

dog out for a walk near Spooner when he heard the dog running up behind him at top speed. The dog ran right past him. When the man turned around, he found himself face to face with a black bear up on its hind legs. The man pushed the bear; the bear took a swipe and scratched him; but they both ended up going in different directions. More recently, a 14-year-old Boy Scout had to have 196 stitches after a bear hauled the boy, his tent, and his sleeping bag 78 feet into the woods.

Weddings in northwestern Wisconsin are social events. Some get carried away. A bachelor party at Murphy's Bar and Grill in Dresser, Wisconsin, turned into a 50-man bar brawl that led to 16 arrests by officers in nearly 20 units. The Dresser police chief got punched while trying to break up the brawl. There was no report on how the wedding turned out.

But newlyweds here are practical. The local Farm and Fleet store that sells farm supplies, work clothes, lawnmowers, and dog food features a bride and groom registry that is very popular. Their ads proclaim: "At last, a place for the groom to register too!"

This area still has church suppers, potlucks, barbecues, and a popular regional dish of bratwurst smothered with sauerkraut. There are old-time dances: I attended one on a farm on the Fourth of July. It was over 90 degrees, but Mr. Morgan, a one-man band, kept playing polkas, two-steps, and waltzes from his stand in a pole barn. Despite the heat, the people kept dancing—and Mr. Morgan kept playing.

The Ceska Opera House in Haugen, Wisconsin, has been in operation for over 100 years. It features variety shows by local talent, from a violin player to a college professor completely decked out in a Scottish kilt playing the bagpipes. My favorite was a lady dressed in a black cow suit, dangling a shocking pink udder while she played a trumpet solo.

Even more astounding to an out-of-towner is the way the folks up north raise money for charity. My first "chicken drop" fundraiser at a rural saloon was an eye-opener. I grew up on a farm in South Dakota, so I am familiar with the personal habits of chickens—I just never expected to be betting on them. The floor of a fenced area was marked off into numbered squares, and the participants bet on the numbers. Then a well-fed chicken was placed in the pen, and whatever numbered square the chicken re-

lieved itself on was a winner. Since that time, I have seen a "cow drop" in a parking lot divided into squares, and a bunny drop, which was a little less predictable.

What really makes northwestern Wisconsin a special place is the people. Many are descendants of the loggers or farmers who struggled to survive in this area a hundred years ago. There is ethnic diversity, yet a proud clannishness as well. I live in an Italian community that has some of the best Italian food I have ever eaten. Another community features "Scandinavian Saturday" where the best in local Scandinavian food and crafts are on sale. People quietly work on their rural acreages growing berries, raising produce, building boats, painting, woodcarving, making pottery, designing crossword puzzles, or carving out a new golf course. There are as many stories as there are people, and it doesn't end. For a photo-journalist, it is a wonderful place to be.

JoAn Melchird writes from Cumberland, Wisconsin.

Letter From Spain

by Brian Kirkpatrick

The Tribe Above Madrid



The sun was low as the luxurious chartered bus labored up the steep dirt track to the wedding reception in the hills above Madrid. We walked up the last of the slope from the buses to the lawn in front of the hunting lodge, where we looked down on the distant city. Middle-aged men and young girls circulated among us in uniforms, carrying trays with sliced Spanish ham streaked with fat, drinks, canapés, and small sliced sausages in hollowed-out bread. As the sun set, the groom explained that the half-finished house on the hilltop behind us—the highest point in sight—was a weekend retreat for Franco that was never completed because of the dictator's death. We stayed on the lawn until dark, then we moved into the tent attached to the side of the lodge for the formal dinner.

There was a hint of the evening's message when I heard that the priest who presided at the wedding had officiated at

the weddings of the bride's mother and grandmother. Surely, it should have been clear to me when the men of the *tuna*, friends of the groom wearing medieval short pants and mantles, threw their cloaks on the ground at the church door and sang to the bride and groom. During supper, the *tuna*—half fraternity, half glee club, each man a member for life—periodically burst into ribald or romantic song, the members seated at their table, playing guitars and small instruments similar to mandolins. I should have noticed that all the Spaniards knew the words and sang along. The point was obvious, but with my American eyes I couldn't see it, even when the *tuna* surrounded the bride, the groom, and their parents at the head table to sing, then made the groom stand and serenade his new wife.

After we'd eaten, the bride and groom walked from table to table with Cuban cigars, and waiters with *Fra Angelica* and *liquor de manzana verde* circulated among the tables. When the cigar smoke and the roar of conversation drove me out into the night, I looked down on distant Madrid and watched the fireworks of the festival of San Isidro slowly rise and bloom above the city. Finally, at midnight, the party moved into the main hall, where the skins and skulls of game hung on the walls.

The world of the bride and groom was educated, cosmopolitan, international; their guests included psychiatrists, social workers, and lawyers from Scotland, Colombia, the United States, Great Britain, and Argentina. I was in the new Europe, where half the room spoke English and many of the foreigners, Spanish. The groom spoke three languages; his father spoke five. The DJ played disco and American music from the 70's and 80's, and Americans, North and South, mixed with Europeans on the dance floor. It was the kind of dancing any American would have recognized, that formless combination of disco and frug and nameless things we don't take any time to learn, because there is nearly nothing to be learned.

But after half an hour the music changed, as Spain, having failed to reach me, resorted to a more direct method. The DJ played a passionate music one could only call Spanish: castanets, guitars, a sensuous, serious sound. Nothing was said, no announcement was made, but the Spanish women all moved to the center of the room, the men stepped

back, and the Americans stepped away in confusion. Europe, the modern world, psychiatry: all gone. Three days in Madrid, and I was finally in Spain.

Hands in the air, their hands much of the dance, the women swirled and spun slowly. Some danced with each other, some by themselves, others pulled the 12-year-old girls onto the floor to teach them. Paco, a military psychiatrist in his 50's with a large belly, watched his wife's dancing with adoration, as if he had never seen this entrancing creature before this magical night. Barely moving his feet to punctuate her movements, he became a modest accompanist to his wonderful wife.

With their dance, the people of Spain jerked me into a world of magicians, hypnotists, gypsies, power, identity. Europe was a conceit, America a hollow thing, but Spain lived. The music started, the European face disappeared, and I was among the people who had spent seven centuries fighting the Moors, from whom they had taken this dance as finally they had taken back all of Spain. The dancers were from a particular place, with a specific history, a great and long and difficult history. Each dancer was a woman, not a person, and those who admired her were men.

The dance was intensely sensual and utterly proper. The few men still on the floor danced with their wives; mothers

danced with daughters. Paco, whose own mother lived with him, stood entranced by the mother of his children. His intense love for his wife was bound to and by his church, his mother, his children, and his friends. His love was both proper and erotic, his pleasure wrapped round with stability, his self-control integrated with vibrant, pulsing life and love. When Paco talked to me that night, he didn't use the word for wife; instead he said *tu mujer*—your woman—his choice of words reflecting the fact that her womanliness was the issue.

As the women danced, an American girl of 20 walked by. She had a tattoo on the nape of her neck, and on her lip there was a faint scar where once she had worn a small stud. Tonight, her hair was a shade between orange and pink. "Will somebody tell me why there are only women out on the dance floor?" she demanded of me. She was angry, sure that if only women were dancing, someone was being oppressed. I thought they had been liberated.

"There's a rule about this," I said. "You don't know it, and I don't know it, but they all do, and they're following it. We used to have this, but we've lost it. These people are a tribe."

Later that night, I asked Cuca, a physician from the northern city of Oviedo, about the dance. Not knowing the word for tribe in Spanish, I struggled to convey

the idea of what I'd seen. "I'm from a nation, a country. But you are a people."

With the same gesture and the same expression I'd seen the new bride use when she was teased by the groom, Cuca raised a finger and wagged it back and forth. "No," she said in Spanish. "We are one blood." There might be Basques or Catalans who would disagree with her. But there were few Basques or Catalans among the women dancing on the floor.

Leaving the reception, I mentioned the dancing to the groom as we stood on the small porch of the hunting lodge. "Europe is nothing," I said. "The music started, and all of that disappeared."

He was a little drunk and was saying goodbye to friends he wouldn't see again for months. Some, he would never see again. Scientist, physician, psychiatrist, he beamed, lighting up the night. "I love that kind of thing!" he roared.

My progressive American friends would say that to belong to a tribe is an evil thing, that tribes are the cause of discrimination, pogroms, and war. They would cite Bosnia, Kosovo, the Kurds in Turkey, the Hutus and Tutsis, the Cypriot Greeks and Turks. I might reply that there are tribes who make good neighbors: the Swiss, the Amish. I live in a neighborhood where I am surrounded by Orthodox Jews. When I run at night, I wave and say hello to them. They seldom answer or even acknowledge me, but I know I am safe, even from their adolescents, who walk to temple with their parents. My friends would say such tribes are the exceptions, safe only because they are few in number. That line of debate is sterile.

Better to say that without such belonging, we decline into the things that America has become. If we belong to nothing, we become no one. Our marriages fail, our streets are unsafe, our children become lost and go to their schools to kill each other. Our erotic love cannot be stable; what stability there is has little life. Better to say there is no escape from this dilemma, that this is our tragedy. This is who we are.

A second American woman in her early 30's, never married, came up to me soon after the Spanish women had danced. She was sweating a little from dancing herself. I had never seen her so excited. She was a social worker who thought herself progressive, and I wondered if she would agree with the American girl who had been so disapproving. Hesitantly, I asked her if she had seen

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what happened when the music began.

"Yes!" She was thrilled.

We talked for some time. She thought we Americans had never been a tribe; I told her I thought that once we had. Whether or not I was right, she made the wisest remark of the night. She was joking when she answered me, but spoke with utter sincerity. Up on her toes, nearly hopping with excitement, she said, "I want to be in a tribe!"

So do we all.

Brian Kirkpatrick is a physician who lives in Baltimore, Maryland.

Letter From Green Bay

by Michael Kuehl

Packing the "All-America City"



Perhaps one can forgive Vernon Taylor for indulging in a bit of self-aggrandizement. After all, as the *Green Bay Press-Gazette's* newest "diversity" columnist, he's now a recognizable face, a household name, a minor celebrity in a fabled National Football League city. His opinions on race, culture, and politics are read by tens of thousands of people. A portly middle-aged black man with a short Afro and scraggy mustache, Taylor debuted in May 1999 with a column entitled (predictably) "Green Bay Enriched by Growing Diversity." As one of the first blacks, Packers excepted, to live and work in Green Bay, he portrayed himself as an historic figure, a harbinger of demographic transformation, a symbol of progress and diversity and multiculturalism.

Not surprisingly, his coming to Titletown was a result of affirmative action.

I came to Green Bay, as so many of us as people of color do, for opportunity . . . There was a position open, resulting from the transfer of a friend, at GMAC. Affirmative action was alive and well in the early 1970's, so it was recommended that I be hired.

He arrived from Texas on October 27, 1974, with a trunk, suitcase, and \$28, and, as he puts it, "the rest is history." But, alas, the Green Bay of old was as "white" as Oslo or Dublin or Helsinki and, moreover, benighted and philistine; apart from the Packers—the legends of Curly Lambeau, Don Hutson, Vince Lombardi, Bart Starr, the "Ice Bowl," the first Super Bowl champions—a place indistinguishable, racially and culturally, from such "cowtowns" as Fargo, Sioux Falls, Duluth, and Cedar Rapids. "To my surprise," he repines:

I discovered that Green Bay was a rural-blue collar community that was 99.75 percent white. Not knowing, most people would assume that a professional sports city like Green Bay would be more urban, cosmopolitan and racially diverse. There was very little that I could identify with. The Oneida Tribe of Indians was the only ethnic group of major proportion.

Twenty-five years later, Green Bay is not dramatically more "cosmopolitan." In some ways, it is more "urban"—more crime, gangs, drugs, poverty, overcrowded jails, and traffic congestion. And it is far more "racially diverse." "As we enter into the year 2000," writes Taylor, "thousands have followed since my arrival in 1974." How many thousands? How much "diversity"?

On Christmas Eve 1996, in a paean to immigration, the *Press-Gazette* reported:

In this area, 2,112 legal immigrants—most Asians—have come to Brown, Door, Kewaunee, Oconto and Shawano counties the past 10 years. In addition, 3,000 to 4,000 Hispanics—including an estimated 1,000 illegal immigrants—have moved into the region.

The editorial did not mention the source or year of such estimates. Unless dated by two or three years, however, the numbers were a gross underestimation. For by this date, a week from 1997, the population of Hmong and Lao in Brown County alone far exceeded 2,112.

According to a pamphlet distributed by the United Way of Brown County, "Brown County's total Southeast Asian population is estimated around 4,200. Of this total, approximately 86% are Hmong, 13% are Laotian, and 1% are

Vietnamese." And less than three years later, the Hispanic population may have reached 15,000, including thousands of illegal immigrants. "At the moment," writes Tom Perry in a pro-immigration editorial for the *Gazette*:

no one knows for certain just how many people with ties to Central and South America live in Green Bay . . . Estimates range from 6,000 to 10,000 people. The 2000 census should bring the number in sharper focus.

Last year, a TV anchorwoman said that there were 10,000 Hispanics in Green Bay, and that their numbers are expected to double in four to five years. But this assessment might have been an underestimation. "Because census data is old and many new Hispanic residents are difficult to track," writes Jim Kneiszel in the *Press-Gazette*:

the ethnic populations in Green Bay are an official mystery. But anecdotal evidence points to dynamic Hispanic growth and smaller gains in Asian growth . . . [T]he department of refugee migration and Hispanic services for the Archdiocese of Green Bay estimates there are 10,000 Hispanics in the city and 15,000 in greater Green Bay. According to Barbara Biebel of the Archdiocese, there are about 5,000 Asian residents in the area.

The most illuminating and portentous statistic is the number of nonwhite students in Green Bay's public schools. "In Green Bay," write the editors of the *Press-Gazette*, "white enrollment in the public schools was 82.8 percent last year compared to 92.3 percent in 1985. Hispanic, black, Asian and American Indian student populations all increased." Put inversely, minority enrollment in Green Bay's public schools more than doubled in ten years, from 7.7 percent in 1985 to 17.2 percent in 1995.

Roughly half of the Asian and Latino students cannot speak English. According to the *Press-Gazette*:

This year, about 1,800 of Green Bay's 19,500 public school students can't speak English well enough to succeed in the classroom. Most are part of an influx of Asian and Hispanic immigration and migration