

# Michigan Today

## Rudy T Maestro of the hoops

MT photo by John Woodford

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# T A B L E

## The Kitchen Shrink Sara Moulton '74

By Emily Hoffman

It is the last day of taping and a tough one at that. Sara Moulton and her team at the Food Network's *Sara's Secrets* have been at it since early morning. By mid-afternoon, they have three shows "in the can" and one to go.

And then things start to go wrong. First, a drooping microphone transforms the sound of sizzling olive oil into the rattat-tat of machine gunfire. Then, a glitch with one of the cameras stops the taping, and finally a scene-stealing fly threatens to become an unwelcome addition to the apricot rosemary chicken recipe.

The director can't believe this is happening. It's the 39<sup>th</sup> show, out of this last round of 126 shows, and you'd think it would be running smoothly. Some technical problems, though, are beyond anyone's control.

But Sara Moulton is as cool as a cucumber sorbet. She is in her element—an elegant, understated Tuscan-style kitchen, with counters just the right height for the petite cook (she stands less than five feet tall in red Converse high tops, a professional kitchen no-no, she says, but for her, a definite comfort "yes!"). Glistening brass pots and pans hang along the back wall, just above a picture window framing a tranquil bucolic scene, not unlike the view from her parents' Massachusetts farmhouse. She uses her favorite knives and one-of-a-kind pepper mill, handcrafted just for her. No matter that, instead



Moulton winds up her last show of the season in a New York studio.

Michigan Today photo by Amanda Willitt

And when mistakes happen, as they inevitably do at home and on the set? "Sometimes you just say 'the show must go on,'" says the unflappable Moulton. And on it goes. *Sara's Secrets* is Sara Moulton's second hit show on the Food Network. First there was *Cooking Live*, which ended its run in March 2002 after 1,200 shows. October of 2000 marked another milestone: the publication of her first cookbook, *Sara Moulton Cooks at Home* (Broadway Books). All this is in addition to her "day job" as executive chef at *Gourmet* magazine.

With her food career cooking on all burners right now, it's hard to imagine that being a TV chef was the farthest thing from Moulton's mind when she attended the University of Michigan in the early 1970s. She chose the college for two reasons that make sense to any 18-year-old: her boyfriend was

there and "the people were really nice." Coming from New York City, she loved "the Midwestern personality" and found Ann Arbor beautiful.

### 'Cozy experience' in the RC

Moulton soon found her niche in the new Residential College (RC). "It was a tiny college within the big university, so you had the cozy experience and still had access to all the great programs at the University. This school was experimental, no grades, just evaluations. I loved the creativity of it all."

Moulton says that after working "my buns off" at New York's well-respected Brearley School, the RC's broad focus and unconventionality allowed her to let loose and explore her various interests. It was an eclectic curriculum, from pre-law and literature (her senior thesis was on Virginia Woolf's *To the Lighthouse*) to biological medical illustration, the history of feminism, astrophysics and, not surprisingly, education.

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of a ceiling, this kitchen is topped with rows of spotlights and in place of the fourth wall there are four roving television cameras and a crew attending to her every move. Moulton forgets about those cameras because she is doing two things she loves: cooking and teaching.

### A revelation

"I've done many things in my career," she says, "but the thing I do best is teach." When the Food Network first asked her to tape a cooking show pilot, Moulton remembers being "awful." But when a media trainer asked her why she should be on TV, she says she had her revelation: "I said, 'I am a really good teacher.' That's where it comes from. I desperately want people at home to have this information and to cook." Her desire extends to her own home in New York City, where her two children, Ruth and Sam, like to cook for her and their father, Bill.

# T a l k

## Connecticut Stake-Out Michael Stern '68

By John Woodford

A nondescript car pulled up to a plain roadside eatery in central Connecticut. A couple got out and walked inside. He was tall and lean and looked like a scholar. She was hearty and full-figured. They joined two other diners, examined the menus and began to talk about the available dishes with a clinical curiosity. They were pros, working undercover as usual, staking out this joint while trying to conceal their purpose from the waitress who came to take orders.

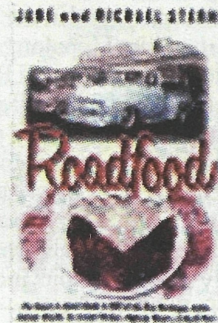
"Are your baked beans special?" the man asked, pointing to the menu's illustration touting the beans.

"What do you mean?" the waitress replied.

"Are they special or are they rather much the same as I might buy at a grocery?"

"They're much the same."

No one ordered the beans, and the rest of the fare also fit the "much the same" category. The place was too ordinary to make the next edition of *Roadfood*, which will be the fifth for Michael and Jane Stern's best-selling series. Since the first edition in 1978, the Sterns have continuously compiled and recompiled their compendium of notable, accessible



Michigan Today Photo by John Woodford  
Michael and Jane Stern outside a Connecticut purveyor of cuisine ordinaire. 'Most of the places we visit for our roadfood books,' Michael says, 'don't read our Gourmet column, don't listen to us on NPR's Splendid Table and don't care about the latest food trends. That's what we love about them. They may see good results and be appreciative if they're in Roadfood, but their main interest is day-to-day service for their regular customers.'

restaurants as they criss-cross the country (*Eat Your Way Across the USA* is just one of their many other literary servings for food junkies.)

Checking out road food, however, is perhaps the smallest fish they fry, mere sustenance for the effort needed to write the 14 other books they've produced since 1976, almost all collaborations.

### A banquet of talk

The menu that day in their home state did not whet hunger but it did stimulate conversation. The Sterns serve a banquet of talk, throughout which it becomes clear that the governing principle of their literary output is insight, not appetite.

Trained as art historians, Michael at Michigan ('68 BA),

Columbia and Yale and Jane at Pratt Institute and Yale, the Sterns were among the first to push the boundaries of their field past the borders of high art and into the provinces of popular culture. It started with their linking of cowboys and truckers as American archetypes.

"In 1971, we pitched the idea to the great editor and publisher Robert Gottlieb that truck drivers were our country's last cowboys," Michael recalled. The notion excited Gottlieb, and the Sterns hit the highways, trailing truckers.

"We soon realized we had to eat something while we were on the road, so we asked the truckers for advice," Michael continued. "They steered us to places along the road where they liked to eat." Two years later they completed the photo essay book *Trucker: A Portrait of the Last American Cowboy* (McGraw-Hill, 1976).

Gottlieb asked them what they wanted to do next. "We knew we were amateur eaters," Jane said, "but the idea of recognizing America's regional food was just beginning back then with Calvin Trillin's early writings on the subject. Of course Duncan Hines had really started it some 60 years ago." Result: the first *Roadfood*.

Their first best-seller was *Elvis World* (Knopf, 1987), one of the first works on Presley that treated him as a global phenomenon rather than a popular music personality. "We got the idea and the approval for the book on August 16, 1985," Michael said, "while we were talking with Bob Gottlieb. It was the 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Elvis's death but we didn't realize it then. We pitched the idea, and Bob lay back on his sofa and mused about it for some moments. Then he said, 'OK. Do it.' He was a publisher of the old school—autocratic, visionary, no contracts."

Jane held up her shrimp approvingly: "Look. They're the shape shrimps were in the 1950s," she says, pointing to the two finny "handles" on the hump-shaped shrimp smothered in deep-fried batter. The '50s continue to be a special era for the Sterns, not just for the emergence of Elvis and truckers but also for film masters like Douglas Sirk (see accompanying article) and the King and Queen of the Cowboys, Roy Rogers and Dale Evans.



The Sterns recognized early on that Elvis was a global phenomenon.

*Continued on page 4*



But food was always part of the picture too. She grew up in a family that was “very into food” and remembers fondly her grandmother Ruth’s hearty New England fare—roast beef, Yorkshire pudding and johnny cakes. Moulton’s mother liked to throw dinner parties and try out French recipes. “There were always interesting ingredients at home, fresh fennel, endive....”

### Vegetarians for thrift’s sake

At Michigan, she lived with three other young women. “We were mainly vegetarian at that point just because it was cheaper. My bibles were *The Vegetarian Epicure* and *Diet for a Small Planet*. We’d buy from a co-op and a great farmer’s market, but that tended to be more expensive than we could afford. Back then, buying a dish drainer was a luxury. We had no money.”

To make ends meet, Moulton satisfied the teaching impulse by tutoring for a while, but all along there were cooking jobs, too. She cooked for a family, waited tables and then cooked at the Del Rio jazz bar. “I thought it was the coolest place on the planet. I still think it is.” She remembers the menu as “haute junk food.”

“We had this crazy thing called a ‘Det Burger’ which was named after a cook there named Detweiler. It had god-awful ingredients, but boy, were they good. You seared a quarter pounder, topped it with dehydrated dried green peppers and California olives and probably Velveeta cheese, and then you steamed it in beer. That was Del Rio’s claim to fame. It was a fun place.”

She graduated in 1974 with, as she says, “no particular major” and credits her mother with pointing her toward a career in the kitchen. Moulton applied to the Culinary Institute of America—one of the country’s premier cooking schools—and graduated with honors in 1977. For the next several years, she worked her way up the food chain of the food world, first at a catering operation, then as a sous chef at a restaurant in Boston. She then came to New York because she “wanted to work with somebody great.” She got a job as *chef tournant* or rounds cook (meaning she could work any cooking station in a restaurant) at Manhattan’s *La Tulipe*. Along the way, she also studied with a master chef in Chartres, France.

### 80-hour weeks put on back burner

By the mid ’80s, her interest in starting a family meant putting the rigorous 80-hour work-weeks of restaurant life on the back burner. That’s when she became an instructor at what was then called Peter Kump’s Cooking School (now the Institute of Culinary Education) in New York. The intensive classes (five hours a

day, several times a week) only reinforced her love of teaching.

But how did cooking on television come into the picture? Moulton credits the woman who started it all, Julia Child.

“I had worked with Julia Child in the late ’70s, behind the scenes, prepping and styling the food on her show, and when I moved to New York in ’81, she was in the city, too, because she’d started working on *Good Morning America*. I went to visit her one time when she was taping, and I asked her if we could go out to dinner. She said, ‘Oh no, I have too much to do.’ So I said ‘Let me come in for free and prep for you so you can get out in time to have dinner.’ I did and they hired me the very next day to come and work with her.”

So began Moulton’s association with *Good Morning America*. In 1987, that led to her being named executive chef of the show, which meant that whenever a chef came on as a guest, she was in charge of the kitchen. But it was still a behind-the-scenes job. “I never intended to be on camera, but around ’93 they put me on just for fun. It was easy because I was on with Joan and Charlie [hosts London and Gibson], and I knew all the camera guys, and they all cheered me on.”

### The mission of a chef

Shortly thereafter came the Food Network pilot, the media trainer and her insight that teaching is what she does best. “When you sign on to become a chef, you have a mission: to make beautiful food and to be true to your profession. I spent a lot of time learning anything and everything I possibly could about food, so I felt by the time I got on the air, I had something to offer.”

Moulton’s Web site ([saramoulton.com](http://saramoulton.com)) offers a lot, too—recipes, of course, but also a discussion board where fans can compare notes. Moulton writes a column called “The Kitchen Shrink,” where she answers cooking questions, again taking on the role of mentor to her many fans.

With all this emphasis on teaching, it’s no surprise that for the very last show of the *Sara’s Secrets* season, Moulton chose the theme of cooking with kids. In succession, an 8-year-old, 13-year-old and 18-year-old cooked on camera with the star, who patiently and gently guided their chopping, measuring and stirring. **MT**

*Emily Hoffman is a writer/producer/broadcaster living in Brooklyn, New York. She has written about several of the world’s best chefs, including Alain Ducasse, Daniel Boulud and Julia Child.*

### King and Queen of the Cowboys

“We began *Happy Trails: Our Life Story* [Simon & Schuster, 1994] the ‘as told to’ book with me doing the Roy section and Jane worked with Dale,” Michael began.

“But soon we switched,” added Jane, perhaps demonstrating by her interjection the couple’s compositional method. (A constant flow of alternating mental current may fuel their prolificacy, because the interview notes show that it became increasingly hard to keep track of who was saying what in their seamless discourse.) “It turned out I could channel Roy, and Michael could do Dale. That’s just the way it worked out.”

The writing trail almost dead-ended at their first meeting with Roy and Dale. “We were riding in their car,” Michael said, “and Jane pointed out that all four of us had been born within days of each other in late October. ‘We’re all Scorpios!’ she said and suggested that was why we were hitting it off so well. But Dale and Roy fell silent. Then, after several moments, Dale said, ‘Honey, we think that stuff is satanic!’”

“I said nothing more about astrology,” Jane said.

“They were amazing people,” Michael continued. “They endured a lot of pain. Both of their adopted children died relatively young, and their only natural child died of Down syndrome at two. Their publicists advised them to keep the grievous episodes to themselves, but instead Dale wrote a book about it to help other parents, and it’s still in print.”

Easygoing and friendly as the onscreen cowboy king, Roy was a “shy and lonely fellow” in private life, Michael said. “His favorite pastime was to visit junkyards and flea markets by himself. He depended on Dale whenever there was socializing to do.”

Rogers was in his 80s and “almost stone deaf from the unmuffled gunshots fired near his ears during decades of acting in movies and TV shows,” Michael said. “If we arrived to interview them and Dale was out, Roy was usually sitting in front of his giant TV, looking at the *This Is Your Life* show about him and Dale, which he played at ear-splitting volume.

“And he was the worst driver in the world. He drove just the same way he rode Trigger—full tilt, turning any way he wished at any speed he pleased regardless of red lights, stop signs or one-way arrows. I said, ‘Jane, we’re going to die in this car. And what will our obits say? ‘Roy Rogers and Dale Evans Die in Car Crash, Two Unidentified Victims in Back Seat.’”



Roy and Dale



Trigger in the museum.

### Bowling ball and bug spray

Rogers’s biggest cowboy rival in the ’50s was Gene Autry, with the older Hopalong Cassidy a distant third. MICHAEL: “Gene and Roy were a striking contrast,” JANE: “The difference in their museums says it all. The Autry museum is like the Frick of Western museums. It has exquisite, rare memorabilia.” MICHAEL: “Roy and Dale’s museum is like a big Quonset hut filled with crap in Victorville, California, a dry, hot, out-of-the-way place. Exhibits include his favorite bowling ball, his bug spray—but also his ode to a dead child. It’s kitschy, schlocky



## How to find road food

Michael and Jane Stern are art historians—a field comedians target as the domain of impractical, impecunious romantics—who met as Yale graduate students. Michael had finished Michigan as a *summa cum laude* and Phi Beta Kappa in 1968. Jane, an alumna of Pratt Institute, focused on painting and Michael on film. He earned an MFA in film history from Columbia in 1971 and published his Yale doctoral dissertation on the films of Douglas Sirk in 1978. For more on the Sterns, check out your library or their Roadfood (<http://www.roadfood.com/>) and Splendid Table (<http://www.splendidtable.org/whereweeat/>) Web sites. They also write a monthly column, “Two For The Road” for *Gourmet* magazine and appear on public radio’s *Splendid Table*.

In 1993, the Sterns were masters of ceremonies at Julia Child’s 80th birthday celebration at the Rainbow Room in New York, for which 21 of the city’s best chefs prepared their specialties.

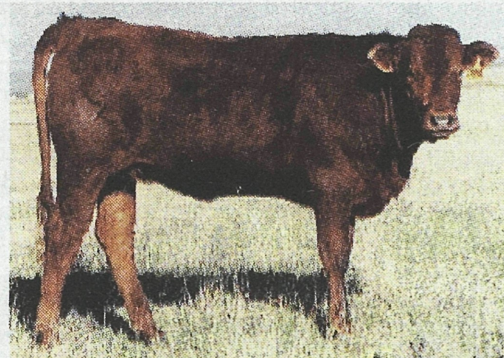


Photo by Anya Liffing

but also quite genuinely touching here and there.” (The Sterns are masters at critiquing, even celebrating, the awful; see their *The Encyclopedia of Bad Taste* for Harper Collins [1990], still selling strongly worldwide in several translations.)

Talk of cowboys reminded Jane of another friend, Oklahoman Jim Shoulders, “the Babe Ruth of rodeo stars.” The Sterns met Shoulders and his wife while writing *Way Out West* (Harper Collins, 1993), an exploration of popular culture in the West. MICHAEL: “He has won more than 16 national riding championships and more rodeo contests than anyone. He’s broken about every bone in his body, but his mark still stands because he competed even with broken bones. He even designed a cast that he could take off when he wanted to hide a broken forearm from meet officials who would have barred him from competition.”

The Sterns digressed on the slim pickings some states offer in recommendable restaurants. MICHAEL: “For the first time in 25 years we found a place in Delaware. But in New Hampshire—nothing, ever, except pancakes. JANE: Wyoming is hard. Oklahoma, too, except steaks. They’re raising a new breed of cattle, a salorn, in Oklahoma and promoting it as health-conscious beef. It’s a mixture of lean, unflavorful longhorn and another breed.”



A salorn heifer, a Franco-Texan experiment.

Photo courtesy Oklahoma State University

### Rocky Mountain oysters and clams

That brought Michael back to their recent visit with Jim Shoulders and his wife. “Jim wanted us to try some salorn steaks. As we sat together, he was popping down Rocky Mountain oysters one after the other as an appetizer. It took us a while to figure out what they were. We said, ‘At first, we thought you were eating fried clams.’ ‘Fried clams!’ he said. ‘How can you people eat those things?’ That’s my example of the range in regional tastes in this country.”

When it was time to eat the bland but healthy low-fat salorn, Jane said, the Shoulders “dipped it in batter, deep-fried it, coated it with sausage gravy and said, ‘Now you can see how good lean beef tastes!’”

Strong stomachs are an obvious prerequisite for the Sterns’ encounters with gustatory regionalism. Dangers abound. MICHAEL: “A place near where we live in West Redding, Connecticut, is famous for food poisonings. Jane is an emergency medical technician, and she’s seen the fast food sandwiches from this franchise of a global chain knock out kids within 15 minutes. We even use the restaurant’s name as a code for our diagnosis of food poisoning.” JANE: “We were in a little restaurant in St. Louis recently and saw a raw chicken propping open a rear door. We lost our appetite and fled.”

MT

## The Saga of Douglas Sirk

Michael Stern grew up in the north Chicago suburbs. He fell in love with food and movies at Michigan. (“I lived above a no-doubt-long-gone diner called Red’s Rite Spot. I think the vapors from Red’s hash browns insinuated themselves into my brain and directed me down my career path.”)

Among the buff-est of campus film aficionados during those cinema-centric days of the ’60s, Stern became fascinated with the work of Douglas Sirk, master of the ultra-soap opera. Later, at Yale, Stern wrote his doctoral thesis, *Douglas Sirk* (G.K. Hall, 1978) on the Danish-German émigré director.

Sirk’s *Imitation of Life* was “so popular,” Stern said, as he ate as little possible of the road food he was sampling (see accompanying article), “that his studio finally acceded to his persistent request that he be allowed to make any kind of picture he wanted. Now was his chance to depart from highly wrought melodramas drenched in Freudian themes and symbolism.” Facing such freedom, Sirk went hysterical and returned to Germany, where he’d lived before World War II with his Jewish wife before they escaped to save her from the Nazis.



Sirk

“But coming to the States meant he had to leave his little son by his first, non-Jewish wife,” Stern said. “The only way Sirk ever saw his son again was in the movies—anti-Jewish Nazi movies the boy appeared in after he became Hitler’s Shirley Temple.” Stern paused and looked at his wife, Jane. “Should I tell what happened later?”

“Oh, that’s the worst—I don’t know,” Jane replied, but picked up the tale: “Michael and other Sirk admirers arranged for Sirk to return

to the States and receive a tribute to his career. But on his way to the airport for his flight to New York, he was struck by blindness. We didn’t know what happened. When he failed to arrive as scheduled, Michael called him. His wife answered and said, ‘You have blinded him, Michael!’ The whole affair was a quintessential Sirk plot. Just like his *Magnificent Obsession*, featuring the blind Jane Wyman character.”

But what about Sirk’s son? “The boy died fighting on the Eastern Front.”



Jane Wyman and Rock Hudson in a pose typical of films Sirk directed.

Know a place near you that you’d recommend for its roadfood? E-mail the Sterns at [roadfood@optonline.net](mailto:roadfood@optonline.net)



**Open to all March 27**

## Coleman inauguration

Mary Sue Coleman will be inaugurated as the 13th president of the University of Michigan in ceremonies to take place March 27 in Crisler Arena.

The academic procession will begin at 9:45 a.m. and the installation will occur at 10 a.m.

"President Coleman's inauguration will be open to the entire campus community," Inauguration chairwoman Chacona Johnson, chief of staff to the president and associate vice president for development, said. "We have chosen to hold the ceremony in the Crisler Arena expressly in order to make it possible to invite everyone—faculty, students and staff—to attend this historic moment in the life of the University."

An academic symposium is scheduled to follow the inaugural ceremony from 2:30 p.m. to 4 p.m. in the Power Center.

Inauguration day activities will conclude with a campus-wide reception from 4:30 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. in the President's House, 815 South University Ave. All are invited. Seating is open; tickets are not required.

Coleman assumed Michigan's presidency on August 1, 2002. Formerly president of the University of Iowa (1995-2002), she was elected to the National Academy of Sciences' Institute of Medicine in 1997, and is a Fellow of the American Association for the Advancement of Science and of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. She co-chairs the Institute of Medicine's Committee on the Consequences of Uninsurance.

At Michigan, she holds appointments as professor of biological chemistry in the Medical School and professor of chemistry in the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts.

# Friends of U-M line up at the Supreme Court

By Laurel Thomas Gnagey  
University News Service

**A**mid-February snow storm forced President Mary Sue Coleman to cancel her trip to Washington DC, but it didn't prevent her from previewing affirmative action briefs to be filed with the US Supreme Court.

"A great deal hangs in the balance right here, right now," President Mary Sue Coleman said by teleconference from Crisler Arena Feb. 17, as she detailed the University's brief two days before it was to be filed with the Supreme Court.

Coleman told members of the American Council on Education that the University's written statement, and those from several friends of U-M, could represent the largest number of briefs filed on a single issue in the history of the high court.

While much of the U-M brief focuses on the benefits of diversity, Coleman said it also addressed misconceptions created, in part, by President George W. Bush's characterization of the Michigan's policies as quotas. Coleman said the University's admissions policies conform with the *Bakke* case (1978), which does not allow for quotas or set asides.

Coleman went on to explain why other types of programs do not work. In particular, she criticized percent plans used in California, Texas and Florida, which cull the top students from each high school to be guaranteed admission. Such plans, she said, rely on segregation within schools.

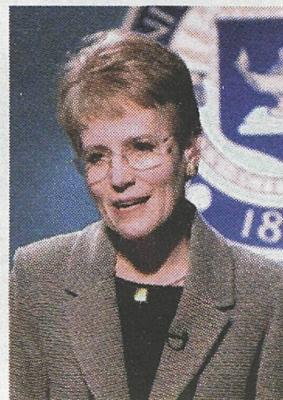
"We dare not—we must not—create public policy that works only if our country's school systems remain segregated," she said.

Coleman told the audience, "We will be joined by over 300 organizations filing more than 60 amicus briefs in support of the University. I want to give you a sense of who they are: They represent universities, faculty and more than 13,900 law students across the country; over 63 Fortune 500 corporations; the AFL-CIO, the UAW and the NEA (National Education Association); the American Bar Association and the Association of American Medical Colleges; dozens of civil rights and religious organizations; 23 states, many members of Congress and more than two dozen high-ranking military and civilian defense officials."

Representatives of those organizations highlighted key messages in their briefs. The participants and their remarks included:

- Charles M. Vest, president, Massachusetts Institute of Technology and former U-M provost—"I want to assure the court that America's private universities fully share the interests of Michigan in this case. ... The diverse workforce and future leadership in science and engineering will be essential to our nation's future economic strength." Stanford University, DuPont Corp., IBM, the National Academy of Science and the National Academy of Engineering also signed the brief.

- Kenneth C. Frazier, senior vice president and general coun-



Coleman

Marcia Ladford: U-M Photo Services

sel, Merck & Co. Inc.—"From a pragmatic business perspective, diversity has tremendous value as the source of a competitive advantage for American businesses. Simply put: diversity creates stronger companies."

- Cecilia Munoz, vice president for the Office of Research, Advocacy and Legislation, National Council of La Raza, and U-M alumna—"The year that I graduated, 1984, the incoming freshman class of nearly 4,000 students had 20 Latino students, which is roughly one half of one percent of the total population of that class. I'm very happy and proud that in the years since I was there, the University suc-

ceeded in increasing the diversity of its student body. Today, 8 percent of the student population is African American and nearly 5 percent is Latino. And the University is a different place as a result. The richness of the student experience and the educational experience has changed dramatically."

- Adm. Dennis C. Blair, senior fellow, Institute for Defense Analyses, and former commander in chief, US Pacific Command—"In our officer corps, which is drawn from undergraduate institutions, we do not have the proportion of minorities commensurate to those in the enlisted ranks. We are missing talented people who could be serving their country." Blair represents a brief filed on behalf of 29 top ranking military leaders, including: Gen. Norman Schwarzkopf, retired four-star and commander of the Allied Forces for Operations Desert Shield and Desert Storm; William Cohen, the 20<sup>th</sup> secretary of defense; Adm. William J. Crowe, retired four-star and the 11<sup>th</sup> chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff; Robert "Bud" McFarlane, retired Marine Corps officer and former national security advisor under Ronald Reagan; and William J. Perry, 19<sup>th</sup> secretary of defense.

- Law student David Fauvre, Georgetown University—"Our brief, filed on behalf of 13,922 law students, asserts that not only is affirmative action constitutional but... [a] diverse student body exposes all law students to an open, robust and creative exchange of ideas." Fauvre represents 139 accredited law schools from 41 states and the District of Columbia.

- David Ward, president of the American Council on Education (ACE)—"It is the leadership of our country that is put at risk because it is the 25 or 35 most competitive academic institutions that, in effect, are most profoundly affected by the plaintiff's case." ACE represents 1,800 member institutions and is considered the major coordinating body for higher education in the United States. Its brief was cosigned by 54 national higher education associations.

For more information on organizations filing on behalf of the University, visit <http://www.umich.edu/~urel/admissions/statements/#support>. The full texts can be found at <http://www.umich.edu/~urel/admissions/legal/amicus.html>.



Law students volunteer  
in several pro bono programs

## In the Public Interest

By Jared Wadley  
University News Service

Last summer, while working as a student attorney in Pittsburgh, Jennifer Weiss handled a case involving a 12-year-old girl named "Alicia" (a pseudonym to protect her privacy). An anonymous caller reported to the child protection agency that Alicia's mother was neglecting her.

Weiss, a third-year student in the U-M Law School, says Alicia was a ward of the state protection agency and "had not been in school for a year because she didn't want to be teased about weighing more than 350 lbs—in fact, she hadn't left her house in over a year."

Funded for the summer through the Student-Funded Fellowship (SFF) program (a student organization that raises money and provides grants to Michigan Law Students), Weiss managed to develop a rapport with Alicia, helped her participate in a weight loss program, enrolled her in school and placed her with a foster care family.

"It made me realize how absolutely important it is to provide a voice for these children," says Weiss, who has worked in two pro bono programs and is a member of SFF. "We, as a society, have an interest in protecting their psychological, developmental and their legal interests. Advocating for these interests is imperative. The bigger picture is that we provide legal representation for members of society who can't otherwise afford it."

Another student who received an SFF fellowship, Abbey True Harris, worked as a legal intern in the US Attorney's Office in Trenton, New Jersey, last summer.

"I was very fortunate to receive an SFF grant that allowed me to explore career paths that would otherwise be unavailable to students like me, who want to earn money over the summer," says Harris, who is also earning a master's degree at U-M's Ford School of Public Policy.

Clinical legal practice opportunities, under the direction of Associate Dean-designate for Clinical Affairs Bridget M. McCormack, include housing, child advocacy, environmental protection, criminal defense, domestic violence and poverty law. Students may receive a course credit for participation in the program as a volunteer or as a recipient of a stipend.

Clinical programs "introduce law students to public service that they wouldn't otherwise be exposed to," adds Don Duquette, clinical professor of law and director of the Child Advocacy Law Clinic.

John Fedynsky says he has appreciated the chance to "make a difference in people's lives" even while he's a student. He successfully represented a defendant jailed for parole violations of nonviolent, drug-related charges. Fedynsky convinced the Michigan Supreme Court that the prisoner had been denied procedural rights.

"Public service has always intrigued me," Fedynsky says. "Here is the practice and theory of law together: dealing with cases and real people. The stakes are higher because it is more than your own grade on the line if you don't do your best work."

The Office of Public Service (OPS), headed by Assistant Dean Robert Precht and the Office of Career Services, headed by Assistant Dean Susan Guindi, work together to help students select career paths. One of OPS's goals is to stimulate interest in not-for-profit law careers and to encourage U-M law alumni/ae to participate in *pro bono* (no charge) programs even if they are in fee-for-service practices, Precht says.

"I view the public interest office as a bully pulpit for advancing not only the social value of doing public service, but also the satisfaction lawyers can derive from doing public service," Precht says.

At least half of all U-M law students participate in at least one public service effort before graduation. Most say they find the experience rewarding even though few make public interest law a career.

According to the OPS, of the 346 Law School graduates in 2001, 14 (4 percent) went into public interest work, compared with 3 percent a year earlier. The figures are typical for "first tier" law schools, according to Paula Payton, student services associate. Recent trends indicate that the great majority of law graduates nationwide are seeking private sector jobs to pay off their sizable student loans.

For more information about the Law School clinics, visit <http://www.law.umich.edu/CentersAndPrograms/clinical/index.htm>.



Law Student Tim Sielaff '03 discusses the case of an adolescent client with Professor Duquette.

## U-M sponsors writers workshop In 'Hemingway country'

The University's involvement in creative writing deepened this year when it sponsored its first workshop for creative writers, the Bear River Writers' Conference on Walloon Lake near Petoskey, Michigan.

The Bear River workshop began one autumn afternoon in 2000 when the poet and English Prof. Richard Tillinghast was fly-fishing near Walloon Lake with James McCullough, who teaches at North Central Michigan College in Petoskey. Chatting as anglers do, they found that each had envisioned the area—the site of Ernest Hemingway's fishing cabin—as an ideal spot for a writers workshop rivaling the best other states can boast.

By spring 2001, the pair had reeled in their dream, renting rustic Camp Daggett's 106 acres of forest, wetlands, meadows and shoreline for a four-day writers workshop they co-directed. The camp sits right across the lake from Hemingway's handsome cabin.

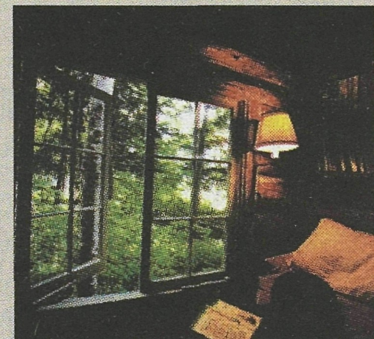
Bear River has proved so successful that this year, its third, the University decided to sponsor the workshop. Both the provost's and the dean of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts' offices supplied funding.

Tillinghast, who continues as director after McCullough resigned to complete a book, says, "This year's special guest will be Donald Hall, one of the great names in American poetry. Don has close ties here. He taught at Michigan for many years before returning to his home state, New Hampshire, to write full time. He'll give a reading and a talk and also just hang out. He'll be an exciting around the camp."

Other 2003 faculty include, among others, National Book Award nominees Thomas Lynch and Charles Baxter; poet/essayist Keith Taylor of U-M's creative writing program, nature writer Jerry Dennis, fiction writer Laura Kasischke and children's writer Kathy-jo Wargin.

"With the new initiative we have taken in sponsoring Bear River," said U-M President Mary Sue Coleman, "we are now reaching out to writers at all levels of experience and expertise who have either already graduated or who may not be in a position to take advantage of the programs we offer on our campus. Based on the participation of writers with Michigan connections as well as internationally known authors, Bear River is well on its way to becoming the premier literary gathering in the Great Lakes region."

Tuition for the May 29 – June 2 workshop is \$600 (\$500 for those who camp or lodge off-site), with a 10 percent discount for pre-April sign-ups. For more information, contact: Bear River Writers' Conference, U-M Dept. of English Language and Literature, 3187 Angell Hall, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1003. You may also register at the Web site: [www.lsa.umich.edu/bearriver](http://www.lsa.umich.edu/bearriver).



View from a cabin at Bear River, from this year's poster for the Bear River Writers' Conference.

Photo by Ed Wargin ©2002



# Still a Leader Still Among the Best

# T

By Bert Schiller

he Houston Rockets were winding down training camp shortly before the 2002-03 NBA season began. The Rockets have a distinct U-M flavor. Their coach is Wolverine great Rudy Tomjanovich '70, who is identifiable worldwide as "Rudy T," and former U-M forwards Glen Rice and Maurice Taylor are notable players. When *Michigan Today's* writer introduced himself to Tomjanovich after practice as "a fellow U-M grad," Rudy T. immediately threw out his arms and broke into a rousing version of "Hail to the Victors" in front of the players, coaches and media.

All-American center for Michigan from 1967 to 1970, NBA All-Star forward for the Houston Rockets for 11 seasons, two championship banners as head coach for the Houston Rockets, head coach of the US team that won the gold medal in the 2000 Olympics: it's quite a resumé for a man whose basketball ambition as a boy in Hamtramck, Michigan, was simply "to be able to play on the center court at Copernicus Junior High School with all the big kids."

In the 1950s and '60s, Hamtramck was even more of an Slavic-American enclave than it is today. Tomjanovich, who is of Croatian ancestry, remembers it as being almost like an old European village. "When I was little, we had no TV set, no car or even a telephone in the house. Dad always said, 'What do we need a telephone for? If you want to talk to someone, you just walk down the street to their house.'"

Sports were young Rudy's entry into the larger world. At first he tried baseball. A cousin had played for the Hamtramck Little League World Series champs of 1959, and Rudy's uncle, a coach on that team, thought Rudy showed a lot of promise in that sport and wanted him to stick with baseball. "But basketball was my true love," Rudy says. "I remember playing at the junior high gym when I was just a kid, thinking, God, wouldn't it be great to play with the big kids on the center court. To this day, one of my greatest thrills was the first time I played on that court."

Tomjanovich began inauspiciously, by



Bill Baptist/NBA/E Getty Images

Tomjanovich

being cut from his freshman team. He responded by challenging the coach to a game of one-on-one. If Rudy won, he'd make the team; if not, he was off. Rudy lost. But the coach liked his determination and put him on the team anyway. Rudy worked hard and improved every year, going on to become one of the greatest players in Michigan high school history, averaging 34 points a game in his senior year. It was then that he told his dad, "I think we'd better get a phone. I think colleges will be trying to call our house."

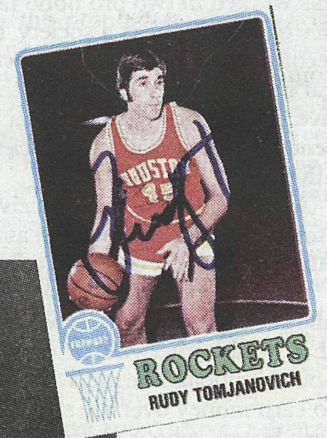
Tomjanovich was right. Schools across the country contacted him. He narrowed the list to four universities close to home: Michigan, Michigan State, Detroit and Toledo. In the end there was only one choice:

"To play where Cazzie played." Tomjanovich was one of many athletes (as well as many other students including this writer) who were drawn to the University of Michigan in the mid '60s by the exploits of Cazzie Russell.

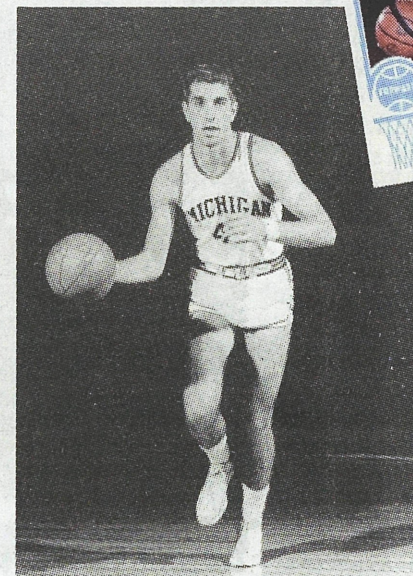
The freshmen and varsity squads still played at old Yost Fieldhouse back then, when NCAA rules barred first-year athletes from joining varsity teams. "I loved the floor at Yost," Tomjanovich says. "It had so much spring, it was real easy on your legs." When he started his first varsity game the next year, in 1967, it was against Kentucky in the first game ever played at U-M's Crisler Arena, "The House that Cazzie built."

Tomjanovich's teams enjoyed winning seasons throughout his three-year varsity career. They never won a Big Ten championship, however, and without a Big Ten championship a conference team could not play in a postseason tournament. Tomjanovich says that being denied tournament games meant "the highlights of my career at Michigan became individual accomplishments or special games we won—like winning at Duke."

Rudy T's individual accomplishments were many. His high game was 48 points against Indiana in 1969, tying Russell for all-time Michigan single game scoring honors. His 25.1 point per game career scoring average is second all-time at Michigan behind Russell. He holds the single game rebound record with 30, and his 14.4 rebounds per game average is also #1 all-time. He was all Big Ten in 1969 and 1970 and All-American in 1970.



Tomjanovich during his early professional career



Rudy T. at Michigan



Tomjanovich majored in education and maintained a solid B average throughout his career. He laughs when asked, "Who was your favorite teacher?" and answers immediately: "Doc Losh! I took every one of her classes!" For those who don't remember or have never heard of her, astronomy Prof. Hazel "Doc" Losh '24 PhD was a campus institution for more than 50 years. She was famous for her grading curve, reputed in campus lore to be "A for athlete, B for boy and C for coed."

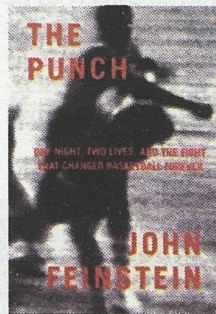
Everyone on campus loved Losh and showed it by electing her as U-M's first Honorary Homecoming Queen. On several occasions, Tomjanovich bought tickets to Pistons games and took Doc Losh into Detroit to see Cazzie Russell play when he was in town. "Her memory was amazing," Tomjanovich says. "She remembered all her favorite student athletes. She used to say, 'Tom Harmon used to sit right over there.'"



Losh

San Diego made Rudy T. the second pick in the 1970 NBA draft, after Bob Lanier by the Detroit Pistons. The franchise moved to Houston the next year. Although shocked at first to be living in Houston's sultry climate, Tomjanovich certainly acclimated, staying 33 seasons with the Houston Rockets, 11 as a five-time All-Star forward from 1970 to 1981. After retiring as a player, he scouted for the team for two years before moving to the bench as an assistant coach from 1983 to 1992. He became the Rockets head coach in February 1992 and has stayed at the helm ever since.

Despite his outstanding career, non-fans may remember Rudy T. most for being the recipient of "the Punch." On December 9, 1977, in a game against the Los Angeles Lakers, Tomjanovich, captain of his team, rushed to center court to break up a scuffle between teammate Kevin Kunnert and the Lakers' Kermit Washington. As he approached Washington from the rear, the karate-trained Laker wheeled around and landed a blow directly to Tomjanovich's face. The punch knocked Rudy T. unconscious briefly and caused massive, life-threatening head injuries. He endured five surgeries and missed the remainder of the 1977-78 season. As detailed in the recent book *The Punch: One Night, Two Lives and the Fight That Changed Basketball Forever* (Little, Brown & Co, Brown, 2002) by John



Feinstein, that punch changed the NBA's approach to on-court violence and changed the lives of the two players forever. Although understandably bitter initially, Tomjanovich's feelings toward Washington mellowed over the years until the two finally formed an unusual bond. Tomjanovich says he is a different person than he was before the incident (the book details Tomjanovich's struggle to overcome alcoholism) and has learned "how to turn a negative into a positive." He knows others have had to deal with even more difficult situations, he says, and he has concluded that "the way to move on is to forgive, to let go of being a victim."

Feinstein quotes Tomjanovich as saying that he and Washington are now "brothers" because of the incident. Publicity about the book has kept them in contact. Rudy T. told *Michigan Today* that he'd invited a player to this season's training camp on the strength of Washington's recommendation. (The player didn't make the squad, however.)

Ultimately, The Punch will be only a minor part of Tomjanovich's basketball legacy. He's very proud of coaching the Rockets to NBA Championships in 1994 and 1995, but equally proud of "taking a group of no-names out of nowhere" to a bronze medal in the World Championship games in 1998 and coaching the US men's team to a gold medal in the 2000 Olympics. "Representing my country successfully was one of my greatest thrills," he says. As he turned to head back to the Rockets afternoon practice, Rudy T.'s parting words were a hearty, "Go Blue!"

Freelance writer Bert Schiller '69 of Bloomfield Hills, Michigan, is an environmental consultant and a history buff.

MT

On Our Cover: Exultant Tomjanovich after a victory over the world champ Lakers.

MT



Former Wolverine Glen Rice

Bill Baptist/NBAE/Getty Images



Cazzie Russell

## The Year of Yao

Rudy Tomjanovich was especially eager for the 2002-03 NBA season to begin. At the start of practice on a summer day early in training camp, he told the assembled squad about leadership: "Leadership is making sure everyone is taken care of. It is separation that will keep us from our goals." Known as a "players' coach"—one who is considerate rather than imperious toward the athletes—Tomjanovich tries to make sure his players are happy and united both on and off the court.

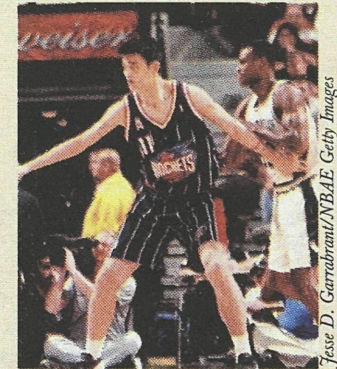
His greatest challenge this year has been overseeing the transition of the NBA's newest superstar, Yao Ming, the 7' 5" No. 1 draft pick from China. Tomjanovich has brought the rookie along slowly. But Yao is already starting to show flashes of the dominance everyone expects from him, averaging 8 rebounds, 2 blocked shots and 13 points a game in early February.

Asked about how Yao was adjusting, Tomjanovich replied, "With year-round tournaments, a new team, a new language and country and all of the media attention, he doesn't just have a plateful, he's got a platterful. But he'll handle it as well as anybody. He's got an even temperament and a passion for the game, the team game. He'll do all right."

Tomjanovich's four years at Michigan gave him similar preparation for his career. "Learning responsibility, teamwork, the value of friends" were hallmarks of his Wolverine years, he says. "There are many guys I met there who are still a big part of my life—guys such as Bill Lyle, Bill Frauman and Steve Fishman." Rudy T. returns to Michigan almost every summer to visit old friends and relatives.

This winter, Rudy T. made a special stopover Feb. 8 during the league's All Star Game break to attend a ceremony in Crisler Arena for the retirement of his jersey. He was just the second player in Michigan basketball history to have his jersey retired, joining former All-American and 1966 NCAA Player of the Year Cazzie Russell (1964-66). Russell's jersey has hung in Crisler since December 1993.

"We are extremely pleased to recognize Rudy Tomjanovich," said Michigan basketball coach Tommy Amaker. "We at Michigan basketball have a very rich tradition, and Rudy is one of the cornerstones of our celebrated past. He has been a tremendous success as a Wolverine player, in his professional life and as a representative of this university."



Yao Ming

Jesse D. Garrabrant/NBAE/Getty Images



## 'AUTISM IS A MODERN CRISIS, IF NOT AN EPIDEMIC' —PROF. CATHERINE LORD

# Little Victories

By John Woodford

I walked in the door from work the other day and found Mason sitting on the sofa watching a video. He doesn't run to me with hugs and kisses like other kids his age might do. He just doesn't greet me—doesn't even look in my direction. It's painful, but I know that he knows I'm home and that he's happy about that. I also know that in order to get his attention, I have to leave my world for a moment and enter his. Each day when I get home, I say to him, "Hey buddy, Daddy's home." Then I walk over to him, put my hands on his cheeks and shower him with kisses. He tolerates this for the most part and will occasionally glance at me and/or pull my head affectionately to his chest.

• However, on this day I simply walked over to the sofa, picked him up and proceeded to throw him up in the air repeatedly, while saying "Weeee weeeee weeeee." He loves it when I do this and laughs out loud while exchanging great eye contact with me. This little game clearly kicks down the door in his world and allows me to enter. The best part is knowing that it will generally end up with him hugging my neck afterwards with a big smile on his face. This day was a little different, as it didn't end with a hug. Exhausted, I put him back down on the sofa and kissed his forehead. He immediately pushed me back and stared me straight in the eyes. Although it probably continued for only a second or two—it seemed like an eternity—like he was telling me something with his eyes because he still doesn't speak. Mason then put his hands on my cheeks, pulled me close and gently kissed me on the lips.

• It was the most touching moment of my life, like an awakening of sorts, and I was speechless. I sat back in awe as he settled back down onto the sofa and returned to his video. The door was shut again. Jackie was in the kitchen, glancing over at us periodically the whole time but didn't see what had just happened. However, she could clearly see by my body language that something very important had just happened. She kept shouting to me, "What? What happened, Jim? What happened?" I was so moved that I could barely speak. I sat down on the coffee table, turned to her and said, "He kissed me . . ."

• What was he telling me? Don't give up on me, Daddy? I love you, too? Regardless, I now define happiness by the little victories in my life. Nothing else seems to matter as much anymore.  
Diary of Jim Abler, 8/22/02.

Mason Abler's parents, Jim and Jackie, recognized autistic symptoms in their son when he was only 16 months old, six months to two years earlier than most children are diagnosed with the neurological disorder that impairs the ability to communicate and interact with others.

If Prof. Catherine Lord, director of U-M's new Autism and Communicative Disorders Clinic, succeeds in her current research, diagnoses as early as 18 months will become routine. "I'm confident that we'll figure out how to identify the disorder that early," says Lord, who developed the current diagnostic instruments, an interview scale and a social-observation scale, in 1989, updated it in 1994 and plans to issue a further refinement this year.

A scholar with a quiet, gentle demeanor, Lord finds herself in the center of heated controversies surrounding autism. The news media have carried many stories about an "autism epidemic." And, indeed, the latest study by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) confirms that the prevalence of autism in the United States is exploding. The study, conducted in Atlanta in 1996 and published in the January 1, 2003, edi-



Corsello observes 2-year-old Mason at play.

tion of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*, reports that the prevalence of autism increased tenfold over the previous decade.

### The vaccine scare

Along with most news stories about the "epidemic" are assertions identifying thimerosal, a now-discontinued mercury compound used in mumps-measles-rubella (MMR) vaccines, as the probable cause.

Lord bluntly states her views on both controversies: "We can't say there is an epidemic. And there is no evidence of autism resulting from vaccines. Our position is that studies show that the effect of MMR vaccine and the increasing prevalence of autism are two separate issues."

So far, the best evidence is that the number of children diag-

nosed with autism has increased to as many as 1 out of 200 mainly as a result of the recent definition of autism as a spectrum of diseases rather than a single one, Lord says. She cites a University of California at Davis study that found that "younger children were less likely to be retarded than the 17-year-olds diagnosed 10 years ago, indicating that diagnostic changes have increased the number of children classified as autistic." IQ also affects diagnosis. More children who used to be diagnosed as retarded or with other disorders may now be classified as autistic.

### WHAT IS AUTISM?

A complex developmental disability that typically appears during the first three years of life. The result of a neurological disorder that affects the functioning of the brain, autism affects the normal development of the brain in the areas of social interaction and communication skills. Children and adults with autism typically have difficulties in verbal and non-verbal communication, social interactions and leisure or play activities.—Autism Society of America, Bethesda, Maryland. (Call 1.800.3AUTISM or [www.autism-society.org](http://www.autism-society.org).)



## SILICON VALLEY DISEASE

The Asperger Syndrome is a mild form of autism. Those with this type may be highly intelligent and may excel at architecture, computer sciences, math and engineering but lack social skills. Some nickname it Silicon Valley Disease because Silicon Valley is saturated with people in those fields, which may explain the apparent explosion of autistic children in that area. Autistic traits can often be seen in parents, and in not necessarily "bad" traits—being careful, organized and neat. But these are pronounced in only a minority of parents. Most parents are quite normal. It can be quite difficult for parents to hear that they may have passed autism to their children.—CL.

Blaming the MMR vaccine for autism is scientifically unfounded, says Lord, who is convinced that most autism is genetic. "Concern about mercury in vaccines is relatively new. A parent-professional group noted that some of the symptoms of autistic children were similar to those caused by mercury poisoning—social deficiency and poor conversational skills—and linked this to the fact that babies have been receiving increasingly large batteries of immunization, some of which, like MMR, contain a supposedly inert mercury compound, thimerosal, as a binding agent."

Lord points out, however, that researchers have examined stool and urine samples and shown that "in children who have absorbed higher than normal amounts of mercury, the excess tends to be flushed out." She acknowledges however, that medical researchers still know little about how mercury or any other chemical may trigger chemical processes that could lead to neurological disorders.

Lord does not belittle the concerns of parents or others who call attention to autism. "It's a modern crisis, if not an epidemic," she says. "There are far more with the condition needing services, it seems to me. We still lack a good way to track the disease since different definitions were used in the past from what we use now." Lord is involved in a CDC study that is tracking the syndrome state by state, child by child, and using a uniform definition of the disease spectrum.

"Lots of evidence suggests that early intervention affects outcome," she says. "The children reached early are likely to have better social skills, be independent, than those diagnosed later. What's needed is intensive engagement that encourages them to respond and teaches them how to communicate."

### Her interest began as an undergraduate

Lord first became interested in autism as an undergrad at UCLA. "I took a class with a professor who felt you could teach anybody anything," she says. "He figured that an army of undergraduate women could go out and make autistic kids normal. It didn't work, but I liked the kids I worked with a great deal. One didn't learn to talk. The other could speak well. That made me interested in language development."

In 1975, during graduate school at Harvard, Lord got a job with a county mental health center in Vermont to gather data for her dissertation in psychology. "The schools didn't have to take autistic kids until they were 8 years old there," she says, "and after the teacher who was supposed to work with the kids didn't show up, I wound up with a class of 15 preschoolers, five of whom had autistic disorders. Some knew a lot



Lord

about certain subjects but were unable to understand facial expressions. I admired their ability to make sense out of the world, so I interned at the autism center at North Carolina. I was struck by the great care provided by the parents of most of the children."

In the mid-1980s, when Lord began working with Michael Rutter, a professor of child psychiatry in London, and other leading psychiatrists and psychologists, the expert view was that autism was not genetic. Rutter was studying family genetics and "wanted to identify autistic children and distinguish them from children with other disorders," Lord says. She was looking at girls with autism to see if they were different from boys with autism. She didn't discover much difference "except the girls were more likely to be severely retarded than the boys, even though girls are four to 10 times less likely to be autistic."

Evidence that autism was a genetic disorder gradually supplanted previous assumptions. "We've seen that the rate of recurrence in families is 1 out of 10," Lord says. "With identical twins, if one has it, it's a 90 percent chance the other does, too. And the fact that kids in the same family may exhibit different aspects of the spectrum indicates that defining autism as a spectrum is helpful."

When the director of U-M's Institute for Human Adjustment (IHA), Prof. Robert L. Hatcher, and other scholars decided to establish an autism center to serve academic and community needs, they contacted Lord, who was then at the University of Chicago, for advice on the ideal features for such a center.

"I suggested ways to organize it," Lord recalls, "and a bit later I was snowed in in Denver. Arnold Sameroff [U-M professor of psychology] was attending the same meeting and was weathering the storm in the same house. He worked on me the whole time to take the Michigan job. He was a good salesman."

"For me, I wanted to be part of a center in a university that was committed to research and education and included recognition of the complex developmental problem autistics faced. I didn't want to focus so much on abstract thought processes and theorizing about linguistic processes as I had been at Chicago. And also, I'm a strong believer in public education. If it hadn't been for an institution like UCLA, I could never have accomplished what I have. I wanted to be part of a clinical psychology program." **MT**

## An Update From Mason's Father

**M**ason is almost 3 now. You wouldn't know anything is wrong with him till you compared him with other kids his age.

Jackie and I noticed something was wrong first when he was about 16 months old. When we'd put him in his bouncy seat, I could get right in his face and he would stare and seem to look right through me. That's a textbook symptom but we didn't know it right off. Or he might just sit and spin Tupperware lids over and over and seem really unusually excited. He'd drop his mouth and stretch out his hands and fingers, like a kid getting a birthday cake, and tremble for a few seconds. We thought it odd he'd have this same reaction for different experiences, and we'd just tell ourselves that he was cute. The same thing happened when he got one of those tops that operate with a metal plunger. He'd spin it over and over and over and just seem too excited. We told friends, and they'd say, "Oh, one of our kids did that. He'll outgrow it." Then he began to drop recognition of the five or seven words he'd learn. Jackie is an occupational therapist and she dug out one of her old college child psychology books and began reading. When she read about autism, she saw he had six or seven of the 10 symptoms listed. She showed me. Needless to say we were up all night, pacing, sobbing, hovering over Mason's crib. What had we done? What could we do?

We wanted the best treatment for him and heard that would be at the University of Michigan. But like most people our insurance didn't cover anything and still doesn't. It costs about \$3,000 to get evaluated, and we live check to check. We hated to put a price tag on it. We learned that the school system offers free evaluations. We took Mason, and they said, "autism." We still teetered on denial. But my mom said, if the U of M is the best, go there. I'll pay half. The Autism and Communication Disorders Center put us on a payment plan. They were wonderful. Maybe in our lifetime we'll see a cure.

[The Ablers agreed to help Corsello by being subjects of her three-hour training seminars during which graduate students and therapists watched the Ablers play with Mason—JW.] Because we documented so much about him, Dr. Lord thought our case would be especially helpful. I keep lots of notes. That helped Mason get identified at 16 months, a very early age.

I have Tourette's syndrome, so I like to talk, though it's a constant struggle for me to control my speech. My eyes welled up and I was intrigued by the fact that doctors and students were clinging to all my words. I knew there were now 45 additional assessments of our son because of the training sessions we participate in. They will discuss him and compare notes, and those students will go out into the field with our son as a benchmark. It was satisfying. I've done something, and I told the clinic, if there's anything else we can do to help, just ask us.—Jim Abler to Michigan Today.

## U-M AUTISM AND COMMUNICATIVE DISORDERS CENTER (UMACC)

The UMACC opened its doors at 1111 E. Catherine last fall, about a year after the arrival of director Catherine Lord and her assistant, Christina M. Corsello, from the University of Chicago.

A unit of the U-M's Institute of Human Adjustment, the center focuses on research, graduate-level professional training and clinical services. Lord is primarily a researcher, although she sees some patients; Corsello concentrates on clinical therapy, and both teach.

Someday genetic testing and therapy may offer the primary scientific approaches to autism, Lord says. Until then, the psychological diagnosis and therapy will continue to predominate.

Developmental pediatricians in the U-M Medical School also assess children for autism. Perhaps 10 departments are involved with research proposals relating to autism, some linked to an international molecular genetic study.—JW.

For more information, contact the UMACC at (734) 936-8600, E-mail: [um.autism@umich.edu](mailto:um.autism@umich.edu) or see the Web site at [www.umacc.rackham.umich.edu](http://www.umacc.rackham.umich.edu).



# For Pete's Sake!

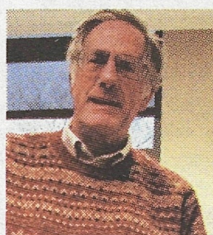
By John Woodford

Photos and captions by Jack Kollmann

In its year-long celebration of St. Petersburg's 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the University of Michigan will show with dozens of concerts, art exhibits, lectures, films, courses and student tours how Peter the Great's "Window on the West" offers those who look in as brilliant a cultural view as it offers those who look out.

Russia - specialist William G. Rosenberg, the Alfred G. Meyer Collegiate Professor of History, finds the "Window on the West" metaphor for St. Petersburg a bit irksome. "Who is looking out?" he asks. "And who is being looked at? We should see St. Petersburg also as a window in. We and others outside Russia should be looking in, trying to figure out and appreciate what Russia is all about. It doesn't do to reduce Russia or St. Petersburg to stereotypes in which we are the object of their gaze."

The hackneyed window metaphor, so common in academic,

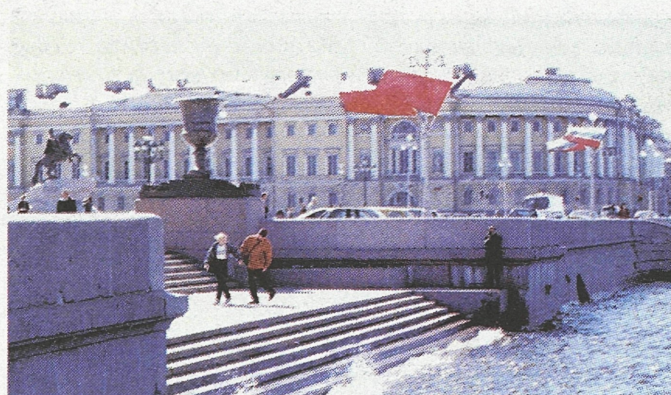


Rosenberg



Photos by Jack Kollmann

Looking across the Neva River from the Palace Embankment at the Kunstkammer, now the Museum of the Ethnography of the Peoples of the World and the Lomonosov Museum. Georg Johann Mattarnovi designed the building, a 16-year project completed in 1734. The setting is the Strelka (or Point) of Vasily Island, where the Neva divides into the Large Neva and Small Neva as both flow to the Gulf of Finland on the Baltic Sea. The tower in the distance housed Russia's first astronomical observatory.



Looking upstream along the Neva River embankment at the Winter Palace, the Rococo main building of the Hermitage Museum, a five-building complex that is second-biggest in the world, after the Louvre. Designed in the 18<sup>th</sup> century by Bartolomeo Rastrelli and commissioned by Empress Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great, the construction of the Winter Palace nearly broke the state treasury. This photograph was taken on May 9, 1998, the annual day celebrating the end of World War II—or, as it is known in Russia, the Second Great Patriotic War (the first was against Napoleon).

political and tourism-industry circles, often pits St. Petersburg against Moscow in a rivalry of West vs. East, Europe vs. Asia, cultural - innovator vs. cultural - conservative. The tensions and contrasts between the two great cities are hardly that simple or conflicted, Rosenberg says.

"We should first note that we are celebrating the 300th anniversary of a city that was artificially founded," Rosenberg says. "Most cities evolve over time, usually as trade sites favored by geographical features or historical processes. Very few cities were created as political or cultural symbols as St. Petersburg, Washington DC, Brasilia and a handful of lesser examples were."

#### 'Like no other Russian city'

Peter the Great founded St. Petersburg in 1703 in large part because he wanted to refashion Russia into a society that would be part of the European world, distinguished from Russia's secondary capital, Moscow, and other Russian cities that evolved since antiquity. "Peter and his successors commissioned Western European architects to direct much of the work,"

Rosenberg says, "so the city's appearance is like no other Russian city. Peter's Summer Palace is even more brilliant than Versailles, and the city is distinctly lacking in onion-domed churches."

The buildup of St. Petersburg was remarkable during Peter's own lifetime. By his death in 1725 it had grown from a tiny, swampy settlement ceded by Sweden and occupied by about 150 persons to a city of 40,000 year-round residents. The city quickly established itself during its first 200 years as a center for wealthy aristocratic families interested in Western cultural forms. The elite built great art collections and supported music and literature, as most official capitals tend to do.

"Many from the St. Petersburg elite traveled in the West and often returned to St. Petersburg with the cultural attributes of Western civilization, as Peter hoped," Rosenberg says, "but this never occurred without opposition, never consistently without resistance to these movements, not just from other areas of Russia but also from within St. Petersburg and the courts of Russia's



increasingly conservative tsars. There was always the stuff of controversy, especially about what 'Russia' really was, and should be. As a result, especially in the literary area, St. Petersburg was a provocative and stimulating place, a center of intellectual and political struggle. The great writers of the 19<sup>th</sup> century—Pushkin, Gogol, Turgenev, Dostoevsky—all lived there, as did the great 19<sup>th</sup> century dissidents who formed the core of the Russian intelligentsia."

Pushkin lived at the residence of the tsar, Rosenberg says, but despite this insider status, he "criticized St. Petersburg society as much as he celebrated it. And Gogol caricatured St. Petersburg in works like 'The Overcoat' and 'The Nose.'"

### Beachhead of the Enlightenment

On their eastern beachhead of the Enlightenment, St. Petersburg's elite found themselves attacked from right and left. Like all autocrats, the tsars saw free-thinking, critical and democratic thought as subversive to their political power. And the nationalists saw the very premises of the European Enlightenment as alien and harmful.

To some extent, "seeing St. Petersburg and Moscow as rival capitals during certain periods has some merit," Rosenberg says. "But we shouldn't ignore the fact that Moscow was also the site of great ballet companies, musical conservatories and artistic experimentation as impressive as St. Petersburg's. Before the Russian Revolution in 1917, St. Petersburg and Moscow were equal pinnacles of the performing arts, however strong their competitive feelings sometimes were. After 1917, Moscow became Soviet Russia's sole capital and hence 'official' cultural center, which some have argued gave greater artistic integrity to those who trained and performed in Peter's still-beautiful city."

St. Petersburg was renamed Petrograd in 1914, and in 1924 it became Leningrad. "The Stalinists exerted a brutal and regressive force on the city's culture," Rosenberg says, "and the city underwent several horrific purges provoked in part by a feeling that too many of its elite still clung to its old cultural traditions."

### Victory over the Nazis

After 1991, St. Petersburg again took pride in those traditions, as evidenced, Rosenberg says, "by the rapidity with which it shed the name Leningrad, despite the heroic connotations that name acquired as a result of the 900-day siege in World War II." The Nazi army decimated Leningrad during an assault that Nazi and Allied experts predicted would capture the city in a few weeks at most. But the people held out for almost three years, from June 1941 to January 1944, when Soviet troops routed the enemy. Two million Soviet civilians and soldiers died from combat, bombing, starvation and disease to save the city, and the toll on its infrastructure was equally devastating.

Today, St. Petersburg is again "a magical city," in Rosenberg's view. "True, the climate is largely inhospitable—the city lies on the latitude of Anchorage, just below the Arctic Circle—and today the impressive canals drained from the surrounding swamps are often oily and smelly, and the beautiful pastel buildings smudged with soot. But in the White Nights of June and early July, when the city is light all night long, it is strikingly, almost indescribably, beautiful."

For all the glamour, art and intellectual vitality associated with it, St. Petersburg is familiar with suffering, indeed it is founded on it. "When I was there last June," Rosenberg says, "I commented to my taxi driver how truly beautiful St. Petersburg was. 'Yes, it's beautiful,' he agreed, but he added, 'It is a beauty built on the bones of 100,000 serfs who died during its construction. You can hear their bones creak under every build-

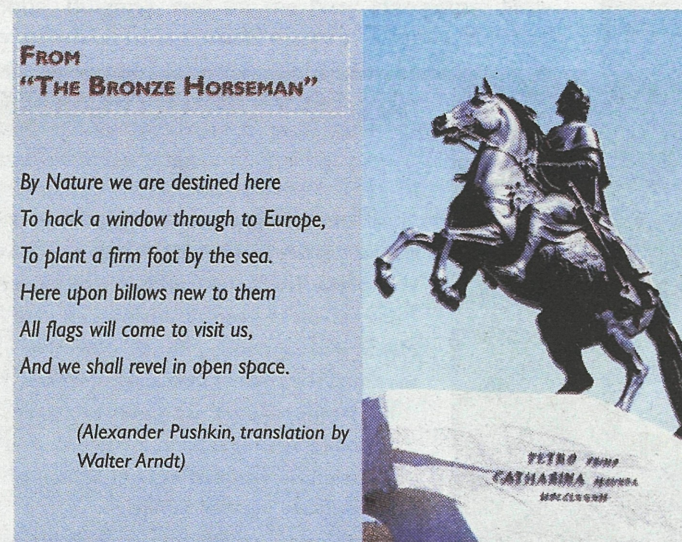
ing.' He seemed to mean it literally, and perhaps he's right."

Rosenberg sees the University's St. Petersburg celebration as an opportunity for students, alumni, visitors and the entire U-M community to go beyond the 300<sup>th</sup> anniversary events. "Look through this open window into the unfamiliar Russia. Go through it," he urges, "and see what's behind the facades of St. Petersburg. In a way, the presentation of St. Petersburg as chiefly a site of high cultural splendor is a defensive façade. There's a lot more edge to it. If we don't look at the city's popular culture, like the pop group Leningrad and many other contemporary examples, it would be like looking at Detroit through the Institute of Arts and ignoring Eminem." **MT**

*Jack Kollmann '78 PhD, academic coordinator for the Center for Russian, East European, and Eurasian Studies at Stanford University, is a historian and lecturer as well as a photographer. "The St. Petersburg window metaphor," Kollman says, "was first employed in 1739 by Francesco Algarotti, an Italian visitor: '... this great window recently opened in the north through which Russia looks on Europe.'"*



One of the many extravagant display rooms of the New Hermitage (1852), the fifth and last building of the museum complex. Commissioned by Nicholas I and designed by the German Leo von Klenze, the New Hermitage was built to house and display portions of the growing royal collection of art and artifacts from around the world.



The Bronze Horseman (1782), so called after Alexander Pushkin's famous poem, depicts an equestrian Peter the Great riding a granite wave, pointing to the West, his horse's hooves trampling a serpent representing the old Russia. Catherine the Great commissioned it from the Frenchman Etienne-Maurice Falconet and his pupil/mistress Marie Colot. The widowed empress, a minor German princess who married into the royal Romanov line, was eager to establish her credentials, hence her not too humble inscriptions in Latin and Russian: 'To Peter I. Catherine II.'



Housed on the third floor of the Winter Palace, the Impressionist and Post-Impressionist Hermitage Museum holdings constitute one of the more significant collections of modern art in the world. Matisse's *Le Danse*, 1910, is one of a series of 'Dance' paintings from the artist's Fauvist period.

### 'Celebrating St. Petersburg: 300 Years of Cultural Brilliance'

"Celebrating St. Petersburg" will include an exclusive exhibition of more than 140 treasures on loan from the Hermitage Museum, performances by the Kirov Ballet and the Kirov Orchestra and a host of lectures, symposia and events featuring Russian themes and performers. Audiences will enjoy an unparalleled opportunity to experience the art and artistic legacy of St. Petersburg. The ceremonies began March 8 with "Projecting Petersburg," a public discussion about architecture. Key ongoing events include:

Theme Semester: The College of Literature, Sciences, and the Arts will make St. Petersburg the subject of its fall Theme Semester, with courses, lectures, films and other events focused on that city.

Museum of Art Exhibit, Sept. 21

– Nov. 23. "The Romanovs Collect: Masterworks of European Art from the Hermitage." More than 140 artifacts, including furniture, jewels, tapestries, porcelain, drawings, paintings and sculpture bearing the names Wedgwood, Meissen, Aubusson, Lorenzo Bernini and Jacob Jordaens at the U-M Museum of Art in an exclusive exhibition sponsored by Ford Motor Co.



Catherine the Great portrait by Richard Brompton will be in the exhibition.

University Library Exhibit, Mon. – Sat., Aug. 4 – Dec. 1. "St. Petersburg: Window on the West/Window on the East," a publishing history emphasizing the arts.

Film Series: Dates TBA: *The End of St. Petersburg*, October, *Peter the First, Part II*, *The Burglar*, *Window to Paris*, *Brother* and *The Russian Ark*.

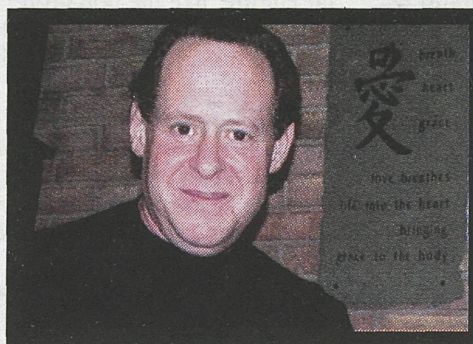
Calendar includes many more events. For complete information, contact Joanne Nesbit (734) 647-4418.



Conductors have competition enough after they leave school—Kenneth Kiesler

# AT EASE, BATONS

By John Woodford



Kiesler

MT photo by John Woodford

# N

o one can say exactly what makes an orchestral conductor great. But someone has to recognize the potential of greatness in aspiring conductors and know how to nurture it. At Michigan's School of Music, that someone is Kenneth Kiesler.

"Nobody has all of the qualities a conductor can possess, not even the greats," says Kiesler, director of the orchestral conducting department. "They have a blend of strengths. Some areas are teachable and some are unteachable. I look to see that our students of conducting are strong in the unteachable areas, because if they are weak there, no one can help them."

Kiesler says the unteachable skills are "receptivity to music, openness to be moved by it. Conducting is not simply a game of analysis and intellectual discussion.

Sure, you need theory, musicology and composition. Those are all teachable. But mostly conductors are performers. Conductors need self-awareness, conviction and belief in themselves. You need to lead, but not to assume it's a god-given right to do so. The worst thing to do is believe only your positive reviews. I also look for people who can work well with others and who can be noncompetitive while they are here."

Being competitive away from the academy is another matter. Last year, one of Kiesler's former students, Budit Ungrangsee, 32, was one of two winners of \$45,000 top prizes in the Maazel/Vilar Conductors' Competition in New York's Carnegie Hall. The 20-month competition, the first of its kind, drew 362 young conductors who competed against each other in round after round on five con-

tinents, till eight were left in New York.

One of the other finalists is still at the School of Music. Joana Carneiro, 25, a current doctoral student with Kiesler, did so well that the judges asked her to conduct a special short program during the winners' ceremonies. And Thomas Hilbish, professor emeritus of choral conducting, discovered the co-winner who split the prize with Ungrangsee, Xian Zhang, 29. Hilbish discovered Zhang in his conducting class at the Central Conservatory in Beijing, arranged for her US visa and hoped she'd enroll at Michigan, but financial aid technicalities resulted in her attending the Cincinnati Conservatory of Music.

Kiesler, who is in his eighth year at Michigan, works intensely with his students on the podium, developing their skills in the "practical technical areas of gestural and ver-



## AN 18-YEAR OLD GUITARIST FINDS HIS CALLING

**B**udit Ungrangsee has gone from last September's co-victory in the Maazel/Vilar Conductors' Competition at Carnegie Hall in New York to a job as assistant conductor for the New York Philharmonic Orchestra, the very orchestra that inspired him to become a conductor.

He was an 18-year-old business student in Bangkok when he attended his first classical musical concert. Zubin Mehta was conducting Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* on tour and Budit, a Beatles-inspired guitar student at the time, watched in awe and concluded, "This is it! This is what I must be!"

His family supported his musical studies at the University of Wollongong in Australia only if he agreed to major in business as preparation for taking over the family's wholesale seafood business. Budit complied, but after graduation he enrolled at U-M School of Music with his family's support for it had become clear that he had extraordinary musical talent.

Ungrangsee probably won't finish his doctoral degree, his conducting professor at U-M, Kenneth Kiesler says. "A few of the very top students get great jobs before they complete their degree requirements. That's what we want to happen. In the professional world, it's how you do it, not whether you have a degree. If you can get a job before the doctorate, take it."

Photo by Ted Marki, NY Times



bal communication of their musical ideas.”

Another key part of the regimen is score study. “What a conductor does is open a score and ask questions about it,” he says. “Those questions have to be right, because the answers determine the performance. When I ask a student, ‘What does this passage in the score tell you?’ one might say, ‘Here, the violins are playing in the background, the chorus is singing loudly and the tempo is fast.’ A second student might say, ‘Bach wrote this in 1745. He lived in Leipzig then. It’s sacred music, and they’re singing about the Day of Judgment. The melody he uses here grew out of the Gregorian chants.’ Of the two of them, whose performance would you like to hear?”

#### Few are chosen

The School of Music’s Conducting Program—which includes choral, directed by Jerry O. Blackstone, and band, directed by Michael L. Haithcock, as well as orchestral—earned top spot in the nation in the most recent *US News & World Report* survey of music schools (1997).

“In the orchestral program we usually have six to eight students at a time, studying for master’s or doctoral degrees,” Kiesler says. “Of more than a hundred who send video tapes and scholarly papers, we invite about 30 to campus each February for several rounds of aural and written examinations, conducting auditions and interviews. Then we admit two or three. What you really look for are people who embody the spirit as well as the letter of music. Out of thousands of conductors, perhaps only a handful will allow the spirit of the music to flow through them, as a conduit to the orchestra, and also receive from the orchestra and enable all of this to be communicated to the audience.”

Kiesler sees his students’ Michigan careers as an enriching lull between the storms of rivalry in the admissions process and in the profession. “They’ll have competition enough when they leave school,” he says. “Conducting is a strange business. Often people doing the hiring are not musicians at all. They are looking for attributes in conductors that have nothing to do with music. I understand that this is inevitable, that executive directors and board members will consider other factors because those factors are important, but, still, fundamentally, a conductor has to conduct. I hear professors in other departments talk of being evaluated by their peers. We conductors are never evaluated by our peers. We’re evaluated by lawyers, doctors, CEOs and their wives, who often do important volunteer work in support of symphony orchestras, but rarely by colleagues. We don’t have peer review.”

Bundit Ungrangsee says the political aspects of the competition among professional conductors almost dissuaded him from entering the Maazel/Vilar musical tournament. “You either have to be very very good or you need to be the child of a top conductor to succeed in this business,” says Ungrangsee, who grew up in Bangkok in a Chinese-

Thai family (see accompanying story). Feeling “low and disappointed” because it seemed politics had deprived him of victories in competitions he should have won, he had “more or less decided not to enter any more.”

But Ungrangsee’s wife, Mary Jane, would not let him retire from the fray. She got the application for the Maazel/Vilar competition and made sure he fulfilled all the entry requirements before the deadline.

Ungrangsee’s ultimate victory also won him the chance to assist maestro Lorin Maazel with the New York Philharmonic, complementing the young maestro’s duties as associate conductor of the Charleston (South Carolina) Symphony Orchestra.

Doctoral student Joana Carneiro, meanwhile, is flying between Ann Arbor, Lisbon and Los Angeles. She occasionally conducts the Metropolitan Orchestra in Lisbon, her hometown, and is music director of the Debut Orchestra in Los Angeles, one of the country’s three top youth orchestras. “Michael Tilson Thomas and Andre Previn had that LA job,” Kiesler says. “Bundit had it. Now Joana does. It’s one of the launching pads for the top conductors. And two other Michigan students are at the other top youth-orchestra positions—Mei-Ann Chen at the Portland [Oregon] Youth Philharmonic and Allen Tinkham with the Chicago Youth Symphony.”

#### Job requirement: tirelessness

Indefatigability is another unteachable prerequisite for conductors. Kiesler guest-teaches regularly, and now, during his sabbatical, he is teaching at the Royal Academy of Music in London and at the Manhattan School. He’ll do some more teaching at Oxford and conduct in London and Sofia, Bulgaria, and for the New Hampshire Symphony, of which he is musical director. Then he’ll record an opera by David Schiff and conduct the All-Eastern Orchestra in Providence, an ensemble selected from 13 all-state high school orchestras from Maine to Florida. That’s a partial list of his projects.

Young conductors learn early on that their pace can never slow. To prepare a new piece, they must devote many hours over a period of weeks, beyond their regular duties, to study the score. But even maestros, whose normal regimen is far more intense, put in only slightly less study time “I once asked Zubin Mehta, who has a quite demanding schedule, if he still has time to study,” Kiesler recalls. “He said, ‘I study from one to five or two to six in the morning.’ We never have the privilege of resting. We have to look at new music and re-examine the old.”

The toll on conductors’ energies inspired Kiesler to found the Conductors Retreat at Medomak, a summer camp in Maine for conductors old and young. “We’re away from the city and pretense,” Kiesler says. “We’re in the woods living in cabins we share with other conductors, with no amenities, no TV, no radio. We just focus on improving ourselves and our understanding of music. An

older conductor may say, ‘My ear is not as good as it was’ a younger one, ‘My grasp of Beethoven is not firm’ or another, ‘My technique is weak.’ And they work on those things. All can share their insights in a safe environment. Younger conductors have an infectious curiosity and enthusiasm that can benefit their elders. Older conductors offer the young their experience and knowledge.” **MT**



Carneiro

Photo ©Steve J. Sherman

#### DISCOGRAPHY AND WEBLINKS

**K**enneth Kiesler can be heard soon on the Koch label, conducting David Schiff’s opera *Gimpel the Fool*, based on the story by Isaac Bashevis Singer. Soon to be released on the Equilibrium label is the University Symphony Orchestra, with Kiesler directing first-ever recordings of Prof. William Bolcom’s *Concerto for Flute*, Prof. Leslie Bassett’s *Saxophone Concerto* and Prof. Michael Daugherty’s *Spaghetti Western*. In Fall 2003, the Milken Archive of American Jewish Music will release Kiesler’s recordings of sacred pieces, part of an 80-disc set.

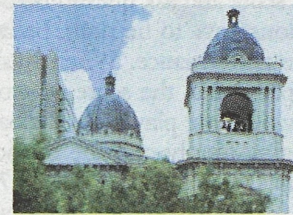
Bundit Ungrangsee will conduct the Charleston Symphony Orchestra in Mozart concertos with Paula Robison, flutist, on the Arabesque label.

For information on the Conductors Retreat at Medomak, see <http://www.conductorsretreat.com/> or write to Richard Sowers, administrator, 1321 East 9th Street, Anderson, IN 46012. Phone: 765.641.4458.

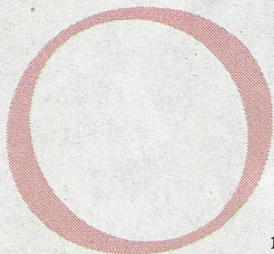


Bolivians embrace a conductor who honors their folk traditions

# HANDEL A OF THE ANDES



By Paul Constance



In a cloudless October afternoon in 2001, the native silence of a salt flat high in the Bolivian Andes was briefly invaded by the sound of Beethoven's Fifth Symphony. From a distance, the source of the music must have looked like a mirage: 65 musicians, each sporting sunglasses against the white glare, arranged on a platform made of solid salt blocks.

Never mind the dismal acoustics. The conductor, a 37-year-old American named David Handel '88 BMA, '91 MM, had planned the concert as a publicity stunt, a chance to show that classical music could "capture everyone's imagination," as he recently put it, in this impoverished, land-locked country nearly three times the size of California. Some 3,000 people, including Bolivia's president, political and business leaders, and busloads of peasants from nearby villages had gathered to hear their National Symphony Orchestra perform for the first time at the Salar de Uyuni. This immense salt lake and the surrounding mountains are the Bolivian equivalent of Yosemite, and the concert, which featured arrangements of indigenous folk music along with the Beethoven, was a tourism minister's dream. CNN and several other international networks broadcast highlights around the world. The local media declared it one of the most spectacular cultural events in recent memory.

Repeated implausible successes have made Handel something of a local hero since he took over as artistic director and conductor of the orchestra in 1997. At the time, years of mismanagement and government meddling had reduced the orchestra to a skeleton crew that offered a few performances a year to small, wealthy audiences in the capital, La Paz. Tickets cost around \$10 at a time when per capita income averaged less than \$800 a year. Programs offered well-trodden standards from the European classical repertoire in a country where 60 percent of the



Handel in the Salar de Uyuni, a salt lake surrounded by the Andes.



Photos by Patricia Crooker/E33

population belongs to indigenous groups that speak Spanish as a second language, if at all. When the Bolivian conductor resigned, Handel, known from previous appearances as a guest conductor, was abruptly offered the job.

#### 'A chance to build something'

"I saw it as a chance to build something," Handel recalls. Though he was based in Chicago at the time and perfectly aware of the developmental chasm that separates Bolivia from the United States, Handel saw parallels between the two countries that meshed with his long-term interests as a conductor. "We are both New World societies, former colonies," he says. "We are both populated by a combination of native and immigrant peoples, and we both face the challenge of making music relevant for multiple cultures."

These affinities were not immediately apparent to most Bolivians. With his blue eyes, shaved head and rapid-but-accented Spanish, Handel is conspicuously American in a nation where "Yankee Go Home" sentiments are frequently spray-painted on walls. Popular Bolivian perceptions of the US, never sunny, have darkened considerably since anti-narcotics efforts became the overriding focus of

US diplomacy in the country in the 1990s. With substantial assistance from the US Drug Enforcement Administration, the government of late president Hugo Banzer forcibly reduced coca

cultivation from 120,000 acres in 1996 to just 36,000 at the end of 2000, according to official estimates.

Celebrated by US officials as a major victory in the war on drugs, the eradication campaign enraged thousands of Bolivian peasants who depended on the crop. (The peasants also cultivate the plant for local consumption in an unrefined state, a tradition that dates to pre-Columbian times.) These *cocaleros*, or coca-growers, have since formed a powerful political movement whose candidate, the indigenous peasant Evo Morales, came close to winning the 2002 presidential election on a stridently anti-American platform.

#### Rise of the *cocaleros*

The coca growers are only the most belligerent manifestation of a broad *indigenista* movement that has been building since 1982, when Bolivia re-established democracy following a string of military dictatorships. After centuries of discrimination and abuse by fair-skinned elites of European ancestry, Bolivia's native peoples (most are Quechua or Aymará) are using the electoral process to assert their rights in virtually every area of public life. Their demands, which range from bilingual education



and better health care to the protection of ancestral water rights, now define the political battle lines for Bolivia's eight million citizens.

When Handel arrived in La Paz he found himself in the middle of a full-blown culture war, a *yanqui* leading an institution viewed as a rampart of cultural Eurocentrism. But even before he could eloquently roll his r's when pronouncing "*imperialismo*," Handel had begun to disarm his potential critics. During his first season he replaced the single ticket price with a sliding scale that began at less than \$1. He launched promotional campaigns in La Paz's politically tumultuous universities, tripled the number of annual concerts and took the orchestra on its first tour of smaller Bolivian cities in many years.

Before, the orchestra had been an emblem of elitism, but now "we were saying that's not what we're about," Handel says. Two of his early concerts took place in a gymnasium in El Alto, a sprawling slum on a desert above La Paz that is home to nearly 800,000 indigenous people. "We performed twice in El Alto to completely full houses," Handel recalls.

#### Composing for the *cueca* and *lambada*

Handel immersed himself in the country's rich indigenous music traditions. For his second season, he commissioned several national composers to write orchestral arrangements of folk styles such as the *cueca*, a traditional ballad and dance. He launched a series of concerts that featured these arrangements along with popular folk singers—a sort of "pops" concept new to Bolivia. The concerts sold out so quickly that Handel turned them into an annual feature and used them as the basis for his first recording with the orchestra. During its most recent season, the orchestra performed with Los Kjarkas, a folk group widely credited with reviving popular interest in Bolivia's indigenous music, including the *lambada*, an Afro-Brazilian rather than a Brazilian creation. (See Los Kjarkas's highly acclaimed 2002 CD *30 Anos Solo Se Vive Una Vez*.)

Some Bolivian critics have attacked these collaborations as frivolous, but Handel is unapologetic. Musical cross-pollination has a distinguished place in the classical tradition, he argues. "Brahms did it, Dvorak did it, Gershwin did it, Piazzola did it in Argentina," he says, referring to composers who drew heavily from folk and popular sources. "There is no society

known to man that has not produced some kind of refined and ultimately artistic expression."

To show that the dialogue isn't unidirectional, Handel has also pushed the orchestra to tackle dozens of challenging works by Shostakovich, Adams, Gershwin, Webern and others who had never before been performed in Bolivia.

#### Ticket sales are up six fold

Even his detractors acknowledge Handel's success in revitalizing the orchestra as an institution. Annual ticket sales have grown from 5,000 to more than 30,000 under his tenure, and local TV routinely features the orchestra, whose operating budget of \$560,000 is nearly quadruple the 1997 figure. Two-thirds of this amount now comes from donations and corporate sponsorships raised by a private National Symphony Orchestra Foundation that Handel created. He has raised salaries and hired 20 additional musicians, and this year the orchestra will have its own performance, rehearsal and office spaces for the first time in its 60-year history.

When budget problems threatened to cut short the orchestra's tour plans last year, Handel, a hard-driving pragmatist with a subtle nose for diplomacy, convinced US Drug Enforcement Administration officials to give the orchestra lifts on their C-130 military cargo planes. In exchange, the orchestra publishes an anti-drug advertise-

ment in concert programs. "They give us earplugs and strap us in like paratroopers!" Handel says of the trips. The arrangement has saved the orchestra \$70,000 in travel costs while giving the DEA a rare bit of favorable publicity.

After six years in Bolivia, Handel has become a public figure. But what matters to him more than celebrity is his being "generally respected and treated as *un boliviano más* [one more Bolivian]. I am very touched by this expression of popular affection and acceptance. It is something I read in the papers but means even more when someone approaches me on the street or when a taxi driver talks to me about a concert he went to." **MT**

*Paul Constance writes frequently on Latin American affairs. He lives with his family in northern Virginia.*



Handel in La Paz's main square.

Photos by Fabricio Crooker/E33

## A Maestro with a Mission

A native of Buffalo, New York, Handel (who is not descended from the Baroque composer) studied violin as a child and began conducting in high school. As a student in the U-M School of Music, he was encouraged to design a program that combined his interests in violin, conducting and philosophy.

At the urging of his violin teacher, Ruggiero Ricci, Handel wrote to Kurt Masur, who was then music director of the legendary Leipzig Gewandhaus, for a job. Masur interviewed Handel in Chicago in 1988 and invited him to serve for a year as an apprentice conductor in Leipzig. Thanks to efforts by Professor Emeritus Gustav Meier, who was

Handel's advisor in the graduate conducting program, and to support from the Rackham School, Handel incorporated the apprenticeship into his master's program.

It proved to be a pivotal experience. Handel found himself working and studying in an institution that Mendelssohn and Bach had once led, while in the streets East German citizens were leading protests that would culminate in the fall of the Berlin Wall. Masur, one of the most prominent cultural figures lobbying for peace and German reunification, fascinated Handel with his ability to select musical works that somehow gave voice to the audience's longing for reconciliation.

"It was under Masur that I began to form a personal idea of the orchestra's potentially unique role in the cultural and sociopolitical life of a community, its potential impact and its unifying power," Handel says.

Handel is modest about whether he can make a comparable impact in Bolivia, where the cultural and economic rifts are far deeper than those that separated East and West Germany. "We are not immune from the social problems," he says. "But I think that as an orchestra we've succeeded in reflecting the core values and cultural aspirations of the community we serve.—PC.



**'That the poor are invisible is one of the most important things about them. They are not simply neglected and forgotten as in the old rhetoric of reform; what is much worse, they are not seen.'**

**Michael Harrington,  
The Other America, 1962**

Last October, the U-M Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy launched the \$5-million federally funded National Poverty Research Center.

The center's mission is to "contribute to the understanding of and reduction in poverty in the United States," said Dean Rebecca M. Blank of the Ford School. "It's truly an honor to become the location of the National Poverty Research Center."

The US Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) presented the Ford School with a five-year cooperative agreement for the center. HHS Secretary Tommy G. Thompson noted at the inaugural ceremony that "much of the progress we have made in the country on issues related to reducing poverty and reforming welfare was through careful research."

The research agenda to be developed at Michigan will explore the long-term effects of policy changes, looking particularly at the well-being of families living in or moving out of poverty. The center has 12 core faculty and more than 50 affiliates from the Institute for Social Research, the Schools of Business, Education, Medicine, Public Health and Social Work and the Departments of Economics, History, Political Science, Psychology and Sociology.

Freelancer **Yma Johnson** spoke with four of Michigan's leading experts on poverty to present this *Michigan Today* minisymposium on the subject. For more information about the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy, visit <http://www.fordschool.umich.edu/>.

THE FORD SCHOOL LAUNCHES CENTER TO STUDY AND ALLEVIATE POVERTY

# THE POOR MADE VISIBLE

**Prof. Rebecca M. Blank**  
Dean, Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy  
Co-Director, National Poverty Center,  
Henry Carter Adams Collegiate Professor of Public Policy



Blank

I've spent a lot of the time in the last five years evaluating the effects of the welfare reform bill of 1996. So far, I can say the reform has encouraged many welfare recipients to get jobs and earn their own incomes. But few have managed to escape poverty, and the legislation's impact on mothers and children who might lose welfare benefits before they have stable employment is a cause for concern.

Along certain lines, the reform has succeeded far beyond anyone's expectations. Caseloads have fallen by more than 50 percent since 1996. Labor force participation among single mothers increased by more than 10 percentage points between 1995-96 and 2000, to nearly 80 percent, although some of these gains have now been lost in the last few years.

The fact that caseloads have fallen and workforce participation has gone up doesn't necessarily mean the bill is a huge success, however. Have the new workers increased their real incomes over what they received from welfare? Most people haven't gained a lot. We might be talking about an additional \$500 to \$1,000 a year in many cases. But the evidence says we at least haven't made many people worse off—through 2001, that is, and that's a big caveat that I'm going to come back to.

If a higher percentage of the poor are now earning their income

rather than receiving welfare, the question remains, will significant numbers escape poverty in the long run? That's a big concern of mine, and I have others as well. What's happening to the kids? When we emphasize new jobs, we're focusing on the moms, but how has the reform affected family life? The strongest, explicit purpose written into the bill was to lower out-of-wedlock childbearing and increase marriage rates among the poor. It said nothing about increasing jobs, decreasing welfare caseloads or benefiting family life.

Did the bill accomplish its stated purpose? Out-of-wedlock childbearing has declined recently, but that trend started before passage of this bill. As for promoting marriage, there's not much evidence so far that this has occurred. The bigger effect has been to increase cohabitation rather than marriage.

Now let's return to the biggest question around all of the positive economic statistics: How many changes were due to the policy and how many of them reflect the incredibly strong economy between 1996 and 2001? People left welfare and went to work, but they clearly would have done that in larger numbers anyway, given what was going on in the labor market and the economy. I've done quite a bit of research trying to tease out how much of this is policy, how much of this effect is economy and how much of this effect is other things.

Evidence shows pretty clearly that at least three things—the 1996 legislation, the dynamic economy and other policy changes—all mattered a lot to the welfare picture. The most important of these other policy changes were the expansions in the earned income tax credit, which added to people's earnings. If the current economic slowdown continues, unemployment will keep creeping up, and we will steadily erode some of the work gains of the last decade. **MT**

**To suppose such a thing possible as a society, in which men, who are able and willing to work, cannot support their families, and ought, with a great part of the women, to be compelled to lead a life of celibacy, for fear of having children to be starved; to suppose such a thing possible is monstrous.**  
**William Cobbett, 1819.**

## Top 10 Research Challenges of the 2000s

Dean Rebecca M. Blank of the Ford School of Public Policy lists these 10 research topics as the "center of attention" for scholars and US society in general over the next decade.

1. Immigrants, Poverty and the Second Generation. Over a third of all poor are immigrants. A key question is how their children are faring and whether they will also be disproportionately poor.
2. Family Formation and Fertility Policies. This is the hottest topic, in terms of current demand for evaluating such programs. But the research agenda may not proceed very far, given the difficulty of linking policies with these long-term demographic changes.
3. Low-skilled Men and the Labor Market. With the large incarceration rates, especially among African-American men, we need to know more about how these men are faring when they leave jail and try to move back into the labor market. We need to evaluate and experiment with a wider variety of jail-to-work programs.
4. Fiscal Policy. With tight state budgets, which low-income programs will states choose to cut and by how much? How will this affect Temporary Assistance to Needy Families programs and Medicaid?
5. Spatial Issues. A high share of those who remain on welfare live in very poor urban

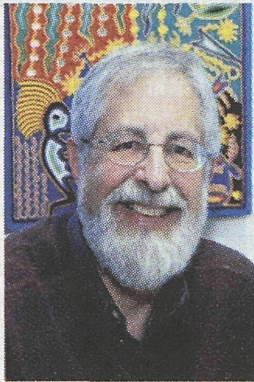
or rural neighborhoods. Poverty among this population and policies that might help them are high on the research agenda.

6. What Is Poverty? We need to improve the ways we officially measure poverty. And we need to do more to measure "well-being" rather than economic poverty, looking at such things as consumption, neighborhood quality, health indicators, et cetera.
7. Role of Nonprofit Services and Nongovernmental Service Providers. Agencies, community foundations and faith-based organizations all play important roles and have been little studied.
8. Health. Little research exists on Medicaid—public health insurance for low income families—despite the size of the program. Looking at effective ways to provide health insurance to low-income working families remains a high policy priority.
9. Changing Methodological Approaches. We need to find good ways to do state-specific studies since welfare programs are now defined at the state level. And that means we need to do meta-analyses that let us merge together multiple state studies to investigate issues of generalizability.
10. Meeting Increasing Data Demands. To study poverty and to study policy, we need longitudinal data over time across geographical and political boundaries. More use of administrative state-specific data is also likely to occur. One of the best ways to produce a well-read study is still to put together data sources that nobody has used before.



**Prof. George A. Kaplan**  
**Professor and Chair Department of Epidemiology,**  
**School of Public Health**

This is a remarkable time in history in terms of both the interest in and funding of public health and science devoted to health. We have the 800-pound genome gorilla: People are reading every day that the health problems in society will be solved by information coming from the elaboration of what we know about the human genome. Everything from the rarest disease to problems of racism, people are now saying, can be solved by what we may learn about the genome. It gets pretty extreme.



Kaplan

In my lectures I quote a former head of the National Institute of Health saying it's not unreasonable to think that research on the human genome will lead to the end of disease and disability. I immediately follow up that quotation by showing figures on life expectancy in Eastern Europe over the last 20 years.

The life expectancy of a 14-year-old male in Hungary decreased by three and a half years. That's equivalent to the amount of life expectancy that would be gained if we eliminated cancer and heart disease. It's a huge amount. We know this was a time of tremendous social, political and economic turmoil in Hungary as it went from a planned economy to essentially a free market economy. It affected people at every level from what they could eat to how they felt about themselves. And it had tremendous impact on their health.

I contend that understanding the genetic aspects of health is only a very small part of the picture. What we need to do is build bridges between the biological and social sciences if we're to close the great health divide between the people in the mainstream and those who are marginalized.

My research is focused in two ways, elaborating what these health divides are and, second, trying to develop ways of understanding the forces that produce health disparities in the population, both the biological and the social forces. It's this intellectual integration of knowledge across multiple levels of study that I think is key today.

Take the question of whether or not societies that have a greater gap between rich and poor have poorer health. Comparisons between the United States and Canada are particularly interesting because in many respects we're the same and in some respects we're different. When we started this work, we found that if we arrayed the states, or metropolitan areas within the states, by the extent to which there are large income gaps between rich and poor, people in the states with smaller gaps have better health. Their death rates were lower, and almost every other indicator we looked at was better in those states.

When we did the same study in Canada, however, we found no relationship whatsoever between income disparity and health. We think that one of the reasons is that there is less racial and economic residential segregation in Canada, as well as greater regional planning. Racial and economic segregation are associated with greater adverse exposures and fewer resources with which to combat these exposures. Regional planning can help to reduce some of the unequal concentration of these exposures and resources.

Canadians set policies mainly at the provincial, that is regional, rather than local level. In Canada it would be much harder to have a Detroit-area residential pattern, where you have hypersegregation in the city and suburbs. When you leave Detroit's boundaries, you cross from the most heavily segregated area in the country with respect to Blacks to the most heavily segregated area with respect to Whites.

How does that happen? Local governments can lure jobs from one area to another. A wealthy locality can give all sorts of tax breaks and actually bleed jobs out of Detroit and into the surrounding areas. Political processes that allow for enormous differences in material being can get instituted. Where you have regional government you can't do that. This is an example of a policy determination that can have a big impact on kids and their eventual opportunities to have good health versus worse health.

We need to train people to get out of their disciplinary boxes from the research point of view and policy point of view to understand how all these things fit together.

The first thing we have to do is change two prevailing mindsets. The first is that the only way to improve health is to invest huge amounts of money in fundamental science, basic science. I'm not against that, but we have to understand its limitations. The second mindset is that the only way to influence health and reduce disparities in health is to have some impact on medical care and the financing of medical care.

It is a sad truth that we are the only wealthy country in the world that doesn't consider health care a right for all members of society. I don't mean to indicate in any way that we shouldn't try to change that. But we're increasingly seeing that, in addition to delivery of medical care, issues of income distribution, labor policy, the structure and quality of community, housing—all these do-

**'Poverty is a great enemy to human happiness; it certainly destroys liberty, and it makes some virtues impracticable, and others extremely difficult.' Samuel Johnson, Letter, 1782.**

main that people don't tend to think of as involved in health policy—are integral parts of the quality of health.

We have to get policy people to start evaluating the health impact of the economic and social policies that they propose. And we need to convince them that there's a tremendous need for training and for research in this area. **MT**

**Prof. Kristine A. Siefert**  
**School of Social Work**

I'm particularly interested in social and environmental factors associated with depression in low-income women. Material hardship is an important predictor of depression that is too often overlooked. It is important because many risk factors for depression are global or difficult to change.

One of the most significant findings to come out of my work is that women who report in our studies that they sometimes or often run out of food are much more likely to meet the diagnostic criteria for major depression.



Siefert

My epidemiological study of household food insufficiency is part of the Women's Employment Study, which involves 753 women in an urban Michigan county who were welfare recipients in February 1997. Interviewers from our Institute for Social Research (ISR) interviewed a random sample of the women, and we have been following them for several years.

In the first year, we found that 25 percent met the diagnostic criteria for major depression. After we controlled for many other factors known to increase risk of depression, food insufficiency remained substantially and significantly associated with depression. This relationship has persisted over time.

The policy implications seem pretty clear: Give people enough to eat! This is a really rich country; we shouldn't have large numbers of poor mothers running out of food. Interesting enough, but not surprising, when mothers can't secure enough food for their household, they feed their children before themselves.

*Continued on next page*



I'm planning another study with Prof. David Williams at ISR, a much larger study using the National Survey of American Life to look at the relationship between household food insufficiency and major depression in African Americans and in Afro-Caribbean Americans.

Some years ago I studied racial disparities in maternal and infant mortality, and I'm sorry to say that the conditions I found are still a national disgrace. Black maternal mortality rates in Chicago and Detroit were three to four times higher than they were for White women. At the national level, those sorry statistics have not improved. The gap has even widened.

One thing that really appalls me about our country's performance in this area is that it is an issue in which the risk factors are modifiable: adequate nutrition, access to good, quality care, a decent standard of living. The same holds true for food insufficiency, which is far higher among African- and Hispanic-American families than among White families and associated with a host of serious diseases for children and adults.

I see two explanations, both of which require policy remedies. One is institutional racism, the other is individual racism.

At the institutional level we need to take steps to eradicate racism, and affirmative action is one effective approach. It's certainly worked well for White women because of their more privileged history and experience in this country, but it will take more time for African Americans and other people of color to make similar gains.

At the individual level, the National Academy of Science's Institute of Medicine recently published a major book documenting case after case of racism on the part of health care providers. It's the thing no one wants to talk about. Whether health care providers are conscious of it or not, it still has the same deadly effect. We've had disgraceful health disparities in this country for decades. It's time that we faced the reasons and did something about it.

I've been working since 1977 on maternal and child health and women's health. What has become crystal clear to me over the course of many years, especially looking at history as well as the present, is the role of racism in health disparities. It's something that we as a society are only beginning to acknowledge. There's so much denial and refusal to acknowledge what's just so glaringly there.

We need more African Americans and more Hispanics in policy-making positions, as deans and faculty of health professional schools, as providers. Affirmative action is so important. We need anti-racist curricula in all of the helping professions. It needs to start in elementary school. And we must have legislative remedies, because unless the law backs up corrective efforts, the corrections are not going to be enough.

What's really important to my heart is eliminating health disparities. All mothers and children, all people in this country, should have a good start in life—the same chance to be healthy and happy. Poor White women experience health-damaging stresses, but they don't experience the pervasive, everyday racism as well as the larger more institutional forms of it that women of color experience. It's two different worlds.

Actually, despite their greater exposure to stressors and risk factors, African-American women have lower rates of major depression than White women. That's one of the really interesting things that I'm hoping to look at with David Williams. One of the things David and others have speculated is that religion may play a protective role. It's important to look at belief systems as well as other protective factors and strengths because they have implications for health policy, too. **MT**

I'm planning another study with Prof. David Williams at ISR, a much larger study using the

**Prof. Sheldon H. Danziger**

**Co-Director, National Poverty Center,**

**Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy,**

**Henry J. Meyer Collegiate Professor of Social Work**

**A** substantial percentage of single mothers are working today as a result of the 1996 welfare reform. Prior to 1996, single mothers were entitled to receive cash assistance; now they are expected to move quickly from welfare into the labor market. However, the current system has little flexibility to deal with people who want to work, are out looking for work, but who can't find work.



Danziger

If the new work-oriented welfare system is going to be effective, there must be a way for single mothers to support their families. This is most evident when the economy is in a recession. Because it is more difficult to find work and because the welfare system still expects people to work as much as they did during the boom, more attention needs to be paid to the following kinds of policies:

- providing access to work-for-welfare jobs of last resort, or
- changing the unemployment insurance system to make it easier for people with part-time and sporadic work histories to qualify for unemployment insurance, or
- granting exceptions to welfare's five-year limit on benefits during recessions.

If government is no longer going to provide welfare recipients with a monthly check, then a system needs to be in place whereby people who cannot find an employer to hire them can work for their welfare. The work-oriented welfare reform of 1996 has increased the personal responsibility of recipients to search for work but reduced government's responsibility to help even those who are willing to work but are unable to find jobs.

I'm addressing these issues with Prof. Sandra Danziger in a book tentatively titled *After Welfare Reform: Toward a Work-based Safety Net*.

After the 1996 welfare reform and up to the 2001 recessions, incomes rose for single-mother families with children, and poverty fell. However, most working former welfare recipients earned less than \$15,000 a year. It is not the case that people are going from being very poor welfare recipients to being comfortable middle-class workers. They're going from being

very poor welfare recipients to being poor and near-poor workers. The poverty rate remains very high even among women who have successfully left welfare to work and get subsidized childcare and the earned income tax credit.

In a study being conducted by the Michigan Program on Poverty and Social Welfare Policy, women who were still on welfare had a poverty rate of about 80 percent in 1998, whereas women who had successfully left welfare for work had a poverty rate of 50 percent. While it does pay now to move from welfare to work, 50 percent is a very high poverty rate.

The provision of public jobs of last resort is just one policy that is needed if we are to have an effective work-based safety net. Another important policy change would be to devote more attention to identifying some of the problems that keep people from working steadily. For example, many recipients have underlying health and mental health problems that make it difficult to get and keep jobs. Often the welfare office is not aware of the extent of these and other problems, such as learning disabilities and low reading scores. The welfare-to-work programs that operate in most states do not devote enough time to assessing and screening clients and offering services that might address such problems and increase their employment prospects.

At any one time in the first five years after welfare reform, about two-thirds to three-fourths of the women who left welfare were working. The good news is that more single mothers were working than most policy analysts thought was possible. The bad news is that in any month about a quarter to a third of the women who left welfare were not working. In other words, welfare receipt has declined even more than work has increased. That means some people aren't getting either welfare or work and have great difficulty making ends meet.

Clearly, some people are worse off under the new welfare system than they were under the old system, especially if they have health and mental health problems that the current system doesn't treat effectively. Yet, there are some women who have moved into good jobs and are better off. Politicians and the media have tended to focus more on the success stories than on those who are falling between the cracks in the new system. **MT**

**'If a free society cannot help the many who are poor, it cannot save the few who are rich.'**

**John F. Kennedy, 1961.**



# Letters

## Watching dogs

I ABSOLUTELY loved, loved, loved the article titled "In the Company of Dogs" by Diane Swanbrow in the Fall issue! Reading about Barbara Smuts, Safi, and Bahati was engrossing! I, too, have two dogs and spend hours watching them interact with each other. They are best buds and they continually amaze me with their consistent friendship and canine behaviors. Thank you for printing the article!

Margaret M. Bunce '89  
Fort Wayne, Indiana

## Proud of a 'caring institution'

DEAR PRESIDENT Coleman, I have always taken pride in my degree from the University of Michigan. Often the actions of Michigan make me proud of the University and its leadership. I have just received the fall issue of *Michigan Today*. My interest centered on the article "U-M Remembers Victims of 9/11/01." As I sadly perused the listing of the victims I noted an '02 graduate. How can this be? Then I read the University granted Manish Patel posthumously his bachelor's degree in August. This thoughtful act by my University makes me realize how caring this institution has remained. Thank you, Madame President, for this continued enlightened leadership.

Eugene H. Peterson '50  
Atlanta

## Easing macular degeneration

THANK YOU for "Family Pattern Blindness Is Coming Into Focus" (Fall 2002). Last year at age 94 my right eye was blinded by macular degeneration. Using vitamin A in baby carrots for several months has restored 50 percent of the vision. A group in Florida and Alabama shipped vitamin A to Afghanistan and its neighbors (all known to exist on diets devoid of fresh fruit and vegetables, and their children—4<sup>th</sup> and 5<sup>th</sup> graders—go blind due to the starving diet). Their blindness is cured while on vitamin A, but soon after returning to the deficient diet, they become blind again.

I must admit I am taking OCCU Bright after meals. It's a mixture of vitamins and minerals along with the baby carrots. As a bachelor age 96 I am on a diet not rich in vitamins. Had I known about baby carrots two years ago, it would have prevented the onset of macular degeneration in my right eye.

James T. Bradbury '32 PhD  
Bozeman, Montana

## Dean Bacon, affirmative action and discrimination

WHAT YOU wrote about discriminatory practices evoked memories. My 1948 medi-

cal school classmate Bill Grier (who subsequently was the senior author of *Black Rage*), picketed Dascola's Barber Shop on East Liberty. Invariably, Jews—even those with Anglo-Saxon names emanating from an Ellis Island miscommunication—were assigned Jewish roommates. And then when my late wife and I moved back to Ann Arbor in 1956, there was a street on which our realtor could not show us houses for sale because they did not allow Jews. How the realtor knew we were Jewish was a mystery. Neither my late wife nor I appeared prototypically Jewish. Evidence is available in my photograph a few years earlier published in the 1948 *Ensign*. Was it my first name? Or?

To sense society's polite anti-Semitism in that era, the movie *Gentleman's Agreement* conveys it. My theory about the diminution of polite anti-Semitism is that people did not want to be on a continuum with the Nazi Holocaust at the extreme. The pendulum didn't swing so far that I could have joined Barton Hills Country Club when I lived in Ann Arbor in the '50s-'70s, but my experiences never rivaled African Americans. When an African-American pediatric psychologist colleague bought a home in Ann Arbor Hills decades later, the colleagues who sold it had to change and unlist their phone numbers to avoid the onslaught of harassing threats directed their way.

The photograph of All-American tailback Jim Pace recalled for me that I perceived him as the best tailback that I had ever seen. That was before Jim Brown and Bo Jackson.

Saul Isaac Harrison '48 MD  
Marina Del Rey, California

I WANT to add some of my personal experiences to your Summer 2002 articles "Crossing the Color Line" and "The Last Dean of Women." I was a member of the Human Relations Board (originally called the Anti-Discrimination Board) from 1954-56. We had seven student members, two businessmen (one of whom was Bob Marshall, owner of Marshall's Book Store), and someone from the administration. I don't recall under whose auspices we operated, but our approach was nonconfrontational, the usual way of the 1950s. We tried persuasion and succeeded in convincing the franchise of a national restaurant chain to stop discriminating by sending a Black couple who were turned away and then a White couple who were served.

We were not immune from the Red Scare of the 1950s. A *Michigan Daily* reporter told us that our incoming chairman was seen at a "Communist front" convention. Our man had no comment, i.e. he refused to "testify." To our shame we didn't make him chairman as was planned. He retained his membership on the board however.

In the dormitories it was clear that students were placed with roommates of similar race, religion and ethnic background. With names, pictures and addresses very few "mistakes" were made. We proposed that the dorms stop using race, religion and ethnicity as criteria for assigning roommates, although we agreed

that students would not be placed with anyone to whom they objected.

Dean Bacon was adamantly opposed to this "radical" proposal and told our committee chair, Sue Levy, and me that she was responsible for protecting girls from small towns in Michigan. She said, "When in Rome, do as the Romans do." We met with the Board of Governors and asked Dr. Theodore Newcomb, chairman of the social psychology department, and Roger Wilkins, now professor of history at George Mason University, to speak in favor of this proposal, but nothing was changed and we didn't have the nerve to go public.

Your portrait of Dean Bacon sounds accurate and I am glad she is still sharp. Her statements about how she maneuvered between her thesis advisors shows that she understood the uses of power and manipulation. We were like babes in the woods compared with her. It never occurred to us that she had a network of informers. But she has nothing to be proud of when it came to her callous mistreatment of Black students and anyone who violated her idea of proper social behavior. Like many liberals in those days I naively thought that integration would be the solution to the problems of race relations. I didn't realize the actual harassment of students who dared defy the unofficial ban against "interracial" dating took place, including expulsion from the dorms for otherwise minor rule infractions.

It is hard to convey the atmosphere of the 1950s, but *Michigan Today* has documented it in previous issues. Professors were fired for their supposed affiliation with "subversive" groups and President Hatcher endorsed the assault on freedom by the House Un-American Activities Committee. And the silence of many of us as I described above contributed to repression. I even refused to sign a petition Dave Goldberg was circulating on The Diag. I can't remember what my rationalization was, but the petition was simply the Bill of Rights!

Richard Eisenstein '56  
Evanston, Illinois

I WOULD like to correct an error in "The Last Dean of Women" in the fourth paragraph, which states that Michigan's first panty raid took place in 1955. The raid actually occurred in 1952. That spring I was a sophomore living at Martha Cook Building. I don't know if there were any subsequent raids, as the sentence implies, but I do remember that it was the first one on a college campus. I have the articles from the *Michigan Daily* and *Life Magazine* written about it. This publicity promoted similar raids at other schools.

Jean McFarlane Caiver '54, '55  
Ligonier, Pennsylvania

## Autos and the economy

THE REASON GM faced bankruptcy in 1992 as you say in "The Maven of Motown" is the big salaries, bonuses, options, pensions and high medical payments. Germans, Japa-

nese and Koreans don't pay that. 401(K)s are a lost cause. How can Micheline Maynard, 45, lecture in law if she is not a lawyer? When the Big Three go out of business like the steel mills, etc., then where are the students going for jobs? When the Americans don't have jobs where are BMW, VW and Toyota going to sell their cars.

I bought a Buick Park Avenue and I find nothing wrong with it. Beats any foreign junk. Maynard has a Lexus RX300. It is just a Camry dressed up on a car platform because it is cheaper, not better. All cars handle the same. Borg Warner or Signal make the suspension systems. Nothing different. What is good mileage? 4-cylinder engine, light weight. What is so wonderful about the interior? All vehicles are about the same. How much did she pay for it? My Park Avenue cost \$27,000. I got a better vehicle. Also, my tax money did not build a foreign car manufacturing plant in America, including the infrastructure: nonunion plants, poor health benefits and cheap retirement plans.

The United States is going broke because no manufacturing plants in the USA, so no tax base. It is a joke. What you have is better than mine? Ha-ha; 20 years from now your kids will find out. Buy American.

Alexander M. Yourshaw '56 MSE  
Falls Church, Virginia

*Micheline Maynard replies: I don't lecture in law. The department is called Law, History and Communications in the U-M Business School. The import companies have built 18 manufacturing plants in the USA over the past 20 years (with numbers 19 and 20 to be announced soon by Toyota and Mitsubishi). So there are plenty of American automotive manufacturing jobs, nearly 100,000 in fact, from non-Detroit companies.*

HAS ANYBODY done any research on students at the U of M from blue collar families? By that I mean families where neither parent attended college or where the level of academic education is low. How are these students faring? What is being done to make their college experience a happy one? I come from a home where my father only finished 3rd grade and my mother, 5th grade. I know this does not hamper some people, but I felt out of place at the U of M from where I got my Ph. D. in 1970.

Edward Palumbo '70 PhD  
E-mail

IN A LONG lifetime I've learned that history is a mixture of facts, fiction and propaganda. The mix varies with the viewpoint, intent and integrity of the writers. The fiction and propaganda may last for a long time, as evidenced by your article "Picasso's War" (Summer 2002 issue). I've seen "Guernica" in Madrid, and it is indeed a powerful rendition of the horror of a bombing attack. However, Franco did not order the bombing of Guernica. He had nothing to do with it. It happened to be selected as a target for a training exercise by the Chief of Staff of the

*Continued on next page*



"Condor Legion," the German aircraft supporting the Nationalists. The German knew nothing about its historical importance for the Basque people.

Second, Guernica was not a city. It was a small town of 6,000 people (smaller than nearby Saline). It had no military significance. Unfortunately, the loss of life was increased because it was the town's weekly market day, and the town was crowded.

Third, the Republicans were not "fighting for democracy," nor were the Nationalists, certainly not as we understood the term.

Fourth, the Republicans were not "exiled from Spain"; there was a civil war. Picasso fled to France to escape the war, as thousands of others did.

Fifth, there are many people in Spain who believe that the Nationalists, whom Franco headed, were the "saviors of Spanish culture and society," in spite of your pejorative statement about Franco. The war memorial in Pamplona honors those who participated in "the Crusade against the forces which would have destroyed our nation and our church." Communist supporters desecrated and burned churches and attacked the clergy. The names of the 11 bishops and over 200 priests and nuns who were killed during the war are inscribed on the walls of the cathedral in Cordoba.

During the First World War, the Germans dropped a few bombs on London from lighter-than-air craft. This was generally considered reprehensible. In 1937, there was still a general expectation that the distinction between "civilian" and "military" targets should be respected. Guernica was a shock.

In 1939, President Roosevelt protested the German bombing of Warsaw and other places in Poland. In 1940, German forces overran the Low Countries and defeated the French. They gained bases from which they could bomb Britain. The first British retaliation was an attempt to bomb Germany's heavy industry, concentrated in the Ruhr valley. The policy of "strategic bombing" to hinder the enemy's military production and weaken the enemy resolve gained acceptance.

On the night of March 9, 1945, the US dropped 2,000 tons of bombs and incendiaries on a section of the city of Tokyo. In the resulting firestorm 83,000 people died, 112,000 were injured and 16 square miles of city were destroyed. The bombing of Guernica, only eight years before, was a distant memory, but I did think of it when I saw the devastation in Tokyo.

Ken Moody  
Ann Arbor

I really enjoyed the articles on the European Union and President Coleman and your interview of Maynard. The plight of the female faculty in Engineering and Science also intrigued me. Please have Judy Steeh check the graph in her article. While 100% of the men responded to the survey on the U-M working climate, 140% of the women re-

sponded. Evidently nearly half of the women felt so strongly they "voted twice."

Bob Flink '43E  
E-mail

I enjoyed your article on Micheline Maynard in the latest issue of *Michigan Today*.

Dennis C. Stavros  
E-mail

THE INTERVIEW with President Coleman in the Fall 2002 *Michigan Today* afforded me what I believe is significant insight into the University's new leadership. It is a thought-provoking interview and covered a lot of ground while maintaining a sense of the new president as a person.

I was disappointed in President Coleman's response to the question regarding her vision for the University. What I read was "maintain" tradition. In my readings and personal experience that is a formula for decline and disaster. By way of contrast I present to you the path to a letter to staff from the University of Texas' new president, Mark Yudof. The letter was published November 24, in the business section of the *Austin American-Statesman* and can be viewed on line at the paper's Web site. Again, thank you for a fine interview.

Tom Jones  
E-mail

I just wanted to correct the geographical citation: i.e., the APL's not ON the JHU Homewood campus. (Although it's possible that there's an administrative office there.) It appears that APL is very independent; but I don't know what the organizational structure looks like. It's certainly a PART of JHU, but what kind of part I don't know. I suspect that there are a number of similar situations. E.g., Lawrence Livermore lab, et al. U-M's Willow Run Labs were similar, back in the 50s—part of the UM, but very independent, as I understood it. I don't know whether they still exist.

Mike Berla  
E-mail

I WAS really fascinated with the article about Barbara Smuts' studies of dogs in groups. We have a group of dog walkers who do this every day in a park in Fox Chapel, a suburb of Pittsburgh. I started this with my newly acquired German shepherds about two years ago and it has been a most rewarding experience. I would be interested in what she has written on the subject, as would some of my friends. I am also a docent at our zoo.

Tom Cramer '49, '50 MBA  
Fox Chapel, Pennsylvania

I ENJOYED "In the Company of Dogs" by Diane Swanbrow. Indeed, I found its educational value to be especially high, so I talked about some of Dr. Smuts's knowledge with friends and family. Is there a possibility of getting permission to reprint the article in a national dog-club newsletter? I am one of

the editors of *The Gun Dog Supreme*, published by the Wirehaired Pointing Griffon Club of America.

Richard Bovard '63 MA  
E-mail

#### "Crossing the Color Line" and "The Last Dean of Women"

I ENJOYED reading the article about Dean Bacon and the subsequent letters from your readers. Men, too, were subject to University oversight in their social lives, though to a lesser extent than women.

In May of '61, I was living with three roommates in an apartment on the second and third floors of a house on Packard Rd. Our landlady was one of the more excitable members of that fine old class of Ann Arbor landladies who had rented apartments and rooms to many generations of students and thought of themselves as more than purveyors of lodging. They considered themselves housemothers once or twice removed and an important part of the University community, namely its eyes, ears and conscience. What we would call today a Neighborhood Watch.

Our apartment was accessed through the front door and a hallway on the first floor leading to stairs up and down. Our landlady had her living quarters on the first floor and used the rear entrance. We also had access to a shower stall in the basement, as our second floor bathroom had only a tub. Final exams were almost over and Roommate A and his girlfriend had stayed up all night studying for an exam that afternoon. She had signed out of the dorm for home. Around 11 a.m., she went to the basement in her boyfriend's bathrobe to take a shower.

The landlady evidently cracked open her kitchen door to see who was descending the basement stairs. In less than 15 minutes we heard the front door open and up the steps and right into our living room sprinted the Assistant Dean of Men, whose name I cannot recall at the moment, though he was almost as notorious then to male students as Dean Bacon was to women. Maybe the name was Nofsinger. He told us who he was and that he knew we had a woman in the apartment and to produce her.

Roommate C, in an adjoining bedroom, had also been up all night studying and was very irritable. He had been a night editor on the *Michigan Daily* that year and had just been made a senior editor along with Tom Hayden and Pat Golden and had been involved in the paper's struggle against the *in loco parentis* policies of the University, which had just culminated in the Wernette report. He stormed into the living room in a terrycloth bathrobe and assailed the Asst. Dean of Men for his intrusion. He was so highly incensed and unrelenting in his criticism of the Dean's Office and their practices that the Asst. Dean was forced onto the defensive and then to apologize when he realized that his action was subject to the scrutiny of the press and that this was not going to be a routine bust.

While the tirade spilled forth, Roommate

A slipped down the stairs with some clothes. Finally the Asst. Dean of Men succeeded in calming down my *Daily* roommate, and in the ensuing silence, there were heard the screams of our landlady, "There she goes! She's getting away! Her hair's still wet!" Roommate A and his girlfriend had fled out the basement door and through the back yard. And as quickly as he had come the Asst. Dean of Men was gone. And gone in a radio-dispatched vehicle as I remember—a morality-police car. Soon gone to that junkyard in the sky, or was it heaven?

My only encounter with Dean Bacon was my freshman year. I lived in Winchell House, West Quad and on the first nice day in April, a friend and I went outside to throw a baseball around. The only grass nearby was next to the Student Publications Building and we had to share it with a few birds. He threw a grounder that snuck under my glove (they were a lot smaller then) and bounced off a parked car. I turned to retrieve the ball and there holding it was Dean Bacon. She handed it to me with a cheerful smile and noted, "First robin, first baseball."

Peter Vanderslice '63  
Berkley, Michigan

AS A STUDENT at U-M from 1949-53 in the School of Music, I found no such bias as you reported in the Fall 2002 letters. I asked for and was assigned a roommate of a different religion than I (at that time a Roman Catholic) and was paired with Grace Fink, a Jewish pre-med student. We got along famously and to this day we still occasionally communicate. It was difficult to realize that those people who wrote in and Grace and I were at U-M at the same time. Interesting how time and memories perhaps change our way of remembering and looking at life as we knew it.

Sally Stowe '53  
E-mail

THE LETTERS in the Fall 2002 issue were as fascinating as the original articles. This is the kind of topic that has burned into the memory banks' "Don't get me started department," but further searching the memory banks, I do recall one dorm friend (1964-5) who told me in disgust that she had heard women who dated Black men would face harassment and letters home from the dean of women. This from a 16-year-old Jewish student from Virginia, who seemed to have a lot of Arab boyfriends.

I lived in Mosher Hall in 1964-65. This must have been a transitional period for dorm rules, because we had "hours": be in by 5 am if we signed out. If you didn't sign out at all (I think it was not required, at least after one was 21), they didn't bother you. I marveled at this at the time, thinking it must have been some accommodation to parents, to think their daughters were under the care of housemothers and had some kind of "hours."



Having come to U-M in 1964 as a junior year transfer student from a little Lutheran university in Ohio, the U-M dorm hours did not seem farcical to me. This Lutheran school had really medieval hours and policies for women (first-year women students had to be in at 10:30 pm during the week, while the library was still open and full of men studying). At Mosher dorm at U-M there still was a housemother who played the dragon role over you ("You can't go bare-foot into the lobby! This is a Public Place!"), but she lost most of her magical powers on your 21st birthday. However, I do recall an "open-open" (a dorm open house when male students were allowed into the rooms) when my roommate and I got into trouble for violating some rules, not enough feet on the floor, or whatever. Also, my roommate had hung a blanket across the bottom bunk and sat behind it with her boyfriend. I forget what my own crime was, but she and I were both sentenced to report to the housemother every half hour from something like 7-11 pm Monday-Friday for two weeks. (This same obscure management technique had been used on women students who got out of line at the Lutheran school.)

I graduated just in time, so to speak. Approximately one year later all hell literally

broke loose on campus and the students claimed their rights as adults. Thanks again to Linda Robinson Walker and *Michigan Today* for these fascinating historical articles.

Mary Stellhorn Roth '66  
Ann Arbor

ENJOYED the Deborah Bacon article, as well as the many letters it elicited. My dates frequently reminded me of the "three feet on the floor" rule enforced in Mosher lounge. No one, however, interfered with the "making out" on the front porch, just before curfew. I must support the letter of David Brown. The first panty raid occurred in the fall of 1952 on a balmy Thursday evening. Glad to know David is still around, as I haven't seen him since his graduation.

Gil Franklin '54  
Tucson

IN YOUR article [in Summer 2002 issue] on the Sixth Circuit's decision in *Grutter v. Bollinger*, please note that the quotation beginning: "While it is true that the [U-M] Law School's policy is based upon [its desire to achieve a diverse student body]" is not, as you state, the opinion of "the majority." The quotation is accurate, but it is from the separate concurring opinion of Judge Clay, which

only three other members of the nine-member court joined.

Honorable Danny J. Boggs  
6<sup>th</sup> Circuit US Court  
Cincinnati

I NOTED your article in the Summer 2002 issue about affirmative action. Judge Boggs correctly argued that it is not proper to "arrange social outcomes proportionally according to the race or ethnicity of citizens...so long as the Equal Protection Clause is part of the United States Constitution..." In the Fall 2002 issue both Ray Constanty and D. F. Reeves again correctly questioned the use of racial designations, etc.

G. M. Freeman  
E-mail

READING THE letters section in the Fall issue helped my recall my undergraduate days as a "Phi Gam" at 707 Oxford Rd. From the time I pledged in 1952, I believe there was a policy (written or unwritten) of the national fraternity not to admit African-Americans. I must qualify that statement since Gertie, our cook, and Wildcat, our houseman, were African-Americans. But to my shame, I never even thought what it would be like to be Black. It was brought home to me when qualified African-Americans were not hired because "they would not fit in" or the staff "would not feel comfortable working next to a Black," or "can you really trust them?"

One of the finest men I have had the privilege to know was a retired Benton Harbor police detective who said that he experienced some form of racial discrimination every day of his life. What an indictment of our political, social and economic system. You have a fine publication. Keep up the good work.

Casper O. Grathwohl '56, '64 Law  
Niles, Michigan

#### "Little Mel"

I'LL COUNT myself among the older generation still reading about our university, its history and its people. My principal job now is clipping articles to read to others who can't, or to provide moments of inspiration to lighten their loads. One such that gave me tremendous pleasure was about Mel Wakabayashi (Summer 2002), who was on campus at the same time as our son. We have had close friends who were interned during WW II in America but who suffered the same indignities as Mel's family. My congratulations to John Bacon for bringing "Little Mel's" story to print.

Jeanne Judson Prentice '40  
Painted Post, New York

#### "Timelines of History"

AROUND 1996 I began a project called the Timelines of History and posted it to the web at: <http://timelines.ws>. Over the years I have used info from *Michigan Today* as well as many other sources and would like to thank you and your associates for a job well done.

I have organized the timelines in a linear

form from the Big Bang to the present, and each item is referenced to its source. Also included are timelines for most every country of the world as well as all the US states and a number of special subjects. Local search engines are provided and users are encouraged to subscribe to a biweekly newsletter, for updates.

Algis Ratnikas '69  
E-mail

#### Halfback flashback

WHILE WATCHING Chris Perry score the winning touchdown against Penn State on October 12<sup>th</sup>, I saw a repeat of what I had seen around the time of my 15th birthday in November 1939. At that time my father ('16 Forestry) took me from Niagara Falls, New York, to Ann Arbor. On Friday evening we attended the tenth anniversary dinner given for President Ruthven.

On Saturday afternoon, we were seated in the top row of the stadium at the 50-yard line. We watched Tom Harmon, Forrest Evashevski, Bob Westfall and company defeat then-powerhouse Yale 14-7. I always remember Harmon's running and scoring, Evashevski's blocking and Westfall's powerful running. Later, I was able to shake hands with all of them at an alumni association meeting in Buffalo, New York.

A play that I have always remembered was one in which Westfall plowed into the line and 22 bodies were in a pile. Just when the play seemed ended, a single person emerged from the pile—Westfall with the ball. Chris Perry seemed to be stopped short of the goal line, but ended up in the end zone. I thank him for winning the game in a way that helped me re-live a wonderful memory.

Frank W. Hoak '53 JD  
Chatham, New Jersey

#### Appearance and reality

I ENJOY the excellent variety of articles in every issue. The letters from readers are quite interesting as well. I like your format just fine. I certainly hope you do not turn *Michigan Today* into a glossy with lots of ads. I look forward to every issue. Keep *Michigan Today* coming. Thank you.

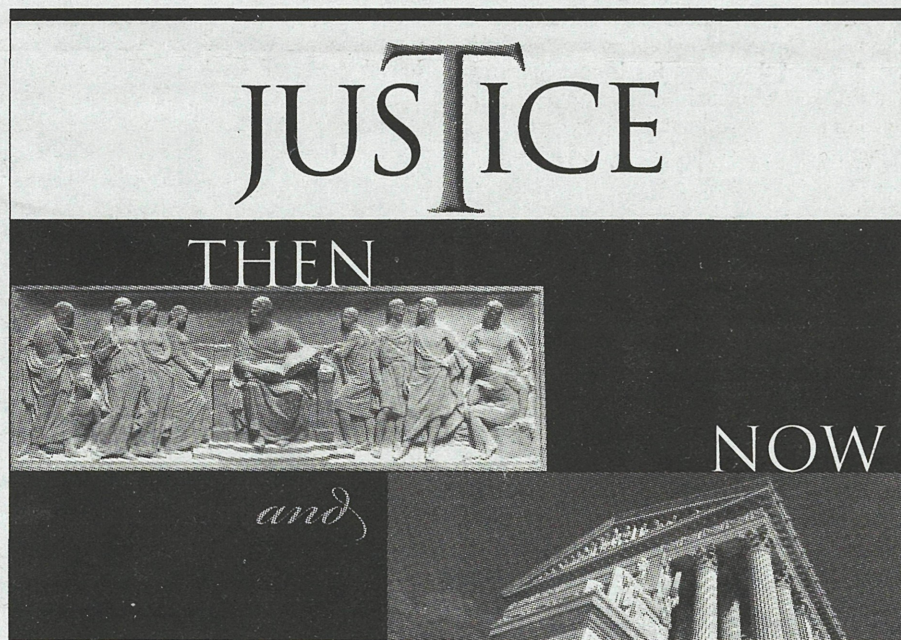
Lilly Crane '67  
Carbondale, Illinois

KEEP UP the good work. This is the best communication I've seen at many a university—meaningful and interesting.

Jo Ann Ropeta Foster '58  
Highland, Michigan

THANK YOU for *Michigan Today*. Your articles and erudite commentary are a welcome trip back to the Ann Arbor campus that I knew so well and hold so dear. The story about the "London Provisioner" was a gem! From my lofty coign of 93 years, *Michigan Today* is a landscape of comment and information I enjoy and appreciate.

Karl S. Richardson '31  
Estero, Florida



### Seminars and conversation — May 2-4 — for exploring the humanities and arts in a convivial University of Michigan setting

The humanities gave birth to concepts of liberty, equality, human rights, and the public good. Without the humanities we would have neither constitutional law nor civil society. How were ideals of justice formulated in the ancient world, and how have they changed? What do the humanities have to say now that is relevant to questions of the welfare state or contemporary market economies? How do the methods of history, political science, or literature allow revision of the past in a way that highlights justice? If you are interested in revisiting the great ideas of justice contained in humanistic study, and considering their relevance today, join celebrated UM faculty in the Institute for the Humanities' Spring Seminar.

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Jasper Gilbert leaves the RSC for the UMS

# Theatrical Stock

By J. Christopher Hippler

With over 350 props, four digital projectors and a huge moving light rig, the Royal Shakespeare Company's performance of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* is a daunting theatrical production. But Jasper Gilbert, the new technical director of the University Musical Society, knows the spectacular show's staging challenges intimately. In London recently, he met with his counterparts at the Barbican Theatre to review their production details and recognized the documents instantly. "They were using the production plan that I wrote when I was with the RSC," he says with a smile.

The son of a choreographer and a dancer, Gilbert comes from "an entertaining and theatrical stock." As a boy, he was forced to take ballet classes, all the while yearning to go out and play soccer with his friends. Performing on stage was not his passion. On a lark, he took a course in stage management in London after high school "until I had to take a real job." He was hooked.

The RSC was Gilbert's real learning ground. Starting as assistant stage manager in 1984 at just 19, he steadily advanced to the top technical job.

At the RSC, Gilbert worked directly with the script to plan productions. Collaborating with the director, he was charged with bringing the words to life. One of the last plays that he worked on was *Midnight's Children*.

A production blockbuster, *Midnight's Children* is sophisticated and multilayered technically, requiring a surround sound system, a dramatic digital light curtain and more than 500 lighting cues. The six performances in March at the Power Center will surpass in pizzazz any live theater Ann Arbor has seen, and Gilbert relishes the chance to dazzle audiences.

As the technical manager for touring, Gilbert journeyed from large-scale tours to Bombay, Santiago, Tokyo before arriving in Ann Arbor for the first joint UMS-RSC productions in 2001. He joined the UMS last September, moving from his home in Stratford-on-Avon to his new surroundings in Ann Arbor-on-the-Huron. But he didn't have long to get settled because the 2002-2003 UMS season was already under way.

His UMS duties differ from those at the RSC. There, he planned performances from the ground up. With the UMS, he manages all technical aspects of live performances. With Hill Auditorium's current renovation rendering it unavailable, he has had to adapt touring shows to 11 different venues. Working with visiting companies, he does the prep work for staging, lighting and set design before the company's arrival—"advancing," as it's known in the theater. "We got to know Jasper when he was advancing the first RSC residency



Gilbert was looking forward to the 'blockbuster' production of Salman Rushdie's *Midnight's Children* in March.

Paul Jaronoski, U-M Photo Services

in Ann Arbor," says Michael Kondziolka, UMS director of programming and production. "He had a wealth of knowledge, and a generosity of spirit that was very appealing."

After the incumbent technical director resigned last year, Gilbert became a leading candidate. But it was strictly wishful thinking at the time. "We didn't think we would get someone of Jasper's caliber for the job," said Ken Fischer, president of the society, "We were thrilled that someone with that much experience—whom we knew well—was interested in the position."

Months before this season's performances of the Rushdie play and Shakespeare's *Merry Wives of Windsor* and *Coriolanus*, Gilbert received the technical requirements: stage dimensions, rigging require-

ments, wardrobe needs, as well as personnel needs for sound and lighting. As the performance date draws near, his binder for the show grows thicker as reference photos, renderings and lighting blueprints arrive.

The advance work for a show continues right up until the company's arrival. Through the local union, Gilbert hires and oversees carpenters, electricians, and sound technicians. Working on stage, Gilbert's good humor and easy-going manner instill an esprit de corps in the staging crew. All the while, he wears his cell phone on his belt like a Western gunslinger, ready to shoot down problems.

No longer focusing on touring has freed Gilbert to implement innovations he's only contemplated before. "As Michael and I formulate the next season and the season after that," he says, "my knowledge of European theater allows me to suggest things that we might take a look at doing performances outside, or taking shows into non-theater spaces."

One of his ambitions for next season is to convert the Michigan Union Ballroom into a set for *Twelfth Night*. In the tradition of Shakespearean theater, the audience will be on three sides of the stage, and will even see the actors change costumes on stage as they did in the bard's time. "It is an attempt to realize traditional theater in a modern setting," Gilbert says.

Although he is quick to say he is "loath to influence artistic planning," he would also enjoy staging a production in Nichols Arboretum and other locales where the audience could be "very close to the actors." UMS outreach efforts appeal to Gilbert as well. In mid-March, he will demonstrate technical fine points to the Mosaic Youth Theatre of Detroit. For schedules and ticket information, contact the UMS at (800) 221-1229 or at [www.ums.org](http://www.ums.org) on the Internet. **MT**

J. Christopher Hippler owns *Capital Letters*, an Ann Arbor-based communications company.

## Michigan Today

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