



THEIR NAMES may be unfamiliar, but not their deeds. The Menominee Logging Museum, the Treehaven Field Station of UW-Stevens Point, the Schlitz Audubon Center: were it not for their generosity and abiding care, these treasures would not exist. In ways both small and large, public and private, Dorothy and Jacque Vallier—she goes by Dory, and despite the French spelling, his name is “Jack”—carry on the grand tradition of philanthropy. Their concerns, no matter how specific, are driven by a profoundly felt commitment to serve broad needs: education, the environment, the preservation of Wisconsin’s natural and historical legacies. They have led long, diversely satisfying lives, their own good fortune allowing them to give tirelessly of themselves, of their time, labor and resources.

For a boy of twelve, it was adventure of the highest order. Jacque Vallier’s father, who had a greenhouse business just north of what is now Mitchell Field (“I hunted rabbits in the tamarack swamps there,” Jacque recalls), enjoyed a friendship with an Elcho man named Julius Falstead. Falstead milked a herd of Guernseys, but he also ran a cedar pole logging camp near Lac Vieux Desert, one of the last such camps in the northwoods. The necessary arrangements were made, and in the autumn of 1924, Jacque arrived in camp via the railroad spur line from Rummel’s Siding (now Conover). His job was “bull cook,” which is lumberjack for cook’s helper; the head cook was none other than Mrs. Falstead. “The best cook I’ve ever known,” Jacque says of her.

He remembers coming into camp as if it were yesterday. “It was just at nightfall,” he says, leaning on the words like a storyteller. “There were already several ‘jacks in camp, and Mr. Falstead had the fires going. The next morning, before he left, he took me aside. ‘Now, Yacque,’ he said in his Norwegian accent, ‘comes four o’clock, you know where you are.’ What he

DOROTHY and JACQUE VALLIER

A natural generosity and love for nature have inspired their extraordinary gifts to the people of Wisconsin.

by Tom Davis

meant was, for crapes’ sakes, don’t get lost! By November, it gets dark early in the cedar swamps. I soon learned that the best place to be at four o’clock was in the cook’s shanty.”

Vallier feasted on logging camp life like a bear on honey. Inquisitive and observant, he absorbed a world of knowledge. He came to know the tools, techniques and tasks, the richly idiomatic vocabulary of the ‘jacks, the structure and rhythm of the camp. He learned, too, to identify the trees and plants of the forest. “It was a marvelous year,” he attests. “I captured a love of wild things, and of wilderness, that never left me.”

Plants, especially, fascinated him. Encouraged by his parents, Jacque majored in botany at UW-Madison, and earned a Master’s degree from the University of Iowa. From there, he signed on to teach at Washington High School in Milwaukee. His forty-year tenure at Washington—thirty as chairman of the science department—was extraordinarily fulfilling. The academic environment was, in his opinion, unrivalled.

In 1955 Vallier applied for the position of botanist at the newly created Wisconsin Audubon Camp near Sarona. He got the job, and at the dedication ceremony made the acquaintance of a woman who had been instrumental in making the camp a reality, Dory (Mrs. Gordon) Kummer.

Dory Kummer’s enthusiasm for nature and the outdoors was a match for Jacque’s. The granddaughter of Schlitz Brewery founder Henry Uihlein, she was a Junior Audubon member by the sixth grade, and

her love of things wild and unspoiled—flowers, birds, country—is rooted in childhood joys: visits to her grandfather’s summer home on the Milwaukee River, with its grape arbors and gardens; walks with her father on the trails of his “gentleman’s farm” near Hales Corners. As an adult, Dory continued her involvement with the Audubon Society. Her experiences at Audubon Camps around the country convinced her to pursue the idea of a Wisconsin camp, an idea that, typically, she saw through to its conclusion. Dory’s achievements and abilities did not go unnoticed: she was selected to serve two terms on the National Audubon Society’s board of directors.

And she played a pivotal role in one of Wisconsin’s most brilliant conservation success stories, the establishment of permanent prairie chicken habitat on the Buena Vista Marsh. On their way to inspect the property that would eventually become Treehaven, Dory and her late first husband, Gordon Kummer, stopped near Plainfield to say hello to Fred and Frances Hamerstrom, the famous wildlife biologists. Central Wisconsin’s prairie chicken range was, in the ‘50s, disappearing rapidly. Fran waxed eloquent—as only Fran can—on the birds’ plight, citing a particularly choice sixty-acre parcel of grassland that was soon to be transfigured by the plow. That wouldn’t do, obviously, so Dory and Gordon bought the sixty, strictly for the chickens. (They went ahead and bought Treehaven, too, 1,200 acres of gorgeous hardwoods in the Harrison Hills, between Tomahawk and Rhinelander.)

Fueled by the Hamerstrom’s dire pre-

dictions, Dory flew the banner of the prairie chicken crusade. At a gathering of the National Audubon Society in New York City, she buttonholed Bill Sullivan, a prominent Milwaukee conservationist. The ensuing exchange has become, in certain circles, the stuff of legend. "Bill," Dory insisted, "we must do something to help the prairie chicken." "Help the prairie chicken?" Sullivan retorted. "Hell, I didn't know they were in trouble." The Society of Tympanuchus Cupido Pinnatus, which has since generated millions for acquisition and management of Wisconsin's prairie chicken habitat, was born of that meeting. The Society is still going strong, and the future of Wisconsin's prairie chickens is secure.

Gordon Kummer died in 1958. Dory dedicated Kummer House on the UW-Madison campus to his memory. The recipients of Evans Scholarships, awarded to former caddies by the Western Golf Association, billet there. In 1962, Dory Kummer became Dory Vallier.

Jacque eventually became director of the Wisconsin Audubon Camp. During a day off from his duties there in the summer of '66, he and Dory drove to an auction at Gunde's Canyon, in the Blue Hills. (Old man Gunderson, whom Jacque knew, had moved to Rice Lake, where he worked as a shoemaker.) What Jacque found at that auction kindled glowing memories into flame. There was a pair of enormous skidding tongs, weighing forty pounds and capable of opening to grasp the broadest white pine, the kind of implement that no average man could wield. There were half a dozen log marking hammers, used to stamp the company insignia on the end of each log, enabling the timber to be sorted at the conclusion of river drives. Several two-man crosscut saws completed the cache. Vallier bought it all, and thus began a three-year odyssey throughout the historic pineries of Minnesota, Michigan and Wisconsin, a journey that culminated in the creation of the Menominee Logging Camp Museum, arguably the finest such museum in the nation.

Vallier was determined to collect *everything* related to logging. He made exhaustive lists of the items that would have filled each camp building, from the bunkhouse to the horse barn. (Jacque later put his knowledge of logging terms to good use as co-



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author, with L.G. Sorden, of *Lumberjack Lingo*, the final word on what might have been a lost language.) He placed this ad in northwoods newspapers during the 1966 deer hunting season: "Wanted: old logging tools of all kinds. Guaranteed to purchase

Dorothy and Jacque Vallier enjoy a quiet moment at the Schlitz Audubon Center, near Milwaukee, a nature preserve their efforts and endowment made a reality.



if of museum quality." It took three years for the Valliers to contact everyone who responded. "Every Friday," Dory recalls, "I'd pick up Jacque at Washington School, and we'd drive north. We'd see as many people as we could, then drive back late Sunday night. I don't know how we did it!"

The collection grew steadily. A tip led the Valliers to an abandoned, but still-standing, camp in a remote corner of north-eastern Minnesota that was a virtual museum in itself, the Lost Dutchman of logging artifacts. There were other, more human, benefits to the search as well. Everywhere they traveled, the Valliers met wonderful people. Many lived humbly in tarpaper shacks; many were Finnish, Polish or Norwegian, and spoke a broken English. All welcomed the Valliers into their homes, as if they were old friends, often insisting they take a meal with them. Jacque and Dory have never forgotten those meals, nor the heartfelt kindness from which they were offered.

The Menominee Logging Camp Museum opened its doors in 1972. Located on the banks of the rushing Wolf River, and surrounded by towering pines, to walk through its authentic buildings is to step back in time, to an era made distant more by its intense brevity than by the actual passage of years. And it is to summon, and experience, the magic of logging camp life that touched Jacque Vallier when he was a boy, and made a mark as indelible as the stamp of a hammer.

While Dory accompanied and supported her husband in this endeavor, she also found time to pursue her own interests. She began collecting pressed-glass goblets, rare, delightful pieces dating to the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The hunt eventually took her to all corners of the country, and didn't end until she had amassed 1,167 pressed-glass objects. Dory later donated the entire collection to UW-Stevens Point, where it is a centerpiece of the Museum of Fine Arts.

And, during the same period, she was deeply involved in the lobbying, cajoling and arguing that would make the Schlitz Audubon Center a reality. The 185-acre property, known as the Nine Mile Farm, had been originally purchased by the Uihlein family in 1885. With its wooded ravines, meadows and wildflowers, it was

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another of the special places Dory had loved as a child. As early as 1960, she proposed to the Schlitz Foundation that the farm be turned into a nature center. "I didn't get very far," she admits. In the years following, she had a hand in quashing at least two outrageous development schemes, and was gravely disappointed when a promising plan fell apart for wholly political reasons.

The puzzle finally came together in 1971. National Audubon agreed to sanction the proposed center, providing that local funding could be secured to cover the costs of operation and development. The Valliers erased the former concern with a one million dollar endowment; Dory's cousin, Joseph Uihlein, drummed up \$650,000 for development of the facility. On the 185th anniversary of Audubon's birthday, April 26, 1971, the Schlitz Foundation board voted unanimously to deed the Nine Mile Farm to the Audubon Society. When the Interpretive Building was dedicated three years later, Robert Uihlein, president of the Schlitz Brewery, commemorated the occasion by releasing a rehabilitated saw-whet owl—in German, Uihlein means "little owl"—which promptly flew into a nearby tree and watched the proceedings with silent approbation.

"It was a dream come true," says Dory. "We're especially pleased by the fact that the Center is within a thirty-minute drive of every school in Milwaukee County.

If you learn to love and respect nature at an

early age—as I did—it enriches the rest of your life." Manned by a professional staff, and bolstered by an army of enthusiastic volunteers, the Schlitz Audubon Center offers dozens of classes, workshops, programs and field trips, tailored for young and old alike. Its value as a resource to the residents of metropolitan Milwaukee can hardly be calculated.

In the late '70s, it occurred to the Valliers that they were "getting older," and that they should "do something with Treehaven." What they did was donate 960 acres of those majestic, rolling hardwoods, and the trout stream that courses among them, to UW-Stevens Point for use as a field station and living laboratory. Thirty-five miles of roads make the grounds fully accessible to students and researchers. Treehaven offers a variety of credit and non-credit classes in ecology, forestry and conservation, and this September hosted the International Forestry Conference. The facilities rival those of an American plan resort, right up to the fieldstone fireplaces. "The food is superb," Dory attests, "and the quarters are very comfortable. That may be why it's so popular! The scenery is magnificent, too."

The Valliers retain ownership of a home at Treehaven, along with a small lake and a quarter-section of forest. They divide their time between that residence and an attractive condominium in Mequon, a duplex decorated with Owen Gromme paintings—originals, not prints—and other big art. A slender pond out back provides habitat for mallards—every spring, a hen nests in the maidenhair ferns they planted on the north side of their home—and Canada geese. They still travel frequently, and count among their favorite places such gems as the Ridges Sanctuary in Baileys Harbor and Crex Meadows near Grantsburg. Age may have slowed the pace of their activity, but it has not reduced the measure of their concerns. Jacque and Dory Vallier are still committed to making Wisconsin better, to saving what is irreplaceable. They are owed a great debt. If people emulate their work and their ideals, it will be, for the Valliers, payment in full.

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