

As my wife, Nancy, and I were driving back to our cottage after seeing **Dairy Heirs** I said to her, “You know, of the ten best – for me – plays I have ever seen, I think three of them were at Northern Sky: **Victory Farm**, **Lumberjacks In Love**, and **Dairy Heirs**. Guys, I have seen a lot of plays. I will always remember my first time. My parents took their prepubescent little boy to see the road show version of **South Pacific** in St. Louis in the early 1950’s. I still think of Nellie when I shower. The others in my personal best include **A Midsummer Night’s Dream** in San Diego’s Balboa Park with the Pacific Ocean providing fog and Neil Simon sitting in the audience (the actors were on fire!); the Los Angeles production of **Hair** in the late 1960’s; B.D. Wong in **M. Butterfly** on Broadway; **Julius Caesar** at the Washington Shakespeare Theater where at the Ides of March Caesar’s Armani suit opened to reveal a red scarf that unrolled as the assassins did their work and ended in a bright red circle around the quiet body (it wasn’t a tin cow, but still!); a **Macbeth** at the Guthrie where Lady Macbeth could have gotten me and every other man in [the] audience to do whatever she said.

A monk I know says there are thin spots in the veil. I have felt them: Oak Creek Canyon in Arizona, near a pueblo kiva in New Mexico, on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, placing my hand on the Wailing Wall in Old Jerusalem, walking through the Muslim section of Old Jerusalem at 4:30 in the morning and hearing the call to prayer, Assisi, the Shrine in a cornfield between Sturgeon Bay and Green Bay. And at Northern Sky, where laughter and songs rise through the Sequoias or Beeches or whatever and join the stars in that wondrous Wisconsin sky.

Nancy and I were high school sweethearts who broke apart shortly after we went off to separate colleges (she went to the good one, I went to the one that would take me). You can see why some of your plays have special resonance for us. We reconnected after 53 years, got engaged in Paris and married in Minnesota (something symbolic about that, I think). She has been coming to Door County since she was a little girl and we now come over from the Twin Cities two or three times a year. Alas, two years ago Nancy was diagnosed with early stage Alzheimer’s and the disease has started its ugly work. But over the last two weeks we saw **Boxcar** and **Dairy Heirs** and realized why theater in general, and Northern Sky specifically, continues: You are in the healing business. Nancy came alive in both shows and that lasted well into the next day. When the fireworks went off in **Dairy Heirs** she was fully in the moment, as was I and everybody around us.

I just wanted you to know what pure good you are doing.

John B.

PS. I thought the worst joke I ever heard on stage was: “In one ear and out the udder.” However, because of Chase’s absolutely perfect timing, it was also one of the funniest. It certainly produced the most moans I have ever heard from a Northern Sky audience.