

Michigan Today
University of Michigan
News Service
412 Maynard Street
Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1399

MICHIGAN TODAY

UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

FALL 2006

VOLUME 38 NUMBER 3

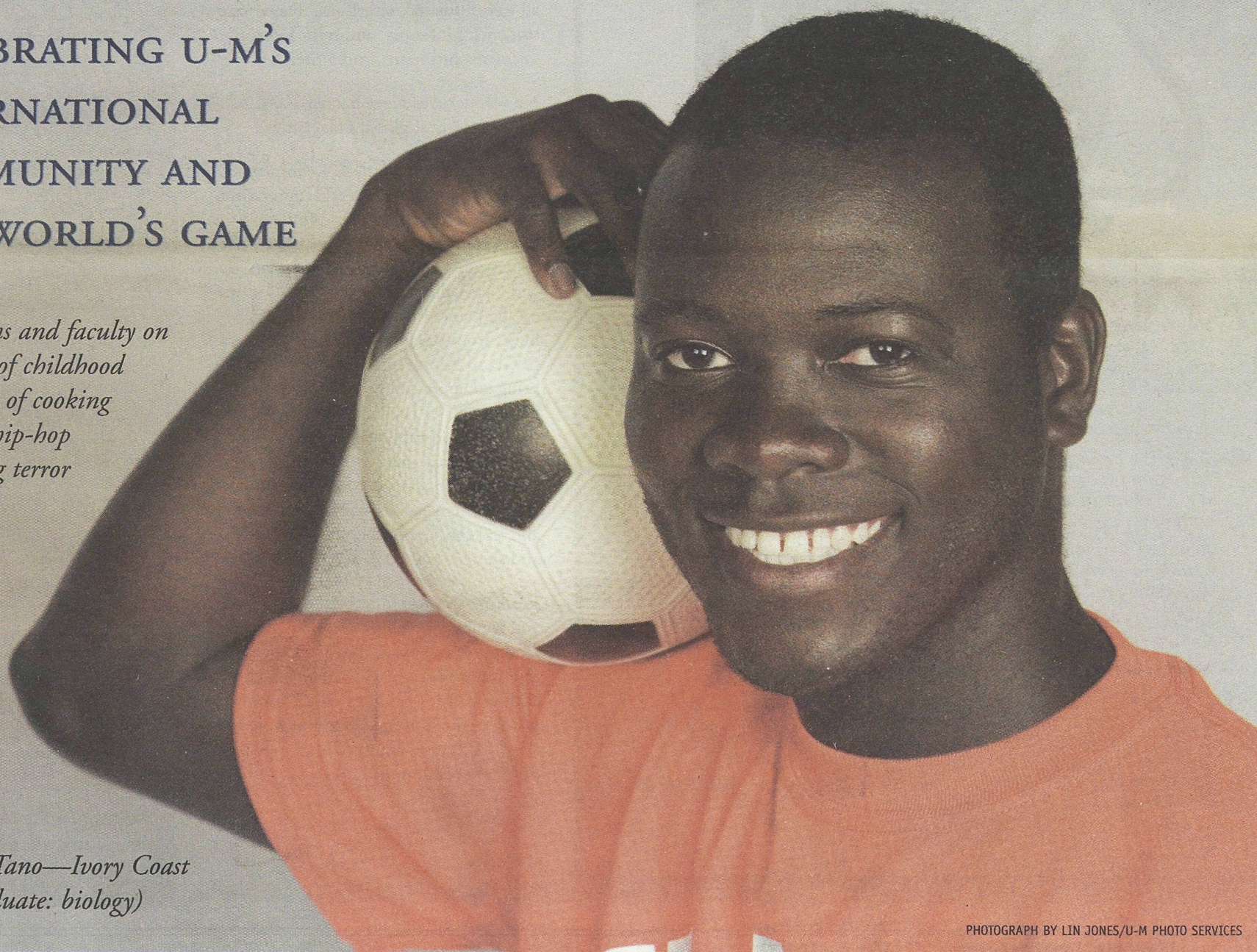
CELEBRATING U-M'S INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY AND THE WORLD'S GAME

PLUS

U-M alums and faculty on

- *hazards of childhood*
- *pleasures of cooking*
- *roots of hip-hop*
- *surviving terror*

*Jean-Yves Tano—Ivory Coast
(undergraduate: biology)*

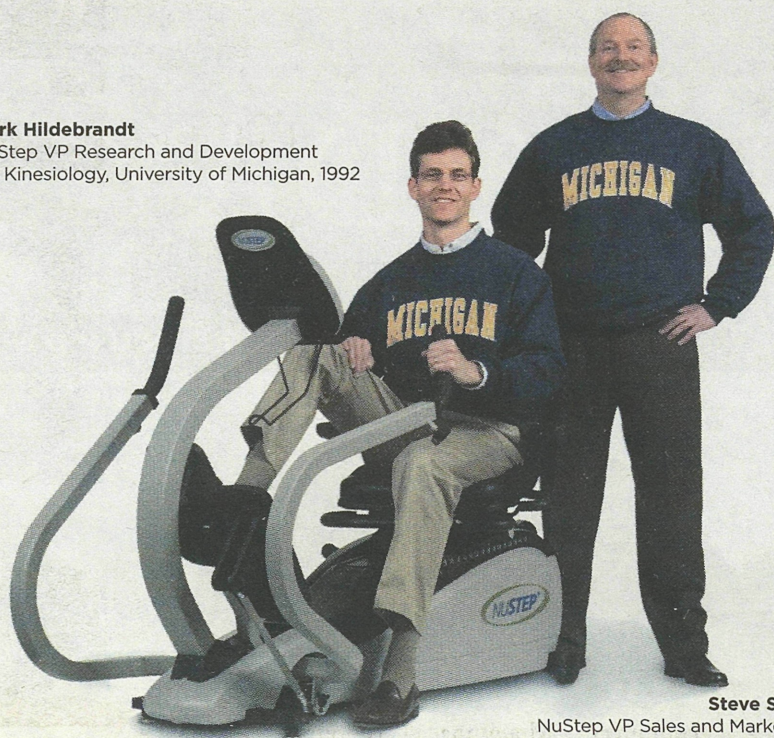


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M I C H I G A N I N N O V A T I O N

Mark Hildebrandt

NuStep VP Research and Development
MS Kinesiology, University of Michigan, 1992



Steve Sarns

NuStep VP Sales and Marketing
MS Kinesiology, University of Michigan, 1988

While studying kinesiology at the University of Michigan, Mark Hildebrandt and Steve Sarns developed a shared passion for transforming lives through improving health and wellness. After graduating, they created the NuStep®, the original recumbent cross trainer, designed to support physical fitness and wellness in the lives of individuals regardless of age or function level.

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editor's note

In the summer, Ann Arbor feels quiet and idyllic. The lines in shops and restaurants diminish, and the locals are elated because we can find parking spaces.

But this past June, you could find pockets of crowded, happy frenzy. It was World Cup soccer time, and through the doorways of bars and homes, you'd hear people cheering and singing in a dozen languages.

At a pub during the Germany-Costa Rica game, I met people from eight countries and four continents. Almost all were affiliated with U-M. There were students, professors, and staff. Doctors, scientists, historians, and writers.

No wonder *Newsweek* named U-M one of its "most global universities."

As the United States faces a complex and frequently hostile world, universities can help us understand and find common ground with other countries. U-M's American- and foreign-born scholars study virtually every country and culture on the planet. When students return home from the university—whether it's to Grand Rapids or to Abidjan—they bring an appreciation for the many different kinds of people in the world and the first-hand experience of things that make America great: freedom of inquiry and expression, respect for other points of view, a cross-pollination of cultures, and the confidence that individuals can, and should, make a difference.

Working with the international students and faculty who appear on these pages (and a few others we didn't have space for) was a pleasure. Smart, engaged, and hard-working, they contribute much to the university and the world. We are proud to count them as members of U-M's community.

—John Lofy

MICHIGAN TODAY

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Advertising—Todd McKinney
Graphic Design—Jim Reitz, Michigan Marketing & Design

Michigan Today is published by the News Service of the University of Michigan, 412 Maynard Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1399

Telephone: (734) 764-0105
Fax: (734) 764-7084
E-mail: michigantoday@umich.edu

Circulation: 408,000

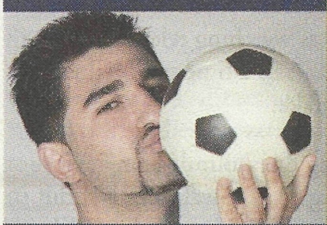
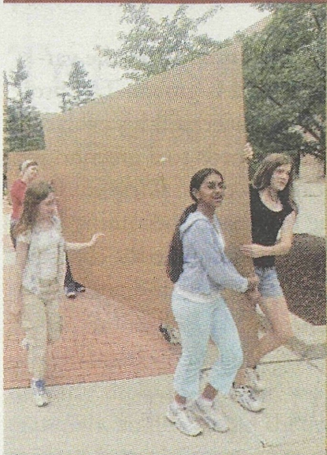
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YOU'RE
STRONGER
THAN YOU
THINK



departments

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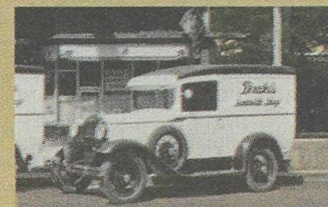
Christopher Paul Curtis, one of the best writers of young-adult novels, learned about life and writing in Flint.

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Marilynn Rosenthal's son Josh died in the World Trade Center. How did she end up at his killer's home?



GOOGLING IN ANN ARBOR

U-M is justifiably proud of having been a home to some of the most creative, influential minds of the Internet age. Alums of the College of Engineering include Thomas Knoll, the creator of Adobe Photoshop; Tony Fadell, the man who brought the iPod to market; and Larry Page, one of the two founders of Google. Now, Google has announced that it will open an office in Ann Arbor.



Larry Page

Google and the university have built a relationship around the company's Digital Library project—a sometimes-controversial effort to make the contents of libraries available to all through the Internet. Along with other universities including Harvard and Stanford, U-M has opened its immense library holdings to Google, in the belief that making this knowledge easily accessible (while respecting copyright) is a crucial part of the university's mission.

This fall, Google opened a new headquarters for its AdWords division—which custom-tailors advertisements based on what users are searching for, and which is the company's main source of revenue—in Ann Arbor. The company expects to create some 1,000 new jobs for the area.

The news was a tremendous boost to the state, whose industrial economy has been pounded in recent years, as well as for the university. U-M president Mary Sue Coleman says Google's decision “points

to the power of Michigan's research universities to help transform our state's economy” and is “a milestone in our state's transformation.”

THE TIGER FORCE PAPERS

In 1967, a renegade platoon called Tiger Force committed the longest series of known atrocities in Vietnam. Although the soldiers killed hundreds of civilians, and top government officials later learned about it, no one was prosecuted and the story remained secret for 36 years. Had U-M's Hatcher Graduate Library not gotten involved, it's possible the atrocities would remain unknown.

The story of Tiger Force began in Vietnam, where the platoon spun out of control for seven months in 1967. Several soldiers executed unarmed civilians, mutilated corpses, and wore necklaces made of human ears. In 1971, the Army's Criminal Investigation Division (CID) heard allegations that triggered a four-year probe. During the probe, CID investigators substantiated the war crimes. But in November 1975, the case was killed.

Col. Henry Tufts, head of Army CID, oversaw the Tiger Force probe, but, when the investigation was buried, Tufts was forced to resign. The cover-up haunted Tufts, who secretly took several thousand classified documents with him when he left. Included in that archive were several classified documents related to Tiger Force.

Decades passed. In 2002, Tufts died, but left his papers to Michael Woods, a neighbor who reported for the Toledo *Blade's* Washington bureau. Tufts stipulated that Woods get the documents into the public domain, so the papers were offered to Bowling Green State University near Toledo, which declined them. Still wanting the documents near Toledo so *Blade* reporters could access them, Woods offered them to U-M's Julie Herrada, curator of the Hatcher Library's Labadie

Collection. After a short period, U-M took the Tufts papers into the Labadie collection, which is acclaimed for documenting movements of social unrest.

In January 2003, *Blade* reporter Michael Sallah began the long process of researching the Tufts documents. After a month of combing through the archives, he says, “I came across 22 classified documents about Tiger Force. That led to our investigation which showed how the platoon killed hundreds of unarmed men, women and children, and how the atrocities were buried.”

Come fall 2003, *Blade* reporters Mitch Weiss and Joe Mahr joined Sallah in writing a multipart exposé of Tiger Force that won the Pulitzer Prize for investigative reporting. Recently, Sallah and Weiss published a book based on their series, *Tiger Force: A True Story of Men and War*. While they've endured criticism, the authors say telling the story of Tiger Force helps promote healing that's decades overdue. Sallah offers praise for U-M: “The fact that [U-M] agreed to archive the materials speaks volumes and, in the end, really helped us.”

WORMING AROUND CAMPUS

Fresh-food aficionados at U-M are celebrating new efforts to raise home-grown food for the campus—and dispose of waste at the same time.

Cultivating Community is a “closed-loop food system,” says Bob Grese, director of the Matthaei Botanical Gardens and the Arboretum, which oversees the project. It provides fresh, organic fruits and vegetables to the University Club and—soon, organizers hope—to campus dorms.

At the center of the project: a herd of hungry red worms. Food waste from the U-Club is served up to the worms, which transform the waste into compost.

The compost in turn fertilizes the gardens where the food is grown. The project has proved so successful it's evolved from a few garden beds to a greenhouse and several campus plots. Grese says it will continue to expand, becoming not just a garden but a resource for courses and research into human and environmental health.

IF YOU WANT TO LOSE WEIGHT, GET MORE SLEEP

In a new article appearing in the current issue of *Obesity Reviews*, University of Michigan researcher Michael Sivak presents calculations showing that replacing one hour of inactive wakefulness—such as watching television—with sleep can result in a 6 percent reduction in caloric intake.

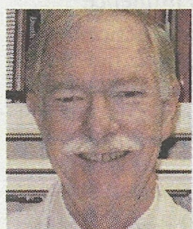
“By replacing one hour of being awake with sleeping,” says Sivak, head of the Human Factors Division at the U-M Transportation Research Institute, “we forgo a significant consumption of food because of the resulting reduction in the opportunity to eat.”

Sivak says that a person who sleeps seven hours a night and consumes 2,500 calories during the remaining 17 hours of the day can cut 147 calories by simply sleeping an extra hour instead of watching TV. He calculated that such a decrease in caloric intake would result in a body-weight reduction of about 14 pounds per year.

“To the extent that a large proportion of the population is both overweight and voluntarily sleep-deprived, replacing some sedentary activity with sleeping might offer a practical behavioral solution for a large segment of the overweight population.”

THE UNHERALDED GREATNESS OF BAND-AIDS

People dismiss a “Band-Aid solution” as superficial and ineffective—but according to U-M professor of surgery Richard E. Burney, bandages, particularly those using new, waterproof materials, stand among the most useful medical innovations.



Richard E. Burney

A surgeon and former head of U-M’s Emergency Services, Burney has seen “all kinds of wounds.” He has been managing wounds for over 20 years and has a strong interest in how

they heal. A file cabinet in his office is filled with studies on various methods to assist wound healing, all of which lead to the same conclusion: if possible, create a moist environment for wound-healing by using an “occlusive dressing”—a bandage. In fact, the best thing you can do for cuts big and small is to cover them and keep them covered. They’ll heal much more quickly and painlessly than those left open to the air.

The old folk advice that you should “leave a cut open to the air” is wrong, says Burney. Leaving a fresh cut exposed dries out the tissues, makes it more painful, and slows healing by 30-50 percent. Burney says, “If you have a wound, you want it to stay moist.... One purpose of skin is to preserve a moist healing environment.” Covering a cut retains that natural moisture and promotes healing. The wound gets all the oxygen it needs via the bloodstream; it doesn’t need contact with the air.

Burney has before-and-after photos of grisly wounds—motorcycle accidents, ulcerations, and the like—that he’s

treated with giant bandages made from materials that look like Saran Wrap (polyurethane film) or a thin crepe (hydrocolloid gel). Even plain gauze moistened with tap water works for some open wounds. The results are striking: even huge wounds heal well under the appropriate dressings.

Band-Aids aren’t just for his patients, either. “As a surgeon,” he says, “I can’t afford to have cuts on my hand.” He carries polyurethane film-based bandages in his wallet. If he does get a cut, he immediately covers it and keeps it covered until it heals.

While most cuts and scrapes should be treated with a dressing, Burney emphasizes some important precautions. Know that your tetanus shots are up to date. Dirty wounds lead to infection, so clean all wounds, and don’t cover a wound that already shows signs of infection such as redness, swelling, or pus. Most dressings should be changed after 24 hours, and if you do bandage a cut and it starts feeling worse, not better, get medical attention. But if you’ve got a simple, clean cut, forget what you learned about giving it air, and go for the Band-Aid solution.

TEENS’ RACIAL IDENTITY CAN AFFECT SCHOOL ACHIEVEMENT

Minority youths get better grades in school when they feel connected to their ethnicity, says a new U-M study.

Black and Hispanic students in 8th and 9th grade also performed well in school if they believed academic achievement was a characteristic of their ethnic group, said Daphna Oyserman, professor of social work and psychology and researcher at the Institute for Social Research, and her former graduate student



JAMIE SAVILLE

This summer, more than 100 middle-school girls participated U-M’s Women in Science and Engineering program’s Girls in Science and Engineering (WISE-GISE). The week-long camp, aimed at supporting talented girls with an interest in science and engineering, includes hands-on activities in human genetics, engineering, physics, chemistry, and computer science. It all culminated in the grand cardboard canoe competition. The girls worked in small teams to design and build their own canoes, which they raced in the Lurie Fountain on North Campus.

Inna Altschul, who is now an assistant professor of social work at the University of Denver.

The study asked 139 youths (98 African Americans, 41 Latinos) randomly selected from three low-income, urban schools to describe their racial-ethnic identity four times during two school years (8th and 9th grade). Responses were linked to the students’ grades.

Analyses showed that racial-ethnic identity became more salient during the transition to high school. Feeling connected to one’s racial-ethnic in-group and believing that doing well in school is an in-group characteristic promoted better school outcomes, Oyserman said.

In addition, youths who reported high levels of racial-ethnic identity connectedness and awareness of racism in the beginning of 8th grade attained better grades through 9th grade, she said.

The researchers noted that the positive effect of these components of racial identity on school grades are consistent for African American and Latino youths and for boys and girls.

“This is important because it suggests that interventions, which can bolster a youth’s sense of connection to their racial-ethnic in-group and her belief that doing well in school is an in-group thing to do, can be equally helpful to African American and Latino youths,” Oyserman said. “Girls are doing better in school than boys overall, but racial-ethnic identity can be beneficial for both boys and girls.”

BUSH READING PROGRAM WORKS LIKE "MAGIC"

A program that is a key part of President Bush's 2002 No Child Left Behind Act is working, says a comprehensive U-M study of 108 Michigan schools. Designed to get all third graders reading, the program, called Reading First, has been a success so far.

The state of Michigan was the first in the nation to sign up for and implement Reading First. U-M School of Education professor Joanne Carlisle, who has been monitoring and grading the efforts of the programs across the state of Michigan, says "Michigan was the first state to start its plan, meaning we have one more year of outcome-based data than any other state."

Among the communities involved in the U-M study are 19 schools in Detroit as well as Kalamazoo, Lansing, Grand Rapids, Pontiac, and Saginaw. More than 90 of the 108 schools were given green lights to continue on with their programs, while 15 were given a yellow light, meaning they required some fine-tuning to improve their efforts, she said. She noted that in one of the schools in Dearborn, more than 90 percent of the students speak Arabic, and the school needed extra assistance dealing with the language barriers. Carlisle said one of the best performers was Romulus, where all schools made substantial progress.

Other federally supported efforts to improve reading achievement in high-poverty schools have not been very successful. But Michigan's Reading First grants, about \$28 million a year for six years or about \$750 per pupil in the first year, are targeting low-achieving, high-poverty schools by providing high-quality professional development in reading and support for the teaching of reading.

Overall, 68 percent of the students in these schools qualified for free or reduced lunch, 10 percent of the student population had limited English proficiency, 11 percent of the students qualified for special education, and 70 percent were racial or ethnic minorities.

Carlisle's team looked at the percent of students reading at grade level or above (above the 40th percentile) also known as an "adequate competence level." The second measure was the percent of students reading well below grade level (below the 20th percentile), who are at substantial risk for long-term underachievement in reading.

"Getting kids up to the 50th percentile when they have been at the bottom 25th—it's magic," Carlisle said. "The slope of progress is at a consistent level for all three grade levels."

Researchers studied performance on three reading subtests of the Iowa Test of Basic Skills from the end of year one, when many reform efforts produce early pay-offs, to the end of year two, when many reform efforts tend to see progress slow. The team, however, has so far found continuing gains across the board from year to year.

The results show that a significantly larger percentage of first-, second-, and third-graders were reading at or above grade level after two years than after one year in Reading First schools. Similarly, a significantly smaller percentage of first-, second-, and third-graders were substantially underachieving in reading after two than after one year in Reading First schools.

Researchers also found Reading First programs generally provided the same degree of improvement in reading from the end of year one to the end of year two, regardless of the socio-demographic characteristics of school's population. By these measures, the program is a rousing success.

TYPE A PERSONALITY IS NOT LINKED TO HEART DISEASE

A study appearing this month in the Public Library of Science found absolutely no connection between the hard-driving personality and heart disease, contrary to previous studies and conventional wisdom.

This finding is among the first of a massive, 10-year effort to measure the genes and traits of a single population of closely related people. Conducted jointly by Italian and Sardinian researchers, the U.S. National Institute on Aging, and biostatisticians at the University of Michigan, the project recruited 6,148 people aged 14 to 102 in four clustered villages on the island of Sardinia in the Mediterranean Sea. The sample represents 62 percent of the population of the Lanusei Valley surrounding the four villages.

Sardinia was chosen as an ideal laboratory for genetic studies because of its isolation and relative stability, said Gonçalo Abecasis, associate professor of biostatistics in the U-M School of Public Health. He and U-M postdoctoral fellow Wei-Min Chen led statistical analysis on the project. "If you did this study in New York or Detroit, you'd find people with all sorts of genetic backgrounds," Abecasis said.

The Sardinian study group is essentially one giant family: 95 percent of the people in the study had all four of their grandparents born in Sardinia and one family encompassed 600 cousins. "If you look at small families it's much harder to separate what's genes and what's environment," Abecasis said.

Each of the study participants took a personality test and received a half-day health assessment that included tests for

cholesterol levels and other blood factors, an electrocardiogram, an arteriogram, and blood pressure measurement.

This is only the first pass on what promises to be a very rich source of new genetic insights, said co-author David Schlessinger of the National Institutes on Aging, in Baltimore. "We're expecting an avalanche of data in the next few months."

Although the statistical analysis showed that there is a clear genetic component for each of the 98 traits examined and that some genetic factors influence many traits at once, no connection was established linking personality and cardiovascular function. "We didn't see it," Schlessinger said. "Maybe it's there, but we didn't see it."

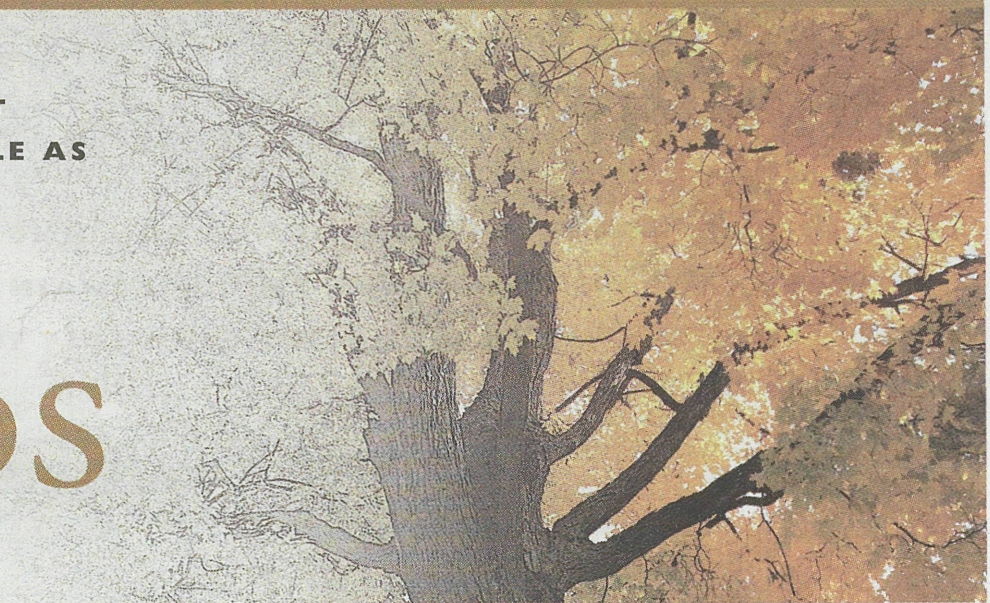
Height was found to be 80 percent genetic, cholesterol about 40 percent, and behavior traits a mere 10 to 20 percent, Abecasis said.

Earlier studies had assigned higher percentages for the genetics of behavior, but Abecasis thinks that happened because of statistical biases created by the twin studies that have traditionally provided this kind of data. "To avoid such problems, this analysis of more than 34,000 relative pairs focused on more distantly related individuals," Abecasis.

Study participants will be tracked for several more years to see if the genetic data has been successful at predicting disease, said Schlessinger, who first began thinking about the ambitious Sardinian study 10 years ago. "There is nothing else quite like this." **MT**

STEPHEN AND RACHEL KAPLAN HAVE FOUND THAT THE CURE FOR WHAT AILS YOU COULD BE AS SIMPLE AS

A WALK IN THE WOODS



BY JOHN LOFY

Professor Rachel Kaplan's office at U-M's School of Natural Resources and Environment looks out over a large oak tree. Potted plants crowd her window sill. Beyond these patches of nature loom the buildings of central campus. But, she says, a little bit of nature goes a long way.

She would know. Kaplan and her husband, professor Stephen Kaplan, were among the first academics to study the psychological benefits of nature. Colleagues and

ticularly take pride in graduate students they have mentored over the years. Students working with the Kaplans have made some striking discoveries:

- Studies by Bernadine Cimprich showed that the psychological health of cancer patients "improved dramatically" after they spent 20 minutes a day, three days a week, doing restorative activities such as gardening or walking in the woods. A control group that did not do the activities showed notably less improvement.

- A study of AIDS caregivers by Lisa Canin found that the single most powerful factor in avoiding stress-related burnout was "locomotion in nature"—such as walking, running, biking, or canoeing. (The quickest route to burnout was watching television.)

Better yet, says Rachel, the natural setting "doesn't have to be big or pristine" to have a positive effect. "Most of all, it has to be nearby." A study by Dr. Ernest Moore of prisoners in Milan, Michigan, showed that simply having a view of farmland from a prison cell reduced inmates' need for health care.

What's so powerful about nature? Stephen theorizes that it comes down to brain function. The source of much mental distress, he says, is overuse of "directed attention"—such as concentrating on work. "Sustained directed attention is difficult and fatiguing. When people talk about mental fatigue, what is actually fatigued is not their mind as a whole, but their capacity to direct attention." And it can make people "distractible and irritable."

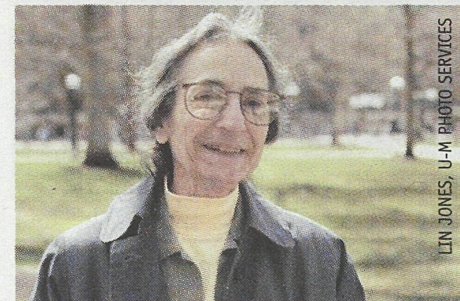
To escape the discomforts of mental fatigue, people often turn to activities that "capture" their attention. They find external events to distract them, so they

don't have to concentrate so hard. Watching TV, for instance, requires little willpower: the programs do the work, and the brain follows along. Similarly, says Stephen, "many people find an auto race fascinating." Fast motion, loud noises, and smells captivate the brain.

The Kaplans refer to activities like watching TV or sporting events as "hard fascination." The stimuli are loud, bright, and commanding. The activities are engaging and fun, but they don't allow for mental rest.

Soft fascination, on the other hand, is the kind of stimulation one finds on, say, a stroll on the beach or in the woods. Nothing overwhelms the attention, says Stephen, "and the beauty provides pleasure that complements the gentle stimulation." The brain can soak up pleasing images, but it can also wander, reflect, and recuperate.

Most people, say the Kaplans, intuitively know this. But often, they either don't do it, or they may not have opportunities to get out in nature. That's too bad, because the Kaplans have shown that if you're upset, frazzled, or suffering, an easygoing walk in the woods or even along a tree-lined street is one of the best things you can do for yourself. **MT**



LIN JONES, U-M PHOTO SERVICES

Rachel Kaplan



Stephen Kaplan

collaborators for decades, they have shown that natural settings—trees, grass, gardens, and the like—have a profound, positive impact on both mental and physical health.

Both Kaplans hold joint appointments: Rachel in SNRE and Psychology, Stephen in Psychology and Electrical Engineering and Computer Science. They both par-

- Studies by Frances Kuo and William Sullivan found that residents of public housing projects who live near trees "showed all kinds of benefits," says Stephen. "More civility, less aggression—and girls were more likely to study" their schoolwork.

Drake's is Gone...

...AND TIME HAS ALTERED U-M. NEW BUILDINGS AND BUSINESSES HAVE TRANSFORMED THE CAMPUS AREA, BUT SOME THINGS REMAIN THE SAME. THE PHOTO-ART ON THESE PAGES RESTORES SOME OF ANN ARBOR'S LONG-LOST ICONS TO TODAY'S WORLD.



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BY MARTIN VLOET, U-M PHOTO SERVICES

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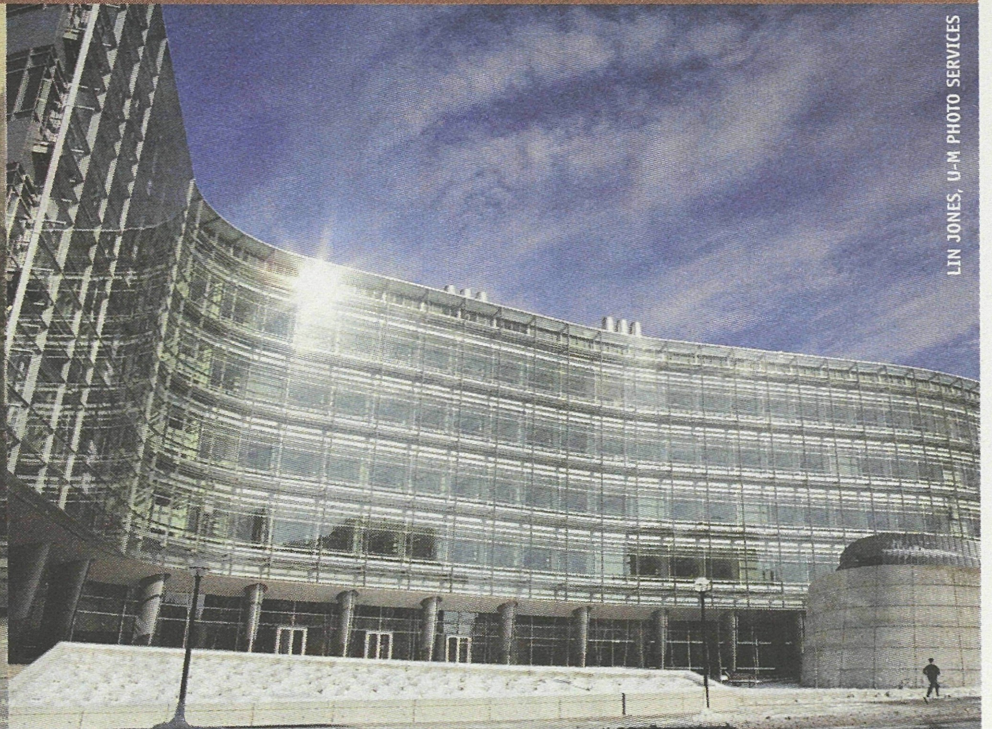
Alums who graduated before the early '90s will remember pecan rolls and sandwiches at Drake's, the legendary sandwich shop that faced the Diag. Drake's closed in 1993. Other eating institutions, such as the Pretzel Bell, are also gone. In their place, a number of chain restaurants have moved in, but so have food joints that cater to today's palates: sushi bars, falafel stands, and organic pizza.



"The more Ann Arbor changes," says Susan Pollay of the Downtown Development Authority, "the more it stays the same." Case in point: State Street. "The businesses have changed," she says, "but State Street is still the interface between town and gown it always was." In fact, not all the businesses have changed. Though Follett's and the Quarry have closed, Van Boven clothiers remains, and in the Arcade, students still buy gifts at Caravan.



The ghost of the “Sig Ep house” hovers where it stood before being burned to the ground by an arsonist. Located at State and Hill streets, the site is now home of the towering Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy. The Ford School has long needed a building worthy of its name and quality, and now it’s got one. Joan and Sanford Weill Hall is the new gateway to central campus. It’s also a reminder of U-M’s longstanding commitment to public service.



LIN JONES, U-M PHOTO SERVICES

The Law School and BSRB

The university has never lacked iconic architecture. Within just a few blocks of one another stand the Union, Angell Hall, Hill Auditorium, and (pictured here during construction in 1924) the Law School. Each is a masterpiece. So is the new Biomedical Sciences Research Building (BSRB), completed early this year. It's a thrilling piece of architecture that also serves a vital function: its open-design laboratories house many of the university's top life sciences researchers and encourage them to collaborate across disciplines.

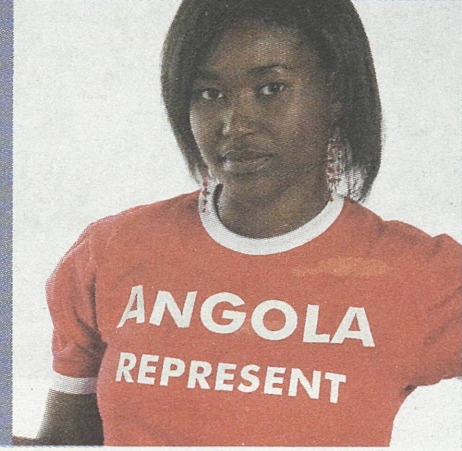
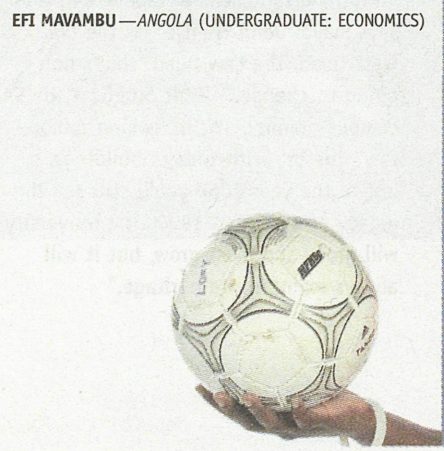


Packard and State Streets

The corner of Packard and State streets, just south of campus, is a living demonstration of the truth that, no matter how much transformation comes to campus, much will remain the same. These photos, separated by over 100 years, are almost identical—save for the horse and carriage. “The thing to remember” about Ann Arbor, says mayor John Hieftje, “is the Diag, West Quad, the Law Quad: that’s not going to change.” Adds Sue Gott, U-M’s campus planner, “We’re making tomorrow’s history with today’s buildings, but in the year 2050 you’ll still see the legacy of 1900 and 1950. The university will grow, and must grow, but it will always maintain its heritage.”

WORLD GAME, WORLD

MICHEL MAHARBIZ—ARGENTINA
(ASSISTANT PROFESSOR: ENGINEERING)



UNIVERSITY

U-M'S
INTERNATIONAL
COMMUNITY
CELEBRATES THE
WORLD CUP
■ ■ ■

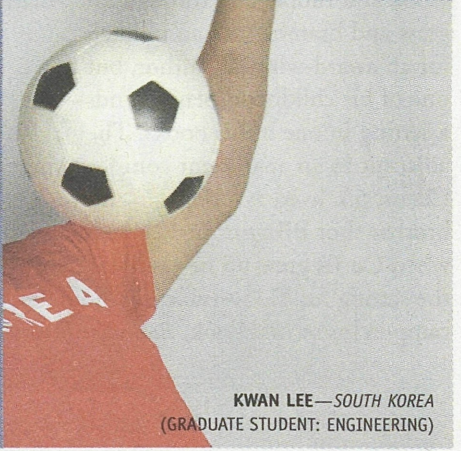
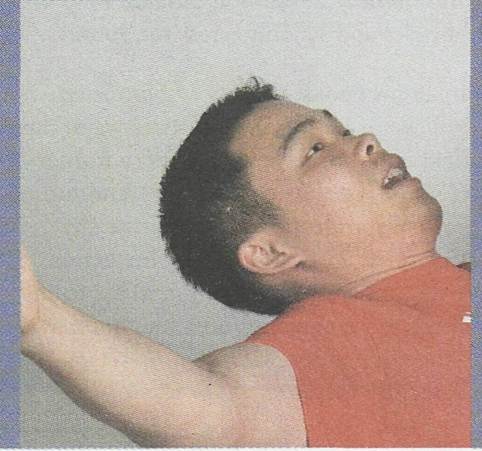
PHOTOS BY LIN JONES,
U-M PHOTO SERVICES

In August, *Newsweek* ranked U-M among the world's "most global universities." U-M has always been a world-class university in the full sense of the phrase, attracting students and faculty from virtually every country.

Says president Mary Sue Coleman: "We have welcomed international students since the 1840s—students who continually enrich the University with their intelligence, their heritage, and their varied experiences." And when they return home, they carry with them a deeper appreciation of America.

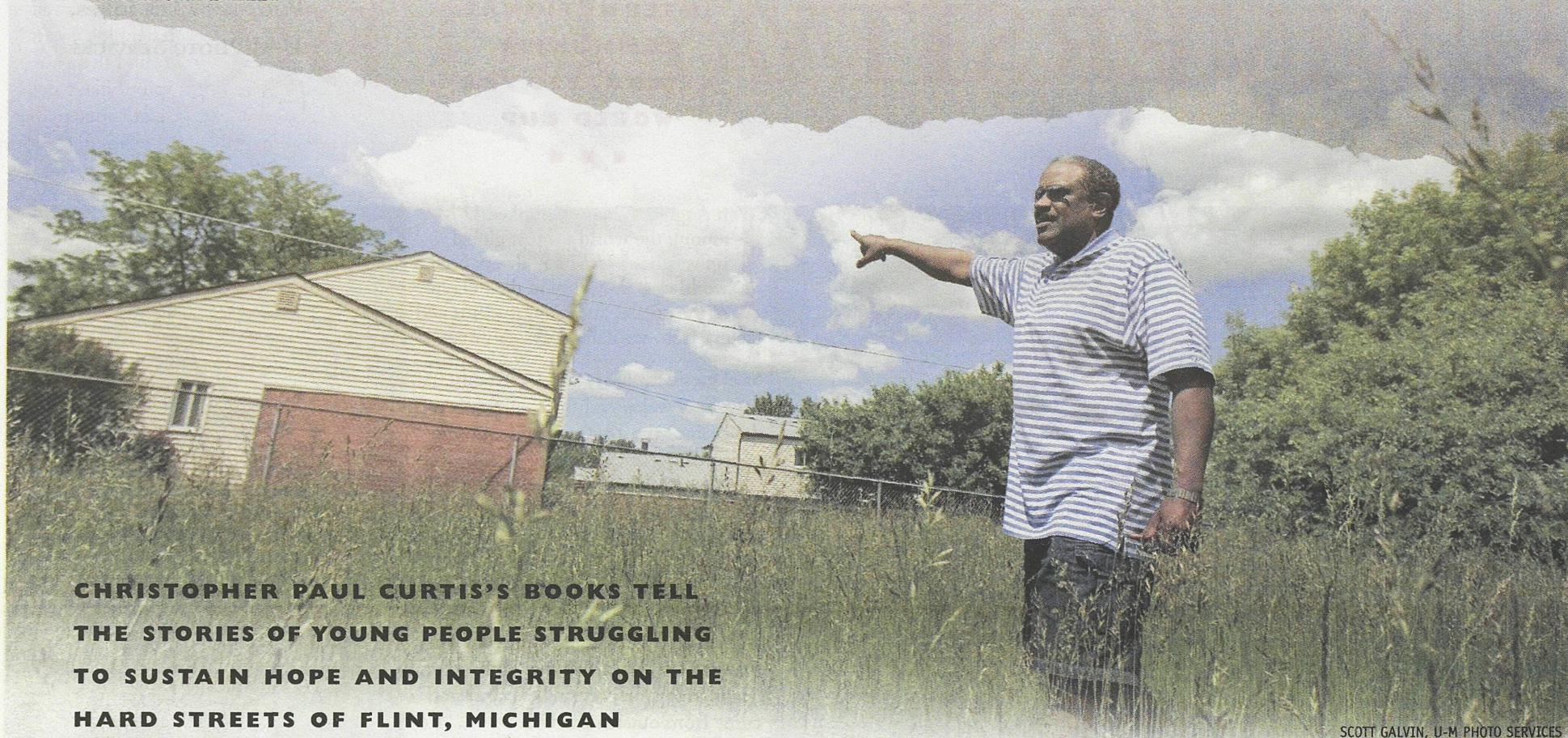
Last year, 4,650 international students studied at U-M, while 1,686 Michigan students studied or worked abroad. Many professors, researchers, and staff come from outside the U.S.

The university's international flavor was especially visible during this summer's soccer World Cup. Across campus and around town, fans from World Cup countries watched games and cheered their teams. These portraits capture just some of their energy. **MT**



the bard of flint

BY LAURA BAILEY



SCOTT GALVIN, U-M PHOTO SERVICES

CHRISTOPHER PAUL CURTIS'S BOOKS TELL THE STORIES OF YOUNG PEOPLE STRUGGLING TO SUSTAIN HOPE AND INTEGRITY ON THE HARD STREETS OF FLINT, MICHIGAN

I can't believe how small it is," marvels Christopher Paul Curtis. He is walking across a tiny field on the southeast side of Flint, Michigan. Curtis swats away mosquitoes as we stumble, sweating, over piles of wood and rubble and through knee-high grass and bramble. It's an unlikely place for an award-winning author, but this is one of his childhood playgrounds—and a setting in one of his books. The field is adjacent to an apartment complex where Curtis, 53, lived as a boy. He and his brother shot BB guns here as kids, and when Curtis grew up he used the field as the setting for *Hooverville*, the homeless camp in his second book, *Bud, Not Buddy*.

That book earned Curtis a Newbery Award—the children's lit version of the Pulitzer—for its story of a boy struggling to survive homelessness and the Depression. His other books have been equally well received, garnering prestigious prizes such as the Coretta Scott King Award, and finding homes in thousands of libraries and schools across the country.

In all his books, the city of Flint is an important setting, and in some ways, this field is symbolic of Flint itself: a former GM metropolis now shrunken and forgotten; spiritless compared to the city Curtis left 21 years ago. But his fiction gives humanity to the city, and his young characters emerge from its tough, often dangerous streets with their dignity and humanity intact.

Indeed, the young protagonists in Curtis's acclaimed books grapple with problems that privileged kids may hardly know exist. Horrors, even: the central event in his first novel, *The Watsons Go to Birmingham—1963*, is the real-life bombing of the Sixteenth Street Baptist Church. The narrator, nine-year-old Kenny, tells of the summer his family, the "Weird Watsons of Flint," drive to Alabama to leave Kenny's troubled older brother for a summer of tough love with their maternal grandmother. In his grandmother's house, Kenny hears the bombing (in which four children died Sept. 15, 1963) and thinks his sister is killed in the blast.

Curtis won Newbery and Coretta Scott King awards for his young adult books set in Flint. Here, he revisits a field where he played as a child. Writing *Bud, Not Buddy* he returned to the field in his imagination, making it the setting for a Depression-era homeless camp.

In his second book, *Bud, Not Buddy*, 10-year-old Bud is left alone when his mother dies. After suffering a night of physical and emotional abuse at the hands of a foster family, Bud runs away to find the father he never knew. His search takes him to Flint during the Depression, when food and shelter are scarce and good will even scarcer. He finds himself in a homeless camp, and later, on a road outside the city where a Black kid alone at night is in peril.

* * *

In Curtis's books, "social issues" are not something far away. They're real, imposing events that threaten to destroy the children who populate his stories.

* * *

Similarly tough lessons of racism and betrayal figure in Curtis's third book, *Bucking the Sarge*. The Sarge is a woman, an empress of slum housing and loan-sharking in Flint. Her son Luther, a smart, sensitive teen, resists inheriting her empire, and is determined to reject her example and the criminal future that seems to await him. The story becomes a battle between mother and son, and between the Sarge's twisted self-justifications (she says she fleeces the system to level social inequities) and Luther's determination to live honorably and honestly.

In all these books, "social issues" are not something far away. They're real, imposing events that threaten to destroy the hope, integrity, and even lives of Curtis's characters. These kids are placed in tough situations, often alone or with little help, and must fight their way out with intelligence, optimism, and hard-nosed determination. Curtis's strong sense of humor and excellent prose stitch all of it together. The fact that they're frequently set in Flint, in real locations Curtis knows well, only adds to their power.

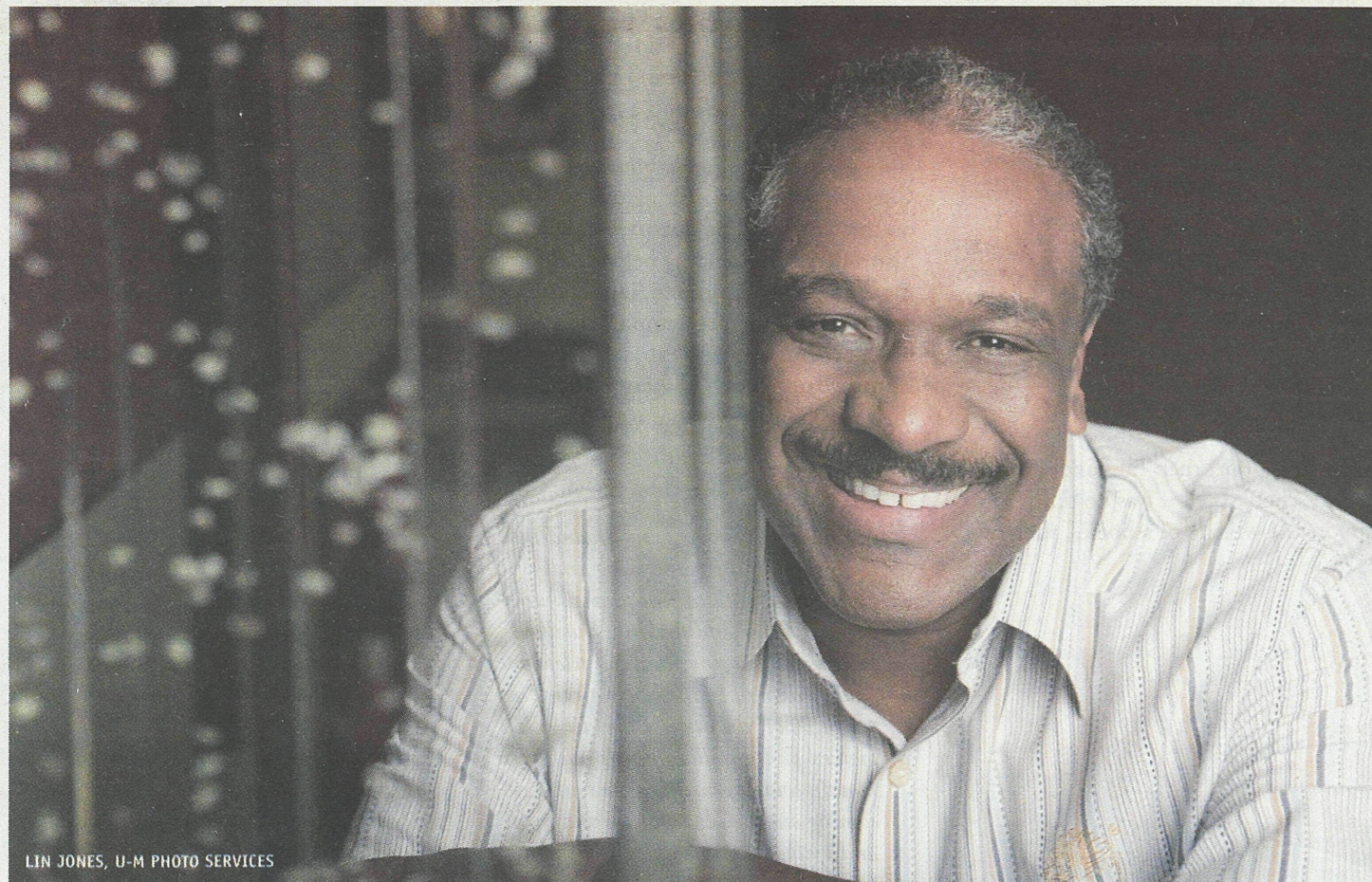
"Flint is vital to the stories," says Curtis's editor at Random House, Wendy Lamb. "Only Chris knows how to tell us about his childhood home as it was, and is today. I doubt if kids care about Flint itself, but they do care about the characters and how they deal with the pressures, opportunities, and conflicts that come from living in Flint."

Growing up, Curtis did not share his characters' traumas. He had a happy, loving family and successful parents. Yet he, too, endured his own challenging Flint story. Before writing full-time, he worked 13 detested years on a General Motors line, followed by a string of dead-end, frustrating jobs. He now lives in Windsor, Ontario, with his wife Kaysandra in a sweeping, expensive-looking home—"this was *after* the Newbery," jokes Kay—overlooking parks and the Detroit River.

Spending time with Curtis, it's difficult at first to find the man who could write such searing stories. He is gracious, gregarious, and funny. He sets aside an entire Sunday to revisit his old haunts in Flint, and on the drive from Canada he is the best of company, laughing about writing, Flint, Canada, music, and kids. Our first stop is Halo Burger, an iconic fast-food joint founded in Flint—we both know and love it, and agree that every burger should be, by law, just as tasty. In the parking lot we meet Curtis's long-time buddy Bullet Head, (nicknamed "for *obvious* reasons," Curtis teases), and the two men banter and reminisce. Bullet Head is security and fire chief at GM's Buick City, and at Curtis's request, he has arranged a tour for us. Curtis worked at Fisher Body, a plant identical to the one we tour.

As we turn into Buick City, Curtis becomes noticeably quieter. The place is vast and nearly abandoned, building after building set upon lots that resemble a recently cleared minefield—here and there are piles of rubble; weeds sprout like patches of mange on an expanse of concrete that stretches impossibly far. He hated working on the line, he says. He calls the work, among other apocalyptic descriptors, "soul crushing."

Curtis spent his days hanging 80-pound doors. He and his line partner doubled up, finishing their work in half the time so they had twice the breaks. "I discovered if I wrote during the breaks it made the time go quickly." But he didn't write fiction. The subject, he says, was more immediate. Curtis recalls writing, over and over, "I hate my foreman's guts, I wish he'd die." I look up from my notepad, expecting the familiar mischievous grin, but he's not smiling.



LIN JONES, U-M PHOTO SERVICES

We walk into the dark, empty interior of the plant. Bullet Head leads the way, explaining this or that machine, some of the plant's history, and why only a handful of people work here now.

"Same old Fisher Body smell," Curtis remarks grimly. The plant has its own atmosphere, oily and thick. It's the only place we visit that day that Curtis doesn't find "so much smaller."

While working at GM, he met Kay, started a family, took night classes at U-M Flint, and kept a journal. When he couldn't stand the line anymore he did the unheard of: he quit. At the time, surrendering a good GM line job was like "jumping off a cliff"—it's the same type of brave move one of his characters might take.

After GM, Curtis took various low-paying jobs and even ran a political campaign before realizing he hated politics. He wrote fiction and took classes. In 1990 he entered and won a short story contest; then, in 1993, he entered U-M's Hopwood Awards creative writing contest, winning a Hopwood Major Essay Award and a Hopwood Major Fiction-Novel Award. It was a turning point, and with Kay's blessing, he took a year off work to write.

"Women support their husbands going back to school; I felt it was no different to support the writing of a book," she says.

During that year off, Curtis entered *The Watsons Go to Birmingham — 1963* in a story contest hosted by Random House. The publisher said the book didn't qualify for the competition, but they liked it so much they published it anyway. *The Watsons Go to Birmingham — 1963* appeared in 1995 and rocketed to the top of children's literature. The book received a Coretta Scott King Award, a Newbery Honor, and a dozen other literary awards including a *Publishers Weekly* Best Book, and a *New York Times Book Review* Best Book.

Despite the accolades, Curtis is humble, saying his work fills a need. "I think I'm in a very unique position because there aren't many books by African American writers, and there's a need for that, with so many African American children. My book just kind of fell into a niche."

Though written for and about youngsters, Curtis's hard-boiled writing doesn't stint on the truth, and he doesn't talk down to his readers. Children, he believes, deserve more credit for understanding than they get. In *Watsons*, Curtis employs raw, unsentimental language to describe the Birmingham church bombing through the voice of nine-year-old Kenny Watson, who believes his sister has died in the church:

I walked past people lying around in little balls on the grass crying and twitching. I walked past people squeezing each other and shaking, I walked past people hugging trees and telephone poles, looking like they were afraid they might fly off the earth if they let go. I walked past a million people with their mouths wide-opened and no sounds coming out. I didn't look behind me and walked back as quick as I could to Grandma Sands house.

Even Curtis's young readers appreciate his willingness to face the hardest facts. Once, during a town hall-style PBS interview, a young boy rose and, before a hushed audience, thanked Curtis for writing *Bud, Not Buddy*.

"He said his mother had a horrible disease," Curtis recalls. "He said he realized from reading *Bud, Not Buddy* that he didn't need to worry about her being there every day. He realized from reading that all the little things she did, she would be there every day."

Such experiences make him aware of his moral responsibility to his young fans. He's cut and rewritten his work to meet that responsibility. In *Bucking the Sarge* there is a scene in which the Sarge orders

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Curtis started writing during breaks from his GM line work. His subject matter was simple: "I hate my foreman's guts," he wrote over and over.

* * *

her son Luther to clean up some blood. Sarge warns: "It better look like O.J. went though here when I come back." Curtis adored the line, but he removed it before the book came out, because he imagined the dismay of O.J. Simpson's children if they read such a line.

Curtis says the traits of people in his past give life to his characters. The Sarge is very loosely based on a Flint acquaintance. Curtis based Luther, Sarge's beleaguered son, on a neighbor boy who sat for hours

in a chair on the front porch of his group home. That day we visit the home, and Curtis, amazed, sees that the chair has remained in the same spot after all those years.

We also visit another home his family rented. "This is where the Watsons would have lived," he says. The expanse of front porch looks wide and friendly as a smile, and I easily picture both the imagined and the real families—the Watsons and the Curtises—living here.

Curtis tells me that someone may be a beautiful writer, but without, say, line work at GM; good, life-long friends like Bullet Head; little boys sitting on porches; horrific church bombings; or empty fields overgrown with weeds and memories, there's nothing to say. Experience, he says, makes writing meaningful.

Curtis has had plenty of experience, and he has more to say. *Mr. Chickee's Funny Money* came out in late 2005. Set in Flint, it's the story of nine-year-old Steven, who receives a mysterious bill with 15 zeros on it from his neighbor, blind old Mr. Chickee. Curtis has also finished a book called *Elijah of Buxton* about the Canadian settlement of fugitive slaves and is writing another book from a girl's point of view.

Nor is there an end to his excitement about his writing life. Writing has "never been hard," he says emphatically, smiling wide, close to laughing. "It's never been hard. You hear about people going to open a vein. I don't know what they're talking about. I really do have a lot of fun." Like his characters, he's come a long way from the brambly fields of his youth. **MT**

Laura Bailey is a writer for the U-M News Service.

BEYOND RECIPES

FOUR MICHIGAN ALUMNAE EXPAND THE TRADITIONAL DEFINITION OF THE COOKBOOK

BY CHERYL STERNMAN RULE

There are 13 brands of Asian fish sauce on the market. This fact is not likely to be of great concern—or interest—to the average home cook, but for Ruth Reichl ('68, MA '70) and the 12 members of her test kitchen staff at *Gourmet*, it is crucial. When testing a recipe for Vietnamese-Style Shrimp Curry, the test cooks prepared the dish with all available versions of the sauce. “We had to make sure one brand wouldn't ruin the recipe,” says Reichl. This same level of care and obsessive detail informed the testing of *The Gourmet Cookbook*, a five-and-a-half pound, 1,000+ page tome containing 1,200 recipes, which Reichl edited. Extrapolating the time and attention required for a single recipe one thousand-fold gives a fair idea of the scope of Reichl's challenge.

With 24,000 cookbooks published worldwide each year, authors' reputations are staked on whether their recipes can be successfully reproduced by non-professional cooks in ordinary home kitchens. When a recipe fails, no cookbook—no matter how thoughtfully conceived or lovingly photographed—will achieve its aspiration to be splattered with olive oil and smeared by successive generations of chocolate-stained hands.

But the best cookbooks, those we not only cook from but relish, go beyond fool-proof recipes. They teach us something new. The works of four prominent U-M alumnae—Flo Braker, Joan Nathan, Sara Moulton, and Ruth Reichl—do just that, telling us about cooking technique, culture, and the evolution of our nation's cuisine.

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“Really good cookbook writers make you want to cook; they make you want to go into the kitchen.”

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Flo Braker learned to bake from years of study—and lots of trial and error. In her cookbooks, she explains the science behind baking as a way to “de-mystify” it and make it fun.

“I had so many questions myself when I first started out,” she says. In 1985, she published her first cookbook, *The Simple Art of Perfect Baking* (1985), as a way of “passing down what I had learned the hard way, through trial and error. I wanted people to enjoy baking as much as I did.... I wanted to de-mystify baking.”

FLO BRAKER

NOT JUST THE HOW, BUT THE WHY.

When Flo Braker (enrolled '57-'60) left Ann Arbor after her junior year to marry David Braker (BSE '59, MSE '60), her thirst for learning was far from quenched. “I only left Michigan because Dave had become the most important person in my life, and he had graduated,” she says. “I always wanted to go to Michigan. My mother wanted me to go to Smith, but I wouldn't even apply. Michigan was like a religion in my family.” After moving to northern California and starting a family, Braker began to bake. “Over the next ten years,” she says, “I baked for hours, every day, alone in my kitchen.” She eventually opened her own baking business and began teaching classes, first in San Francisco, then further afield. Soon she was studying in France and Switzerland, and visiting bakeries across the U.S. and Europe for inspiration.

In *Simple Art*, this de-mystification frequently comes in the form of lucid scientific explanations. For example, Braker explains that when creaming together ingredients for a butter cake, using room-temperature butter, liquid, and eggs is vital, because only at 70 degrees can the ingredients “combine with and penetrate one another to give a smooth, homogeneous batter. If each of their temperatures is not 70 degrees, the batter will suddenly become wet and lumpy. An ingredient that is too cold, such as an egg refrigerated to 42 degrees, can solidify the dispersed butter (70 degrees) which is holding millions of minute air bubbles. The walls of these bubbles will then become rigid, pop open, and collapse, allowing air to escape [and] producing what is commonly called curdling of the batter.” By taking the time to explain why specific reactions occur, Braker makes it far more likely that we'll produce optimal results in our own kitchens. (Disclosure: I serve as a consultant to Braker on her newest book.)



JOAN NATHAN

COOKBOOK AS CULTURAL WINDOW.

In Joan Nathan's ('65, MA '66) books, readers learn as much about cultural traditions, people, and places as they do about cuisine. For Nathan, food and culture are inextricably linked.

"I always thought I would become a sociologist," says Nathan, who chose U-M for its sociology department before ultimately pursuing a degree in French literature.

Upon finishing school, Nathan worked as foreign press officer for Teddy Kollek, then mayor of Jerusalem. "That was a defining moment for me," she says. "In that job, I was actually doing sociology. Mayor Kollek liked to eat, and as he sat down with Arabs or Orthodox Jews, even if they were hostile to him, people would start opening up to him as he ate their food. It was there that I realized the power of food."

Nathan co-authored her first cookbook, *The Flavors of Jerusalem* (1975), as a lark, unaware that she had found her career.

Eight more books followed, including *Jewish Cooking in America* (1994) and *The New American Cooking* (2005), both winners of awards from the James Beard Foundation and the International Association of Culinary Professionals. In these books, history, culture, and immigration form the lens through which Nathan looks at food.

Here is but one example, from *The New American Cooking*. The head note on a Cambodian recipe for Tuna and Avocado Salad with Lemongrass and Fresh Mint reads, in part: "The first upscale Cambodian restaurant in the United States was the Elephant Walk in Somerville, Massachusetts, run today by Nadsa de Monteiro and her mother. When Nadsa was a young girl, privileged and protected, she could never have predicted the journey she would take from Cambodia to Boston. But the 1975 takeover of Cambodia by the Khmer Rouge changed the life of this diplomat's daughter forever. When the Cambodian government fell, Nadsa's family sought asylum in the south of France. [Several years later] Nadsa married and moved to Boston. Her parents joined her there a few years later. And in 1991, the family opened The Elephant Walk, housed in a renovated police station." Knowing the back-story of this dish, and the family that created it, brings the recipe to life in a way a traditional description of its flavors and textures never could.

SARA MOULTON

INSPIRING AND EMPOWERING THE HOME COOK.

"When somebody asks me what I do, I say I'm a chef," says Sara Moulton ('74). "But I think I'm probably a better teacher than almost anything else." Millions of television viewers would likely agree. As host of two hit cooking shows, *Cooking Live* and *Sara's Secrets*, Moulton taught legions of viewers how to turn fresh ingredients into satisfying meals.

After graduating from U-M, Moulton headed to the Culinary Institute of America. She worked as a restaurant chef in Boston and New York for seven years and taught as a culinary instructor before joining *Gourmet* magazine's test kitchen in 1984. Three years later, Moulton moved to the magazine's executive dining room, where she presides as executive chef.

Moulton's latest cookbook is *Sara's Secrets for Weeknight Meals* (2005). "This book is completely targeted to getting dinner on the table during the work week, which is sort of my religion right now," she says.

Along with practical recipes that can be thrown together after work, Moulton inspires her readers to re-think the evening meal and to look beyond the same 10 dishes most people prepare over and over again. She devotes entire chapters to pre-



When Joan Nathan came to U-M, she planned to study sociology. She fell in love with cooking, but she still gets to indulge her love of different cultures. Her cookbooks are a lens on history, culture, and immigration.



senting sandwiches, soups, salads, and even breakfast dishes in new ways—often with an ethnic flair—to make them substantial enough for the dinner table. By including recipes for Middle Eastern Meatball Sandwiches with Cucumber Yogurt Sauce, and Asparagus and Goat Cheese Souffléed Omelet, for example, Moulton shows us how to make inventive, healthful meals with a modest investment of time. Better yet, she motivates us to think creatively about meals.

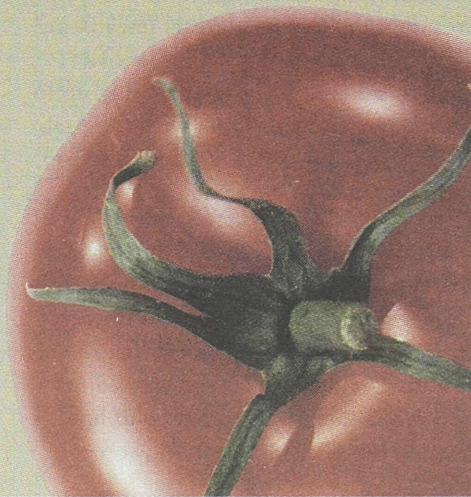
“I’m not encouraging people to open up cans and boxes; I’m encouraging them to re-think dinner,” Moulton says. “I also try to anticipate problems that can arise and provide tips and tricks and strategies that you’ll remember later on.” One such tip: “Take advantage of the pre-rinsed and/or pre-sliced vegetables available in the supermarket’s vegetable section or salad bar.” Doing so ensures that nutritious meals are on the table quickly and the family has time to unwind over a leisurely, relatively stress-free meal.

Sara Moulton can do fancy. After all, she’s the executive chef for *Gourmet* magazine’s executive kitchen. But she’s built her reputation, and her hit TV shows, on her ability to make everyday meals easy, healthy, and interesting.

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The best cookbooks—like these by four alumnae—go beyond recipes. They tell us something new about food, cooking technique, even culture.

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RUTH REICHL CULINARY EVOLUTION.

Few cookbooks trace the evolution of American cooking over time; fewer still bring the recipes up to date so that we actually want to cook them. *The Gourmet Cookbook* (2004) does both.

Ruth Reichl ('68, MA '70) wants to make clear that she did not write *The Gourmet Cookbook*. “I am the editor, which is a very different thing. Our book was an enormous collaboration.”

While at Michigan, Reichl earned her bachelor’s degree in sociology and a master’s in the history of art. She has since become one of the nation’s preeminent food writers, having authored three best-selling memoirs and served as the restaurant critic for the *New York Times* and the *Los Angeles Times*, and, since 1999, as editor-in-chief of *Gourmet* magazine.

In 2001, Reichl and her colleagues, several of whom had been at the magazine for decades, sifted through 60 years’ worth of recipes for the magazine’s anniversary issue. With the issue wrapped, the editors realized they had hundreds more recipes worth sharing. “We had this vast catalogue of recipes and decided it was time to resurrect the really good ones and make them usable today. But every recipe needed to be redone. You couldn’t just print a recipe from the 1940s, 1950s, or even the 1980s for two reasons: first, because the products have changed, and second, because the skill set

At one time the beloved (and often feared) restaurant critic for the *New York Times*, Ruth Reichl is now editor-in-chief of *Gourmet* magazine. As editor of *The Gourmet Cookbook*, she directed the resurrection and overhaul of thousands of recipes from the magazine’s 60 years.

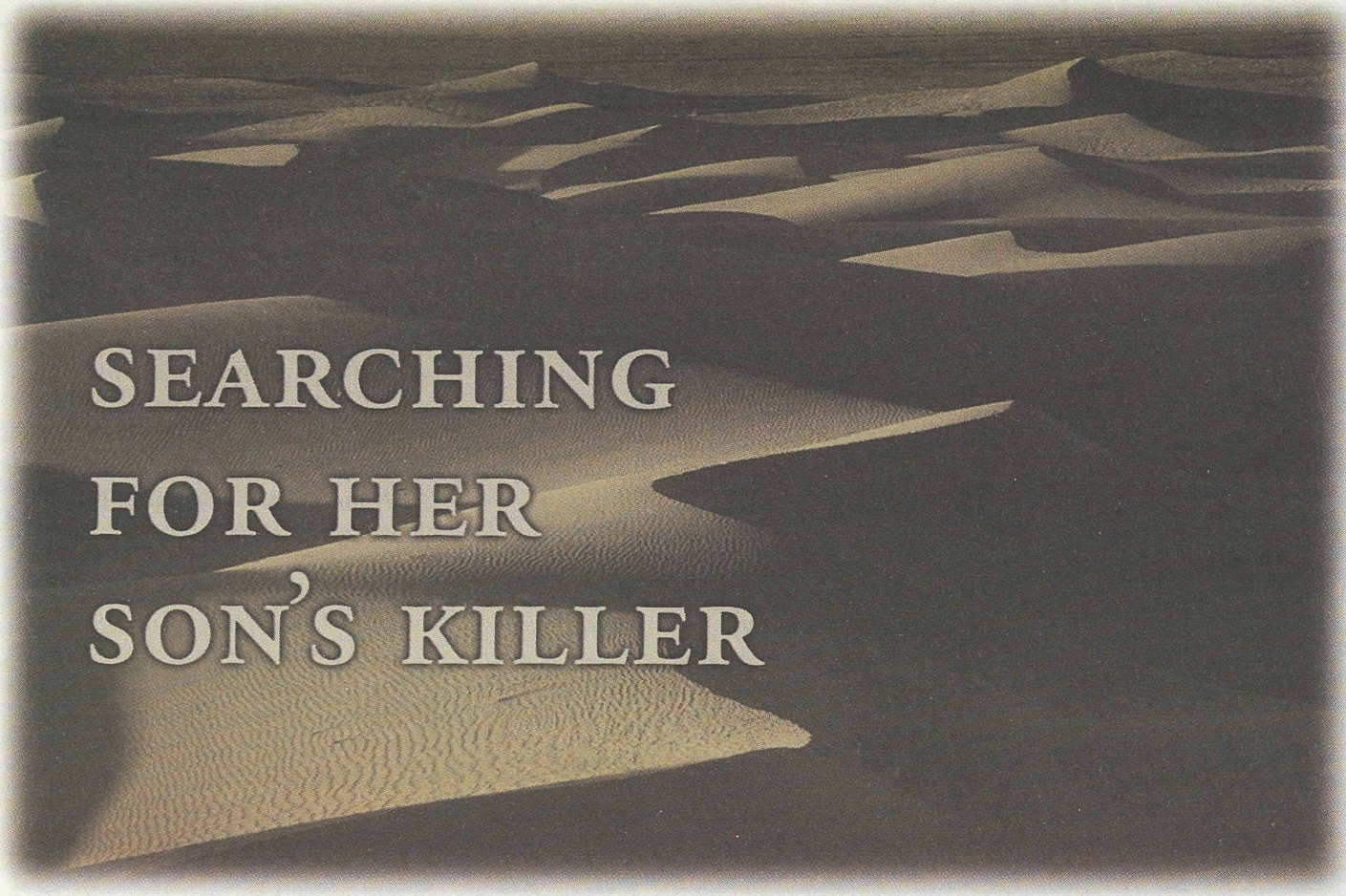
of Americans has changed. For example, in the '40s many people didn’t eat garlic, so the recipes would just say, ‘wave a clove of garlic over the dressing.’ Now everyone eats garlic. You could see the vast changes in America through the prism of the magazine.”

Many cooks wonder why they should shell out \$35 for a book when they can download recipes for free with a click of their mouse. What do cookbooks offer that the Internet does not? Context. *The Gourmet Cookbook*, for instance, is only in part about how to prepare particular dishes. By including recipes from across the globe, calling for ingredients only recently made available, and updating culinary classics, the book also chronicles our culinary evolution in a way that individual recipes cannot. “You get a world with a book, not just recipes,” Reichl says. “When you’re going through a cookbook, you look at this recipe, you look at the one next to it, and maybe you flip around a little bit. It should be a kind of delicious experience.”

“Really good cookbook writers make you want to cook; they make you want to go into the kitchen.” **MT**

Cheryl Sternman Rule is a freelance food writer based in San Jose, California.





SEARCHING FOR HER SON'S KILLER

**MARILYNN ROSENTHAL
LOST HER SON IN THE
WORLD TRADE CENTER.
HER QUEST TO UNDER-
STAND WHAT HAPPENED,
AND WHY, HAS TAKEN
HER FROM MICHIGAN
TO A TERRORIST'S HOME-
TOWN TO A FEDERAL
COURTROOM.**

BY SHERYL JAMES

For Marilyn Rosenthal, it all boiled down to this moment: here she was, 72 years old and halfway across the world, in the United Arab Emirates hometown of her son's murderer. Here she was, smiling at the murderer's aunt and cousin, two women seated across a large tablecloth on a tile floor. The aunt and her daughter had greeted her warmly and had cooked American delicacies in her honor: hamburgers and hot dogs.

It was August, 2005. Four years after Sept. 11. Four years after Rosenthal's daughter Helen had called and told her to get to New York as fast as she could. Four years after that initial flash of anger she had felt at her son Josh for not calling to say he was fine.

But Rosenthal, a professor emerita of sociology at UM-Dearborn, was not in this town, Ras al Khaymah, to talk much about Josh, to the amazement of just about everyone back in Michigan. She was hoping her hostesses would bring

her to the murderer's boyhood home, a few blocks away. It was after leaving this place in 1996 that he had met the terrorists who would convince him to pilot a plane into the World Trade Center's South Tower. Josh was in that tower; when the plane hit, he had just finished a business meeting.

The terrorist's name was Marwan al-Shehhi and by this August day, Rosenthal believed she knew more about him than his relatives did. She had spent years researching al-Shehhi's path to Sept. 11. She had come to believe, in the time leading up to this exchange of small talk with the Arab women, that al-Shehhi, 23, and Josh, 43, likely had died at the same instant.

But years of research, international travel, interviewing, and writing had not been enough for her. The trip to this town, she hoped, would somehow suture the wound. The one person she wanted to meet was al-Shehhi's mother, who had, after all, lost a son on Sept. 11, too.

"I couldn't think what I would say to the mother," Rosenthal recalled in a recent interview at her Ann Arbor home. "I asked different people's advice. I couldn't get my mind past sitting down. I thought, 'Okay, I'll sit down next to her, take her hand, put my arm around her. But then, what am I going to say?' I never had a phrase in my mind.

"After all, it was such a strange and unique set of circumstances."

It certainly was. September 11 sparked many feelings, from grief to fury, but different people have responded to the outrage of the attacks in different ways. Researching what happened that day, and writing a book about what she found, was the way Rosenthal tried to make sense of her son's death. As a mother, she had to understand what happened to her son. As a social scientist, she wanted to find out why. Calling terrorists "savages," a term she heard early on after Sept. 11, did not qualify as understanding for her. "If you call them savages, they're not human," Rosenthal said. "Then all you do is bomb them off the face of the earth. You don't get anywhere" toward understanding their motivations.

Evidence of Rosenthal's researcher-mother character is everywhere in her home, where she has lived since 1984. Bookshelves filled with textbooks, literature, and an Oxford dictionary line one wall. Other walls bear simple, handmade instruments made of branches, animal skins, and wood—mementos of Rosenthal's international travels. A friend made the large, silkscreen wall-hanging bearing strange symbols. "It's an artistic rendition of ancient languages, like Aramaic," Rosenthal explained.



LIN JONES, U-M PHOTO SERVICES

"You go through these feelings. You don't want to believe he died at this point. You hope he is in a hospital and has no identification. And was he even there? I had been in Europe and I spoke to him on the 5th or 6th and he was about to take a trip somewhere. I thought he was away.

"Then the other thought is, 'Oh, he's always late. That plane hit at 9:03 a.m.' And then, it's, 'Why didn't he get out?' And it's, 'He was killed instantly.'

"And that's my guess."

Rosenthal says her book about her research and travels offers a unique perspective: she presents two biographies, one of Josh, one of al-Shehhi. As a

senior vice president at Fiduciary Trust International, Josh embodied capitalism; al-Shehhi embodied radical Islam. She has tried to understand their fateful encounter in the context of the larger struggle between those two world views. She insists on trying to understand al-Shehhi's perspective without dismissing his motives as crazy.

"Americans seem to like psychological explanations. And I just don't buy that. There were psychological explanations. There were [also] social-psychological explanations [and] there were ideological explanations." And at 23, she insists, he was "just a boy."

It might be nice to believe there could be a happy ending to this story. To say the American mother sat with the Arab mother, and that somehow they bridged the divide between them. But back in Ras al Khaymah, Rosenthal quickly learned al-Shehhi's family was in denial. "The

family does not believe that Marwan did this terrible thing," Rosenthal quotes al-Shehhi's cousin in her book. "Either he was brainwashed or he was killed and his passport taken. His brother feels he is still alive, that he is hiding and will come back some day."

That, Rosenthal said, was her only real surprise. For all her research, "it never occurred to me that they didn't believe he did it. Isn't that funny? Of all the things I thought they might say, that was not one of them... They don't want to believe it. But where is he?"

Rosenthal only gently presented evidence of al-Shehhi's complicity in the attacks. She kept pressing to meet his mother. The family claimed she was living in the family home just a few blocks away but was too distraught to talk. But UAE intelligence officials told Rosenthal the woman was from Egypt and had long since returned there.

There was no sort of reconciliation with al-Shehhi's mother. Rosenthal left the country never stepping foot in the home. She came back to a country seriously divided over Sept. 11. The national unity that had followed the attacks has, by most accounts, dissolved. Liberals and conservatives attack each other over strategies for winning the war on terror, and even the families of the Sept. 11 victims have often been in fierce disagreement.

Last spring, for instance, Rosenthal found herself in a Washington, D.C. courtroom. As a Sept. 11 family member, she had been invited to watch the penalty hearings of Zacarias Moussaoui, the al-Qaida conspirator who was captured before the attacks. Many of the Sept. 11 families testified for the prosecution and called for Moussaoui's execution. Many others, including Rosenthal, testified for the defense. "I don't believe in the death penalty," she said.

"We'll be accused of being unpatriotic," added Rosenthal at the time. She was right. Conservative firebrand Ann Coulter (a U-M Law School alumna) ripped "9/11 widows," of whom she said "I've never seen people enjoying their hus-

Many walls bear pictures of her children, Josh and Helen. Josh appears in various frames as a little kid, a middle schooler, a college student. He has a handsome face with an ever-present, easygoing smile. Rosenthal, who is long divorced from Josh's father, described her son as "personable," and "probably a little cocky." He also loved to debate, as does his mother.

One photograph in Rosenthal's house shows an older Josh. His hair bears a tinge of grey; his face is wider, more mature. But his smile is unchanged. "That is the most recent picture," Rosenthal said. "That picture was taken on a sailing trip in August, 2001."

That was scarcely one month before an old family friend called the morning of Sept. 11, as Rosenthal was preparing notes for a class lecture. The friend, who had visited Josh at his World Trade Center office, told her to turn on the television. She said she was rushing over. Rosenthal thought that was odd. She turned on the TV and saw the second plane explode into the South Tower, the one where Josh worked.



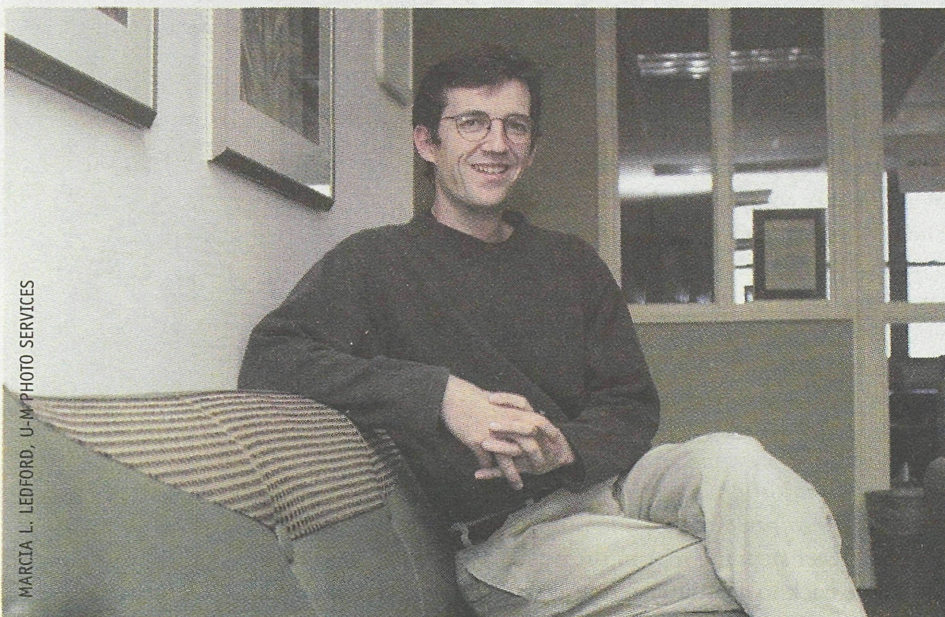
Terrorism expert Jessica Stern gave a lecture titled "Listening to Terrorists" on January 27, 2006 as part of the Josh Rosenthal Education Fund Lecture series.

bands' deaths so much." And while her criticism was the most extreme, it was only one part of the ongoing political firestorm between left and right in this country.

Still, Rosenthal insists that her research, the writing of the book (which has yet to find a publisher), and even the eight-day trip that never led her to al-Shehhi's mother was all worth it. "I forgot everything about the rest of my life. It was just so intense," she says. And she professes sympathy for al-Shehhi's still-denying family. In Josh's memory, she says, "there's a street sign, we've got a memorial lecture, we have the benches in the park. I can at least mourn my son. They can't even do that." **MT**

Sheryl James is editor at the Partnership for Learning in Lansing.

BOUNCING BACK

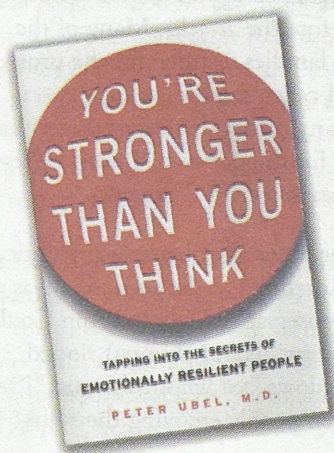


MARCIA L. LEDFORD, U-M PHOTO SERVICES

Peter Ubel, M.D., is a U-M professor of medicine and psychology. Along with a team of scientists, he has spent several years studying the nature of happiness and emotional resilience. This year, he published some of his findings in *You're Stronger Than You Think: Tapping into the Secrets of Emotionally Resilient People*.

Winner of a Presidential Early Career Award for Scientists and Engineers and other prizes, and recognized internationally for

his work, Ubel shows here that even under the most arduous and painful circumstances, it's natural for people not just to survive, but to thrive. And he describes some of the things that can make everyone happier and more resilient.



Greg Hughes woke up and got out of bed, and before he even had a chance to drag a comb across his head, a sharp pain grabbed hold of his right leg. The pain increased, and within an hour Greg was whisked to the local emergency room, where he slipped into a coma. He was flown by air ambulance to U-M Hospital, where the doctors discovered that he had lost blood supply to both legs. They had no choice but to amputate Greg's legs.

Forty-five years old at the time, Greg lived in Dansville, Michigan, where he worked 70 hours a week as an auto mechanic and spent his free time camping and fishing.

What would it be like to wake up one morning and lose your legs, your job, and your favorite hobbies? Many people say they would rather die than live without legs. Most cannot fathom finding happiness again. What about Greg, then? What kind of life could he expect? Would he be able to find happiness?

In the 1970s, a trio of psychologists led by U-M professor Philip Brickman measured the happiness of lottery winners, motor vehicle accident victims who were living with paraplegia, and healthy people. They found surprisingly small differences, leading many psychologists to conclude that people live their lives on a "hedonic treadmill," with happiness determined more by genetics than by circumstances.

But can we believe Brickman's accident victims, or Greg Hughes for that matter, when they tell us they are happy?

* * *

Five years ago, as part of my research into the psychology of resilience, I began conducting studies designed to determine, among other things, whether we could trust patients when they tell us how happy they are. It's not that I thought patients were lying. Instead, I was worried that when researchers asked them questions like, "On a 0-100 scale, how happy are you these days?" their answers would be distorted by subconscious forces.

For example, U-M professor Norbert Schwarz has shown that people report being happier overall on sunny days, or after finding a dime—the sunshine and the dime elevating their moods and, thereby, distorting their answers.

When researchers ask people how happy they are, people reflect on whatever comes to mind. And when they feel happy, they remember more of the good stuff going on in their lives, and therefore report an exaggeratedly high level of well-being. The implications of this phenomenon are staggering for medical researchers like me. By paying patients to answer our surveys, by training our research assistants to establish rapport with potential participants, we might be causing patients to unconsciously exaggerate how happy they are!

Concerned about the possibility, my colleagues and I tried to uncover any factors that could be causing people to subconsciously exaggerate their well-being. Sometimes we identified ourselves as health researchers and other times we did not, in order to see whether mentioning patients' illnesses caused them to exaggerate their well-being: "Given my Parkinson's disease, I am doing quite well, actually." In another study, we sent patients home with Palm Pilots programmed to beep every 90 minutes throughout the week to assess their mood, thereby avoiding the short-term, sunny day/find-a-dime bias that distorts people's reports of overall happiness. In yet another study we developed a new way

to test whether people's happiness reports were merely a result of redefining the numbers on the 0-100 happiness scale.

Across our studies, we discovered many subtle distortions in people's self-reports. Nevertheless, our main finding was not subtle at all. Patients with a wide range of chronic illnesses and disabilities turned out, basically, to be just about as happy as they had been telling us they were. In fact, many of them—despite experiencing kidney failure or colostomies or, like Greg Hughes, leg amputations—were almost as happy as perfectly healthy people.

* * *

I'm convinced that it is possible, and even normal, to thrive in the face of adversity. In my own research and that of others, several factors that affect happiness and emotional resilience become apparent. For instance:

- *Social support* is helpful, but not as important as you might think. In fact, a study by my colleague Stephanie Brown indicates that people are actually happier when they *give* support and help to others than when they *receive* it!
- *Uncertainty* is harder to live with than even the worst bad news. In the 1980s, for instance, when HIV infection was a death sentence, a survey showed that men were happier after receiving HIV test results—even if their tests were positive.
- *Religion* is an important aid. Helped by the social aspects of a religious community, by the practice of prayer, and by the confidence that life is meaningful and ultimately just, people who are religious tend to be more resilient.

■ ■ ■
 "I'm convinced that it is possible, even normal, to thrive in the face of adversity."
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Other factors are also important—from the personality you inherit to your ability to recall positive experiences.

Even so, it can be hard to believe anyone could really be so resilient. I visited Greg Hughes after he had read several chapters of my book, *You're Stronger than You Think*, in which I tell his story. He had circulated the chapters among his family members, and most of his relatives concluded, despite my clear explanations of emotional resilience, that they would rather be dead than be in Greg's situation.

Greg's wife, Ruth, teared up a bit as she told me her family's views, admitting that even she had reached the same conclusion. Greg sat on the other side of the room petting a cat and looking unperturbed.

"It's not as bad as all that," he said.

"But honey," she replied, "you've had so much taken away."

"But you get it back," Greg answered. "You find other things." **MT**

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**PROFESSOR AND JAZZ
MUSICIAN KYRA GAUNT
HEARS THE ORIGINS
OF CONTEMPORARY
MUSIC IN THE RHYTHMS
OF AFRICAN AMERICAN
GIRLS' GAMES.**

Ma-ry Mack (clap)
Dressed in black (clap)
Diam'nds all down her back (clap)

Kyra D. Gaunt (Ph.D. '97) was at a Midwest ethnomusicology meeting at U-M in 1994 when, down the hall of the Rackham Building, she heard the voices of two Black girls clapping out a complex syncopated beat to a game-song.

Shimmy shimmy ko-ko pop
Shimmy shimmy pow!

The girls, nine-year-old twins, were keeping themselves entertained while their mother worked at the event. Gaunt is a musician herself, and her well-trained ear heard a link between the girls' game-songs and popular African American music such as hip-hop. But, as an academic, she could

do more than notice the similarities. That small moment inspired Gaunt to research girls' hand-clapping games and other game-songs such as double-dutch jump-rope chants, and their link with popular music.

Those two girls "gave me the first set of games I started to study. Then I interviewed African American women about their musical life. I had eight or nine games on a bad cassette recording, and I'd play it for the women. They heard the games, and they came out with a flood of memories about the games they played when they were little girls," says Gaunt. The research culminated in a new book, *The Games Black Girls Play: Learning the Ropes from Double-Dutch to Hip-Hop*.

* * *

"Sampling and mixing beats are an important part of hip-hop," Gaunt says. "But think about it—the idea of sampling was already prevalent in girls' games. Mixing beats? Girls were doing that years ago" in their game-songs.



Hip-hop is a genre most often associated with male performers. "Sampling and mixing beats are an important part of hip-hop," she says. "But think about it—the idea of sampling was already prevalent in girls' games. Mixing beats? Girls were doing that years ago."

The book explores more than just the back-and-forth influence of girls' games and hip-hop. The role of gender in the African American music scene is a recurring theme. She condemns the misogyny of some hip-hop lyrics and the dominance of male artists, yet she is more interested in highlighting the influence Black girls have had on the music. And she urges female rappers and hip-hop artists to pick up where they left off as girls, by incorporating the sounds of the playground into their music.

She cites several examples of the influence of girls' music on the music scene. The male rapper Nelly's song "Country Grammar" includes a hook from a girls' game-song: "Down down baby, down down the roller coaster/Sweet sweet baby, I'll never let you go"—though Nelly's modifications shift the text from feminine to masculine.

Alongside her academic career, Gaunt—whose Ph.D. is in ethnomusicology—continues to perform as an R&B/jazz vocalist, with a new CD this fall. Until recently an associate professor of ethnomusicology at New York University, "Professor G" is joining the faculty at Baruch College in New York. Like her book, her classes are fast-paced, vibrant affairs. In her hip-hop courses, for instance, she gets classes of 60 to 90 students clapping, beat-making, and rapping.

None of this would have happened, she says, had she not attended U-M during the era of the Michigan Mandate, an initiative that called for a more diverse campus, with the goal of students of color comprising one-third of the population by the end of the 1990s; and Diversity Days, a series of events that brought together students of various cultures and backgrounds. Those experiences opened her to thinking more broadly about race, gender, and ethnicity. U-M's public discussions of such topics helped shape Gaunt's path as a scholar-performer, she says.

"Michigan gave me the context for my feminist hip-hop pedagogy," Gaunt says. "This book would not have been possible had it not been for my experiences at Michigan." **MT**