

# The Oakland Observer

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## Sage Pans Auto-Poet

A new poet, hailed earlier this week as avant garde, got the crushing critical word yesterday; amusing, interesting but somewhat old-fashioned and limited in feeling.

The verdict was delivered by Rudd Fleming, professor of modern poetry at the University of Maryland, against an IBM machine in Florida.

The IBM-709, fed words and phrases by 18-year-old Richard Ragan in Tallahassee, has been turning out such verses as:

*Darkly the peaceful trees  
crashed  
In the serene sun  
While the heart heard  
The swift moon stopped  
silently.*

Fleming found poetry by computer "an entirely legitimate and interesting sort of operation, but—

"There was too much of the old notion of poetic diction; it was too limited in nature."

To compose his poems Ragan fed the computer at Florida State University 15 nouns, 10 "noun phrases," 13 past-tense verbs, 13 preposi-

(Continued on P. 2)

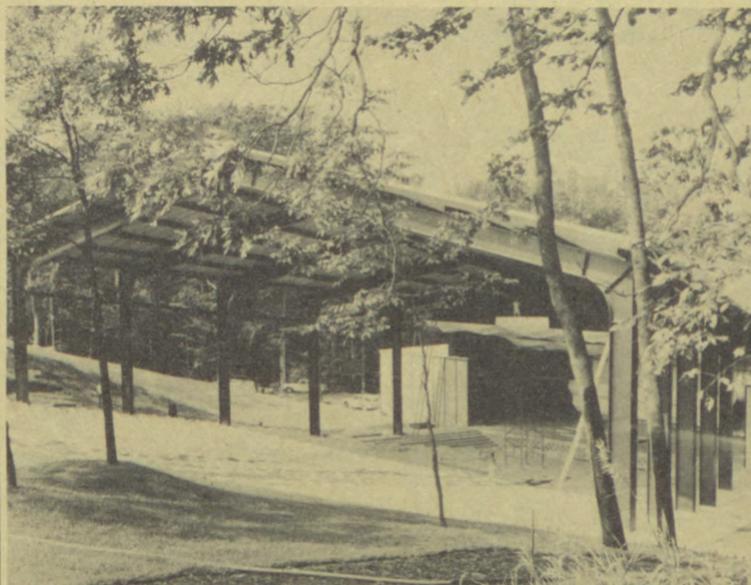
## Philosopher To Speak On Campus

Professor Abraham Kaplan, of U of M, will be on campus Friday, July 17, as guest of the philosophy department. Kaplan will present a talk at 1:00 p.m. in 195 Sci. on "Science and Human Values."

Kaplan is an American philosopher of considerable distinction. He has written several books and many articles in a variety of fields related to philosophical discourse, but always of current interest. His writings are sufficiently erudite to earn him the respect of his colleagues, but not arcane enough to keep the average, intelligent reader from reading and enjoying them. His most recent book, "The Conduct of Inquiry," deals with the same topic he has elected to speak on Friday, namely, the values implicit in scientific enterprise and their implications for society in general.

The University community is invited to hear Kaplan's address, which should be of interest to humanist, social scientist and natural scientist alike. Faculty members, even.

## Music Festival Opens In Week



The Baldwin Pavilion as visitors to the Meadow Brook Music Festival will see it next week. It is a highly sophisticated acoustical structure, termed "An ideal place for musical presentations." Observer photo by Howard A. Coffin.

It's finished and it's fabulous. The new \$300,000 Howard C. Baldwin Memorial Pavilion on campus will be given its debut for the first concerts of the Meadow Brook Music Festival season next Thursday, Friday and Saturday at 8:30 p.m.

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra under Sixten Ehrling's direction will be featured at these concerts and in the nine programs scheduled, three a week, through August 15.

Violinist Gordon Staples and cellist Italo Babini will be soloists at all three concerts this week playing the Brahms Double Concerto in A minor.

The Thursday-Friday program will include Wagner's Overture to "Die Meistersinger" and Sibelius' Symphony No. 2 in D major. Saturday's program will include Dvorak's Overture "Carnival," four excerpts from Mendelssohn's "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and Alfvén's Swedish Rhapsody No. 1.

Of special interest at Meadow Brook will be the new Lula C. Wilson Memorial Concert Shell especially designed for the facility by Christopher Jaffe of Stagecraft Corporation, Norwalk, Conn.

Jaffe's theory is that a well designed concert shell must blend, balance and project the various sections of an orchestra, evenly distributing a well mixed and toned musical sound throughout the listening area.

He has designed this shell, taking into consideration the need of the musicians to hear themselves and other segments of the orchestra during a concert.

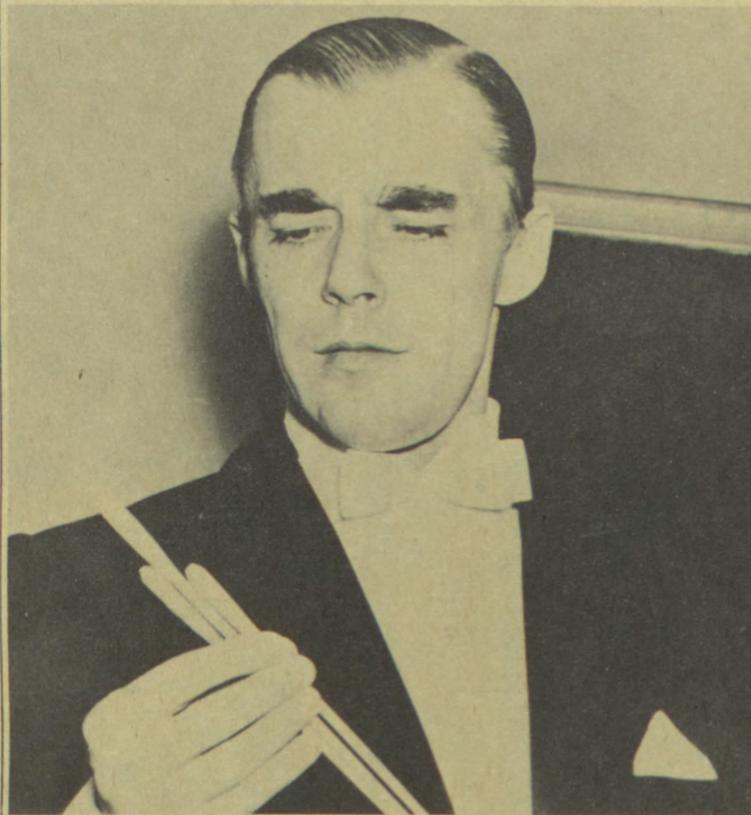
The Lula C. Wilson Memorial Concert Shell and Canopy was designed on the basis of these musical acoustic parameters utilizing the polycylindrical column form in combination with multi-faceted ceiling splays to achieve optimum results.

The polycylindrical column, one of the most efficient dispersing surfaces known to the acoustician, has been used for many years in Europe. It is currently receiving recognition from architects and acousticians in the planning of concert halls, auditoriums and concert shells in this country.

The design for Meadow Brook calls for the ceiling and canopy to utilize multi-faceted dispersing surfaces molded in a three dimensional splay that improves the side to side distribution of musical sound throughout the listening area and stage.

By adjusting the angles of the ceilings, which float within the perimeter of the standing walls, the shell is first tuned with electronic instruments and then with the Detroit Symphony itself.

It is anticipated at some future time, that the Meadow Brook Music Festival will be presenting opera productions on the same stage. The shell is completely demountable and can be removed or adapted for operatic productions in a relatively short time.



Sixten Ehrling, conductor of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

## Woody Banishes Basketball

Intercollegiate sports has reared its fiery head above Oakland's peaceful dells once again. This issue, the most controversial Oakland has ever faced, has polarized the community more than any other. As usual, each side is persuaded of the Elysian rectitude of its cause, much to the bane of intelligent discussion.

On the "against intercollegiate sports" side, there are the oft-repeated charges that Chancellor Varner acted in bad faith, that he is fronting for a gremlin who is out to wreck the university. What they do not seem to realize is that no one ever told Varner NOT to have intercollegiate sports in the first place. The policy as it has stood since 1959 was Varner's own idea. Perhaps there is not adequate sympathy for the fact that Oakland, providing as it does a first-rank faculty and curriculum, has not been a particularly good environment for learning. Our attrition rate has been very high, and students, well-qualified by all objective standards, have been failing. Something has been wrong. In terms of attrition-rate, the failures have been some decimal-fraction. Who reads into the decimal-fraction the fact that Oakland's inadequacies have been taking qualified students and grinding them up? The new curriculum for freshmen plus a special dean is expected to correct the situation. But perhaps Varner wanted to try athletics out as added insurance. And if he sincerely believed that some measure (such as intercollegiate athletics,) would help the school, would he not be acting in bad faith to deny his better judgment?

But there is another side to the issue. The "pro" faction has, we believe, displayed a contemptible blindness to the dangers that intercollegiate sports pose. The university, after all, is not placed in the midst of an established intellectual community; we are in the lap of the largest industrial complex in the world. The values of this territory are un-intellectual or anti-intellectual enough without our helping them along. Athletics are an easy way to spend enthusiasm. Studies are less convenient. Perhaps we should not contrive to make it so easy to avoid the real crux of the Oakland program.

Furthermore, Chancellor Varner acted unilaterally on a matter which should have gone before the faculty Senate. Athletics undoubtedly affect university welfare, and the Senate has the right and responsibility to review such things as athletic policies. We do not propose that Chancellor Varner act against his own better judgment—what we would rather see is a greater eagerness on the Chancellor's part to accept and sympathize with faculty views.

In any event, the issue of intercollegiate sports has done in spades what we feared football might do at worst—it has distracted the university from its main function. It has given students a convenient way to get out of studying, it has given the faculty a reason to ignore teaching and scholarship for the time being. We have generated in the past several days more "team spirit" than is ever in evidence around here in the name of academic pursuits. That fact alone is deplorable, in a humorous sort of way.

Intercollegiate athletics would never be a problem if everyone behaved with circumspection and civility.

But everyone won't, and athletics will.

OU will not have an intercollegiate basketball team—at least not yet. Chancellor Varner reversed his decision on intercollegiate basketball in the wake of formal demands from faculty and students that basketball be proscribed. "There seemed reasonable question that something as controversial as basketball could be to any immediate advantage," Varner said.

Instead, the faculty Senate committee which will establish controls on the sports program will discuss the matter of basketball and decide whether or not it should be a part of Oakland's athletics picture.

Hollie Lepley, director of intramural athletics, was instructed by the Chancellor to suspend plans concerning the basketball team until the committee makes its recommendation.

A re-assessment of the intercollegiate athletics program will be undertaken in two years by a committee of the faculty Senate. Chancellor Varner agreed to a student demand that he solicit faculty advice after two years as to whether the intercollegiate sports venture had been worthwhile. The demand was embedded in a letter signed by about 80 students.

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Daniel Polsby, Factotum.  
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(Continued from P. 1)

tions, 16 adverbs and 10 adjectival phrases.

Fleming, who also teaches creative writing, said he was reminded of "art by chance" such as throwing or shooting paint onto a wall, recently popular but at least as old as the teachings of Leonardo da Vinci.

The fact that Ragan used a machine to produce poetry "doesn't have any satiric force against modern poetry," Fleming said. "A play with words is part of the everlasting business of poetry."

"Rhyming poetry gives you something like the automatic effect of the IBM machine. Even the sonnet gets to be a kind of automatic game, working within set limits."

Nevertheless, Fleming concluded, good poetry "still requires the full, free intuitive feeling and skill of a human being, and the intelligence of poet and reader."

"You can't have automatic poets," he declared.

Cogito ergo Cartesius est.

### Morality

Set in the dooryard

*Through the bows in bamboo slats  
Past the blue outlines of bats  
Light slips out of my living room  
And detonates the eyes of cats.*

*The yellow incandescent light  
Stripes green the damp dark grass of night,  
Illumines, too, the sweet bright pats  
Dropped-by dogs from an earthly height.*

*Beyond the back yard's narrow keep  
I shut the light and pray for sleep.  
In my woodpile rodents lodge,  
And cats convoke in my garage.*



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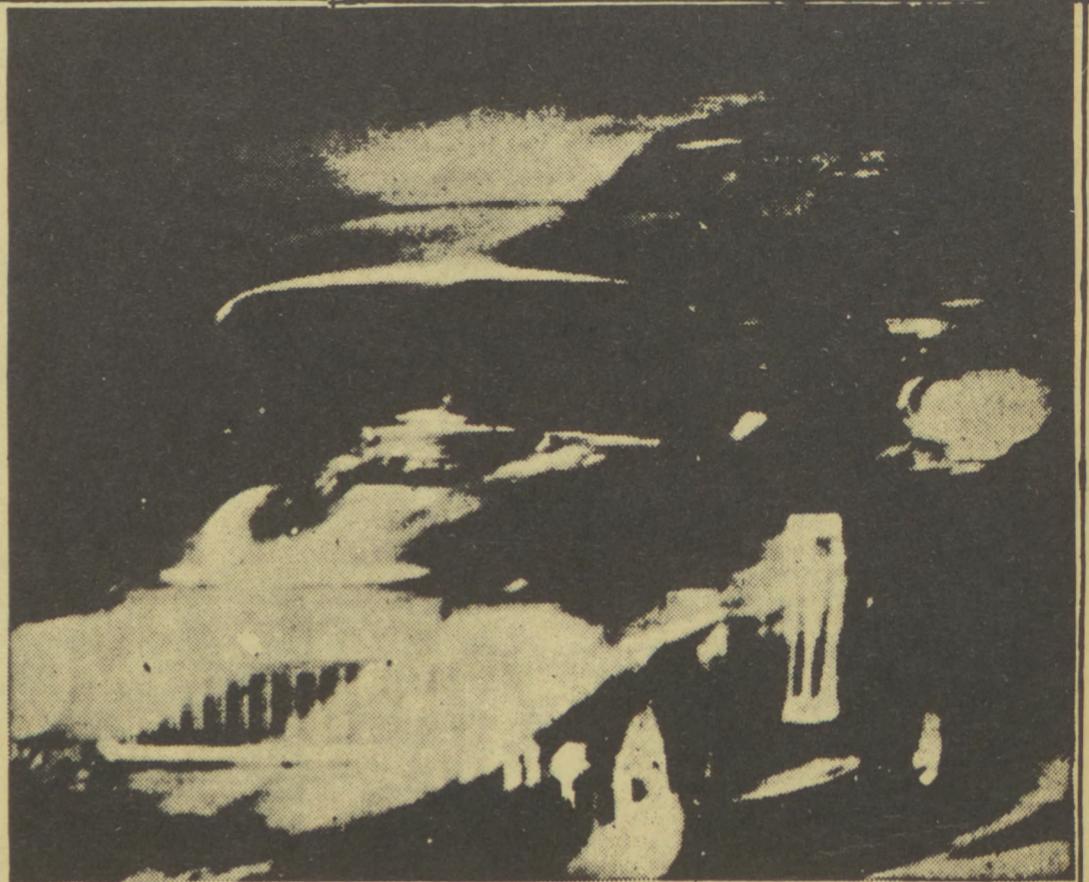
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