DARE Newsletter

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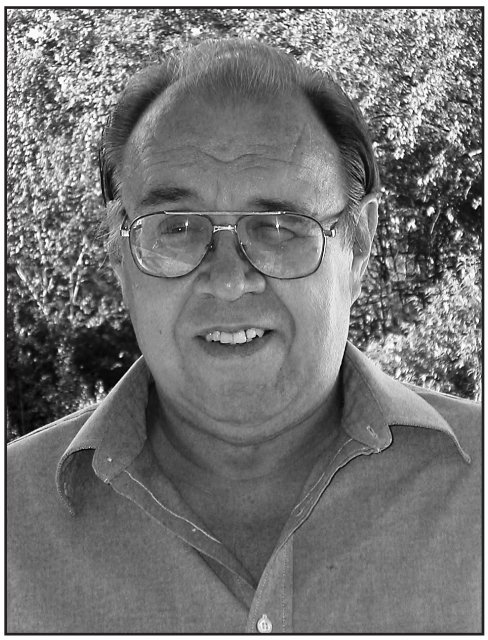

Reino Maki, DARE *Fieldworker*

DARE Fieldwork: The Adventure Begins

Reino Maki

In this installment of our ongoing series of Fieldworker reminiscences, Reino Maki gives a vivid account of life on the road in a DARE *Word Wagon.*

In the summer of 1965, Professor Audrey Duckert encouraged me to enlist as a Fieldworker in the fascinating *DARE* dialect survey that would begin in the fall. Shirley, my wife, was not completely enthusiastic. We both knew Professor Duckert from undergraduate days and trusted her recommendations. But we were concerned about how our two young children would take to nomadic life in a Word Wagon.

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Funding Update

David Simon, Director of Development

I am always fascinated by the thought-provoking questions I am asked about the *Dictionary of American Regional English.* Here are three of those questions (and their answers):

1. How many words will be in *DARE*? More than 50,000 headwords will be included in the *Dictionary,* with thousands of additional senses.

2. What is the longest entry in *DARE*? The longest entry is **be** v, with almost ten columns of text. It includes pronunciation variants, grammatical forms that vary by region and social group, and various unusual negative constructions such as *beant,* an old-fashioned New England form that means "am not," "is not," or "are not."

3. Has *DARE* been used in any surprising ways? Many readers are surprised to hear of *DARE*'s "Hollywood connections." Actress Diane Keaton used the *DARE* audiotapes to prepare for her role in *Crimes of the Heart;* director Michael Mann asked Frederic G. Cassidy to look over the script for *The Last of the Mohicans* to see if the language was appropriate for the time and setting; dialect coach Bob Easton, "the Henry Higgins of Hollywood," uses *DARE* materials in coaching many of the film industry's best-known actors and actresses.

Of course, *DARE* will be even more useful when Volume V is finished. I hope you will help us complete the journey by making a gift to the *Dictionary.* All gifts to *DARE* are tax-deductible and matchable by the National Endowment for the Humanities. You can make a gift by filling out the form on page 8; if you would like to make a gift of stock or a deferred gift, please call me at (608) 263-5607 or e-mail me at <david.simon@uwfoundation.wisc.edu>. Thank you very much for your interest in *DARE.* ✦

Coming in Volume V

sprawl	Energy, initiative, spunk. (NEng)
spreader dam	An earthen dam that interrupts runoff in order to reduce erosion and promote infiltration. (Chiefly West)
sproutland	Land covered with saplings, usu grown from suckers. (Esp CT, MA)
stomp	An area where livestock gathers or is penned. (Sth, S Midl)
stomp-down	Genuine, pure; really, very. (Sth, S Midl)
stone drag	A stoneboat. (Chiefly NEast, esp NEng)
stool chair	?A chair with a solid wood seat. (We have plenty of evidence for the use of this word, but not much for its precise meaning; if you are familiar with this word, please let us know!) (Chiefly Mid and S Atl)
storm pit	A cyclone cellar. (Gulf States, S Atl)
storm shed	A small, enclosed porch erected, either permanently or seasonally, to protect an entrance door in cold weather. (Esp Inland Nth)
strand	A long, narrow slough, often heavily wooded. (GA, FL)
straw shed	A shelter for livestock, made from straw. (Chiefly Upper MW, WI)
strut	To swell, become turgid. (Chiefly Sth, S Midl)
study	To think, reflect. (Chiefly Sth, S Midl, SW)
stump ranch	A farm full of stumps left by recent logging. (Pacific NW)
sugar ant	A red ant *(Monomorium pharaonis).* (Chiefly Sth, TX)
tangle-breeches	A kind of friedcake or cruller. (Esp PA, MD)
tap	A nut (for a bolt). (Chiefly Sth, S Midl)
tavern	A sandwich made with crumbled ground beef. (Chiefly nwIA, seSD)
teakettle up	To tidy, put in order. (NEng)

DARE Fieldwork

Continued from page 1

The combination of scholarship and adventure was irresistible. In early September, I arrived at the new *DARE* headquarters at the University of Wisconsin in Madison. Ben Crane came up from Alabama then to join the project as a fellow Fieldworker. We were told that the Word Wagons would be ready in a few weeks.

Professor Cassidy had a heroic schedule then, but found time to instruct Ben and me in the International Phonetic Alphabet and other arts of linguistic fieldworking. Kathie Beckett had her hands full, too, organizing the new *DARE* office. Ben and I pitched in, helping with staff work and, too often, manual labor.

The Wagons were delayed and redelayed until the beginning of November. Shirley and Carina, our three-year-old daughter, came to Madison at that time. Rick, our year-old son, would stay temporarily with his grandparents in Massachusetts.

We settled into our Word Wagon, using the parking lot behind the *DARE* office as a campground. Carina soon got acquainted with Professor Cassidy's grandson, Alexander, and they became good buddies.

The Word Wagon was a 1966 Dodge A100 Sportsman van, dark green and somewhat cramped. Inside were a dinette table and seats that converted into a double bed. It had a small kitchen cabinet with a hand-pump sink, icebox, and portable stove. Headroom was adequate until you stood up. For auxiliary heat, we had a catalytic heater, with a two-gallon can for white gas. A hanging garment bag and an obtrusive spare tire took up room just inside the rear doors. All of the windows had curtains, but they weren't made for sleeping late on a sunny day.

Carina liked the small bed that attached above the front seats. A second, Rick-sized bed could be set up over the double bed. Overall, the Word Wagon was smaller and less convenient than we had hoped, but we were young and not easy to discourage. We added a large car-top carrier to hold our luggage and occasionals. To increase living space, I also secured the spare tire in it.

Then Ruth Porter arrived, completing our band of three Wagoneers. With the same sense that God gives a goose, we all headed south for the winter and would come back north in the spring. The sky was clear and the air was crisp as our caravan left

Madison. Ruth would start fieldwork in Florida, Ben in his native Alabama, and I in Oklahoma.

The first community on my itinerary was Miami, in the Ozark foothills of northeastern Oklahoma. I was somewhat apprehensive about coming into a strange town, finding suitable lifelong residents, and convincing them to spend hours answering questions. But I had good luck in finding an excellent first informant, a retired coal miner. As he and I went through the questionnaire, his wife chatted with Shirley and introduced Carina to their grandchildren.

I would find that same luck would continue in community after community, as I found informants who were generous with their time and knowledge and were also a pleasure to know. That luck sometimes took longer to come through than I might wish, but it always seemed to work.

Naturally, I tried to repay my informants for their help and kindness. At first, I was able to expense small gifts, but there were complaints from the bureaucrats who oversaw the project accounts. Later gifts came mostly out of my own pocket. Frequently, however, I was able to help with errands and with small fixes on the informant's home or car.

Most informants could devote only an hour or two a day to interviews. Then, in my callow years, I expected old people to be sedentary. But my informants, though advanced in years, were generally quite busy with their families, homes, and hobbies. To complete a questionnaire in reasonable time nearly always took more than one informant in a community.

We were working then with the first *DARE* questionnaire. As we gained experience with it, we sent back suggestions for additions, deletions, and rewordings. During the early interviews, I also learned to revise my own regional speech habits. I remember that my first Oklahoma informants were puzzled by words like "farm" and "barn" when I pronounced them, Boston-style, without any "r" at all.

Shirley, Carina, and I grew accustomed to the confines of the Word Wagon. While the weather was still pleasant, we could spend much of our free time outdoors. Shirley usually managed to cook at least two hot meals a day. I enjoyed trying regional foods, but never did convince her to cook up the can of calf's brains that I'd found.

Both Shirley and I enjoyed discovering regional words and expressions in local newspapers and casual conversations. Our finds were sent back as *DARE* field notes. I was particularly drawn to words that gave a sense of history in their derivations. For example, in Oklahoma, the tough Osage orange was called "bodark." Many people were familiar with this word, but few realized that it derived from *bois d'arc*—"wood of the bow." Early French explorers, on their search for the Vermilion Sea, are said to have given it this name after experiencing its effect at the hands of regional Indians.

Similarly, in the state of Maine, I would hear the Canada lynx called a "lucifee." Informants sometimes associated this word with Lucifer, but it derives from the old French term for lynx, *loup cervier.* James Fenimore Cooper and Henry David Thoreau were familiar with the *loup cervier.*

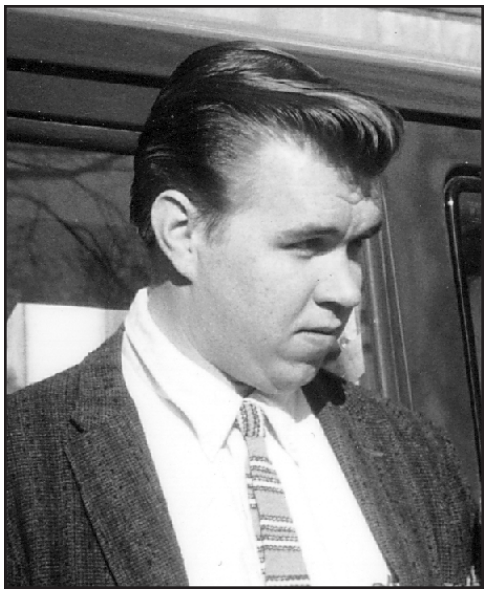
As I grew accustomed to hearing new words and expressions, I was sometimes taken aback by grammatical usage. With my provincial New England background, I would never think of using the word "anymore" except in a negative phrase. When I first heard it used without a negation, as in "We have town water anymore," I had to stop and figure out what sounded so wrong to me.

Also, it was noteworthy at first to hear even young children say "Turn north at the lights" rather than "Turn right at the lights." Of course, I soon realized, residents are well oriented to the compass points in the Plains states, where most roads run north-and-south or east-and-west. I adopted this usage myself. Then, driving onto a garage lift, I was surprised anew when the mechanic told me, "Cut your wheels a little to the west."

We heard many regional tales. Several were violent. Oklahoma was a relatively new state, and the law hadn't fully taken hold when my informants were young. I recall seeing the grave of Henry Stiff, who had filled it shortly after his last gunfight, shooting across the tracks behind a moving train.

There was also a grisly story, heard twice, about a robber who preyed upon isolated crews working on oil-field drilling rigs. When the members of one crew caught him, they were in the middle of "making a trip," and had pulled up their string of drill pipe to replace the worn bit. When the new bit was attached, they drilled the robber down into the bore hole with it.

During the first few months of fieldwork, mechanical problems were a common nuisance. The most frequent source of trouble was the old-fash-



Reino Maki, photographed in front of a Word Wagon in 1965

ioned reel-to-reel tape recorder for recording informants' voices. This piece of equipment broke down so often that we carried a spare and sometimes found that neither would work. In those olden days, almost every town, however small, had a radio-and-TV repairman, just as they all have a video-rental store now. When the local repairman couldn't fix the recorder, I would ship it back to the *DARE* office and wait for a replacement to arrive.

The Word Wagon was not without its faults. Back in Kankakee, Illinois, the shift cable broke. The Dodge service manager there was rather indifferent to customer satisfaction—at least when the customer was an itinerant Fieldworker. It took Professor Cassidy and the University's Fleet Service to galvanize him into reasonably prompt repairs.

In Miami, the shift cable stopped working again. The mechanic in Kankakee had installed it so that it rested on a hot exhaust pipe, where its plastic casing eventually melted. I disconnected the frozen shift cable at the transmission and bypassed the safety switch. Then, still underneath the van, I set the lever on the transmission manually into "drive." Backing up was awkward—I had to crawl under the van and reset the lever—but I was able to keep on interviewing while waiting for the new part.

Aside from the shift cable, the Word Wagon had no serious mechanical problems. It was nose-heavy, though, and had poor traction on ice and snow in spite of its limited-slip differential. On a rainy day, it could easily bog down in the black Oklahoma gumbo.

Housekeeping in the Word Wagon raised another set of issues. The original stove had limited heat output and could not be used in the outdoors. It also blackened the bottoms of pots and pans. Because the manual sink pump was so slow, we kept a gallon jug of water for our water supply. Shirley sent back a list of such comments and hints for the Fieldworkers' newsletter.

Toward the middle of December, nights were getting downright cold. It was time for Shirley and Carina to go back home, where they could stay warm indoors. I would bundle up for the winter and rejoin them in the spring.

In the southeastern Oklahoma town of Broken Bow, I saw my first snowstorm of the season. It amounted to only a few inches, but it created a local holiday. Schools and businesses closed, and there were plenty of playful snowball fights and short-lived snowmen. There were also several minor traffic accidents.

The coldest weather I experienced was in southwestern Oklahoma, at a campground on the Red River. The temperature dropped to zero that night, and the wind, coming off the Texas Panhandle, blew so hard that the Word Wagon rocked. Because the catalytic heater wouldn't light, I had to run the engine every two hours to keep from freezing. At that time, one of my informants was a fireman in Frederick. I gladly accepted his offer to let me sleep at the firehouse for the next few nights.

Traveling alone, it was easier to find a place to camp. Without having to worry as much about flush toilets and hot running water, I could easily find a roadside rest area or a secluded parking spot when I needed sleep.

These alternative campsites were not always good choices. After an oil change in Lawton, on a Saturday morning, I drove around sprawling Fort Sill and explored the Wichita Mountains Wildlife Refuge in the afternoon. I hadn't seen any campgrounds, but I felt sure that I could find a quiet spot somewhere there for the night.

As the sun came down, I was getting tired. There were several dirt roads, but they were in open country and snowed in. One likely road, paved and plowed, led through an unguarded gate into the northern section of Fort Sill. The wooded, hilly terrain was unoccupied and looked promising. I drove in, knowing I shouldn't be there, but feeling sleepy and running low on good sense.

I drove on and turned east at a fork, watching for a side road into the trees. Then the trees petered out, and a fixed sign warned that I was entering an artillery impact area. That woke me up. I turned around quickly and kept traveling west at the fork.

It was rapidly getting dark, but, trying to stay inconspicuous, I did not turn the headlights on. Just as I was ready to give up, there was a small yard, plowed clear of snow, behind a stand of tall mesquites. Several bales of hay were stacked there, probably winter fodder for elk and buffalo. I parked behind the hay bales, and soon was sound asleep.

Early the next morning, Sunday morning, I awoke to the booming of artillery. It was a little surprising, but I wasn't particularly troubled. The practice range was far to the east. I lit the heater and let the Word Wagon warm up. After breakfast, I made sure that the road was empty and started back.

A mile or so away, a sawhorse blocked the road. A sign was attached to it, facing in the opposite direction. I walked out to read it: "Artillery Impact Area—DO NOT ENTER." They were using a different target range that morning, and I had been camping in it! I moved that sawhorse aside and got out of Fort Sill as fast as the Word Wagon was able.

My traveling alone, a long way from home, inspired sympathy from my informants. When one suggested that I stay for a meal, I was always ready to oblige. One of these benefactors was a woman in Silver City, in southwestern New Mexico. Her father had been sheriff there in the wild nineteenth-century days.

I casually mentioned to her one day that another informant, a rancher, had invited me to supper that evening. Of course, she then suggested that I have lunch with her on the following day. I happily confirmed that a Mexican meal would be fine and, yes, I'd like it hot. Back home, I had often enjoyed a spicy bowl of chili.

The next day, she served enchiladas with chili sauce. I quickly learned that "hot" meant much more in New Mexico than it did in New England. I needed several glasses of water and almost half a loaf of bread to finish my plate. Meanwhile, my informant, an octogenarian, spooned up that flaming sauce as though it were melted ice cream. Back at the campground, it didn't take long for my free lunch to burn me for a second time.

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Notes and Quotes

The "Bobbasheely" article in the Winter 2004 issue of the DARE Newsletter *generated many interesting letters. Here are excerpts from a few.*

"[The] story in the Winter *DARE Newsletter* about *Bobbasheely* was fascinating. It has inspired me to make a modest donation (I was an English major, so 'modest' is the best I can do) to the project. . . . I was for many years editor of a general encyclopedia; shortly before I was hired in 1955, the publisher launched a 'two-year' project to revise the entire set, from A to Z. We finished the job 12 years later (and then began all over, just like painting the Golden Gate Bridge). We didn't begin with A, but with S, where we felt our mistakes would be less conspicuous. Keep up the good work in tracking down those odd words."

Douglas W. Downey
Northbrook, Illinois

"We enjoyed reading your recent article in the *DARE Newsletter* titled 'Bobbasheely.' I thought you would be interested to know that the Millsaps College yearbook, first published in 1905, is titled *Bobashela.* In its first pages are the words:

> To its readers the first *Bobashela* speaks its own name. With full meaning, that Choctaw salutation is given to those who have known our College, to those who know it now, and to those who in the future may be honored with a place within its walls. May we indeed be 'good friends'. We have endeavored, before our life at school is over and the joyous times and hallowed scenes exist for us only as memory's trust, to leave a token of our love, to show how some of our school life has been spent, and to recall in distant days thought of college, of time, and of friends.

We get many queries as to the meaning of the name of the yearbook, and always reply, '*Bobashela* is a Choctaw word which means good friend or good friends.' It is interesting to see the background and other uses of the word explained in your article. I love the pictures of little bobbasheelies—gives me a whole new perspective on the college students who gather on our campus!"

Debra McIntosh, College Archivist
Millsaps College, Jackson, Mississippi

 Continued from page 5

Las Vegas was my last community in New Mexico. My main informant there was in the middle of remodeling her house. I helped her in the afternoon and she would help me with the questionnaire when the day's work was done. When we finished late on a Thursday evening, I returned to the campground for a good night's sleep before driving back to Madison on my way home.

I couldn't sleep. Eager to see Shirley and the children again, I got up and drove for the rest of the night. On Friday, I kept going through Kansas and Nebraska. When it got dark, I stopped at a rest area, drew the curtains, and tried to sleep. I still couldn't sleep. I got back behind the wheel and drove until I reached the *DARE* parking lot in Madison, just before dawn on Saturday morning. Then I got in a couple of hours of rest before meeting Professor Cassidy and Kathie.

In two days more, I was back in Massachusetts, amazed at how small and congested my hometown had become during my absence. But Rick had grown considerably, and Shirley and Carina were eager to rejoin me on the road. We found space for Rick's baby foods and accoutrements, and the four of us went fieldworking in the state of Maine.

Our first community was the town of North Berwick, in the southeastern tip of Maine. We worked our way north and east, trying to stay ahead of the black flies. During this trip, we began to use the new and improved questionnaires and an excellent supplementary wildflower book. We also replaced the original stove with a Coleman model, which gave more heat, was cleaner, and could be used outdoors.

On Beal's Island, interviewing a lobster fisherman, I made my standard offer to assist with chores in return for his help. As a result, I spent Saturday morning offshore in his lobster boat, hauling traps and baiting pockets. That was the most memorable of my small, reciprocal favors.

I recall waking early one morning at the Michaud Farm campsite on the Allagash River. The night before, we had closed the Word Wagon up tight to keep out insects. There were only a few black flies on the white headliner, but there were a hundred or more nasty little no-see-ums that had crept in through tiny cracks. It took some time to pick them all off before they could warm up and go to work on us.

Allagash was the last of our Maine communities. I completed fieldwork in New Hampshire that summer and started in Vermont. Because of the black flies and mosquitoes, Shirley and the children spent more time at home. But I was close enough to get home myself on the weekends.

One of my informants had been a logger in the White Mountains. Now and then, I catch myself singing a refrain to one of his songs. I wish now that I had sought out other loggers—especially those who had worn spiked boots in the old long-log river drives.

When my fieldwork was over, Shirley and I were sad to say goodbye to the Word Wagon. It had brought us to many memorable places and let us come to know many delightful people. Our informants were largely old and retired, but most were also quick-minded and fully occupied with projects and plans. As we approach old age, these memories attest that we still have a lot of good years coming.

After living in several states, I'll retire close to where I was born. Shirley and I plan to get a small camper, but not quite as small as the Word Wagon. When we hit the road again, we'll revisit some of my *DARE* communities. My informants may have moved on, but many of their words are still alive in my eclectic vocabulary.

Between trips, I'll sit in a rocker on my side porch, a drink in my hand and a dog at my feet. Then, as Professor Duckert once jested, I'd love to see an unsuspecting Fieldworker, carrying the next-generation *DARE* questionnaire, come down the garden path. ✦

Reino Maki served as a systems analyst and application architect during most of his career, working for General Electric's steam turbine division and IBM's Atlanta software laboratory. He became an independent consultant about ten years ago, and is currently looking forward to an early retirement.

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Longtime Staff Member Retires

After seventeen years as *DARE*'s Office Manager, Karen Krause retired in March of 2004. Karen's plans for retirement include spending more time with her beloved Persian cats, indulging her passion for reading, pursuing her interest in writing, and traveling. We wish her the best. ✦

Barbara G. Wolfe, DARE *Office Manager*

Staff Member Profile

In this continuing series, Beth Gardner interviews the newest member of the DARE *staff, Barbara G. Wolfe, who came on board as Office Manager in March of this year.*

Q: What are your major responsibilities at *DARE*?

A: I was hired to be the Office Manager and maintain sound budget and financial practices. My responsibilities include management of all financial activities for the *DARE* project, including preparation of budget proposals for granting agencies, maintenance of fund disbursements, and continual analysis of accounts. I serve as liaison for *DARE* with the English Department, the Office of the Dean of Letters and Science, the Office of Research and Sponsored Programs, and the UW Foundation for grant-related correspondence or questions concerning the expenditure of funds. Other duties include purchasing supplies, working with the Chief Editor on correspondence, preparing reports as requested, and coordinating maintenance activities.

Q: What parts of your job do you enjoy most?

A: All of it. I really do not have a preference as to what one thing I like better than another. I work with a super group of people, I have my own office, everything works well (equipment-wise), and I am right in the hubbub of the campus—what more could a person ask for?

Q: What do you find most challenging?

A: Sitting for eight hours a day—I am not used to that!

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

A: The whole project is incredible and a complete surprise to me. I never realized the amount of work that goes into a dictionary and the research of each word. I believe a book could be written on the process alone—maybe it has been. I believe the staff members have to truly love their work and be 110% dedicated to endure the process of putting a dictionary together. I admire them.

Q: What are your interests away from *DARE*?

A: My husband, Fred, and I have a 320-acre beef farm in South Wayne, Wisconsin, so when I have time, I help on the farm. My husband also is nationally known for his antique Massey-Harris tractor collection (he has 44 tractors), so we do shows and participate in the Pecatonica Valley Antique Farm Thresheree in Lafayette County every fall. I assist him when necessary with his online tractor parts company.

I have a 23-year-old son, Brandon, who lives in Belleville, Wisconsin (which, fortunately, is on my way home from work, so I can fit in short visits with him periodically as I fly by during my three-hour daily commute). A year ago I graduated with a B.S. in Business from Upper Iowa University, and I am now working on my Master's degree in Public Administration in UIU's online program.

Other interests include participation in many committees and organizations. I am chairperson of the Friends of the Seniors committee, which is trying to raise funds to renovate an independent living facility for South Wayne's senior citizens. I am also running for a position on the town board, and am president of our church council and an advisor for the Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection's Farm Center, where I assist farmers in financial distress and help assess their financial options.

For fun, Fred and I love to go camping in our mobile home or go riding on our Harley-Davidson or go rummaging for antiques. We also are starting a new adventure as metal detector distributors. I cannot wait to discover all of the treasures awaiting us on our farm! ✦

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