

Preservationists Visit Mallard

This past summer, July 2016, a skilled and very interested group came to spend a week on Mallard Island – professionals in the field of cultural landscape preservation. It all started several years ago when Historical Landscape Architect David Driapsa, the group's leader, visited Mallard for the first time while he was in the area doing historic preservation work with the National Park Service at Voyageurs National Park. David's trained eye took in Ober's creation on the island, and he was hooked. He began looking into Ober's Harvard training in landscape architecture. David studied Mallard Island, and presented his findings to the Oberholtzer Foundation Board as well as to gatherings of historical landscape architects and cultural resource management professionals. Some of these people were eager to visit *The Mallard* to see the place for themselves.

Thus, David organized a Mallard Island Colloquium that brought together an enthusiastic, hard-working group of ten talented folks. They showed up on Mallard Island with computers, cameras, GPS devices, even a laser scanner, to study, measure, and record the buildings, the landscape, vegetation, view-scapes, and more. Participants came from Florida, Wisconsin, Washington D.C., Louisiana, Iowa, Minneapolis, even India! They dove into their work, sharing discoveries and opinions as the week progressed. Their work included laser scanning a cloud point image of Ober's Big House (inside and out), taking measurements and photos, establishing GPS points of features for use in mapping, and digging through archival records to find the written record and the few sketches Ober made as he planned his buildings and the island landscape.

Included in the group were a number of folks associated with the National Park Service, plus from private sector landscape architectural firms, as well as college professors from Iowa and Wisconsin, a classical large-format camera photographer who trained with Ansel Adams, and an architect from Gujrat, India who was in the country as part of a heritage management exchange program. This group continues to work to pull together all of the information gathered last summer to create architectural renderings of the buildings as well as a narrative report. Most will return in late June 2017 to take this work further. The Oberholtzer Foundation Board is grateful to have all of the useful knowledge and advice about cultural landscape preservation that has already come its way from this group and will continue to do so.

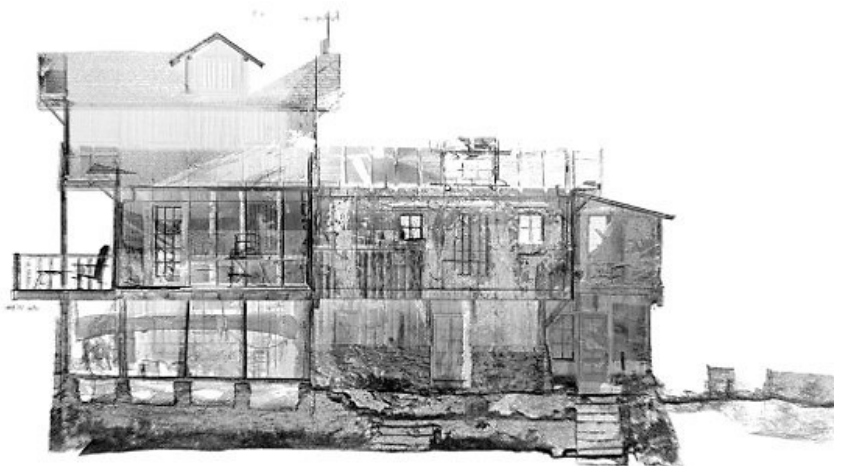
Article by Diane Crawford Tessari
Group photo on page 4

From the Desk of Ernest Oberholtzer...

In the spring of 1950, now sixty-seven years ago, Ober made plans to purchase Crow Island and Hawk Island, previously undeveloped by owner William Hapgood. He wrote these words in a letter to Frances E. Andrews in early March of 1950:

"If I pass on to the next world soon afterwards, someone else can start where I leave off and dream the larger dreams... It seems almost unbelievable that, after living on my little acre and a half for nearly 35 years, I should suddenly expand to ten times that size, but then my unofficial family has long more than justified it. We have been flowing over the edges for a long time."

Crow Island is just under eleven acres in size, and Hawk Island is a bit over three acres. In 2003, the Foundation also acquired Gull Island (3 acres) at the wishes of Rosalie (Rody) Hall. Since 2008, the Foundation has held these four islands in conservation easement through the Minnesota Land Trust. The Oberholtzer Foundation does its very best to continually "dream the larger dreams" in the legacy of Ernest Oberholtzer.



LIDAR scan by Dana Lockett

Dear Readers,

It may be no surprise to you that our family (the Waterhouse clan) is suffering a big shift in leadership this past year, with the deaths of my parents. This background story has caused me to understand the meaning of legacy in new ways.

The legacy of a family might include wealth or land. It can also include songs and stories, pretty things and memories. In Ober's case, it includes over ten thousand books, lovingly collected and not an easy task to care for. I must say I'm glad that the Waterhouse family did not create a library of that size.

But legacy goes beyond all of that to the intangible, the stuff of love and the lessons of hardship. How can we talk about all of that in ways that give it life and breath? My dad's life story, for instance, is always punctuated by his early loss of his mother, Mabel—she so defined us, yet none of us were ever able to meet her.

I think of the deep grief that young Ernest lived even before he turned eight years of age—the loss by death of his younger and only brother, Frank, and the loss of his father first in divorce and then death. Ober lived in Davenport, Iowa, with his mother and his grandparents, but then his beloved grandfather, Ernest Carl, also died before Ober went to Harvard. When Ober was just 45, he lost his mother, Rosa—the pianist behind the beautiful old piano in Cedarbark House. That loss hit him hard.

But he went on. He did not stop in his lobbying for wilderness preservation or his biggest plans and ideas for structures on Mallard Island. He planted roses; he created terraced gardens. He then painted a beautiful picture -in-words, before his mind began to leave him, about his commitment to Indigenous Peoples. He knew what a difference their knowledge makes for the land itself, for the animals and for the waters, and he managed to convey that to his friends and heirs.

It has taken me a decade to even begin to understand the depth of this legacy, of the legacy behind this modest organization and around the man fondly called “Ober” by so many. As I plumb the depths of my own family's legacies, I continue to learn about these, and I welcome your thoughts, old letters, poems or writings about it all.

-- Beth Waterhouse



Ellie Kingsbury will be exhibiting her photos about Oberholtzer's life in International Falls on May 27th 2017, from 1:00—3:00 p.m. at the Koochiching County Museum.



MALLARD ISLAND

THE OBERHOLTZER FOUNDATION

The Ernest C. Oberholtzer Foundation maintains Ober's legacy and North Woods island home as a source of inspiration, renewal and connection to Indigenous Peoples, kindred spirits, and the natural world.

This newsletter is published twice per year, generally February and October. Cover sketch of Mallard Island is credited to Gene Ritchie Monahan. Send poems, stories or articles to Beth Waterhouse at beth@eober.org

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For more information, visit

www.eober.org

There you will find back issues of this newsletter as well as annual reports for the organization, guidelines for summer programs, history and photos of the island, friends and writings of Ernest Oberholtzer, and much more.

Please support this publication or our organization, as you are able. Send a donation for general support or mark your check “endowment” to pledge to that campaign, ongoing in 2017. Meanwhile, think about adding the Oberholtzer Foundation to your estate plans—this is a long-standing organization upholding solid preservation and conservation values and maintaining four beautiful islands in Rainy Lake. We can receive gifts of stock. To learn more, or to visit the island this coming summer, contact the executive director or a board member. Thank you!



Mallard Island Summer of 2017

Following several opening days, the island benefits from two weeks of work. The first brings carpenters and skilled repair people, the second brings gardeners. A third work week focuses on the book care and repair, mid-June. In addition, due to our carrying capacity rules, we dedicate two mid-summer weeks for the rest of the island. These, then, are the remaining hosted “program weeks” on the island in the coming summer season:

June 11-17 “Artists in These Times” – hosted by Mayme Donsker - to create a space to “get back to center” in response to current political, social and environmental changes that are weighing heavily on our hearts and minds. This group travels in from all over the nation and brings a range of disciplines: writer, animator, designer, architect, painter, musician, and performing artist.

June 25 to July 1 Landscape Architecture –hosted by David Driapsa - to document our historic island, they carefully continue in this second season to refine maps and drawings and to construct the timeline of Oberholtzer’s creation of “The Mallard,” his masterful work of landscape architecture.

July 9-15 Anishinaabe Week - Following the initiative of having more First Nation involvement from nearby on Rainy Lake, this group will again invite fellow Anishinaabeg to consider and examine the commitment that Ober made to his First Nation friends. Hosted by Pebaamibines (Dennis) Jones and Laura Pawlacyk.

July 16-22 Nature/Nurture Women Poets -- A small group of women, convening on Mallard Island, can open up a safe space of connection, acceptance, inspiration and poetry. Hosted by Katie Rauk and Brett Elizabeth Jenkins.

July 23-29 “Centering through the Earth and the Arts hosted by Marianne Joy Zarzana. This week pulls together professors of science with artists and art educators and folks across the disciplines to connect with the physical aspects of life on a far north island. In small ways, it re-creates Ober’s idea of a “university of the wilderness.”

July 30-Aug 5 “Turning the Pages of History” hosted by Kathryn Kysar. Mallard Island is a text, the land, water, rocks and plants a map of the island’s history. Scholars and artists who are revising, rewriting or examining history gather to gain new understanding of the land and its people with a focus on indigenous knowledge.

August 6-12 Nanaandawi’iwe Nagamo Guided by Ojibwe traditions with plants, the group will continue its studies—listening to the voices of the plant world. Our relationship with the plant kingdom is crucial to our understanding of health (plant *and* animal) and of each other. Hosted by Lavonne Schildt

August 20-26 Calling the Muse for the Care of the Earth – hosted by Barbara Draper. The backdrop of this week is the over-riding and massive issue of climate change. At its front and center: learning another way to be. The group will seek ways to open to full conversations about the Earth, our connection to it and our love for it.

August 27-Sept 2 Songwriters - This musical week is always rich with learning and co-creation. The group is free to compose, practice, read, collaborate and jam on into the evening hours. Sessions lead to great surprises, mystery and beauty. Hosted by Barbara McAfee.

The season ends with the week of September 3-9 Individual Artists / Special Projects Week – offered by the Oberholtzer Foundation—each year a different group of artists, with different disciplines and intentions. Together, their creating becomes “magic” as time on Mallard Island often can.

Following artists’ week, it is likely that there will be a week dedicated to tree care. A proposal is pending with the Foundation board of directors.

As this newsletter goes to press, there are still openings in the early summer work weeks and the late summer artists’ week. Program weeks are being filled by their respective hosts. Call Beth Waterhouse (952) 401-0591.



Cultural Landscape Preservationists 2016

L to R back: Bill Lutrick, Heidi Hohmann, Dana Lockett, Jean Garbarini, Debbie Smith, Mark Granlund*, Arne Alanen, David Driapsa, Melissa Christenson Ekman.

Front: Diane Tessari*, Chirashree Thakkar, and Lynn Bjorkman.

*Oberholtzer Board Members



My parents: Robert Hugh Monahan, Jr. and Marian Willey Monahan

Written by: David F. Monahan

Editor's Note: In this "part two" of a 2-part series, we hear in first person about a family important to Ernest Oberholtzer. The author is one of two sons in the family featured on the cover of the last issue.

My father, Robert Hugh Monahan, Jr, was born in International Falls in 1914, the third child of Robert Hugh Monahan and Elizabeth Stevens Monahan, both pioneer medical doctors who established the first hospital in the area. He, too, became a doctor. While in medical school he met a nurse named Marian Louise Willey, and soon they decided on marriage.

My father was excited to introduce his fiancé to his family, and they ventured to International Falls for a formal announcement. Mother once told me about her confusion over our father's choice for his "Best Man," as she thought that the man was a bit older than she expected.

The best man in our parents wedding was Ernest Carl Oberholtzer. Ober was the age of our grandparents' generation; however, our father was very close to him. We have come to the conclusion that our father didn't have a very close relationship with his own father, and Ober was more of a father and friend than his own. It didn't take any time for our mother to realize Ober's charms.

Robert and Marian were married on June 23, 1939 in Minneapolis. They spent their honeymoon on Ober's Island in the peace and tranquility of the Japanese Cabin at the west end of The Mallard.

After WW II, we settled in St. Paul, Minnesota and spent our summers on Rainy Lake. On Memorial Day weekends, we would pack the family car with pets and move into our rustic cabin at Birch Point. Our family and various animals would stay until Labor Day, and our father would commute back and forth so he could keep his medical practice active.

That first summer day on Rainy Lake would be consumed by preparation and getting launched. My early recollection was of a wooden boat with a whopping 9-HP Johnson motor that propelled us at a walking pace. By afternoon we would be east-bound in the channel between Deer Island and Jackfish Island. As we rounded the corner around The Crow, and The Mallard would come into view, it was magic. There would be Ober on the dock waving a greeting to us. It was absolutely amazing to a young boy that Ober knew that we were coming, because there was no telephone or electrical power. My brother and I would quickly be out of the boat and exploring every inch of the island. Of course, Ober would insist that we stay for dinner and spend the night. After dinner Ober would send us boys to the ice house where we would paw through wood shavings in search of a block of ice. Ober loved ice cream. We had to churn the cream by hand, and it was always a great show.

(Monahan continued on page 5)



(Monahan continued)

Sleeping on the island was an adventure. Many nights I fell asleep to the haunting rhythm of drums coming from the west end of the Hawk. Ober provided a camping site for the Indians from the Wild Potato Reservation on the Canadian side of the lake. This campsite was ideal to facilitate canoe travel from the reservation to Ranier, International Falls and Fort Frances; it was well used. After Ober became incapacitated, a caretaker was hired to oversee the islands. Part of this tragic turn of events was that, a short time later, I believe that the Indians were told they could no longer camp on that campsite. Things were already changing prior to Ober's death.

Throughout the 1960s and early 1970s, I overheard many long discussions between my father and other men about estate planning. Ober was a horribly impractical man, and he certainly dragged his feet dealing with the issue, but through our father's encouragement the concept of the Oberholtzer Foundation was officially documented in his will. Ober chose the First National Bank in Minneapolis as executor of his estate.

After Ober's death in 1977, our father invited a group of Ober's friends to re-activate the Oberholtzer Foundation. There were countless planning meetings at our cabin on Rainy Lake, and our mother took great delight in hosting the seemingly endless parade of interested parties.

Ober had no close family, and he had named thirteen heirs to his estate. This presented a huge problem for The First National Bank. Satisfying all these people with varying interests made the act of distribution of his assets a nightmare. The easy solution for the bank was to liquidate all the assets and distribute the funds to the thirteen named heirs; however, my father and others sincerely believed this was specifically contrary to Ober's will.

The bank had no concept of what Ober or his islands were all about. The individual assigned to the task of distributing the estate had never been in Koochiching County and certainly not out on a remote island. In fact, the bank was told that the islands were overgrown and the buildings were in a desperate state of decay, a condition that probably was grossly exaggerated. The bank was also told that there was a private party waiting to purchase everything in the current rundown condition. The bank summarily proceeded to consummate a sale.

In response, our father filed a lawsuit against the First National Bank to block the sale of the islands to a private party since several friends felt it was contrary to the specific wishes dictated in Ober's will. The sale of the islands was successfully blocked. Our father wisely then invited the bank representative to serve on the board of this newly re-formed Oberholtzer Foundation. Through a complex combination of transactions, enough funds were raised to secure the islands for the immediate future. My parents worked countless hours and days with other friends of Oberholtzer to ensure that those ideas Ober had were fulfilled to the best of their abilities.

From a March 21, 1978 letter from this group of friends:

"We are named not as heirs to divide his estate in the conventional manner, but as stewards to continue his (Ober's) own stewardship of a philosophy aimed at awakening his fellow man to the sheer joy of being, and being here, on this planet."

Our father was the first president of the Oberholtzer Foundation. Three years after Ober's death, our father was forced to give up that position due to his own health issues. It was one of the most difficult things he had to do, knowing that his health was failing, because he knew that the fragile foundation needed a leader and direction. He died a few months later (in November 1980). As you recall from part one, our mother, Marnee, who was immersed in the foundation from day one, took a position on the board after our father's death. She knew that our father clearly cared deeply for his life-long friend, mentor, and father figure.

These key preliminary actions taken by our parents and other close friends laid the groundwork for the Oberholtzer Foundation as it exists today. Had the islands been sold into private ownership, the Oberholtzer Foundation would be lacking the essential component that drives the Foundation today—the islands.



Photo by Don Maronde ca 1982

Excerpts From: ORIGINAL THINKING, By Glenn Aparicio Parry

Thoughts on Time.

"Although I am asserting that linear time is an illusion, time itself is not an illusion, for without time, there would be no movement, no activity." One of my ancestors calls time the "fifth element, and if the first four elements are fire (or light), air, water, and earth," then the fifth is an "animating force that interconnects all the elements." In other words, "time is spirit, and if time is spirit, then it does not exist outside of us but within us, an ever-present state of nourishment... if time is spirit, then, like air, we are also immersed in it. We must have all the time in the world!"

Later, Parry continues...

"Going back to what is called prehistoric times, or what anthropologists call mythical time, time was a part of us and we were a part of time. We had not yet separated ourselves from the natural rhythms of the earth, but lived attuned to earth's rhythms. Our foremost teacher was time herself. When we deviated from her rhythms, we learned ceremonies from nature to bring us back into balance and harmony. So what changed all this? We began to believe that we could harness, even defy, nature's rhythms and control our future... this was the beginning of separation..."

"We began to invent ways to outwit nature. With artificial light, we can stay up as long as we like and get up whenever we want. We plant what we want, when and where we choose, by continually adding fertilizers and eradicating pests chemically. We eat foods out of season, transporting them from supermarkets all over the world..."

Until lately, says Glenn Aparicio Parry, "linear time was not up for debate... I am heartened, now, to see this finally come back into awareness. We are beginning to re-discover the difference between natural cycles of time and clock time and all of us—Indigenous and non-Indigenous—are awakening to the colonizing effect that clock time has on our souls. We do not want clocks to run our lives anymore."

How does this relate to Mallard Island?

Our Mallard Island guests are hungry, absolutely, for time away from the clock and phone and duties ruled by what hour it is. Six days is never enough time to really understand the power of taking back the clock, but even a full day or two of it in a row helps people understand what they are missing or re-define who they are, a little bit, with regard to linear time. On Mallard, for instance, we encourage group leaders to avoid saying, "meet in the Wannigan at ten a.m." suggesting, instead, that folks ring the bell when they want the group to gather. That allows people to stay off the clocks, to leave their watches in their suitcases. One thing that foils this, lately, is that so many people love to use their phones as cameras-- good images are abundant-- and then both their phone (texts coming in) and their clocks are too near at hand.

Here's your challenge for any vacation, on Mallard Island or elsewhere: to keep the cameras as cameras and put the clocks, watches, and timepieces away. Paste some masking tape on the digital clocks that are ever-present in our appliances! Enjoy re-making time in the image you want of it; it's yours to play with. And if time is spirit, as Parry suggests, then it needs nurturing.



*Ober's clock,
disengaged*

To Contact Us:

The Ernest Oberholtzer Foundation is cleaning its feathers for the late spring migration up to Mallard Island in Rainy Lake. Visit our web site at www.eober.org.

On Facebook, enter "Mallard Island in Rainy Lake."

The Ernest Oberholtzer Foundation Board of Directors: Jim Fitzpatrick, president; Michael Reid, vice president; Peggy Anne Smith, secretary; Tim Heinle, treasurer. *Board Members At Large:* Mark Granlund, Bob Hilke, Pebaamibines (Dennis) Jones, Charles Kelly*, Bob Norbie, Diane Tessari, and Elaine Thrune. Beth Waterhouse serves as Executive Director. **Email:** beth@eober.org

Trustees Emeritus are remembered and honored for their significant contributions of time, energy, expertise, talents, assets and skills to further the mission of the Oberholtzer Foundation: Robert Hugh Monahan, Marnee Monahan, Gene Ritchie Monahan, Ted Hall, Delores DeLaittre, Joe Pad-dock, Douglas Wood, Jean Sanford Replinger, Mary Swalla Holmes, Jim Davis, Robin Monahan, and Harry Sweatt.

* Note: Charles Kelly is also an emeritus member of the board who is currently serving as its assistant treasurer.

Staff: Beth Waterhouse, and Summer Program Directors: Mairi Doerr and Prudence Johnson.

Special thanks to our island caretakers set to assist during the summer of 2017 (in alpha order)—Daniel Laurence Andersen, Mary Casanova, Paula DeMars, Barb Draper, Jim Fitzpatrick, Mark Granlund, Mary Swalla Holmes, Kim Knutson, Jane Lund, Don Maronde, Jennie Ross, Danielle Sosin, Diane Tessari and Elaine Thrune. Call the office (952) 401-0591 or Beth's cell # (952) 607-6879 to contact any of the trustees, staff, or caretakers.

Foundation Address: 818 Third Avenue #305, Excelsior, Minnesota 55331

2016: A Banner Year for the Oberholtzer Foundation

Dear Friends;

This past year has been very positive for the Oberholtzer Foundation. We have made excellent progress on Ober's Islands. Our "physical place" stays in great shape with lots of attention during the summer. We also made dozens of new friends this past year, and we continue to stay in touch with our outstanding constituency—you! We really do have so many *wonderful* people that surround us in this legacy.

We also have grown financially. We kicked off our *Endowment Campaign* in the last newsletter, with a goal of a half million dollars. As of this writing, our overall pledge total is a generous \$385,445, which is 77% of that goal. We have heard from 140 donors as part of this campaign, including a surprising eight percent new to our organization. Sixty-eight of these 140 total pledges have already been paid in full, which is nearly half. So we recognize broad generosity and prompt responses, all in one.

In this campaign, special lifetime dedications have been made to:

Elizabeth and Larry Doyle
Henry and Katherine Doerr
Dr. Mary Ghostley
Elaine S. Waterhouse
Janet Pearson
Dr. Melinda J. Larsen.

We will often read their names and think of them remembered in this way.

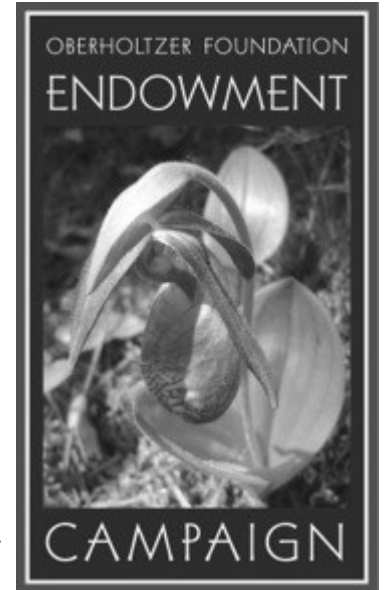
We still have not heard from all of you in this Endowment Campaign. We hope for everyone to participate, but we will not ask again for your support to this special campaign. Thanks so very much to all of you who have taken part. Our Annual Report, available in March, will show a full listing of your names. We appreciate each and every one of you.

Meanwhile, our operating financial picture for 2016 was also excellent. It is not easy to build our annual support in the midst of a long-range campaign with a different emphasis. We were able to support our staff and a variety of summer programs plus the needed island repairs, just as we had hoped. Mallard Island continues to change lives using the whole picture of financial gifts that support that unique place.

Thanks to all of you for all the gifts that you direct to us. We truly appreciate that you have included us in your giving efforts. May the Great Spirit continue to fill your hearts with sunshine. *Seek the joy of being alive,*

Tim Heinle, Treasurer

[*Campaign Logo by Karen McCall*]



2016 Gifts in Honor or Memory of Family and Friends

* Sheree Peterson gave a gift in honor of Jean Sanford Replinger.

Endowment Pledges were made in memory of...

* From Kathy Kirchner, Joe Bennett, Thomas Bennett, Ruth and Dave Hoff and Phyllis and Dale Callaghan, gifts in memory of Elizabeth and Larry Doyle.

* Mairi Doerr, a gift in memory of her parents, Henry and Katherine Doerr.

* Barb and Dave Fisher, a gift in memory of Dr. Mary Ghostley.

* Robert Waterhouse (now deceased), a gift in memory of Elaine Waterhouse.

* Joe and Nancy Paddock, a gift in memory of Nancy's sister, Janet Pearson.

* Paul and Kay Larsen and Ann and Barry Sampson, a gift in memory of their sister, Melinda J. Larsen.



MALLARD ISLAND

Ernest C. Oberholtzer Foundation
818 Third Ave # 305
Excelsior, MN 55331

That's Mallard for Ya'

Today on the trail near the Taj,
I picked up a piece of blue plastic
Smaller than a pea.

Today as I shut hard the door of Ober's room,
Four books fell and hit me on the nose.
One was entitled, *The Devil*.

Tuesday afternoon, a woman learned
That her two new re-built shoulders
Still knew how to paddle...
Still knew the way among the channels.

One drizzly Wednesday morning,
Four workers burnt debris on Gull.
She, at sixty, returned with flushed face,
"I was Big Time out there, Big Time."

Last night in the drum room,
The book reading session
Turned into a powerful discussion
Of domestic violence.

Yesterday, a guest appeared to say hello
And found us in Ober's drum room,
Storytellers all, laughing so hard
We could barely breathe.

Wednesday, a novelist shut off her laptop
And took pen to poem.
She says she's not a poet.
Her words made us cry.

Thursday, she lost her watch...
Friday, he became very honest...
Saturday, she stood on the dock at Bald Rock,
And said, arms wide,
"Just think, this is where I stood one week ago.
I had *no idea*,
Now my whole *life* has changed!"

- B. Waterhouse