

# A WEST WING UPDATE

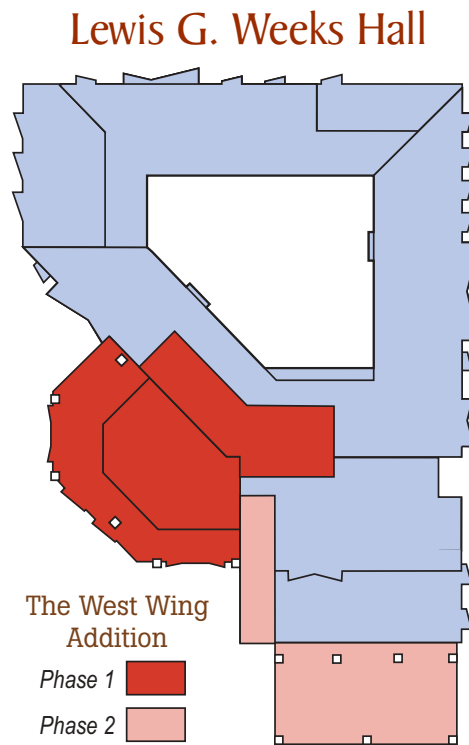
*Louis Maher and Clark Johnson*

The 2001 *Outcrop* contained a summary of our exciting plans for additions to Weeks Hall. A year later our designs have been finalized, and we have received construction bids on the project. The cover on this year's issue shows the general layout: a five-story structure at the southwest, which joins Weeks, and an extension on the south to enlarge the Museum.

In 2002, we had many meetings with the architects to tailor the plans to our needs. The final size of the addition came to 19,519 square feet; 85% of which (16,678 sq. ft.) were assignable to department functions. A huge set of plans comprising the "50% Architectural Base Sheet Review" were issued in early May, and these were pored over by staff of the State, University, and Department. Because of their intimate knowledge of Weeks Hall systems, Ben Abernathy and Lee Powell were critical in guiding our final designs.

In June, rough estimates suggested that costs might exceed our budget of five million dollars. However, we knew that the poor economic climate allowed several other similar-sized projects on campus to come in under estimates when the bids were completed—so we were optimistic. As a fallback, we took the only option available, and asked the architect, HSR Associates, to break the project into several parts wherein the bidding would be for a base structure with the option for several "add/alternates." The base bid was specified to include the main addition (shown as Phase I on the cover), and the Museum addition would be the next highest priority (Phase II).

The final project was divided into five components, including the base building, as well as four "add/alternates": (A.) Museum external shell structure; (B.) Museum interior and new air-handling equipment; (C.) Complete certain offices on the fourth floor, and (D.) purchase new compact shelving for the basement. The final bidding document and



plans were issued on November 22, 2002. The bids were opened by the State on January 23, 2003. Six area contractors submitted bids for the base structure; four bids for the plumbing; six bids for the electrical work; four bids for the heating and air-handling, and two for the audiovisual equipment. The low bid for the base project (respectively: J.P. Cullen and Sons, Inc., Janesville, WI; Monona Plumbing and Fire Protection, Inc., Monona, WI; Great Lakes Electrical, Oregon, WI; H & H Industries, Madison, WI; Lewis Sound, Milwaukee, WI) with the \$1,435,550 set aside by the State for architect fees, moveable equipment, lab equipment, contingencies, etc.) came to \$5,000,000. The bids

for the basic structure and the four add/alternates totaled \$6,167,231.

The high bids, fully \$1.2M above our budget, placed us in a quandary. The faculty therefore decided that we had no choice but to break the project into two phases. We recognized that fund-raising is a challenge in the current economic climate, and we could not take an additional \$1.2M from our endowment without in turn making deep cuts in funding for undergraduate and graduate teaching and research programs. The faculty therefore voted to pursue the Museum addition (Phase II) as soon as Phase I is funded.

We successfully avoided a freeze on all State building projects that was imposed in January 2003, because the addition has only university and gift funds involved; there is no State funding. We expect that ground breaking will take place in late spring of this year, and that completion of Phase I will occur in the fall of 2004. We plan to include Phase II in the campus-wide capital campaign that will be announced later this fall.