

DARE Newsletter

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Dictionary of American Regional English

Fall 2017

The News from *DARE*

George Goebel
Chief Editor

As you know, the *DARE* project has been struggling for some time to find adequate funding to continue. Without the NEH grant we had hoped to get for the next two years, it is simply impossible to go on as we have been, despite the continuing and generous support of private donors. At the end of this year *DARE* will cease to have any full-time, paid staff. Sadly, this means parting with two longtime staff members, Elizabeth Gardner and Julie Schnebly, whose dedication, care, and experience have contributed so much to the project over the years. I am officially retiring, but I intend to continue updating *DARE* with new and revised entries and posting Quarterly Updates on the project website, though necessarily at a somewhat slower pace. The UW–Madison English Department will continue to provide Joan Hall and me with office space, so the project will maintain a physical presence on the sixth floor of Helen C. White Hall for the foreseeable future.

While of course I wish this further reduction were not necessary, looking back on the history of the project, I can only be amazed at how long it *has* survived with no long-term funding, and grateful for all the support, public and private, that it has enjoyed. Elsewhere in this issue our donors for 2016 and 2017 are individually listed and thanked, but here I would like to thank more broadly all the many people who have supported *DARE* over the years, not just financially, but also with interest, encouragement, and appreciation. Whatever we have accomplished, you have helped make possible.



Photo credit: George E. Hall

For nearly twenty years this *Newsletter* has been our way of informing you of what we have been doing and thanking you for your support. Regretfully, I must announce that this is the last issue. I invite all friends of *DARE* to visit the project website, <http://dare.wisc.edu>, where news about *DARE*—as well as future Quarterly Updates—will continue to appear.

Now for some positive reports!

In our Fall 2016 *Newsletter* I said that two important milestones were coming up, and I am happy to say that we have now passed both of them.

The first is that all the audio recordings made during the original *DARE* fieldwork in 1965–70 are now publicly available online through the UW–Madison Libraries' Digital Collections Center.

In Memoriam: Patt VanDyke

Elizabeth Gardner

This is the culmination of a four-year project to “bleep out” personal information in the recordings to protect the Informants’ privacy, which was carried out by graduate student Project Assistants and volunteers (mostly undergraduate student interns) and managed by Julie Schnebly. The home page of the collection is <https://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/amerlang>s. We are pleased that the collection has been listed in the *Scout Report*, a respected online publication that selects “valuable STEM and humanities resources on the Internet” to feature each week; you can see the coverage at https://scout.wisc.edu/report/2017/0818#id_5. The collection can be searched in various ways: by community names or characteristics, Informant numbers or social characteristics (sex, race, age, and education level), subject headings, and content descriptions. To get an idea of the extraordinary range of topics covered in these recordings, go to <http://dare.wisc.edu/audio>, where we have posted some short sample clips.

The second is that Harvard University Press has released an updated version of the full *Dictionary* text (www.daredictionary.com) that incorporates all the new and revised entries from Quarterly Updates 1 through 6, as well as a great many other corrections, improvements, and updates elsewhere in the text and an updated bibliography. (The Quarterly Updates will remain freely available on the project website, but this update to the online *DARE* integrates them seamlessly into the full text of the *Dictionary*.) The Press plans to issue its next update, incorporating Quarterly Updates 7 through 10, early next year.

If you do not already have access to Digital *DARE* through an institution, there is more good news from Harvard: the Press has reduced the individual subscription price to \$49 a year. Details can be found at <http://www.hup.harvard.edu/catalog.php?isbn=9780674425071>.

Since the Fall 2016 *Newsletter* was published, Quarterly Updates 7 through 9 have appeared on our website (<http://dare.wisc.edu/words/quarterly-updates>), comprising another 104 new and substantially revised and updated entries (137 distinct senses). They’re all interesting and significant in one way or another, but for a brief overview that gives some idea of the range of material included, I’d suggest checking out [ackempucky](#), [booya](#), [boy howdy](#), [bow up](#), [broomball](#), [buggy n 5](#), [cane skimmings](#), and [mason bream](#). And please don’t forget to check back for future updates! ♦

We are saddened to report the death, on March 13, 2017, of Patt VanDyke. As a UW–Madison graduate student in the late 1960s, Patt did fieldwork for *DARE* in the Midwest and West. Her Fieldworker reminiscence, “On the Road in the West,” appeared in our Winter 2000 *Newsletter*. This excerpt, recounting an interview with an elderly Colorado gentleman, demonstrates Patt’s regard for the words she collected and the people who shared them with her: “Mr. D. . . . wanted very much to answer a question about what women of poor reputation were called. He knew a word that he had never said in front of a woman before. . . . We walked down the hallway until we were absolutely private, and he apologized because I was a nice girl and wanted to know something not so nice. He told me he would tell me because I was serious about my work, and he knew it mattered to me. He looked around, leaned toward me, and whispered, ‘Chippy. They’re called chippies.’ I silently and soberly wrote down the words, and they are to me, even now, not so much an entry in a dictionary as they are a gift from one person to another, a bequest.” (The full article, along with Patt’s contributions to several “Ask a Fieldworker” features, can be found at <http://dare.wisc.edu/dare-newsletters>.)

Patt went on to have a distinguished career at Northwest Missouri State University, serving over the course of thirty-two years as Professor of English, Director of the Talent Development Center, Interim Vice President for Academic Affairs, and Dean of Libraries.

In addition to reading what Patt wrote for the *DARE Newsletter*, we recommend listening to some of her conversations with *DARE* Informants (recorded in 1967 and 1968 and now available at <https://uwdc.library.wisc.edu/collections/amerlang>s). She was a skilled interviewer who drew the best from the people who spoke with her. As one Informant from Newfalden, Minnesota, put it, “I’ll tell you, this University of Wisconsin . . . should be really proud to have you—not only as a teacher, not only as a student, but also as a person working in this field, doing this job that you’re doing. . . . It’s really been a wonderful pleasure to work with you, honestly, it sure has.” Those of us at *DARE* who had occasion to correspond with Patt over the years feel the same way. ♦

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The *Dictionary of American Regional English* is profoundly thankful for the generosity of these donors. Gifts were received by the *Dictionary of American Regional English* Fund and the Frederic G. Cassidy *DARE* Fund. Because this is a national project, it is particularly meaningful that donations were received from supporters in at least twenty-four states and the District of Columbia (and friends in Germany and Switzerland as well). Donors listed without a state or country made their contributions through the GoFundMe website. ♦

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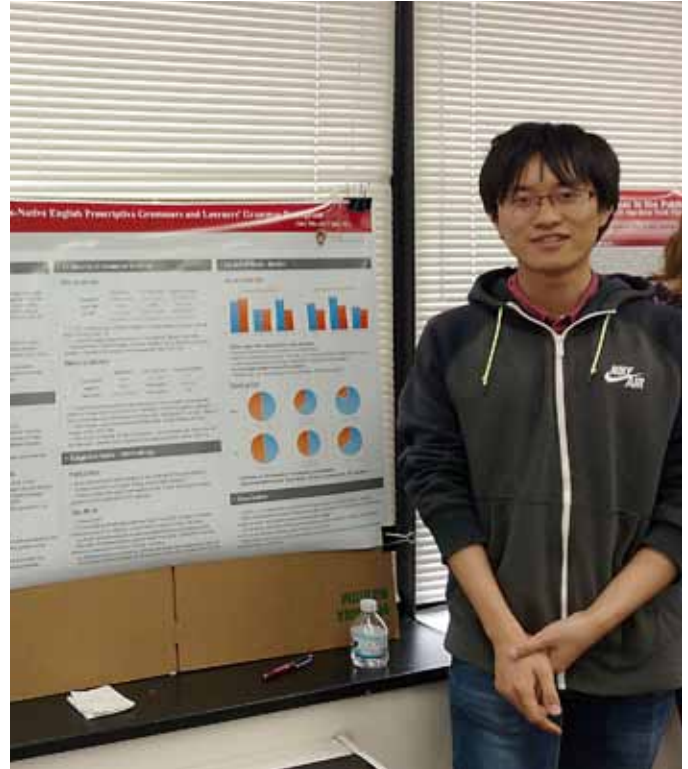
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DARE Project Assistants past and present were well represented at a recent UW–Madison graduate student symposium entitled “Investigating Prescriptivism in Contemporary English Language.”



All photos on this page: Julie Schnebly

Joy Kwon gave a talk on “The Influence of Strunk and White on Grammar: The Case of Passive, Relative Pronouns, and Third Person Pronouns.”



DARE’s most recent Project Assistant, Yuhong (Jake) Zhu, and Yaqi (Vilcky) Wu (not shown) presented their research on “Non-Native English Prescriptive Grammars and Learners’ Grammar Perception.”



Trevor Wells Fraser’s research demonstrated that “Flat Adverbs Aren’t Disappearing as Quick as You’d Think.”



Cristopher Font-Santiago’s poster showcased his findings on “Whoever or Whomever? The Effects of Prescriptivism on Usage and Frequency.”

Staff Member Profile

In the final installment of this series, Beth Gardner interviews Project Assistant and UW–Madison grad student Yuhong (Jake) Zhu (pictured on page 4), who joined the *DARE* staff in the fall of 2016. Jake received his M.A. degree this summer and is now pursuing doctoral studies at Ohio State University.

Q: What is your field of study, and what are your primary research interests?

A: I am completing my M.A. program in Applied English Linguistics in the Department of English. I am interested in human speech sounds in general, and I am currently working on the sound system of Wu Chinese, a dialect spoken in my hometown. It is technically not “Applied,” and obviously not “English,” but I did learn a lot about linguistic research methods from my program, and also from working at *DARE*.

Q: How did you first become aware of the *Dictionary of American Regional English*?

A: My first experience with *DARE* was in a linguistics course with Professor Tom Purnell, where I was assigned one *DARE* recording and asked to transcribe and analyze the speech patterns of the participant. That class project gave me two thoughts: “I know very little about linguistic variations in the U.S. as a non-native speaker” and “I should do the same thing with my own dialect.” The chance to work for the *DARE* project came as a surprise later.

Q: What are your primary job responsibilities at *DARE*?

A: My main job at *DARE* is putting quotes from written materials into our online database. Sometimes I also collect materials in libraries in order to proofread quotes and help finalize a few dictionary entries. I have had some experience listening to *DARE* recordings as well.

Q: What is the most enjoyable aspect of your work at *DARE*?

A: Working at *DARE* gives me the opportunity to see new things constantly. I have been to libraries that I had never visited, read through newspapers from centuries ago, and listened to many voices from across the nation. None of these adventures would have happened to me without this exciting job at *DARE*.

Q: What part of your work do you find most challenging?

A: Staring at a seemingly endless amount of reference slips or a collection of more than 1,700

recordings can be demoralizing at times, I must admit. Also, I do feel frustrated when I need one specific quote from the Fall 1987 issue of some periodical, but the resource at hand only gives me access to everything from 1950 to 1985.

Q: What aspect of working on the *DARE* project has been the most surprising to you?

A: I was astonished by the breadth of knowledge one must have to be a good lexicographer—my focus of study is language, yet I know so little about terms used to address objects distant to my own living experience (names of farming tools and regional dishes, for example), not to mention the difference between those terms across the country. I have definitely learned a few vocabularies that I cannot even think of a suitable context to use during my work here.

Q: What do you plan to do after finishing your current graduate program?

A: I will go on to pursue a Ph.D. degree in Linguistics after graduation. Linguistics is fun. I want more of it!

Q: When you have a rare moment of spare time away from your studies and your work, what are your interests?

A: I probably have more hobbies than I need! I enjoy playing video games, going to concerts, petting dogs online, and occasionally producing pieces of electronic music. ♦

A Word of Thanks

Our final *Newsletter* would not be complete without some recognition of volunteer Judith A. Taylor’s amazing commitment to the *DARE* project. Judy (who was profiled in our Spring 2003 issue) has generously donated her time and talents to *DARE* since 1987.

During her three decades here, Judy has gone from filing paper quote slips and typing bibliographic references on index cards to entering quotes and citations in a customized computer database. Navigating every technological transition with ease, she has remained a constant and cheerful Tuesday-morning presence. She is currently helping us inventory Prof. Frederic Cassidy’s correspondence for archiving, a task that brings back many memories of earlier days at *DARE*. We are grateful not only for all the work Judy has done for the *Dictionary* over the years, but for her friendship. ♦

Last winter, artist and text analyst Carrie Roy's "Words Count: A Rantum Scoot through *DARE*" exhibition (viewable online at <http://darewordscount.com>) was on display at the Madison Central Library. These photos were taken by George E. Hall at the opening of the exhibit.



▼ A close-up view of Wood Terms 95





▲ Chief Editor George Goebel and Editor Emerita Joan Hall with a bird's-eye maple sculpture entitled *Bittern 70*

Former *DARE* staffer Trini Stickle (at left), now an Assistant Professor at Western Kentucky University, returned to Madison this spring to give a presentation with UW Professor Anja Wanner on their joint research concerning “Syntactic Patterns in the Speech of Persons Diagnosed with Dementia.”



Photo credit: Julie Schnebly

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