School and began his pursuit of an MA in English Literature from Bread Loaf.

Patrick Somerville

Patrick Somerville met with current ILS students for an informal discussion of the joys and tribulations of a writing career before giving a reading from his novel *The Cradle*, which was selected by Barnes & Noble as the “Discover Book” of this spring. Following the success of his short story collection, *Trouble*, *The Cradle* received sparkling reviews



Alumna Spotlight: Abbie Steiner

Editor’s Note: The following is a dispatch from ILS Alumna Abbie Steiner, who has been teaching in Gujarat, India.

Wow am I happy I got out of bed that day! Imagine if you can: A small classroom with a blackboard, no chairs and a whole bunch of English words on the walls. I am somewhere in there, sometimes standing at the board or the door or next to the wall, sometimes sitting in the circle, next to the students, sometimes dancing, doing anything and everything to get English into the minds of Gujarati youth and back out of their mouths. And it goes on for seven and a half hours a day, six days a week!

“It is really fun to try to come up with innovative ways to help them understand the words beyond just direct translation.”

— Abbie Steiner

I have 31 students who are all at different levels (including some who have never seen the English alphabet). Sometimes I feel like I can’t reach them all. Other times I am much more optimistic about what is happening in the classroom. Even if they still struggle to create organic English conversation (conversation not prompted by my carefully phrased questioning), it is obvious that they understand more and more English every day. My co-teacher is a beautiful, wonderful Indian man (whom I a little bit love) who can speak English well and is also a great teacher and really cares about our students. I have been singing in the classroom a lot and using specific songs to reinforce grammar topics. They LOVE that. It is great to see them outside of class when they ask me more elaborate questions than “How are you?” or “Did you eat?”

I have been teaching them one “Dalit Shakti” (Dalit Empowerment) English word of the day every day (it usually turns into about three or four per day, but one formal one) to try to help them develop a subjective English understanding of concepts relevant to their lives. I read somewhere that this is valuable and important. It is really fun to try to come up with innovative ways to help them understand the words beyond just direct translation. Freedom and opportunity were both explained with an “open door” metaphor (you can do anything; every

door is open to you). They loved that. I remind them of it constantly. Another word was equality. That was easier to explain because many of them had come in contact with the English word before (as so much of their lives is dictated by an institutionalized system of inequality). Now they are always encouraging each other to practice equality. When practicing “I have” statements, one student said, “I have a beautiful teacher” while looking at me. Another looked at me and said, “You have a beautiful smile.” I told him that we practice equality in this class and that he had to tell the other teacher the same thing. He turned around and did just that. They all laughed.

The most recent word was pride. We encouraged them to express what they have pride in and why. Most of the students had trouble understanding what we were asking (in a mix of English and Gujarati), but one student raised his hand and said: “I have pride in myself because I have confidence.” I almost collapsed on the spot it was so perfect. He is a lanky 15-year-old boy who is suffering from the woes of a voice change (the kind that would zap most people’s confidence) and he spends much of class goofing off in the corner (he was recently relocated to the front of the room) but he wants to be a scientist and I get this feeling that he can if he keeps working at it.

We then asked them to write down five things they are proud of and why (after an exercise in the difference between “pride” and “proud”). Many said they were proud of their parents because their parents are great (echoing my sentiments exactly), many are proud of the training center because it is big and beautiful, many have pride in India, in their friends, in their style, in the Indian Cricket team, and on and on. I was touched to see that many have pride in their teacher because “she has all the world knowledge and she teaches so finely” or because “she is never angry and always kind” or because “she is a beautiful, young woman.” As if my self-esteem hasn’t already been overinflated ... I was also excited to see that some are proud of Barack Obama because “he is the American president and he can change the world.” To teach “to be able” or “can,” I taught them part of the Ben Harper song “With My Own Two Hands,” which talks a lot about how each person can change the world with their own two hands ... they struggled to understand how but by the end of class they had conceived of — in English, mind you — some great ways that individuals can change the world. If I had been here when Bush was president, we

Continued on page 4

Abby Steiner continued from page 3

would have had to search a little harder for American role models. It feels nice to have pride in America again (it was a long eight years).

Obama actually comes up a lot in my everyday life. He is always in the Indian newspapers. Sometimes the stories are limited to the new White House dog or spotting Michelle volunteering in a D.C. soup kitchen and are found in the paper next to stories about Julia Roberts' bad breath resulting from her obsession with PB&J sandwiches or Mylie Cyrus' crush on Scarlett Johanson ... needless to say, the English journalists are pretty lazy. And the "Yes We Can" chant that we heard so often throughout the primaries and the election season is still echoing through the halls of the training center and ringing in the villages that I have visited.

And on that note, I had the distinct pleasure of accompanying three of my friends on an adventure to their homes some 200 miles northwest of the training center. This was quite a treat. Unlike many of the other invitations that I have received to visit homes, in which people ask me as they are hopping onto the back of a motorbike to go home if I want to come along, this trip was planned many weeks in advance. The travel route was carefully mapped out and the details were discussed at great length (mostly in Gujarati, so even though there were "plans," I didn't know about them until we were on our way). In both villages, I was treated to so much wonderful food, one cup of chai in the house of every relative, friend and neighbor (one day the total number of cups towered over 15) and lots of quality time with all of the village children. We played a lot of games to learn English names for parts of the body and we practiced English names for numbers. We did a lot of tickling. One afternoon I was "sleeping" (I was commanded to) in a room packed with people (of course) and one cousin or nephew or brother (I am not quite sure) crawled under the bed and spent the entire time that I was supposed to be sleeping tickling me. For a while I pretended to be asleep (to make everyone happy) but finally I reached under the bed and gave the little rascal the tickling he deserved. Because there were so many people in the room at that time, no one knew he was under there but when they saw me tickle him everyone laughed uncontrollably about it. We still laugh about it.

The sense of community that existed in these villages was so authentic. Everyone just comes over, for the simplest pleasure of enjoying each other's company. Your brother is down the street, your uncle is next door and all of your

cousins live on the same block. The classic isolationism so popular in American suburbia wouldn't last a day in these places. I can't deny that sometimes I long for what I now consider my "American solitude," maybe just a little space to be alone. But when I forego that desire to instead be with my friends and enjoy their company, "charge our batteries" (a lot of English cell phone lingo has leaked into our everyday speech about ourselves) and enjoy some mango juice when we can get it, I forget about the need for space or privacy. Some of my old luxuries aren't necessary everywhere, I have come to realize.

When the glorious journey through the lives and communities of my Indian family came to an end, I had to say goodbye to a dear friend (one of the adventurers) because he was not coming back to the training center. I wasn't too surprised to find myself wanting to cry but when I turned to the other friend that I was with and found that she was already crying, I could not stop myself. As sad as it was, it was very powerful to feel so connected to someone to need to cry (like saying goodbye to my parents or other friends with whom I have shared so much in other spaces of my life). There was also much meaning stored in the moment, in which I and my other friend shared that grief and cried together in the back of a bus. Imagine: two women, an American and an Indian, sitting in the back of a dinky private bus crying. As if I am not already something wild to stare at.

The videography teacher has asked me to help her improve her English by checking the English writing that she does in her diary. I was happy to oblige and found the first entry to be entirely about me and how happy she is to know me. I was touched. She thinks I am bold. I am honored. She wrote about a person that I aspire to be ... hopefully knowing her and spending time with her in this time in this place will help me live up to what she thinks I am.

So as I prepare for another six days of English, English, English, I continue to think about how to empower my students to think abstractly (in both English and Gujarati) and how to continue developing their confidence (I want them all to have the same confidence as my lanky hormonal scientist).

One other thing: Mangoes in India are like apples in America. There are SO many different kinds and they are all so delicious. I am going to Sanand later for a mango run. GLORIOUS.

Libraries in Nepal continued from back cover

The model consists of building community library resource centers in rural villages as well as seeding local businesses such as storefront rentals, fishponds, ambulance services — whatever the local village needs. The businesses generate profits to financially support the library, and additional funds can be channeled back into the community for other social projects like health clinics or day-care facilities. One village used extra profits from a furniture factory to build a bridge over a river that children used to have to walk two hours around to get to school.

READ has been operating in Nepal since 1991 and has 45 libraries across the country. With support from the Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, READ also opened up a program in India in 2007 and in Bhutan in 2008. Plans are to add two more countries in the next couple years.

My job as Operations Manager normally has me sitting behind a desk but when my boss offered me an opportunity to get in the field, I jumped at it. I was to do



The ILS tradition spreads to Nepal

unannounced site visits of some of our libraries in Nepal. The purpose of the evaluation was to get a sense of what the libraries were like on an average day. This was my first opportunity to see our libraries in person and I couldn't wait to experience it.

The adventure began in Kathmandu, a mass of humanity that assaults your senses on every level. There are people and motorbikes swarming around you, cars honking, people yelling, smells of spices, smoke and urine, and an energy so palpable you can almost touch it. We visited beautiful Hindu and Buddhist temples, stupas and shrines and the impact of their religion is felt in every aspect of life.

After this, our library adventures began and we headed north toward the Annapurna mountain range. We visited eight libraries in 10 days and that was as exhausting as it sounds. Most of these libraries could not be reached by jeep and we had to hike up to them. I used my

trekking poles to save my knees on this assault and apparently an old woman we passed confusedly said, "Well, her face looks young but she is using old-person sticks." This area was not used to seeing westerners and all their fancy hiking gear. Actually, for the first couple days, we were in towns that tourists don't stop in and we didn't see another white face anywhere.

The libraries I visited ranged from 15 years to three months old, which made for a great comparison of how the program had advanced over the years. One of the oldest libraries in Palebas was a large rectangular building with tiny rooms, cramped bookshelves and one ancient looking computer. Next door, the foundation had been laid to construct a new building and the village was excited to tell me about the plans for a large children's section and computer training room.

Continued on page 11



Charles Anderson Podcasts on the Web

A series of lectures by the legendary Charles Anderson is now available at www.uwalumni.com/anderson. Drawn from Professor Anderson’s ILS 205 and 206 classes, these lectures take you from the origins of democracy in Ancient Greece through the Scientific Revolution to the Federalist Papers and contemporary political thought.



Charles Anderson



Socrates



Plato



Thomas Hobbes



John Locke



Jean-Jacques Rousseau



Adam Smith



Charles Anderson’s ILS Lecture Series

- INTRODUCTION TO POLITICAL PHILOSOPHY
- ANCIENT GREECE: DEMOCRATIC EXPERIMENTS
- PLATO: THE REPUBLIC
- THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION: BEGINNINGS
- THE SCIENTIFIC REVOLUTION:
 - Descartes, Bacon, and Newton
 - Influence of Their Theories on Our Conceptions of Politics and Economics
- THOMAS HOBBS
- JOHN LOCKE
- JEAN-JACQUES ROUSSEAU
- ADAM SMITH
- FEDERALIST PAPERS & THE AMERICAN REVOLUTION
- CONTEMPORARY POLITICAL, ECONOMIC & SOCIAL THEORY

Chair’s Letter continued from page 1

the sorts of explorations that lead to creative breakthroughs. Today, interdisciplinarity is everywhere.

That makes it more important than ever that ILS continue to do what it’s done best all along, which is to form communities dedicated to clear thinking and jargon-free expression. It’s vital that we live up to our professed goals, that *integration* be more than lip service. With that in mind, the faculty has been holding a variety of events directed at realizing those goals. Last year, we sponsored a series of public events organized around the Year of Darwin, looking at the scientific, cultural, social and political impact of evolutionary thought. We’ve been talking about team-taught courses on topics like Making Meaning in an Evolutionary World.

We’re able to do those kinds of things in part because of the generosity of our alumni, whose donations have allowed us to sponsor theatrical performances and team-taught courses like the one I taught on The Vietnam Era with veteran Doug Bradley. They’ve also allowed us to complete a refurbishing of Meiklejohn House (for details see page 2), and to sponsor dozens of extracurricular events for our students, such as Kristin Hunt’s movie, pizza and discussion nights. Enclosed (or, if you’re looking at this online, en-linked) you’ll find a form for donating to the program. We’re currently seeking funds to support the ongoing upgrade of MJ House so we can continue to offer classes in the building; and to allow us to bring Doug Bradley back for another semester. As always, we appreciate donations to the funds supporting the student prizes we give out at the banquet.

Let me close by welcoming Cathy Middlecamp, whom you’ll be hearing from in the next newsletter. In the short time since she officially assumed the Chair position, Cathy’s been ... choose your favorite superlative, it’s accurate. She’s overseen the first stages of MJ House’s upgrading; assembled a group of talented and enthusiastic student workers; and shared her thoughts about how ILS can play a role in shaping the future of undergraduate education nationally. If you’re in Madison, drop by MJ House and say hello. Our alumni, and our future alumni, the students, are the heart and soul of what ILS is. That will never change.

An ILS Alum Witnesses History: The Obama Inauguration

By Kate Fenner

I will always be able to say I was there. I was there the day our country elected its first black president and was a part of the largest crowd in Washington, D.C.’s history that gathered on the Mall to welcome him. Ultimately, this will be what I remember about the day.

However, this event was not for the faint of heart. We woke up at 4 a.m. to take the metro to downtown D.C. and bundled up in as many layers as possible to combat the pre-dawn, 18-degree temperature. When we arrived, the streets were already filled with people covered in Obama hats, pins and shirts, an electricity in the air normally unknown at these early hours. A weak barricade of bright orange cones was quickly overrun by the excited crowd and people raced down the street to line up against the metal security fence.

Since the security gates would not open until 8 a.m., there was nothing to do but wait, sandwiched up against strangers from across the country. It wasn’t uncommon for sudden chants of “OBAMA” or singing of “Lean on Me” to spontaneously spring from the crowd. Everyone was in cheerful moods despite the biting cold and lack of personal space. As the hours crept so did the crowds and all that could be seen was a dense throng of heads fading up 7th Street. Leaving or going to the bathroom were not options.

At 8 a.m. the security gates opened and the crowd slowly filtered through the gate. I have heard that other people sailed through security while others ended up trapped in

a tunnel, missing the entire ceremony. I was within 15 feet of the gate and it took me three hours to get through. That is an average of five feet per hour. The crowd lost a bit of its cheerfulness after five hours of waiting but ultimately we made it through.

We got in just in time to see the motorcade drive down Pennsylvania Avenue and we placed guesses on which car we thought the President-to-Be was in. We then ran down side streets to reach the Mall, seconds before the ceremony began. Again, the crowd stretched endlessly into the distance and we found a spot on the edge with an only partially-obstructed view of a jumbotron TV.

Considering the huge numbers of people, you would expect noise and commotion but the crowd was remarkably focused. When Obama spoke, the crowd was completely silent. When Obama was sworn in, the crowd went wild. Strangers were hugging. Cameras were flashing. There were tears, back-slapping and smiles.

People of all ages were ecstatic about this new, young man they had just voted into history and a sense of camaraderie pervaded the normally bipartisan streets of D.C. I have never before been a part of such a large, happy, hopeful group of people. I don’t know where I will ever have such an opportunity again.

Despite the cold and the crowds, people came together to usher in a new era in American history and I will always be able to say I was there when...

Kate Fenner ’02



Faculty News and Notes

Laura McClure continues to chair the Classics Department and looks forward to the arrival of new colleagues next year (and perhaps future members of ILS?!). Her current research focuses on the authority and influence of mothers in shaping male political and social identity in ancient Greek literature and society. Laura is very excited about stepping back into ILS 203 in the fall after a few years' hiatus. The course will be organized around a new interdisciplinary theme, "Art and Text in the Ancient World," as part of the campus-wide celebration of Year of the Humanities.

William Aylward, archaeologist in the Classics Department, teaches ILS 203. In 2009, he returns to Troy in western Turkey with three UW students for his 14th summer at the international research project at Troy, directed by the University of Tübingen. While in Turkey he will also participate in research on monumental architecture at Ephesos and in study of a Hellenistic shipwreck near ancient Claros, where marble freshly quarried for a temple of Apollo sank before reaching the harbor. William's report on the shipwreck, co-authored with the project director, is forthcoming in the *American Journal of Archaeology*.

Mike Shank has been named the Evelyn and Herbert Howe Bascom Professor of Integrated Liberal Studies in recognition of his dedication to ILS and the excellence of his teaching and scholarship. In addition, he recently published an article in the journal *Early Science and Medicine*, in which he argues that he has found one of the texts against which Copernicus was arguing when he published his *On the Revolutions of the Celestial Spheres* (1543).

Shifra Sharlin's paper on the Russian avant-gard artist, Kazimir Malevich, and his surprising reactions to the Jews in the provincial town of Vitebsk was accepted for the 2009 annual conference of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies. A second scholarly paper has come out — again in Russian — about two views of Jewish Vitebsk: Marc Chagall and Yehuda Pen, "Two Views of Vitebsk: Authenticity and Eclecticism." In addition, her essay "Better Practices in Mourning" was accepted by a literary journal, one of the oldest in the country: *Southwest Review*. It's about the

debate between Marxist and Formalist literary criticism, between Shklovsky and Trotsky as differences about their ideas about life, rather than art, in relation to mourning and Elisabeth Kubler-Ross.

Lynn K. Nyhart's new book, *Modern Nature: The Rise of the Biological Perspective in Germany*, is just out from University of Chicago Press. Against the backdrop of the social upheavals of late 19th century, she charts the early history of the ideas that would grow into the scientific discipline of ecology — ideas about the nature of living communities, about organisms' interactions with one another and with their environments — in their earlier incarnations in late 19th- and early 20th-century popular natural history in Germany, especially as it emerged in museums, zoos and schools. Professor Nyhart has been working on this book project since 1997, and she is very happy and relieved to have it finally published! You can check out a longer description and the table of contents at: <http://www.press.uchicago.edu/presssite/metadata.epl?mode=synopsis&bookkey=337416>

Richard Staley's book *Einstein's Generation: The Origins of the Relativity Revolution* just came out from University of Chicago Press.

Daniel Kleinman spent last year serving on a Federal Grand Jury. He was also elected chair of the Department of Rural Sociology in July 2008 and continues to serve as the director of the Holtz Center for Science and Technology Studies. Among his articles published in 2008 is "Building Citizen Capacities for Participation in Technoscientific Decisionmaking: The Democratic Virtues of the Consensus Conference Model, Public Understanding of Science," co-authored with Maria Powell. This paper is a study of a democratic forum Kleinman organized in 2005 with Powell and students from his ILS "Democracy and Expertise" course.

Cathy Middlecamp has been elected to the inaugural class of ACS Fellows by the American Chemical Society. This distinctive honor (new this year) is given to those who combine true excellence in their contributions to the chemical enterprise coupled with distinctive service to ACS or to the broader world of chemistry. They were

recognized at a ceremony Monday, Aug. 17, at the ACS National Meeting in Washington, D.C.

Craig Werner has been selected for a four year term as a Senior Fellow in Race, Ethnicity & Indigeneity at the Institute for Research in the Humanities. Working in collaboration with Reverend Rhonda Lee, a historian and Vicar of St. Joseph's Church in Durham, N.C., he will be studying the role of theology in the Civil Rights Movement, Black Power Movement and American Indian Movement. In his capacity as a member of the Nominating Committee of the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame, he remains determined to see that disco has its day.

Joe Elder has received a Lifetime Achievement Award from the Wisconsin Network for Peace and Justice. In addition, he was a recipient of the 2009 Honored Instructor award from the students of Chadbourne Residential College.

Kathi Sell taught her Wisconsin Alumni Association-sponsored short course, "Great Books and Midlife Transitions" in Door County during June. Stay tuned for information about the variations on the course Kathi will be teaching in the future at other places.

HAROLD'S INFAMOUS QUOTES & IDEAS

"All Institutions of Higher Learning should have the **New York Times**."

"My two years at the ex-college was the defining educational experience of my life."

"Learning is a *lifelong* pursuit; Education has been my *lifelong passion*."

Harold shares that he is only a humble student who has held a sustaining interest in what he considers to be a highly valuable enterprise. He often jokes that in his Ex-College years he was "nothing outstanding, nothing brilliant, not even a good student."

Harold's primary hope is that this paper by Joshua gives expression to the immense value and intrinsic worth that **Alexander Meiklejohn** and the **Experimental College** hold for education and democracy in the twenty-first century.

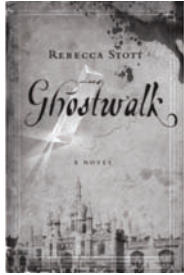
Celebrating Harold November

ILS has its roots in Alexander Meiklejohn's Experimental College (1928–32 at UW-Madison), and it is noteworthy that our friend and Ex-College alum, Harold November, celebrated his 98th birthday in June 2009, still offering his helpful advice to ILS. According to his son, Robert, "Harold's focus recently is how to get ILS/Wisconsin to celebrate the 100th anniversary of the Ex-College — not to mention celebrations at the various five-year intervals: 80, 85, 90, 94. This is part of his continuing interest in having the Ex-College recreated in the original mode for the role of education so the youth become advocates and participants in the democratic society."

Happiest of Birthdays, Harold!

The ILS Bookshelf

Note: In each issue of the Newsletter, ILS faculty provide suggestions for "what to read." Alumni are invited to submit their own suggestions, which can be sent by e-mail to Craig Werner at cwerner@wisc.edu.



Daniel Kleinman recommends: Rebecca Stott, *Ghostwalk*

This book is two or perhaps three mysteries in one. It is the story of a historian in present-day Cambridge, England exploring Newton's alchemy and murders during his time. She is murdered while doing her research, and there seems to be some connection between her murder, the opposition of animal rights groups to her son's laboratory research and her own excavation of Newton's shady past.

Rick Avramenko recommends: Robertson Davies, *The Rebel Angels*

Last time I recommended Trilling's *Sincerity and Authenticity*. This time, I'll stay away from scholarly books and recommend a novel by master storyteller, Robertson Davies. Davies' *Rebel Angels* is the first book of a trilogy. If you read it, there's a good chance you'll want to read more.

Shifra Sharlin recommends: Marshall Berman, *All that is Solid Melts into Air*

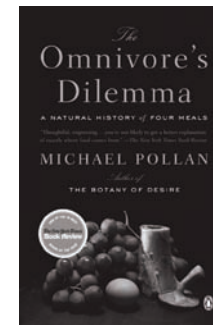
A great read, full of interesting insights about modernism in the 19th Century with an eye to recovering complexity and culture's moral engagement with everyday life that Berman feels we have lost.

Shifra Sharlin recommends *A Public Space*

This is a particularly terrific independent, aka little, aka literary, magazine. Edited by Brigid Hughes, once the successor of George Plimpton at *Paris Review*. Great writing. New writing. Beautifully produced. Fascinating. Find it at excellent bookstores or get a subscription! <http://www.apublicspace.org/>

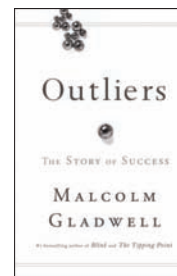
Shifra Sharlin recommends Jane Jacobs, *Death and Life of Great American Cities*

It's old. It's from 1961. She seems to think that Greenwich Village is the only place where people can live as they ought. However, it will change the way you think about urban spaces. My sons and I read it and often refer to her insights.



Mike Shank recommends: Michael Pollan, *The Omnivore's Dilemma*

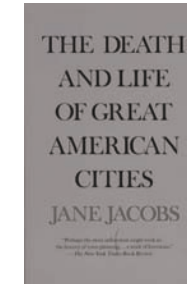
For Christmas, my daughter Laura (who will be a UW-Madison graduate in a few weeks) gave me this book, which has been both stomach-churning and mouth-watering. Although I have not yet made it to the end, Pollan's discussion of mass-produced fast food has reinforced some of my pre-existing hunter-gatherer tendencies. (I am told that Pollan ends the book with a meal that was exclusively hunted and gathered). I expect to finish the book as wild mushrooms, dandelions, and cattails spring up in the next few weeks. On a whim, because I have been enjoying his poetry, I am also reading Hermann Hesse's *Beneath the Wheel*, new to me, a coming-of-age novel that is also a fictionalized autobiography. Great reading for nerds past and present.



Laura McClure recommends: Malcolm Gladwell, *Outliers*

The author attempts to explain how success is the product not only of native talent, but also of social conditions outside the control of the individual. He looks at success in sports, business and the computer industry in order to test his hypothesis. This is an easy but

fascinating read along the lines of *Freakonomics*. Laura is also attempting to get through Charles Dickens' scathing social commentary, *Our Mutual Friend*, for the third time. Wish her luck!



Craig Werner recommends: Terry Eagleton, *Reason, Faith and Revolution: Reflections on the God Debate*; Jonathan Lear, *Happiness, Death and the Remainder of Life*; and Andre Compte-Sponville, *The Little Book of Atheist Spirituality*

Together, these three books represent a high-level conversation on fundamental questions regarding the place of religion in humanity's quest for an ethical life. A Marxist literary critic best known for his unsparing criticism of academic fashion (see *The Illusion of Postmodernism*), Eagleton calls for a serious engagement with Christian theology as a potential foundation for moral and political action. Less polemical than Christopher Hitchens and Richard Dawkins (two of Eagleton's main targets), both Lear and Compte-Sponville make the case for an ethical life which is not dependent on a divine presence. Each book is valuable on its own; together they're guaranteed to make you rethink your perspective.

The New Face of ILS

Please join us in welcoming Symphorien Fossi, who has been serving as ILS's Administrative Assistant since November. A native of Cameroon who sends out his "pensées du jour" regularly, Symphorien comes to us from African Literature & Language. Look for a full profile of Symphorien in the next ILS newsletter.



Libraries in Nepal continued from page 5

The village had come together to raise funds for this new building and READ was helping to cover the rest. They had also formed partnerships with the local health clinic and schools and effectively networked the social organizations in the village together through the library. Pretty impressive for a village of rural farmers.

Our newest library in Beni was a large, sunny building with huge rooms, shiny new books and toys, a women's section and a large computer room. The library management committee was very proud of its work and the children ran up to the play room when the library opened. These children probably have few, if any, toys and none are educational. Some libraries offer day-care services so children can stay at the library while the parents work in the field. Being in this educational environment is a much better option than leaving them

locked in the house unattended which unfortunately is often the case.

My tour revealed that these libraries were all being used frequently and although I had suggestions for ways to improve adult outreach with job or agricultural trainings, it was ultimately up to the village to decide the best way to use the libraries. All of the communities were proud of their libraries and saw them as an important resource. I feel lucky to be a part of an organization that is impacting rural villages at a grassroots level and look forward to my next opportunity to meet the people my distant desk work in helping!

Kate Fenner '02 ... who uses old-person sticks