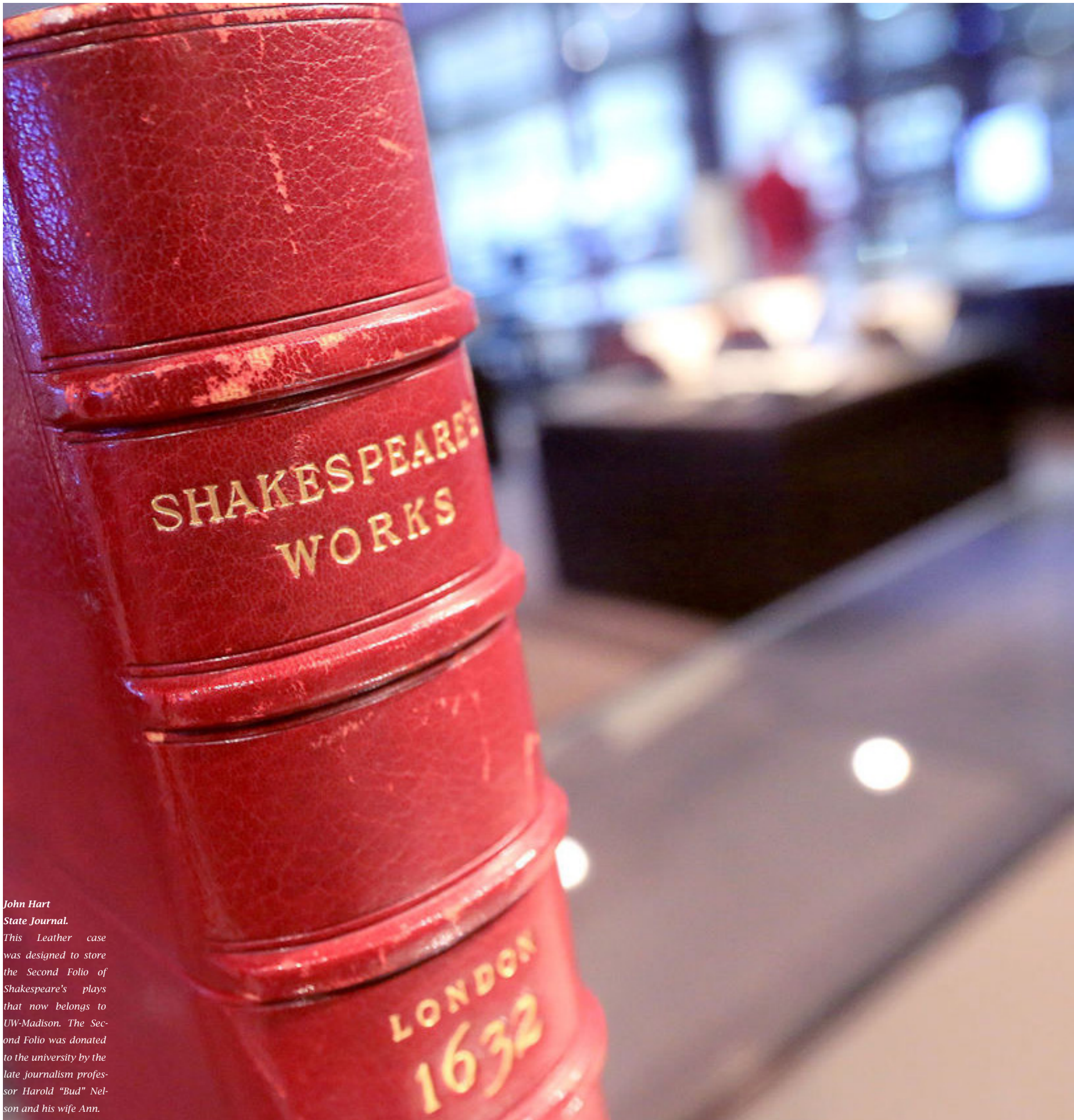




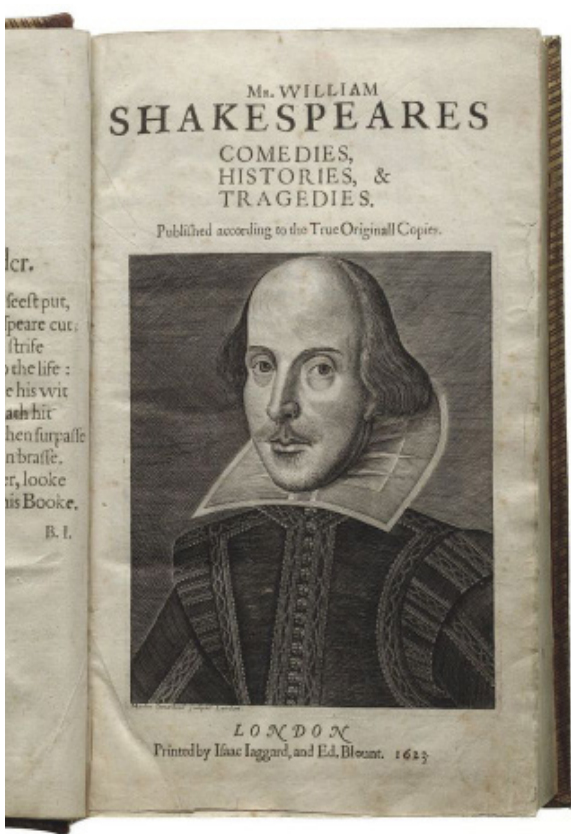
John Hart
State Journal.
This leather case
was designed to store
the Second Folio of
Shakespeare's plays
that now belongs to
UW-Madison. The Sec-
ond Folio was donated
to the university by the
late journalism profes-
sor Harold "Bud" Nel-
son and his wife Ann.

First Folio's Arrival a Shakespearean Thriller

Get ready for Shakespeare's dramatic entrance. The First Folio is coming to Madison, one of the last stops in a yearlong tour designed to exhibit a copy of the first printed collection of Shakespeare's plays in every U.S. state, Washington, D.C., and Puerto Rico. The precious and historic volume, laid open to the page bearing Hamlet's "To be or not to be" speech, will be on display from Thursday to Dec. 11 at the UW-Madison's Chazen Museum of Art. But how it got there, who exactly placed it in its specially designed case or when it will be removed from the museum and returned to its home at the Folger Shakespeare Library in Washington, D.C., is something that very, very few people will ever know. The First Folio, traveling to mark the 400th anniversary of Shakespeare's death, is to be delivered under con-

ditions of top-secret security. "Nobody on our staff will be allowed to touch it," said Chazen director Russell Panczenko. The Folger will send its own specially trained staff to lift the 900-page book into the glass case built to house it while on tour. Explanatory wall panels, bearing background information for visitors, are also shipped in by the Folger.

*"probably the most
studied book in the world
besides the Bible"*



Shakespeare First Folio, 1623. Folger Shakespeare Library. An original copy of the Shakespeare First Folio, printed in 1623, will be on display in Madison Nov. 3 through Dec. 11 as part of “First Folio! The Book that Gave Us Shakespeare,” a traveling exhibition from the Folger Shakespeare Library, in partnership with the Cincinnati Museum Center and the American Library Association.

The First Folio’s visit, and many cultural events linked to the occasion, have been coordinated by collections librarian Susan Barribeau of UW-Madison Libraries. But the Chazen is playing host to the rare book itself because the art museum is used to handling fragile and valuable cultural works. Even so, the First Folio’s visit is unique. Thousands — nobody knows how many thousands — of people are expected to come view it. Slots for group tours at the free-entry museum are already filling up. The First Folio was put together by two of Shakespeare’s actor friends and printed in 1623, seven years after Shakespeare’s death. Scholars believe about 750 copies were printed by a London print shop, and some 233 of those are known to have survived to this day. Eighty-two copies are in the Folger Shakespeare Library collection.

An estimated 400,000 people have already turned out across America to see copies of the First Folio in the first 10 months of the tour, which began with a stop in Norman, Oklahoma, on Jan. 4. In some cities, as many as 30,000 people showed up to see the First Folio, said Folger spokeswoman Garland Scott. Because of “tour se-

curity,” Madison won’t know exactly which of the Folger’s 82 copies was shown here — until the volume has been returned safe and sound to the Folger, Scott said. The First Folio is considered the closest thing the world has to Shakespeare’s plays as they were written. It is a collection of 36 plays, grouped for the first time into comedies, histories and tragedies. Eighteen of the plays — including “Macbeth,” “Julius Caesar,” “As You Like It,” “Twelfth Night” and “The Taming of the Shrew” — had never been in print before, and likely would have been lost if they had not been published in the First Folio.

Actors also cherish the First Folio because of its purity. Shakespeare’s plays have been adapted, altered and abridged over the centuries. But the First Folio was published when the printing press itself was less than 200 years old. “Punctuation, grammar, was still closely tied with speech, how people spoke — and not grammar for reading purposes,” said Randall Duk Kim, an actor and co-founder of American Players Theatre in Spring Green, whose roots are in performing Shakespeare. Kim noted that when actors go back to the First Folio, they find punctuation — and even pauses that indicate entrances and exits from the stage — that brings the words to life, and reflects the way the playwright wanted them to be heard. For the general public, the First Folio “is probably the most studied book in the world besides the Bible,” said Barribeau, who has spent the better part of the last two years coordinating “Shakespeare in Wisconsin 2016” and the First Folio’s Wisconsin visit.

The secrecy surrounding its arrival, while impressive, is also understandable, Panczenko said. In 2001, a First Folio sold at auction for just over \$6.1 million. Another

fetches \$5.2 million in 2006. “It’s not so much that it’s valuable in terms of dollars — which of course it is — but it’s a unique piece of history,” Panczenko said. “And that’s what you don’t want to risk. It’s not so much the monetary value; preservation for future generations of (this) very important artifact is paramount.” The Chazen’s existing security system is sufficient to protect the First Folio, Panczenko said. Even so, the museum had to paint the space the book will be shown in — the second-floor Garfield galleries — at least four weeks ahead of time, to give the new paint three weeks to cure. That requirement was “by contract,” the museum director said.

At the Folger, First Folios “live in a vault that occupies an entire city block and is more than 30 feet underground,” Scott said in an email to the State Journal. “It looks a lot like the stacks in a modern library, with movable, sliding, metal shelving, very cool temperatures just the way the Folios like, and low humidity. It’s monitored for temperature and moisture continually,” she said. Many of the Folios are “housed with special containers built by our conservation team. One thing that surprises folks is that the folios lay on their back rather than standing up the way books do on a bookshelf. Standing a book up puts stress on the book spine.”

UW-Madison owns a copy of the Second Folio, published in 1632. That bound volume is on display along with a copy of the Third Folio borrowed from Loras College in Dubuque, Iowa, plus other prized books from Shakespeare’s day in the exhibit “The Globe/Global in Shakespeare’s Time,” located in the special collections area of Memorial Library. In contrast to the high security demanded by the Folger, most of the items on display

“It’s not so much that it’s valuable in terms of dollars — which of course it is — but it’s a unique piece of history”



at Memorial Library can be removed from their glass display cases by library staff for the public to examine up close. “As my predecessor always said, we’re a library, not a museum,” explained curator of special collections Robin Rider. “We’re delighted to have people use books.”

“The Globe/Global in Shakespeare’s Time,” which features beautifully printed books and maps reflecting views of the world in the playwright’s day, is one of dozens of events and exhibits that have been part of “Shakespeare in Wisconsin” since April.

And the events continue: on Thursday, the Chazen Museum hosts the opening celebration of the exhibition “First Folio! The Book That Gave Us Shakespeare,” with a lecture by UW-Madison assistant English professor Joshua Calhoun and a reception sponsored by Friends of the UW-Madison Libraries. The Chazen will present an afternoon of family-friendly activities during its ART-SPIN community day on Saturday. On Friday and Nov. 6, Madison Opera performs

Gounod’s “Romeo and Juliet”; the following week University Opera performs Verdi’s “Falstaff”; and Bridge Poetry performs at the Chazen Dec. 8. Even UW-Madison’s Babcock dairy has developed a honey-flavored ice cream in the First Folio’s honor, called “To Bee or Not to Bee.”

More than four dozen Madison teachers will participate in a workshop at the Chazen, designed by the Folger, on teaching Shakespeare. UW Cinematheque is showing several Shakespeare-related films at the museum. Along with hosting the First Folio, the Chazen has mounted an exhibition of theater posters from the U.S. and Europe. The posters, all stunning works of graphic art, also demonstrate how Shakespeare’s stories continue to mesmerize audiences around the world. In the UW-Madison Libraries special collections room and soon at the Chazen, “You’re seeing books that are half a millennium old,” said Rider. With the proper care, “they’ll do very nicely for another half a millennium without any difficulty.”

John Hart State Journal. UW-Madison collections librarian Susan Barribeau, who has coordinated the upcoming visit of the First Folio of Shakespeare’s plays to Madison, stands near a display case bearing a Second Folio belonging to the university. While the First Folio is arriving under top-secret conditions from Washington, D.C., the Second Folio can be examined up close by the public.

If you go

What: “First Folio! The Book That Gave Us Shakespeare,” a touring exhibition from the Folger Shakespeare Library

Where: Chazen Museum of Art, 750 University Ave.

When: Nov. 3-Dec. 11. Museum hours are 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. Tuesday, Wednesday, and Friday; 9 a.m. to 9 p.m. Thursday; 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. Saturday and Sunday.

Admission: Free. Groups must call ahead at 608-263-4421.

Opening reception: Thursday. Lecture “Hamlet, Hamlet, Hamlet” by UW-Madison assistant professor of English Joshua Calhoun at 5:30 p.m. in Room L160, Conrad A. Elvehjem building, 800 University Ave. Preview reception with refreshments, music and cash bar from 6:30-8 p.m. in the Mead Witter Lobby of the Chazen Museum of Art, 750 University Ave.

ART-SPIN Community Day: Family-friendly events at the Chazen Museum of Art, Saturday with hands-on activities from 12-3 p.m.; Madison Shakespeare Company performing 12:30-1:30 p.m.; Young Shakespeare Players performing 1:45-2:45 p.m.

UW-Madison Special Collections: Other books from Shakespeare’s day, including a Second and Third Folio, are exhibited on the ninth floor of Memorial Library, 728 State St. Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. weekdays, with some weekend hours possible. A valid ID is needed to enter the library and the free exhibit.

Other events: Shakespeare-related events across the state -- including films, operas, plays, music and lectures -- are listed online at shakespeare.library.wisc.edu

Websites: www.folger.edu
www.chazen.wisc.edu