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Editor's Comments

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Editor's Comments

With this Spring 1993 issue we begin, belatedly, the seventh year of the *Grand Valley Review*. Rob Franciosi, after serving admirably for several years as the editor, stepped down from that position last spring. Throughout the summer and early fall, we had some questions about whether there was enough genuine interest, campus wide, in keeping the *Review* alive. The new editor, appointed in the fall, and a new staff decided to find out. In the size and the diversity of the new advisory board, we have had our answer.

Our joint desire now is that we have an equal amount of representation and diversity in the journal itself. To that end, we begin our issue with comments by two of our board members--Todd Carlson and Mark Luttenton--who encourage their colleagues, especially those in the sciences, to share with the whole university community the work they are doing in their research and in their classrooms, statements which we heartily applaud. President Lubbers and Dean Travis of the Social Science Division graciously accepted our invitation to respond to those comments; and we are pleased that their responses support the continuation of the *Review*. We are particularly interested to hear your reactions to the President's recommendations.

The ensuing essays do display diversity of discipline representation, and coincidentally, because no special theme for the issue was announced in advance, the first four are on the subject of women, perhaps no great surprise in this political "year of the woman." Psychologist Roelof Bijkerk notes that there has been a recent increase in reported sightings of the Madonna, and he explores the psychological and social implications of that phenomenon. Anthropologist Cindy Hull invites us to look beyond any stereotypes we might have that Mayan village women are only passive homebodies. Literary historian Victoria Brehm, herself a sailor, traces the powerful symbolism of the Great Lakes for women, from Native American storytellers to contemporary Michigan poet Judith Minty (who was an adjunct professor at Grand Valley for several years). Science historian Sheldon Kopperl reminds us that one of the charter members of Grand Valley's Board of Control was a woman; but we may not have known and so learn that Dr. Icie Macy Hoobler was also a distinguished scientist and a pioneer in nutrition research.

From the School of Business, R. J. and S. L. Planisek report on the results of a questionnaire given to business students and purportedly intended to disclose their views about the meaning of their lives and what their afterlife rewards might be; the conclusions drawn about the significance of the findings, particularly in relation to general education at Grand Valley, may surprise you and lead to a rejoinder.

Poetry by Christine Stephens and Kathryn Waggoner, a memoir of boyhood in northern Michigan by Carl Kobernik, and a story about a remarkable child by Terri Shanahan round out the issue.

We invite you to respond to any of the pieces in this issue or to submit something else that you think your colleagues may be interested in. Are you now engaged in some research that you can explain for a general audience? Have you published something elsewhere which can be turned into an informative article for your colleagues in other disciplines? Have you given a talk lately--on campus or in the community--from which your notes can be turned into a lively article? Have you recently returned from sabbatical or leave with some information that can enlighten all of us? The *Review* allows us to keep in touch professionally with each other in this rapidly growing community. We, of course, also welcome poetry, fiction, and personal essays.

One final note: though we spend our times in different disciplines, many of us have in common that we are teachers, and, therefore, share common problems, as well as pleasures. A recent article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, "The Perils of Grade Inflation" (Jan. 6, '93) laments the fact that too many faculty members give high grades for average or sub-par work: "By rewarding mediocrity we discourage excellence....We sometimes carelessly assume that by giving B-minuses (or better) to students who we honestly feel should have failed, we are doing them a big favor. Will their employers so indulge them later on?" Is Grand Valley under such a peril? Let us know what you think.

--R.S.

