



The "Practical" ARTS

Recently I served on a state-appointed commission to review the place of the arts in Michigan education. Our first meeting began with an open discussion concerning the value of arts education. We talked of the importance of opening young people's minds to the beauty of the world, acquainting them with diverse cultural expressions and especially of fostering creativity and an innovative spirit. The conversation was dominated by teachers and other professionals who had made their careers in the arts and could offer an "inside" perspective. I found their remarks helpful and stimulating, consistent with my own beliefs that the arts are a key element in a broad-based education.

One of the most intriguing comments, however, came from a representative of the Michigan Manufacturers Association. He declared that he was at the meeting because of a deep concern about the future of the manufacturing base in Michigan. He predicted that most of the manufacturing jobs that could be taught to a worker in a few minutes then done successfully for years without further thought or training would soon be gone, probably to overseas locations. The future lay with a work force that could utilize their knowledge, skills and creativity to add value as they worked. He attended the meeting because it was his belief that an increased emphasis on arts education, which would prepare graduates to be innovative and creative in the work that they performed, would help to create such a force.

His remarks were a useful reminder that the arts are for everyone. Too often our perception of a "practical" education, an education that trains us for the "real world," is that it develops specific skills and knowledge that can be applied to the accomplishment of specific tasks. We tend to treat education in the arts as a luxury, perhaps something for the "leisure class," those who have less concern with putting bread on the table. It was useful to be reminded that the rapidly changing workplace increasingly rewards innovation and creativity and that the edge that we must maintain in a highly competitive world requires an education that emphasizes breadth and balance, including a grounding in the arts.

It is not clear to me that we understand this. The arts are often the first area to be cut back when finances get tough in elementary and secondary education. In the world of higher education, there is evidence of a narrower focus in much of the instruction being offered. The newest and fastest growing segment in post-secondary education is composed of institutions, some of them for-profit businesses, which emphasize specific training for currently-available jobs. At the same time, the number of "liberal arts" institutions which value arts education as a vital element of their curricula is declining.

At Adrian College we do not define the value of the education we provide simply in terms of dollars and cents. We seek to educate the whole person, in John Wesley's words, the "heart, soul and mind." As we have highlighted in this and the last two issues of Contact, this includes strong programs in the arts. This approach, we believe, remains the best preparation for life. It may also be the most practical approach to a successful working career.

Stanley Caine
Stanley Caine, President



John Hiner '82

LETTER from the Alumni Board

Call it summer school for your alumni board.

Though students just recently returned to campus for the fall semester, the Adrian College Alumni Association Board of Directors has been busy throughout the summer planning a number of activities and initiatives for 2004-05.

Some, like the Kick Off Classic and Homecoming, are familiar to you all. But we've also made some changes that, while largely invisible to the 10,000 alumni who are not on the board, will impact the kind of programs and services to the college community that alumni can provide.

At a two-day planning meeting on campus in June, the Alumni Board of Directors brainstormed ways to build more bridges: The College has needs, alumni have enthusiasm and resources, and our goal is to link the two whenever possible.

We took a step in that direction by making Alumni Board committees more

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a Big "MAHALO"

A response to the Miles Peelle story in the Summer 2004 issue.

As a member of Professor Peelle's Comparative Anatomy class in the 1930s, I can affirm that the cats we dissected were caught by the boys of the class and prepared for dissection by them with help from Dr. Peelle. I was there! On the first day of chordate dissection the boys were very chivalrous: They insisted the girls would be the first to reach into the formaldehyde barrel and select a specimen. So as one of the two females in the class, I was urged to roll

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action-oriented, and giving them some objectives to work toward this summer.

Here's what they are up to:

AWARDS AND COMMUNICATION

This committee, chaired by **Madeleine Lakatos Fojtik '82**, is developing an online newsletter that alumni will be able to access for up-to-date information about alumni affairs and events.

The newsletter, called *The Rock*, currently is under construction; you may see it as an inactive link on the College's alumni web page (www.adrian.edu/alumni.php). But it soon will be an essential bookmark so you can stay current with alumni developments.

BOARD DEVELOPMENT

Chaired by **Stephen Gregg '68**, this committee is reviewing the process we use to recruit, nominate and select members to the Alumni Board of Directors. The goal is to have a broad cross-section of ages and affiliations, and to find people who are committed to active involvement in alumni and campus activities.

The committee also will work this year to increase the participation of alumni in the College's drive for the AC Fund (annual fund), and in future special project drives, such as the one conducted for the Ridge Student Center. We learned in June that the percentage of alumni who make a donation of any amount to Adrian College is below averages of many other private colleges in Michigan. This statistic is seen as a barometer of institutional health, so that's one area we feel deserves attention.

EVENTS AND PROGRAMMING

The fruits of this committee's labor will be apparent to alumni who attend the Kick Off Classic and Homecoming. The committee, chaired by **Christy Cole '98**, has worked hard this summer to line up sponsors, volunteers and resources for these key alumni events.

The committee also lined up a panel of alumni to do sessions with new students at Welcome Week in August and to help on move-in day, and plans to work on increasing alumni presence at campus events.

So, it's been a busy summer, and it's exciting to greet the new school year with a big "to-do" list. You'll be hearing more as these plans shape up, and in the meantime I invite all alumni to stay in touch and join us when you can.

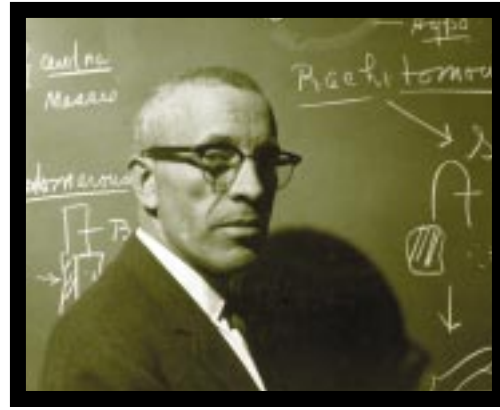
Adrian College will be richer for it.

John Hiner '82

President, Adrian College Alumni Board

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up my sleeve and reach into the large barrel and pick our "specimen." Shock! It was not a cat, but a large female dog that had lived on campus and evidently provided many litters of pups. Calmly Dr. Peelle instructed me to reach deeper and make a choice. This time it was a cat, which had to have the solution squeezed from the fur. The boys were delighted with their efforts. So I reached further and squeezed out the formaldehyde so that we could begin!

Many times in my 30 years of teaching high school biology I silently thanked Dr. Peelle for instilling in me the love of nature and learning. I can only hope I have passed some of his lore and passion for nature on to my students.

A big "Mahola"* to Dr. Miles Peelle, to Contact for recognizing the contributions of this great teach, and to his son, David Peelle.

Margaret Dibley Thurston '38
Honolulu, Hawaii

* "Mahalo" is Hawaiian for "thank you."

Remembering Doc

I want to thank you all for the work on the wonderful article on "Doc" [Miles Peelle]. It was warm, factual, and at times funny – but always informative.

I REALLY enjoyed reading and remembering! You really did catch the essence of the great human being that he was.

Thank you from all of his students – some of which became lifelong friends and great admirers of a true Renaissance man.

Terrance Andrew Robinson, M.D., '66
Bremerton, Wash.

Letters Policy

Unless noted as "not for publication," communications to the editor are considered for publication (often in a condensed version) when space is available. Include your name, address and phone number and limit your comments to Contact or topics mentioned in the magazine.