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Michigan Today



Class at the Border See page 22

Photo by Sireya Shah '04

Hank Meijer '73

Man of Commerce, Man of Letters

By Mary Hunt

The cliché is absolutely true, "Retail is detail," says Hendrik (Hank) Meijer, 51, who, as CEO of Michigan-based Meijer Stores, must do daily battle with the likes of Wal-Mart and other national big box competitors. But unlike his counterparts in the industry, he balances the details of retailing with a passion for writing and the arts.

Since graduating from U-M as an English major in 1973, Meijer has taken courses in history and film-writing, collaborated on a film script about the poet Edna St. Vincent Millay and written a thousand-page "not quite yet publishable" manuscript on the life and political career of Arthur H. Vandenberg, Michigan's influential but largely forgotten Republican senator.

Meijer's schedule is full of civic and familial duties as well (he's a divorced father of three teenagers), but his work habits follow the example of his grandfather, Hendrik, and father, Frederik (Fred). Grandfather Hendrik came to the United States in 1907 as a 23-year-old factory worker, socialist and atheist. He immigrated to Holland, Michigan, because he could speak Dutch there. He disliked the prevailing religiosity of his predominantly Calvinist fellow Dutch Americans, however, and in 1912 he took up barbering in Greenville, a Danish-American community 35 miles from Grand Rapids.

In 1934, Hendrik, then 50, and son Fred founded the first Meijer store, the Meijer Grocery in Greenville, with \$338.76 worth of merchandise obtained on credit. The Thrift Market, their Depres-



Meijer

sion-born enterprise, grew into Meijer's Thrifty Acres, the nation's pioneer one-stop-shopping, 24/7 supercenter that combined groceries—including exceptionally high quality fruit and vegetables—with discounted soft and hard goods. Hendrik and Fred moved to Grand Rapids in the 1950s to expand their grocery chain. The company soon adopted a Dutch boy in wooden shoes for its logo, a quick way to appeal to the area's price-conscious consumers. They bought comfortable ranch houses (Fred still lives in his today) on Grand Rapids' northeast side, and that's where Hank grew up and went to Creston High.

FROM HAMILTON TO MICHIGAN

When Hank left Grand Rapids for Hamilton College in upstate New York, he never expected that he'd come back home to join the family business, or chronicle Michigan history or become so charmed by his home town. Neither of his parents had gone to college. Fred Meijer, ever-curious, a natural historian and storyteller, had been immersed in the grocery business since the age of 14, when he started out as a bagger.

The Meijer Stores now number 160 Thrifty Acres. They post annual sales of \$4 billion and range north to Traverse City, Michigan, south to Lexington, Kentucky, east to central Ohio and west to the Chicago suburbs, where they continue to expand. Successful imitators of the Meijer family's 200,000-square-foot-and-up "scalable" discount stores, as they're known in retail jargon, include Wal-Mart and Target, both of which have recently added perishable foods in some locations.



Hank's mother, Lena Rader Meijer, was a German farm girl with a head for numbers. She had worked at the original Meijer Thrift Market in Greenville. But Hank's Aunt Johanna, an excellent student, had graduated from the University of Michigan in 1939.

Fred and Lena loved taking Hank and their two younger sons to grocery conventions that offered possibilities for educational side trips like the Civil War battlefield at Gettysburg or William Randolph Hearst's estate, San Simeon. "Those are the kind of

things that get you hooked on history," Hank says.

Grand Rapids Community College and Central Michigan University were typical college choices of Hank's classmates at Creston High School. But Hank was an all-around good student ("student council, Boys' State, that kind of junk"). He was part of "a small coterie of pseudo-hippies" with artistic and intellectual aspirations who read Solzhenitsyn's novels. Skiing and cross country were his athletic passions.

Hank wanted to go East to college and chose Hamilton over several others because of its picture-pretty hilltop campus, small size and excellent track and cross-country program. Fred hoped that the Eastern mystique would not lead his eldest child away from Michigan and the family business. He hoped all three sons would stay with the company but never tried to steer their careers. (Doug, the middle son, joined Meijer soon after earning his BA in business at U-M in 1976. He is co-chairman of the board now that Fred, 83, has retired. Mark, the youngest, started his own ambulance company and is past

president of the American Ambulance Association.)

Fate worked in Fred's favor. "I had spent so much effort searching out colleges that no place could live up to it," Hank recalls. A knee injury early freshman year forced him to quit the track team, and, having come from a large high school where everybody said hi, he was alienated by Hamilton's Eastern reserve and its dominant fraternity system. By Thanksgiving, he was ready to transfer. He visited Michigan and Michigan State.

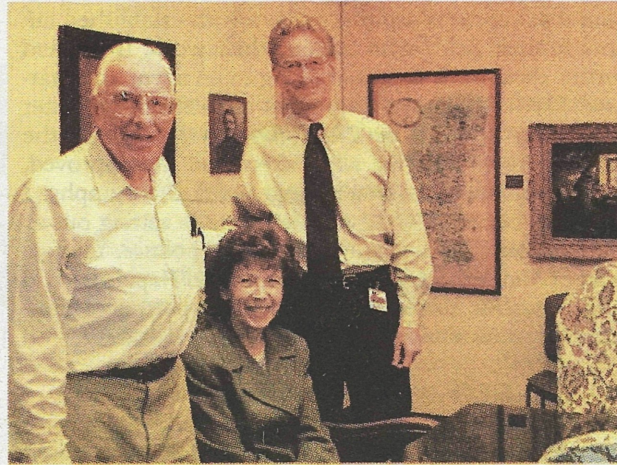
The MSU admissions officer, however, said Hank was bailing out of Hamilton too soon. So Hank reluctantly resorted to family connections to transfer to Michigan. A high school friend had touted the Honors College as a "cool atmosphere" within the U-M's multifaceted LS&A college. Honors Director Otto Graf, remembering how smart Hank's Aunt Johanna had been in the 1930s, let him in even before the required transcript arrived.

The newspaper business attracted Hank, but he found his journalism class's use of a computerized punch-card system to analyze sentence length and verb use "horrible." On the other hand he loved his English courses. He was closest to Medievalist and Irish studies specialist Leo F. McNamara, whom he regards as "a marvelous, marvelous teacher." A Harvard classmate of John Updike, McNamara, now a professor emeritus, was the rare professor who had not gone to graduate school. He oversaw Hank's senior dissertation on Updike and "turned me into a tea-drinker," Hank says.

Hank had decided to graduate in three years. He won third place for his Hopwood essays, joining a distinguished company of Hopwood winners in his era, including Lawrence Kasdan, Jane Kenyon, Sven Birkerts, Lawrence Joseph and fellow Grand Rapids native Max Apple. Hank's essay subjects were telling; they included the father-son relationship in Odysseus, the origins of a Grand Rapids television station and the lone-wolf tradition in American popular culture as suggested in TV heroes like Paladin in *Have Gun, Will Travel* and Tod and Buz in the *On the Road* knock-off *Route 66*.

FROM NEWSMAN TO BIOGRAPHER

Upon graduating, Hank took his own road trip west on Route 66 in search of a newspaper job, but to no avail. He settled for a job back in Michigan on the *Observer* newspapers, a suburban chain published by U-M alumnus and former regent Philip H. Power '60. Hank and the *Observer* editor soon left the paper to start a competing publication, the *Plymouth Community Crier*. Being in Plymouth meant Hank could take U-M creative writing courses, which, he says, "showed me that I clearly had no future in writing fiction." When the publisher returned from a leave to resume editing duties, Hank



Hendrik and Gezina Meijer's Dutch dining room furniture highlights the Dutch heritage board room at Meijer Inc. Hank and Fred Meijer stand with Pam Kleibusch, their administrative assistant for 45 years, in front of the portrait of Gezina's mother, an influential matriarch with zealous utopian socialist convictions.

decided to leave—right, as it happened, when his father wanted to entice him back to Grand Rapids to write a company history.

The result was *Thrifty Years: The Life of Hendrik Meijer* (1984, Eerdmans Publishing), a book now in its second printing and available at every fourth counter of a Meijer store and in many bookstores. *Thrifty Years* (a "fascinating piece of Americana" in the judgment of fellow biographer Leonard Mosley) tells not only Hendrik's story but also documents the working-class Dutch anarchist-socialist milieu he arose from and provides insight into American retailing, too. From 1907 to their marriage in 1912, the ebullient, naturally entrepreneurial Hendrik exchanged almost daily letters with his quietly idealistic socialist fiancée, Gezina Mantel. While he worked to save money for their marriage, she remained in Holland in the dreary textile mill town of Hengelo, where workers toiled long hours only to live in poverty.

Thrifty Years proved a turning point for Hank. It showed him that biography, with its ready-made characters and implied narrative, was an ideal match for his literary and intellectual interests. To learn the historian's craft for writing the book, he took history courses at Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo.

Writing about the ebullient grandfather for whom he was named caught Hank up in the drama of the Meijer story. Hank says Hendrik, who died in 1964 when Hank was 12, "is so vivid it's as if he's still here today." Hank saw the distinctive father-son relationship, ideals and management principles behind the company. Both Hendrik and Fred were willing to try lots of ideas, quick to acknowledge their mistakes, ever ready to delegate responsibilities and always on the lookout for talent within their ranks to train for leadership. Hank saw how the firm had constantly sought loans to expand, and almost went pub-

lic in 1978. The canceled public offering was a blessing in retrospect, because it permitted the firm to grow without interference from stockholders and Wall Street.

By 1984, when the biography came out, Hank had become active in the Grand Rapids cultural scene. He reviewed books for the *Grand Rapids Press*, whose book review editor, sensing a kinship, introduced him to Larry TenHarmsel, an English professor and now a dean at Western Michigan, who is the author of *Dutch in Michigan*, a perceptive and witty short book about a subculture in which "moderation was, in their minds, like intolerance: a sure sign of impurity."

Thrifty Years underscored Hendrik and Fred's generosity and lack of pretense. Now those attributes help Hank lead the company as it continues to reinvent one-stop shopping. "With 73,000 employees, it would be easy for the CEO to feel like a ruler," a Meijer grocery department manager told *Michigan Today*. "Meijer family members preach and teach humility. They haven't forgotten where they come from." On occasional store visits Hank likes to fill in, if needed, as bagger, his and his father's original Meijer job.

'MAKE MINE TEA, BARTENDER'

To avoid being consumed by his public role and its round of regular management meetings, civic obligations and frequent trips, Hank connects with his local world in behind-the-scenes, ordinary ways. He not only plays the expected role of arts supporter but shows up at independent films and poetry readings of the grassroots Urban Institute of Contemporary Arts, Grand Rapids' alternative arts organization. "Hank likes going into any old place, sitting down at the bar and taking an

Continued on next page



Hendrik Meijer at 23, in 1912

"Again and again the spirit of enterprise has passed by richer and older regions to settle upon some desolate rim of the world, such as the bleak coast of the Baltic and the dunes and marshes of Holland. It seems to prefer virgin soil to that which has been heavily encumbered by vested interests and prejudices."—Miriam Beard, *A History of Business*, quoted by Hank Meijer as prologue to *Thrifty Years*.



The Meijer store in Greenville, Michigan.

Photo from Thrifty Years

interest in local people," says his long-time pal Bob VanderMolen, a housepainter-poet with an international reputation. Schedules permitting, Hank, VanderMolen and TenHarmsel like to meet at the Cottage Bar, Grand Rapids' oldest watering hole—where Hank drinks tea.

Conversations with Gordon Olson, the Grand Rapids city historian, inspired Hank to follow *Thrifty Years* with an article for the *Michigan Historical Review* on Senator Vandenberg. Hank saw Vandenberg as the forerunner of the Republican moderates whom he saw rise to ascendancy in 1966—George Romney, Charles Percy, Nelson Rockefeller and Grand Rapids' own Gerald Ford. Hank admired them "for their ability to strike a balance between competing social interests in a thoughtful, honorable way."

Drawing some inspiration from Lytton-Strachey's sardonic, completely unscholarly character portraits of Florence Nightingale, Cardinal Manning and other "Eminent Victorians," Meijer burrowed into Vandenberg's papers in U-M's Bentley Historical Library. Soon he learned that some years back a U-M doctoral student had published the first volume of a projected two-part Vandenberg biography that would say all the world needed to know about Arthur Vandenberg.

Shortly after lecturing on Vandenberg to the Historical Society of Michigan, Meijer heard from the daughter of the biographer, who had suddenly died: would he be interested in the boxes of research her father left? "There was a sense, if I don't pick up this project, who's going to?" Meijer recalls. The gift jump-started him on the "most fun part of biography, pure thrill—interviewing people—so I wrote the necessary letters to set up interviews."

Soon Meijer was meeting with Gerald Ford, Dean Rusk, Clark Clifford and Herbert Brownell (campaign manager for Thomas E. Dewey '23 when Dewey and Vandenberg were rivals and allies); with "great talkers among old newsmen who had schmoozed with Vandenberg"; and with the author Gore Vidal. As a boy, Vidal had assisted his blind grandfather, a US senator, and met and observed Vandenberg.

"I tend to relate pretty well to elderly people on the track of their youth and their memories," says Hank, a natural listener. After 10 years, he had produced a thousand-page manuscript—too long, he knew—and sent it off to be critiqued. Humber College in Toronto offers a program that connects aspiring writers with established authors in their fields who critique their work. If deemed worthy, their work is passed along to an agent and marketed. D.M. Thomas, a biographer of Solzhenitsyn better known for novels like *The White Hotel*, felt that the Vandenberg manuscript, when shortened and improved, "has the potential to be a superb political biography. I can't help but wonder at your industry in setting out so clearly the internal struggle of American politics. Your account of Vandenberg growing up in Grand Rapids is vivid and informative. You build up a convincing portrait of him—ambitious, conscientious, a bit pompous and idealistic."

FULL-TIME CEO AND AMATEUR SCHOLAR

How could a non-academic without staff support produce a thousand-page manuscript? Of course, the deceased biographer's research was a huge help, and until he became CEO in 2002, Hank's schedule at Meijer—in advertising, marketing and then as corporate vice-president—had been flexible enough for him to make research trips and take off up to two mornings a week for writing. Also, he points out, "I don't play golf or watch TV sports." Although his social life is quiet, he tries to make time for readings at universities in his region.

Meijer went to a reading in Kalamazoo that included Central Michigan University English professor Liesel Litzenburger '89. Litzenburger read from her recently published *Now You Love Me*, funny stories told by a perceptive girl of 10 about life with her single mother in a northern Michigan resort town. Meijer, whose first marriage ended in divorce, read it, liked it and wrote her a letter. Now, more than a year later, they are engaged to be married.

Meijer and his writer friends critique and sometimes edit each other's work. He edited *Lorca: A Dream of Life*, a biography by his friend Leslie Stainton, editor at the U-M School of Public Health (see "An Author's Dream," Spring 1999 *Michigan Today*.)

Being Meijer CEO isn't too bad a fit for a guy who wanted to be a reporter and occasionally still dreams of getting a master's degree in writing "in a program that doesn't require a residency." As in journalism, the subject matter in his type of retailing is richly varied and constantly changing.

One day Meijer might look at signage in the flagship Knapp Corners Meijer store in Grand Rapids, where new ideas are often tried out, or fly to Dayton, whose Meijer stores were the first to add name-brand fashions in a superstore setting. Hank and Chief Operating Officer Paul Boyer (who

coined the firm's "Think big, move fast, have fun" motto) exchange visits with cooperating supermarket chains in Texas and upstate New York that sometimes buy together with Meijer Stores to offset the scale advantages of Wal-Mart and Kroger. A glamorous current task is working with New York interior and restaurant designer David Rockwell (Comerica Park) on a new look and feel for future stores and pending remodeling projects. "The design of the shopping experience is increasingly important as the company tries to distinguish its stores from those of its competitors," Meijer says.

An essential but less pleasant duty is reviewing employee benefits to stay competitive with Wal-Mart. Wal-Mart's overwhelming economies of scale pressure its competitors to adjust their benefits. For Meijer, the strains of competition are offset by the reward of sometimes being able to support institutions he appreciates. He has a special fondness for the U-M Bentley Historical Library and the Theodore Roethke House in Saginaw, and enjoys serving on the architect-selection committee for a new Grand Rapids Museum of Art.

Best of all is the pleasure of traveling with buyers to suppliers around the world. He loves his real-world, completely un-touristy interactions with other cultures in places like Singapore, Romania, India and China. "Hank's always hoping he'll be someplace when trouble breaks out and he can become an on-the-scene reporter," says friend Bob VanderMolen, an internationally published (house)painter-poet.

"Maybe the worst place I ever saw was a drop forge in the Punjab, with 12- and 14-year-old boys running around in sandals. It clearly wasn't up to OSHA standards," says Hank, whose company refuses to carry products known to have been made by child labor. "But those boys did get a few hours of schooling a day, and brought home money for their families. To me they're clearly much better off than the beggar kids who swarm around cars at every corner!"

In Ho-Chi-Minh City (formerly Saigon), he drove by the soon-to-be-demolished US Embassy and spotted the ladder that throngs of Vietnamese used to climb to the roof and escape via helicopter as the Americans were pulling out of Vietnam in defeat. Back home, he suggested to his father, who sits on the board of the Gerald Ford Museum in Grand Rapids, that the ladder could become a

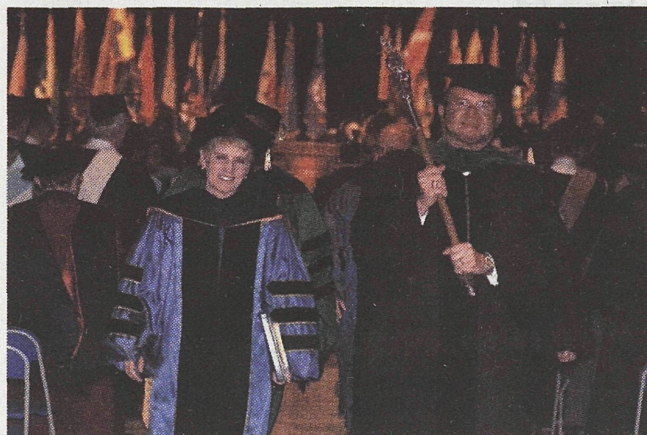
museum exhibit. Fred loved the idea—to him the ladder symbolized man's desire for freedom—but fellow board member Henry Kissinger hated it. The ladder reminded him of US humiliation and failure. Gerald Ford took Fred's side, and the ladder is at the museum today. **MT**



At their regular Cottage Bar get-togethers, Meijer (center) and TenHarmsel (left) listen while poet-housepainter VanderMolen (right) holds forth. The trio often finishes and amplifies each other's sentences.

MT photo: Mary Hunt

Freelancer Mary Hunt '70 MA of Lake Linden, Michigan, in the Upper Peninsula, writes and publishes, with her husband Don, *Hunts' Guide to Michigan's Upper Peninsula*, available at bookstores throughout the Middle West or at <http://huntsguides.com/>.



Marcia Ledford U-M Photo Services

President Coleman and Charles Koopmann Jr., president of the University Senate and professor of otorhinolaryngology, lead the recession from Crisler Arena after inauguration ceremonies

Moving ahead with an eye on the past

By Laurel Thomas Gnagey
University News Service

The inauguration of U-M's 13th president, Mary Sue Coleman, was celebrated as a day to "look back" and "reach forward."

"The glory of the University of Michigan resides in its ability to reinvent itself continually, to cherish its roots while inventing the future," Coleman said in the president's address. She used a symbol from Ghana in West Africa, the sankofa, as an illustration.

"The sankofa is a bird that is moving forward, while its head is turned backward," Coleman said at the March 27 event. "The proverb associated with the symbolism of the bird is: Look to your roots in order to reclaim your future."

Coleman acknowledged the contributions of past U-M presidents, including two in attendance at the ceremony: James Duderstadt and Lee Bollinger. She extolled the values of a public university by quoting James Angell, Michigan's eminent president at the turn of the 19th century: "The state and the University should feel their interests are identical. The prosperity of the University is bound up in that of the state. Michigan cannot grow stronger, wiser and happier without strengthening her principal seat of learning."

In looking forward, Coleman addressed challenges created by technologies that are "transforming all areas of learning." She also talked of U-M's responsibility to the environment, to economic growth and to maintaining ethical controls over science and technology.

"The University of Michigan has emerged as a leader in no small part because of its public character," she said. "We will not be working alone. To address broader issues will require collaborations far beyond Ann Arbor, Dearborn and Flint. The University of Michigan can bring vast intellectual resources to bear in our resolve to work on behalf of society."

Granholt and Coleman Challenge Class of 2003

In her first commencement address as governor of Michigan, Jennifer Granholt said on April 26 in Michigan Stadium that her wish for University graduates "is that when that diploma is handed to you—like a relay runner passes the baton—that you feel the force, feel the charge of leadership...and a calling to use that revered diploma to do a great thing."

Similarly, U-M President Mary Sue Coleman, who marked her first Spring Commencement as the University's president since taking office in July 2002, urged the graduates to make good use of the "endless information" cascading around them.

Granholt, inaugurated this year as Michigan's 47th governor and the state's first female governor, challenged the graduates "to embody excellence, complexity and service, and then to become, as Gandhi would say, become the change you want to see in the world."

"Make sure," she added, "that your commitment to excellence and success never becomes so narrow that it excludes a commitment to moral excellence."

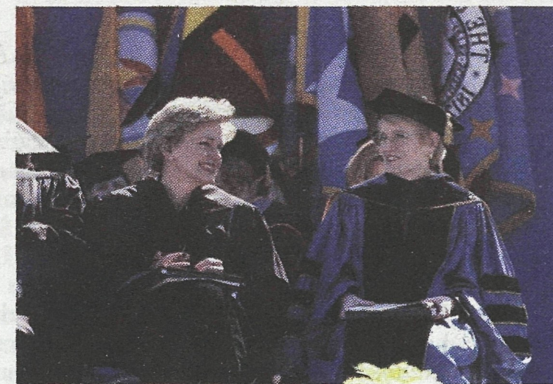
In her speech, Coleman, who is U-M's first female president, concentrated on the challenges of the information revolution. "I don't want to make you nervous," she said but according to her research, "220,000 gigabytes of information will be created during this ceremony, [and] that means you are all falling behind in the information revolution while we sit here. But how much of this endless information do you really need to know? How much of this new 'information' is true, or valuable, and how much is useless? And how do you tell the difference?"

"You are all savvy enough to know that a great deal of information that is available on the Web is not true. This information revolution provides you with access to galaxies of material—and what we have done at the University of Michigan is to provide you with the critical tools that will allow you to find true gold among all the fool's gold of the Internet."

Coleman concluded by calling on the Class of 2003 to recognize "your deep responsibility to yourselves and to society to use your well-developed critical skills to allow this information to provide you with intellectual freedom, rather than a world of deceit."

The audience of 40,000 included the undergraduate class of 6,400 and their parents, family, friends and faculty. A day earlier, U-M granted 175 doctorates and 1,143 master's degrees at ceremonies in Crisler Arena.

Honorary doctoral degrees were conferred on Granholt, who received a doctor of laws; Oleg Grabar, professor emeritus at the Princeton Institute for Advanced Studies, doctor of humane letters; Judith Jamison, director of the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, doctor of fine arts; Hillel I. Shuval, Lunenfeld-Kunen Professor of Environmental Sciences at the



Martin Vloet: U-M Photo Services

Granholt and Coleman at April 26 Commencement in Michigan Stadium.

Hebrew University of Jerusalem, doctor of science; former State Sen. John J. H. Schwarz of Battle Creek, doctor of laws; and Billy Taylor, jazz pianist and educator, doctor of music.

Schwartz was the main speaker at the University Graduate Exercises, and Taylor received his honorary degree and served as the main speaker at commencement ceremonies for the University of Michigan-Flint on May 4.

The commencement speeches of Granholt and Coleman are available at on the Web at <http://www.umich.edu/news/>.



Martin Vloet: U-M Photo Services

New grads going off with a bang.

McDonald is named dean of LS&A

Terrence McDonald was approved by the Regents as dean of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts at their June meeting.

"I am honored to be chosen dean, and I look forward to collaborating with my colleagues for many years to create a vision for the next period in the long and distinguished history of LSA," said McDonald, whose appointment is effective July 1. "During the next few years, we will work together to determine how LSA can strengthen and leverage its ties with the many schools within the University for the benefit of our faculty and students and the entire campus community."

McDonald joined the University after receiving his doctorate from Stanford University in 1980. He was promoted to professor in 1992. In recent years he also has maintained an active public life, serving on the Ypsilanti City Council from 1994 to 2000.

An award-winning historian of the United States, McDonald has made important contributions to the fields of American urban political history and historical method.

McDonald had served as interim dean of LSA since the departure last year of Dean Shirley Newmann to the University of Toronto.



McDonald

NCAA penalizes U-M after basketball probe

University News Service and Michigan Daily

The NCAA penalized the University this spring after a seven-year investigation of violations of NCAA rules in the U-M basketball program dating from the early 1990s.

In its report released May 8, the NCAA Committee on Infractions ruled that the acceptance of \$616,000 in improper loans by four former U-M basketball players violated NCAA rules on amateurism, impermissible recruiting inducements and extra benefits by an athletics representative.

The committee placed the University on probation for four years, imposed an additional year's ban on postseason play for the current men's basketball team and reduced the allowable scholarships by a total of four over the next four years. It also required the University to disassociate for 10 years the four players involved, or show cause why such an action should not be taken.

"We have always accepted responsibility for the concerns raised by the NCAA and by the Infractions Committee in its report," said U-M President Mary Sue Coleman. "We agree that these were very serious infractions, and we accept the additional penalties imposed by the committee that address the loss of scholarships, extended probation and requirement to disassociate the players or show why we should not. We own the wrongdoing and we own the responsibility."

Coleman added, however, that U-M would appeal the imposition of an additional year's ban on postseason play, over and above the one-year ban Michigan self-imposed for the 2002-2003 season. The appeal will be based on the unfair burden such a penalty places upon innocent student-athletes and coaching staff.

"I am disappointed that the committee's action has the effect of further punishing our current, uninvolved student-athletes," Coleman said. "This contradicts one of the core principles of NCAA enforcement."

U-M Athletic Director Bill Martin noted that U-M's own investigations had led to a number of actions, including personnel changes, extensive changes in the Athletic Department's compliance programs and self-

imposed sanctions. "We've had three presidents since the violations first occurred," he said, "and three athletic directors and three different coaches. All of the players in the program during those years have long since left the University."

U-M's self-imposed sanctions included vacating 114 wins including two Final Fours, removing four championship banners from Crisler Arena, returning money to the NCAA for postseason play with ineligible players and putting itself on probation for two years.

The NCAA Committee on Infractions agreed that U-M's response "represented meaningful self-imposed penalties," and praised Michigan for its cooperation and its commitment to accept responsibility for the violations. The committee said it had levied additional penalties because of the seriousness of the case, the large sums of money involved, the prominence of the players accepting the money and the lengthy time period over which the violations occurred.

The appeal process with the NCAA will probably take three to four months, with a response anticipated by early fall.

Player placed on probation

In other basketball news, U-M said that Bernard Robinson Jr. '04 of Washington, DC, would remain on the team as a player and co-captain while serving probation for assaulting a female undergraduate.

Last March, Robinson pleaded guilty to two counts of assault and battery for an incident that occurred in April 2002.

According to U-M Department of Public Safety (DPS) reports, a female student of West Quad Residence Hall accused Robinson of fondling her in a stairwell of the hall. She said she escaped and contacted DPS. Campus officers arrested and released Robinson the next morning. Robinson was initially charged with three counts of fourth-degree criminal sexual conduct. In a plea agreement, those charges were dropped and replaced with two misdemeanor counts of assault and battery.

Robinson's probation requires him to participate in sex-offender screening, to deliver a presentation to other Michigan athletes about criminal sexual conduct and to abstain from drugs and alcohol. He was also fined \$850 and ordered to have no further contact

with the victim, except for a required letter of apology.

Robinson, a 6'6" forward, was elected co-captain by his teammates earlier this year. He averaged 32.2 minutes, 11.2 points and 6.1 rebounds this past season.

Students connected with the campus Sexual Assault Prevention and Awareness Center petitioned the University to overrule the decision to keep Robinson on the court. Addressed to President Coleman and the Board of Regents, the May 19 petition was distributed to students, staff and alumni.

"We ask that Bernard Robinson, Jr. be stripped of his captaincy for the 2003-2004 season, lose his basketball scholarship from the University of Michigan and be removed from the University of Michigan's men's basketball program," the petition said. "By allowing him [Robinson] to continue to represent the University on a national level, the University administration shows a lack of commitment to ending violence against women on this campus. Allowing Robinson to continue to play for the University's men's basketball team also sends a message to this student body and to the nation at large that the University of Michigan is less concerned with the character of its student athletes than with their athletic abilities."

The University said Robinson's punishment was consistent with disciplinary actions taken against nonathletes who have faced similar charges. Basketball coach Tommy Amaker defended the decision to keep Robinson on the team. In a written statement published by the *Michigan Daily*, Amaker said, "Bernard knows that the consequences for his action carry a great deal of weight and will not be taken lightly. We will expect him to fulfill all his obligations as outlined by the judge. He will take a leadership role in sharing this experience with his teammates and especially with our freshmen players so they, too, understand the serious nature of this issue."



Amaker



Martin

You're probably not eating enough copper

By Judy Steeh

University News Service

Non-tenure-track faculty vote to unionize

Faculty members off the tenure track at the University of Michigan voted in April to create a union to represent 1,300 full- and part-time teaching staff.

The Lecturers' Employee Organization (LEO), an affiliate of the American Federation of Teachers (AFT), drew more than 80 percent of the vote, which included about half the eligible faculty members at U-M's Ann Arbor, Dearborn and Flint campuses. The new union includes full- and part-time lecturers, adjunct faculty members and visiting faculty members.

The AFT represents 45,000 non-tenure-track faculty members in the United States and also is the bargaining agent for graduate teaching assistants at Michigan.

Job security was the top priority for those who voted for the union. Some said they work for many years on series of yearly contracts, never knowing if they'll be rehired. Salaries were also a factor. Some part-time faculty members make as little as \$2,400 per course.

The U-M administration did not try to influence the vote. Julie Peterson, associate vice president for communications, said, "This was a democratic process, and we're comfortable with the outcome. We'll be making preparations to begin bargaining."

Jeffery Frumkin, assistant provost for academic and staff human resources, said both the University and LEO were preparing to begin bargaining over a new contract in late summer or early fall.

Lecturers and adjunct faculty still should be comfortable asking their department chairs and unit directors for information about their employment, Frumkin said. "But the existence of a collective bargaining relationship means there will no longer be individual negotiations over the terms of employment," he said.

Kirsten Herold, an English Department lecturer and chair for LEO in Ann Arbor, said that the lecturers "are not opposed to people making more money than other people. We know the market is different for different teachers, but there had been no university-wide rules or transparency in salary, job security or benefits."

Dennis J. Thiele has studied copper for decades in yeast, plants, fruit flies and mice, and he says, "We believe that in nature every cell is always looking for copper. There's never enough."

Most of us think about the food pyramid and wonder if we're getting the right amounts of protein, carbohydrates, fat and fiber. We read the labels on the food we buy and try to make sure we're getting the right vitamins and minerals. But when was the last time you worried about having enough copper in your diet?

Thiele, a professor of biological chemistry in the U-M Medical School, wants you to worry about just that. Copper is essential for life, Thiele says. The body won't function properly without it. Yet, some nutritionists estimate that at least 20 percent of the population suffers from a deficiency of copper. [See Thiele's Website at www.med.umich.edu/opm/newspage/2001/coppermouse.htm]

Copper plays a key role in forming red blood cells, especially in the absorption and utilization of iron, Thiele says, and it is required for the development and maintenance of bones, connective tissue and many body organs.

Copper is especially important for normal growth and development of fetuses, infants and children. In fact, Thiele says, "Copper could be more important to the health of your unborn baby than folic acid, giving up smoking or abstaining from alcohol."

Fetuses store up copper to use during their first months of life. Breast-feeding generally provides enough copper to see them through their first four months of life, and most commercial infant formulas are



Thiele

now fortified with copper. However, researchers have found that infants don't absorb copper as effectively from formula as they do from breast milk.

According to the US Department of Agriculture, most adults need about 1 mg of copper a day. Children should be getting 0.5 to 0.7 milligrams, and infants (to 6 months of age) need about 0.2 mg. Pregnant and nursing women need more copper, up to 1.5-2 mg/day.

Of course, Thiele cautions, although most experts worry about copper insufficiency, too much copper can be toxic. Excess copper can cause stomach upset, nausea and diarrhea.

Some rare genetic diseases like Menkes disease, which generally affects very young boys, and Wilson disease, which tends to afflict older people, cause copper imbalances.

Copper is also implicated in other diseases, including Alzheimer's and ALS (or Lou Gehrig's Disease).

Copper sources: Organ meats, especially liver, are the best dietary sources of copper, followed by seafood (especially shellfish), whole grains, nuts, raisins, legumes (beans and lentils), red meat and—best news of all—chocolate. Potatoes, mushrooms, peas, red meat, kale and some fruits such as coconuts and apples also supply dietary copper.



Photo: Dennis Thiele

Copper is the main alloy for the 10-cent through 2-Euro coins. Copper was chosen in part because its natural antimicrobial properties help prevent the spread of bacteria.

Were you married in the Michigan League?

"I DO!" If you spoke those cherished words in a wedding ceremony or had your wedding reception in the Michigan League building, we'd love to hear from you! In celebration of the League's 75th anniversary in 2004, we hope to host an event that commemorates League weddings and wedding receptions. Please fill out the questionnaire below:

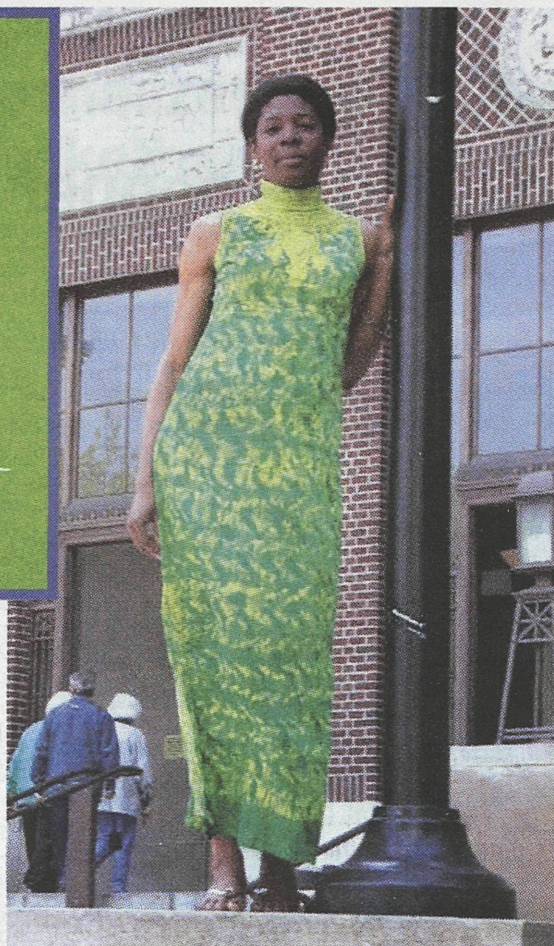
1. Name _____
2. Address _____
3. Date of marriage or reception _____
4. Would you be interested in attending a wedding commemoration event? Yes/No _____
5. Special Memories? _____
6. Do you know of someone else who was married at the League? Would you be willing to share this information? _____
7. Name _____
8. Address _____

Return form to Faye Traskos, Michigan League, 911 N. University, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1265. Fax: 734-936-2505. E-mail: traskosf@umich.edu

Ann Arborite, African, American, Alumna—
a writer weaves the strands of her identity

TRAVELS IN MIND & SPACE

By Yma A. Johnson



Johnson at a site of childhood romps with her brother in the Diag while their father held summer office hours.

“When we win we will free you from your shackles.” So proclaimed Lord Dunmore, Royal Governor of Virginia, to American slaves after he lost control of his colony in the summer of 1775. The British issued similar proclamations throughout their North American colonies to raise more troops to suppress the American Revolution. Enticed by promises of freedom, protection and land, thousands of indentured servants and slaves, known as the Black Loyalists, joined the British side.

After the American victory, supporters of the British gathered in New York to evacuate. They included more than 3,000 Blacks who obtained “certificates of freedom” and migrated to Britain’s Nova Scotian colony in Canada. The first group arrived in the fall of 1783 and passed a miserable winter in makeshift tents. Many succumbed to epidemics and starvation. Promises of land as reward for their service evaporated for all but a few. After two years of suffering, a delegation of frustrated Black Loyalists sailed to Britain to demand the land promised them. In response a British company offered a new proposition: passage to Africa in 1787 if they would form a British colony there. The loyalists agreed and several hundred set sail for Freetown, a settlement on the Sierra Leone Peninsula on Africa’s most western coast, where the British had replaced the Portuguese as the imperial power.

The indigenous community, dominated by the Mende, wiped out the first settlers. But in 1792, the St. George’s Bay Company (later, the Sierra Leone Company) transported a second group to Freetown, 1,196 Blacks from Nova Scotia along with 500 Jamaicans and dozens of rebellious slaves from other colonies.

In 1807, when Britain outlawed the slave trade, people called “Recaptives” joined the Loyalists and other first settlers. These were Blacks freed from slave ships intercepted by the British on the high seas. Although the Recaptives were from different parts of Africa, all were sent to what later became the Republic of Sierra Leone. Stripped of their original ethnic connections, the Nova Scotians, Jamaicans and Recaptives formed a new tribe, the Creoles (also called the Kri), who fashioned an English-Spanish-French-Portuguese-African pidgin, or creolized, language called Krio, a language born of the African Diaspora. These are my ancestors, and our stories flow through mind and space, back and forth like the sea, touching the coasts of North America and Africa.

With Duddy on the Diag

My parents, Marian and Lemuel Johnson, Mummy and Duddy, were born in tiny villages on the outskirts of Freetown and came to the United States to attend college. My mother studied dental hygiene at Howard University in Washington, DC, on a Sierra Leone government scholarship. My father won a grant from his prep school and majored in Spanish and English at Oberlin College in Ohio. After earning his PhD in comparative literature from Michigan in 1968, he accepted a professorship in the English department, where he taught for more than three decades before dying of cancer last year.

My brother, Yshelu, and I were born and raised in this Midwestern college town. The summers of my youth were magical. My parents rarely left us with sitters, so Yshelu and I spent much of our time with Duddy. We often played in the Diag on Central Campus while Duddy held office hours for his graduate students. Diag traffic is light from May through August, so we held dominion over a vast and peculiar playground flanked with grand buildings and cool concrete benches shaded by sprawling oaks, chasing each other in games of tag, climbing library ledges and running around like little wind-up toys oblivious to the small groups of big kids drifting to and from class in the afternoon heat.

Lucky campus days ended at the Michigan League’s snack shop where, unbeknownst to our dental hygienist mother, Duddy allowed us to gorge ourselves on cookies, pop and ice cream. Then it was off to the public library. My father enrolled us in the book club. Each member could borrow up to 13 books every two weeks, and at summer’s end the library hosted a party for the kids in the club.

Duddy nurtured a passion for learning in us, especially of the classics. He introduced us to Homer and Sophocles when we were in grade school. He found junior editions of *The Iliad* and *The Odyssey*; made up rhymes to help us remember the characters from the *Epic of Gilgamesh*, read us favorite passages out of Shakespeare and bought us cards describing the major Greek deities. On hot summer nights I imagined my bedroom lit with the fires of Prometheus. With Hercules I prepared to battle Cerberus, the three-headed dog that guarded the gates of Hades. A few years later, however, I found myself beginning my own 20-year war against my own three-headed dog: race, class and culture.

‘You’re an Oreo Cookie!’

Prior to seventh grade I was not aware that I was different from most of the other Black children around me. But at my middle school, most of the Black students came from a low-income housing development on the west side of town. Many knew each other from their neighborhood elementary school and decided to torment me. I was an easy target. I was skinny, dressed differently, spoke differently—“like a White girl,” they said—and all of my friends from my neighborhood were White. Some kids called me “Oreo cookie” (black outside, white inside). Brenda and Lisa were particularly vicious and made it clear to me that if I ever wanted to have Black friends I would have to change.

The majority of these encounters happened in the hallway because other Black students were almost never in advanced placement classes, another difference held against me. All the way through middle and high schools I was usually the only Black person in my Latin, French and Humanities classes. Some White friends, in feeble attempts to compliment me, told me I wasn’t “really Black” to them. The fact that I spoke “like a White girl” seemed to make them feel more at ease with me, made them feel they could ask to touch my hair or to explain to them the presumed mysteries of blackness.

What neither my friends, my enemies or I realized then was that I was speaking like an African reared in the United States, no more no less. My parents spoke English with British ac-



An Ann Arbor kindergartner.

cents and chatted in Krio with their Sierra Leonean friends. Caged by narrow definitions of what it means to be Black in America, combined with living in a mostly White town, I began to change. Where I had been an almost straight-A student with a docile and attentive attitude, I became rude, contentious and disruptive in class, although I maintained the same grades. Six of my seven teachers called home to report my misdeeds. The seventh merely wrote a note documenting my misdeeds.

I was put on "travel card" status, meaning every teacher marked down whether or not I had accomplished my homework and been punctual and respectful. I shaped up immediately. After two days of perfect reports my father said, "Let's not have any more of this" and ripped the bright yellow piece of paper into pieces.

I managed to stay out of big trouble for the next few years. However, I was still being hassled regularly in the halls. This went on for nearly four years, until the start of 10th grade. Of my main tormentors, Brenda seemed to find mistreating me merely amusing, but real hatred fueled Lisa. One afternoon in a stairwell I was on the bottom landing, and they faced me menacingly several steps above. "What are you looking at?" Lisa said. I clearly remember thinking, "I may get my rear kicked today, but I am sick of this stuff!" I planned to throw her down the stairs if I had to. I was willing to get suspended over this, willing even to wind up in the hospital, as long as I got in one good punch. It must have shown in my eyes, because that was the last nasty thing they ever said to me. After a stare-down like boxers before a match, Brenda said, "C'mon Lisa, let's go."

My troubles with Lisa and Brenda had an almost saccharine ending, just like a Disney movie. As I walked into my argumentative writing class after our stairway confrontation, there sat the evil twins. Fabulous, I thought, an entire year in a class required for graduation with those two only seats away from me. For one of our early assignments, each student was to speak on a topic for 15 minutes. I picked sexual abuse and interviewed a girl who volunteered to tell me her story. I related her experience and ended the speech with information about where people could get help if this was happening to them. When I finished there was dead silence, then loud applause. After class Lisa and Brenda approached me and told me that they thought it was a really good speech. We were never what one might call close, but a certain respect grew between us.

I felt compassion for my former enemies as I moved closer into their world. Lisa and I walked home from school together one day. As we separated, she spoke with palpable envy as I turned toward my neighborhood. "That's where you live?" It was an awkward moment. I knew where she lived, and it was the poorest neighborhood in the area. I had a similar incident with Brenda, who lived in the same subdivision as Lisa. I was visiting a friend near her home and decided it would be nice to see Brenda. I stopped by and her brother said she was out. The next day at school I mentioned that I'd come to see her. She panicked, blurting out, "Did you go inside?" I said no and the relief on her face was evident.

Brenda was one of the few girls in high school who kept her baby after getting pregnant. I remember her swollen teenage belly lumbering conspicuously down the hall. I felt terrible for her but shunned her because I didn't know what to say. I wish I knew what happened to Brenda and Lisa.

Rich kids and Poor Kids at Michigan

As I moved from high school to college at Michigan, my experiences with race, class and culture continued to disturb and disappoint me. I was excited about the prospect of rushing a sorority. Then Duddy explained the segregated origins of the "Greek system" on campus. There were Black Greeks and White Greeks and very rarely did the twain meet. I thought then and still think that foolish racism, perpetuated by both sides, has maintained the separatism. The system, though a manifestation of racism, has acquired a life of its own, and no one seems interested in changing it. I did not rush.

The University was similar to high school in that I was usually the only Black person in my classes. One major difference was the fact that I met Blacks with money with a capital M. It's embarrassing for me to admit, and a little saddening, that I had had no idea that America has concentrated pockets of extremely wealthy Black people. Freshman year, I met Terry from Shaker Heights, Ohio. That girl had money, money, money. Enough clothes for a small nation. Credit cards. A fancy car. She rushed without hesitation and was readily accepted. I found Terry fun but tough to get close to.

Cynthia and Angela were more my speed. They taught me what it's like to be Black at Michigan with no money. Cynthia and her four sisters grew up in Detroit with a single mother. Every one of those girls went to college. Cynthia, who had gone to Cass Technical High School, didn't have problems with the academics, but the stress of

holding down a job, and the culture shock of in-your-face affluence, would have undone a weaker person.

One night, several girls were getting ready for a party at the Law Quad as part of their pursuit for what they called "that all-important MRS degree." Terry, Cynthia, my roommate Mariella and a few others had gathered in my room to strut and preen. I thought their scheme was stupid. I sat on my bed and watched them get gussied up, with dollar signs in their eyes for some handsome stranger. When they were ready to make their grand exit, they looked like they'd stepped out of the pages of *Vogue*. Everyone, that is, except Cynthia. Her outfit made me look away.

Mariella was wealthy now but had spent some of her childhood poor. She found Cynthia something dressier from our closet. The spectacle was only made more awful, however, because Mariella was 5'2" tall and Cynthia nearly 6'. Cynthia went to the party in her own clothes, obviously underdressed and underclass. Ultimately, she withstood the pressures and humiliations, studied hard and secured her degree.

Angela was not so fortunate. She came from Inkster, Michigan, and her school had clearly not prepared her for the academic demands at an elite university. She hung in for a while but slowly started slipping away. By the second semester, clearly homesick and experiencing devastating culture shock, she began returning to Inkster on more and more weekends. Then she started to miss classes. Next I heard she was hanging around with a man near his 60s who was giving her crack. She didn't disenroll; she simply vanished.

What I didn't realize at the time is that there are quite a few "Angelas" at U-M. I'm not saying every or even most Black students who leave U-M abruptly have a substance abuse problem. I am saying that I saw a pattern of inner city Blacks vanishing from Michigan within the first year. Whether the pattern reflected culture shock, financial problems or an inability to build a bridge between their high school education and college is unclear. What was and is clear to me is that more needs to be done to retain and graduate such students.

White Girl Kim

Being poor is extremely tough at Michigan, but being poor and White adds another dimension to the alienation-invisibility. "White Girl Kim," that's what they called her in the ghetto, because she was the only White girl for miles. Kim had an alcoholic father who left her mother with five kids, the two oldest of whom were addicted to drugs. There is an unspoken assumption that all Whites at U-M have money. I watched Kim struggle against those stereotypes on a daily basis. "Why do you listen to hip hop?" (This is over a decade ago. Nowadays a White girl listening to hip-hop is no big deal; back then it was an oddity.) "Why do you hang around Black guys?" These were questions wealthy White men felt they had the right to ask her in a contemptuous tone—even if they barely knew her. She had a sharp tongue and sliced up a few frat boys who assumed it was their God-given right to interrogate her while angling for a date while they were at it.

I worked part-time and Kim a full 40-hour week at a retail store near campus. When she could, she also went to school full time, drinking coffee constantly, never getting enough sleep and putting more care into her coursework

Continued on next page



The author's parents, Lemuel and Marian Johnson, in London in the late '60s, when he joined the English department faculty.

Photo courtesy of Tina Johnson

than anyone else I ever met at college. Some semester, she would get part way through her classes, then her money would run out and she'd have to drop out. She kept going to class, though, for the love of learning, even when she'd get no course credit. I remember days she would fly down the steps of the store, run into the bathroom and start sobbing. "It's just all the begging, Yma." She had managed to hold those tears all the way from the financial aid office, across the Diag and through the store. Those of us who have been fortunate enough to have someone pay all of our expenses can't imagine what poorer students go through. People with money pursue their education. The poor fight for it. That is one of the many things I learned at Michigan.

Home, Bittersweet Home

Every Black person in America—and other Americans, too—should spend at least one month in a place where the beggars, the garbage men, the doctors and the president are Black. Knowing only life in America can give us an extremely narrow context within which to interpret what it means to be Black. A disproportionate number of Blacks live in poverty in the United States, but being in Sierra Leone smashes to pieces the framework in which Blacks are identified with poverty and opens up a more complicated vista.

Although I've always felt a sense of liberation when visiting Sierra Leone, my sense of otherness tracked me across the ocean. I've gone there at the ages of 2, 9, 11, 16 and 26. The first two trips I was blissfully ignorant of the racial, class and tribal dynamics in my parents' homeland. Basic pleasures can make a child feel included: I enjoyed copious quantities of my favorite foods, and my relatives embraced me unconditionally. But one day, when I was 11, I visited a maternal aunt's house in Hastings, a village near Freetown. A little girl standing across the street nudged her friend and said in Krio, "Look the whet man pickin" (Look at the White man's child). I'll never forget the two shabbily dressed children pointing through the red heat and dust at me in my new Western-style clothes.

There is a maddening sense of disconnection when I try to gain a deeper understanding of the intricacies of Sierra Leone culture and Freetown life as my parents experienced it growing up. While writing this piece, I called an uncle to check my chronology of key events in Sierra Leonean history. Then I read him something about his homeland that I thought I had learned from my father and from his conversations with other relatives.

As I read to my uncle, he objected again and again. Ultimately, he advised, "Stick to your personal experience," adding that not only I but also his own children

"don't know anything [about Freetown] because you didn't live there." It was like being slapped in the face.

The vignette that particularly offended my uncle dealt with the relationship between Creoles and "up country" people, also known as "Unto Whoms." One of my father and uncle's teachers took great delight in tormenting students from the interior, reminding them each morning that they were unworthy and unwelcome. After singling out those with non-Creole last names—that is, their family names were African and not English—he'd call them to the front of the class one by one and say, "Repeat after me, 'I have come to rub shoulders with my betters.'"

My uncle asked me, "Do you know what Unto Whoms means?" I admitted that I didn't. He explained that the term referred to their lack of westernization and the fact

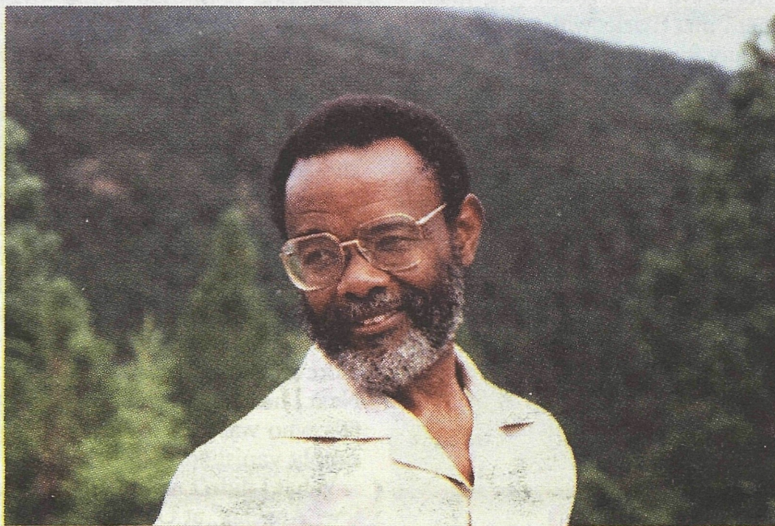
that they were not Christians. It was the Creoles' derisive play on biblical phrases like "Unto whom alone the earth was given, and no stranger passed among them" in the *Book of Job*. My uncle took exception to my including the story because, he said, the teacher's attitude was not representative of most Creoles. "That's not something we're proud of," he continued, saying that while Creoles may have felt superior to

"up country" villagers, many traveled to the interior on missionary expeditions, took "up country" children into their care and gave them access to opportunities they might not have had otherwise.

My latest trip to Sierra Leone was a few years ago, when I was 26. For the first time, I noticed the Lebanese. They had, of course, been there all along, having begun immigrating to Sierra Leone in the late 1800s. From humble beginnings as merchants trading seashells along the coast they have become prominent players in the country's diamond trade. Creole and Lebanese social circles are such that in all my trips to Sierra Leone, I've never spoken with a single Lebanese. They were like ghosts to me. They own businesses in the shopping district, which is the only area of Freetown I have ever seen them in, but when the stores close, they vanish into the dusk.

This trip was also the first time I became more aware of my social class within Sierra Leone society. My hairstyle complicated matters. At the time I wore a short Afro, both a political statement and financial necessity. (Ask any Black woman who straightens her hair how much it costs to do so every six weeks with a weekly "styling" to maintain it. A lot.) As it happened, Freetown prostitutes at the time were wearing their hair in an Afro. So here I was with the hairdo of a hooker, expensive American clothes and an upper-class last name.

Then, about two weeks into my visit, I discovered that shorts were considered borderline indecent. I also smoked then, adding to my decadent look. People in the streets, especially women, sized me up with murderous glances.



The author's father in Sierra Leone on Africa's West Coast.

Photo courtesy of Yma Johnson

One man actually shouted, "How e go walk the streets looking so when people are starving?"

I didn't understand this conservative culture that was supposed to be my own. People I barely knew asked me for money I didn't have. Others asked me to leave clothes from my wardrobe for them when I returned to the States. It was extremely uncomfortable to face daily the longing and envy in their eyes. Beggars filled the streets, some hideously deformed; others, thin and dirty, stretched toward me in blackened rags. If I gave them nothing, my comparative affluence was like spitting in their face. How could I explain to them that back home I was struggling myself, that I couldn't afford such a trip, that my parents paid for it? I honored some requests for gifts, but in retrospect I feel I should have been more generous.

Even though I'll never be at home in Sierra Leone, it is still a healing place for me, far from the soul-slating realities of what it can mean to be Black in America. As my father used to say, "Going back clears away the noise of American society." I wept on the ferry ride to the airport. I felt as though I was leaving part of myself behind.

Puerto Rico: No Utopia, Yet Gloriful

I moved to Puerto Rico one year after that last trip to Freetown. I had no friends, no home, limited funds and spoke very little Spanish. I was naively searching for some sort of racial utopia. I found no such thing. Puerto Ricans look down on the Dominicans. The Dominicans look down on the Haitians. I'm not sure whom the Haitians scapegoat but, people being what they are, I'm sure they've cooked up someone to oppress, even if it's only other Haitians.

Being dark-skinned was not an asset in Puerto Rico; nevertheless, I never feared that a gang of Puerto Ricans might beat up someone on the basis of their victim's darker complexion. I worked for a newspaper there and never saw an article on racial attacks or heard about any in the five years I lived there.

The Puerto Rican ethnic mix of Taino Indian, African and Spanish adds a layer of complexity to race relations. If somebody light-skinned is being racist, there's the standard comeback: "*Y donde está tu abuela?*" (And where is your grandmother?) It's nearly impossible to find a Puerto Rican without a Black relative, and that changes the social dynamics of race and color.

Although I didn't find a utopia, I did find traces of my ancestors. Slaves from Sierra Leone were brought to Puerto Rico, and their descendants have remained where they landed, on the coast in Loiza and Piñones. Red rice looks and tastes quite a bit like Jolof rice, a Sierra Leonean dish. I saw in the darker-skinned Puerto Ricans from the coast an unadulterated "Africanness." They looked like my relatives from "home."

I returned from Puerto Rico with a daughter who embodies the racial harmony that I've been searching for. Her father is a man of Polish and German descent who was adopted by Puerto Ricans and speaks English with such a heavy accent that it is sometimes difficult for mainlanders to understand him. Her name, Shechinah, means "the Glory of God" in Hebrew. Her ancestry crisscrosses oceans like the roots of the flowery flame tree, which grows in Sierra Leone and in Puerto Rico. I don't expect to live to see a harmonious blend of races in the world. We still have too much hate for that. But I can have a small sliver of that harmony every day in Shechinah, the Glory of God.

Freelancer Yma Johnson '90 lives in Ann Arbor.

WAS THE BREAD FOR PRIESTS, PRINCES OR A PRIVATE HOUSEHOLDER? THE ANSWER WILL SHED NEW LIGHT ON THE DAWN OF MESOPOTAMIAN CIVILIZATION AT NAGAR 4,500 YEARS AGO

A BAKERY RISES FROM SYRIA'S ANCIENT PAST

Story and Photos by Geoff Emberling



Tell Brak from the north. The mound is composed entirely of the remains of human settlement; the landscape is naturally flat.

A joint archaeological project of the University of Michigan and Cambridge University is working to uncover the remains of the ancient Mesopotamian city of Nagar in northeastern Syria.

Known in modern times as Tell Brak, the site was occupied for at least 5,000 years—from before 6000 BC to about 1000 BC.

Recent work at the site has focused on two periods: the time around 3600 BC when the settlement grew to become one of the first large cities in the Middle East (and thus in the world); and around 2400 BC, when it was the capital city of the large and powerful state of Nagar.

Work on this later period has uncovered a remarkable burned structure—bread ovens, flour mill and grain storehouse all in one complex, with an attached living area.

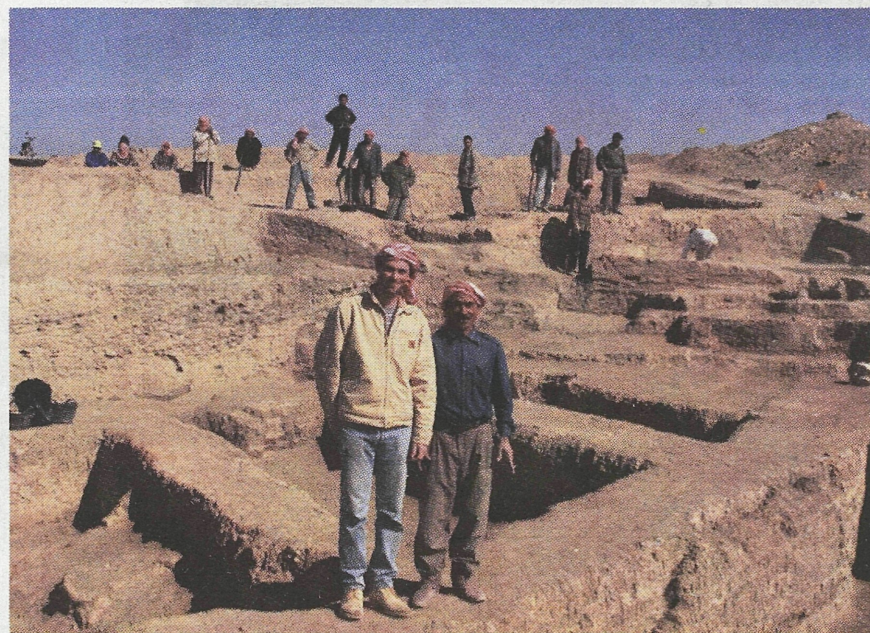
Is this bakery complex part of a larger building like a palace or temple, or might it be one of the great household enterprises mentioned in ancient cuneiform texts but rarely found by excavation?

It was not possible for the archaeological team to work in northeastern Syria this spring, particularly since Brak is no more than 20 miles from the Iraqi border. Thankfully, our many friends and colleagues in Syria seem to have been unharmed by the recent conflict. When excavation resumes, we may discover whether the bakery complex belongs to a temple, palace or household. Until then, we at least have a rare glimpse at the operation of an ancient bakery.—GE.

I met Humaidi Abed (fig. 1) in 1992 when I traveled to northeastern Syria to work as a junior excavator at Tell Brak, a mound (*tell* in Arabic; Brak is the name of the town today) that contains the remains of Nagar, one of the oldest capital cities of ancient Mesopotamia.

When I arrived at the site, the director of the excavation, Prof. David Oates of Cambridge University, put me in charge of a group of 40 local workmen. Among the challenges I faced in that first season were learning Arabic on the job and learning how to identify the mud bricks used by ancient Mesopotamians for building their palaces, temples and houses. Failing to find the bricks meant the irrevocable destruction of ancient architecture, so the stakes were high.

Humaidi was by far the best excavator among the Syrians who have been working with Oates since the excavation of Nagar began in 1976, and he is without doubt the most dignified person I have ever met. That first season Humaidi worked in the same area of the site that I did. I struggled to control the work in my trench—it always seemed to be a mixture of loud conversations on topics that I could only guess at and workers sleeping in the shade because I had not learned to balance the work speed of the picks, shovels and wheelbarrows. Humaidi's trench, in stark contrast, was all purposeful activity and little chatter. I'm sure I seemed pitiful to Humaidi then, but in 1998 I took over as field director at the site, and he and I became close friends, excavating together a bakery built in about 2400 BC, more than 2,000 years after Nagar was founded.



The author (left) and Humaidi Abed in the excavation of the bakery complex in 1998.

Ancient Nagar

What remains of the city of Nagar is a mound over 140 feet high and 160 acres in area, once home to as many as 20,000 people. The mound contains layers of houses, temples, palaces, the occasional statue or hoard of gold and silver jewelry, lost or discarded artifacts, and trash—all buried for thousands of years and only recovered in the 20th century.

The site is one of the tallest archaeological mounds in the Middle East, suggesting that it was an important place over a long period of time.

The city's location is puzzling, though. Nagar was in the Syrian Jazira ("Island") between the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers, one of Syria's richest agricultural areas. But since today it is right at the edge of this zone, Brak receives barely enough rain to grow wheat and barley, the major crops of antiquity. To make matters worse, the nearest source of water is the Wadi Jaghjagh, over a mile away.

It's not so much the average yearly rainfall that makes life difficult for farmers at Tell Brak, though—it's the variation in rainfall from
Continued on next page



Map of Mesopotamia (modern Iraq, Syria (where Tell Brak is located) and Turkey).

TRAVELS ANCIENT SYRIA

Continued from page 11



A dust storm about to sweep over the dig house and camp in 2000, a very dry year.

year to year. Some years, the land around the site is beautiful and green in the springtime, when we usually carry out our excavations. In other years, the landscape is arid and dry, and our feet sink into the dust as we walk over the surface of the mound. In the dry years, farming is impossible without deep wells and diesel pumps, and enormous dust storms appear and quickly blow over us, blacking out the sun and blowing over the tents in our camp. Studies of the ancient climate suggest that by about 4000 BC it had settled into a pattern similar to what we see today.

Why would a settlement with such apparent disadvantages have prospered over millennia? To begin with, it must have had a significant role in trade, both locally and over long distances. The agricultural zone grades into arid steppe to the south of the site, an area that was very likely inhabited by nomads; thus the city would have provided a marketplace for exchange of the wool and dairy products produced by nomads for goods manufactured in the city.

Brak also sits on long-lasting routes that connected the resource-poor cities of Sumer and Akkad (in modern-day southern Iraq) with the timber, copper, silver and precious stones of the mountains to the north. The people living at Brak would probably have participated in this trade.

Finally, in ancient times the population must have had access to a plentiful water source. The ancient name of the site, Nagar, indicates as much—the word means “flowing water,” so it seems reasonable to assume that it was founded on or near springs that are no longer visible.

The prominence of Tell Brak on the landscape attracted archaeological attention in the 1930s, when the British archaeologist Max Mallowan became one of the first to work in the region. He dug with hundreds of workmen, a scale rarely seen in modern projects, and excavated several large buildings in just three seasons of work. The largest was the “palace” (more likely a fortified storehouse) of Naram-Sin (2254-2218 BC), the ruler of the Akkadian empire centered on the city of Agade, who used a base at Nagar to control much of northern Mesopotamia.

‘... My name is Ozymandias, King of Kings,
Look on my Works, ye Mighty, and despair!
Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
Of that colossal Wreck, boundless and bare
The lone and level sands stretch far away.’

From Shelley's Ozymandias

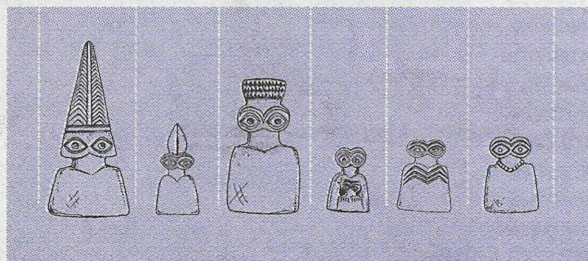
Mallowan also excavated a series of temples that we now know date as early as 3600 BC. Among his finds were many small stone objects, including thousands of so-called “eye idols” found in one of the building levels, which gave the buildings their name: the Eye Temple. He suggested that the idols were offerings brought to an eye god, but since no such deity is mentioned in historical records of later times, it remains difficult to confirm his suggestion.

Mallowan's wife was Agatha Christie, and she wrote an account of their work at Brak under the title *Come, Tell Me How You Live*. Her novel *Murder in Mesopotamia* takes place on an excavation in southern Iraq at the site of Ur. Ur was excavated by Leonard Woolley, well known in the 1930s for his discovery of the exceptionally rich “Royal Tombs of Ur.” Mallowan was Woolley's assistant at Ur for a number of years, and one year Agatha came to work there. Woolley's wife was a demanding woman and not well liked, so she became the murder victim in the book.

The Kingdom of Nagar in Ancient Texts

During the middle of the third millennium BC, Mesopotamia was ruled by small states interacting in shifting alliances and trade relations as well as frequent military conflicts. The rulers of these states built many palaces during this period, and royal inscriptions document the emergence of kings whose authority was independent in some ways from the temples that may have dominated earlier Mesopotamian political life.

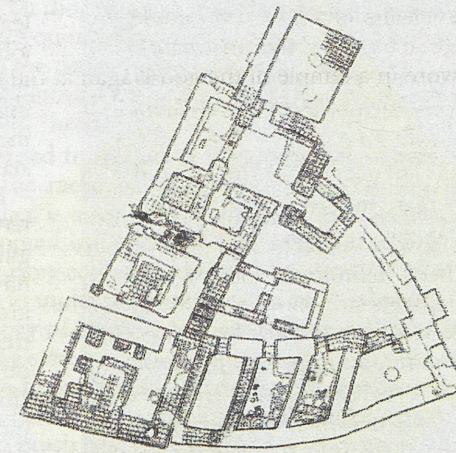
Some scholars have seen this shift as the rise of “secular



A few of the thousands of ‘eye idols’ found in a temple first excavated by Agatha Christie's husband, Max Mallowan, in the 1930s. They range from about one inch to five inches in height. Most are of white alabaster, many are black alabaster, a few are terra-cotta. Until recently, the idols had been found only in the ‘Eye Temple,’ but hundreds have now been found at the nearby site of Hamoukar.



A photo of the excavation area taken from a camera attached to a kite. The latest ancient occupation of the area was by Roman colonists, who built a village and fortification a bit northeast of the main tell. A. Poidebard of France investigated the Roman fortification in 1930. Mallowan began excavations at Brak in 1937-38.



Plan of the bakery building.

kingship” from an earlier “theocracy,” but across the varied landscape of languages, cultures and traditions of rule during this period, such a statement vastly oversimplifies the changes that were taking place. Perhaps it is enough to say that the large elite families were able to put the temples in their service rather than the other way around, and in so doing, were able to reduce the competition for power within the states.

Yet temples continued to be important in social and economic relations of this period. They were probably the centers of scribal learning in which Sumerian texts were written. Temples also owned large quantities of land, commanded large labor forces, redistributed many products to a variety of dependents and employed trading agents to acquire distant raw materials.

All the known cuneiform texts we have recovered so far were written for the temples and palaces. We have no comparable direct records of the activities of large, wealthy families, although texts make it clear that such families did exist and that they employed large numbers of laborers.

Scribes designated palaces, temples and families all by the Sumerian word *E* (house/household), usually with a qualifying term: the palace is the “big house,” the temple is the “diety’s house,” and other households are specified as belonging to an official or a family. We don’t yet know what proportion of people in Mesopotamian cities belonged to one of these large households since our knowledge comes mostly from texts, and the texts don’t specify how many people they are not mentioning.

While we have not yet found a large archive of cuneiform texts of this period from ancient Nagar, texts from other Syrian cities like Ebla, Mari and Nabada mention the site. These texts make it clear that Nagar was one of the most powerful Mesopotamian capitals during that era. A prince of Nagar married a princess of Ebla, and cuneiform texts tell us that she brought with her to Nagar a rich dowry including textiles, gold jewelry (including a plaque in the shape of a leaf), small cosmetic containers and 42 large jars of wine for the wedding celebration.

Another text tells of a peace treaty in which the king of Nagar swore in a temple of the god Dagan at the neutral city of Tuttul, to end a war against the king of Ebla.

New Excavations in the Kingdom of Nagar

Few physical remains of the days when Nagar was at the peak of its power have survived at Brak. One reason is that armies of the Akkadian empire (whose capital has still not been definitively located but is thought to have been near Baghdad) conquered Nagar around 2300 BC. The Akkadian kings built a series of large administrative and storage buildings, three of which have been excavated, together comprising about 5 percent of the total area of the city.

The Akkadian rulers may have built these structures on top of palaces or other important buildings, destroying them or making them practically inaccessible to excavation. Building on top of earlier buildings was a common



The ‘reception room’ in the residential area of the bakery complex. Elongated reception rooms are standard features of later Assyrian palaces and of modern houses in the area. This architectural form was associated with feasting as well as with resolution of disputes.



Room for grinding grain into flour. A grinding stone sits on the floor in the foreground. One of the plastered basins in the back still holds a broken grinding stone.

practice in crowded ancient cities. The symbolism of overtopping the edifices of earlier regimes was a powerful message of conquest.

In 1998, the Brak project began excavating a new area of the site and found burned remains of a large building that proved to belong to the pre-Akkadian kingdom.

The building forms a coherent architectural unit organized around two courtyards, an outer one and an inner.

The residents baked large quantities of flat bread in rooms around the outer courtyard. Piles of burned wheat and barley in two nearby rooms showed that these were storerooms. A third storeroom was empty at the time of



Room with seven bread ovens. The ovens originally had a domed top with a hole in the center for air circulation. The holes at the bottom (shown in photo) were for adding fuel and removing ashes.

the fire. They used a fourth room to grind the grain into flour; it still contained large storage jars. Another room contained seven bread ovens of a type still used in the area. In this type of oven, now called a tannur, fuel is burned within the oven, and flat bread is quickly baked on its rounded top surface.

The inner courtyard was more domestic in character, with a small kitchen, a small storage room and a reception room lined with benches. Although this room would occasionally have been used to receive guests, at the time of the final fire, it was a storeroom for clean grain—piles of extremely pure wheat and barley stood next to piles of grain with a significant chaff content, so it seems the people gave the grain a final clean-up in this area.

Throughout the building we have recovered lumps of cleaned and sifted clay. On one side, these lumps preserve the form of what they were used to seal: jars, bags, baskets or door locks (pegs driven into the wall and door, with string tying the pegs together). On the other side, the clay received the impression from a carved cylinder that was rolled over them. The designs of these “cylinder seals” are stylistically identifiable to regions and periods within Mesopotamian history and often depict scenes of mythological significance. We have recovered over 200 of the clay “seal impressions” or “sealings” in the structure but have found none of the stone cylinder seals, themselves, only the evidence of how people used them. We found six caches of door sealings that residents or builders had buried under doorways during a renovation. These finds suggest that the clay sealings were considered to have a kind of ritual protective significance.

Three of the most common designs were used to seal doors, so we assume that people who worked and lived in

Continued on next page

ANCIENT SYRIA

Continued from page 13



An inch-wide seal impression. The drawing of its rolled-out design shows a 'contest scene' involving stylized lions and goats.

the building owned these seals. Most of the other 35 designs have been found only on portable container seal impressions, and so were owned by people who sent shipments of grain, oil or other products to the bakery building.

What does the bakery tell us about early Mesopotamian cities? First, it is significant that the seven ovens and two storerooms indicate production of much more bread than the 20 or so people who lived and worked in the bakery could have eaten. Cuneiform texts often cite bread as a form of rations for laborers in palaces, temples and elite households, so it is likely that this bakery was part of one of these organizations.

We have looked for a physical continuation of the bakery complex that might show it was physically part of a palace or temple, but it seems so far to have been an independent structure.

If the bakery was a self-contained house, we are confronted with what appears to be the use of cylinder seals outside the direct control of a temple or a palace. That would mean that not just large institutions but also private families adopted the use of cylinder seals for their own use.

Our work is not finished—we can't yet say whether the building is a temple, palace or private household. Identifying the building will alter our interpretation of the artifacts within it.

If it's a palace, we will have found the seat of power of a major capital city; palaces from Ebla, Mari, and Nabada have been partially excavated and show interesting differences in display and use of space.

If it's a temple, it may allow us to address and understand an apparent anomaly between the huge temples of southern cities and what seem to be small shrines in the north.

In some ways, though, it will be most interesting if it turns out to be a large private household. There have been massive debates in the field about the extent to which such households dominated the economy of Mesopotamian cities. Some scholars say there was no market, no free enterprise and no entrepreneurship because palace, temple and elite households controlled the economy entirely. So far, such arguments have been based almost entirely on texts, and there have been few good remains of private households to rebut them. It would be important, therefore, to have an excavated example of a private household, particularly one that retained evidence of how it functioned within the larger economy.

To resolve such questions will require a continuation of our excavation, which we hope will be possible in the years to come.

MT

Geoff Emberling '95 PhD (*Anthropology and Near Eastern Studies*), is Visiting Assistant Professor in the University's Department of Near Eastern Studies. He has served as field director of the *Archaeological Expedition to Tell Brak, Syria*, since 1998.



A 5-inch-wide door sealing was found in three fragments. The center shows the impression of the door peg. The outside surface bears impressions of the cylinder seals. To mark clay seals and locks, residents rolled stone cylinders engraved with distinctive designs over clay. The designs bore images ranging from geometric patterns to mythological subjects.

Fieldwork has been suspended

In the aftermath of war, it is not clear when archaeologists will be able to resume fieldwork in the Middle East. Anti-American sentiment among some in Iraq, Syria, Turkey, and Iran may compromise the safety of teams, and in Iraq itself, the stability of the government and unavailability of basic services will have to be addressed. Archaeological fieldwork provides benefits apart from increased knowledge of the past, however—in providing jobs to hundreds of locals, it not only will help Iraqis recover from the rule of Saddam, two wars and a long embargo, but by putting Iraqis and foreigners in closer contact, will help restore good relations between the West and the Middle East.—GE.

U-M scholars lead efforts to protect treasures of Iraq

On May 6, Piotr Michalowski, the George G. Cameron Professor of Ancient Near Eastern Civilization and Languages, announced that he and 30 other scholars had met in New York City and elected an eight-person American Coordinating Committee for Iraqi Cultural Heritage. U-M Profs. Gary M. Beckman of Near Eastern Studies and Henry T. Wright of anthropology also attended.

The committee, which represent major US scholarly societies and institutions, said its "first and most urgent concern is for the security of Iraqi cultural sites and properties. It is imperative that the authority structures in Iraq seal the borders to prevent cultural properties from leaving the country.

It is also imperative that the same designated authorities establish and maintain guards at all museums, libraries and archaeological sites to prevent further destruction."

Michalowski, who chaired the meeting, said the group would press for federal and international regulations that would ensure that "only competent scholars and experienced museum professionals will supervise the handling of objects and records to prevent further harm to surviving or recovered materials."

Meanwhile, in late May, Professor Wright, the Albert Clanton Spaulding Collegiate Professor of Anthropology and Curator, U-M Museum of Anthropology, led a four-person American delegation to Iraq to assess the condition of Iraqi

monuments and historical sites. The two-week trip was made under the auspices of the National Geographic Society's Committee for Research and Exploration. On June 11, the team announced its findings at a Washington, DC, news conference.

"Somebody in the US government deserves positive credit for sparing the archaeological sites from bombing," Wright said, "and we found nothing but concern and politeness from the military people we encountered. However, several important sites have been badly looted and remained unguarded while we were there. Very little archaeological work has been done in key parts of Iraq, so much of its history—the world's heritage—still lies in the ground. Protecting

these places for future research at this very vulnerable time is crucial if we are to have any hope of understanding the fundamental processes that gave rise to the earliest civilizations."

"We saw plenty of evidence of significant looting," said anthropologist Elizabeth Stone of the State University of New York at Stony Brook. "The looting of sites and museums and the illegal trade are something governed by the desire of people in the West to collect these items. These are the end users. It's very similar to the drug trade. Wealthy people in America, Europe and Japan drive this kind of destruction." (For more information on the expedition, see www.nationalgeographic.com/iraq.)

MICHIGAN TODAY News^e

NEW MONTHLY ELECTRONIC PUBLICATION

Michigan Today, now mailed to approximately 400,000 University of Michigan alumni/ae and friends, is launching a new monthly electronic publication this July. It is the MICHIGAN TODAY News^e.

Our approach will be to send the MICHIGAN TODAY News^e to people who want to receive it.

You can sign up online by going to www.umich.edu/NewsE.

Another change for next year reflects budget constraints being felt across campus. We will publish the print edition of Michigan Today twice. A third full issue will be published only online in winter, at <http://www.umich.edu/news/MT/>. All current editions and our archive back to 1993 are also at that Web site.

John Woodford
Executive Editor

The screenshot shows a web browser window displaying the Michigan Today News website. The browser's address bar shows "http://www.umich.edu/NewsE". The website header features the "MICHIGAN TODAY News^e" logo and the text "News from the University of Michigan News Service". A yellow banner at the top reads: "Welcome to Michigan Today News^e, a new monthly email newsletter from the University of Michigan. We hope you enjoy it, and we welcome your feedback." Below this is a featured article titled "Public still knows little about genetics" with a DNA double helix graphic. The article text states: "Despite a decade of highly publicized advances in genetics, U.S. adults know no more about genetic testing than they did in 1990." Below the article are three bullet points with small images: "High-speed images show cell's immune system in action" (with a cell image), "U-M Composer Bolcom's Year in the Spotlight" (with a photo of William Bolcom), and "News You Can Use: How to Prevent a Stroke" (with a photo of a person). On the right side of the page, there are two vertical boxes: "MToday News^e" with links for "Send this to a friend", "Subscribe/Unsubscribe", "Read/Send Feedback", and "Alumni Notes"; and "Book of the Month" featuring "Uncertain Science... Uncertain World" by Henry N. Pollack '83 PhD, with a "Links" section below it listing "Michigan Today", "University Record", and "MiGlobe".

Letters

Change, yes; but progress?

AS AN Ann Arbor native, a graduate of University High School and with a masters from the School of Education, I just felt the need to reflect on Michigan Today—not your fine journal but how I saw Ann Arbor, the campus and the citizenry during my November 7th thru 11th 2002 visit.

Receiving an invitation to return to the Phoenix Memorial Project, the site of my introduction to nuclear education 47 years ago this past October, filled me with excitement. It was those many years ago that the Michigan Department of Public Instruction gathered 32 Michigan science teachers to participate in a program to develop a nuclear science handbook for the high schools of the state. Our instruction and intensive study took place at the Ford Reactor.

The weekly colloquium of the Nuclear Engineering Department drawing noted scientists from around the nation had picked me, not a nuclear engineer but rather an educator with extensive public nuclear education experience, to address the students and faculty. My topic: "Observation of the Ne-

vada Test Site and Yucca Mountain."

Because it had been so many years since I had been at the on north campus I found, with streets torn up and building projects it necessary to ask a driver of a U of M vehicle how to reach North Campus. I might just as well have asked my neighbors in Las Vegas who have never been to Ann Arbor. The driver looked blank and said, "Beats me." I thought, is this of a sign of things to come while in Ann Arbor?

Having been born and raised in Ann Arbor 80 years ago, and not having been back for 17 years I was frustrated by the lack of parking on South University. Hoping to visit the lab where my dad taught metal processing in the East Engineering Building for many years, I found there was no parking available. Heading toward the Law Quadrangle, I thought it would be fun to walk in and remember when I drilled Judge Advocate trainees during my return from a German POW camp in 1945. Again no place to park. Off to another spot that meant so much was the mall between Hill Auditorium, the Burton Tower, The Women's League and at the north end, the Rackham School of Graduate Studies. Remembering the building of the tower as a student at U High brought back many delightful memories. Unfortunately, a large parking structure dominates the once pleasant setting. Ah, finally a place to park but that was only a fleeting

thought—I was told I needed a permit. Even thinking it would be fun to visit the old U High building was only a thought; again, no parking. Students walked aimlessly across streets daring drivers to hit them. Winding back around I went down State St. only to find the nice shops and bookstores that once attracted the townspeople as well as students to be replaced with sleaze.

Off to another more dynamic facility, the U of M Stadium. I noted a gate open and workers busy with chores no doubt in preparation for a game a week away. Parking in an empty lot, I lugged my camera, walked through the gate only to be greeted by, "You can't come in here." I explained that I hadn't been in the stadium since right after WWII and just wanted to take a picture. "You ain't coming in here" was the response I received. I tried to reason with the fellow, telling him I remembered my dad taking me to watch as steam shovels and horse-drawn scoops dug the initial hole—also that as a Boy Scout I ushered for many years on the 50 yard line, and that I had been friends with such Michigan greats as, Harmon, Westfall, Evashevsky and Coach Crisler. "I don't give a hoot about that crap, I told you to get the hell out of here or I'll call security." No doubt he was doing his duty but that was the crowning blow to my attempts to visit U of M facilities. Like a neatly dressed older gentleman with a camera was going

to harm the stadium—come on!

To me the once loved charm and friendliness of both Ann Arbor and the University that I remember so well was gone, and for many now living there, they may never have experienced that joy. On the flight back to Las Vegas I thought about the honor of being invited to make a presentation, the three high school friends I visited, the walnuts I had picked from the trees still standing behind where our house had been for 82 years, the woods where I played as a youngster and how much had changed since my youth. Looking in a mirror the next morning I saw that I too had changed over the years. For better or worse, change is a fact of life which I understand and accept but may not always appreciate.

Richard G. Telfer '53 MA
Las Vegas

Handel of the Andes

I WAS excited to read the article "Handel of the Andes" in the winter issue. I grew up Bolivian-American and have been to La Paz about 20 times. Conductor David Handel makes Bolivians proud by helping advance their National Orchestra. I will be passing the article on to my father, Dr. Escobar, the consul of Bolivia, who will enjoy reading how a Michigan alum is helping Bolivia. "Viva Michigan!" Thanks for your quality articles!

Paula Escobar Berger '90
Elmhurst, Illinois

YOUR ARTICLE about the dynamic conductor of the Bolivian National Symphony hit the spot with me, a Bolivia specialist. I am aware of the maestro's success and I consider him probably the most popular US citizen in Bolivia in my acquaintance of Bolivia since 1939, when my parents moved there for several years. The *Michigan Today* article will become a part of my large Bolivia collection of books, pamphlets, journals and essays. In 1953 in the then *Michigan Quarterly Review* (vol. LX, no 10) I already had an article about Bolivia.

Charles W. Arnade '50, '52MA2
San Antonio, Florida

Affirmative Action

COME AUGUST it will be 40 years since Martin Luther King, at the civil rights march on Washington DC, spoke these oft-quoted words: "I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character."

After reading President Mary Sue Coleman's Comments in *Michigan Today* (Winter 2003) championing U-M's affirmative action policies relating to admissions and a point system granting preferential treatment on the basis of race, I could not help but wonder if she, the Board of Regents and the admissions offices foresee the day when the Rev. Dr. King's dream will be realized. Or will the civil rights leader's deep concern be perpetuated by well-intentioned institutions that fail to understand that the law must be "color blind" (Brown v. Board of Education, 1954)?

Robert Trost A.B. '58, '60AM
Grand Rapids, Michigan

PLEASE RUN [affirmative action] articles as "opinion" not news. The issue divides our Michigan community—one of many moral, pragmatic and constitutional flaws. Most alums outside the inbred campus oppose using race as a form of "spoils."

Michael J. Gillman '61
Traverse City, Michigan

JUST RECENTLY, the Bush administration told the University of Michigan that the country does not need affirmative action anymore because everything is great now. Please! They are totally losing touch with reality, and here is why:

For decades thousands upon thousands of Europeans, Middle Eastern people and others from various countries have been coming into the US, and then enrolled in our colleges and universities with substandard test scores. Many receive more funding and

grants than any African American, Spanish or white student seeking an education here. They are also helped with aid for immigration, housing, racial issues and anything else they need. So is this not affirmative action? And if indeed it is, why are they not placed within the same legal issue Blacks are confronting today?

The issue of the preferences such people receive is not mentioned once. Why? Many are considered as being white, but from another country outside the US. Yes, indeed, so whites do receive affirmative action, too, but are not included within the legal attack on benefits Blacks receive. Why? It's only the disadvantaged minority within this country who is considered a problem if he or she receives one dime or any help from the colleges, because he is depicted on one hand as a beggar and on the other as unfairly receiving more than whites when in fact he or she does not.

This indeed is a big mark against this country and the so-called civil rights of the United States in the new millennium. We have gone 100 years backward while others are moving forward.

So to those who sue against the affirmative action policies of the University of Michigan: Did you also bring suit against those from other countries who receive special assistance, or were they left out because they are white like you?

D'Anne Burley
Chicago

The Last Dean

JUST OUT of the service, orientation already in progress for the 1947 Spring Term, a Miss Helen Keller hurried along the process of my admissions to the U of M. Knowing that housing was at a premium, I presented myself at the housing office, hoping for a billet, possibly, at Willow Run. The woman at a desk listened to my tale and then handed me a questionnaire, telling me to have my mother fill it out and to return with it the next day with ten dollars. Having been to the wars I questioned: "Have my mother fill this out?"

She laughed and said: "We try to match roommates and have found that mothers are very honest about their sons' habits and personality that could make rooming with some more difficult." That was how things were done. Nothing sly as some of your correspondents suggest [in "The Last Dean of Women," Summer '02—Ed.]. It worked. I always had great roommates, first at Victor Vaughn and later at Anderson House.

Harold E. Evans '50
Saginaw, Michigan

Macular degeneration and carrots

I MUCH enjoy *Michigan Today* and wonder if you could help me contact James T Bradbury '32 in Bozeman, Montana. He wrote a letter about baby carrots and macular degeneration. At nearly 80 I am concerned about the same thing so was wondering how many to eat, how often etc. Thank you.

Susan Whitman '46
Tallalasee, Tennessee

Many other readers called or wrote to learn more from James T. Bradbury. Professor Bradbury gave us this reply in a telephone interview: "My suggestions came from my personal experience. I'm not an expert in the field. I have good vision in one eye now—relatively good, that is—but had very poor vision in both eyes previously. Then I read a study that told how children had lost most of their sight. It was in Europe, and their parents couldn't provide them with fresh fruit and vegetables. As part of the study, an American company shipped vitamin A to them and carrots, which they took daily, and their vision improved. But when the study was over and they went back to their previous diet, they lost clear vision again.

"After reading this, I went out and bought baby carrots right away—baby one because they're easier to chew. Just two or so a day is plenty to supply the eye's needs. They seem to build up helpful chemicals in the eye. The Occu-bright pills I also take are said to maintain the eye. I don't know any studies that prove what I'm doing works. But carrots are inexpensive and a very nice "pill" to take. Carrots have done my eye a lot of good.

I WANTED to let you know how much I enjoy *Michigan Today*. It is a truly wonderful publication and I read a great many of the articles. I missed the "Family Pattern Blindness is Coming Into Focus" (Fall 2002) article. Can you e-mail me a copy or send me a copy? I would be most appreciative.

Thank you.

Mary Anne Drew
Ann Arbor

Editor's note: In our last Letters section, we misidentified the issue in which "Family Pattern Blindness" first appeared. It was the Summer '02 issue, and is available online at <http://www.umich.edu/%7Enewsinfo/MT/02/Sum02/mt7j02a.html>

Rudy T

AS A FOOTNOTE to the article on Rudy T by Bert Schiller, it might be of interest to mention another "M" connection to the Houston Rockets at the time of "the punch": yours truly.

Not even the most ardent basketball fans who remember the tragic incident in LA involving Rudy can ever recall that it was I who had the unenviable task of replacing him in that Rocket/Laker game.

Moreover, after reading John Feinstein's *The Punch*, I seriously question the author's claim to have conducted extensive interviews with all those who could shed light on the incident. The slightest bit of research on Mr.

Feinstein's part would have revealed that I am a former teammate of Rudy's (Houston Rockets) and Kermit Washington's (Los Angeles Lakers). Even more important in my estimation is that I, too, had a physical altercation (albeit much less damaging) with Kermit Washington while we were teammates in L.A.

Also, I have always remained curious about the detailed investigations that certainly must have been pursued by all vested parties (read litigants) following "the punch." Not one attorney from Rudy's, Kermit's, the Lakers', the NBA's or any insurance company's camp interviewed me.

Strange indeed.

C. J. Kupec '75
E-mail

We learned after publishing our story about Rudy Tomjanovich that although he is in the class of 1970, he still lacks a few credits for his BA. He is an alumnus, nevertheless, and we would have featured him anyway. Like the entire U-M community, we wish Rudy T a successful recovery from the cancer that forced him to step aside as head coach of the Houston Rockets.—Ed.

YOUR RUDY T story in the Winter 2003 issue brought back memories of the one basketball game I saw in my time at the U. I sat in Crisler behind the basket, up a ways and off to the left side at about a 45-degree angle from the back of the glass. The first shot I remember from Rudy was a long one, with him on the other side of the court, his left, at about a 45 degree angle to the backboard—shooting right toward me, releasing the long jumper confidently, nonchalantly, the ball, of course, visible through the glass. It came closer and closer, but it seemed off course, high and to his left—the it abruptly changed direction and flicked down through the net. Bank shot. Good! From Rudy, no smile, no surprise. I didn't see it coming, didn't know his *modus operandi* yet. I did after that, seeing several more such long bombs that game and many more on TV later during his pro career. The longest routine, intentional, accurate bank shots I've seen in over 50 years of watching basketball. Longer than Elgin Baylor's or Sam Jones's. All would be NBA three-pointers today.

Jim Lein, '70 MSW
Minot, North Dakota

THANKS FOR the wonderful update on my old friend Rudy T. My junior year, Rudy and his roommates Baseball Captain Tom Lundstedt and future Basketball Captain Dan Fife lived downstairs from my three roommates and me in an unforgettable apartment building on Monroe Street. My roomies and I had a running competition over who was the best cook, a fact that did not escape our athletic neighbors for long. We all became excellent friends over slices of chocolate cake, spaghetti, etc. I remember Rudy then as you describe him today: a true gentleman, humble and grateful for the opportunities that Michigan offered him. I recall the

day after he was offered his first NBA contract, he went out and bought a red Chevrolet convertible. Since I caught him driving into the apartment parking lot on his way back from the dealer, I think I was the first person to drive with him in that dream-on-wheels. Rudy's joy and pride in being able to buy it seemed to me to hinge on his near disbelief that he could ever be able to afford such a car.

It's great to see that such a good person is in most ways today the same one I knew over 30 years ago.

Doris Rubenstein '71
Richfield, Minnesota

For Pete's Sake!

I ENJOYED seeing some of my photographs included in the article on St. Petersburg, "For Pete's Sake!" Since the article attributes photo captions to me, I'd like to suggest a change of emphasis and a correction. The caption for the page 12 photo looking across the Neva River at the Academy of Sciences and the Kunstammer refers to the Lomonosov [sic] Museum inside the Kunstammer. Since 1949 there has indeed been a small museum under the former observatory tower dedicated to the famous 18th-century scientist and man of letters, Mikhail V. Lomonosov, who worked in this building for the last two decades of his life, when the collections and activities within the Kunstammer included disciplines since transferred to other buildings and museums: zoology, botany, mineralogy, numismatics, physics, astronomy, etc. The Lomonosov Museum, however, which occupies a miniscule third-floor space under the former observatory tower, would be of interest only to a limited number of visitors, and it is not usually shown except by request.

The present Kunstammer is best known for the other museum mentioned in the caption, the Ethnography Museum (named for Peter the Great) of the Peoples of the World, the collections of which occupy virtually the entire building.

The rest of the caption applies to a different photo, not published, in which the Neva River is shown dividing on either side of the Strelka (point, or tip) of Vasily Island, and in which the Kunstammer tower is indeed "in the distance."

The subject of the other photo on page 12 is not, as the caption states, Rastrelli's 18th-century Rococo Winter Palace, part of the modern Hermitage Museum. It is, rather, Carlo Rossi's early 19th-century Empire Neo-Classical Senate Building, with the granite embankment and landing of the Neva River, and at far left, on Senate/Decembrist Square, the "Bronze Horseman" statue of Peter the Great, which is shown close-up on page 13.

Jack Kollmann '78 PhD
Palo Alto, California

Editor's note: We regret mixing up some of the richly informative captions and superb photos that Jack Kollmann contributed to our last issue. Readers can see the correct alignment on the Web at www.umich.edu/news/MT/.

GIVEN THE FACT that Russia and its tsars have committed multiple crimes against humanity, the Ukrainian community in N. America is deeply offended by your portrayal of St. Petersburg, Russia, and the proposed celebration of its 300th anniversary. When the Russian taxi driver informed [Prof. William] Rosenberg that this city was "built on the bones of 100,000 serfs who died during its construction" that was only half true. The majority of those so-called serfs were Ukrainian freedom fighters (i.e. Ukrainian cosacks), who had been incarcerated by the Russians and subjected to famine-like conditions during the building of this city.

Which is one more reason why we continue to provide financial support to the current-day Chechen freedom fighters who are fighting for an independent Chechnya. Much like Russia's imperialist history, there will always be those willing to risk their lives to fight the common evil, which is based in Moscow. Much like the suffering of the Ukrainians and Jews were never brought to light until much later, Moscow's crimes against humanity will never be forgotten in Chechnya.

Walter Maruszczak
E-mail

I WAS very happy to see an article on my native city of St. Petersburg. However, imagine my shock and disappointment when upon reading the article I found a number of factual mistakes. The first thing that jumped at me was the picture on the bottom of the left page. The comment under it claims this to be the Winter Palace while in fact this is the building that housed pre-revolutionary Senate and is now the State Historical Archive. I am attaching a picture of the real Winter Palace for your information (you can see, the two are quite different).

There are also a number of quite erroneous statements throughout the article. Unfortunately, I do not have time to go over all of them. But here are couple examples: 1. Despite what the article claims, Pushkin never "lived at the residence of the tsar." 2. The popular Leningrad band has nothing to do with pop music (according to Russian definition of pop music).

I believe your publication (as well as its readers) would benefit greatly if you avoid publishing materials that contain such embarrassing errors and are signed by people who are supposed to be subject-matter experts.

Anna Danishevskaya '01 MBA
E-mail

THANK YOU very much for your article about St. Petersburg, my native city. I appreciated Professor Rosenberg's and your comments and indeed the article poured balsam on my soul. I love the city and always feel sorry about so few people around the globe being aware of this miracle of the world and even fewer being able to enjoy its beauty. Sorry to say, but I have two comments: the caption on page 12, "Looking upstream along

the Neva River embankment at the Winter Palace, the rococo main building of the Hermitage Museum..." seems inconsistent with the photo where the Senate and Synod complex, rather than the Winter Palace, is shown.

The caption under the Bronze Horseman says that a granite wave under the horse points to the west. However nice it sounds, I am not quite sure it's true. As can be seen on the above-commented photo, the monument points to the Neva river, which generally flows from East to West, so the granite wave is believed to point to North. I may be wrong though, as far as this specific site is concerned.

Anyway, thank you again for the excellent publication so dear to my heart.

Alexander Rabinovich
E-mail

I GRADUATED 43 years ago and recently retired from teaching at East Carolina University. The school I worked with here and most others in the region have very nice prints available (11x14 etc.) for framing. I am sure that U of M also has similar campus artwork that might be purchased, but I have never been able to obtain a listing, source, etc. My wife, a Duke graduate, has always found this amusing. As well, my daughter, a University of North Carolina Law School graduate has offered to purchase prints from Chapel Hill to fill the void on the wall. I hope you can help me in this situation that has been going on for many years. Many thanks.

Harold A. Jones
E-mail

The University of Michigan Photo Services has a wide selection of University images available on our online stock gallery. The gallery can be viewed at <http://www.umich.edu/~photos/>. Several hundred images are available, but if you are looking for something in particular, and cannot find it, contact us directly and we will do a further search of our extensive archives. Pricing information is also available online. You may also call us at (734) 764-9217—Kim Haskins, supervisor, U-M Photo Services.

Bear River Writers Conference

I FOUND the writing about the Bear River camp very interesting [*U-M sponsors writers workshop in "Hemingway country"*—Ed.] and it's given me some impetus to get my Pine River material upscaled and into print. I work on the Great Lakes novel as well. How many graduates go through their "Ann Arbor Days" phase of reminiscing—and thinking they will write something about their experiences in the old town? It makes reminiscence at the reunions rife with stories and jokes we like to recall and share. I've got some that start with Ma Kelly's rooming house that used to be at 407 S. University St. back in 1949-1955 and later, and when I started to put things down on paper this week, I found there's enough for a book that would tell something significant about the life of those Fifties at Michigan.

I remember talking with Katherine Anne Porter when she was a visiting writer in the Hopwood Room, and then later having such a field day with her fiction in my own classes at St. Louis University—teaching American fiction. What I made of her and her writing by the time I got to St. Louis, of course, along with Emerson, Thoreau, Twain and Faulkner, is the subject of new writing. I suppose a person's real university education in those days really amounted to how much genuine thought and experience he or she could muster in the years after—in the hard knocks school of the new teaching position or the privacy of the study. I think meeting all the great people that came to or were teaching in Michigan was half of it. We didn't know anything, tearing through all those classes and courses; we adopted a new language and began to use it; we fought sleep and pored over the pages till dawn and wrote our papers in those same hours—wholly engaged, ("Engage," as one Herbert Barrows used to say). Thanks for other articles in the Winter issue, the one on autism especially.

Theodore Haddin
Birmingham Alabama

Panty raids

THE FIRST panty raid at the U of M took place in the spring, not the fall, of 1952. I was a senior at the Helen Newberry Residence then. One of the stories told at the time (probably apocryphal) was that as one of the male raiders was descending the stairs from the second floor, waving a bra, he encountered Dean Bacon, who was marching upstairs. Completely flummoxed, he said to her, "Nice party, you're giving, Dean Bacon."

Terry Mussin Swenson '52
E-mail

JEAN MCFARLAIN Caiver '54 states that Michigan's first panty raid took place in Spring 1952, not 1955 (Winter 2003, Letters). I believe Spring 1951 may be closer to the correct date. At that time I witnessed a disturbance which began at a women's housing facility located a block or so west of south State Street, near the Law School and behind a row of fraternity houses there. This group of noisy males then moved their mischief eastward toward the Martha Cook dormitory.

While I could not discern exactly what was taking place at the time, a bystander remarked that this was a "panty raid." Since the activity seemed thus to have already acquired a name, one might assume that even this was not the first such doing, but it may have been Michigan's first panty raid.

H. I. Lawrance '52
E-mail

What's Cooking?

NOW I know why I love Sara Moulton so much! She is a fellow University of Michigan alumna. Having worked in New York City for the last several years, I love to relax to Sara Moulton's Cooking Live and now

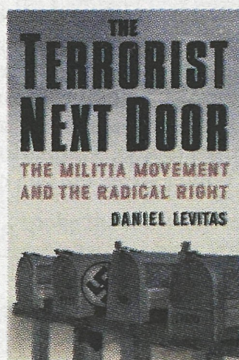


The Terrorist Next Door. The Militia Movement and the Radical Right

By Daniel Levitas '82, Thomas Dunne Books/St. Martin's Press, 2002, \$27.95 hardcover.

When terrorists struck the World Trade Center towers on Sept. 11, 2001, some Americans celebrated. August Kreis exulted on the Web site of the paramilitary group Posse Comitatus, "Hallelu-Yahweh! May the WAR be started. We can blame no others than ourselves for our problems due to the fact that we allow Satan's children, called jews [sic] today, to have dominion over our lives." And Billy Roper of the neo-Nazi National Alliance crowed, "Anyone who is willing to fly a plane into a building to kill Jews is alright by me."

What experiences and ideas motivate these next-door terrorists? Why do they focus recruitment on rural Americans? Author Daniel Levitas, an expert on home-



grown hate groups and a veteran of the farm movement in Iowa, discussed such questions in a *Michigan Today* interview with Raphael Ezekiel.

Ezekiel was a professor of psychology at U-M from 1964 until his retirement in 1995, the year Viking Press published *The Racist Mind*, his pioneering field-based study of the lives and thinking of national leaders and ordinary members of neo-Nazi and Klan groups. Since then, he has been a senior research scientist and visiting scholar at the Harvard School of Public Health in Boston. Levitas lives in Atlanta, where he works with law enforcement, religious and community groups in response to hate group activity and crimes.

Raphael Ezekiel: Why do you think members of some hate groups cheered the September 11 atrocities? **Daniel Levitas:** Many of the hate groups I studied were enthusiastic supporters of the terrorist acts of September 11 despite the fact that they consider themselves to be patriots and defenders of the Constitution. In reality, these groups are as theologically committed to murder as the most violent fanatics of militant Islamic fundamentalism. We need to recognize that since the earliest days of the Ku Klux Klan, there have been groups in America who were eager to perpetrate "ter-

rorism" against their fellow Americans. Various right-wing groups directly praised the terrorists of al Qaeda in a slew of statements, groups like the neo-Nazi National Alliance glorified the terrorists of al Qaeda, even as they denounced them in racist terms because they were Arabs and Muslims.

How is it, then, that these same groups consider themselves to be patriots and defenders of the Constitution?

The anti-government revolutionary metamorphosis of the radical right can be traced to the 1950s and '60s and stems from the 1954 Brown decision ending segregation and the 1964 Civil Rights Act and the 1965 Voting Rights Act that followed. And I'd definitely include the adoption of affirmative action in the early '70s (which was first promoted by a



Levitas grew up in New York City, but his studies at the School of Natural Resources and the Environment took him to the Iowa farm belt, where he organized rural communities that wanted to resist right-wing extremists.

Republican president, Richard Nixon, by the way). With the adoption of these civil rights measures the Klan and other hate groups began to see themselves as outside mainstream society, politics and culture. They then began the process of reconstructing themselves as anti-government revolutionaries.

Your book discusses extensively the Posse Comitatus. First of all, what does the name mean? It's a Latin term meaning "power of the county." It is derived from the ancient medieval practice under British law of a sheriff summoning a group of men to help him pursue and arrest law-breakers. But in an American sense, as it was invented by William Potter Gale in 1971, the Posse Comitatus was a vigilante group that believed the sheriff was the highest law enforcement officer in the land. Although, if the sheriff wasn't doing his job, it was the right—if not the duty—of white supremacists to take the law into their own hands as they saw fit.

Who was William Potter Gale? One of the most fascinating things I uncovered was that Bill Gale, who became a raving anti-Semite, was the son of a Jewish man who as a teenager in 1894 fled Russian anti-Semitism and immigrated alone to North Dakota. Gale's father enlisted in the

Letters

continued from page 17

Sara's Secrets. I find her teaching techniques adept and intuitive. A shrink she is—I always feel better after spending a half an hour with her. Thank you for bringing me a little joy by way of Sara Moulton and the University of Michigan.

Jennifer M. Johnson '94
New York City

I THOUGHT I'd share these corrections with you: P. 3: Elvis died on August 16, 1977, so even though the Sterns (I've been a fan of theirs for years) thought that 8/16/85 was the 10th anniversary of that historic event, it was actually the eighth.

p. 8: "Tomjanovich's teams enjoyed win-

ning seasons throughout his three-year varsity career." Nope. They were, in order, 11-13, 13-11 and 10-14 overall, and 6-8, 7-7 and 5-9 in the Big Ten.

Jeff Mortimer
Ann Arbor

Mortimer is the co-author of Basket Case: The Frenetic Life of Michigan Coach Bill Frieder (Bonus Books, 1988), a biography of the former U-M basketball coach.

I LOVED the story on Michael and Jane Stern ("Connecticut Stake-Out," Winter 2003). All I knew about them was their segment on *The Splendid Table*. I usually turn it off after the Sterns' part is over. Had no idea

they were art historians or had any U-M connection. It must have been a trip interviewing them.

Kate Kellogg
E-mail

Your Files May Be Destroyed

The Career Center conducts a regular review of reference letter files that have been inactive for ten years. Files that have not been used since 1993 must now be updated by July 31, 2003, to remain active. After that date, all inactive files will be deactivated and destroyed.

File deactivation affects only reference letters. Transcripts and other academic materi-

als will not be affected by the deactivation of reference letter files.

To maintain an active file, students or alumni/ae must have conducted one or more of the following transactions since 1992:

- 1) requested to send reference letters as part of an admission or employment process,
- 2) added new letters to their file,
- 3) submitted updated personal data in writing (e.g. current address, telephone, or newly acquired degree).

Please contact the Career Center at (734) 764-7459 or by e-mail at cp&p@umich.edu for specific questions about a file status or the update process in general.

army, fought in the Spanish American War and assimilated. By 1905, he had married a Christian woman, and they raised their five children as Christians. There is nothing remarkable in that story, but the fact that their son Bill grew up to become someone who advocated the murder of Jews is definitely notable. Gale died in 1988.

What do you think led Gale to endorse terrorism? He was a career military officer and rose to the rank of lieutenant colonel. However, by 1950 he had washed out of the Army and was going through a mid-life crisis of sorts, despite his relatively young age of 34. He became active in a series of political groups in and around Hollywood, where he lived. This environment led him to Wesley Swift, a former Methodist minister. Smith converted Gale to the racist, anti-Semitic religion of "Christian Identity."

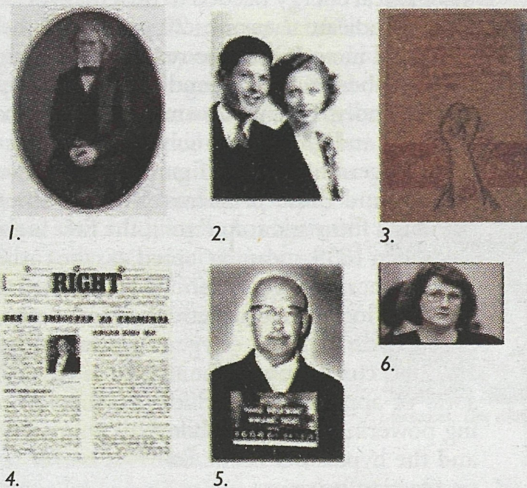
What is "Christian Identity" theology? A theology that asserts that white Anglo-Saxon Christians are the descendants of the Lost Tribes of Israel; that Jews are the product of the sexual union of Eve and the devil; and that Blacks and other racial and ethnic minorities are so-called pre-Adamic mistakes, essentially nonhuman.

What sort of things did Gale's group do? The Posse Comitatus first made headlines in the mid-1970s when its members began to engage with violent activity directed against the IRS and other federal agencies. The earliest activities centered primarily on tax protest. No one was shot or injured in gunplay until 1983, when a Posse Comitatus member named Gordon Kahl shot and killed two federal marshals outside Medina, North Dakota.

Does the Posse exist today? Only a handful of people around the country claim to be active members. The group has survived quite vibrantly, however, as a set of ideas and beliefs that have thoroughly penetrated the ranks of the so-called Christian Patriot Movement in the Midwest and the Pacific Northwest.

When did you first encounter these groups? I first ran into the Posse Comitatus in the early 1980s, after I left U of M and was living and working in Iowa, doing community organizing during the farm crisis for a nonprofit public advocacy group called Prairie Fire. The Posse was telling farmers that a so-called international Jewish conspiracy was behind the farm crisis. Many farmers who encountered this were appalled and came to us to share their disgust at having received this propaganda in the mail, at a meeting or from a neighbor.

What counter explanation of the farm crisis did you present? That the root cause was a government farm policy that refused to pay farmers a price that enabled them to make a profit. Instead, government policies kept commodity prices artificially low in order to maximize exports for the large grain companies. Additionally, farmers had been encouraged by a variety of economic and political factors to expand production dramatically. As a result of rising land values, farmers could borrow heavily to make expensive investments in expanding their acreage or herds, in high tech mechanization and other means. But the economic bubble burst with the recession of the late 1970s. Interest



1. In 1828, John C. Calhoun asserted that states could 'interpose' their 'sovereign' power to resist the federal government. 2. Wedding photo of William Potter and Catherine Gale, 1937. 3. In 1954, Mississippi Circuit Court Judge Tom Brady, a foe of school desegregation, published *Black Monday* ('a veritable encyclopedia of racism,' says Levitas) to foment resistance to school desegregation. 4. Gale published an 'indictment' of President Eisenhower after Eisenhower dispatched federal troops to Little Rock in 1957. 5. Posse Comitatus member Gordon Kahl, who murdered two lawmen in 1977. 6. Right-wing tax resisters physically assaulted Stanislaus County (California) recorder Karen Matthews in 1993 and '94.

rates skyrocketed and farmers were caught in a death grip between plummeting farm prices and high interest rates.

How long were you in Iowa and when did you leave? I spent eight years in Iowa and moved to Atlanta in 1989, where I became the executive director for the Center for Democratic Renewal [CDR], a national watchdog group that keeps track of the neo-Nazi movement.

During your time in the farm belt, what sort of organizing was effective in countering hate groups? A lot of the focus was on organizing one- and two-day training sessions for farm leaders, church and religious leaders, community activists and others concerned about the economic devastation of the farm families and about the radical right. When key leaders spoke up in their own communities, it projected a strong message of disapproval, which helped contain the spread of right-wing ideology.

How do you reply to those who say that you're exaggerating the impact of mere fringe groups? I tell them that what they think of as fringe groups are not necessarily "fringe," in that they do pose a genuine challenge. Unfortunately, many people are too quick to dismiss the hate groups and their ideologies as things of the past that have no bearing on life today. I would rather people take these groups and movements seriously. Elements of the same bigoted ideas and beliefs are alive and well within the mainstream of American political and social life. The statements of former Senate Majority Leader Trent Lott endorsing segregation is but one example of this.

Twisted Web

By Tom Grace, Pocket Books, 2003, \$6.99, paper

Tom Grace is at it again. His Ann Arbor-based alter ego Nolan Kilkenny is off to Antarctica in this third adventure in the *Web* series Grace is weaving. *Spyder Web* and *Quantum Web* (reviewed in Summer 2001 *Michigan Today*) led off Grace's thrillers.

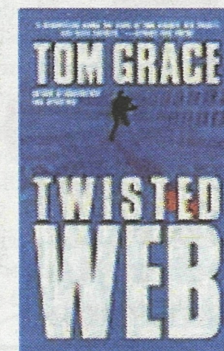
Like the previous books, *Twisted Web* displays Grace's mastery of action and technology. The world of genetic engineering and the splendors of the South Polar region combine to challenge the ex-Navy Seal, an expert in all forms of combat, computers, planes, ice boats and investment portfolios for a venture capital group involved with the U-M's initiative in the life sciences.

When scientists in a remote NASA research lab find something living deep under a two-mile-deep frozen lake, they report their finding. Then get murdered. Only Kilkenny has the savvy and brawn needed to challenge evil forces who intend to profit by interfering with human evolution.

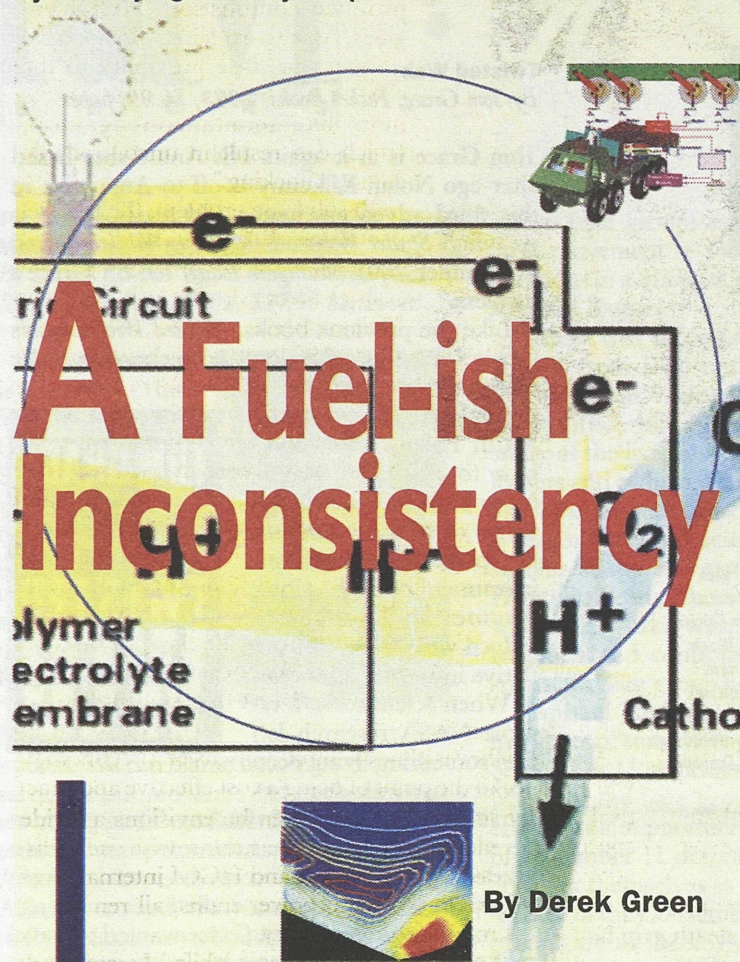
A meticulous researcher, Grace wanted to travel to Antarctica to make sure his cold-weather details were accurate. That proved impossible, but he did manage to sign on with a North Pole research team headed by then-U-M geophysicist Vladimir Papitashvili, who recently moved to Washington, DC, to head polar research for the National Science Foundation (NSF).

Grace's two-week stint 700 miles from the pole in Greenland resulted in a book that has met Papitashvili's expectations. "The story Tom has put together is intriguing, very well written, and certainly has an educational component in genomic and in Antarctic sciences," Papitashvili told *Michigan Today*. "We visited Thule at the Far North and Raven on the Ice Cap. He was a good worker when we needed to shovel snow. I am intrigued by his forthcoming book, *Dark Matter*. As a program director for Antarctic Aeronomy and Astrophysics at NSF, I am familiar with recent developments in cosmology and "dark matter" and "dark energy" are not mystification. They are real, but we do not know yet what their constituents are."

If you like techno-thrillers that move at break-neck speed, you may find that no one concocts them better than Tom Grace—JW.



Two big minds are confronting the automotive hobgoblins by developing new ways to power us on the road



By Derek Green

It's all about the fuel for the vehicles we drive or ride in: How efficient is it? How clean can it burn? How little can it cost? Can new fuels replace fossil fuels? Answering these questions is as great a challenge as were the quests for the New World, antibiotics, atomic energy or space travel.

It's a global race, and U-M is competing in it, just as it has since the dawn of the Automotive Age. In a quiet, windowless laboratory in the College of Engineering on North Campus, researchers test how well various precious metals can scrub sulfur from gasoline byproducts in prototype fuel cells. At a lab just a street over, a huge diesel engine roars on and on while computers snap high-speed photos of the fuel burning within its cylinders.

The quest follows two main paths: toward improving existing fuel technologies or toward finding alternatives to fossil fuels. We'll follow both of them in the labs of two U-M fuel experts. Though their approaches differ, they complement, rather than rival, one another. Both see a future—one not all that far off—in which we fundamentally transform the way we power our cars and just about everything else, from wristwatches and tools to home appliances and even whole cities.

'THE HYDROGEN ECONOMY IS COMING.'

An internal combustion (IC) engine powers almost every car and truck on the road today. IC engines burn fuel—usually a hydrocarbon compound like gasoline or diesel—and rely on the expansion of

hot gases to do mechanical work. IC engines, however, come with well-known drawbacks.

First off, they're not very efficient at converting the energy derived from gasoline or diesel into the mechanical energy needed to turn the wheels. (Most reports indicate that only 20 percent of the energy produced in an IC engine reaches the road, though that number varies, depending on whom you talk to.) Secondly, IC engines emit pollutants that cause acid rain and global warming.

Hydrogen fuel cells at first glance seem to offer a way around those problems. Though the technology has a futuristic sound to it, the first fuel cell was devised in 1839, meaning it predates the earliest gasoline engines by a generation. Modern fuel cells use catalysts to facilitate electrochemical reactions between hydrogen and oxygen. The reactions generate direct current useful for all sorts of applications, including powering an automobile, and the byproduct of the basic reaction is water.

So why not pull out your car's conventional engine and replace it with an efficient and environmentally friendly fuel cell? For one thing, although hydrogen is abundant in free form outside Earth's atmosphere, in the biosphere it's almost always locked up in water, hydrocarbons (like gasoline), alcohol compounds (methanol and ethanol) and even vegetable oils. Hydrogen can be extracted from these compounds in many ways, including the electrolysis of water, the burning of fossil fuels and even using heat generated by nuclear reactors.

But extracting hydrogen on a large scale requires energy, and once extracted other challenges remain. Hydrogen is a low-density gas, meaning it's hard to store. Using current technology, a car with a 250-mile range would require a hydrogen tank 15 yards wide. Another problem: hydrogen is highly explosive—meaning a risk of a mini-Hindenburg blast at every fender bender.

But say you've managed to store hydrogen in a secure tank. You'll find next that there are no filling stations with hydrogen pumps. Some experts say it will cost trillions of dollars to build a national system of hydrogen filling stations. (Currently, only two prototype hydrogen fuel stations exist, one in Sacramento and the other in Dearborn—which makes for a long haul between refills.)

All this means that the most practical form of fuel cell in the near future would be one that could use more readily available forms of fuel. Devices known as fuel processors, or reformers, can convert hydrocarbon-like gasoline, diesel and alcohol fuels into hydrogen.

Prof. Levi Thompson, a chemical engineer and associate dean of engineering, directs a U-M research team that hopes to come up with a fuel processor that can remove sulfur from hydrocarbons (sulfur spoils the chemical catalysts needed to convert hydrocarbons into pure hydrogen) and convert the hydrocarbons efficiently and inexpensively into hydrogen. Existing processors that carry out these complicated chemical conversions are too big to fit on an automobile.

"We're working to develop more practical, smaller fuel processors," Thompson says. So far his project is progressing "slightly better than we expected," but it still faces big hurdles, such as how to deal with the fact that gasoline-to-hydrogen conversion produces carbon monoxide.

Especially promising is the Thompson group's development of catalyst materials to replace the strategically important and expensive noble metals—such as platinum—currently used in fuel processors. Because of patents pending on the work, Thompson won't give details about the new catalysts. All he'll say now is that "the new materials we've developed significantly outperform the materials available right now."

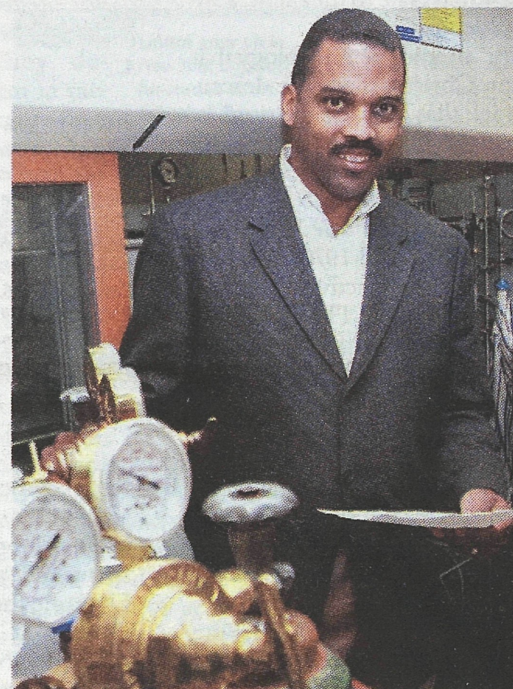
Thompson and his group expect to develop a prototype 10-kilowatt working gasoline processor within four years. A typical V8 gasoline engine generates 250 kW, meaning it will be

a while before a hydrogen-powered car is on the market.

An amiable man with a visionary's knack for infecting a listener with enthusiasm for his technology's future applications, Thompson emphasizes that "an important part of the national energy policy focuses on energy security. Imagine if wherever we use gasoline we could replace it with water. Everywhere you see gasoline, take it out. Replace it with hydrogen fuel. Wherever you use a battery, take it out. Replace it with a fuel cell."

In such a world, he says with a smile, "The Great Lakes region would be more important in terms of energy security than the Middle East." That possibility accounts, in part, for the federal government's willingness to fund his laboratory with a \$6 million Department of Energy grant.

"The hydrogen economy is coming," Thompson says. "The bottom line is, it's still pretty early and there are problems to be solved. But it's coming."



Thompson, the champion of hydrogen fuel cells.

Paul Jaronoski: U-M Photo Services

'INTERNAL COMBUSTION IS HERE TO STAY'

Dennis Assanis believes that reports of the internal combustion engine's death are greatly exaggerated. Sure, hydrogen fuel cell technology will be vastly important down the road, he agrees, but he thinks it's just as important now to make gasoline and diesel engines cleaner and more efficient.

"One obvious advantage of the internal combustion engine is that it already exists," says Assanis, the John R. and Beverly S. Holt Professor of Engineering, who chairs the Department of Mechanical Engineering and directs the U-M's Automotive Research Center (ARC). "We can now have advanced designs of up to 45 percent efficiency, about twice the current mark for typical passenger car engines in North America." And that, he adds, is nearly as efficient as future hydrogen engines promise to be when measured in "well-to-wheel efficiency" (a measure that takes into account all steps, from the extraction of raw resources at the oil well to getting energy working "where the rubber meets the road").

One area of focus for Assanis and his team is the development of cleaner diesel engines and hybrid power trains. It might sound like a back-to-the-future approach to most Americans—diesel engines as a clean technology? But as Assanis points out, the diesel engine is already the power train of choice in Europe, where EU automakers, unlike their US counterparts, must meet Kyoto Accord emission requirements.

"Diesel engines offer excellent mileage; they're robust and last forever," Assanis says. He thinks it's unfortunate that Americans associate the word diesel with big sooty buses. "Those engines are older designs," Assanis continues, "not the latest engines, which treat exhaust byproducts and reduce emissions. Diesel engines go for a million miles, so people who frown on diesels are looking at technology that's 30 to 40 years old."

Although modern IC engines are "fuel tolerant"—meaning they can burn just about any combustible liquid or gas as fuel—they predominantly use gasoline or diesel fuels. Engines achieve ignition differently, however. Gasoline engines use a spark to ignite premixed fuel and air in the combustion chamber. In contrast, a diesel engine injects the fuel directly into the chamber and compresses the air-fuel mixture to a much higher pressure, resulting in the auto-ignition of fuel for a "sparkless" ignition.

By design, diesel engines operate with much higher compression ratios than gasoline engines, as they are not limited by the "knocking" caused by poor timing of the spark and therefore achieve much higher fuel economy. However, both gasoline and diesel engines produce harmful emissions, which include nitrogen oxides, unburned hydrocarbons and, for diesels, soot particulates and smoke, as well.

In engine test cells in the Walter E. Lay Automotive Laboratory, Assanis and his team are trying to figure out ways to maximize the efficiency of both types of engine and minimize their emissions so as to satisfy the most stringent regulatory standards. One example is variable valve timing. At relatively cooler temperatures just after start-up, when gasoline engines generate most of their toxic emissions, the exhaust valve can be opened and closed earlier. This strategy, already simulated and proven in the engine lab, allows hot combustion products to flow down the exhaust pipe to the catalyst faster, markedly reducing the emission of unburned hydrocarbons. By closing the

valve earlier, a variable-timing engine can recycle a portion of the unburned hydrocarbons for the next combustion cycle.

Another innovation is a variable compression ratio system developed jointly by Assanis's group and Ford Motor Company. It uses specially designed, spring-loaded piston heads capable of adjusting their shape in order to maximize fuel efficiency. His team is also studying hybrid power trains, such as those already available in the Toyota Prius and Honda Insight, which combine gasoline and electric systems.

Assanis is interested in more exotic hybrids as well. "We're very keen here on hydraulic hybrids," he says. When a vehicle brakes, it dissipates a lot of kinetic energy in the form of heat. Hydraulic hybrids use a hydraulic pump/motor, reservoir and accumulator to recover, store and reuse that energy to assist the engine at lower speeds. "These are robust and proven designs," he says. "We've seen a fuel economy benefit in the area of 50 percent for a delivery truck in city driving."

Fuel-cell powered vehicles and hybrids have been stealing headlines in recent years. But Assanis believes much of the enthusiasm for these unusual technologies—many of which are extremely expensive or still in the earliest phases of development, or in some cases even being abandoned by several companies—is in part the result of "hype and irrational exuberance."

Assanis and his colleagues are working on a promising but lesser-known alternative to the traditional gasoline engine as the likely power train of the near future. It's the homogenous-charge compression ignition (HCCI) engine, a high-tech design that essentially combines the traditional power of a spark-ignition gasoline engine with the more efficient compression-ignition design of a diesel.

HCCI engines use a premixed air-fuel mixture similar to spark-ignition gasoline engines', but they rely on high compression spontaneous combustion like diesels, getting the best of both designs. The current problem with HCCI engines is trying to control the timing of ignition.

Whereas gasoline engines use a timed spark to ignite



Assanis, the champion of internal combustion

Paul Jaronoski: U-M Photo Services

the fuel mixture and diesels inject fuel into highly compressed air to produce combustion, HCCI engines, Assanis explains, "do not have a trigger in close proximity to the start of heat-release; instead, this is more like spontaneous ignition, which can result in uncontrollable engine knocking."

To solve the problem, the US Department of Energy and several automakers have provided \$4 million to form the Multi-University Consortium on Homogenous Charge Compression Ignition Engine Research. Michigan heads the project in collaboration with MIT, Stanford and U-Cal Berkeley.

"We're studying characteristics of fuel combustion in computer simu-

lations as well as advanced laser diagnostics in actual engines," Assanis says. The goal is to come up with chemical and mechanical methods for controlling the moment of combustion in the HCCI engine.

"HCCI is a clean combustion engine that can be commercially viable," Assanis says. "We believe it could be in use within five years. It's an alternative that's much closer to being ready than fuel cells."

Assanis believes that eventually hydrogen technology will advance to the point of being a cost effective and practical energy source. But even then he envisions a "wide spectrum of energy plants" in the future—with fuel cells, advanced diesel, spark ignition and HCCI internal combustion engines, and hybrid power trains, all remaining important throughout this century.

"We expect many things in an automobile," Assanis says. "Practicality, mobility, excitement, entertainment, passion. Internal combustion engines satisfy these desires. They are relatively low-cost, and we are making them more environmentally friendly all the time. The infrastructure already exists to deliver their fuel. In my view they are going to remain part of the mix for many years to come. Internal combustion engines are here to stay." **MT**

Derek Green is an Ann Arbor freelancer who frequently writes about the auto industry.

A Fuel-ish Efficiency

Merely obtaining gasoline or diesel fuel from a well drops efficiency to about 88 percent. The internal combustion (IC) process drops efficiency much further. But once extraction and conversion costs are factored in, hydrogen efficiency is not yet appreciably better. In either technology, well-to-wheel efficiency is only 25-30 percent.

Still, one reason hydrogen fuel cells are so attractive is that IC engines have historically produced high levels of toxic emissions. But even that story is more complex than meets the eye. Here's what a leading energy lab recently reported after meticulous tests:

"Considering the uncertainties of long-range predictions, and judging solely by lowest life-cycle energy use and greenhouse gas (GHG) releases, there is no current basis for preferring either fuel cell (FC) or internal combustion engine (ICE) hybrid power plants for mid-size automobiles over the next 20 years or so using fuels derived from petroleum or natural gas.

The conclusion applies even with optimistic assumptions about the pace of future fuel cell development. Hybrid vehicles are superior to their non-hybrid counterparts, and their advantages are greater for ICE than for FC designs.

... If automobiles systems with GHG emissions much lower than the lowest estimated here are required in the very long run future (perhaps in 30 to 50 years or more), hydrogen is the only promising fuel option identified to date—but only if the hydrogen is produced from non-fossil sources of primary energy (such as nuclear or solar) or from fossil primary energy with carbon sequestration [capturing carbon for removal—Ed.]."

From "Comparative Assessment of Fuel Cell Cars," MIT Laboratory for Energy and the Environment, Feb. 2003. This comprehensive study of the automotive future is available on the Web at <http://lfee.mit.edu/publications/reports>.

A sociology class visits the border to learn about immigration first-hand

By Rob Goodspeed

A Tale of Both Nogaleses

Photos by Andrea
Coronil, Shreya Shah,
Yochi Zakai, Alex Wolk

The white 15-passenger van lurched awkwardly on the potholed dirt road. Outside, in the evening twilight, I could see Flores Magon, a neighborhood of cinderblock and brick homes bearing satellite TV dishes and air conditioners, and wood-and-tarpaper shacks clinging to rocky, barren hillsides along improvised dirt streets. Flores Magon is one of the most recently settled sections of Nogales, a city straddling the border between Arizona and the Mexican state of Sonora.



I'm participating in Residential College 360, "Labor in Mexico's Maquiladora Zone: Nogales Field Study," and our class of 25 is on its way to a two-night stay with residents of one of Nogales's poorest neighborhoods. A group called Borderlinks has helped organize our visits with local political and health activists, government officials and citizens. In addition to providing tours to college and religious groups, Borderlinks runs a community center and food kitchen.

Nogales is one of a string of Mexican border cities that have boomed in the past few two decades. It was home to some of the first foreign-owned *maquiladoras* (assembly plants), which Mexico set up in the 1970s to produce goods for export under its Border Industrialization Program. The factories, called maquilas for short, operate tax-free and in effect are often subsidized by the state, which sup-



Looking over the border from the Mexican side (above). Moving clockwise: 14-foot steeland resin sculptures by Guadalupe Serrano and Alberto Morackis. Innovative homebuilders fill tires with soil to form foundations. Electricity is haphazard in the neighborhoods. Razor wire atop US-Mexico border near Nogales remind some residents of the Berlin Wall.

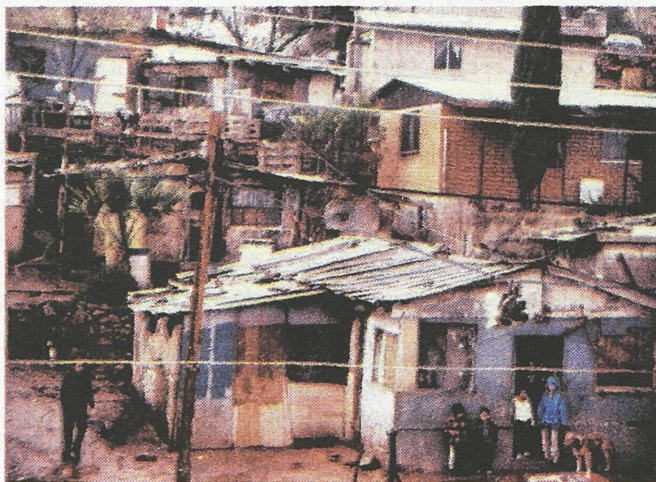
plies roads, electricity and other infrastructure at no charge. More recently, Mexico has allowed maquilas to open almost anywhere in Mexico. (See sidebar.)

The Flores Magon neighborhood is less than six years old. Its more affluent residents have only recently received electricity and still lack sewers and running water. In some areas, residents have run ex-

tension cords from one home to many others and share utility costs. Some illegally tap into the lines. The roads cut across the rolling hills of brown rocky soil, and the homes reflect an ingeniously improvised architecture—walls are built from all types of scrap material, and auto tires filled with soil serve as staircases and retaining walls.

My group stayed with Maricruz, who lives with her husband and 10-year-old daughter. Our host family would be middle class in the States. They own a computer, cell phone and telephone; one older daughter is married and another is in college. But they lack running water and sewer connections, the wooden walls of their three-room house are thin, a carpet covers their floor of leveled loose rock, the roof is tin, and the whole structure leans downhill. Maricruz's husband works long hours as a bus driver, and she sells the table cloths she embroiders. They host visiting groups for Borderlinks to add to their income.

The maquila our class visited assembled electrical compo-



The population of Ambos Nogales (Both Nogaleses) was about 30,000 on each side of the border in 1965, when the BIP was first introduced. Since then, the population of Nogales, Arizona, has stayed roughly the same, while that of Nogales, Sonora, has swelled to about 10 times that total, with almost no expansion in funding for water, power, sewage or roads, let alone health and education.

nents. Clean, new and efficient, it resembled a US plant except the workers' pay was equivalent to only \$4 to \$8 a day. Mexican employees pay a payroll tax making them eligible for medical care and other benefits under the government's social security program, but the World Bank has been pressuring the Mexican government to eliminate that program. People in the "informal" job sector, like most of our hosts, don't qualify for government benefits.

We met two organizers for a Mexican trade union who were distributing literature about Mexican labor law and the Mexican constitution house-to-house, hoping to organize workers at the electrical plant and other non-union maquilas. "It's hard to change mentalities," one tells us. "The managers lose sight of the fact that they are working with human beings."

Borderlinks operates the Casa De Misericordia (House of Mercy), a compound purchased from a religious group, in one of the more established yet poor neighborhoods of Nogales. The Casa serves a free meal to hundreds of neighborhood children each day, and operates a community garden, food co-op and bicycle repair shop as well as a dormitory for tour groups. At the Casa we met Kiko Trujillo, the director of Borderlinks in Mexico. "I've seen this small town go to the mess we have today," Trujillo told us, who began in the maquila industry working in management with a US businessman. "Absolutely nothing justifies paying workers \$5-6 per day," he told us. "It's true the [Mexican] minimum wage is \$4.60 per day, but that still does not resolve the conditions of the workers. That's what bothers me about the maquilas. We [Borderlinks] are not against world trade. We're just against the way it's been done."

From Walnuts to a Wall

Nogales is about an hour south of Tucson by car. Together, the US and Mexican cities are known as Ambos Nogales (Both Nogaleses). The site was a pleasant desert wash, a shallow valley in the rugged mountains running south to north. The city's name, "walnut trees," comes from a long-dead grove in the otherwise arid region. Settlers arrived in the 19th century, and the Mexican government established a customs checkpoint along the tracks at the new border.

Nogales today bears little resemblance to the sleepy customs checkpoint. Until the 1990s, the border slicing through the heart of downtown was marked with little more than a chain-link fence. Residents fondly remember casually crossing into the US to shop or work. After an aggressive crackdown on illegal migrants in California and Texas, more and more began making their way here. Today, Mexican Nogales has a growing population of more than 300,000—from fewer than 30,000 in the 1970s. The growth has overwhelmed municipal services on the Mexican side. On the US side, the 2000 census counted 20,878 people in an area of roughly the same size, 94 percent of whom self-identified as Hispanic or Latino.

In 1994, the US government replaced the chain link fence with a 20-foot cement and metal wall. Topped with razor wire, the wall is monitored by video cameras and floodlights placed atop towers every few hundred meters.



The unimproved drainage system dates from the 1930s; 11 million gallons a day of polluted wastewater flow under the border in this pipe.

Vibration sensors installed in the ground along the border and desert migration routes alert the 500 US Border Patrol agents in the area.

The border fortifications, which many here compare with the Berlin Wall, have forced migrants to attempt crossings into the United States in the remote and dangerous desert region west of Nogales, where at least 175 people died of dehydration or of hypothermia in 2001. Despite the billions of dollars spent on border security, the migrants our class met said virtually all succeed in entering the States, although sometimes it takes a few tries. Officials estimate that more than 2,000 successfully make the three-day desert trek each week.

The Journey North

For migrants from Mexico who seek work in the States, the journey north no longer leads to Nogales. Instead, most take commercial bus lines to the small town of Altar 60 miles south-

west of Nogales in the rural desert. Here, we met migrants who had scraped together \$1,000 for up to three attempts at crossing. They spend a night in one of four hotels or over 100 guesthouses. Next, most meet up with guides they have contacted ahead of time; others look for the "coyotes" or polleros ("chicken cowboys," roughly) to help them cross the border at the tiny town of Sasabe, an hour's ride north.

Illegal migration is a local industry. Padre Rene, a young priest who helps migrants, told us that more than 40 percent of Altar's residents have jobs related to the migration and that some of the polleros have offices and houses in Mexico City.

Along Altar's main roads gas stations, restaurants and little shops cater to the temporary residents. Unlike typical Mexican pueblos, Altar's town plaza is almost always swarming with people. Every few minutes, large commercial buses pull up to the plaza and drop off Mexicans, mostly from the far southern states of Chiapas, Oaxaca and others where most people are of Mayan ancestry.



At the crossing point of Sasabe, an ex-Navy Seal now working for the US Border Patrol said, "Where else do they pay you to drive around and go hunting?" He said that he didn't mean he enjoyed shooting people, just catching lawbreakers.

A few of the people we met have been to the States before. Some had picked apples in Washington state; one had built chimneys in the Atlanta area. They bombarded us with questions, such as what were their legal rights? where would they be safe? were they likely to be arrested on the street? We had few answers. All of them faced a three-night desert trek. Most would be picked up at designated spots and driven to Phoenix, the staging ground for the trips to their final destinations. A few, however, had been returned to Mexico by the Border Patrol three times and lacked the money needed to attempt more crossings or to return home. They were stranded in Altar.

We rode north from Altar toward the border at Sasabe on a heavily traveled dirt road. A Mexican army checkpoint stopped us along the way. The young troops assured us the inspection was routine, apologizing for the inconvenience. As we reloaded our vans, a beat-up conversion van passed by, one of the many we'd seen with "Altar-Sasabe" painted on the side. These shuttles take migrants to Sasabe on a 60-mile road cut straight across a flat desert of stately cacti and scrub brush dotted with the shells of burnt-out cars, empty bottles, tires, mufflers and oil cans.

In Sasabe, the police chief wore a silk shirt decorated with a large rooster. He showed us his chicken key chain, apparently taking pride in his town's status as the pollero capital of Mexico. The town is barely more than a small strip of homes and businesses clustered near a border crossing. From the town we drove a few minutes until the road dead-ended at a barbed wire fence, one of many crossing points on the outskirts of Sasabe. On the other side stands the Tohono Indian reservation and the majestic O'odhane Mountains marking the route north. Abandoned bottles litter the desert, evidence of the area's heavy use by crossers.

At the end of our Spring Break trip we returned to Ann Arbor. We were the third class to make the trip to the Mexican border, and in past years students reported meeting migrants who were heading for jobs in the Detroit metropolitan area. (The 2000 census recorded 33,143 people identifying themselves as Mexican in Detroit—3.5 percent of the city's population—at least some of whom have traveled north to find work.)

Wanting to do more than submit our required trip journals and other academic assignments for our instructor, Ian Robinson, our class organized several outreach programs. They included an exhibition of photographs—including those accompanying this article—at a number of local venues, a five-minute video, a teach-in with local high school students, and community service in the Mexican community in Detroit, among other projects. **MT**

◀ A souvenir t-shirt bearing the logo of the US Border Patrol on sale at a shop in the police agency reads: 'There is no hunting like the hunting of man. And those who have hunted armed men long enough and liked it never really care for anything else thereafter—E. Hemingway.' (From 'On the Blue Water: A Gulf Stream Letter,' written for Esquire April, 1936, collected in *By-line: Ernest Hemingway, Scribner, 1967.*)

Rob Goodspeed '04 of Cumberland, Maine, is a history major and publisher of a news-oriented Website (known as a "blog") at <http://www.goodspeedupdate.com/>. Funding for the students' trip was provided by the Labor and Global Change Program of U-M's Institute for Labor and Industrial Relations and also the Latin American and Caribbean Studies Program.

Why Mexicans head for our border

By Ian Robinson

Before visiting the divided border towns of Nogales, students in "Labor in Mexico's Maquiladora Zone" study the political and economic history of Mexico to provide a context for what they will see, hear and read. Their instructor has condensed some of that information for Michigan Today—Ed.



Robinson

During World War II, the United States instituted the bracero (farm worker) program, which permitted hundreds of thousands of Mexican workers to cross the border and become contract laborers throughout the Southwest and beyond. When their work was completed, the braceros, who worked with virtually no protection from labor laws, were required to return to Mexico, although many didn't. When the US-Mexican agreement expired in 1964, this kind of imported contract labor became illegal.

Mexico decided, under its Border Industrial Program (BIP), to create duty-free industrial zones in a 2,000-mile wide, 12-mile-deep strip on the Mexican side of the border with the United States. The goal was to increase trade between the countries and provide jobs for former braceros. But BIP also swelled the populations of such cities as Tijuana, Juarez and Nogales.

Border city governments do not have the right to levy corporate taxes in the border zone, so they get little revenue to support their burgeoning infrastructure needs. And the corporate taxes collected by the federal government in Mexico City tend to be invested in the much poorer regions to the south.

At its peak in 2000, approximately 1.3 million Mexicans worked in the border plants. The recent downturn has wiped out at least 300,000 jobs. So, increasingly, jobs across the border in the USA are attracting not only hundreds of thousands of desperate Mexican peasants from the south, but also recently laid-off maquila workers. Those who succeed in entering the United States work as restaurant staffers and farm workers and in home-building and other low-paying jobs. Once here, they can't go home easily, so their families are at risk.

In the 1970s Mexico borrowed lot of money from international lenders so it could meet its short-term need for imported oil at OPEC-inflated prices, and invest in developing its own oil reserves. As OPEC prices soared, oil profits had poured into British and US banks, which offered loans at low interest rates to non-oil exporting poor countries so that they could still afford to buy oil.

The interest rate for the loans (after inflation) was very low—often 2 percent or less. But the loans had to be repaid in dollars and at flexible interest rates, rising or falling with the interest rates set by the US Federal Reserve. In 1978, the Carter Administration appointed Paul Volcker as the new Chair of the Federal Reserve Board. Volcker raised interest rates to levels unprecedented in the post-war period, suddenly saddling the poor countries with huge increases in the in-



A Nogales family outside their home.

terest rates they had to pay on the debts they owed to foreign banks. This policy was a major cause of the subsequent global recession.

Demand for Mexican products dropped sharply as the economies of the US and other rich countries contracted. At the same time, Mexico needed more foreign currency earnings to meet its new, 15- to 20-percent interest rates. Falling export earnings and rising foreign debt payments soon became unsustainable. In 1982, Mexico said it would default on the loans unless they were rescheduled so that smaller amounts could be paid each year over a longer period of time.

The International Monetary Fund said to Mexico and other debtors, yes, we'll reschedule the loans, but first you have to restructure your economies. This restructuring was supposed to increase Mexico's economic growth rate, but (in combination with the debt crisis itself) it had the opposite effect: Mexico grew at an average rate of more than 5 percent a year from the 1950s through the '70s, but in the 1980s and 1990s, it grew at half that rate or less.

The 1994 NAFTA pact (North American Free Trade Agreement) exacerbated some of the problems created by the IMF's structural adjustment programs. NAFTA

rapidly phased out all remaining tariffs in the manufacturing sector, putting many small and medium Mexican-owned industries that provided many jobs at high pay rates out of business, by making them compete directly with much bigger, better resourced multinational corporations. NAFTA also dramatically reduced agricultural tariffs—a new factor because early trade agreements had exempted the agricultural sector.

Only 1 to 2 percent of the US population works in agriculture today—the many dying and dead rural towns testify to this great demographic change over the last century. In Mexico, at least 25 percent of the population still relies on "subsistence farming"—farming that produces mainly for family consumption and sells whatever surplus remains for cash income. These small farmers cannot compete with energy- and capital-intensive agribusinesses in the US that, ironically, enjoy heavy subsidies and can sell corn, the national staple, at one-third the costs of production of small Mexican farmers.

The accelerating exodus from the Mexican countryside, to places like Nogales and other Mexican cities as well as to the United States, can be traced to the economic ruin of millions of Mexican subsistence farmers and peasants by Structural Adjustment policies that eliminated their subsidies (while leaving those to US farmers intact) and trade policies which then eliminated the Mexican tariffs that might have counteracted US subsidies.

MT

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