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LSA

COLLEGE OF LITERATURE, SCIENCE, AND THE ARTS

Fall 2010



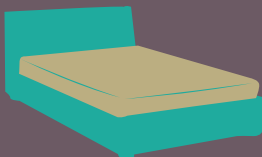
happiness

Red rover, send Fido right over! Canines are good for your health and can help decrease anxiety, heart rate, blood pressure, and cholesterol levels.



Social Interaction and Blood Pressure: influence of animal companions. *Journal of Nervous and Mental Disease*, 171:461-65.

Better Z's equal better days. According to one study, quality of sleep had more to do with how people felt in a given day than any other factor.



Kahneman, Daniel et al. (2004). Experience: The Day Reconstruction Method, a Survey Method for Characterizing Daily Life. *Science*, 306:1776.

Less is more. Sixty percent of Americans who say they have enough money for their needs rate their lives as thriving.



Gallup-Healthways Well-Being Index, 2010.

Small talk is small potatoes. People who have substantive conversations are more likely to rate themselves as happy.



Mehl, M.R. et al. (2010). Eavesdropping on Happiness: well-being is related to having less small talk and more substantive conversations. *Psychological Science*, 21(4):539-541.

Straight up: Sixty-seven percent of Americans are hitting the bottle, the most since 1985.



Gallup Poll, July 2010.

Sweat more, yell less. Studies suggest that even a small amount of exercise can combat the buildup of anger.



Kanning M., Schlitt W. (2010). Be Active and Become Happy: an ecological momentary assessment of physical activity and mood. *Journal of Sports and Exercise Psychology*, 32(2):253-61.

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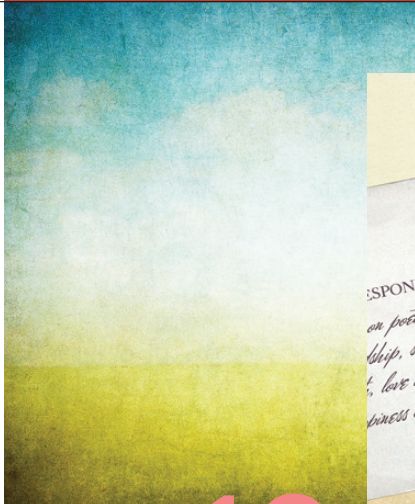
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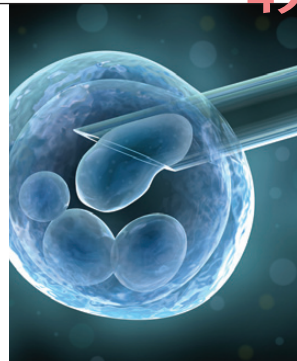
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dean's notes



Arthur F. Thurnau
Professor,
and Dean
Terrence J. McDonald

The Best Four Years

THE NEW FIRST-YEAR STUDENTS are here and the campus is humming with a higher energy level these days. About 32,000 students applied for the 6,000 seats in the first-year class University-wide. Four thousand of those seats are in the College of LSA alone. This is the third year in a row that the number of applicants has increased and that the academic credentials of those admitted have also improved.

What will these wonderful new students find here? As I've already told the newly arrived LSA students at our welcome event in September: The best four years of their lives.

But you needn't take my word for it. When this year's *U.S. News & World Report* rankings of colleges and universities were released in August, my September speech to the first-year students all but wrote itself. We received widespread recognition for our hard work on our undergraduate programs.

For example, we were ranked among the very best of the national universities (more than 200 of them) for the first-year student experience, undergraduate learning communities, service learning, study abroad, and our opportunities for undergraduate research and creative projects. We were also pleased that guidance counselors from *U.S. News & World Report's* best high schools ranked us 22nd among national universities for the best undergraduate education.

But perhaps the best news was in a new category this year: On a list of 86 national universities cited most often by college presidents, provosts, and admissions officers as schools where the faculty has "an unusual commitment to undergraduate teaching," our ranking was eight. That puts us above both Yale and Stanford; Harvard was not in the top ten.

In the overall rankings by *U.S. News*, we are 29th among national universities this year—not an altogether surprising number, since they are hard on schools that operate at scale. We are never going to be ranked as highly as richer, smaller schools on measures such as expenditure per student, for example.

What is important about these undergraduate rankings, taken together, is the national recognition of what we are doing with the resources we have, namely steadily improving the undergraduate experience. We aspire to be both one of the greatest research universities in the world (*U.S. News & World Report* ranked us 19th of the 400 greatest universities in the world) and one of the greatest places for undergraduates in the world.

It is, of course, our scale—the amazing breadth, depth, and distinction of our faculty—that is the cornerstone of our greatness. And our mission today, as always, is to connect our outstanding students with these outstanding faculty.

When we say "Go Blue" in LSA, we mean: Go Philosophy, Go Psychology, Go Chemistry, Go Faculty to the frontiers of your field, and Go Students beyond the limits of your intellectual imagination.

We will go to these places together. And that is why our students will have the best four years of their lives here.

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Hans Anderson

Makes Life Worth Living

MLSA FALL 2010 THEME SEMESTER

What Makes Life Worth Living

The Beatles (and before that, the National Rifle Association) said that happiness is a warm gun. I might say it's a sticky bun—fresh from the oven served with a cup of steaming coffee. Captain Von Trapp might say it's a singing nun, and *Project Runway* contestants might say happiness is Tim Gunn.

Whether you rhyme it or not, what creates happiness is often different from person to person. And yet, according to much of the research on the subject—and many of the stories in this issue of *LSAmagazine*—there are commonalities among truly happy people.

Professor Chris Peterson has spent much of his academic career researching happiness. In our article “The Science of Meaning” (p. 10), he breaks it down into three words: other people matter. Don't worry, that's not a spoiler. Peterson and his colleague, Nansook Park, share a wealth of information and data that explains why happy people are healthier, optimists live longer, and zestful people enjoy their work more.

And while this issue is chock full of data, it doesn't leave out elements of happiness that are harder to quantify—the deeper, richer moments that you get from experience, from the school of hard knocks, from coming out on the other side of a journey bruised but inexplicably better. Check out our alumni who offer up “Lessons Learned” (p. 22), our visiting faculty member who is working to better his homeland of Liberia (p. 39), U-M's adventurous seventh president, Alexander Grant Ruthven (p. 26), and our student who uses her equine expertise to help kids with disabilities (p. 43).

Happiness also comes into sharp focus during the “What Makes Life Worth Living” theme semester this fall in the College of LSA—an opportunity for faculty, students, and alumni to explore this topic in depth through special courses, guest speakers, performances, and more. There are too many great activities to list here, but you can go to www.wmlwl.com to learn more about the theme semester events. And if you decide to return to campus for any of the “What Makes Life Worth Living” goings-on, I hope you'll search out an old professor who made a difference in your academic career. I hope you'll shake their hand and tell them their work was not in vain. Or, if you can't make it back to Ann Arbor, write said professor a letter. Or send them an email. With any luck, it won't just make them feel good—you'll feel the corners of your mouth turning up too.

LARA ZIELIN, EDITOR

(letters)



LSAmagazine. The design is always fresh and I love the busyness—it makes me want to crawl inside and wrap myself up in the cheery colors while I snack on all the clever little details. The stories are well written, lively, and interesting.

NOREEN BYRANT ('84)

Neil Greenberg ("A Simple Plan") had the complete Oakland-Wayne County bus system memorized by route and bus number when he was my eighth-grade math student. He could discuss it in detail with as much confidence and ease as I had when explaining a quadratic equation. Glad to see that his missed homework assignments weren't for naught!

CONSTANCE KELLY ('65, M.A. '66)

Congratulations on the super "Super" issue. Reading it, I thought how nifty it would have been if John Updike had

a connection to the University. The main value, of course, would have been that connection itself, and the wisdom and insights he could have offered the University community. A secondary benefit would have been the opportunity to use his poem, "Superman," in this Issue.

Originally published in *The New Yorker* in 1955, "Superman" is 16 lines of superior work:

*I drive my car to supermarket,
The way I take is superhigh,
A superlot is where I park it,
And Super Suds are what I buy.*

*Supersalesmen sell me tonic—
Super-Tone-O, for Relief;
The planes I ride are supersonic,
In trains, I like the Super Chief.*

*Supercilious men and women
Call me superficial—me,
Who so superbly learned to swim in
Supercolossality.*

*Superphosphate-fed foods feed me;
Superservice keeps me new.*

*Who would dare to supersede me,
Super-super-superwho?*

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DAVID CARLYON ('71)

Most popular letter-generating article:
The letters about our "Super" issue, writ large, far outweighed letters regarding any single article.

Your "Super" issue of LSAmagazine

was truly that. After reading it, I had to tear it apart to share portions with students and colleagues. The article on teaching mathematics and science ("The Big Idea behind IDEA") went to one of our top seniors who will be pursuing a master's in math education; the article on the Large Hadron Collider ("The Biggest Hammer Humankind Can Muster") went to a senior who is going into physics rather than mathematics; vampires ("Monster Mash") and the article on emergence ("Emergence") went to a colleague in physics who teaches a course on horror in film and literature, and who is developing an honors mini seminar on Dracula and his kin. Finally, I let my wife have the article on improving students' online research skills ("Fact Finding Beyond Google"). I'm keeping Zog's Dogs ("King of the Dogs") to remind me to go there the next time I'm in San Francisco. To sum it up in a single word (which I didn't see anywhere in the issue), it was supercalifragilisticexpialidocious.

GARY STEVENS (PH.D. '74)

Editor's note: Actually, the word mentioned did indeed make a brief appearance in the issue. Please take a closer look at p. 11.

I'm a graphic designer and writer. I was rigorously trained in my craft by many fine professors at U-M. Which, of course, means that I'm super critical, nit-picky, snarky, and definitely snobbish about magazines—both their design and content. So I gotta tell ya, I love getting

Let us know what you think!

We welcome your thoughts, opinions, and ideas regarding LSAmagazine. Letters may be published in the magazine and/or on our website, but we cannot print or personally respond to all letters received.

Letters may be edited for length or clarity. Opinions expressed in "LSA Letters" do not necessarily reflect those of LSAmagazine, the College, or the University of Michigan. All correspondence should be sent to: Editor, LSAmagazine, Suite 5000, 500 South State Street, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-1382. You can also email us at lsamagazine@umich.edu. Please include your name, address, and graduation year.

COLLEGE



When Doors Were Chained on State Street

THE ORIGINS OF LSA'S
CENTER FOR AFROAMERICAN AND AFRICAN STUDIES LIE IN A MIXTURE OF URGENT DEMANDS AND CAUTIOUS COMPROMISES

by James Tobin

Members of the Black Student Union commandeered the LSA Building in April 1968 to push for equitable admissions, academic programming, and hiring processes on behalf of minority groups. Most of the 100 or so students carried typewriters and textbooks to ready for finals while their designated representatives met with University leaders.

AT 7:15 A.M. ON APRIL 9, 1968—the day that Martin Luther King Jr. was to be buried in Atlanta—some 100 members of U-M's Black Student Union (BSU) entered the University's old Administration Building (now the LSA Building) and chained the doors. If their demands for an endowed faculty chair and a scholarship fund, both in King's name, were not met, the students said, then "we will continue to live in a basically racist university."

Their act of dissent set in motion a process of soul-searching and debate that would culminate two years later in the founding of the Center for

Afroamerican and African Studies (CAAS). A look back at that time reveals the University in the throes of culture shock—a traditionally white and often complacent institution painfully adjusting to a minority's urgent demands for inclusion.

THE PROTEST'S ROOTS

The Administration Building protesters were part of the new wave of black college students recruited in the wake of the civil rights movement, who saw too clearly the predominance of Western European cultures in the classroom. Many of them resented the assumption among white faculty and students that they had come to college to be “whitewashed” for success in a white-dominated society.

Amid these concerns—and amid the larger trend of black and ethnic studies protests at universities across the country—black studies had become the rallying point. It was a symbol of something that might be “ours” not “theirs”; a tool for opening the curriculum to non-Western experience; and a chance for direct aid to inner cities in crisis.

That morning in April, protesters opened the doors to admit U-M President Robben W. Fleming. After a long talk, Fleming emerged and the lockout ended.

“We’re not really at odds,” Fleming told reporters. The University wanted what the students wanted, he said—more African American students, faculty and staff; more teaching and scholarship to ameliorate the crisis of black America. But precisely how

these goals were to be accomplished was to be a matter of intense and often agonizing debate.

DISCUSSION, COMPROMISE, EXPANSION

All the following year, as a fledgling program for Michigan undergraduates took its first steps, the nationwide demand for black studies intensified. In the spring of 1969, the BSU (in a plan authored by J. Frank Yates, later director of CAAS and professor of psychology and business administration) proposed that Michigan establish a full-fledged center for black studies.

Fleming and other U-M leaders were open to the idea but wary, too. Would they be caving to political pressure? Who would control the curriculum? Would standards be rigorous? And what would be the mission? To educate in the traditional sense? Or in the parlance of the New Left, to “raise consciousness?”

The debate was aired in a two-day conference at Inglis House—the University-owned retreat overlooking Nichols Arboretum—in May 1969. The 26 participants included administrators and faculty; outside advocates of black studies; and students.

A record of the proceedings is preserved at U-M’s Bentley Historical Library. Even a sample of the comments shows the crosscurrents that shaped not only the U-M entity that would become CAAS, but the entire black studies movement.

On the first day, urgent advocates of change seized the initiative:

In March 1970, frustrated with U-M’s slow response to integration demands, more than 200 picketers marched outside Hill Auditorium. BAM’s largely nonviolent efforts to end discrimination on campus helped stay a call to the National Guard by U-M President Robben Fleming.



Ivanhoe Donaldson, a leader of the radical Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC): *"The Afro-American program must be community-oriented. Otherwise, it will only be an exercise in an ivory tower.... It is vitally important that black people be taught how to gain and maintain control of the black community."*

An unidentified student: *"Perhaps the University should not control a black studies program in terms of hiring, firing, or administration."*

Lonnie Peek, a graduate student at Wayne State: *Universities have locked arms with political and religious institutions to maintain the status quo of white domination. To break that status quo, "we must destroy the present system and implement new ideas...."*

Others envisioned a black studies program consistent with the mission of a public university:

William L. Hays, dean of LSA: *Is U-M really equipped to take action in the inner city? Is there not "a graduate and research function at this University which could make some contribution to the understanding of and action in the black community and its problems?"*

Allan Smith, former dean of the Law School and Fleming's top aide as vice president for academic affairs: *Even a semi-independent unit such as U-M's Institute for Social Research must reside "within the University framework." It was "almost inconceivable that the University could take tax dollars or student fee dollars and transfer them to a truly independent unit."*

Regent Otis M. Smith—first black member of the Michigan Supreme Court and the General Counsel of General Motors, and one of the tiny minority of blacks educated at major colleges before the 1960s: *"This is a public university and does not operate without some basic conformity to what the regents and administration think the Michigan public will accept.... Do you want a black psychological crutch? Or do you want to probe into the historical and cultural situation dispassionately to see what really happened and why? Research and advanced training could result in all kinds of productive advances."*

Even after 1970, when student members of the Black Action Movement staged a campus strike to demand a full black studies center and other concessions, the entity that emerged represented a compromise between

the two camps at that two-day retreat. It would foster research and teaching, but it would also include a community-outreach arm.

One other major element was added, thanks largely to a proposal by Niara Sudarkasa, the U-M anthropologist who would become associate vice president for academic affairs, director of CAAS, and president of the historically black Lincoln University. Sudarkasa ensured the new center would deal not only with the African American experience, but also with sub-Saharan Africa itself.

Sudarkasa's proposal foretold the field's future. By 1980, black studies had been reconceptualized as the study of black Africa and its entire diaspora. As the former U-M Africanist Godfrey Uzoigwe wrote, "CAAS is one of the few black studies programs in which the comparative emphasis was built into its structure from the beginning." ■

Sources for this article include the records of the College of Literature, Science, and the Arts and of the vice president for academic affairs at the Bentley Historical Library; Nathan Huggins, "Afro-American Studies: A Report to the Ford Foundation" (1985); "Black Studies Programs and Civil Rights" (Special Report, American Council on Education, 1969); and Godfrey Uzoigwe and Niara Sudarkasa, "Center for Afro-American and African Studies, 1970–75" in *The University of Michigan: An Encyclopedic Survey* (supplement).



A Look at CAAS Today

This year, LSA's Center for Afroamerican and African Studies (CAAS) will celebrate its 40-year anniversary. Since its inception, the center has grown from 13 faculty under the early leadership of directors such as J. Frank Yates and Harold Cruise, to 39 appointed faculty and 14 faculty associates in 17 academic disciplines.

CAAS's growth represents success in more than just numbers. CAAS Director Angela Dillard says the center's expansion has helped "transform the University culture" by folding concerns of race, ethnicity, gender, and religion into multiple disciplines simultaneously. For example, Dillard says the center has forged strong links with LSA's Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies and also the new African Studies Center, "to contextualize the experiences of black peoples in Africa, in the Caribbean, in the United States, and increasingly in Europe."

By broadening the scope of black studies, CAAS has "helped to transform the study of not only black peoples but *all* peoples," Dillard says. "This kind of approach means we have to view the world differently."



Stephanie Powell ('99)

Author, poet, and second-grade teacher at Key Elementary in Oak Park, Michigan

DEGREES: History and English

LSA EXPERIENCES: Volunteered with groups such as Project Outreach, Project Serve, and Alternative Weekends; conducted research with LSA's Undergraduate Research Opportunity Program

LIFE EXPERIENCES: Powell worked as an attorney for the Legal Aid and Defender organization in Detroit before switching careers and becoming a teacher. "I realized my dedication to helping people wasn't limited to the legal field," she says. "Now, my worst day at school is ten times better than my best day as a lawyer."

WE ARE LISTENING.

LSA's College Connection Coordinator Jenny Howard just heard from alumna **Stephanie Powell**.

TO REACH YOU WE HAVE: consumed 770 cups of coffee and tea; driven 14,300 miles on Michigan freeways; traveled on the D.C. Metro, the New York Subway, the Chicago El, the London Underground, Maryland's MARC line, and San Francisco's BART trains; visited the CNN Tower, the Detroit Renaissance Center, the New York Times Building, the John Hancock Tower, Rockefeller Center, the U.S. Capitol Building, San Francisco Ferry Building, and Facebook headquarters; visited with 1,100 alumni in a wide range of professions, including: art, computer science, consulting, curatorial work, education, finance, governmental affairs and public service, journalism and media affairs, law, marketing and advertising, massage therapy, medicine, motherhood, nonprofit management, physical therapy, politics, publishing, real estate, and sales.



SPEAK UP!

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COLLEGE CONNECTIONS

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LEARN MORE AT WWW.LSA.UMICH.EDU/ALUMNI/CONNECT

Super Stars Have Humble Beginnings



The first close-up picture of a nascent supermassive star and its surroundings has shown that the highest-mass stars in the universe form just like their smaller counterparts. They are born from swirling disks of gas and dust, rather than from violent stellar collisions.

“How these high-mass stars form has been a debate for 20 years,” said Stefan Kraus, a research fellow in LSA’s Department of Astronomy. “We’ve provided the first clear observational evidence of a compact, solar system-sized, dusty disk around a massive young star.”



IS THE ORGANIC LABEL TRICKING DIETERS?

LSA psychology researchers say that there’s a strong tendency for Americans to associate the concept of “organic” with healthiness. Organic foods are not necessarily lower calorie foods, says psychology graduate student Jonathon P. Schuldt. He explains that if Americans perceive organic foods to have fewer calories, they may eat more than they otherwise would.



Fulbright Grants Assist More U-M Students Than Ever

The U.S. Department of State Fulbright Program awarded grant offers to 43 U-M students, 38 of which are LSA students. The grant allows students to participate in research, study, or an English teaching assistantship abroad. Operating in 155 countries, the Fulbright Program was designed to increase mutual understanding between countries. This year’s number of grant offers is the highest in U-M’s history.


The Monkey-Ape Lineage Split

Scientists agree that Old World monkeys and apes share a common ancestry, but at some point two lineages diverged. A primate skull unearthed outside of Mecca in Saudi Arabia is the closest common ancestor to apes and Old World monkeys, LSA paleontology researchers say, and helps date the split. Sediment records indicate that the fossil is 25 to 29 million years old, making 24 to 29 million years ago the window in which the monkey-ape split may have occurred. The ape and human lineages split later. The research appears in the journal *Nature*.



SMART WOMEN DON'T NEED SUGAR DADDIES

A new study suggests that intelligent women are less impressed by rich men. LSA psychology researcher Christine Stanik (M.S. '07, Ph.D. '09) found that the higher a woman’s verbal IQ, the less likely she is to seek out a male breadwinner. Instead, smarter women with careers look for men who don’t mind changing diapers and washing dishes.



Long the subject
of **self-help gurus,**
religious leaders, and
talk show hosts, psycholo-
gists are now tackling the topics of
HAPPINESS and **FULFILLMENT**
for a scientific look at what
gets us out of bed in the
morning and fills our
days with purpose.



THE
SCIENCE

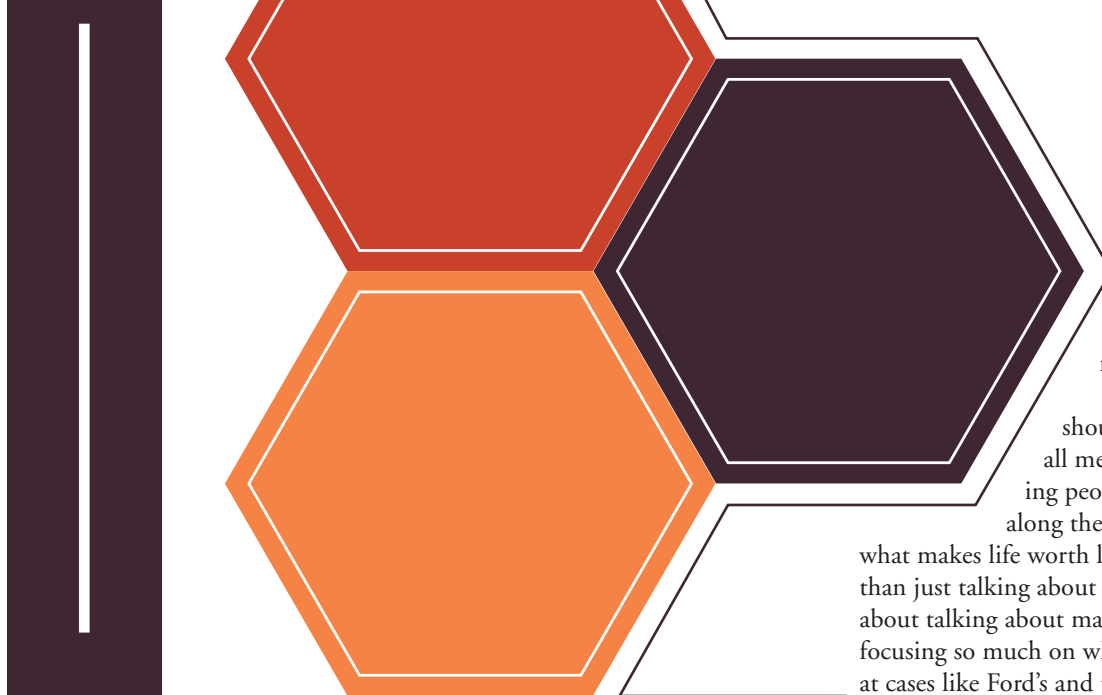
OF
MEANING

A
CLOSER
LOOK

AT
WHAT
MAKES

LIFE
WORTH
LIVING

by Lara Zielin



IN 1998, ON THE WARM, SPRING MORNING OF MAY 16, Wendy Chapin Ford ('77) began to feel ill. A week later, she was comatose. Doctors ran test after test trying to figure out what was occurring but they had no diagnosis—and no treatment.

Finally, after reading clues in an MRI, doctors determined Ford had acute disseminated encephalomyelitis (ADEM), a rare neurological disorder characterized by inflammation of the brain and spinal cord.

Treatment began immediately and Ford improved, but a full recovery was dubious. “She will probably remain quadriplegic indefinitely,” said one doctor at her Boston rehabilitation hospital.

But that didn’t stop Ford. “The doctors never came out and told me I’d never walk again,” she says, “which was a good thing. I never knew how impaired I was. If I had known, it might have discouraged me.”

Six weeks later, Ford walked out of the hospital without so much as a cane.

Doctors call her recovery a miracle, but the explanation for her transformative recuperation might be slightly more tangible.

Ford credits her “exquisite medical care,” her children who were “an inspiration,” her husband who was her “shooting star,” and a support system of friends, family, and caregivers who followed her progress and cheered her on.

In sum, Ford’s life mattered, and many people had a stake in how she came out of this. “I had to get back to my family, and I had to work as hard as possible for my medical team who were trying so valiantly to help me,” Ford says.

In the College of LSA, faculty are studying this idea of “mattering” and how it may influence a person’s ability to not just live life, but thrive in it.

Long the topic of talk show hosts and self-help books, LSA faculty are using tried and true research methodologies to take a close look at the good things in life, studying and measuring them in the same way psychologists have investigated other behaviors and attitudes in the past.

FOCUSING ON WHAT’S RIGHT

This academic perspective is called positive psychology, and it can be applied to any of the traditional psychological fields, including social psychology, child psychology, cognitive psychology, and more. One of positive psychology’s champions is LSA Psychology Professor Chris Peterson, who says that for too long, psychologists have

measured and focused on what’s wrong with people, not what’s right.

“Positive psychology shouldn’t replace anything—by all means, we should keep helping people with problems—but along the way, we should also study

what makes life worth living. For example, rather than just talking about broken marriages, what about talking about marriages that work? Instead of focusing so much on why people are sick, let’s look at cases like Ford’s and talk about what motivates people to help themselves heal.”

Peterson began his work in positive psychology in 2000 by developing a robust definition of universally celebrated values and character traits. He studied a plethora of philosophical and religious texts, and conducted interviews with people around the globe.

“When we first started getting involved in this,” he explains, “a well-intentioned colleague said, ‘Oh, come on. This is all culturally defined and value laden.’” In other words, someone in Vietnam would have a much different idea of meaning and happiness than someone in Iowa. “But,” Peterson continues, “we quickly discovered much of this is universal. There is no culture that we could find that celebrates mean-spiritedness.”

After three years, Peterson had a list of six virtues and 24 character strengths “that enable human thriving.”¹ (See Figure 1.) And every single one of them is quantifiable.

Peterson and his colleague, Nansook Park, an associate professor in the Department of Psychology, devised a series of surveys to thoroughly measure these strengths of character to “look at the good of a person,” Peterson says. He and Park put the survey online and thought they’d be lucky if “a few hundred folks” filled it out.

Today, it’s something of a phenomenon. “More than a million and a half people have filled out our surveys,” says Peterson. “There are more than 200 countries represented. We’ve had people who’ve filled it out from Vatican City, Zimbabwe, and Iceland.”

The results influence everything from job success to health to military service. According to a paper Park and Peterson published in the *Journal of Social and Clinical*

¹ Seligman, M. E. P., Steen, T. A., Park, N., & Peterson, C. (2005). Positive Psychology Progress: empirical validation of interventions. *American Psychologist*, 60:410-421.

Psychology, these values “contribute to fulfillment...[and are] robustly associated with life satisfaction.”²

And at the heart of it all is what helped Ford walk out of the hospital on her own two feet. “A lot of our research comes back to the idea that other people matter,” says Peterson, “and we are all other people.” Put another way: Will people miss me when I’m gone?

When the answer is yes, life satisfaction is much greater. “When you have tough times, if you have good relationships, that will buffer you against them,” explains Park. “We’re not saying that it will bring you a job or cure your cancer. But it can give you motivation to do things that pay off.” In Ford’s case, that meant,

among other things, enduring arduous and often painful physical therapy day after day.

“I knew I had work to do, and I had to keep at it,” Ford says. Her single-minded focus was to return to her husband and young children, which later inspired the title of her memoir, *To Get Back Home: A Mysterious Disease, A Fight for Life* (iUniverse, 2010).

But you don’t have to have a disease like ADEM to put these principals to work. When people begin to understand and maximize their character strengths, they’re automatically further along the road of happiness and “mattering.”

For example, in a 2008 paper published in the *Professional School Counseling Journal* by the American School Counselor Association, Park and Peterson presented findings showing that character strengths can influence academic achievement. “After controlling for student IQ scores, we found that the character strengths of perseverance, fairness, gratitude, honesty, hope, and perspective predicted end-of-year grade-point averages.”³ Building and enhancing not just intellectual strengths but character strengths in schools could, they argued, promote not only higher academic achievement but could lead to happier, more fulfilled and productive students overall.

Among adults, Peterson says, they also found a “whopping correlation” between job satisfaction, zest, and enthusiasm.

“If you are an enthusiastic worker, you’re going to like what you do, whether you are a ditch digger or a CEO,” Peterson says. He points out that these findings are often at odds with popular self-help books about “discovering your strengths” or “crafting your own job.” But Peterson says it’s simpler than that. “Just get excited about life. Then you don’t have to craft a new job because your current job will become a source of satisfaction.”

Park relays a story about a female bathroom attendant working the late shift at an airport who, when asked if she liked her job, smiled and said absolutely. “She told me she loved meeting people, and I stood back and watched her,” says Park. “She greeted every person who came in the door and asked them where they were going. She individualized it, and even remembered some people who were returning to the airport.

“That is one of the most dirty, boring, and low-paying jobs, but she found a way to love it. She said, ‘It’s a blessing to me, and I’m grateful for the opportunity to work.’ If she’d only thought of her job as cleaning up someone else’s garbage, she couldn’t have been happy. But instead, she thought of her job as a calling, that she was helping people travel.”

NO POLLYANNAS, PLEASE

Still, Peterson notes that there are situations where unbridled optimism and happiness can be a hindrance. “There is such a thing as stupid happiness,” Peterson says, citing a lesson by the Dalai Lama about a man who encountered a bear in the woods and remained happy instead of running for his life. “When things are life-threatening, that’s when you can be too happy or too optimistic.”

There’s also a point at which happiness tapers off in some respects. “Happy students get better grades than

Figure 1

WHO ARE YOU?

Each of the six virtues listed below in red are defined by the character strengths beneath. According to LSA Psychologist Chris Peterson, these traits are universal and “enable human thriving.” If you’re curious to see how many of these virtues and character strengths apply to you, please visit www.authentichappiness.org.

WISDOM

- Creativity
- Curiosity
- Open-mindedness
- Love of learning
- Perspective

COURAGE

- Authenticity
- Bravery
- Persistence
- Zest

HUMANITY

- Kindness
- Love
- Social intelligence

JUSTICE

- Fairness
- Leadership
- Teamwork

TEMPERANCE

- Forgiveness
- Modesty
- Prudence
- Self-regulation

TRANSCENDENCE

- Appreciation of beauty and excellence
- Gratitude
- Hope
- Humor
- Religiousness

² Park, N., Peterson, C., and Seligman, M.E.P. (2004). Strengths of Character and Well-being. *Journal of Social and Clinical Psychology*, 23:603-619.

³ Park, N., Peterson, C. (2008). Positive Psychology and Character Strengths: Application to Strengths-Based School Counseling. *Professional School Counseling Journal*, 12(2): 85-91.

unhappy students,” Park says, “but the really happy ones have a little lower GPA than the merely happy ones.” She and Peterson advise students to “get the 3.8 and be happy,” versus putting their wellbeing at risk for a 4.0.

The same thing happens with money. “Money can buy happiness if you are struggling or at the poverty level,” Park says. “You have to have a basic level of being able to provide for yourself.” But beyond that, a financial increase does not yield a corresponding increase in happiness. “Your happiness goes up very little, even if your income soars.”

Peterson does point out, however, that there is one case in which money can buy happiness: When you give it away.

“Even if the recipient isn’t pleased, the data points to the fact that the giver always gets pleasure from acts of kindness,” he says.

Generosity works to increase happiness even if you’re not giving Bill Gates-sized gifts to charity, or flying across continents to serve in the Peace Corps. “The benefits are there, even if you’re just kind to people at your work, or if you say thank you to people who are nice to you,” Park says. “It doesn’t have to be a great cause. You can be a contributing member of a family, for example. Much of our meaning comes from relationships.”

But putting those relationships first isn’t always easy.

LSA alumna Wendy Guilfoyle (’91, J.D. ’94) discovered this firsthand when she had her first child, a son, in 1994. She’d just graduated from law school and was starting private practice. “Academically and intellectually, being an attorney was a great match for me,” she says, “but not emotionally.” In addition to absorbing the stress of her client cases, Guilfoyle was working extremely long hours. “It would be eight P.M. and I’d be thinking, I have to go home. I want to give my child a bath and a bottle before he goes to bed.”

Eventually, the stress became too much for Guilfoyle. “I’d shut my door on certain occasions and think, this is taking years off my life.”

Finally, she and her husband agreed that she should stay home to raise their son—even though it would mean major changes. “It was a huge financial sacrifice,” she says. “I was 29, and I kept thinking, any client can get another attorney, but my son will never have another mom.”

Guilfoyle found that the value of her being at home far surpassed any financial gains, and that her role as a mom mattered—not just to her, but to her whole family. Today, now that her son is a bit older—and has a younger brother—Guilfoyle works as a children’s librarian for Wilcox Elementary in Holt, Michigan. It’s a position she loves. “I use my creativity, I read, and it’s also very flexible, scheduling-wise. It’s the opposite of what I was doing before.”

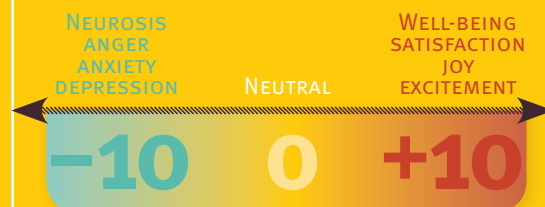
INFORMED DECISIONS

While Guilfoyle’s decision worked to her benefit, Park and Peterson make sure to point out that they’re not in the business of advocating any particular way to live. Though happy people are healthier, optimists live longer, and zestful people enjoy work more, Peterson notes his research has “no magic answers,” only that these subjects are “worth studying, and bringing into the scientific realm.” Peterson says that, like any research, readers should “use the science to make an informed decision

Figure 2

The HAPPINESS CONTINUUM

While the role of traditional psychology has been to alleviate suffering or misery, positive psychology works to help individuals move beyond the absence of problems to a place where they are thriving and happy. On the scale below, a person in the negative range might suffer from depression, anxiety, or other mental illnesses. Zero represents the absence of problems. In the positive range, people create and sustain well being.



LSA WIRE ➤ To watch positive psychology founder Martin Seligman give a Technology, Entertainment and Design (TED) talk on what psychology can help people do and become, visit the LSA Wire at www.lsa.umich.edu/alumni/wire

about how to live your life.”

He does encourage people to take the strengths surveys, which can be found at www.authentichappiness.org. He also says that just because people are living problem-free doesn’t mean they’re living their best lives. (See Figure 2.) “There are different ways to be happy,” Peterson says. “People have to digest all this for themselves.”

He and Park do, however, advocate counting blessings. That’s something Ford learned to do long ago, even after she recovered from ADEM and was then diagnosed with Multiple Sclerosis. Even after her husband passed away two years ago from cancer.

“Bad things happen to people all the time,” Ford says, “but I can’t fail to be mindful of my many blessings: my magnificent children, my amazing friends and family, and the best medical care imaginable.”

She recalls a moment back in 1998 during rehab, when

she was slumped in her wheelchair and asking what the chances were that she'd ever walk again. Her therapist, Dawn, didn't bat an eye. "She told me, 'It's too early to tell, we'll just take it one day at a time.'"

It was a moment when her hope could have been diminished—by Dawn, by self-doubt, by pain—but wasn't. "And that's what they did," says Ford, "they took it one day at a time. It's what I still try to do. I really believe, despite it all, that I've been incredibly lucky." ■

Lara Zielin is Editor of LSA magazine.

How **HAPPY** Are We?

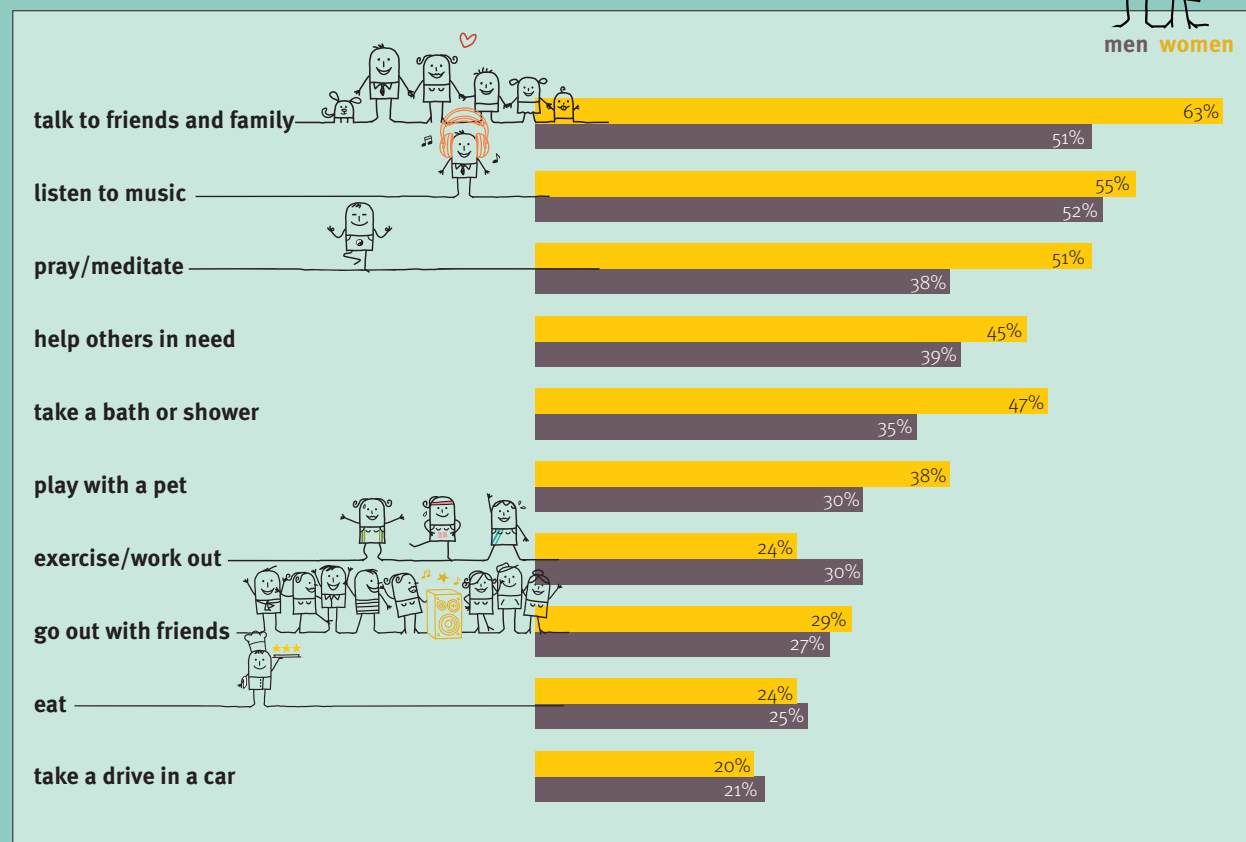
Based on the answers to a *Time* poll, a majority of Americans claim to be genuinely happy, regardless of income levels.

WOULD YOU SAY YOU ARE HAPPY MOST OR ALL OF THE TIME?



And What Makes Us **HAPPY**?

DO YOU OFTEN DO ANY OF THE FOLLOWING TO IMPROVE YOUR MOOD?



Source: *Time* magazine, January 17, 2005

Happy Americans



POST CARD

WASHINGTON 5c




CORRESPONDENCES

*Notes on poetry and
friendship, sex and
death, love and grief,
happiness and despair*

FROM:

**writer and
funeral director
Thomas Lynch**



sex and the dead, Yeats wrote in a letter to Olivia Shakespear, are the only subjects of interest to the studious mind. He was, I suppose, trying to chat her up – and far from the only one to have noticed the links between our comings and goings, the ins and outs of life, such as we have come to know them. Shakespeare wrote about almost nothing else. Woody Allen, Edna St. Vincent Millay, Roy Orbison, to name a few — they all saw sex and death, love and grief, romance and memory as the bookends and turnstiles of our imaginations.

HOW HANDY FOR ME, I remember thinking. I was fond of sex; the dead were everywhere. I'd only been recently rescued from chastity and was working part-time at my father's funeral home while taking some classes at the university, the better to avoid Vietnam and to ogle beauties and their attributes.

And here now more than forty years since, I'm still trying to keep myself upright between the equal and opposing gravities of creation and mortality. However good the sex is or the death, neither is ever quite good enough. Such are the vexations of our species. Must the perfect always be at odds with the good? Our inexorable desires and dodges define our life and times.

"We poets would die of loneliness but for women," Yeats wrote later to Olivia, "and we choose our men friends that we may have someone to talk about women with."

The man who introduced me to Yeats was Michael Heffernan, the first living poet I ever met. The poets I'd heard of were for the most part dead. We'd memorized them in bits and pieces of "Gunga Din" and "The Raven," "Macbeth" and "J. Alfred Prufrock." Or else they were driving west in America with braless consorts, designer drugs, and biblical footwear and coiffures. From my vantage in middle-America, I could not imagine the life of either a patrician or hippy bard. But Heffernan was a poet in the flesh, the thing incarnate, in his three-piece worsted wool, with his watch-fob and brown polished oxfords, looking like Eliot at Faber and Faber, pacing back and forth the room, reciting pentameters to eager undergrads, among them a fetching

red-headed and breathless specimen smiling at him from her desk in the front row. He was not yet twenty-five. The suit and the pocket watch, his elegant speech, the pipe he was always fiddling with, all fixtures in his effort to appear older, more worldly, and wiser than the punters he taught.

He'd studied in England and Ireland

and Massachusetts, after the Jesuits in Detroit had let him go from that sad city he'd been born and raised in. And here he was, the lately indentured professor of English at the state university where I was at the time, a lackluster student and feckless bon vivant. "Women," I might have said to myself, "approve of men who read poems." Or maybe it was the watch fob or the pipe. I don't know.

It was September of 1967, I was nearly 19 and knew if I didn't soon have sex I would surely die. "Poems," I might also have noted then, "had a chance of outliving their makers." Because here were Yeats, and Dickinson, and Robert Frost, all dead with years and yet remembered, almost brought to life in Heffernan's recitations of their poems, wooing still as they'd been meant to woo:

*A sudden blow: the great wings beating still
Above the staggering girl, her thighs caressed
By the dark webs, her nape caught in his bill,
He holds her helpless breast upon his breast.*

Sudden blows and thighs caressed, staggering girls and napes and breasts: Heffernan and I had enough in common — the

common hungers, the usual thirsts, the orthodox Irish Catholic boyhoods and apostasies of youth—we soon enough became drinking buddies. Long nights spent downing sour mash or vodka, listening to Mozart and Puccini, reading the poems he'd been working on, blathering on about romance and desire. Before he left for a better teaching post in southeastern Kansas, he'd taught me Pound and Stevens, Williams and Whitman, sestinas and sonnets and villanelles. I introduced him to his first wife, a fellow student. And helped him drive a truck full of his books and belongings out west.

We stayed in touch by phone and post. In 1978, his first slim book arrived. I remember holding it, "The Cry of Oliver Hardy" it was called, and thinking that it might outlive him, this little book of poems I had read in loose-leaf on the desk of his rented house, 10 years before. It is when I first really wanted to write poems, to have such a book of my own on the shelf in a library where one of my sons or my daughter might find it. I was married by then and having plenty of sex and was running the funeral home where the dead came and went en route to their eventual oblivions. And I wanted some of the immortality that books provide, giving voice, as they do, to the dead and gone.

In 1985 the postal service raised its rates. Heffernan typed poems on postcards and mailed them east—fourteen lines for fourteen cents. It seemed like the postal service imitating art and for the next three years we corresponded in sonnets that would eventually find their ways into books of mine and books of his. Of course the rates went up and the poems got longer and over the decades have been replaced by electronic mail. He writes me one called "Purple," I write back

one of my own called "Red." He has one called "Asleep," to which I answered with "Awake." His "Rhetoric Upon a Window," becomes my "Rhetoric Upon a Rhetoric Upon a Window." Hummingbirds are implicated in each.

Heff and I are both in our sixties now. He's in Arkansas. I'm still in Michigan. If not quite dotage, we're both past middle age. We both got divorced and then remarried, both publish books at intervals, both quit drinking

for the usual reasons, both have three sons. I have a daughter. We've both long since buried our parents. Both of our fathers died in their sixties of sore or damaged or broken hearts. Love and grief, sex and the dead remain both of our primary studies. We both take long walks to maintain some serviceable regimen of proper fettle.

Heff goes to the doctor regularly. I avoid medicos like the trouble they are. He worries over his charts and graphs, biopsies and x-rays. No news is good news is the thing I say. Each in our own way is a bit of a head case. He calls in a panic about something the doctor said, about his blood pressure. I prescribe a dose of Robert Frost, assuring him that high blood pressure is better than none and that everything will work out in the end.

In the way we've always carried on about good sex, the good death has become the new fixation. Both are horizontal mysteries, breathless enterprises, flesh and blood and bone endeavors. Both make you wish you'd spent more time on your knees, not been in such a rush, learned to say your prayers more earnestly.

In our heart of hearts we wonder which of us will outlive the other, who will be our eulogists, obituarists, principal mourners and pallbearers? Will we outlive the women we currently bide with? Do they secretly pray for our demises? Will we die with our wits about us? Such are the thoughts that bedevil us now. And what about our stones and epitaphs? What if there's a heaven? What if there's not? Ought one be buried or burned or consigned to cyberspace? Will any of our books outlive their makers?



HEFF CALLS WITH QUIBBLES ABOUT BLOOD COUNTS AND

enzymes—something his doctor said about something he gathered from something in his latest labs. I tell him something's going to get him in the end. The numbers are fairly convincing on this—hovering, as they do, around a hundred percent.

We die, old friend, is what I tell him. And more's the pity. We get our dose of days and after that we get whatever is or isn't next: heaven, remembered, a kick in the ass, a place in a frame on some grandkid's piano, a grave, a tomb, the fire, our ashes scattered. Is one oblivion as good as another? I say such things because I'm frightened too. Pot-valiant as Cagney in the face of the void.¹

He says he's certain it's something fatal—his condition. Think of it, I tell him, as punctuation, as if there's comfort in that—a question mark or exclamation point, ellipses or full stop, pause or period, it hardly matters much. Everyone's given their walking papers. Everyone's shown the door and sees the light. The adversals are incidental. Once it's over no one gives a wrap whether tumor, tantrum, stroke or heart attack, too many cigarettes, too frenzied sex, too many cheeseburgers, too old an age, a murderous shellfish or tsunami sweeps the creature from creation's little stage, waving and smiling, kicking and screaming, at ease or agonizing—the hush, the breathlessness, it's all the same. The month, the day, the year, the proper names, the size of the stone, what gets cut in it: *I had a lover's quarrel with the world. Enough's enough. Good riddance. Less is more. I told you that I wasn't feeling good! Together wing to wing and oar to oar, cast a cold eye on life, on death, horse-man pass by*—all footnotes to the single and insuperable truth. We mortals come with our mortalities, freighted, laden, born with our last breath in us. Why worry whether this or that improves or ruins the chances?

I tell him quit the medicos and pharmacists. They're only peddling pills for whatever ails you—restless leg or ornery bowel, cauliflower ears, sugar, tapeworm, loose stools, septicemia. I say clean your plate and say your prayers. Go out for a long walk after supper and listen for the voice that sounds like you talking to yourself, you know the one: contrapuntal, measured to foot-fall, true to your own metabolism. Listen—inspiration, expiration, it's all the same, the sigh of creation and its ceasing—whatever's going to happen is going to happen.

So, go on out and count some syllables, lay some lines down one after another, check the pulses, make the meters tick, make up whatever noise you have to make to make some sense of the day that's in it.

As for God and heaven, I have my doubts on almost everything. I sit in church and think these hooligans are only fellow pilgrims, like myself, no more beatific than a heap of bones,

lost and grinning for no apparent reason. That said, I've had these glimpses, inklings, sometimes it's almost as if I'm haunted. Things come to me as apparitions do: my late father, for instance, my dear mother, odd bits of old tunes, sermons, lines from poems—they often reappear in lines like these as if they had a message meant for me which echoes with some things I've always known or thought I knew.

Life goes on. Forever. It's impossible.

A good death, even when it kills you, is still better than a bad one.

Heff sends me a new poem borrowing a line from Frost's poem "New Hampshire."

"Dear Lynch," he writes. "The medicine is working."

"Dear Heff," I write him back, this time in verse:

*Remember when it cost just fourteen cents
to send a sonnet on an index card?
"The postal service imitating art"—
which one of us said that, my lettered friend?
And now we carry on page after page
as if we both depended on it still.
We carry on and pay the going rate
because we keep as articles of faith
there might be something for us in the mail.
God knows we could turn up, the two of us,
long after our long correspondence goes
silent as all such correspondents must.
Maybe someone will get some wind of us
in some old book or in the bonfire,
the firebug rising to its occasion,
the way the frost appears then disappears,
a door that swings both ways on its hinges...
It could happen. We could go on forever.
If so we'll want a codeword, secret sign,
something to make it known we recognize
each other. How about "New Hampshire?"
How 'bout we grab our groins or give a wave,
like third base coaches when the count is full,
to signal take a pitch or guard the plate,
go for the walk or runner stealing home?
To signal all is well, we're not alone,
let's both of us turn over in our graves. ■*

Thomas Lynch is an adjunct professor in LSA's graduate creative writing program and is a regular presenter at the University of Michigan Bear River Writers' Conference. His first book of stories, Apparition & Late Fictions, and fourth book of poems, Walking Papers, were published this year. He lives in Milford, Michigan.

¹ Come Fill the Cup (1951).



The Ann Arbor Bucket List

Whether one believes in a Big House in the sky or an unequivocal dirt nap, the unmistakable truth is that the end is nigh. Enter: The Bucket List, an inventory of “can’t miss” experiences before one’s inevitable date with a mortician. Ours reflects recent changes to the campus environs, things every alum should come back to see. Are you going to let Ann Arbor slip by without a last glance? Hail no!

by Evan Hansen

- 1 EAT LOCAL:** The locavore trend has found its way to Ann Arbor. Restaurants like Grange source ingredients from more than a dozen farms, orchards, and creameries in southeast Michigan; Zingerman’s opened its BBQ-slinging Roadhouse, which carries produce from Cornman Farms; and Jolly Pumpkin on Main pours pints crafted by alumnus Ron Jeffries.
- 2 GET ARTSY:** Erected exactly 100 years ago, Alumni Memorial Hall was eventually converted into the Museum of Art. And exactly one year ago, the Frankel Family Wing added 53,000 square feet, more than doubling the display space for drawings from Delacroix and paintings from Picasso.
- 3 SEE DEAD PEOPLE:** It’s less *The Sixth Sense* and more *Indiana Jones* in the Kelsey Museum of Archaeology’s new Upjohn Wing. The expanded space allows curators to display impressive Egyptian and Greco-Roman collections—including a mummified child that underwent investigation via CAT scan.
- 4 VISIT THE STADIUM:** Word has it that the football team replaced lost love as the preferred object of angst in last year’s creative writing classes. But this fall, the 2010 squad got off

to a fast start inside the recently renovated Big House, where the new press box, stone façade, and 83 suites make game day louder—and hopefully more intimidating—than ever.

- 5 ENTER THE VAULT:** Comic, graphic novel, and collectible lovers may stroll Liberty and wonder where the Vault of Midnight has gone. In 2005, they moved into a massive space on Main where they also stock DVDs, action figures, and board games from around the world. Recently a recipient of the prestigious Will Eisner Spirit of Comics Retail Award, it’s more mecca than mere must-see. So say we all.
- 6 GET CAFFEINATED:** About 30 to 40 percent of college students drink coffee. If you’ve carried your habit through adulthood, there are some outstanding options in Lab Café and Comet Coffee. Get a single origin pour-over and enter the afterlife wide-eyed and bushy-tailed.
- 7 MARVEL AT NORTH QUAD:** The newest U-M building lords over North State like a modern castle and serves as home to dorm rooms and classrooms alike. Not to mention a TV production studio, performance space, and video-teleconferencing rooms. We don’t encourage misbehavior, but you may want to embrace the youthful inclination to break and enter. Just for a quick peek.
- 8 CLOG YOUR ARTERIES:** The town’s (in)famous greasy spoons, Fleetwood and Blimpie Burger, haven’t changed. So why list them? Because the inch-thick coating of fat covering each has hermetically sealed these Ann Arbor icons, preserving them in time; and everyone deserves a trip down memory lane before they kick the bucket, even if that trip may grease the path to the great beyond.

Lessons

Learned

GRADS WHO HAVE LEARNED A THING OR TWO ON THEIR LIFE'S JOURNEY—EITHER BY DESIGN OR BY ACCIDENT—SHARE HOW-TO'S ON EVERYTHING FROM TRAVEL TO TELLING JOKES TO EMPLOYMENT

by Lara Zielin

How to

DO WHAT YOU LOVE, EVEN IF IT'S NOT YOUR JOB

After graduating in 2005, Laura Monk started design school and held a successful string of internships that were all pointing her toward her dream job: interior designer. And then the economy tanked.

After she was let go from an architecture and design firm, she worked as a waitress until she found a job as an executive assistant at a mortgage and financial company. It's not her dream job, but she's still finding ways to do what she loves.

✿ **Apply what you know to different things.** "What I've been through has made me adapt what I've learned to fit a variety of positions," Monk says. She's looked into stage design, stationery and event design, and working in art galleries. Because she's still using her design skills, the positions feel like a decent fit. "I have 12 different versions of my résumé. I'm adaptable and flexible."

✿ **Do your passion for free.** "Since I've been looking for a job, I've re-designed my apartment like it was a client's," Monk says. She's helped her sister with her house, and her mom just asked Monk's opinion on a kitchen re-do. She's also the co-chair of the Illinois Medical District Guest House at Rush Hospital, which needed makeovers for its apartments housing kids in long-term care. "There's always satisfaction in helping people, and I always learn something."

✿ **Brush up on your skills.** After she got laid off, Monk decided to get additional certification for commercial interiors. "I got more education because I had the time to study." She updated her portfolio and learned how to put together a book of photographs using an online website. "I stay busy. I learn. Every little bit I can get, I take it. When the right job opening comes along, I'll be ready."

Laura Monk is a LEED-certified interior designer living in Chicago.

think

How to

SAY WHAT'S ON YOUR MIND

Tim Slagle admires the court jester. "He was the only one in the kingdom who could tell the king exactly what he thought because he could make him laugh." For the past 25 years in his career as a stand-up comedian, Slagle has opined on everything from margarine ("it went from healthy to the deadliest thing you can put in your mouth next to cigarettes and strangers") to his own profession ("I got into comedy because I'm lazy; I work for an hour each day and drink every night for free"), packaging it all with gut-busting guffaws.



How To STOP AGING AND START LIVING

Sixty-eight-year-old Charly Heavenrich ('67, M.B.A. '69) is the oldest full-time oar guide giving rafting tours in the Grand Canyon. He's been doing it for 11 years now, having jumped into a second career when most people would be looking ahead to retirement.

Heavenrich says he is able to do his job because he has found his passion, and because he understands that growing old happens in the mind as well as in the body. "Life is a perceptual experience, and what we put our attention to is what we experience." In other words, if you think you're strong and fit and healthy, then it's more likely you will *be* strong and fit and healthy.

Heavenrich says most people think changing their life means taking drastic steps, but that in reality small adjustments can go a long way. "Get enough sleep. Eat well. Maintain good balance. Be active. Hydrate. Don't smoke." Heavenrich also says that "any form of stretching, from simple stretches to yoga and Pilates," can keep the "normal" experience of aging—which he describes as "freezing and drying up"—at bay.

At the same time, Heavenrich is also aware that there is no one-size-fits-all approach to aging. "I have been blessed with great health and vitality in my life and feel very grateful that I am able to continue my work in the Grand Canyon. I also work hard to be more aware of how I deal with people who are not so fortunate, either because they have physical limitations or lack confidence in their physical abilities. I love helping people go where they never imagined possible, and I realize that, at times, I can be more sensitive to where others are."

Living life means more than just being physically sound, however. Heavenrich encourages "replenishing and nourishing relationships." He also advocates "mental pushups" to improve cognitive and memory skills. He recommends *The Longevity Bible* (Hyperion 2007) for brain exercises.

One of Heavenrich's favorite words is "neoteny," which means maintaining beneficial child-like qualities as an adult. "We all have a playful, curious, adventurous child within us. Invite him or her along on this adventure. It will make the journey much more enjoyable."

Charly Heavenrich is a Grand Canyon rafting guide, author, life coach, and photographer. Learn more at www.charlyheavenrich.com

Most of the time, anyway. Slagle admits that he touches on subjects "you're not supposed to make fun of." Such as? "Vegetarians. They're treated like modern-day secular monks." So maybe Slagle's standup isn't always warmly received, but because he delivers his perspectives with a laugh, it usually stands a chance of sticking with audiences.

Take, for instance, some recent posts on Twitter:

Nothing is done about illegal immigration because Congress is made up of 535 Americans who have never mowed their own lawns.

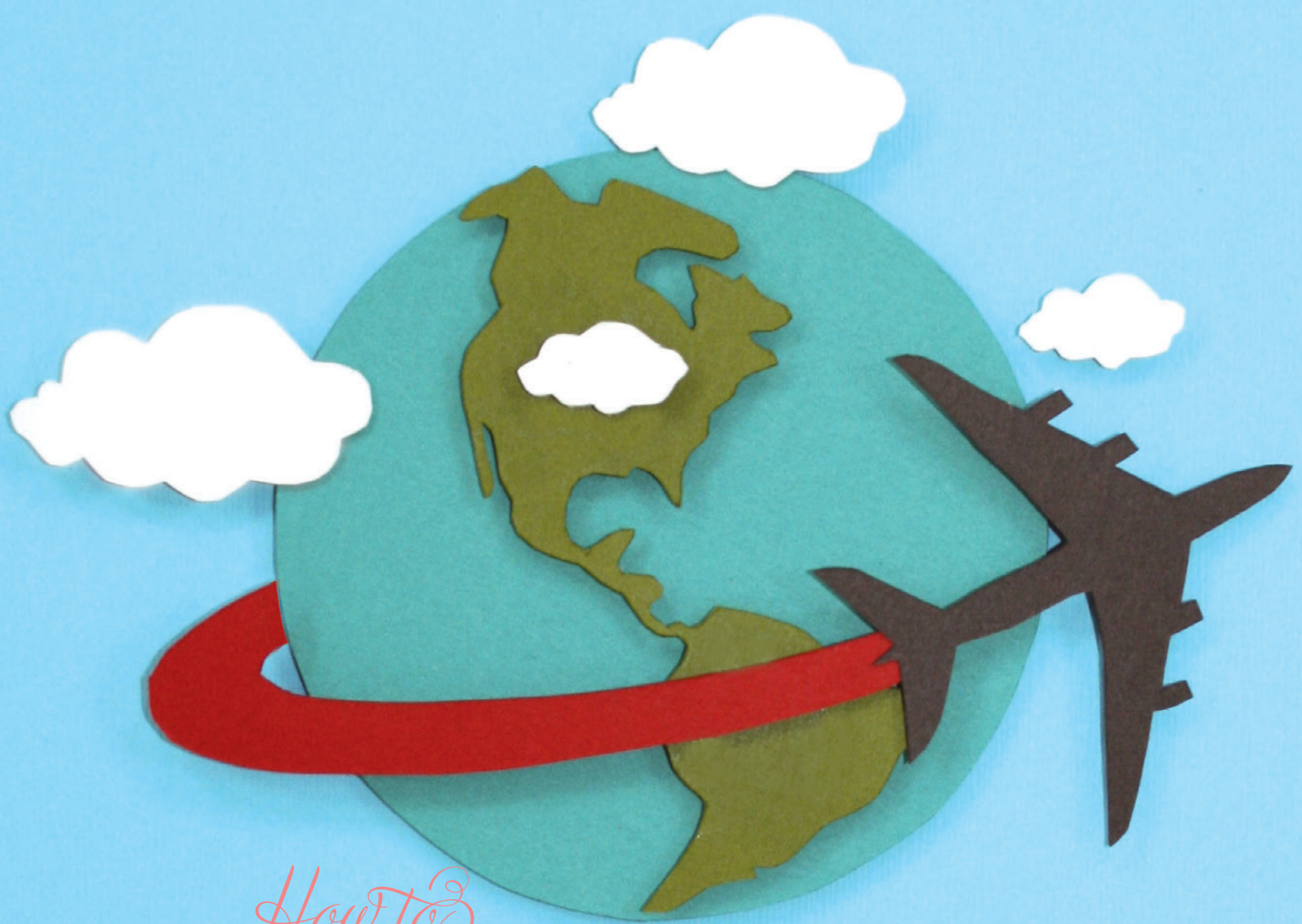
Gov. Schwarzenegger banned use of welfare cards in casinos. Nobody should gamble with taxpayer funds, other than the State of California.

Slagle says a joke is the fastest way to find a common denominator among folks. "That's the soul of comedy, recognizing our humanity," he says. Got a lesson to teach? Slagle says try satire: "When it's done well, you don't even know you just learned something. You just think you've heard something silly."

And if your jokes bomb, that's okay. Keep going. "[David] Letterman is often at his funniest when the jokes don't work. Move forward and don't let it compound."

In this politically correct age, using comedy to speak your mind may be one of the few forums left to air any opinions at all, Slagle says. "That's why comedy is so popular. There are things said in comedy shows that people can't say anywhere else. Once you laugh about it, the bomb is diffused—at least a little."

Tim Slagle is a political satirist with a penchant for the controversial. Learn more at www.timslagle.com.



How To TRAVEL SAFELY AND CONFIDENTLY ANYWHERE

A recent trip to Cuba capped off a long list of countries Drew Peters ('96) and his wife, Meredith Peters ('98), have visited since 2007 including Australia, Brazil, Ecuador, Thailand, China and Tibet, Vietnam, and more. For those wanting travel adventures but who don't want to lose their cool—or for that matter their luggage—Peters has these travel tips:

✿ **Keep calm and carry on.** “In Colombia,” Peters says, “we were approached by a guy while we were waiting for our hotel shuttle and he said, ‘I talked to your hotel and your shuttle’s not coming. I’ll take you to a different hotel.’” Peters says it can be common to hear misinformation from people who want your business. While potentially unnerving, he says keeping a clear head is imperative. “This guy wanted us to panic so we’d go with him, but we just shrugged and he went away. Our shuttle arrived and our hotel was fine. When people don’t smell blood in the water, you’re less likely to get scammed.”

✿ **The truth is somewhere in the middle.** Research is valuable before any trip, but no single source will have all the information you want or need. “Travel books know you’re

interested in going to a specific place and they’re not going to talk you out of it,” Peters says. “On the other hand, online discussion forums usually highlight the scary, oh-my-God-I-can’t-believe-it stories. The truth is somewhere in the middle. Read everything you can get your hands on, but take it all with a grain of salt.” For his money, Peters likes the *Lonely Planet* books for their travel candor.

✿ **Say less and reach out.** Peters says one of the most effective ways of getting information is to break down what you need to know in the fewest words. “Instead of saying, ‘Can you tell me how to get to Havana?’ just point in the direction you think the city is, or point at your map, and ask, ‘Havana?’ Spouting a lot of English at someone isn’t going to get you the results you want.” Peters also advocates asking multiple people the same question. “Ask three people, then choose the answer most often given to you.” This is both because you might be misunderstanding each other, and also because the person you’re asking might have no idea how to direct you, but is pretending they do. Finally, Peters says to hunt out other travelers and use their expertise, and offer them yours in return. “A lot of times people are trying to do the same thing you are. Help them out. Work to keep everyone informed.”

Drew Peters and his wife, Meredith Peters, live in Ann Arbor and are currently exploring a trip to North Korea during that country’s annual mass games.

All photos and cut paper artwork on this page and two preceding pages by Patricia Claydon

THE UNPLANNED PRESIDENCY

Or The Convivial Adventures of an Ardent Naturalist Who Also Happened to Shape the University as We Know It Today

Written by Patricia Claydon ■ Illustrations by Carolyn Reed Barritt ■ Historical photos courtesy of the Bentley Historical Library

DID YOU KNOW that we had a University president with a wife game enough to smuggle **TWO LIVE BOA CONSTRUCTORS** back from Veracruz, Mexico, in her ship's berth?

FLORENCE
RUTHVEN,
A VERY
BRAVE LADY



DID YOU FURTHER KNOW

that we had a president who counted among his best friends his dog, Eleanor? **A DOG NAMED**

FOR A FAMOUS FIRST LADY? And that circumstances would dictate the two Eleanors meet face to face?

(More on that awkward situation later.)



ALEXANDER
GRANT
RUTHVEN

HIS BEST FRIEND, ELEANOR



ELEVEN-FOOT
BOA CONSTRUCTORS
KEEPING WARM
AND TOASTY

ONE FINE DAY

this past summer, I made the familiar trek over to a favorite place, the Exhibit Museum on central campus. As I walked into the Alexander Grant Ruthven building, the motto over the door caught my attention: *Truth Conquers by Itself*. For some reason, this gave me pause. Hadn't I walked under these words countless times before? Why did they catch my attention this time?



I stopped to consider the origins of the inscription, the museum, and the building. Was this building constructed specifically for the museum? And who is this Ruthven person in the building title?

I decided I needed to conquer some truth myself. I headed to the Bentley Historical Library and started digging. I was not surprised to find that Alexander Grant Ruthven was a prominent Michigan scientist. He was the director of the museum, chairman of the Department of Zoology, and presided over the construction of the current building in 1928. I was much more surprised to find that Ruthven was U-M's seventh president — despite all efforts to the contrary. Ruthven simply wanted to be a first-rate herpetologist, tramp through South America in pursuit of (usually deadly) snakes, and run the best zoological research museum in the country. But as reluctant as he was to find himself in administration, he didn't hold office idly. As president, he turned the University on its head and revolutionized the structure of the institution we know and love today.

Ruthven lived a truly contented and enchanted life, despite being president during Prohibition, the Great Depression, and World War II. How did he do that? My research turned up story after story of his intelligence, wit, and sense of adventure — attributes that no doubt played a large part in his success.

THE FOLLOWING IS A PATCHWORK HISTORY OF THIS REMARKABLE YET HUMBLE MAN — A FEW SELECT VIVID AND CHARMING CHAPTERS FROM A TRULY VIVID AND CHARMING LIFE.

WHO IS THIS GUY?

ALEXANDER GRANT RUTHVEN

HAVE YOU EVER HEARD OF HIM?



THESE GOOD PEOPLE AREN'T ESSENTIAL TO OUR STORY, BUT THEY APPEAR HERE WITH RUTHVEN IN 1950 EXAMINING THE CONTENTS OF A BOX FROM THE CORNERSTONE OF UNIVERSITY HALL AFTER IT WAS RAZED. THEY ARE REGENT VERA B. BAITS (LEFT) AND REGENT R.O. BONISTEEL (RIGHT).

ALEXANDER GRANT RUTHVEN

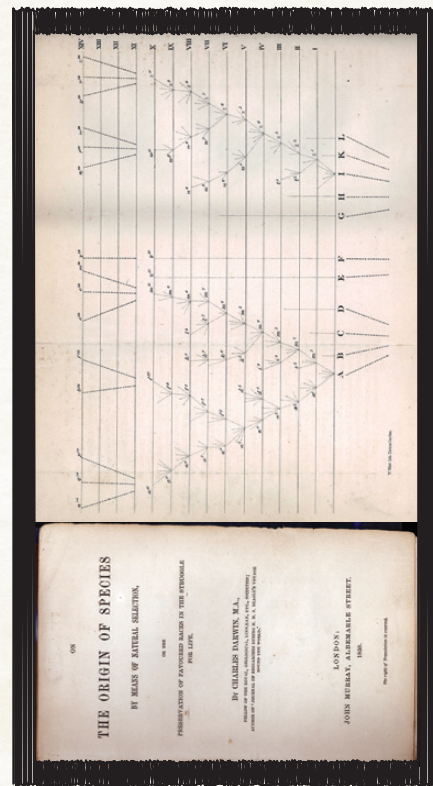
is born into this world on April 1, 1882. No fooling. His birthplace is Ruthven, Iowa, also not a joke. The city is named after its founding father, Ruthven's grandfather, Alexander Ruthven Sr. The big man in town is Ruthven's uncle, Alexander Ruthven Jr. (Junior owned the first lumberyard in town, was the director of two banks, served as president of the first school board, was elected mayor, and owned the first cement-paved sidewalk in town—a definite mark of distinction.)

At the tender age of eight, our hero starts riding ponies and discovers a love of the outdoors. As he rather poetically remembers:

"Riding a company over the sunlit, wind-swept prairie, trampling over the black loam of plowed fields under dull autumn skies, listening to the calls of the wild fowl as they dropped into sloughs swollen with floods from melting snows . . . a small boy dreamed of knowing wild animals, studying their habits, and being associated with them in a museum or zoological garden."

This surprisingly specific dream will eventually put him at odds with his family's grand plans for him (he is next in a long line of Alexander Ruthvens, after all), but he pushes on. At age 12, Ruthven asks his mother for a copy of Darwin's *On the Origin of Species*. And remarkably, despite his parents' strict code of ethics and the fact that the name Darwin was anathema to churchgoers everywhere, his mother purchases the book. Which he proceeds to read. In its entirety.

With that feat accomplished, there is no turning back. **RUTHVEN SETS HIS SIGHTS ON A FUTURE FILLED WITH SCIENCE.**



DURING HIS PRESIDENTIAL YEARS, YOU COULD FIND RUTHVEN AT THE FAMILY'S SUMMER HOME IN FRANKFORT, MICHIGAN, WHERE HE SHARED STABLES WITH ANOTHER FACULTY MEMBER, AND WHERE THE TWO FAMILIES HELD REGULAR RODEOS. QUITE OFTEN THE RODEOS FEATURED IMPORTED BUCKING STOCK, AMATEUR TRICK RIDERS, THE FRANKFORT HIGH SCHOOL MARCHING BAND, AND THE ENTIRE BOARD OF REGENTS WATCHING AGOG.

IMMEDIATELY AFTER HIGH SCHOOL, Ruthven heads off to Morningside College in Sioux City, Iowa. He is the first Ruthven to go to college, and the family is bursting with pride. Naturally, Ruthven dives headfirst into science courses, including such classes as “Algae and Fungi” and “Morphology of Spermatophytes.” The family probably wasn’t so happy about this. How could spermatophytes help him become the next great Alexander of Ruthven, paragon of business?



ALEXANDER GRANT RUTHVEN ON HIS COLLEGE RECORD:

“My academic performance as a student will forever be a secret. In afteryears, to prod my children to do well in school, I could boast of a perfect record. Both my offspring and my secretary were skeptical. When they connived to check my class records, however, they were disappointed to discover there were none extant. My high school had burned. My college records had been destroyed by fire. I had been admitted to Michigan on diploma, and in my time graduate students were not graded on classwork—they passed or flunked. I cannot prove I was always a model student, but no one can prove I was not.”

DURING THE SUMMER after his third year of college, the family tries to distract Ruthven from science and his father gives him the strategic task of supervising the sale of a carload of cattle in Chicago. Surely the thrill of a business transaction will straighten out the young man.

This plan backfires spectacularly as Ruthven grabs the opportunity to enroll in graduate classes at the University of Chicago. Here he meets his lifelong mentor, Charles C. Adams, a professor of zoology.

And this is where Ruthven destroys the hopes of his family. Instead of going home to Iowa and becoming a banker and prominent citizen, Ruthven determines to follow science wherever it may lead him. **HE CLINICALLY SEVERS ALL TIES WITH HIS FAMILY AND NEVER ONCE LOOKS BACK.**

CARLOAD OF CATTLE



ALEXANDER GRANT RUTHVEN

AND NOW WE ARE AT THE POINT

in the story where Ruthven comes to our great University. Charles C. Adams is appointed curator of the Museum of Natural History at U-M, and he invites Ruthven to come with him as a graduate assistant.

Ruthven learns two important lessons here.

The first involves the actual duties of a research assistant.

"The...activity included...touring of local farms on foot to secure cats for the comparative anatomy course....I collected earthworms at night in President Angell's garden...President James B. Angell must have been a sound sleeper, for he seemed never to be disturbed by my wanderings through his garden with my dark lantern in search of the wary Lumbricus."



The second:

"I learned that a museum of zoology is not a 'dead circus,' not a gallery of elaborate exhibits to astound the public, and not a storehouse to demonstrate material for professors and students to tear to pieces. It is a teaching and research institution akin to a library. Its proper function is to gather intelligently and to preserve carefully specimens for research and to maintain exhibits illustrating biological facts and principles."

THE SECOND LESSON IS PROBABLY THE MORE VALUABLE OF THE TWO.

IN 1906,

Adams leaves the University and Ruthven becomes a full-fledged instructor of zoology. He seamlessly takes over as curator of the museum as well. He is 24 years old.

The Museum of Natural History at this juncture is something of a campus joke. It holds an incoherent cache of objects including a collection of musical instruments and a Chinese exhibit presented to President Angell. One of the more frequent users of the museum is a fraternity that requires its initiates to steal a toenail of a mounted walrus.

Ruthven soon becomes ruthless about raising independent funds to expand legitimate collections and build a new and bigger museum building. And he starts turning down donations deemed inappropriate or unscientific.

"The public had to learn that a curator did not pickle or stuff animals, that a museum was not a repository of freaks and curios, and that a specimen without data was all but useless. I had to refuse, as tactfully as possible, a two-headed calf, Aunt Mary's hair wreath, and grandfather's hunting trophies."



Finally, frustrated with lack of support from the museum director and President Hutchins, ruthless Ruthven makes a bold move. A really bold move. He writes a letter to the Board of Regents suggesting that the museum become the Museum of Zoology, and that they not only jettison irrelevant collections, but also the current director. The regents agree and name Ruthven director at age 31.

WHERE U-M ZOOLOGICAL EXHIBITIONS

were previously limited to the United States, the new director boldly decides to go abroad. Ruthven directs trips to South America, Central America, and the Caribbean.

And here are two of his adventures.

The first happens in Veracruz, Mexico, where the team acquires two boa constrictors just before setting sail. The snakes are ideal specimens and nobody wants to leave them behind. So...

"We placed them in a suitcase in our stateroom. During the voyage home it became quite cold, and we feared the boas would not live to reach Ann Arbor. Mrs. Ruthven, who accompanied us on this trip, solved the problem. She placed them in two cheesecloth bags and put them in her berth. All three got along very comfortably."



THE SECOND ADVENTURE INVOLVES WORLD WAR I.

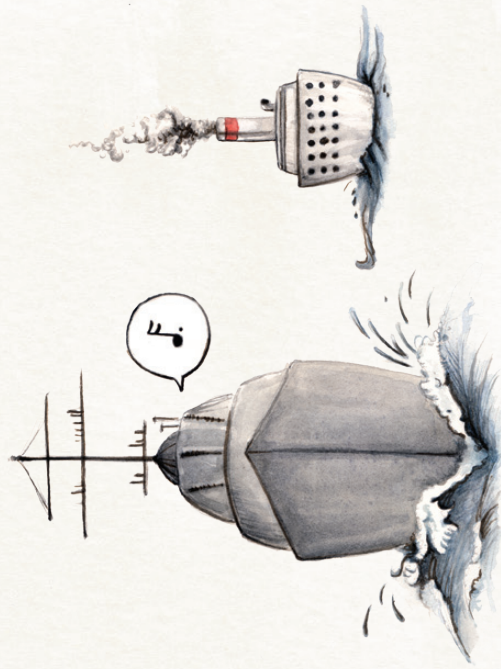
In 1914, Ruthven and team are in British Guiana (on the northern coast of South America, known these days as Guyana). Ruthven sets out alone to track down and capture bushmasters (11-foot-long VERY venomous snakes). About halfway through he discovers he's being tracked by a jaguar.

Ruthven remains calm and makes it back to camp safely. Only to discover the place in chaos. What is going on? What could be worse than a jaguar? Local boys with hats that read "River Police" manage to convey that Germany and England are at war and have been for several days, and American officials are not happy. They didn't even know Ruthven was in Guiana.

The team is given a choice: Board a freighter back to the States and travel directly through German and British warfare in the Caribbean, or sit back and stay in Guiana for the duration of the war. However long that might be.

GUESS WHICH OPTION THEY CHOOSE?

RUTHVEN'S TEAM ABOARD A BLACKED-OUT FREIGHTER PASSED CLOSE ENOUGH TO A DESTROYER TO FEAR FOR THEIR LIVES, ONLY TO HEAR MUSIC WAVING OUT OF THE SPEEDING SHIP. ACCORDING TO THE FIRST MATE, THE BAND ON THE DECK OF THE DESTROYER PLAYED "AMERICA" EVERYONE RELAXED AND THE SHIP MADE IT SAFELY BACK HOME WITH NO FURTHER INCIDENTS.



NOT ONLY DOES

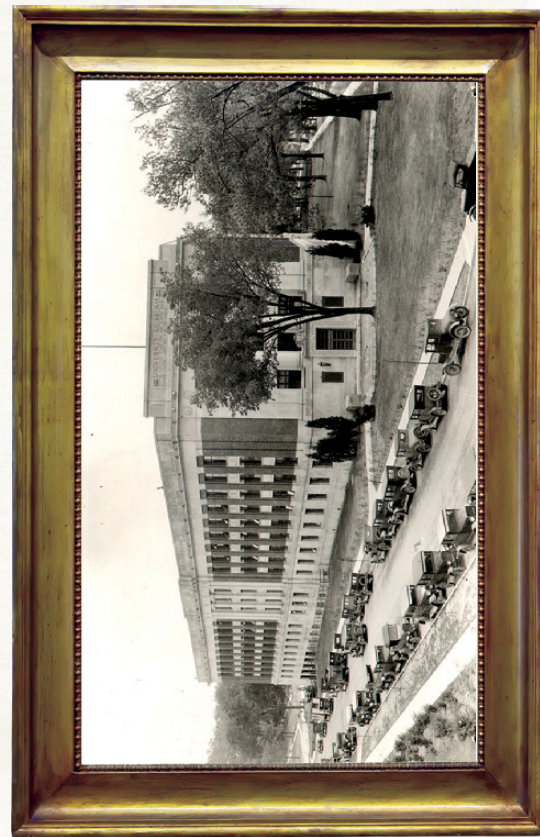
Ruthven's sense of adventure find an outlet during this chapter in his life, but his more academic ambitions come to fruition as well. He is credited with training the majority of herpetologists in the country. He starts a museum newsletter called *The Ark* with the tagline, "The only research museum in the middle west." And the museum collection grows to consume the entire Natural Science Building, two frame houses, two rooms in Angell Hall, two rooms in the Medical Building, and two rooms in University Hall.

In 1926, Ruthven is made the chairman of the Department of Zoology. He pushes even harder for a new museum building, and the regents finally approve it.

The new museum opens on June 14, 1928, and is declared an artistic triumph. This is a bit amazing since Ruthven and the architect did not get along. Albert Kahn considers the building insignificant and is irritated by Ruthven's passion for details. Ruthven remembers thinking:

"Albert Kahn is a jack-ass and I am glad I will soon be through with him."

CARVED ON THE FRONT OF THE BUILDING IS: "GO TO NATURE, TAKE THE FACTS INTO YOUR OWN HANDS, LOOK AND SEE FOR YOURSELF," ALONG WITH THE INSCRIPTION, "TRUTH CONQUERS BY ITSELF." RUTHVEN LIKELY PICKED BOTH.



KEEP IN MIND,

Ruthven has an ideal partner throughout all these adventures and endeavors.

Florence Hagle Ruthven was a student of zoology herself, taught science at Chelsea High School, and met her future husband in a class at U-M. She was the student who grinned every time graduate assistant Ruthven couldn't get the lamp on the projector to work. He was infuriated and claims he got even with her by marrying her.

The two happy zoologists start a family right away, and by 1919 they had assembled a cast that includes: three children (Katherine, Peter, and Bryant); one parrot; one parakeet; one canary; two love birds; three salamanders; two telescope fish; 742 gold fish; one alligator; one turtle; and one dog.



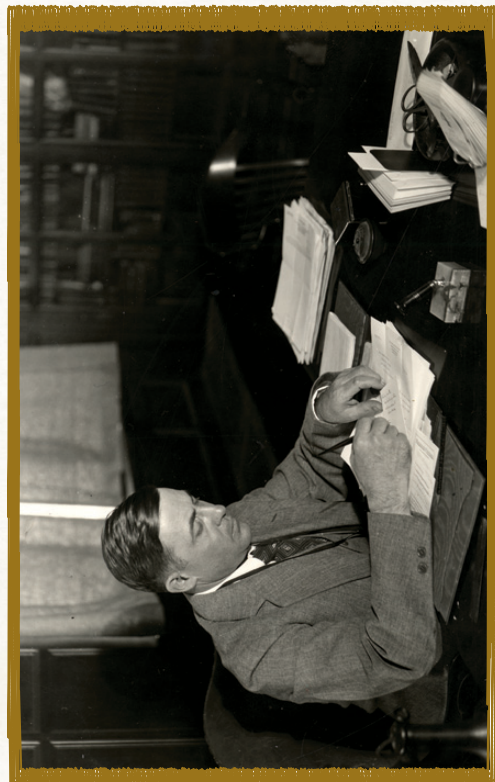
Ruthven's life is a dream at this point. He has a wonderful family and he's working successfully in a field he loves. Then he is made dean of administration of the entire University in June 1928. He did not campaign for this job and there is much concern he will not be able to continue his scientific work. But he respects the trust the regents put in him, accepts the job, and insists his interest in the museum will continue **"AS LONG AS I CAN TODDLE TO IT."**

SHORTLY AFTER RUTHVEN'S APPOINTMENT, C.C. Little's controversial presidency comes to a rather abrupt end. The Regents make Ruthven president in 1929. He is the first president to be promoted from within the University.

When Ruthven comes to power, the executive office of the president has exactly two employees: the president and his secretary and business manager, Shirley W. Smith. The workload is overwhelming, and to expedite major decisions, deans and faculty often skipped the backlogged president's office and go directly to the regents.

Although this system puts him in power, Ruthven views it as archaic, aimless, amorphous, and militaristic. He turns to the burgeoning business community for inspiration and finds it in General Motors. He creates a cabinet of five executive officers, each with the rank of vice president:

Vice President and Secretary
Vice President in Charge of Educational Investigations
Director of Plant Extension
Vice President in Charge of University Relations
Director of Student-Alumni Relations



AFTER RUTHVEN WAS DONE RESTRUCTURING, HE HAD CREATED A DEMOCRATIC, YET ORDERLY, GOVERNANCE KNOWN UNIVERSALLY AS THE "MICHIGAN SYSTEM." IT WAS INSTITUTED IN ONE FORM OR ANOTHER AT ALMOST EVERY OTHER LARGE UNIVERSITY.

RUTHVEN WANTED STUDENTS TO FEEL THAT THEY HAD A HOME ON CAMPUS. HE INSTITUTED WEEKLY STUDENT TEAS AT THE PRESIDENT'S HOUSE, EVENTUALLY DRAWING AS MANY AS 500 STUDENTS AT ONE SITTING.



IN ADDITION TO ALTERING

so drastically how faculty and deans deal with the administration, Ruthven determines to change University dealings with others as well. He and Florence humanize the University by installing three phone lines in the president's house (in 1929!). They prepare themselves to live in a fishbowl, allowing students, parents, and alumni to contact them whenever they wish.

Ruthven institutes an open-door policy in the office as well. He tells his secretary to follow one rule: **"STUDENTS GET IN FIRST, FACULTY MEMBERS SECOND, AND DEANS WHEN THEY CAN."**

RUTHVEN AND FAMILY

also open their home to visiting personalities, with a wide cast of characters: Eugene Ormandy, Charles A. Lindbergh, Marian Anderson, Ezio Pinza, Eleanor Roosevelt, Robert Frost, Madam Chiang Kai-Shek, and Cornelia Otis Skinner, just to name a few.

And, of course, it wouldn't be fair to omit a few of the interesting stories from these visits. Here are two for your reading pleasure, but it's up to you to guess the visitor in each tale.

The first involves a famous poet invited to visit and give a public reading. After a most genial dinner, the poet discovers he has forgotten his recitation materials. Ruthven comes to the rescue with a book of collected poems. To show his gratitude, the poet offers to recite a poem of Ruthven's choosing. Nobody should be surprised at this point that Ruthven picks a poem about a horse. When the poet announces he's reading from the "Morgan Horse Edition" of his collected poems, it causes quite a stir. Nobody has ever heard of that edition! Ruthven announces that only one copy exists and he owns it. He then writes in his memoirs:

"I have often wondered for how many years this bit of misinformation was passed along to students."



EVERYONE KNOWS WHO THIS GUY IS, RIGHT?

THE SECOND STORY

involves two ladies named Eleanor. One is married to a president, and the other is the best friend of a president. One is a prominent first lady, and the other is a bulldog. This poses a problem of etiquette. What if the first lady doesn't take kindly to having a dog named for her? Will confusion reign every time someone calls the dog's name? The family is nervous, students and faculty aghast. It is decided that everyone must make it through the visit without ever saying the dog's name. It must be kept a secret at all costs.

Ruthven remembers:

"By exercising great vigilance, lying to newshawks, threatening the maids, and bribing the children, the secret was kept. The two ladies became fast friends, no embarrassing questions were asked, honor was preserved, and the family escutcheon was kept unstained."

It was only after the meeting that Ruthven finds out some interesting information from another visitor. The first lady had remarked before coming to campus that she looked forward to meeting the Ruthvens very much.

SHE THOUGHT ANY FAMILY WHO NAMED THEIR DOG AFTER HER MUST HOLD HER IN HIGH REGARD.





YET RUTHVEN'S 22 YEARS AS PRESIDENT WERE HARDLY ALL TEA PARTIES AND LARKS TO FOREIGN LANDS.

The same year Ruthven comes into office, the Great Depression hits. Ruthven stands firmly behind the Ann Arbor banks, and the support of the University is probably what saves them. When he is short on payroll, Ruthven sends the University comptroller, along with a local sheriff, out to state offices to collect even small amounts of change owed. During the entire length of the Depression, the University only misses one payday — and it isn't missed completely, just postponed. That's not a minor feat.

In the months leading up to World War II, Ruthven aggressively argues against military recruitment on campus. He feels very strongly that training students to be doctors, dentists, engineers, and teachers serves the war effort more than sending young men off to fight. As a result, he faces loud criticism from both the regents and students for being unpatriotic. In the end, more than 32,000 Michigan students serve in the war, and 520 of them die. Two hundred twenty-three faculty members are granted leaves for government service, and much of the classified research done at the University is later cited as instrumental in winning the war. Sounds pretty patriotic to me.

One significant challenge Ruthven faces immediately in his tenure is student housing. Previous to his presidency, there were no dormitories on campus, every student had to fend for his or herself. Recognizing a growing need and knowing that shared living experiences can help ease a student into university life, Ruthven develops the Michigan Housing Plan. While he is president, East, West, and South Quadrangles are built, and Mosher-Jordan is acquired. So not only do we owe him the current administrative structure of the University, we also owe him the physical structure so many students associate with their college experience.

ALL OF THIS HISTORY

makes me fervently wish Ruthven was still alive. I would love to meet him and walk him through the current Exhibit Museum. I think he would love the mastodons, and all the interactive teaching material sprinkled throughout the museum, not to mention the planetarium.

I'd also love to sit down and pick his brain on all the other adventures he had in his life. What was it like to meet King Fuad of Egypt? Did he really catch live rattlesnakes in a thin canvas bag and throw them over his shoulder to carry home? Why did he tell his son he had an anti-venom kit on these trips, when he really didn't? Did he think that was funny?

I imagine us bonding over our love of dogs — his bulldogs and boxers, my terriers. And then I would confess to him that I wish I could design all the displays in the Exhibit Museum. I'm not a scientist, but I love history, and I'm not that bad with graphics. Perhaps he could put in a good word for me?



Evan Hansen

Instead, I think I'll head out to the Exhibit Museum once again and admire just one of the many legacies Ruthven left behind. I highly recommend you do the same. For now I'll leave you with the last words of Ruthven's memoirs. I think they sum up the man far better than any of my words ever could.

Life for me is pleasant, rewarding, often amusing, and sometimes exciting. What more could one desire?

This story was written using the following sources: Peter E. Van de Water, *Alexander Grant Ruthven of Michigan: Biography of a University President* (William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1977); Alexander G. Ruthven, *Naturalist in Two Worlds: Random Recollections of a University President* (The University of Michigan Press, 1963).



FACULTY

Excavating Ann Arbor



A U-M PROFESSOR PUTS
HIS **ARCHAEOLOGICAL
EXPERTISE** TO USE
NEAR CAMPUS

by Grace Shackman

WHEN PROFESSOR HENRY WRIGHT started excavating on Ann Arbor's Wall Street in 1996, he thought of it as a short-term project to give his students some real-life archaeology experience. Fourteen years later he's still there, volunteering his own time in between museum duties, teaching duties, and work-related trips to far-off places like Madagascar and

China. What keeps him digging is the unique opportunity to do what no one else is doing: applying his professional knowledge of interpreting ancient archaeological sites to better understand the history of Ann Arbor.

Wright, who holds a joint U-M appointment as a professor of anthropology and as curator of the Museum of Anthropology, focuses on the development of relationships within urban societies. He explains that Ann Arbor's Wall Street, "with its mix of houses going back to the 1830s, yields information about different ethnic groups, differences in wealth and in social pretensions, that helps us understand the complexities of urban society through-

out the world."

Just like anthropologists try to answer questions about early social life in Mesopotamia, China, and Mexico, Wright wants to use his excavations to learn more about Ann Arbor and its early residents.

And Wall Street is the perfect locale, he says.

LOWER TOWN'S RISE AND FALL

The original village of Ann Arbor was founded in 1824 by John Allen and Elisha Rumsey. Lower Town, where Wall Street is located, was founded three years later, in 1827, by Anson Brown, who landed in Michigan after working on the Erie Canal. He dammed up the Huron River, built

a grist mill, erected a commercial block, and laid out streets that shared names with those in New York—Wall, Broadway, and Maiden Lane—showing his high hopes for the new settlement.

Lower Town flourished for a few years, and then sank into obscurity.

Brown died in 1834, a victim of what is thought to have been a cholera epidemic. A few years later, the University of Michigan and the railroad were sited on the south side of the Huron. Lower Town waned in the shadow of its bustling neighbor, Ann Arbor, which eventually absorbed it. However, residential construction continued on Wall and Maiden Lane, mainly by people who worked in

Professor Henry Wright's archaeological projects have involved excavating on the property of several 19th century houses in Ann Arbor, in a section of the city known as Lower Town. This area is just north of the Huron River and east of the Broadway Bridge.

(Top) students sift dirt at the excavation site to uncover archaeological material.

(Bottom left) Site notes provide information on sediment layers, which helps date materials.

(Bottom right) Excavated fragments from the Beer house at 1025 Wall Street.



Lower Town. The houses remained relatively untouched until recent years, when the University began buying them, tearing them down, or moving them so they could clear the land for an extension of the medical campus.

One such residence was an elegant New England-style home at 947 Wall Street constructed by Nathan Burnham in 1837. Wright started his work there in 1996 at the suggestion of a friend, Liz Elling, then-development director of the Nichols Arboretum. Elling was raising money to move the house to the arboretum, where it now sits as the James D. Reader Jr. Urban Environmental Education Center.

“Liz was working to move and save the house, and I agreed to investigate and save whatever history might be in the layers of earth around it,” Wright says. “We wanted to salvage what we could and learn about Ann Arbor, since the space was going to be eventually paved over and made into a parking lot.”

DIGGING INTO DAILY LIFE

Wright recalls that first excavation, when he brought in students. “It was a chance for undergraduates to get their fingernails dirty. To see if

“We wanted to salvage what we could and learn about Ann Arbor, since the space was going to be eventually paved over and made into a parking lot.”

they really liked archaeology or if it was just a passing fancy.” He thought they’d have a few months before the house was moved but in fact it took more than a year. During this time, Wright found enough interesting material to keep him working.

“We found well-defined layers with evidence of changes in what people ate, what they wore, what they did in their day-to-day life in the house,” he says.

Wright and his crew excavated carefully, layer by layer at each site, removing dirt, sifting it to find artifacts, and then washing what was left to discover if there was more. The most recent items were, of course, on top.

In front of the Burnham house they found toys—jacks and marbles and a ceramic figurine—indicating it was a place where children played. They also retrieved lost items such as an 1844 bank token from Canada, which likely dropped from someone’s pocket and shows the connection early Michigan had with Canada.

The backs of the houses were the most informative, especially since there was little garbage pick-up in the 19th century. Wright found many animal bones—pigs, cows, sheep, and goats. On lower levels he also found deer and fish bones, showing

(Bottom left) Henry Wright discusses the layering of archaeological deposits with a student at the Burnham house dig. They are excavating behind what was once the smokehouse.

(Bottom right) The Burnham house, an exceptional example of Ann Arbor architecture and the location of Wright’s first excavation, was slated for demolition by U-M to make way for a parking lot until friends of the structure preserved it and moved it to the Nichols Arboretum. It now serves as the James D. Reader Jr. Urban Environmental Education Center.



that the early settlers fished and hunted.

Even though the Wall Street period is much later than Wright's usual excavations abroad, it presents many of the same challenges inherent in piecing

together the past with small shards of evidence. Early 19th-century written records for Ann Arbor are scarce, especially regarding people of modest means. The city's building permits only go back to 1919. Indexed city directories start in 1894, Sanborn Fire Maps in 1888. Wright's excavations of pre-Civil War houses provide information on daily life that cannot be obtained in any other way.

When other house sites on Wall Street became available for archaeological excavation, Wright moved on. He worked at 939 Wall, a more modest home known as the Belding house named after the first long-term owner; then the Sumner Hicks house, the residence of a temperance man and abolitionist at 936 Wall. Most recently, Wright has worked at the Beer house, 1025 Wall, which was occupied by several generations of African American families.

In the earlier layers at all the houses, Wright has found pieces of china—reddish brown floral ware, oyster shell edge, blue transfer print. Most look like English Staffordshire but are probably imitations made in Ohio.

At the Beer house he found a Styrofoam cup left

from the 1970s, which helped to date a house addition. Further down in the layers he found early 20th-century items, such as a Michigan Union mug, glass, and pottery.

At the Sumner Hicks house, he found an old muskrat trap and pieces of an old stove.

To help him sift through everything, Wright has supplemented his undergraduate help with graduate students in his program and from the Kelsey Museum of Archeology, as well as volunteers from the Michigan Archeological Society. He has found the University very supportive of these projects.

FINDING LOST HISTORY

Wright's academic research has taken him all over the world, though he got his start in archaeology investigating local sites and has always appreciated their importance. His first dig was as a boy when he helped a neighbor—a retired history professor in his hometown of Annapolis, Maryland—excavate an 18th-century storage cellar.

While still a teenager, Wright correctly identified places along the Chesapeake Bay where Native Americans had camped. When he showed his findings—neatly packed, with cotton dividing the different layers, not just a pile in a cigar box like most kids' efforts—to researchers at the Smithsonian, they invited him to come once a week to work with them.

These same Smithsonian researchers advised him that U-M would be a good place to study archaeology. He did, graduating in 1964. Wright attended the University of Chicago for his Ph.D. and then returned to U-M to join the faculty in 1967. His first home was a pre-Civil War house on Pontiac Street in Lower Town where, while digging a sandbox for his son in 1973, he found some artifacts—clay pipe stems, shell buttons, and transfer print ceramics, and began to think about the value of Ann Arbor archaeology.

There are several other Wall Street sites that Wright would like to excavate before they are paved over. Meanwhile, his garage and basement are full of labeled artifacts, many of which he'd like to show to experts who specialize in pottery, nails, and glass. In between his other professional demands, Wright plans to someday write a book about his discoveries, tentatively titled *The Lost History of an Ann Arbor Neighborhood*. ■

Tokens of History

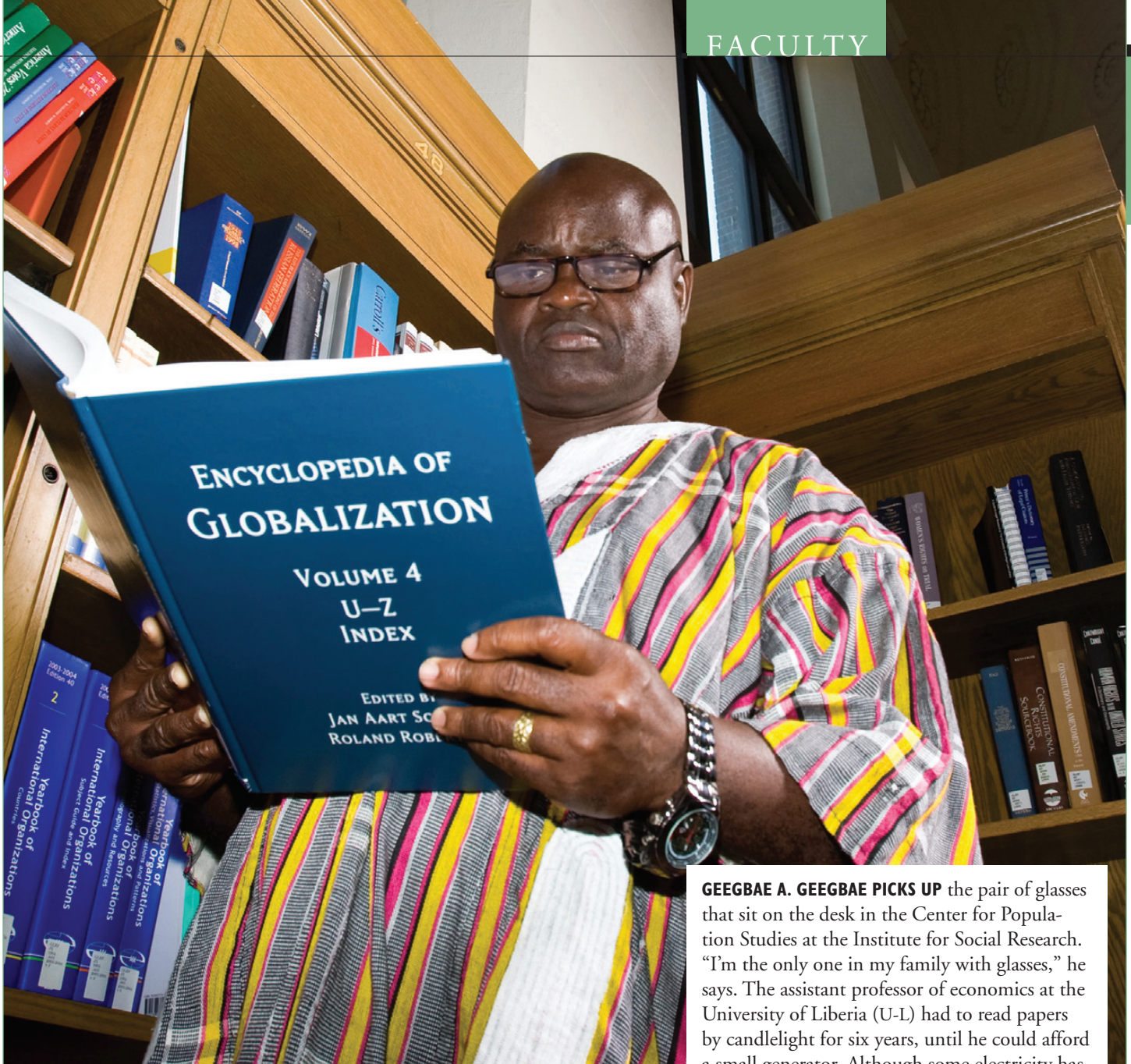
Even the smallest of Professor Henry Wright's excavated objects helps paint a more detailed picture of Ann Arbor history.



This Bank of Montreal token was minted in the mid-19th century in an effort to standardize Canadian currency. The coin was either lost or thrown away in the front yard of the Burnham house.



This medicine bottle showcases how, in the 1900s, the Burnham house was used as an office and clinic space for several local doctors. They often provided health care for families with limited financial resources.



Geegbae A. Geegbae



A VISITING LIBERIAN SCHOLAR DESCRIBES LIFE AS AN ACADEMIC IN AFRICA AND HOW HIS TIME AT U-M IS CHANGING HIM—AND MAYBE HIS HOMELAND

by Davi Napoleon

GEEGBAE A. GEEGBAE PICKS UP the pair of glasses that sit on the desk in the Center for Population Studies at the Institute for Social Research. “I’m the only one in my family with glasses,” he says. The assistant professor of economics at the University of Liberia (U-L) had to read papers by candlelight for six years, until he could afford a small generator. Although some electricity has been restored to a country ravaged by civil war, it is expensive. “We still use generators,” he says. “We have one at the university that runs for several hours a day, during classes.”

That’s not the only problem scholars at U-L face. The library hasn’t added to its collection in years. Internet access is occasional, at best. The school’s 18,000 students fare no better: There are 700 students in most classes. They have outdated textbooks. “Friends and relatives abroad send us textbooks, and we develop lectures out of them, but we are lagging behind,” says Geegbae.

Faculty development is crucial. “Universities traditionally have two pillars, teaching and



Liberia at a Glance

- Liberia is located along Africa's coast, east of Sierra Leone and south of Guinea. It occupies an area slightly larger than Tennessee.
- The Republic of Liberia was established on July 26, 1847. In 1989, civil war ensued under authoritarian rule until relative peace in 1997. War resumed in 2000 and did not cease until a 2003 peace agreement.
- Liberia's flag—consisting of red and white horizontal stripes and a white star against a blue square—is modeled after the American flag.
- More than half (60 percent) of Liberia's inhabitants live in urban areas.
- Although Liberia's official language is English, approximately 20 ethnic languages are also in use.
- The majority of Liberians work in agriculture, producing rubber, coffee, and timber. Despite these resources, Liberia has an 85 percent unemployment rate with 80 percent of its inhabitants living below the poverty line.
- Only 20,000 of Liberia's citizens are classified as Internet users, compared to 231 million in the United States and 298 million in China. While there are more than 2,000 television broadcast stations in the United States, there are just five in Liberia.

Source: The C.I.A. World Factbook

research,” Geegbae reflects. “Our research [in Liberia] has collapsed. Only two percent of faculty members have doctorates.” And demoralized by low salaries, those with research abilities take outside consulting work to supplement meager incomes.

“We have an urgent need now to develop the university.”

After a visit to South Africa and Ghana in early 2008, U-M President Mary Sue Coleman decided U-M could help by giving African scholars like Geegbae access to the University's rich resources—libraries, classes, and faculty mentors. She launched the U-M African Presidential Scholars program (UMAPS), which brings 10 to 14 African scholars to Ann Arbor annually to pursue research projects they propose. This year, UMAPS expanded to include four scholars from Liberia, including Geegbae.

“With help from U-M, these scholars are positioned to take on leadership roles at the University of Liberia,” says Lester Monts, senior vice provost for academic affairs and Arthur F. Thurnau Professor of music, who accompanied President Coleman to Africa in '08. “They can go back as Ph.D.s and teach others based on what they learned here.”

Geegbae, who came here with an M.A. in economics, is using his time on campus to investigate the social consequences of rural-urban migration in Liberia. That research gives him a chance to explore and possibly change the dire conditions at U-L.

“From 1990–2003, my country was involved in a civil conflict,” Geegbae explains, beginning a story of difficult elections, corrupt government, and extreme

poverty. “During the crisis, there was an unprecedented level of movement of people. In the capital, the population went from 400,000 to 1.1 million people,” he says.

Migration has created problems for both the overpopulated capital and the outlying regions that have been abandoned. Overextended schools and health institutions as well as increased unemployment plague the capital, while the more rural regions are left without enough teachers or doctors. Deteriorated roads have made the cost of transporting goods prohibitively high; doctors can't reach patients quickly; perishable goods spoil en route. When students graduate from U-L, they want to stay in the capital to practice their professions, which perpetuates the brain drain in rural regions.

Geegbae's research looks at ways to help his country get back on track. Fixing roads is the first essential step. Providing incentives to live in the rural regions, including farming subsidies, is also critical. “If there's nothing to attract me to move to Detroit, I will stay in Ann Arbor,” he says, drawing a Michigan parallel. Developing Liberia's local bank branches is important, too. “What if I had to drive from Ann Arbor to Lansing to cash my salary check?”

In Ann Arbor, Geegbae has all the resources he needs to conduct robust research with the most impact. “I was never exposed to so huge a library,” says the visiting scholar, who credits David Lam, an LSA professor of economics, his mentor, and U-M librarians for useful guidance since his arrival.

“Geegbae's research will help guide programs to reduce poverty in Liberia and will help policymakers understand the large migration flows from rural areas into the capital city of Monrovia,” says Lam. “Another important aspect of Geegbae's visit is that it helps Michigan faculty and students understand the challenges faced by African countries and African universities.”

Geegbae says his research also will strengthen his own university. “Reaching out both nationally and internationally is at the center of the university mission, and I was unable to reach out. I couldn't share with my students research from the rest of the world. I have been yearning for that for years,” he says.

He will go home with knowledge that otherwise would have been impossible to gather and to share. “My coming here has changed my life,” he says. ■



Around the World of Art with Martin Powers

A Q&A WITH THE **POPULAR PROFESSOR**
ABOUT HIS HISTORY OF ART CLASS

In *History of Art 100*, Professor Martin Powers introduces students to works from China, Japan, and South Asia, such as the Queen Mother of the West funerary slab, pictured, at the University of Michigan Museum of Art. Carvings like this allowed middle-class families of the Later Han dynasty (25 to 220 C.E.) to publicly display their hopes, fears, and even their political views, on decorated tombs and memorial shrines.

by Dan Desmond

A CHINESE PROVERB SAYS teachers open the door; you enter by yourself. The origin and application of the adage is familiar ground for Martin Powers, the Sally Michelson Davidson Professor of Chinese arts and cultures in LSA's Center for Chinese Studies.

In his role teaching the popular *History of Art 100* class, Powers dives deepest into Chinese art because of its rich heritage, but his class also navigates through African, South American, and Middle Eastern works.

We caught up with Powers shortly after his return from Hangzhou and Hong Kong, and asked him an assortment of questions about his art history course.

What's one thing about Asian art that usually surprises people who are oriented in Western culture?

Most students are surprised to discover how strangely familiar Chinese art is. Premodern Chinese sources are full of narratives about defiant, bohemian artists; student demonstrations; social protest literature and art; women artists who question their assigned social roles and so on—all by the 13th century.

What is something about Eastern art that is unusual from a Western perspective?

One of the more interesting differences may be the practice of writing personal poems or other texts directly upon paintings in China and Japan, along with highly conspicuous signatures and personal seals.

This first happens in the late 11th century in China. It is a revolutionary act at the time, then becomes fairly standard. In Japan, the relationship between the text and the images is often quite loose. The artist may be musing about art [in general] or the inscription might say something like, “my friend came over for tea, we were talking, and then I decided to do this picture.” It's about self-representation—the artist creating a presence for himself. Very often, they emphasized the casualness of the moment.

Is there an equivalent to the Renaissance period in Eastern art?

Many social practices associated with the early modern period—printing and print culture, art collecting, canon formation, political centralization, rising social mobility, or public discourse—developed in China as in Europe, though for China most historians trace these developments to the 10th and 11th centuries.

During the Renaissance period, artists painted primarily biblical stories, myths, and portraits. In the East, where did their subjects come from?

In China, artists were inspired mainly by poetry. There were portraits too. But one of the interesting things about Chinese art is that the aristocracy collapses early on, and so religious painting and portraiture also decline.

If you wanted the University of Michigan Museum of Art to acquire a piece of Chinese art, what would it be?

If you mean to ask if I could legitimately acquire any work for our collection, despite its current location in another collection, I suppose it would be the Southern Song hand scroll attributed to Qiao Zhongchang in the Nelson-Atkins Museum. ■



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STUDENTS

Straight from the Horse's Mouth

> LSA STUDENT HAYLEY HOFFMAN USES HER EQUINE EXPERTISE TO HELP OTHERS

by Maryanne George

IN A COOL, WHITE CINDER BLOCK BARN off a dirt road about five miles north of Ann Arbor, Hayley Hoffman stands next to Dobbs, a handsome Morgan gelding, as a young rider mounts.

Hoffman, a volunteer with the Therapeutic Riding, Inc. (TRI) program, leads Dobbs slowly around the small indoor arena, while the 15-year-old boy sits smiling atop the horse. Hoffman's quiet demeanor and gentle touch sooth both the horse and rider as



Riding Results

In 2004, the *Journal of Southern Agricultural Education Research* published data showing the measured differences parents see in their children with disabilities who participate in therapeutic riding programs. The noted changes they documented included increased self-esteem, improved socialization skills, better problem-solving skills, and a host of physical benefits including better balance, fewer muscle spasms, and stronger motor skills. For more information on Therapeutic Riding, Inc., please visit www.therapeuticridinginc.org.

they make their way.

The boy is one of about 80 people who will ride one of 10 specially trained horses each week. The TRI program serves children and adults with disabilities and helps them develop physical, cognitive, and emotional capabilities.

Hoffman, an LSA junior majoring in cellular and molecular biology, began volunteering with the program last year, when she heard about it through her pre-veterinary club at U-M. Hoffman plans to become a large animal veterinarian.

An accomplished horsewoman, Hoffman has been riding since she was six years old and has two horses of her own. She says what drew her to the program was the chance to help people ride horses, especially those who would otherwise not be able to. She volunteers once a week and usually works with Dobbs.

Sitting at a picnic table in the sunshine outside of the barn, Hoffman talks about what she has gained from the program, especially her new awareness of the strength and courage of the riders.

"This has made me more aware of the challenges people with disabilities face," she says. "Some people have to be lifted up onto the horse and they don't have that much control of their bodies. And yet they have to give control to the person leading the horse and the side walker. They are really brave to trust them. If I couldn't walk and someone put me on a horse, I couldn't do it.

"I'm really glad I found the opportunity to use my knowledge of horses to help people," she adds. "You can definitely see you are helping."

Kendra VanWasshenova has witnessed the results firsthand. A physical therapist with the Milestones rehabilitation program at the University of Michigan Health System, she works in a summer TRI program with children who have traumatic brain and spinal cord injuries.

"I've seen a lot of kids grow socially and cognitively in the program," VanWasshenova says. "They become more verbal. They sing when they're riding. Giving commands to a horse is pretty powerful. It gives riders a sense of

“Giving commands to a horse is pretty powerful. It gives riders a sense of control and freedom.”

control and freedom. They can move forward without a wheelchair. They come home happy and tired.”

Hoffman says the horses do as much as the volunteers. She has seen the four-legged therapists help riders open up.

"The horses interact with the riders who do not respond to human contact," she says. "It's amazing to see kids who are not mobile get on the horse and tell them what to do. The horses tune into each rider and adjust their own temperament. If they need a lot of help, the horses slow down."

There are challenging days, when both the horses and the riders struggle to get it right.

"There are times when the kids are having trouble focusing and the horses can be more difficult," Hoffman says. "But whatever little struggles we have, they are no big deal if the rider has a good ride."

Thomas Merenda has two children, Genevieve, 17, and Peter, 14, who ride every week. Sitting in a chair outside the arena, he talks about the benefits he sees. Genevieve is astride Dakota, a chestnut gelding. Peter rides Sigbjorn, a dun Norwegian Fjord.

"Gen has learning challenges, but in this environment she is responsible for her own progress," he says. "She can't argue with a living animal, and taking instructions and translating them to the horse is good for her. For Peter, who has cognitive impairment, this takes him out of himself and gets him out of the house."

The program relies on the help of more than 100 volunteers, like Hoffman, and four paid staff members. TRI director Jan Vescelius says Hoffman is crucial to the program's success.

"Hayley is everyone's example of the perfect volunteer," she says. "She can do it all and do it well. Her quiet spirit, soft touch, and dedication to our program are humbling. Hayley makes our world a better place."

Hoffman says she gets as much out of the program as she gives.

"I look forward to it every week," Hoffman says. "I have much greater respect and appreciation for how able these kids are. Jan holds them to a high standard and instills a lot of independence in them. It really gives me a thrill. I have never been as committed to a volunteer opportunity as I am to this one." ■



Michigan in Washington



STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT AMERICA'S POLITICAL SYSTEM WHILE WORKING IN THE CAPITAL

by Rebekah K. Murray

ALL NINE SUPREME COURT JUSTICES sit at a long, curved desk. A giant red curtain hangs behind them. Lawyers from the Department of Justice (DOJ) present their arguments for the best way to calculate “good-time credit,” which can reduce sentences for well-behaved federal inmates. It’s March 2010, and LSA junior Sunethra Muralidhara sits in a guest box facing the judges, absorbing the details of the case.

“The justices are very cutthroat,” she says, noting how they’d cut off an attorney’s argument to correct facts. “I would love to be a Supreme Court justice.”

Muralidhara was one of 21 U-M students who completed the winter 2010 semester in Washington, D.C., with the Michigan in Washington (MIW) program. She interned at the DOJ’s Environmental Enforcement Section and worked on cases regarding the Clean Air and Clean Water Acts.

MIW is celebrating its fifth anniversary this fall. Through the program, students complete a semester of U-M courses while holding down an internship. “It’s real life,” Muralidhara says about



(Top right) LSA student and Michigan in Washington (MIW) program participant Sunethra Muralidhara sits in front of the U.S. Capitol last winter. Through MIW, Muralidhara interned with the Department of Justice’s Environmental Enforcement Section.

(Bottom right) MIW students at the Smithsonian Museum of Natural History last winter: (left to right) Seth Buchsbaum, Salim Alchurbaji, Brian Cischke, Jared Gamelin, and Brian Herrick.



Who's Who in the White House

THERE IS MORE MAIZE AND BLUE IN THE WHITE HOUSE THAN EVER. HERE ARE JUST SOME OF THE MANY LSA ALUMNI WITH TIES TO 1600 PENNSYLVANIA AVENUE:

- **JENNIFER CIZNER ('99)**
Energy and Environment Director
White House Office of Presidential Personnel
- **DEREK DOUGLAS ('94)**
Special Assistant to the President for Urban Affairs
White House Office of Urban Affairs
- **LISA ELLMAN ('00)**
Legal Director
White House Office of Presidential Personnel
- **JOCELYN FRYE ('85)**
Director of Policy and Projects in the Office of the First Lady
Executive Office of the President
- **EUGENE KANG ('06)**
Special Projects Coordinator and Assistant to the President
- **CECILIA MUÑOZ ('84)**
Director of Intergovernmental Affairs
Executive Office of the President
- **TROOPER SANDERS ('95)**
Deputy Director of Policy and Projects for the First Lady
Executive Office of the President
- **RAJIV J. SHAH ('95)**
Administrator
United States Agency for International Development
- **LOUIS B. SUSMAN ('59)**
Ambassador to the United Kingdom

working nine to five along with taking courses Monday evenings and all day on Fridays. The students are paired with an alumni mentor in D.C., and they live near Dupont Circle, just five blocks north of the White House.

"You get to meet congressmen on the Metro, network with your fellow interns—you can't just learn that in school," Muralidhara says.

After a semester in D.C., the students return to campus changed, says MIW faculty director Edie Goldenberg, professor of political science and public policy. "They come back much more confident, much more professional in their ability to present themselves, and much more engaged politically and in policy matters of interest to them. The students have gained real perspective."

PART OF HISTORY

Many MIW students are on the ground floor for historic legislative events, such as the health care bill. LSA senior Lilly O'Brien-Kovari researched and watched the development of that bill as part of her internship at the government relations firm Bryan Cave Strategies. "I read through the legislation and gave brief summaries of the provisions that were relevant to particular clients," she says.

After working at Bryan Cave Strategies, Kovari left with a new understanding of how a lobbying firm operates.

"They don't have this undue influence as a lot of people think they do," she says. "Before, I thought lawyers would shell out gifts and food to influence the government. Instead, they're hired to help people understand and get in touch. The lobbyists work as liaisons."

That's one of the main goals of the MIW program, Goldenberg says. "We want students to learn how Washington works. We want them to engage in public service and be able to relate what they're learning in the classroom to what they're seeing on the job."

For academic credit, MIW students must complete a project and research paper, "one of the most ambitious papers they'll write as undergraduates," Goldenberg says. "We wanted students to relate what they were seeing in some intellectual way and to produce a serious piece of work." Upon returning to U-M, the students participate in a poster session to display and explain their project and research.

CAREER EXPLORATION

Jared Gamelin's internship was at the Department of Defense's National Defense University. A senior in U-M's Ford School of Public Policy, he plans to complete an M.B.A. and is interested in a career that would combine public policy and business. Until MIW, "I had no idea how many possibilities were out there," he says.

"One day I'd call the embassy in England, and the next day I'd be working on a project regarding social media and the military," he says. On one occasion, he accompanied his supervisors to the Pentagon for a briefing on the privatized military industry—the topic of Gamelin's MIW research paper.

The variety of opportunities allowed Gamelin to interview top officials in the military, CIA, FBI, and NSA for his academic research and about job opportunities. He discovered that both government agencies and private organizations hire college students fresh out of undergrad for defense analyses positions, a job he may be interested in after graduation.

"The coolest part about the internship is the fact I walked away from it with a reference from a three-star general," he says.

Goldenberg says the faculty and alumni who founded MIW wanted students to gain job-search skills and learn how to network, but "we didn't set out for this to be a program that helps students find jobs," she says. Nevertheless, "we have a couple of dozen who have graduated and are now employed in Washington. Our students also go to the Peace Corps, Teach for America, law school, and lots of other places, but a significant number do choose to go back to Washington and have been quite successful."

"It's the real-world opportunity. It's absolutely amazing," says Muralidhara. "There may be thousands of interns that come to D.C. every year, but my opinions and work were valued." ■



Zachary Ciullo: Athlete, Philanthropist



THE BIG FOOTBALL
PLAYER WITH AN
EVEN BIGGER HEART
MOTIVATES HIS TEAM-
MATES TO GIVE BACK

by Sheryl James

ZACHARY CIULLO spends a lot of his time asking others for help—for donations, time, and participation in fundraisers. At first glance, you might think folks would fear refusing him. Standing six-foot-one and weighing 270 pounds, Ciullo can look intimidating.

But no one who knows Ciullo could fear him, and even strangers notice his smile or hear his soft-spoken fundraising pitch more immediately than his bulk. Sure, he plays left guard for U-M's football

team and can bench press small automobiles. These things his opponents on the football field might heed.

And, sure, he's a bouncer at Rick's American Café, where, with adroit strength, he dispenses with rowdy folk.

But for some time now, Ciullo, an LSA senior, has had a reputation as a big man with an even bigger mission: philanthropy.

"It means a lot," Ciullo says. "I feel it's important to give back." Football, he says, "is like a separate family. It's kind of like a fraternity, only closer. But it's given me great opportunities and it's opened a lot of doors for philanthropy."

Ciullo is a member of the Student-Athlete Advisory Council, which sponsors, among other events, the popular Mock Rock, a show

featuring U-M athletes doing a variety of mostly funny skits, dances, and the like. The event raises money for C.S. Mott Children's Hospital and other charities. Ciullo was a major organizer of

his team for the event in 2010—and he had a lot of fun, too.

"The football team's skits have been notoriously bad for many years. So one of the coach's wives is a choreographer. She came in like a drill sergeant, got us into shape, got us doing a dance that was actually really good. We were doing flips, more athletic things. We came in fourth."

Mock Rock is just one beneficiary of Ciullo's efforts. A member of Student-Athletes Leading Social Change, he raised so much money for a trip to

Kenya, he was invited to participate in the project there—to build a school—last summer.

In 2010, Ciullo was co-captain, along with Nick Koenigsnecht, for the football team's first Relay for Life team. "That was a challenge," he says. "It's hard to organize a bunch of kids to come to this event and stay all day. We fundraised, organized. We signed people up at training tables, sent emails to thousands of alumni. We raised somewhere around \$7,000." Next year, he will be captain for the event again.

Ciullo's academic and athletic performances don't suffer. He carries a 3.57 GPA, is in LSA's Honors Program, and has won the Michigan Athlete/Scholar award three times. A psychology major, he plans to write his thesis on the effects of exercise on mood and mental health. He hopes to attend law school after graduating.

Meanwhile, he has been "Weight Room Warrior" six times for outstanding effort in U-M's weight room.

The only down side to all of this? "This is my last year. I'm really going to miss all of this." ■

“Football is like a separate family. It's kind of like a fraternity, only closer. But it's given me great opportunities and it's opened a lot of doors for philanthropy.”

(Top) Zac Ciullo and his football teammates participate in Mock Rock, an annual athlete talent show that supports C.S. Mott Children's Hospital.

(Bottom) As a member of Student-Athletes Leading Social Change, Ciullo helped raise so much money to build a school in Kenya that he was invited there to participate in the project. Here, he poses with kids who will directly benefit from his efforts.





ALUMNI

The High-Tech Pursuit of Parenthood

> Injections, egg retrievals, and embryo transfers: LSA alumni talk about their struggle with infertility, a condition that affects one in six couples of reproductive age.

by Rebekah K. Murray

LISA GILBERT STARK ('90) WAS 37 when she and her husband of two years, David, decided it was time to build their family. A TV news reporter and anchor in markets throughout the United States, Lisa says she put off having kids because of her career. Then when a pregnancy didn't happen quickly, she says, "I felt like I was already behind the eight ball. We decided to seek fertility treatments after just a few

months because I knew these were critical years."

That same year, 2006, a couple in Birmingham, Michigan, were hoping to start their family. Joe (U-M '05) and Kari Derkos, ages 28 and 26, "were concerned after six months of trying," Joe says. "Then, after a year, I went in and they did tests on me that guys don't usually have done until their 50s."

Both the Starks and Derkoses never expected to struggle with infertility. Lisa says she knew she was in her late 30s, but "still, people think it's not going to happen to me," she says.

Infertility is defined as the inability to conceive or carry a pregnancy to term after 12 months of trying, according to Resolve: The National Infertility Association. For couples over the age of 35, the time of trying is reduced to six months. One in six couples of reproductive age will experience infertility in their pursuit of parenthood with the condition affecting both men and women equally, according to fertility specialists at New York-Presbyterian Hospital/Weill

“We heard every comment you can imagine,” says Kari Derkos, from “just relax and go on vacation,” to “adopt and then you’ll get pregnant.”

Cornell Medical Center.

Infertility brings medical tests, diagnoses, treatments, financial stress, and what the Starks and Derkoses say is the worst—emotional distress. A study by Harvard Medical School found that women with infertility felt as anxious or depressed as those diagnosed with cancer, hypertension, or who were recovering from a heart attack.¹

“It can feel so very dark,” says Dr. Laura Fechter (’91), a clinical psychologist who adopted her two children. “A critical part of treatment is addressing your emotional needs and talking to people who’ve gone through this,” she says.

While many patients are hesitant to talk about their inability to conceive, the Starks and Derkoses hope their stories will resonate with others who know that getting pregnant isn’t always easy. “Infertility needs to be discussed more openly,” Lisa says. “There’s still reluctance and some shame.”

A TREATMENT PLAN

After seeing a reproductive endocrinologist, Lisa went through one cycle on the common infertility drug Clomiphene

Citrate (Clomid) before proceeding to in vitro fertilization (IVF).

“I felt like I didn’t have time to try other stuff with lower success rates,” she says. IVF—the process in which eggs are removed, fertilized in a laboratory, and then transferred into the uterus—has a 47.6 percent pregnancy success rate for women under the age of 35, according to the Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology. For women between the ages of 35 and 37, the success rate is 38 percent.²

The Derkoses also decided to proceed to IVF after being told the procedure would allow for conception to occur despite sperm of an unusual shape. They felt their chances for success were high since they were still in their 20s.

“Age is a huge factor for many couples,” says alumna and reproductive endocrinologist Dr. L. April Gago (’91) of the Gago Center for Fertility,

located in Brighton, Michigan. “The older you get, the more you lose the benefit of IVF due to the reduction of egg quality as women age.”

Yet IVF isn’t an easy decision for many couples as Gago explains that one cycle in Michigan can cost between \$8,000–\$12,000 or between \$25,000–\$30,000 if donor eggs are used. Gago says patients are also concerned over a slightly increased risk of birth defects, low birth weights, “leftover” embryos after IVF, and the physical and emotional toil.

“When we discuss treatment options, I tell my patients to consider the risks, their beliefs, and the options available for building their family,” Gago says.

Once the decision to proceed with IVF is made, it’s not an easy route to parenthood. Patients endure injections, the retrieval of eggs, and anxiety over whether the fertilized eggs will grow into high-quality embryos. In the final stage of the IVF process, the embryos are transferred into the uterus.

“I wasn’t afraid of the treatment or needles or medication,” Lisa says, “I was going to do what I needed to do.”

After the transfer is the two-week wait before a couple knows if the embryo(s) actually implanted in the uterus and if they are, indeed, pregnant.

During the entire process, “you’re just on pins and needles,” Lisa says. “You go about your life, but for me, I was thinking about it every second of every day. It really does consume you.”

At the end of the Derkoses’ first IVF cycle, Joe was working at the Renaissance Center in Detroit. He was looking out at the Detroit River from the 17th floor waiting for Kari to call and tell him she was pregnant. “When she called and said it didn’t work, it was devastating. That was my lowest point,” he says.

“Every time you hope it’s going to work,” Lisa says. “And when you get the phone call that it didn’t, it’s just devastating.”

Gago cautions that even a positive pregnancy test after IVF or other infertility treatments isn’t a guarantee. “Sometimes we get to the pinnacle and hear that a patient is pregnant, only to learn of a miscarriage nine or ten weeks later,” she says.

¹ “The psychological impact of infertility and its treatment.” *Harvard Mental Health Letter*. Harvard Medical School. May 2009.

² Percentage of fresh embryo cycles that resulted in a pregnancy. 2008 Clinic Outcome Reports. Society for Assisted Reproductive Technology. <http://tiny.cc/38g2e>



HANDLING THE EMOTIONS

The grief these alumni have all felt is normal, says Fechter, who regularly counsels infertility patients through her private practice in Manhattan.

“Women are socialized to feel like it’s their job to have babies, it’s something that their bodies are supposed to be able to do,” says Fechter. “When that doesn’t work, women feel like they failed, or that others are judging them. There’s a lot of shame.”

Comments and advice from friends and family, even well-meaning ones, are often regarded as insensitive by couples experiencing infertility, Fechter says.

“We heard every comment you can imagine,” says Kari Derkos, from “just relax and go on vacation,” to “adopt and then you’ll get pregnant.”

Lisa found herself withdrawing from friends and social activities. “People don’t understand,” she says.

Fechter says it’s important to help them understand.

“Let people know when they’re being hurtful,” she says. “You’re in the job of educating other people when you’re going through infertility. Help the people in your life learn how to be sensitive to you and tell them what you need them to say. Maybe you don’t want them to cheerlead, but to say, ‘I know this is really difficult, and I admire you for what you’re going through.’”

It can be especially difficult to talk to parents, says Gago. “There’s still a generation gap. A lot of mothers and grandmothers had their babies at a young age, and didn’t have these struggles.”

Fechter and Gago both say women—and men—going through infertility need to talk to someone who understands. Online there are forums and blogs devoted to infertility. Resolve: The National Infertility Association has a list of support groups on its website, resolve.org, along with other resources and information.

“My patients shouldn’t feel like failures,” says

Gago. “I’m looking at this as a medical problem that we can work together to treat.”

RESOLUTION

There are several ways couples can resolve infertility: a pregnancy, adoption, or the decision to live child-free, says Fechter.

Lisa switched IVF clinics after three failed cycles (“Not all IVF doctors are the same,” she says), and after the first IVF cycle at her new clinic, she was pregnant. She gave birth to boy and girl twins, Jack and Olivia, in May of 2008. Five months later, she was surprised to learn she was expecting again—without any high-tech assistance.

“With two-year-old twins and a one-year-old boy, Ben, it’s a 24-hour circus at our house,” she says. “It’s not easy, but I am very happy and fulfilled.”

Lisa quit her broadcasting job and is now working in Las Vegas for her IVF clinic, the Sher Institutes for Reproductive Medicine, as the Director of Communications.

Joe and Kari Derkos’ IVF story doesn’t have the same ending. After two failed IVF cycles, along with other forms of treatment, including a surgery Kari endured for endometriosis—a gynecological medical condition—the Derkoses were told that it was very unlikely that they would ever conceive a child.

“We actually felt such relief,” Kari says. “We were so tired of everything—emotionally and physically.”

The couple decided to adopt and Joe says, “Once we switched gears, we didn’t look back.” Last March, the couple flew to South Korea and came home with their son, Ryan.

“I’m just glad we moved forward,” Joe says. “We have a family, a great little boy.”

As for infertility, “the pain and struggle of trying to conceive already feels like a distant memory,” he says. ■

(Left) After struggling with infertility, Lisa Gilbert Stark (’90) and her husband, David, are now a family of five with two-year-old twins, Jack and Olivia, and a one-year-old son, Ben.

(Right) Joe Derkos (U-M ’05) and his wife, Kari, decided to stop infertility treatments. They adopted their son, Ryan, from South Korea.



Love and Rock, Dick Valentine

ELECTRIC SIX FRONTMAN
TYLER SPENCER—A.K.A.
DICK VALENTINE—DISHES
ON MANAGING AND
ENJOYING A HURRICANE-
FORCE ROCK-STAR LIFE

by Brian McCollum

IT WAS THE SORT OF rock 'n' roll shouting match that bands on the road know all too well.

In 2003, the Electric Six had just catapulted from the Detroit club scene into the global limelight. The band, cofounded by vocalist Tyler Spencer ('94), was now burning the candle at both ends — a frenzy of travel, promotional gigs, sleepless nights, and fraying nerves.

Tensions at last erupted into a noisy face-off between Spencer and his band mates. The group's guitarist, flustered and flummoxed, glared at the easygoing frontman.

"You're the only one out here who's actually enjoying himself!"

Seven years and several band mates later, Spencer is still having a fine time. The Electric Six, whose high-energy dance-rock can be as kooky as it is captivating, just released its seventh album (*Zodiac*) on September 28, 2010. Through the trials of life in rock's trenches—the grind of touring, the shifting lineups, the hot hype that can quickly ice over—Spencer has pulled off one of the trickiest feats of all: endurance.

"Our band is, for better or worse, unique," says Spencer, 38. "There aren't other bands trying to be the Electric Six. Where that doesn't bode well is that we're not going to be millionaires. But where it does is that the cult following of people who like us don't have other options."

He chuckles, but he knows there's more to it than that: "I didn't get my first record deal 'til I was 30. So I was more appreciative of it—willing to put in the leg work, willing to take the ups and downs."

The journey to 30 was colorful enough. A graduate of Berkley High School in metro Detroit, Spencer arrived at U-M in 1990 "completely naïve, with no idea what route I was going to go."

As he found his way to the University's English Department, he also found housemates with a musical bent. He promptly taught himself to play guitar, bass, and drums. He took a midnight shift at

A local disc jockey once remarked that they were like a hybrid of Devo and Black Sabbath. No, came the band's clarification — “we think of ourselves as Kiss trapped in Talking Heads’ bodies.”

The band adopted colorful stage names; Spencer's cartoonish, charismatic frontman became Dick Valentine. The songs were zany novelty tunes packaged in furious arrangements, sporting titles such as "Gay Bar," "Danger! High Voltage," and "Nuclear War (On the Dance Floor)."

A local disc jockey once remarked that they were like a hybrid of Devo and Black Sabbath. No, came the band's clarification — "we think of ourselves as Kiss trapped in Talking Heads' bodies."

Greg Baise, Spencer's housemate during their University years, recalls "Tyler was always impressing me with his musical taste." Baise went on to become a Detroit concert promoter with a front-row seat on his friend's career.

"He's never been Tyler Spencer singing for the Electric Six—he's always had a stage persona," says Baise. "It was a kind of nerdy, skinny, socially awkward frontman."

Channeling left-field musicians such as Roky Erickson and Captain Beefheart, Spencer and his band embraced a freewheeling approach with a touch of the absurd. Onstage, the nattily suited group played songs by Kraftwerk and Tom Jones, flanked by hula girls, robots, and screens with random film snippets—marching armies, smokestacks, freeways.

The shows were weird, fun, and utterly counter to a '90s zeitgeist ruled by oh-so-earnest alternative rock.

"We just wanted to be entertaining," Spencer reflects. "We started in the era of the grunge

WCBN-FM, the University's student-run radio station, plumbing its vast record collection for an eclectic music education.

In 1994, by the time he graduated with a B.A. in English Language and Literature, Spencer was primed for a go at the Detroit rock scene, and soon formed the group that eventually would morph into the Electric Six.

The Wildbunch was unlike anything else in Detroit: a disco-metal tornado with Spencer's dramatically enunciated vocals up top.



OVER A DECADE OF IMPROPER DANCING

In the mid-1990s, the Wildbunch, which eventually morphed into the Electric Six, couldn't get anyone to release their first single, so they released it themselves. What a difference a few years can make. By 2003, the band had blown up in England and found themselves on the same label as the White Stripes. Non-self-released albums by the Electric Six include:

- *Fire* (2003)
- *Señor Smoke* (2005)
- *Switzerland* (2006)
- *I Shall Exterminate Everything Around Me That Restricts Me from Being the Master* (2007)
- *Flashy* (2008)
- *Sexy Trash* (2008)
- *Kill* (2009)
- *Zodiac* (2010)

phenomenon, the shoe-gazing bands. You weren't seeing a lot of fun bands, or bands that didn't just take it all seriously. We were the antithesis of what was going on."

The band became a top draw at Detroit area clubs as a whirlwind few years kicked in: The group twice split up and reformed, renamed itself Electric Six upon landing a record deal, released the debut album *Fire* in 2003, and embarked on a global tour.

"I was 30 years old and had never left North America," says Spencer. "Within a span of a year I'd been to five continents and 30 countries."

The United Kingdom became especially enamored of Spencer and company. In 2003, the group placed a trio of hits in the U.K. Top 40—"Danger! High Voltage," "Gay Bar," and "Dance Commander"—while playing to capacity crowds, landing on magazine covers, and earning ample television time.

It was there that the group imploded in spring

“I was 30 years old and had never left North America,” says Spencer. **“Within a span of a year I’d been to five continents and 30 countries.”**

2003: The tensions prompted three members to quit on the spot, and their replacements flew in from Detroit to meet up with Spencer. Two of them remain in the band today.

"The predecessors didn't even know what country we were in half the time," says Spencer. "Those of us who remained behind were happy to take it in a saner direction."

Saner behind the scenes,

at least. On stage and record, the band's booty-shaking fury and campy humor are intact—the upcoming *Zodiac*, says Spencer, is the band's "most Neil Diamond record yet." While the buzz has cooled off from the group's heady early days, the Electric Six retains a loyal audience and can fill midsize clubs and theaters in the United States and Europe.

Spencer, who also ventures out for several solo dates each year, has learned how to pace himself on the road.

"We're definitely not a drug band, and many of us are in monogamous relationships," Spencer says. "For us, the road is all about the eating. That's what we look forward to. That's the vice."

Having moved to Brooklyn, New York, six years ago, Spencer concedes his scenester days are behind him—a satisfying night means being home with his wife, web designer Kate Muth, and "our two lovely cats."

He long ago learned that a rock career is best treated as a marathon, not a sprint.

"You treat it like a job, a great job," he says. "I've gotten to go to Russia and Japan and Argentina and Chile, and as long as you're always cognizant of how great it is, it'll be great."

"People always ask me if I get sick of how often I have to sing 'Gay Bar.' It's always couched as, 'That's gotta be hell.' If that's my hell, I'll take it every time. I can't complain. I've worked in cubicles, and that's not a bad cubicle to work in—the 'Gay Bar' cubicle. I'll take it." ■

Members of the Electric Six, from left to right, with stage names noted parenthetically, include: Zach Shipps (The Colonel), Keith Thompson (Smorgasbord), Mike Alonso (Percussion World), Tyler Spencer (Dick Valentine), Christopher Tait (Tait Nucleus?), and John Nash (Johnny Na\$hinal).





Inside the Michigan Court of Appeals

> JUDGE DOUGLAS SHAPIRO'S JOB IS AS EXCITING AS THEY COME — SORT OF

by Sheryl James

IF YOU WERE TO STROLL through the Hall of Justice in Lansing, Michigan, the handsome home of the Michigan Court of Appeals and the Michigan Supreme Court, you might think the place was deserted. The halls are eerily quiet. Where are the beleaguered defendants, the lawyers, the swarms of reporters, the noise?

That, says Court of Appeals Judge Douglas Shapiro, first signals how much appellate courts differ from lower courts. Shapiro was appointed to his position by Michigan Governor Jennifer Granholm in February 2009, and the quiet took him by surprise, too.

"It is pretty solitary," he says about his work. "When you walk down the hall, it's almost silent here. And not because people aren't working, but everyone's in their own little chamber."

What are they doing there? Shapiro points to a stack of trial transcripts for his most recent case. Judges hear oral arguments two days each month. After that, "You have to review the trial record, read the briefs, read the relevant case law," and then write. And write and write. In fact, each judge writes at least 10 opinions per month—an enormous output of work. In all, 27 judges hear 270 cases each month, in nine panels of three judges each. "So it's an intellectual factory," Shapiro says. "It never stops. You've got to crank it out."

Sounds dreadful to most. But not to Shapiro. "The job is fantastic. If you like to read and write, and you like to think about human relations and structural issues of society, it's a great laboratory to be in."

Shapiro, originally from New York City, grew up positive he never would be a lawyer, and dropped out of U-M after successfully finishing his first year in 1972 to work as a waiter for several years. "My parents were *not* happy," he says.

Finally, at age 26, he returned to U-M, earned his history degree in 1983, and graduated *cum laude* from law school in 1986. He was law clerk to Justice James Brickley of the Michigan Supreme Court, worked in appellate court positions, and was a personal injury trial attorney for 17 years.

Shapiro, who is married, has two teenage sons and lives in Ann Arbor, is unopposed in this fall's elections, and will have to run again in 2012. His district covers 16 counties, primarily in Western Michigan.

The Court of Appeals, he says, mainly corrects lower court judges' mistakes or with "gray areas in the law." Many are parental rights or property cases—dull to some, not to Shapiro.

"In each case, for the people involved, it's their only case. So even if it seems run-of-the-mill, it's important to remember that there are real people who are waiting for the decision to come in the mail to tell them what happened, and not only to say if they won or lost, but why, so they feel they got a fair shake. They're entitled to an explanation." ■



Air Guitar Nation



ONE ALUMNA SHREDS HER WAY INTO THE WORLD OF AIR GUITAR COMPETITIONS

by Lara Zielin

SHRED YOURSELF

Got what it takes to rock air? Look for 2011 competitions in your city and follow these simple steps:

- 1 Pick a stage name
- 2 Fill out an official entry form online at www.usairguitar.com
- 3 Prepare your 60-second song
- 4 Practice, practice, practice!

Win the regional competition and you'll go on to nationals. Win there and you will represent Team U.S.A. at the Air Guitar World Championships in Finland.

BROWN-HAIRED, BROWN-EYED Marquina Iliev ('01) is tall and slender, polite and poised—until Air-ice Cooper is unleashed. In seconds, Iliev's hair is flying, her body bending and twisting, and her hands working...on air. Or, more specifically, on air *guitar*.

Air-ice Cooper is Iliev's on-stage personality when she rocks out to metal songs in air guitar competitions. Defined by Wikipedia as "a form of dance and movement in which the performer pretends to play rock or heavy metal-style electric guitar," using "exaggerated strumming and picking motions," air guitar has exploded as a popular pastime among a wide range of enthusiasts.

"From last year to this year, the number of people in the competitions has doubled," Iliev says. She competes in New York, but notes "there are more cities hosting competitions every year."

Iliev, who works as a social media consultant by day, says she's hooked on air guitar as a hobby. She compares it to performance art. "It's all about figuring out how to perform on this huge stage with no instruments. You can think it through, but it's

more about just going out there and doing it. You just really have to be awesome. People will know if it's authentic or not."

Iliev says the performances are judged on three criteria: technical merit, stage presence, and "airness," which is defined by the popular 2007 documentary *Air Guitar Nation* as "the extent to which the air guitar performance exceeds the imitation of playing guitar and becomes an art form in and of itself."

The first time Iliev competed, she discovered her airness was on the heavy side. "Air guitar, it's supposed to be gritty. It's rock. I was too done up. I had makeup on and my hair was styled—it's not about that. You don't overdress. You just rock."

Iliev says she's still trying to define her airness as she gets ready to compete in the 2010 Dark Horse competition—a last ditch effort to see if she can squeak by to the air guitar finals (the winner of which goes on to Finland to the world championships). "Everyone has to get their own thing," she says. "I'm trying to figure out how to be interesting and engaging on stage without wearing a diaper on my head."

She'll have seconds to wow the crowd and the judges with the right song and the right moves. And while she'd be delighted at an air guitar win, she's just happy to be on stage. "All the people in the air guitar community support and encourage each other. If I placed at all, I'd be so happy. But I know I'm going to have a blast no matter what." ■

LSA WIRE > To see a video of Iliev performing air guitar and to learn how she did in the Dark Horse, visit the LSA Wire at www.lsa.umich.edu/alumni/wire



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Weed it and Reap

➤ ONE PHOTOGRAPHER'S
QUEST TO CAPTURE
BEAUTY IN DISCARDED
AND DEAD THINGS


by Lara Zielin

LAST FALL, photographer Adrian Wylie ('86) put his portrait and architectural photography on hold in favor of images from his own Michigan backyard.

"Anyone can travel to Hawaii and the Galapagos and photograph amazing natural things there," he says. "But the bigger challenge to me is using what's around you, opening your eyes and seeing things in a new way."

Wylie walked around his yard and neighborhood filling a bag with sticks, dead leaves, and teasels —

J. Adrian Wylie



a common weed. He brought the items back to his studio and set out to photograph them. "I believe that if you take the time to look for the beauty in things, you'll be rewarded."

Light played a key role in this particular photography process. "With any plant, its whole life depends on light, on photosynthesis. I think that's part of what I'm doing here, especially shooting this on film. It's almost this organic process of having that latent image on film that no one can see, like

a seed, until you add water and get it to bloom. Time, light, and proper care are how both plants and photographs come about."

Wylie says he'll continue to look for inspiration in plants and everyday items that most people overlook. "I've never heard of a *National Geographic* photographer being sent out to shoot a teasel. These aren't iconic photographs you see all the time in magazines, but they're beautiful in their own way." ■

LSA WIRE > To see more of Wylie's photos, visit the LSA Wire at www.lsa.umich.edu/alumni/wire

CAMPUS

A Piece of U.S. History

> A massive desk that once served **William Howard Taft** in the Philippines now sits in a conference room at the Bentley Historical Library. How it got there is a tale of two countries, two presidents, and one scrawny football player.

In 1905, U.S. Secretary of War William Howard Taft led one of the largest American foreign diplomatic delegations to the Philippines and China. Previously, from 1901 to 1903, Taft had served as the first civilian governor general of the Philippines.

by Fritz Swanson

THERE IS AN ENORMOUS MAHOGANY DESK and chair locked away in a conference room on North Campus. When you sit in the chair, the caned-wicker back rises above your head more than a foot.

Tom Powers, curator of Manuscripts for the Bentley Historical Library, says the desk arrived in 1972. Its previous owner was Frank Murphy of Harbor Beach, Michigan. The 135-pound Murphy played football for U-M, graduated in 1912, then

received his law degree from U-M in 1914. He served as mayor of Detroit from 1930 to 1933 where, after trimming \$30 million from the city budget, he used the savings to re-open closed auto plants as temporary dormitories for the more than 50,000 Detroiters impoverished by the Depression.

Murphy became Michigan's 35th governor from 1937 to 1939 but lost the re-election to Frank Fitzgerald. Shortly thereafter, President Theodore Roosevelt appointed Murphy to attorney general of the United States and then, from 1940 until his death in 1949, he served as an associate justice of the United States Supreme Court.

Murphy had many desks throughout his storied career. So why, when his papers were donated to the University of Michigan, did the Murphy estate also send the University this desk?

POST-COLONIAL COLONIALISM, U-M, AND THE DESK

The desk's history starts with William Howard Taft, who became president of the United States in 1908. In 1900, before he ascended to the Oval Office, Taft was appointed by President William

McKinley as the first civilian governor general of the Philippines, which the United States had taken at the close of the Spanish-American War.

At the time, Taft was approximately six feet tall, and weighed 320 pounds. He commissioned Filipino craftsmen to make him a desk and chair. For such a large man, a big chair with a wicker back would have been essential in the tropical climate of the Philippines.

Taft's job—the job of civilian rather than military government—was to unravel Spanish colonial rule over the islands so that the Filipino people could govern themselves. The Spanish had ruled the islands from the early 16th century until February 6, 1899, when America became a colonial power. As President McKinley said, “The Philippines are ours, not to exploit, but to develop, to civilize, to educate, to train in the science of self-government.”¹

Taft was one of the first bearers of the now-common American burden: nation building. Then-Vice President Theodore Roosevelt bemoaned Taft's task by writing, “In the Philippines, we were heirs to all the troubles of Spain, and above all to the inveterate distrust and suspicion, which Spanish rule had left in the native mind.”²

And so, when Taft sat down in his newly crafted chair, he bore the full weight of this new American problem: post-colonial colonialism.

The University of Michigan played a key role in helping Taft work through it.

In 1887, Zoology Professor Joseph Steere, one of the University's first visitors to the islands, took a group of students to explore the native wildlife. One student, Dean Conant Worcester (1889), fell so in love with the islands that he returned in 1890, and again in 1893, laying the foundation for what would become a century-long relationship between the islands and U-M.

Worcester developed a special political and cultural understanding of the islands, which prompted President McKinley to appoint him to the Philippine Commission under Taft.

The Commission was tasked with devising, building, and then running the colonial government of the Philippines, eventually acting as the

legislative body under the Governor General.

But Worcester wasn't the only Wolverine on the job. There was such a disproportionate number of Michigan alumni serving in the American colonial government that when Taft gaveled in one of the first meetings of the commission, he is reported to have wryly noted, “The Michigan University Alumni Association of the Philippines will come to order.”³

Here Frank Murphy re-enters the picture. After serving as mayor of Detroit but before becoming governor of Michigan, Murphy served as the 72nd governor general of the Philippines from 1933 to 1935—the same position Taft had before leaving the islands for a successful presidential bid. Murphy was the 16th and final American civilian to hold that post, and the last man to officially sit at the desk.

Even though the slight Murphy was dwarfed by the chair in which he sat, he never failed in his obligations as civil governor general. Murphy presided over free elections and watched as Manuel Quezón become the first president of the modern Republic of the Philippines, ending more than 300 years of colonial rule. President Quezón called Murphy “one of our best friends and benefactors.”

Sometime in late 1939, President Quezón made a gift of the desk to Murphy who, by then, was serving as the 56th attorney general of the United States. In 1940, Murphy became an associate justice of the Supreme Court and took the Taft desk with him to the new job. He arrived on the court just nine years after President Taft, the desk's original owner, had died while serving as the court's chief justice. (Taft is the only person to have served as president and as a member of the Supreme Court.)

When Frank Murphy's own career on the court was cut short by his death in 1949, the Republic of the Philippines observed three days of mourning.

The desk's history starts with William Howard Taft, who became president of the United States in 1908. In 1900, before he ascended to the Oval Office, Taft was appointed by President William McKinley as the first civilian governor general of the Philippines...

¹ Powers, Thomas. *Balita mula Maynila/News from Manila* (University of Michigan, 1971).

² Roosevelt, Theodore. *The Philippines: The First Civil Governor* (The Outlook Company, 1902).

³ Powers, 1971.



The Philippines, Then and Now

- Ferdinand Magellan landed in the archipelago of the Philippines in the spring of 1521 and claimed them in the name of King Philip of Spain. By the end of April, Magellan was dead—killed in a Filipino war.
- The archipelago consists of 7,107 islands that run north to south, from China to Indonesia.
- America ended Spanish rule of the islands following a U.S. victory in the Spanish-American war of 1898. America held the islands until July 4th, 1946.
- Japan occupied the islands from 1942 until the end of WWII.
- The Philippines' population today is almost 100 million, or one-third the population of the United States.
- Because of the United States' close historic relationship, Filipinos recognize English as an official language, second only to Filipino itself.
- From the mid-1960s to the mid-1980s, the country suffered under the quasi-dictatorship of Ferdinand Marcos, until a "people power" movement (known as EDSA) forced Marcos into exile. Corazon Aquino was installed as president, followed by a series of coup attempts, until 1992 when Fidel Ramos established a stable government.
- In May 2010, Benigno S. Aquino III was elected as the 14th President of the Republic of the Philippines. If the governor general's desk had remained in the Philippines, it would have been in Taft's chair that Aquino sat when his term began in the summer of 2010.

From there, Murphy's papers and the desk came to the University of Michigan.

THE DESK AS SCHOLARSHIP

Today, the Bentley Library has amassed more than 23 substantial collections of papers and other media from Michigan-affiliated people who served in the Philippines. Not only does the Bentley have all of Dean Worcester's papers—which describe the political, social, and environmental conditions of the islands at the outset of the colonial period—but it also has copies of all of Filipino President Manuel Quezón's papers. The Bentley is the only library outside the National Library of the Philippines to have copies.

This exhaustive collection has had a broad impact on scholarship at the University, says Fe Susan Go, the head of the Southeast Asia division of the Harlan Hatcher Graduate Library, and the newly appointed head of the Philippine Studies Endowment at LSA's Center for Southeast Asian Studies.

Go started her career as a librarian at the Philippines University of San Carlos in Cebu City, then was ultimately recruited to Michigan to help care for the Bentley's collection. Go views the holdings from two important perspectives—as both a Filipina and a scholar.

"Did the Americans do something bad?" she asks, referring to the years America ruled her country and all of the culturally and historically significant items that were brought to Michigan. "In some sense, yes, we [Filipinos] lost some of our cultural heritage. But as a librarian, I say great. Americans foresaw the problems and these items were preserved. The culture was preserved."

Immediately following WWII, America celebrated the retaking of the Philippines from Japan by melting down the bronze propeller of the U.S.S. Olympia—the naval flagship that presided over the U.S. victory at the Battle of Manila—and striking coins describing Admiral George Dewey's victory. For many Americans, this bronze coin was a symbol of the United States' relationship with the Philippines. It is perhaps more comforting to know that for men like Murphy, the symbol of that relationship wasn't a battleship, or a canon, or a bayonet, or a stockade on a hill. Instead, the symbol was a desk. It was paperwork. And it was the rule of law. ■

(Left) The desk as it is displayed in the Bentley Historical Library today.

(Right) Governor General William Howard Taft presiding over an unidentified event in the Philippines in 1903.



(Bottom left) Scott Soderberg, U-M Photo Services; (bottom right) courtesy of the Bentley Historical Library

(campusnews)



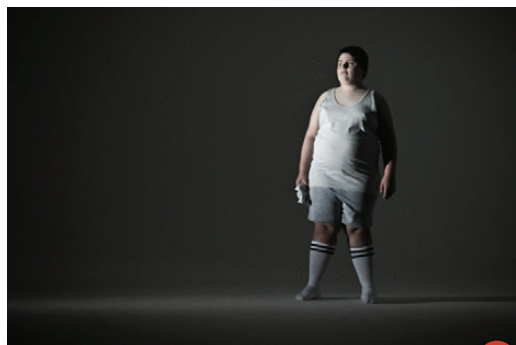
New Michigan iPhone App

A new University of Michigan app is available in the iTunes store for free. It allows users to track buses in real time, check dining hall menus, search for buildings, read campus publications, and more. The initial app was created by Computer Science and Engineering students Kevin Chan and Mark Yang for a mobile and web app programming course in winter 2009. Last March, U-M Information and Technology Services (ITS) purchased the app. ITS is exploring the development of an Android version of the Michigan app and is also developing other apps for the Michigan community.



CAN COMPANIES REALLY PREDICT WHAT WE LIKE?

Internet marketers who try to predict what we like based on what we've bought online or which websites we've visited may not know as much about us as they think they do, according to new U-M research. Researchers found that people's natural aversion to being predicted makes it difficult for companies to understand exactly what consumers want.



ARE OBESE ADOLESCENTS TOO YOUNG FOR BARIATRIC SURGERY?

One-half of physicians say yes, despite the potential benefits, according to a U-M study.

"We still have a lot to learn about the long-term effects of bariatric surgery among adolescents," says Susan Woolford, medical director of U-M's Pediatric Comprehensive Weight Management Center. "Physicians worry whether the risks will outweigh the benefits.... If findings are similar to those in adults, there could be significant weight loss and health benefits."

U-M Accredited for Another 10 Years

U-M has earned continuing accreditation from the Higher Learning Commission (HLC) of the North Central Association of Colleges and Schools. HLC evaluates institutions in five major categories: mission and integrity; preparing for the future; student learning and effective teaching; acquisition, discovery, and application of knowledge; and engagement and service. In particular, the HLC noted that U-M, despite declining state support, has weathered the nation's financial crisis well, such that academic programs remain strong and the University continues to enhance its reputation as a leader in higher education. U-M has been accredited since 1913.



CLOSE TO MOM

Most Americans live within 25 miles of their mothers, according to a report issued by U-M's Retirement Research Center. The study calls into question a widespread belief that when children grow up, they're likely to move far away and not be on hand to help out when their mothers age. Children are staying close, yet those with college degrees were much less likely to live with or near their mothers, the study found.



New UMMA Director

Joseph Rosa, formerly the chief curator of architecture and design at the Art Institute of Chicago, is the new director of the U-M Museum of Art. The selection came after an international search conducted by a 14-member search advisory committee appointed by U-M President Mary Sue Coleman. Rosa is the seventh director of UMMA.

tom rath

According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, employed persons ages 25 to 54 (with children) spend 8.8 hours each day on work or work-related activities. That's more than one-third of an entire day. Work time has a major impact on people's overall wellbeing, which is a connection Tom Rath ('98) has studied as a global practice leader in the Gallup Organization's workplace consulting business. Rath guides Gallup's practices and research on employee engagement, selection, strengths-based development, leadership, and wellbeing. He's also the bestselling author of *Wellbeing: The Five Essential Elements*. We caught up with Rath to ask him more about his research on work and life interplay, and how people might enjoy their jobs more thoroughly every day.

How much of an impact, good or bad, does a person's day-to-day work have on them?

A lot of the research we see at Gallup indicates that people think their work is separate from the rest of their lives, but time spent in an office or in a classroom isn't independent or unrelated from other critical areas of life at all. If you don't have the opportunity to regularly do something you enjoy, the odds of your having high wellbeing in other areas of life diminish rapidly.

What are these other areas of wellbeing? And how do you define wellbeing?

Enjoying your work is defined as career wellbeing. The other areas of wellbeing are social, financial, physical, and community wellbeing. In our research, we don't just define wellbeing as being happy. Or being wealthy. Or healthy. Rather, it's about the combination of our love for what we do each day, the quality of our relationships, the security of our finances, the vibrancy of our physical health, and the pride we take in contributing to our communities. Most importantly it's about how these five elements interact.

Even so, career wellbeing might be the most important of all. True?

Our research shows that you can recover your wellbeing more rapidly from the death of a spouse than from a sustained period of unemployment. This is especially true for men. Our careers shape our identities in many ways. If you don't like what you do every day, chances are your social time is going to be spent worrying or complaining about your job. And this causes stress, taking a toll on your physical health.

What are some things that can improve a workplace experience?

One thing that's important to realize is that your wellbeing is closely tied to the people around you. One of the best predictors of whether or not people are productive at work is whether or not they have a best friend in the office. And by best friend, we're really talking about someone who you feel cares about you and who you can socialize with. For people who don't have a best friend at work, their odds of being engaged plummet to one in 12. For those who do have a best friend, Gallup's findings show they are seven times as likely to be engaged in their jobs.

What's more, we conducted research on the number of happy moments and the number of stressful moments workers had in a given day, and the results were

Do you like what you do each day? Only 20 percent of people can give a strong “yes” in response to that question.

A 1958 study by the late George Gallup found that career wellbeing was one of the major differentiations that helped people live into their 90s.

A study of more than 3,000 workers in Sweden found that those who deemed their managers to be the least competent had a 24 percent higher risk of a serious heart problem.

Source: *Wellbeing: The Five Essential Elements* (Gallup Press, 2010).

directly tied to social time. When individuals had five to six hours of social time in a given day, they were closer to having 10 happy moments than stressful moments. Myself as an introvert, I underestimated the social time we needed to have a good day. It's really not that much different than exercise and sleep.

Mondays are the hardest day of the week for many, but an overabundance of workweek blues can be unhealthy. Can you elaborate?

Our research shows disengaged workers live for the weekend and dread the workday. This extreme variation between a good weekend and a bad workday might explain why heart attacks are more likely to occur on Mondays. For example, we know cortisol is a stress hormone that boosts blood pressure and blood sugar levels while suppressing the immune system. It's essential for functioning, but if, for example, your boss criticizes your work or you're engaged in a frustrating activity, your cortisol levels spike. When cortisol rushes through your system, your heart rate goes up and you start to breathe faster. Over time, these cortisol spikes, coupled with rough transitions from Sunday to Monday, may take a physical toll.

Many people might feel like their hands are tied if they're working in a dysfunctional environment, but is there still a way they might enjoy their job?

One of the essentials of enjoying work is getting to use your strengths every day. Compared to those who don't get to focus on what they do best, people who have the opportunity to use their strengths are six times as likely to be engaged in their jobs and more than three times as likely to report having an excellent quality of life.

If there's a way to fold your passions and strengths into your work, the payoff is significant. Even if you wind up having to work more, your overall enjoyment in the job will go up. One of the patterns we observed among people with thriving career wellbeing was that their work was closely aligned with, and spilled into, their personal lives.

Tom Rath has been with the Gallup Organization for more than 14 years. His latest book includes a wealth of research and statistics, such as the fact that people who have at least three or four close friendships are healthier, have higher levels of wellbeing, and are more engaged in their jobs.



What about just trying to be a good person? Wouldn't offices everywhere improve if people worked toward that one simple thing?

Absolutely. We've found that the little interactions we experience during the day—saying hello, holding the door—do have an impact on how we experience things. You get immense reward from doing good. We see this financially, especially. A team of Harvard researchers studied people and found that spending money on oneself does not boost wellbeing. But spending money on others does.

Just remember, the people who are oriented toward others have the highest wellbeing in return. This is as true across offices as it is across cultures. ■

crime and punishment

POLICE LINE DO NOT CROSS

Wrongdoing. Redemption. Love. Loathing. Freedom.
Confinement. Our Spring 2011 “Crime and Punishment”
issue blinks through the magnifying glass at the notorious,
the nominal, and the nonfeasance in between. This issue
will also feature a fresh approach to content including new
sections and more ways to engage with the College.

A premeditated plot to be sure.