

MINNESOTA

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

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**Gopher
Eric Decker
On Deck**

**'s Motherhood
a Right?**


**Diet Soda
Under
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**How a
Senator
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the U**

A Guest in Their World

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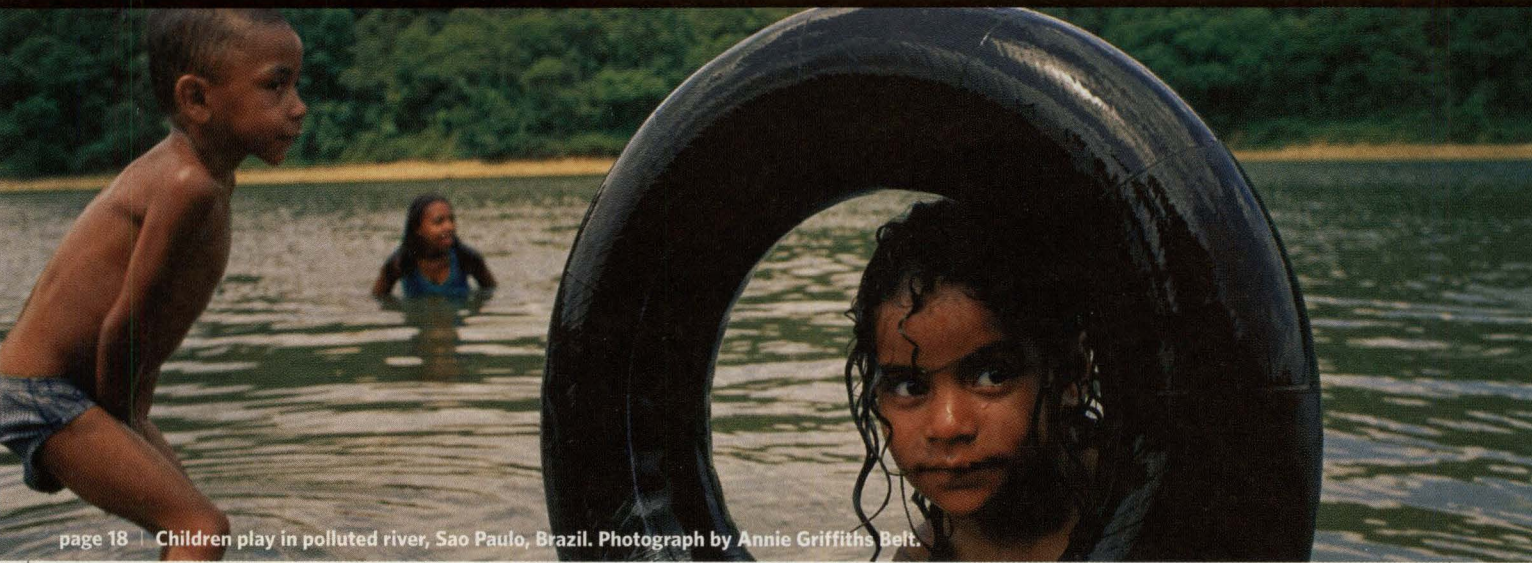
This is more.



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
CHILDREN'S HOSPITAL

 FAIRVIEW

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page 18 | Children play in polluted river, Sao Paulo, Brazil. Photograph by Annie Griffiths Belt.

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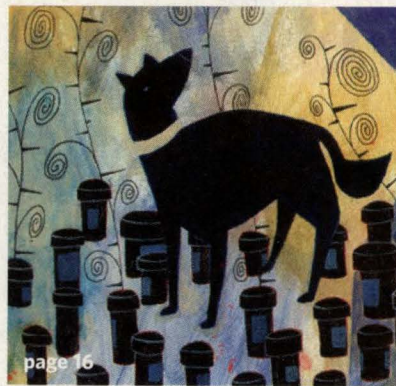
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Cover photograph by Mark Luinenburg

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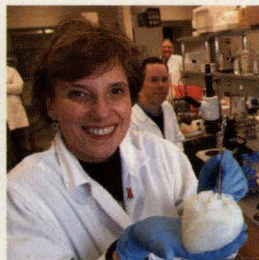


In a world of variables, innovation needs to be constant.

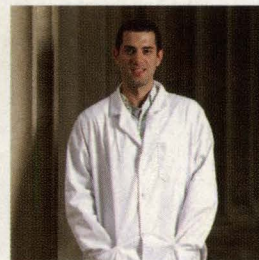
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Editor's Note ✨

The Webs We Weave

With the approach of May each year, I feel the hot breath of a herd of new graduates on my neck. I don't dare look over my shoulder; I know that each one is young, optimistic, and hungry to take my job. How can I compete?

I've tried coloring my hair and shopping at thrift stores, but I lose sleep fearing I'll thoughtlessly say the word *mimeograph* in a meeting, bringing the discussion to a halt and revealing that I've been around a little too long. The going-away party will soon follow. I'll pack my Rolodex and Walkman in a box and ask my replacement to dispatch the rest of my belongings via one of those horseless carriages.



Shelly Fling

A few years ago, a friend sent me an invitation. "Join my network!" her e-mail screamed. I called her and asked what this network thing was and whether it was secure. Looking to change careers, my friend had employed an online tool to reconnect with former colleagues and make new connections through them, one of whom might lead her to the perfect job.

I decided to swirl my big toe in these unknown waters. Maybe doing so would be safer than not. After all, as skeptical as I was of the Y2K panic, I did stash a few days' supply of water and chocolate in the pantry, just in case. So, I joined up and supplied the necessary information.

Every couple of months, then weeks, more "Join my network!" e-mails arrived from current and former colleagues. Two were from people I was certain erred in wanting to link to me. Didn't she despise me? Didn't he realize he should network up and not down? It evoked the second grade, when we were required to bring valentines for every class member, even the kids we didn't think much of. A subtle lesson in equality.

Just as in my palpable life, I had yet to extend an invitation to anyone else; I tend to wait to be asked first. Besides, even without nurturing, my little web appeared to be expanding faster than a patch of creeping Charlie. One day I logged on to view my list of connections and saw that it had grown to 12. That's a good start, I thought. Then I clicked on the names in my burgeoning circle and saw that one had 56 contacts, another 87, and the one who had first invited me to join had 122.

I flushed. What if someone saw that I had 12 measly contacts? What a loser! Worse, I searched the site and found a number of people I knew who hadn't bothered to connect to me.

It evoked junior high, when a school club took orders for Valentine's Day carnations. The flowers were delivered during homeroom, and for the rest of the day the most popular girl walked the halls cradling her red bouquet like she was Miss America. An overt lesson in reality.

It was decision-making time. Should I take a week of vacation to lard my network? Should I save face and quietly snuff out my listing?

According to Megan Hustad (B.A. '97), such career-related quandaries are timeless. She's the author of *How to Be Useful: A Beginner's Guide to Not Hating Work*, a new career advice book based on the early sages of the genre but with a modern twist, and is featured in this issue (page 46).

In the end, I decided to retain my contact information and let my network grow in its haphazard way—even if it benefits the members of that herd of new grads—but to continue networking the old-fashioned way, too, over coffee and lunch. ■

Shelly Fling may be reached at fling003@umn.edu.



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Letters

LOST, FOUND, AND LAID TO REST

It was with great interest that I read the article on Albert Jenks ["Primitive Thinking"] in the March–April issue of *Minnesota*. Though he appears to have been rather unpopular in certain points of his career, he was a revered figure in my home. That was because he was closely associated with the Browns Valley Man, whom my father, William H. Jensen, discovered on October 9, 1933, in a gravel pit on the southeastern edge of Browns Valley, Minnesota. For about anyone, that might have been a thrilling experience, but for my father it was exciting beyond belief. All of his life, much of his interest had been directed toward archaeology, history, and Indian culture.

After his find, Dad contacted Jenks and sent him the remains to study in 1934. Jenks determined the age of the Browns Valley Man to be about 10,000 years. That was quite a remarkable estimate in the less scientific time of 1934. In 1989, a fragment of bone sent to Auckland, New Zealand, for testing concluded that he was 9,160 years old. At that time, the Browns Valley Man was considered to be the oldest, most complete skeletal remains in the Western Hemisphere.

At my father's request, the bones were returned to him in 1935. In 1950, Dad put them away "for safe keeping" in our home in preparation for a trip we were taking. As time went on, Dad was unable to locate his precious find, and he died in 1960 never having retrieved it. That may sound neglectful, but you'd have to understand the situation. My parents' interests and hobbies in life were extensive and our home was much like a museum. When we found the bones again they were in very fine condition.

On June 24, 1987, the Browns Valley Man was delivered to the state archaeologist's office at Hamline University in St. Paul. Later, the remains were placed at the Science Museum in St. Paul, and for many years they were studied by scientists from around the world.

The Browns Valley Man was repatriated to the Dakota tribe and reburied in 1999 on the reservation near Sisseton, South Dakota, along with approximately 1,200 other remains from around the United States. As it turns out, that location is not far from where the bones were originally found 66 years before.

Janet Jensen Presley (B.S. '59, M.A. '77)
Edina, Minnesota

UNDERSTANDING SCIENCES' MISSTEPS

Tim Brady's "Primitive Thinking" is an informative presentation of Albert Jenks's anthropological career. Jenks, caught up in the "racial" anthropometric movement of his time, published prominent conceptualizations regarding the races of the world—and especially the European races which sought emigration to the United States.

Nowadays, we decry the race conceptualizations so common in the 19th and early 20th centuries. Certainly these were vague, primitive, and poorly reasoned. But all sciences include primitive and later-discarded concepts in the course of the dialectic thesis/antithesis progressions in their discipline. Sciences grow in zigzag, topsy-turvy fashion—not a nicely logical, clear-line development.

Any worthy history of anthropology includes earlier concepts which now are perceived as invalid. But these remain as occurrences within the progressions of the discipline—whether now we like them or not or reject them. Albert Jenks was a pioneer figure in the developing discipline of anthropology/cultural anthropology.

Thank you for your complete presentation of Jenks's doings and ideas—metaphorically inclusive of his warts and all.

Leo Shatin
Retired professor of clinical psychiatry and psychology, Mount Sinai School of Medicine
Boca Raton, Florida

MISPLACED BLAME

I'm writing in response to a letter in the March–April edition written by Suzanne Montabon ["Illegal Immigrants' Impact"]. She referenced an earlier article published in November–December 2007 titled "Immigration Conflagration" in which University of Minnesota history professor Donna Gabaccia was interviewed. I'm disappointed in Montabon's failure to understand the information provided in the article.

Although numerous academic studies have disproved the myths associated with immigrants (i.e., "they steal jobs," "they're costing us money," and "they're criminals"), critics like Montabon continually seek to contribute to the cycle of discrimination, racism, and marginalization that have tainted the history of our country. Montabon demonstrates that our country is a "nation of victims," since we continue to blame our problems on those individuals in our society who are the most vulnerable.

The issue of immigration, much like its solution, is not simple. I urge Montabon as well as other readers to read or reread "Immigration Conflagration." It provides a balanced perspective and urges us all as educated individuals to think beyond stereotypes and generalizations.

Steven Renderos
Project Coordinator, Minnesotano Media
Empowerment Project
Department of Chicano Studies, University of
Minnesota-Twin Cities

I'd like to respond to Suzanne Montabon's letter in the March-April issue. I would like to know what impact illegal immigrants have had on your health, safety, and freedom? I think you are exaggerating and scapegoating. However, I'm sure most illegal immigrants would agree with you that the damage done to the environment near the border is unfortunate.

I'm also sure that most would rather apply for a visa, obtain a work permit, and arrive to the United States in an airplane, or car, as respected people. It's unfortunate that our government has created a system that discriminates against working-class Mexicans. It is virtually impossible for them to obtain U.S. visas. This is why, when faced with poverty and hunger, they come walking across a desert, risking their lives, for the American Dream.

They are not favored by anyone. They are unfavored. They live as second-class citizens without, as you point out, much-desired identification and auto insurance. The vast majority *do* pay taxes. The vast majority will *never* collect a cent from social security or disability. Not all Mexican immigrants send all their money home. Many of them spend it here. Many of them have bought homes with the only loans they can get, with very high interest. They pay property taxes. They pay sales taxes. They pay income taxes. They are a part of our society and they contribute to this society.

Complaining about wheelchairs going to those in need? Do you think you should be favored? Just because you were born on the north side of an imaginary line?

Amanda Tallen (B.A. '93)
St. Paul

To submit a letter, go to www.alumni.umn.edu/opinion or write to Letter to the Editor, *Minnesota Magazine*, McNamara Alumni Center, 200 Oak St. SE, Suite 200, Minneapolis, MN 55455. Guidelines are at the Web address above.



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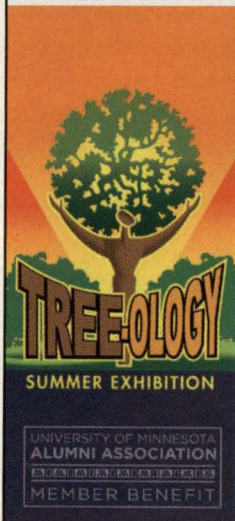
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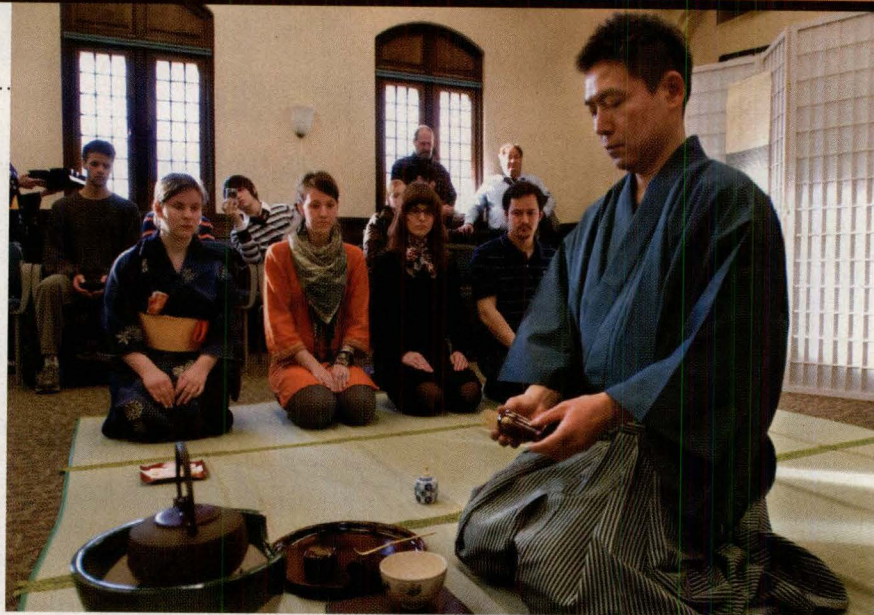


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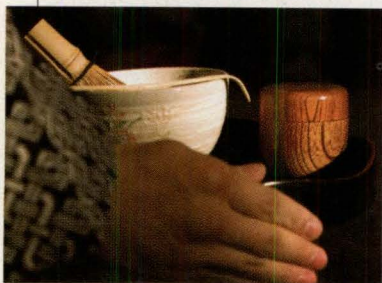
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Tea and Taciturnity

A Japanese tea ceremony to learn about *chadō* (the way of tea) took place at the Nolte Center in March as part of linguistics professor Polly Szatrowski's class, "Verbal and Non-Verbal Communication through Tea." At right, Professor Fumio Watanabe from Yamagata University in Japan prepares tea for his *okyasuan* (guests), who are seated on a *tatami* (mat) while onlookers observe. Watanabe was the tea master honored in the event, which consisted of four tea ceremonies. Students also performed and

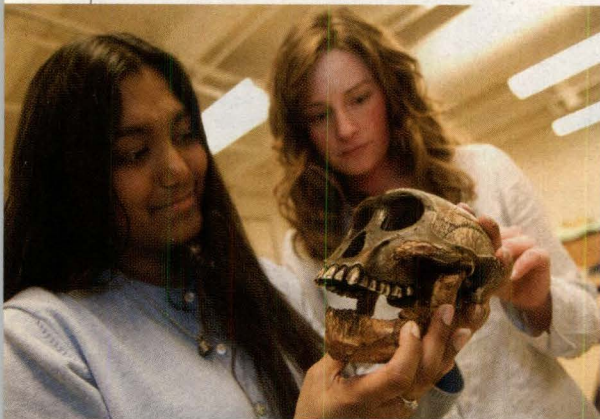


were able to communicate with Professor Watanabe through the ritualized movements and phrases of the ceremony. At left, a student carries a tray of tea utensils as the *bonryaku demae* (abbreviated tea ceremony on a tray) comes to a close. In Japan, the tea ceremony is considered a way of keeping in touch with traditional Japanese culture as well as being a meditation and life discipline. The spirit of tea is one of peace, harmony, and mutual respect.



At left, a student carries a tray of tea utensils as the *bonryaku demae* (abbreviated tea ceremony on a tray) comes to a close. In Japan, the tea ceremony is considered a way of keeping in touch with traditional Japanese culture as well as being a meditation and life discipline. The spirit of tea is one of peace, harmony, and mutual respect.

Hip and Digital



State-of-the-art digital scanning tools have helped cast a whole new light on Lucy, the most complete and earliest discovered hominid, who resides in the Evolutionary Anthropology Laboratory in Blegen Hall. The Laboratory was part of the tour during Emerging Digerati Week.

In classrooms, dorm rooms, labs, and offices all over campus, University of Minnesota students and faculty are imagining new ways to apply digital technologies to their fields of study. They are emerging digerati—a twist on the term *emerging literati*, which describes writers at the cutting edge of literature. Emerging digerati are at the frontier of all things digital.

During the first week of April, the University's Institute for New Media Studies in the School of Journalism and Mass Communication sponsored Emerging Digerati Week, a showcase of the ways that U scholars are applying digital technology to artistic and scientific work. Included were public tours of state-of-the-art simulation labs in anthropology, architecture, surgery, and traffic engineering, as well as presentations by emerging digerati of their current projects. For example, one lab for training health-care students features SimMan, a mannequin that breathes, gags, and goes into cardiac arrest.

One of the goals of the week was to connect emerging digerati on campus with people from outside the U. But presenters also got the opportunity to review each other's. "In a large university, people get silo-ed into their discipline areas and often don't get a chance to see or hear about the cool things happening in other departments," says Nora Paul, director of the Institute for New Media Studies. "This is an attempt at cross-fertilization and a way to invite the public to see the great stuff happening at the U."

OVERHEARD ON CAMPUS

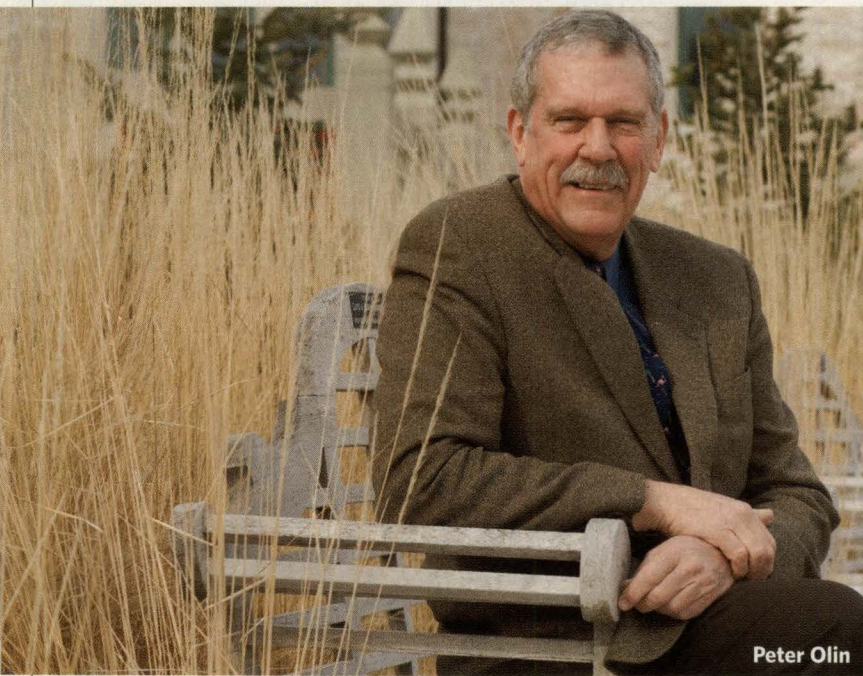
"Steve was a great humanitarian who believed the knowledge of the past could prevent atrocities in the future."

—Eric Weitz, chair of the University of Minnesota department of history, reflecting on the death of Stephen Feinstein, director of the University of Minnesota Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. Feinstein, 65, suffered an aortic aneurysm and collapsed while speaking at the Jewish Film Festival in Minneapolis on March 4. He was known internationally as an advocate for Holocaust survivors and genocide education, and tributes to him poured in from throughout the world.

Force of Nature

This year, the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum celebrates its 50th anniversary. Peter Olin, a professor of horticultural science and the man who has shepherded the arboretum through nearly half of those years as executive director, retires in June. During Olin's tenure, the arboretum—which is based in Chaska and is part of the U's College of Food, Agricultural,

Program, which gets kids involved in gardening and landscaping by connecting them with caring adults and mentors. I like the idea of using plants as a way of addressing not only environmental problems but social problems. Because they're a way of offering people opportunities they might otherwise not have.



Peter Olin

and Natural Resource Sciences—has grown to become a nationally recognized public garden and research center.

Olin recently spoke with *Minnesota* about the role of the Arboretum in people's lives.

Of the innovations that occurred during your tenure, which do you feel most passionate about? The first thing to come to mind is our horticultural therapy program that connects people with disabilities to nature. It reaches about 5,000 people each year through workshops, lectures, and visits to nursing homes and other places. I'm also really proud of our Urban Garden Outreach

How does the arboretum help needy gardens overseas?

When people go on garden tours through the arboretum, a part of what they pay goes into a fund that we use to help gardens in need. The director of Kew Gardens in London told me about his work in developing countries, particularly in the Amazon, where he was training people to plant trees of economic value to earn a living rather than sell off the rain forest. He told me that, with our climate, I should be helping out northern gardens in need. I talked with one of my colleagues who was working with the Tallinn Botanic Garden in Estonia. They needed a greenhouse for research. We wound up sending \$6,000 to help get the greenhouse built and a portable heater put in. That's just one of the things we've done and I'm glad we can help some of these gardens that really struggle. They have such a commitment to provide beautiful gardens for people to visit and they're trying to save their own endemic flora.

Why is the arboretum's role in helping to connect people, particularly children, to nature so important to you?

I recently read a book by Richard Louv called *The Last Child in the Woods: Saving Our Children from Nature-Deficit Disorder*. He talks about how kids have lost contact with nature. During the era when Louv and I were growing up we went out in the woods and built forts. Kids don't do that today. Computers are such a big draw. That's a little scary because you can't experience nature just looking at pictures on a screen.

Think of how the future will be when those kids grow up and have no problem with legislation getting rid of parks and gardens to make way for more buildings. They won't see the need for nature.

—Meleah Maynard (B.A. '91)

Green Light for Ecotourism

University of Minnesota students who aspire to a career in the tourism business now have the option to become certified in ecotourism, the fastest growing market in the industry. The U is one of a handful of schools nationwide and the first Midwestern university authorized to offer the International Ecotourism Society's University Consortium Field Certificate, a course of study that helps prepare students for careers in sustainable tourism.

The term *ecotourism* was coined in 1983 by Mexican

architect and environmentalist Hector Ceballos-Lascarrain and was initially used to describe nature-based travel with an emphasis on education. In recent years, the concept has evolved to include preserving biodiversity and minimizing the harmful effects of traditional tourism on the natural environment, enhancing the cultural integrity of local people, and other principles of sustainable tourism. The University will offer the certificate as part of the recreation resources management program in the department of forest resources.



The Truth about Dogs . . .

Cancer researchers at the University of Minnesota Cancer Center and North Carolina State University who collaborated on a study of cancer in humans and dogs have found that the two species share the same genetic basis for some forms of cancer, perhaps laying the groundwork for a better understanding of cancer risk, diagnosis, and prognosis in humans. Many forms of human cancer, particularly blood and bone marrow cancers, are associated with specific alterations to the number or structure of chromosomes and the genes they contain. Researchers found that the genetic changes that occur in dogs diagnosed with these cancers are virtually identical to genetic abnormalities in humans with the same cancers. The implication, they say, is that some cancers may be the consequence of generations of genetic evolution that has occurred similarly in dogs and humans. Studying dog cancers may allow researchers to identify cancer-associated genes more easily than in humans; once identified, the findings may be translatable to humans.

. . . And Cats

Those warm fuzzies you get from your cat might be more than just good feelings. They might actually be good for your heart. A cardiac researcher at the University of Minnesota was surprised to discover in a study of 4,435 volunteers that cat owners had a greatly reduced incidence of death due to heart attack than those who did not own a cat. Dog owners did not enjoy the same level of protection from heart disease. Reasons for the findings were unclear but could be attributed to the possibility that cat ownership leads to reduced stress levels which, in turn, lower the risk of heart disease. Another possibility is that cat owners as a group may share specific personality traits that reduce their chances of heart disease. The findings require confirmation by other studies before medical recommendations can be made.



Smoking Ban's Benefits

The statewide smoking ban that went into effect in Minnesota in October 2007 has significantly benefited the health of hospitality workers in the state, and a researcher with the University of Minnesota Cancer Center has the numbers to prove it. The research measured the levels of a carcinogen known to cause lung cancer in the urine of 24 nonsmokers who work at bars, restaurants, and bowling alleys before and after the ban went into effect. On average, the levels of nicotine and the carcinogen dropped by more



than 80 percent. Previous research has shown that nonsmoking hospitality employees have up to a 50 percent higher risk of lung cancer than nonsmokers who are not routinely exposed to secondhand smoke.

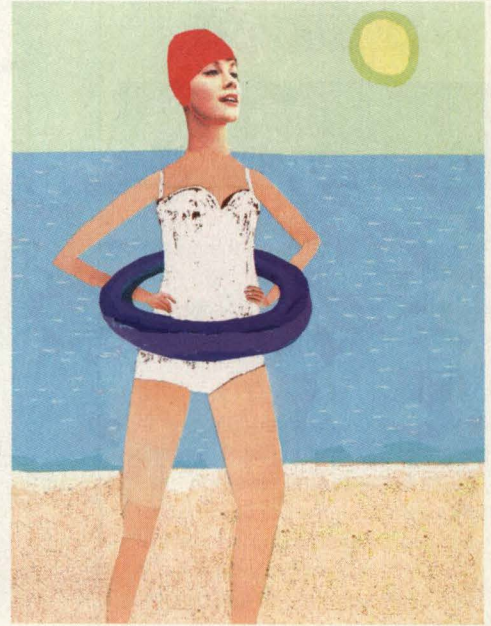
Nip Nipping in the Bud

Children need to participate in alcohol prevention programs before sixth grade, and parents need to participate with them according to a study by the University of Minnesota School of Public Health and the University of Florida. Previous studies have found that nearly one in six children has already used alcohol by sixth grade; the recent study found that adolescents who have already used alcohol are less receptive to prevention programs aimed at all students. Intervening between third and fifth grade, researchers say, makes it more likely that anti-alcohol messages will reach high-risk children. Involving parents helps improve parent-child communication and provides parents with better skills for monitoring their child's alcohol use over time.



An Incontinent Truth

Women who have trouble controlling their bladders find better relief with muscle and bladder training than with drugs or mechanical devices, according to a systematic review of published studies on the ailment at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. The study found that several commonly prescribed drugs and devices were inconsistent, ineffective, or actually exacerbated the problem. In contrast, pelvic floor muscle rehabilitation alone, also known as Kegel exercises, improved or resolved incontinence, though the level of effectiveness was inconsistent across studies. Furthermore, intensive lifestyle changes such as losing weight were also found to be less effective than doing Kegel exercises. About 12 million adults in the United States have urinary incontinence. It is most common among women over age 50, but younger women who have just given birth, as well as some men, are also affected.



Give Moms a Sporting Chance

A researcher at the Tucker Center for Research on Girls and Women in Sport at the University of Minnesota has found that women, especially mothers, doubt their ability to coach youth sports teams and do not perceive that their parenting skills might be transferable to a coaching context. The result is that only about 15 percent of youth sport coaches in the United States are women. Previous analysis has shown that there are few female coaches in college and elite ranks. By analyzing the extent of women's involvement in coaching at entry levels, researchers



hope to gain insight into why there is a lack of women coaches at advanced levels. One reason for the low participation by women, the research identified, is that most coaching clinics are run by men and little attention is given to addressing the specific needs of female coaches, such as the learning how to separate the mother role from the coach role. The research suggests that youth sport leagues and others who sponsor coaching clinics need to provide women-only courses, run by women, as well as mentoring and promoting the benefits of mothers being coaches.

Chew on This

Teenagers who eat breakfast consume more calories daily but weigh on average five pounds less than their peers who skip the first meal of the day, according to research at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. The study concluded that teens who start the day with breakfast tend to have healthier diets overall and more healthful habits in general. The theory behind the findings is that eating in the morning helps people better control their appetite throughout the day instead of overeating at lunch and dinner.

Pushing Malt Liquor

Alcohol, especially malt liquor, is more available and more aggressively marketed in poor African American neighborhoods than in other areas, according to a study by researchers at the University of Minnesota School of Public Health. The study found that the neighborhoods had higher homicide rates and significantly more off-sale alcohol outlets, 40-ounce bottles of malt liquor in coolers, and storefront ads promoting malt liquor. Malt liquor is a concern in inner cities because of its cheap price, high alcohol content, and its link to aggressive behavior. The study targeted low-income neighborhoods in 10 cities in California, Minnesota, Georgia, Missouri, Kansas, Massachusetts, and Maryland.

—Edited by Cynthia Scott

President & Chief Executive Officer

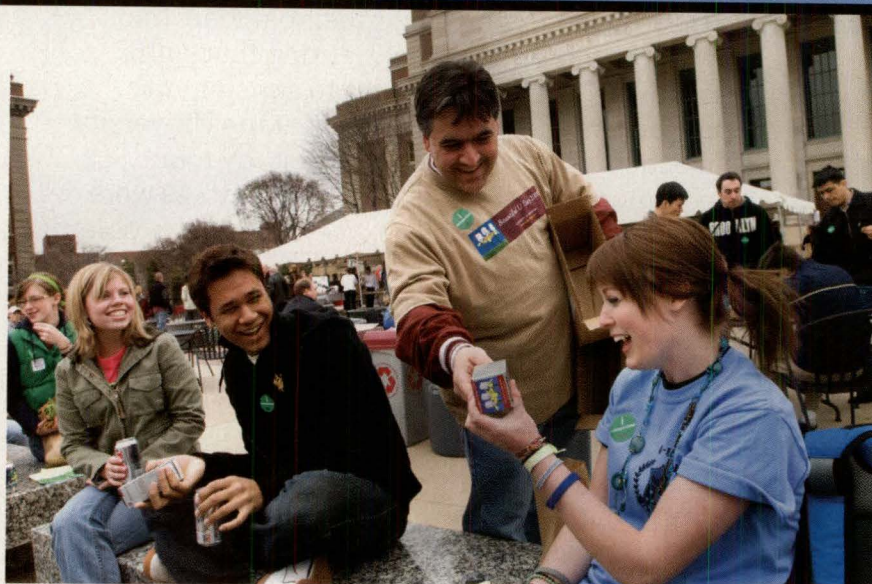
The University of Minnesota Foundation (UMF) is an independent, non-profit foundation whose mission it is to engage the resources of the private sector to build and sustain excellence at the University of Minnesota. With \$1.7 billion in assets and an annual operating budget of \$22 million, the Foundation acts as the central development office for the University of Minnesota and coordinates raising in excess of \$250 million in private gifts annually from 87,000 donors. In addition, the Foundation works with the University to identify other significant sources of revenue to support its vision for the future and its aspirational goal to be among the top three public universities in the world. Current strategic initiatives include real estate development opportunities and intellectual property commercialization.

The UMF President sets the vision and guides the Foundation strategically with oversight from the Board of Trustees and in alignment with the University's mission of teaching, research, and outreach. This person is responsible for all activities constituting effective and trustworthy stewardship of the Foundation's assets, including investment management through a subsidiary, real estate management and technology transfer. In addition, the President leads university-wide fundraising/development and oversees the design and implementation of a successful multi-billion capital campaign.

We welcome you to learn more about the University of Minnesota Foundation and view a copy of the position description at www.giving.umn.edu/foundation. The search committee requests that all inquiries, nominations and applications be directed to the Foundation's search firm, Spencer Stuart, at UMF@spencerstuart.com.

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Minnesota Masonic Charities has given the University of Minnesota the largest gift in the school's history with a \$65 million pledge to the University Cancer Center.

Since the Masons first began supporting cancer research at the University in 1955, the fraternal organization has given \$100 million toward cancer research, care, and prevention. In recognition of their commitment, the Cancer Center will now be called the Masonic Cancer Center. The newly renamed center was founded in 1991 to provide a collaborative environment for researchers to work on the causes, prevention, detection, and treatment of cancer. The \$65 million donation is believed to be the largest gift ever given to a college or university in Minnesota.

Minnesota Governor Tim Pawlenty (B.A. '83, J.D. '86) signed a \$716.8 million state bonding bill that includes \$105.1 million for the University of Minnesota.

The Minnesota State Legislature had sent to the governor a \$925 million measure that allocated \$131.1 million to the U, but Pawlenty used his line-item veto authority to cut \$208 million from the bill, including \$24 million for a new Bell Museum and \$2 million for classroom renovation projects. Funding that was approved for U projects includes \$35 million for basic infrastructure and building maintenance on all campuses; \$10 million for a civil engineering building on the Duluth campus; \$48.3 million for a Science Teaching and Student Services building on the Minneapolis

Enlightening Campus

The University of Minnesota celebrated Beautiful U Day on April 17 by giving away compact fluorescent light bulbs on Northrop Mall. Mike Berthelsen, associate vice president of facilities management, handed out some of the 10,000 light bulbs that went to students, faculty, and staff. According to the Environmental Protection Agency, replacing just one incandescent light bulb with a compact fluorescent bulb in every home in the United States would save enough energy to light 3 million homes for a year and prevents greenhouse gases equivalent to the emissions of 800,000 cars. Beautiful U Day began in 1997 as a way to promote campus beautification and sustainability.

campus; \$5 million for construction of a Gateway Center on the Morris campus; \$3.3 million for laboratory renovations throughout the system; and \$3.5 million for research and outreach centers around the state.

In a separate measure, the governor preserved spending for the Minnesota Biomedical Research Program, a landmark \$292 million project to build four world-class science facilities on the East Bank of the Minneapolis campus. Of the \$292 million, \$219 million will come from the state and \$73 million from the University.

The University of Minnesota aspires to stature, not rank, in its quest to become one of the top three public research universities in the world, University President Bob Bruininks said in his sixth annual State of the U address in March. In "The Challenge of Change," Bruininks

asserted that one of the challenges facing the U is its changing economic relationship with the state of Minnesota. In the wake of the financial challenges facing the state, he said, the U must realize the maximum return for every dollar invested. "If we expect investment and support, we must continue to demonstrate that we are an asset to the state of Minnesota and its citizens," he said.

The U's new Healthy Foods, Healthy Lives Institute has awarded \$1.17 million over the next three years to three projects focused on food safety and disease prevention. The projects include a study that explores how bacteria survive on vegetables and how farm practices could prevent outbreaks of food-borne illness; a study on how consumption of broccoli, cabbage, and other vegetables could reduce the risk of colon and liver cancers; and a study of how certain properties in anti-inflammatory drugs such as aspirin might also be found in food. Scientists conducting the studies are from the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences; Medical School; College of Veterinary Medicine; College of Biological Sciences; School of Public Health; and Extension.

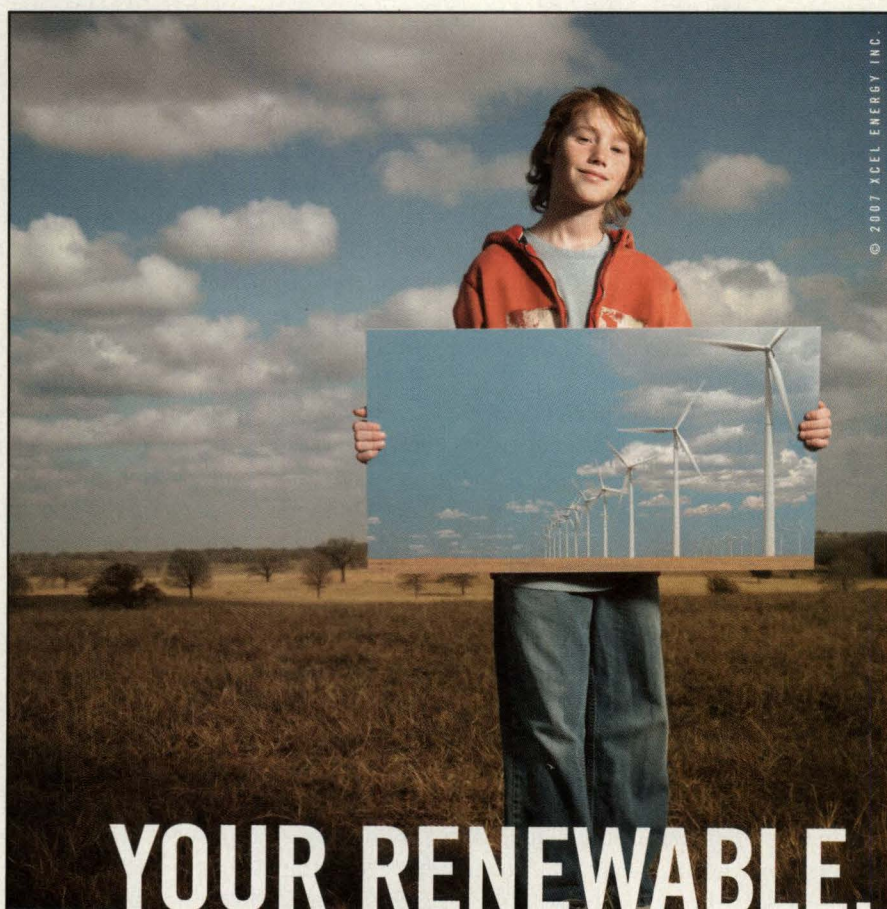
Three research projects based in the College of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences have been awarded nearly \$2.27 million over the next three years to encourage biomass research and development. The awards, a joint effort by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and the U.S. Department of Energy, will be used to explore how biomass can be produced more efficiently and cost-effectively. The University's award is part of an \$18.4 million initiative nationwide aimed at reducing U.S. dependence on oil and mitigating climate change. The projects include identifying economically viable and environmentally benign options for biofuels development; researching the use of brown rot fungi in biofuels development; and developing processes for conversion of cellulosic biomass to bio-oils. The U was the only institution to receive more than two grants.

The University of Minnesota, in partnership with Xcel Energy, the National

Renewable Energy Laboratory, and the Great Plains Institute, will begin testing an innovative technology that stores wind energy in batteries. The research partners will test a one-megawatt battery storage technology to demonstrate its ability to store wind energy and move it to the electricity grid when needed. When the wind blows, the batteries are charged. When the wind calms, the batteries supplement

the power flow. Fully charged, the battery could power 500 homes for six and a half hours. The 20 50-kilowatt battery modules will be roughly the size of two semitrailers and weigh approximately 60 tons. The project is located adjacent to an 11-megawatt wind farm in southwestern Minnesota, near Luverne. The battery is expected to be installed and operational by October.

—Cynthia Scott



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When darkness is a too faithful companion, creating brings light.

Churchill's Dog

Winston Churchill called it his Black Dog and was known to lay bricks until it curled up and went back to sleep. I've called it the Black Horrors and have been known to lie in bed, curtains drawn, waiting for the storm clouds to pass.

I've suffered from depression since childhood, though back then we called it "feeling sorry for yourself," and I included self-pity in my litany of sins beginning with my first confession at age seven. Often the penance our parish priest meted out was, "offer it up for the souls in purgatory." I will never know whether my weekly offerings commuted the purgatorial sentence of any sinners. If so, their gain was my loss. The sadness stayed with me, and I spent a good deal of my childhood praying for a liberation that did not occur.

What relief I did experience came from books or during moments of creativity. I'd spend hours in my room reading, or putting together dollhouses from shoe boxes using scissors and paste, or writing little stories into my spiral notebook, or making collages from cut-up pieces of colored paper. And then, when it was time to go downstairs into the real world of supper, homework, and Ed Sullivan, the heaviness came back and life returned to my version of normal.

My father suffered long, Lincolnesque periods of melancholy, during which he'd fall asleep on the sofa after dinner until bedtime and grind his teeth so loudly through the night we could hear it in every room of the house. We didn't call it depression then either. We didn't call it anything. But we knew that something was imploding inside of him; my father's head was packed with memories of the horrors of war unmitigated by the passing of time. So we tiptoed around that nameless force, puzzled by its depth and afraid of the rage that would erupt if we woke him.

Whether it rises from emotional trauma, is encoded into my DNA, or both, depression has conducted some convincing whispering campaigns throughout my life. It advised me to marry before I was barely out of my teens because I'd met the only person on Earth willing to put up with me. It warned me not to divorce my unfaithful husband 10 years later because I could not survive without him.

With help, I found ways to defy it. When my marriage ended and depression insisted that I wasn't smart enough to go to college, I put it in a room by itself while I typed term papers that, every semester, were marked with A's. It told me that I was a terrible mother and to believe my born-again ex-spouse and his

perky new wife's claims that they were better parents than I. So I locked it in the car while I sat in a courtroom with them, making a case for my parenting skills that, while true, I only half believed.

Fifteen years ago, during a traumatic series of events that made sleeping, eating, and working next to impossible, my doctor prescribed antidepressants. For the next year we went through a variety of medications, weighing their merits and ruling out those with intolerable side effects. The first one tied my intestinal tract in knots. Four hours after trying a different one, the walls of my living room began to close in on me. Panicked, I ran out into the front yard, only to discover that the sky and the trees and the house next door were closing in on me too. Next came one that gave me migraines preceded by an aura of glittering needles.

And though it has given me back my sleep and the ability to enjoy the everyday pleasures of love, Johnny Depp movies, and cinnamon rolls, the medication I've been taking for several years isn't an unqualified triumph. Just recently I've felt the old darkness pacing outside the door to my conscious mind, not unlike Churchill's faithful Black Dog. And I've noticed the return of some familiar symptoms: random holes poked in my memory, the shadow of anxiety close at my heels, and an attention span that jumps and flits like drops of water on a hot skillet.

So you might think that I'm working with my doctor again to find the next antidepressant medication, the one that will help me through the next 10 years. But I'm not. Not yet, anyway. Because for all the good the medication does—and it does do good—it's not without its emotional downside.

By definition, the equilibrium brought on by antidepressants softens the reality of the human condition. And there are those who believe that the desire to bring loss and mortality into sharp focus is, well, crazy. But experience has shown me that understanding loss means compassion for myself and others that isn't as empathic when my emotional range is narrowed down to variations on the theme of beige. And while a mindfulness of death can (and does) lead to morbid thoughts (I have to stop myself from imagining my own funeral), it also makes the fact that I'm alive to strut and fret my hour upon the stage nothing short of a miracle.

Don't get me wrong. I'm not advocating that severely depressed and suicidal people quit taking the medication that keeps them going day in and day out. I'm just asking myself, for myself, *what if?*

ESSAY BY MARY WINSTEAD > ILLUSTRATION BY SCOTT BAKAL



A few years back, when I was teaching creative writing, a student raised her hand and said that the class wasn't making her happy the way she felt it should. Surprised, I stopped for a moment and blurted out, "Who promised you happy? Virginia Woolf put rocks in her pockets and drowned. Ernest Hemingway put a gun to his head. Sylvia Plath put her head in an oven. This is not a club with happy members." Not surprisingly, in her evaluation of my teaching at the end of the quarter, the student commented that I was angry and perhaps a little bitter.

We could make a long list of the artists who spent their lives dancing on the brink of madness until they lost their footing and toppled over the edge. Hemingway himself called depression "the artist's curse." Had he lived in the age of psychotropic drugs, would his agony have been relieved? Would medication have given him a new lease on his creative life, or diminished it? If Dr. Gachet had prescribed Prozac for Vincent van Gogh, the thinking goes, would he have been able to paint *A Starry Night*? If Mozart had taken Wellbutrin, could

he have written *Don Giovanni*?

Damned if you do and damned if you don't: the perfect recipe for depression.

On the other hand, I am reminded of Picasso and his infamous moods, which rose and fell throughout his long life like crows in a corn field, and who was productive until he died a natural death in old age. His emotions inspired artistic periods in colors as melancholy as blue and rose, and shattered the human form into the sharp-edged geometry of cubism. What might have happened—or not happened—had he taken Paxil to balance his chemistry and even out his moods?

Though I do not live in the same creative stratosphere as Picasso, Mozart, or Virginia Woolf, I do know what it's like for life's journey to reach a darkened corner. When I've come to that place, however, and I have on two occasions, something intervened: the knowledge that the end of life is the end of pain but that it is also the end of everything else, even the briefest moments of beauty, creativity, love, and success. The will to live was stronger than the desire not to, and I wasn't on medication either time.

And I still find the creative process, with all its frustrations, to be palliative. I find solace in a Saturday afternoon at the sewing machine, top-stitching a pleated skirt. I've lost track of time revising an essay and mapping out my next book.

So, for now, the question isn't whether or not I'll try another antidepressant. Neither will happiness be the test. The question is whether I can rise from my bed in the morning, get dressed, and

serve the creative gift I've been given, however large or small. The test will be whether I *want* to write another book or paint with watercolors or plant pansies in my window boxes. I want to love my wonderful new husband and watch my grown children (who thrived despite their existential mother) build their adult lives. I want to be in the world to face the possibility of failure or success.

And if depression clouds my desire to live a loving and creative life? Then I'll wait for the skies to clear. Maybe I'll try laying bricks. Whatever it takes to get me through another day. ■

Mary Winstead (M.F.A. '00) is the author of Back to Mississippi: A Personal Journey through the Events that Changed America in 1964. She lives in Apple Valley, Minnesota.

> First Person features personal essays written by alumni, faculty, students, or anyone with a University connection. To request writers' guidelines, visit www.alumni.umn.edu/minnesota.

A Guest in Their World

National Geographic Society photographer Annie Griffiths Belt focuses on children to make a difference in their lives.

Photographs and text by Annie Griffiths Belt

*"I believe it's far better to look like someone's mother than a photographer," writes Annie Griffiths Belt (B.A. '76) in her new book *A Camera, Two Kids and a Camel*, published this May. Belt, a National Geographic Society photographer, recounts through stories and pictures three decades of traveling to nearly 100 countries, often with her two children in tow.*

In fact, most of the first 10 years of Lily's and Charlie's lives were spent traversing the globe with their mother when she was on assignment. While their classmates in the United States were reading textbooks about other continents, the Belt kids were off exploring them.

Traveling with kids was sometimes a logistical challenge, Belt says (even when her husband, Don, an international correspondent for National Geographic, was along). But most often her children were her passports, helping her to gain entry into people's homes, hearts, and lives to make her award-winning photographs.

Of late Belt has focused on making photographs that are what she calls useful as well as beautiful, shooting for nonprofits such as Habitat for Humanity and World Church Service. She recently spoke about her work for Minnesota magazine.

Early on when I became a photographer, it was really important to me not to focus on children. I was one of the first female photographers at National Geographic, and I remember a female colleague of mine saying, "Sometimes I think they just expect us to take cute little pink pictures. As a

young photographer, I said to myself, "OK, I have to make sure I do *not* do that."

But in the last 10 years, I have consciously made a decision to do photography for aid organizations that help women and children. That's where the greatest need is, that's where the greatest results can happen.

I try very much to come across as a human being, not as a journalist. The way I work with people is I just try to be a guest in their world. I want to do everything in my power to help them just see me as

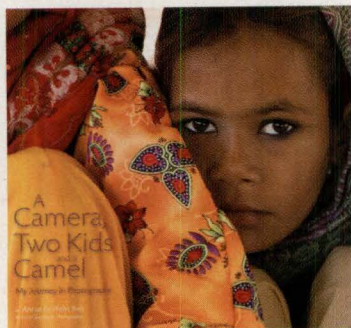


Above: National Geographic photographer Annie Griffiths Belt, photographed by Mark Luinenburg

Left: Belt's new book, *A Camera, Two Kids and a Camel: My Journey in Photographs*

Top right: Ready for church on Easter Sunday, rural Georgia

Bottom right: Jewish boys misbehaving during Purim, Jerusalem, Israel







Above: First Communion Day, Dingle, Ireland
Right: Hutterite children praying after meal, Forest River, North Dakota

another person. And that's not always easy to do. I'm towering over some of these women, I'm white, I'm usually dressed in a way that's very odd to them, and I'm alone, unchaperoned. There are so many things about me that could make it difficult for them to accept me. So I do everything I can to help them see that I'm another woman, I'm a mother, I'm no better.

In most situations, as an American, I'm kind of a curiosity or like an exotic creature. Kids are especially that way when they find out. They'll look at me like, "Really? You're one of those?" Our country's greatest export is entertainment. So, all over the world, people hear about America and see American stuff, see television's views of what America is. I remember one time when I was in a Bedouin community and somehow the word spread that a real, live American was in the village. A little boy came over and looked at me and said, "American?" And I said yes. And he said, "You know Muhammad Ali?!" I thought, he has no idea what America is, but he knows that Muhammad Ali is from America and so he figures we'd know each other. These kids live in a place where they really don't have an opportunity to learn—in a formal way—very







Top: Ari, self-appointed king of the refugee camp, Sarajevo, Bosnia

Bottom: Pai Pai Indian grandmother and child, Baja California, Mexico

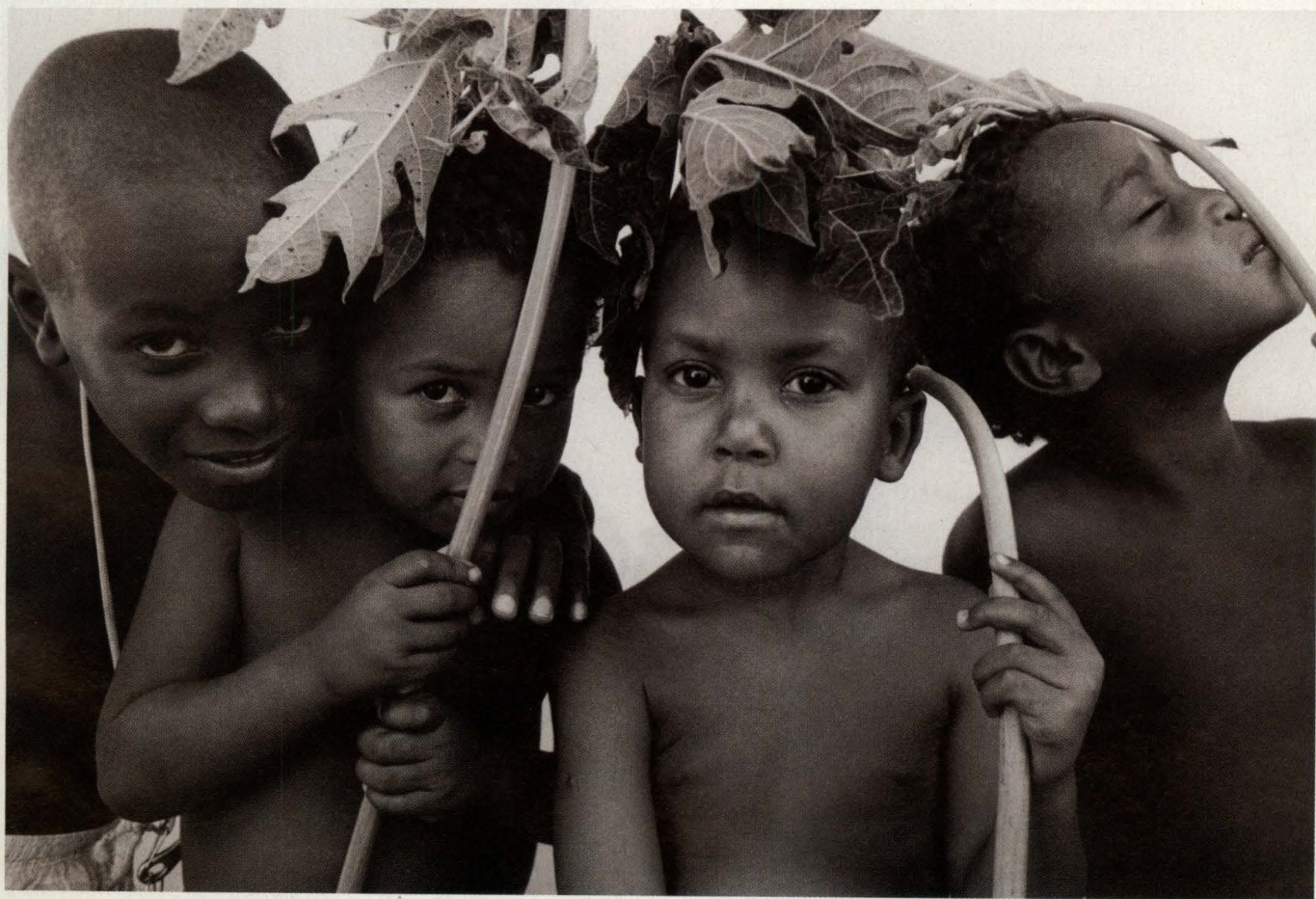
Top right: Child along the Sepik River, Papua, New Guinea

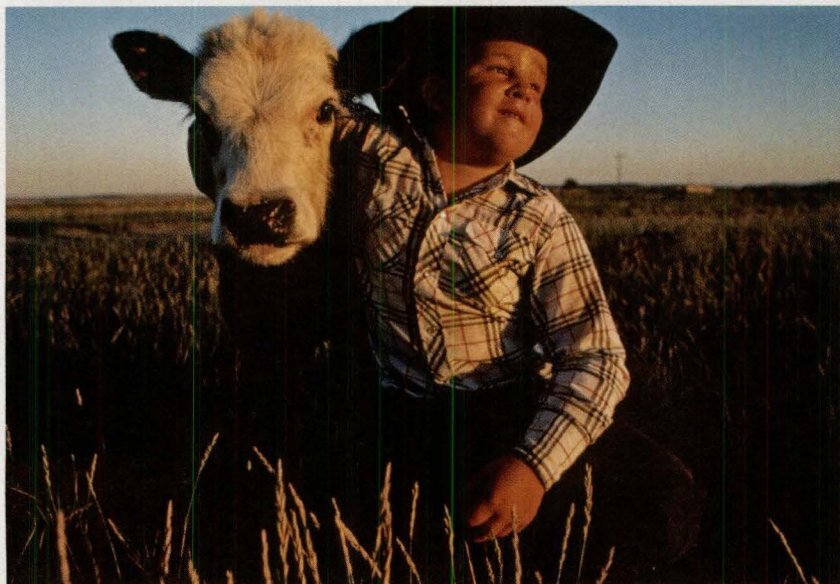
Bottom right: Young boys play with papaya leaves, Paraiba do Sul, Brazil

much about the rest of the world.

I feel the full gamut of emotions when I'm shooting, I don't try to be objective emotionally. I try to be objective in the storytelling to make sure that I don't take sides, especially in the Middle East. But in terms of being with people, I just jump in with both feet. I don't know how to be objective. I hope that in those situations that I'm humanizing everybody, which to me *is* objective. We're all human.

That picture of the little boy brushing his teeth: He's an earthquake survivor in Balakot. That's ground zero for the earthquake that hit Pakistan, and the entire city was just pancaked flat. What was touching to me about that photograph and that situation was despite the fact that his whole family was living in a tent village and they'd lost everything, he was still someone's little boy who was sent off to brush his teeth before bed. There's a poignancy in that, and I see that poignancy a lot. I'm touched by the fact that other people love their children as deeply as I do. It's easy to think that no one could *possibly* love their kids





Above: Little cowboy, Choteau, Montana

Right: Young survivor of a devastating earthquake, Balakot, Pakistan

Below: Father carrying his 11th child, Dingle, Ireland

Opposite page, bottom: Charlie Belt, age 4, and Lily Belt, age 6, with Bedouin friends, Petra, Jordan

as much as you love your own, but of course they do.

I think I've always had a real sense of justice, and I've always been uncomfortable around people who are judgmental or exclusive. Somehow I really have always had an open heart. And, of course, as you get older you get better at listening and not seeing things quite as black and white. Plus, it's just a fact that the more you're in the world the more you "get it."

When you travel—and not just travel to look at people and look at things—but travel and get to know people and spend time with them, it's pretty hard to dislike or hate somebody you know. I guess the opportunity to travel has allowed me to open my heart even more. ■





Weighing In on Diet Soda



We've all heard that red meat and fried foods are linked to obesity, high blood pressure, and other metabolic diseases. But a University of Minnesota epidemiologist has found an even stronger association with the low-calorie beverage introduced in the 1950s.

BY GREG BREINING | PHOTOGRAPH BY MARK LUINENBURG

Are you prone to gaining weight around the belly? Are you worried about high cholesterol or high blood pressure? Do heart attacks or diabetes run in your family? Then steer clear of a “Western pattern” diet, which puts you at risk of a condition known as metabolic syndrome, according to a new study at the University of Minnesota. The syndrome—characterized by abdominal fat, high blood pressure, and high cholesterol—doubles a person’s chances of heart disease and increases the risk of diabetes five-fold.

What is this so-called Western diet? It might be dubbed a “fast-food diet”—with at least two daily helpings of red or processed meat (the equivalent of two burger patties) and plenty of deep-fried food. That’s not surprising, perhaps. We’ve heard for years that fried foods and heaping portions of red meat aren’t good for us.

But here’s the kicker—the other component of a Western diet, the item more strongly associated with metabolic syndrome than either fried foods or red meat?

Diet soda.



Lyn Steffen

Yes, the carbonated, artificially sweetened beverages many of us drink to *lose* weight have actually been associated with weight *gain* and the development of metabolic syndrome. Diet soda, recommended by the American Diabetes Association to avoid high-calorie sugar, actually corresponded with the onset of diabetes.

“Isn’t that interesting?” remarks Lyn Steffen, associate professor of epidemiology at the University of Minnesota and lead author of the study published this January in *Circulation*, the journal of the American Heart Association. “Is it the arti-

ficial sweetener that’s causing it? Or is it a behavioral kind of mechanism where people will say—and women are great at this—‘I’ll drink my diet soda and then I can eat my chocolate chip cookie?’”

Early warnings

As early as the 1920s, researchers began to notice that certain troublesome symptoms appeared in concert. More recently, this cluster of risk factors for heart disease and diabetes was dubbed “syndrome X” and then “metabolic syndrome.” Generally, the



Diet pop drinkers—those who drank at least one diet soda a day—were 35 percent more likely to develop metabolic syndrome than those who drank little or none.

condition applies if a person has at least three of the following: fat around the waist (more than 40 inches for men or 35 inches for women), high blood pressure, cholesterol problems (high bad cholesterol, low good cholesterol, or high triglycerides), insulin resistance, proinflammatory state (elevated C-reactive protein in the blood), or prothrombotic state (predisposition to a blood clot).

More of us are developing metabolic syndrome. More than 50 million Americans have the condition. (It's especially prevalent among Hispanics; more than a third of Hispanic adults have it.) Soon it will surpass cigarette smoking as the leading risk factor for heart disease in the United States. More than anything, according to experts, the rise in metabolic syndrome follows the increase in obesity.

The trend is worrisome. Overall, patients with metabolic syndrome have a significantly higher risk of death (53 percent) over the course of an 11-year study than those without the syndrome. The first line of attack in battling metabolic syndrome: Losing weight.

While excess weight is key to metabolic syndrome, the role of diet isn't entirely clear. Is it certain foods or patterns of eating that are at work? To find out, Steffen and her co-investigators analyzed the diets of more than 9,500 participants ages 45 to 65 in the Atherosclerosis Risk in Communities (ARIC) study, funded by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute.

At the beginning of the study and then six years into the study the participants were asked to characterize their diets during the previous year on a 66-item food frequency questionnaire. "Self-reporting is a problem," Steffen admits. "This questionnaire is notorious for underestimating food intake." For one thing, it can't list everything people would eat. Second, normal-weight people routinely overestimate what they eat while overweight people underreport.

Nonetheless, the survey was sufficiently clear and detailed to allow Steffen to divide participants into two groups according to the character of their diet. The Western-pattern diet was big on refined grains, red meat, processed meat (such as bacon and sausage), fried food, eggs, and carbonated drinks. Fish, fruit, vegetables, and whole grains mostly went missing. The "prudent diet" included plenty of vegetables, especially cruciferous vegetables (such as cabbage, radishes, and broccoli) and carotenoid veggies (carrots, pumpkins, peppers, and spinach), as well as seafood, poultry, whole grains, and low-fat dairy. In addition to these broad patterns, researchers examined the relationship between metabolic syndrome and individual foods.

After nine years, when the study ended, nearly 3,800—about 40 percent—of the participants had developed metabolic syndrome. If you count the 5,000 ARIC participants Steffen excluded from her study who already had metabolic syndrome, 60.5 percent of the group had the condition by the end of the study.

Steffen found that a Western dietary pattern increased the

incidence of metabolic syndrome. Two daily servings of red and processed meat increased risk by about 25 percent, compared with people who ate only two servings a week. Eating plenty of fried foods also increased risk about 25 percent. Simply eating an average of one serving of french fries each day boosted risk 10 percent.

Dairy products, especially yogurt and low-fat milk, actually seemed to ward off metabolic syndrome. Not contributing one way or the other were whole grains, refined grains, fruits and vegetables, nuts, coffee, and beverages sweetened with sucrose or fructose.

The strongest and most startling correlation was diet soda. Diet pop drinkers—those who drank at least one diet soda a day—were 35 percent more likely to develop metabolic syndrome than those who drank little or none. By comparison, regular soft drinks didn't boost risk by a statistically significant amount.

Steffen says her study doesn't reveal *why* red meat, fried foods, and diet soda might cause metabolic syndrome. Or even that they do—a point emphasized by the American Beverage Association: "This study merely shows that diet soda consumption and certain markers for metabolic syndrome occur simultaneously—not that one causes the other."

Indeed, these foods may simply correlate with unhealthy lifestyles or behaviors. "After working many years with dietary intake," Steffen says, "I've noticed that people who consume a more Western-pattern diet, their lifestyle habits aren't really quite as healthy as people who eat a lot of fruit and vegetables or a lot of whole grains. People who eat a lot of red meat, refined grain, or candy or fried foods—they're not very physically active."

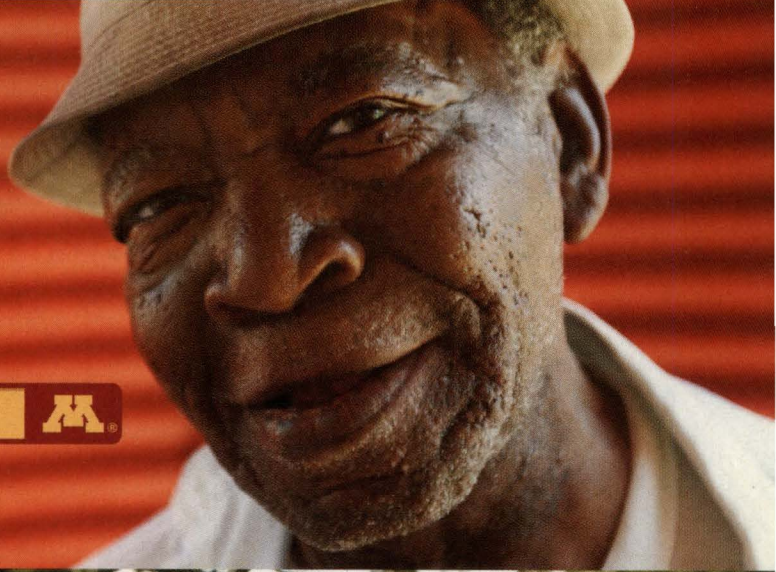
Something similar may be at work with diet soda in particular, she says. Perhaps diet soda drinkers generally lack concern about proper nutrition. Or perhaps they choose it because they are already overweight and at risk for more serious health problems and believe diet drinks will help shed pounds. Or maybe drinking diet soda sets up the psychological bargaining that excuses the extra chocolate chip cookie.

Or perhaps it is something more.

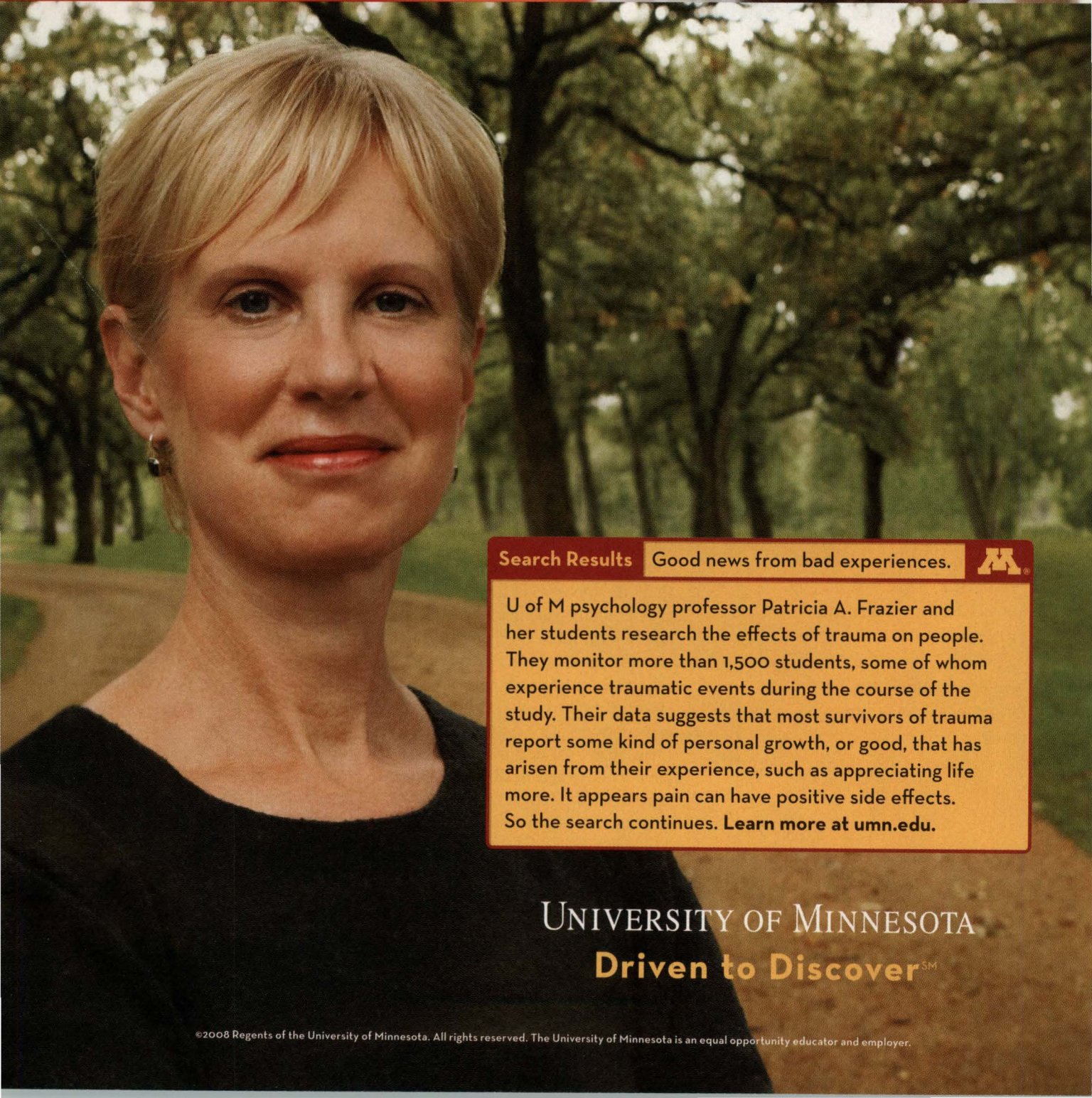
Sweet nothings

Soda (known as "pop" in Minnesota and much of the Midwest) has been around for two centuries, but it wasn't until 1952 that the first diet soft drink went on sale. Since then, our consumption of carbonated beverages has climbed from about 10 gallons per person each year to more than 50. For years, diet soda has made up nearly 30 percent of the total volume of sales. So as soda sales have climbed, so has our consumption of diet pop.

There's little in diet drinks to raise suspicions of a connection to metabolic syndrome. Water makes up 99 percent of most diet sodas. Carbon dioxide gas, responsible for the fizz, is added by a "carbonator machine" at the bottling plant. Bottlers also add



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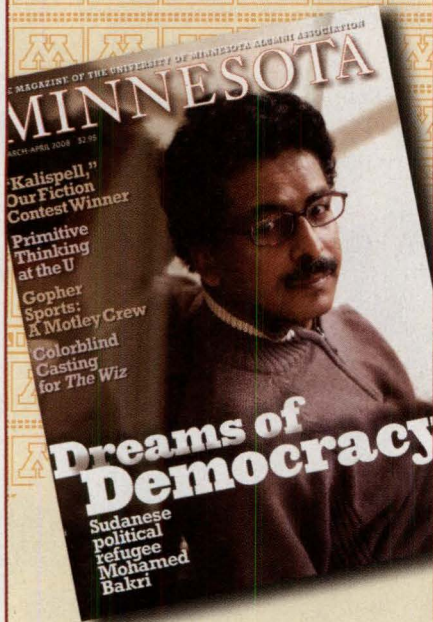
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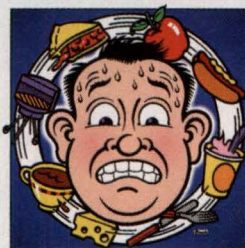
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Diet sweeteners break the link between sweetness and calories. With no signal to stop, the animal keeps eating.

natural and artificial flavors and colors. Acidulants such as phosphoric acid and citric acid make soda slightly tart—both to enhance taste and to retard spoilage. Some drinks also contain small amounts of preservatives to protect flavor. Many of the additives in soda contain potassium and tiny amounts of sodium.

The most notable ingredient is the sweetener. Regular soft drinks contain sucrose (from sugarcane or sugar beets) or high-fructose corn syrup. Low-calorie drinks most often contain aspartame or sucralose. Though aspartame has been blamed for everything from brain tumors to cancer, it has been approved by the Food and Drug Administration and other health agencies. Neither artificial sweetener—or anything else in soda—has been shown to cause metabolic syndrome directly. “No, no, no, no,” says Barry Popkin, a professor of nutrition at the University of North Carolina specializing in beverages. “Not that we know from all the research that has been done on beverages.”

Some research has shown, not surprisingly, that people lose weight when they actually replace the regular soda in their diets with artificially sweetened soda. But other investigations indicate that often people eat foods and beverages containing artificial sweeteners *in addition* to all the sugar they normally eat. And still other studies indicate that without careful supervision artificial sweeteners lead to even greater sugar consumption and weight gain.

An analysis of more than 6,000 participants in the famed ongoing Framingham heart study showed that individuals consuming more than one soda a day had a higher incidence of metabolic syndrome (including obesity) than those drinking less. The association held true with both diet and regular sodas. Soda drinkers ate more calories, more saturated fat and trans fat, and less fiber than people who didn't drink soda. They also exercised less.

A weakness of many of these studies is

that they involved humans—humans who cannot be controlled and supervised for months or years, humans who fib about and continually stray from their diets.

So a Purdue study published early this year created a lot of excitement because its participants were carefully controlled and monitored. The investigators demonstrated a link between use of artificial sweeteners and eating more, gaining weight, and growing fatter. Only the subjects weren't humans; they were rats.

But the authors, Susan Swithers and Terry Davidson of Purdue's department of psychological sciences, suspected that what was true for rats might also hold true for the “millions of people . . . being exposed to sweet tastes that are not associated with caloric or nutritive consequences.” That is, artificial sweeteners. And they do mean millions. The number of U.S. adults consuming artificially sweetened products of all kinds increased from 68 million in 1984 to 180 million in 2004. During the same period, the incidence of obesity has doubled.

Swithers and Davidson divided their rats into groups that were fed yogurt sweetened with high-calorie glucose or with the low-cal artificial sweetener saccharine. All the rats also ate meals of unsweetened yogurt and all the rat chow they wanted.

The rats on artificial sweeteners gobbled more rat chow than their counterparts did. When both groups of rats were fed a rich meal of high-energy, high-protein milkshake, the rats conditioned to real sugar compensated by eating less rat chow, but the rats on diet sweeteners went on eating as before. In another test, when the sugar-conditioned rats ate their milkshake, their metabolisms kicked into high gear, burning calories. But the rats on diet sweeteners showed much less of a metabolism boost.

As a result, Swithers says, after five weeks “animals that had experience with the artificially sweetened yogurt



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In place of diet sodas, drink coffee, tea, and especially low-fat milk, which provides calcium for the bones and teeth and seems to protect against weight gain.

were heavier, they were fatter, and they had decreases in core body temperature responses to sweet-tasting foods.

"We think that in our rats that the experience or learning between the sweet taste and the calories that follow is one

of the mechanisms that are producing these changes in body weight and body composition," she says.

An animal, goes her theory, is conditioned from birth to expect that a sweet taste precedes a wallop of calories. Its body

compensates by reining in the appetite. Diet sweeteners break the link between sweetness and calories. The body loses its conditioned response. With no signal to stop, the animal keeps eating.

"We also think the same kinds of processes could be happening in people," Swithers says. "If the same thing is happening, then we would predict that you would see increased body weight and other sorts of physiological complications by consuming artificially sweetened products."

As Swithers notes in her study, "Such an outcome may seem counterintuitive, if not an anathema, to human clinical researchers and health-care practitioners who have long recommended the use of low- and no-calorie sweeteners as a means of weight control."

Finding the sweet spot

Minnesota's Lyn Steffen wonders if the results of Purdue's rat study can be duplicated with more popular sweeteners. "We need to get other investigators to replicate the saccharine study but also to test aspartame and sucralose," Steffen says. "And those are rats. Now we also need to conduct the same study in humans." She would also like to see additional human studies parse the results of her own research.

Until then, the jury is out on diet soda, she says. Despite the implications of recent studies, "the evidence just is not there yet to say don't drink it."

That doesn't mean she doesn't have recommendations for dieters with concerns about weight gain, heart health, and diabetes. Go easy on red and processed meat, avoid deep-fried foods. In place of diet sodas, drink coffee, tea, and especially low-fat milk, which provides calcium for bones and teeth and seems to protect against weight gain.

And one thing more. "I think that people in this country do not drink enough water," Steffen says. "Just regular old water." ■

Greg Breining is a freelance writer based in St. Paul.

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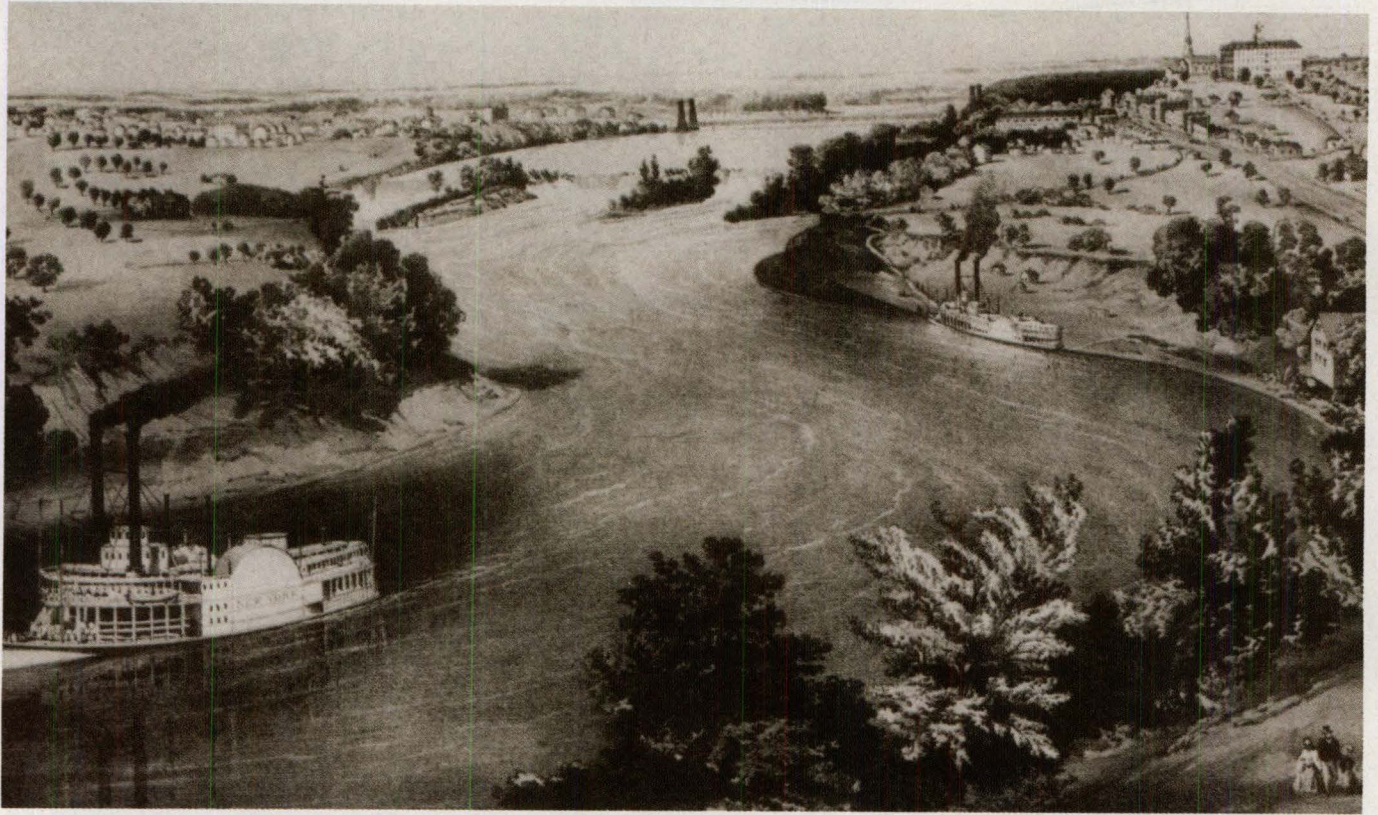
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A view of the Minneapolis campus from the riverbluff in an 1857 sketch



Old Main was designed to resemble the “palace of a minor monarch” and have two wings added later.

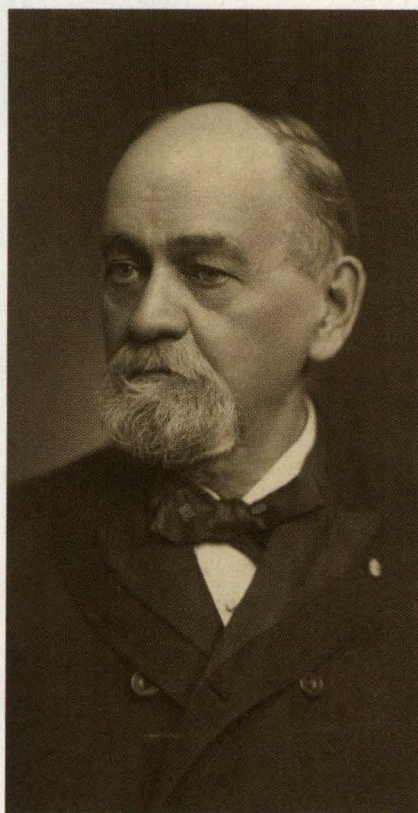
The Land Deal

Most anyone associated with the University of Minnesota will tell you how critical the institution is to the vitality of Minnesota. To mark the state's sesquicentennial this May, we look to a critical moment in U history, when the state gave it a second chance.

It was a cold day in February 1864 when one of the newest members of the Minnesota State Legislature, John Pillsbury, made his way toward what then constituted the University of Minnesota: a single, half-finished building that, in the not-too-distant future, would be called Old Main. For now, it was just the “university building,” and it was located in Pillsbury’s East Hennepin senate district above the Mississippi River, on property downriver from the commercial district along Main Street in St. Anthony. It sat near the center of a pentagon-shaped lot of some 25 acres and was isolated from both the flow of river traffic and Main Street commerce.

Along with three other state senators, the recently elected Pillsbury came to inspect the condition of the school, which had been closed since the start of the Civil War three years earlier. In fact, so little attention had been paid to the University in recent times that the first thing Pillsbury and his colleagues noticed as they approached was that the building was occupied by squatters. A family had taken up quarters and invited their animals inside to join them for the winter. In the basement, Pillsbury and company found one room full of turkeys and another heaped with hay. A fine wood floor in the structure’s main hall had been used as a base for wood-chopping, and now hundreds of ax blade marks peppered the boards.

That wasn’t all. The original design of the university building was intended to have two wings coming off a central structure, but when money ran out due to the economic depression beginning in 1857, construction



John S. Pillsbury led the effort to revive the University of Minnesota.

BY TIM BRADY

So little attention had been paid to the University in recent times that the first thing Pillsbury and his colleagues noticed as they approached was that the building was occupied by squatters.

stopped after only the west wing was built. Workers simply boarded up the unfinished side of the building, and the elements poured in through the patch, further damaging the structure.

The University of Minnesota “was in very sad condition,” Pillsbury wrote years later, recalling this visit to a gathering of alumni. The designs of the original founders of the University had been thwarted by their own grandiosity and the unpredictability of the American economy. The inspection of the campus by Pillsbury and his colleagues, however, signaled a turning point in the campus’s existence. For a slew of reasons—including because the school was in his senate district, because he had just been

asked by the governor to serve on the Board of Regents of the University, because he understood first hand the root cause of the college’s disrepair (Pillsbury held one of the University’s many debts), and because he had committed himself in a business, political, and social sense to the affairs of the new state of Minnesota—the good senator decided it was high time the state did something about the deplorable circumstances of its University. Just a few days after that inspection, legislation was introduced in the senate that gave Pillsbury and two other “special regents” the power to sell University land with the intention of settling its debt and someday reopening Minnesota’s state college as a genuine institution of higher learning.

No high drama followed, no fantastically wealthy guardian angel stepped forward to save the school. The rebirth and invigoration of the University of Minnesota in the years after the Civil War began with a balancing of the books.

Back to the beginning

The men and women who founded the state of Minnesota 150 years ago this May were nothing if not visionaries. They had to be. In a vastly unsettled region where most of the Euro-American newcomers lived in little ribbons of land on or near the banks of the Mississippi, St. Croix, and Minnesota rivers, some of these pioneers dreamed of a great state university that would not only educate and enlighten the area’s young people, but would serve as a reservoir of talent and intellect for Minnesota for generations.



The victim of fire more than once, Old Main burned beyond repair in 1904.

The original founders of the University—names like Ramsey, Steele, Rice, Ames, Neill, and North—were founders of the state, as well. In 1851, before Minnesota was born, when barely 10,000 white people had populated the territory, legislators created a board of regents, leased lands in St. Anthony, and began construction of a first university building (not Old Main) that actually opened as a preparatory school in November of that year. They were encouraged in their endeavors by the U.S. Congress, which had granted the prospective university almost 100,000 acres of territorial land. This acreage would be the University’s endowment for years to come.

In the heady days of the early to mid-1850s, as more people poured into the region and the price of land escalated, it didn’t seem beyond the reach of Minnesotans to expand the University and build a grander future. The number of students at the prep school grew and overcrowded that first university building. A new plot of land became available, “sufficiently removed from the noise and confusion of [St. Anthony’s] business” community to make it appealing as a quiet college campus, according to *The St. Anthony Express*. The legislature authorized its board of regents to buy the acreage above the river and begin building an elegant new structure that would be the center of a busy campus in the midst of a thriving state.

The building would have the grandeur “of a palace of a minor monarch of the 19th century,” according to University historian James Gray. There would be two wings off a four-story central hall, with extensions branching off of these wings. Construction

Sixteen thousand acres of the congressional endowment had been sold piecemeal to make the bills go away, but go away they did, and the regents wasted no time in beginning plans to reopen the school.

proceeded piecemeal, one wing at a time, with work beginning on the west wing of Old Main in 1857. It ended with the economic crash in 1858, before any building had started on the balancing half of the "palace." By that time, the bill for the work done at the new University building had already reached \$50,000, a figure that was daunting enough in pre-crash financial terms but looked like the mortgage on the Taj Mahal after the downturn.

The Congressional land grant, which had been such an encouraging endowment to the founders of the University a few years earlier, was now simply land that no one in the area had the money to buy. The University had no other assets. Furthermore, the economic downturn had left the state with no means to step in and assist the school, even if it had been so inclined.

The prep school (the University of Minnesota was still not an institution of higher education) operated in the new building for a couple of years before the war, but bills were left unpaid and interest on the school's debt mounted. When the Civil War arrived, any remaining attention to the University's plight was diverted by the necessities of war. The debt continued to grow as time passed, and squatters and turkeys took up residence in the partially boarded-up university building. By the time John Pillsbury and his cohorts visited, the state university bill stood at about \$150,000 and climbing, and the hopes of getting a school started anytime soon were slim to none.

In fact, one notion for cutting losses was to give the property over to a state institution for the insane, an idea no one thought was particularly nutty.

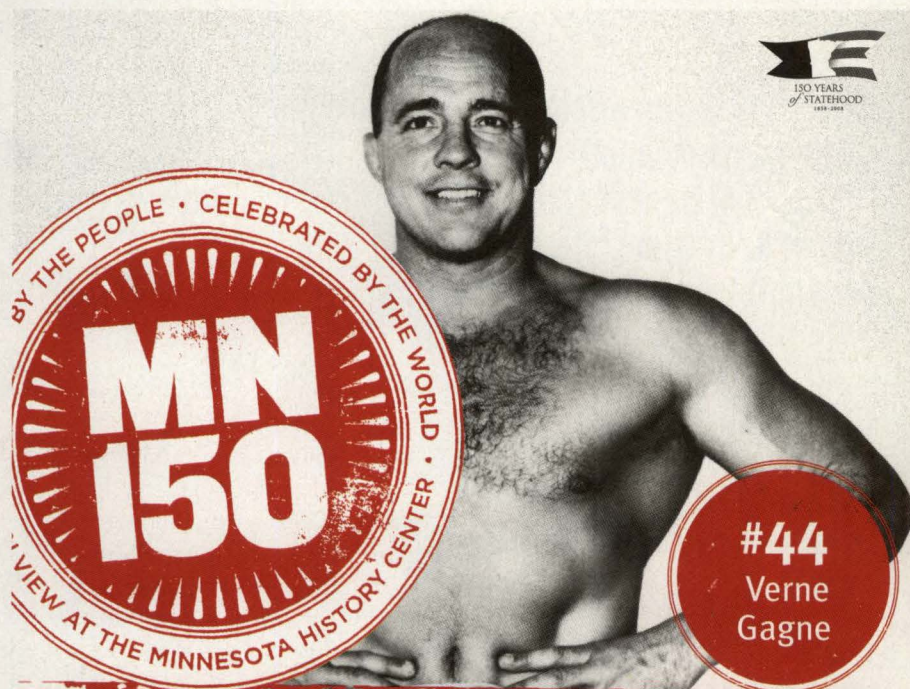
In debt and indebted

Pillsbury was not yet the giant of Minnesota affairs that he would become, though he was heading in that direction. The famed flour business that bears the family name had not yet been founded, and Pillsbury's political career was nascent (that state senate seat was his first public office; he would

subsequently be elected governor three times). A transplanted Yankee, Pillsbury settled down in St. Anthony in 1855 and opened a hardware store that did well until the economic woes of '57. Pillsbury lost money in the downturn but managed to rebuild his business in the years after,

earning the respect of the community and of East Coast financiers, by the dutiful way he repaid his debts. It was in this context that Pillsbury was tapped by the state to lead efforts at resurrecting the University.

The federal land grant turned out to be the means by which the school's indebted-



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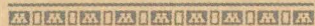
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Folwell saw a statewide system that would provide resources for the citizenry of the region and serve as a fount of talent and knowledge for business, government, the arts, industry, and agriculture.

ness was finally retired. Toward the end of the Civil War and in the years immediately afterward, Minnesota land values began to rise. Pillsbury and the two special regents appointed with him by the state legislature, John Nicols and Orlando Meriman, took advantage of this movement to divest a portion of the University's land holdings. They also were able to collect stumpage fees from a number of lumberers who had been cutting timber on University land without compensating the college. With the funds accrued from these sales and fees, they slowly began shrinking the debt.

By June 1867, Pillsbury could report to the legislature that "the last claim against the university has been paid . . . [and its] slate is clean." Sixteen thousand acres of the congressional endowment had been sold piecemeal to make the bills go away, but go away they did, and the regents wasted no time in beginning plans to reopen the school.

Within weeks, W.W. Washburn was hired as principal for the school, and Charles Chute, the 15-year-old son of a former regent, Richard Chute, was enrolled as the first student and enlisted to find more students of his age around town to fill the school rolls. Twenty were needed and 32 were found. They included at least 13 girls and the two students who would turn out to be the first graduates of the University of Minnesota (as opposed to its prep school). These were Warren Eustis and Henry Williamson, who entered the school that fall.

But there were lumps in the gravy. While the debt was paid off, there was no money to pour into the new enterprise, which meant, among other things, that the University building had not yet been repaired. Between the ouster of



William Watts Folwell, the University's first president, served from 1869 to 1884.

the squatters and the planned reopening of the school, not much had been done to improve the condition of the structure. According to an account written by Charles Chute years later, instead of turkeys occupying Old Main, it was now squirrels that had streamed in through the disrepair. In addition, the side was still boarded-up and local boys had used the windows to practice their sharp-shooting, knocking out most of the panes. The necessary repairs to open the building were made, however, and in September 1867, the state university reopened for the first time in years. Still a little wobbly in its finances, but open.

Another potential problem arose when efforts began to open a second state school—an agricultural college—in Glencoe, Minnesota. With the campus

in St. Anthony just getting off the ground again and in such a tenuous condition, a competitor school—clamoring for a new pool of federal land grants offered through the 1862 Morrill Act—would surely bury one or the other of the emerging colleges in the battle.

But Pillsbury and his allies were able to stymie these efforts at diluting the state's emerging higher education efforts, in part through Pillsbury's donation of a plot of land near the St. Anthony school property on which a university farm could be built and agriculture taught. The state legislature dutifully passed legislation that reorganized the University, creating a board of nine regents, and guaranteeing that agricultural college grant moneys would go to the one and only state university, in St. Anthony.

Now all that was left was to make what was still a preparatory school into an actual degree-conferring college. To the practical-minded men, like Pillsbury, who had just led the University out of debt and back into existence, the matter of getting an institution of higher education up and running was a practical concern as well. The Board of Regents would hire a faculty and a college president who had experience in these matters, and the University would simply proceed as colleges were meant to.

Pillsbury and others on the board had never even attended college. Best to let the experts run the educational side of things. The most important function of the board would be grasping the school's purse strings, and this would be an exceedingly tight grip, given the history of the University of Minnesota.

Grit and grandiosity

In 1869, a university faculty was hired (composed, at least in part, of qualified professors). Then a young Civil War veteran named William Watts Folwell was appointed as the first president of University of Minnesota. A graduate of Hobart College in his native upstate New York, Folwell had served as a professor of mathematics at his alma mater before the war and took a similar post at Kenyon College after service. He was entertaining a number of academic offers when he decided to come to Minnesota.

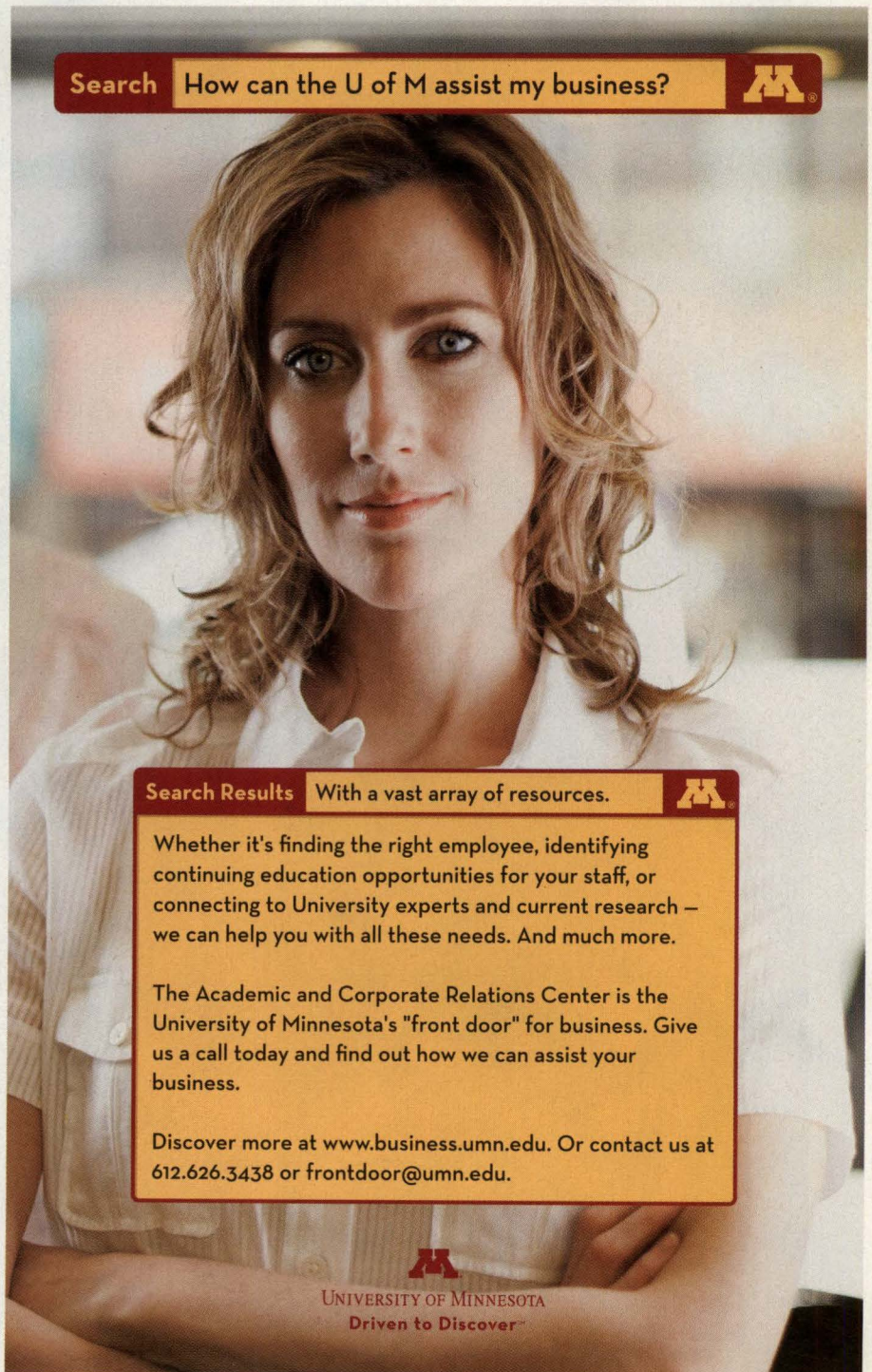
Folwell was not only a scholar of the first order but a man with a vision of what


higher education might be in a frontier state like Minnesota. Soon after he arrived in the state, he gave a remarkable speech at the state legislature in which he outlined what would turn out to be the future of state higher education in Minnesota. He saw a statewide system that would provide resources for the citizenry of the region and serve as a fount of talent and knowledge for business, government, the arts, industry, and agriculture. It was a dream of higher education that the early territorial leaders—many of whom were still around to hear Folwell—could under-


stand and appreciate.

Of course, the state in 1869 was still rough around the edges. It would be many years before the dreams of a great university were achieved. The first 15 freshman in the University's history enrolled that fall—18 years after the school first opened—joining some 130 prep students. And Folwell's first duty turned out to be helping the workmen hired to complete the boarded-up wall of Old Main. ■

Tim Brady is a St. Paul-based writer and frequent contributor to Minnesota.




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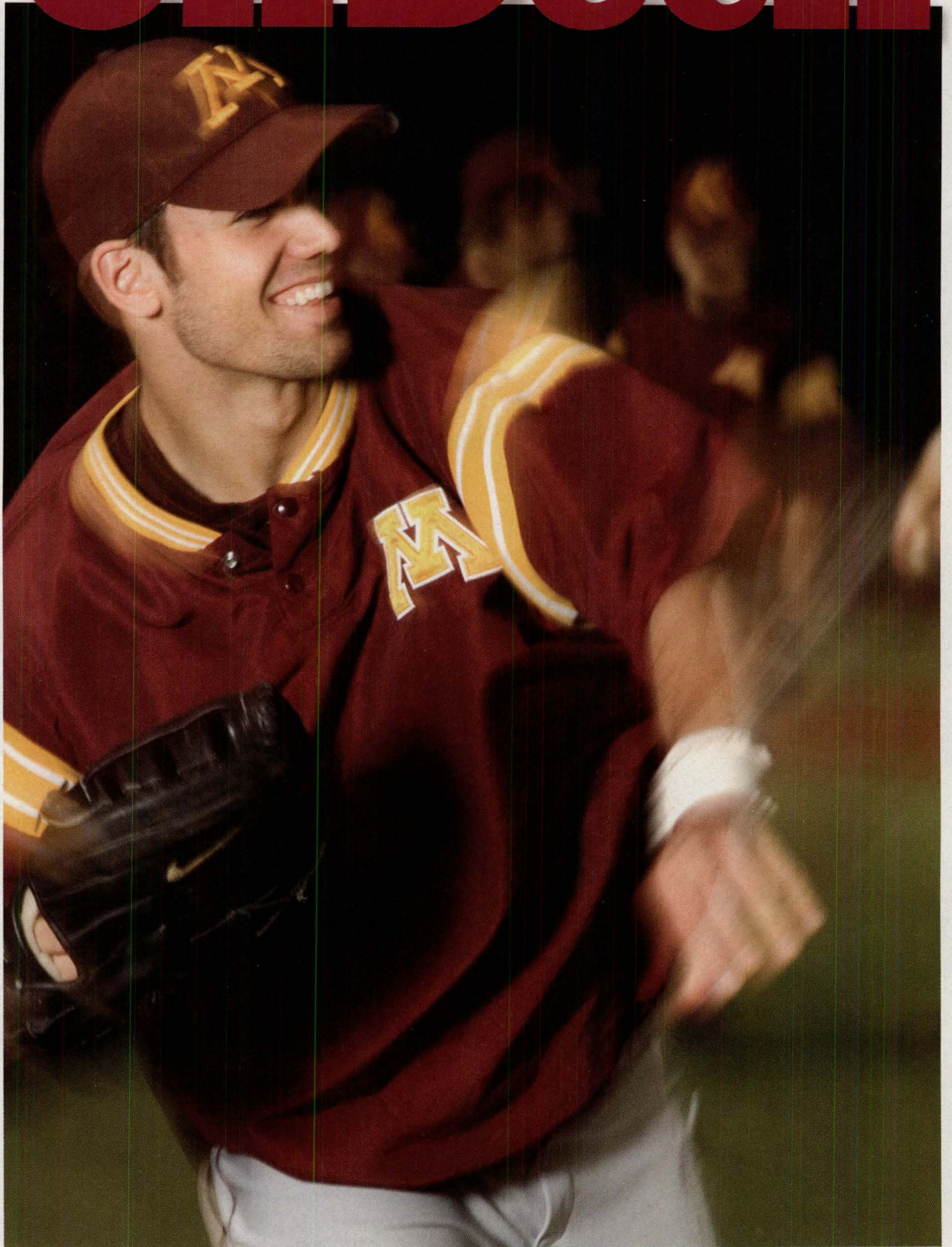
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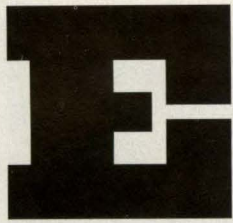

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On Deck



Gopher football standout Eric Decker steps up to the plate.

By Peter Schilling Jr.



Eric Decker walks slowly across the Metrodome turf and takes his place in the batter's box. He stands at the plate, aluminum bat cocked and ready, knees slightly bent. At this intrasquad practice for the University of Minnesota baseball team, Decker takes a waist-high pitch and drills it into the gap in deep center field. With his eye trained on the outfielder, Decker rounds first and then picks up speed, sprinting toward second with a graceful stride that is remarkably similar to Joe DiMaggio's tiptoed lope.

Gopher football fans are to be forgiven for wondering what Decker is doing in the Metrodome in February, wielding a baseball bat and a left fielder's glove in place of a football helmet and pads. Decker is a standout wide receiver on the Gopher football squad and last year was one of the bright spots in an otherwise dismal season. On the gridiron, Decker broke a school record with 67 receptions, was second in the Big Ten in receiving yards with 909, and scored in seven games. But the sophomore from Cold Spring, Minnesota, hasn't always focused on football. At Rocori High School he wore two hats—or rather, he wore a cap and a helmet—as one of the state's most prominent baseball and football players. Now he's playing both again, this time for the Golden Gophers.

"I had friends back home, ex-Gophers, who told me that I absolutely had to try out for the baseball team," Decker says. "I thought, here's an opportunity I can't pass up." In fact, according to Gopher baseball coach John Anderson (B.S. '77), if Decker hadn't received a football scholarship, he would have been given one to play for the baseball team. "I am better in football," Decker says. "But when I got here I talked to [head football coach Tim] Brewster about playing baseball. We agreed I would focus on football at first. After my success last season, I decided to try out for baseball. You only get so many opportunities in life to do this, so I figured, why not? There's nothing to lose."

Nothing, perhaps, except free time. At the beginning of spring semester, Decker—a business and marketing major who was an Academic all-Big Ten last season—was balancing a busy class schedule with practices for both football and baseball. He would run with the football team at 7 a.m., head off to classes until noon, lift weights with the football team, and then drive to the Metrodome for three hours of baseball practice. After an evening class, Decker would go home and eat dinner, do homework, and sleep. The next day he'd start all over again.

By mid-semester that grueling regimen lightened up. Decker eliminated the football workouts, and he and Brewster are so confident in his abilities that he skipped spring football practice altogether. "Now I'm smart enough to focus only on baseball," he says with a laugh.

While there have been many two-sport athletes in Gopher history, few possess Decker's combination of speed, quickness, and arm strength. Perhaps the most apt comparison might be with the late Paul Giel (B.A. '55), who excelled in football and

baseball. Giel pitched for the Gophers from 1952 to 1954, led the team in numerous pitching categories, and went on to throw in the major leagues for six seasons. On the football field he was even better, as a star halfback who was runner-up in Heisman Trophy voting in 1953. Both his football and baseball uniform numbers have been retired at the U.

Of course, Decker has a long way to go before anyone retires his uniform, and he admits that his baseball skills are a bit rusty. He worked out with the Gophers in preseason practice his freshman year, in 2006, and spent the summer of 2007 playing with the Cold Spring Springers, an amateur club from his hometown that has earned seven state tournament titles. Otherwise, it's been all football. But Anderson is excited about Decker's potential. "Somebody who's as talented athletically as Eric has the skill to make it," Anderson says. "He's got a great throwing arm, running speed, and bat speed. His hardest adjustment is going to be in the hitting part of the game."

Decker agrees. The quality of pitching he has encountered in the college ranks surpasses anything he's seen before and has made hitting, well, a whole new ballgame. "You think, 'God, how am I going to hit these curveballs?'" he says. "Just seeing this stuff has been a big part of getting back into it."

Decker's baseball debut comes at a time when the Gophers are trying to fill the shoes of 17 players who played on last year's Big Ten runner-up team. Anderson thinks last season was a breakout year for the Big Ten conference, with Ohio State, Michigan, and Minnesota all advancing to the NCAA tournament. Decker is one of a handful of talented newcomers vying for playing time in the outfield. Matt Nohely, who last year earned a spot on the first all-Big Ten team, will hold down center field, but right and left field are wide open.

Anderson plans to start Decker in the eighth or ninth spot in the batting order and protect him from powerful left-handed pitching for now, at least until they can build up his confidence. "The only way he's going to learn is to play. So we're going to get him out there," Anderson says. Best of all, Decker is eager to learn. "He's hungry," Anderson says. "He's proven himself in football, so it's not like he has to do it again. He's been well-received, the kids like him, and he doesn't want to be treated differently."

Decker knows that if he's to make a mark on Gopher baseball, as he has football, he'll need to work hard and be patient. When pressed about whether he plans to move on to the next level and play professionally in either sport, Decker shrugs. "I want to keep an open mind. I do want to stay involved with sports and get to that highest level, but if that doesn't happen I'd like to manage or coach." With that he stares out on the diamond to watch his teammates take batting practice and smiles. "Whatever comes my way, if I like it I'll take it. Right now I'm just enjoying my college life." ■

Peter Schilling Jr. is a freelance writer and author of the novel The End of Baseball, released in April.

Gopher Sports News and Notes

Football might not yet be in the air, but the rapid progress of construction on TCF Bank Stadium has gone a long way toward evoking the sights and sounds of on-campus football again.

The latest milestone: the laying of the first brick on April 7 by 100-year-old Hilding Mortenson, who worked as a 16-year-old bricklayer during construction of Memorial Stadium in 1924. He is also an uncle to Mort Mortenson Jr., of the Mortenson construction family, the general contractor for the stadium. With dozens of University officials, construction workers, media, and dignitaries looking on, Hilding Mortenson spread and feathered mortar on the brick ledge, "buttered" the end of one brick, and laid two, tapping them down level and plumb with the ledge. Mortenson hasn't laid a brick in 37 years, but he clearly has not lost his touch.

The Golden Gophers gave their fans some thrilling moments this winter but took home no postseason titles in hockey, basketball, wrestling, or swimming.

The Gopher women's stellar hockey season ended in heartbreaking fashion with a 3-2 overtime loss at Ridder Arena to rival Wisconsin



Hilding Mortenson lays the first brick for TCF Bank Stadium.

eventual national champion Boston College in the regional semifinals to close out the year. The Gophers played six postseason games that were all decided by one goal, including four overtime games. They ended the season at 19-17-9 overall after making their eighth straight trip to the NCAA tournament.

Tubby Smith guided the Gopher men's basketball team to a 20-14 season and a berth in the National Invitational Tournament, where they lost to Maryland. It was the first postseason appearance for the Gophers since the 2006 NIT. Looking ahead to the 2008-09 season, the team announced that it will play the Louisville Cardinals next December at the University of Phoenix Stadium Shootout.

The young Gopher women's basketball team exceeded expectations during the regular season, finishing 20-11 and earning a first round NCAA tournament match as the No. 9 seed against No. 8 seed Texas in the first round. The only starter the Gophers will lose to graduation is senior Leslie Knight.

Gopher wrestlers finished the NCAA tourney in 10th place, their lowest finish since 1996. Minnesota's lone representative in the finals, Jayson Ness at 125 pounds, finished in second place.

The women's swimming and diving team won the Big Ten championship and placed 13th in the NCAA meet.

The men's team finished 11th in the National Championships, securing its 17th consecutive top-15 finish. Senior David Plummer finished his Golden Gopher career with eight individual all-America awards, which ranks second all-time at Minnesota. He is the only Gopher to ever earn all-America awards for four straight years in both the 100 and 200 backstroke events.

Fifty-one Golden Gopher student athletes earned academic all-Big Ten honors in winter sports, including basketball player Emily Fox (junior, journalism), who was a consensus selection. Academic all-Big Ten honorees must have a grade point average of 3.0 or better.

—Cynthia Scott



David Plummer crowned his Golden Gopher career with eight individual all-America awards, second all-time at Minnesota.

sin in the first round of the NCAA tournament on March 15. One week earlier, the Badgers had defeated the Gophers 4-3 in the WCHA Final Face-Off, a loss that resulted in the Gophers missing the WCHA tournament final for the first time in seven years. The Gophers finished the season with a 27-7-4

overall record and a 21-5-2 mark in the WCHA, finishing second behind champion University of Minnesota-Duluth.

The Gopher men's hockey team put together a blistering postseason run on the heels of a disappointing regular season, finally falling 5-2 to

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The Right to Be a Mother

For many new mothers in the United States, the tax credit on their bundle of joy is a welcome perk. For a select few, bearing a child brings a much larger windfall: Jennifer Lopez reportedly received \$6 million for flaunting her newborn twins on the cover of *People* magazine. Then there are those for whom motherhood, as the saying goes, is simply its own reward.

There's the waitress in Ohio fearing the time when, due to welfare reform, the government assistance she relies on runs out. She plans to work multiple jobs, as she's done before, but worries nonetheless: "What will happen if I can't get by? Will they take my kids away and put them into a foster home?" There are mothers in prison; pregnant teenaged sisters in foster care; and the developmentally disabled woman whose 10-year-old daughter's skills are starting to surpass hers.

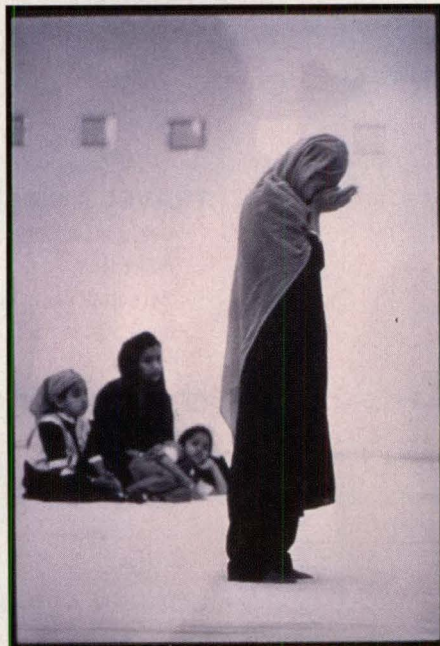
Portraits of these women and their children are part of "Beggars and Choosers: Motherhood Is *Not* a Class Privilege in America," a photography exhibit on view through June 14 at the Elmer L. Andersen Library on campus. With 56 images made by 43 documentary photographers, this exhibition, starting with its title, aims to provoke.

"If you bring your culturally conditioned eyeballs to the gallery, you'll say, 'Whoa, wait a minute, what's she doing? She shouldn't be a mother,'" says Rickie Solinger, the New York-based historian and author who organized the exhibit. "Then you're affirming that certain women shouldn't have the right to be a mother," she continues. "Motherhood is a right. Like the right to vote, the right to free speech, it doesn't matter if you're poor or rich, it's a right for everyone."

Lisa Norling, an associate professor of history at the University of Minnesota, was instrumental in bringing the exhibit—which is based on Solinger's 2001 book, *Beggars and Choosers: How the Politics of Choice Shapes Adoption, Abortion, and Welfare in the United States*—to campus. "Rickie Solinger is an important and well-known historian of women and public policy in 20th century U.S. history," Norling says. "With this



Regina and Stanley, 1996, Brooklyn, New York, by Regina Monfort



Vermont Gurdwara, 1999, Los Angeles, by Jerry Berndt

exhibition, we wanted to foreground the kind of work that she does, make a strong statement about the value of women's history in general, and showcase historical resources we have here at the University." Solinger, she notes, used the U's Social Welfare History Archives in conducting research for her 1992 book, *Wake Up Little Susie: Single Pregnancy and Race before Roe v. Wade*.

This is not the only exhibition that Solinger has organized; in fact, she has forged a supplemental career as a curator. It started with "Wake Up Little Susie." In 1992, she was working with several other women as part of a collaborative program of the Rocky Mountain Women's Institute in Denver, and the group decided to create an art installation based on the issues Solinger addressed in that book, including how post-World War II public policies made it difficult for unwed black mothers to get housing, assistance, jobs, and education.

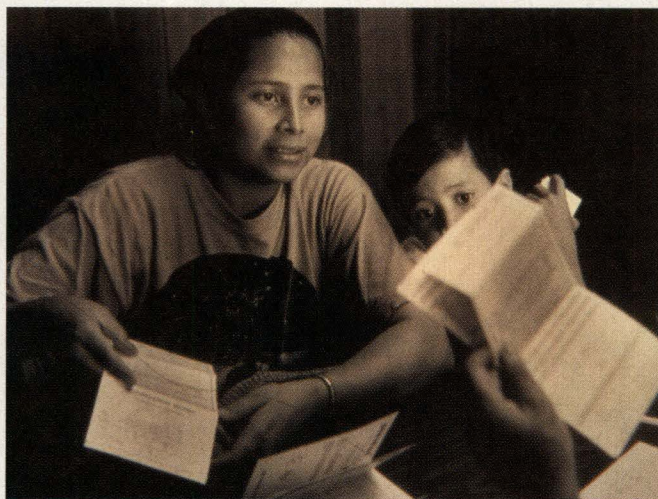
"I realized only a limited number of people are going to read my academic books," Solinger says. "So making exhibitions is another way of doing this kind of public education." A mixed-media installation, "Wake Up Little Susie" showed at more than 60 colleges and universities over 11 years. "Interrupted Life: Incarcerated Mothers in the United States" was her first exhibition not based directly on a book. "Beggars and Choosers" has traveled to dozens of campuses since 2002. And a fourth, featuring contemporary artworks that incorporate historical domestic tools, recently opened at the Bennington Museum in Vermont.

Norling wanted the "Beggars and Choosers" exhibit on campus during the Berkshire Conference on the History of Women, which the University is hosting this June. With work by renowned photographers Susan Meiselas, Eli Reed, and

others, the exhibit's images "challenge both romantic platitudes about motherhood and stereotypes about 'bad' mothers by portraying actual mothers in their particularity," says Annette Igra, the Carleton College history professor who will moderate a panel discussion on the exhibit. "Yet there are clues to the larger con-



Mother and Daughter, East 173rd Street, 1980, New York, by Mel Rosenthal



Immigrant mother goes over her son's vaccination records so he may enter 1st grade, 1991, Los Angeles, by Susie Fitzhugh



Mary and Mika, 1997, Oakland, California, by Anne Hamersky



Homeless in Florida, 1997, Daytona Beach, Florida, by Betty Press

text that reveal the ways inequalities of class, race, and gender shape the experience of mothering.”

Besides the exhibition's role at the Berkshire Conference, Solinger intends for it to “interrupt the curriculum” by serving as a complex topic for discussion in a range of University courses, including sociology, history, and women and public policy.

When students look at, say, Brenda Ann Kenneally's *Little Moms*, will they focus on how the scrawny, large-eyed girl in the foreground seems scarcely larger than the toddler she holds on her hip—or will they note how she does so with utter poise? What will they think of the mother in Corky Lee's *Ten-minutes-to-four in the Garment Factory*, hunched over a sewing machine, her daughter hovering at her side? How long will it take them to notice that the woman dressing her child in Anne Hamersky's *Mary and Mika* is sitting in a wheelchair?

Perhaps because it features documentary photography, “Beggars and Choosers” may be the most controversial of Solinger's exhibits. As its Web site explains, “Public opinion polls show that a majority of Americans [believe] women shouldn't have

children if they are too poor and resourceless to support kids properly.” But “Beggars and Choosers” confronts viewers with powerful images of poor, nonwhite, immigrant, and very young women being mothers with dignity and determination.

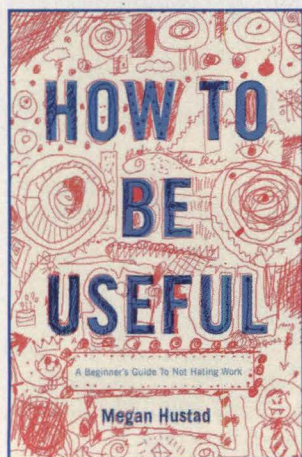
Still, it's hard not to question how they manage to do the hard work of mothering—or, more to the point, why. Solinger, of course, expects just that. “Many people think that they are the ones who are causing poverty in the U.S.” She counters that belief with text panels that include quotes from the mothers themselves, as well as an array of information on what Solinger describes as “very substantial causes of poverty: paying people non-living wages; a lack of adequate education; or the most common, a lack of health insurance.”

Is it any coincidence that those particular issues—money, schooling, health care—loom large in any parent's mind?

“Beggars and Choosers” is on display through June 14 at the Elmer L. Andersen Library, 222 21st Ave. S., on the West Bank of the Minneapolis campus. Call 612-624-4377.

—Julie Caniglia

A Cynic's Guide to Success



How to Be Useful:
A Beginner's Guide
to Not Hating Work
By Megan Hustad (B.A. '97)
Houghton Mifflin (2008)

What could some musty old self-help manuals teach a laptop-toting, BlackBerry-punching professional about moving up in the 21st-century corporation? Plenty, says Megan Hustad (B.A. '97), whose degree from the University of Minnesota is in history.

Former book editor Hustad dusted off stacks of classic advice tomes and found their instructions still valid. Human nature being what it is, today's high-tech offices apparently aren't all that different from workplaces in the late 19th-century, when steel tycoon Andrew Carnegie praised the value of can-do enthusiasm; or in the 1920s, when socialite Emily Post preached the importance of being a good conversationalist; or in the 1930s, when Dale Carnegie's best-selling *How to Win Friends and Influence People* taught readers to get ahead by stroking the egos of their superiors.

Hustad's *How to Be Useful: A Beginner's Guide to Not Hating Work* is both an exploration of this potentially underappreciated publishing genre and an advice book in itself. Deploying a breezy tone and contemporary cultural references—including television's *The Office*, Gawker.com, The Gap, and *America's Next Top Model*—Hustad avoids scaring off modern readers while reiterating time-honored recommendations: listen, show optimism, keep your shoes polished and desk neat.

Among her dos and don'ts: "Don't walk in the door with wet hair." Instead, arrive looking prepared for the day—and get there before the boss does. "Do be careful whom you compliment," because complimenting someone higher up "suggests you imagine yourself in a position to judge their performance." And for goodness' sake, don't "just be yourself." Rather, Hustad writes, heed the counsel of Andrew Carnegie: "Forget yourself, he essentially said, and maybe try being somebody else a few hours a day. Maybe somebody better than you."

Speaking by phone from her home in Brooklyn, New York, Hustad explained why modern professionals should pay attention to success literature and what she learned from it herself.

How did you decide to write this book? I'd always had this guilty fascination with success literature. It's something that I think a lot of people in my generation find sort of tacky and sort of suspect—intellectually, politically, and otherwise. I started reading this to see if I could address some of the problems I was facing—and some of the problems my friends were facing—in our jobs.

So it sounds like you went in with a pretty open mind, a sort of snark-free attitude about it. It seemed like, we can deconstruct it all day long, but we're still suffering in our jobs. I thought of it as a literary salvage operation, reclaiming these materials for an audience that otherwise would never come to it.

If you look at the motivations of a lot of the people who were writing this, they were humanitarians in a profound way. Emily Post, Andrew Carnegie, even Steven Covey [author of *The 7 Habits of Highly Effective People*], they were really motivated by a sincere desire to help.

There was nothing cynical about their projects when they wrote these books. I thought that was quite relevant. I think it's been a very cynical 10, 20 years. My generation was raised to be cynical and look askance.

Where does that attitude come from? I think part of it comes just from sheer exhaustion, spiritual exhaustion. Everywhere you walk, you're being marketed to all the time. At some point you just have to shut down. You put your defenses up, and you take everything with a grain of salt. Because your next question is, "What are you trying to sell me?" You get this reflex.

You suggest that the best way for young professionals to advance their careers is to change the focus from presenting themselves as talented stars and, instead, to pitching in and being helpful and humble team players. Well, team players, yes. But I think it's a little more complicated than that. You have to realize you're ultimately performing. It's an act. And you can



Megan Hustad

be sincere at some things, but, you know, there's a last chapter about how to get out [of your job]. That was certainly my goal: How can I do so well that I can ultimately leave office life?

Because the thing is, if you don't succeed with the team, you can't leave. You're stuck. . . . So yeah, be a team player—but toward your own ends.

Where did the title come from? Useful probably isn't the first word to spring to most people's minds in terms of succeeding at work. I think there's something very human about wanting to be of service to other people.

And also, there's a theme that's subtle throughout all these books, that you're not going to be successful if you're not doing something that's of use to someone. You can have all these bright ideas, be selling amazing widgets, be doing work that's so much more clever than anything that's been done before, but if there's no demand for what you're offering it really doesn't matter. If you're not meeting someone's needs, you're not going to advance.

How do you predict success literature will hold up as the American workplace changes—for example, involving more telecommuters and contract workers, becoming more distance-oriented? If anything, greater distance will make things harder for people, because you're not learning by osmosis by being in

“You're not going to be successful if you're not doing something that's of use to someone. If you're not meeting someone's needs, you're not going to advance.”

the same space as people and able to trade on the loyalties that come from sharing the same space. If you're just sitting in your house somewhere, how are you going to communicate how valuable you are?

If you had to recommend one success book from the past 100 years, what would it be? The one I had the most fun reading, and that expanded my understanding, I wouldn't have even thought to include. This guy said, you should really read Helen Gurley Brown's *Sex and the Single Girl*. And then I read it. First of all, it was just very funny. Really changed my mind about how even to think about who she was about. Because I had never read *Cosmo* in my life. But she actually has a very coherent philosophy about the things she had to do to get power for herself. Being a girl from the sticks, the wrong side of the tracks, literally, in a very male-dominated environment, is something that I think women my age can learn a lot from.

—Katy Read



Sam Richter

Sell Mate

Sam Richter (B.A. '89) lists three books that he turns to again and again for inspiration: Napoleon Hill's *Think and Grow Rich* and Dale Carnegie's *How to Win Friends and Influence People* and *How to Stop Worrying and Start Living*. Richter is a salesman first, last, and always. His specialty? Selling how to sell.

Richter came to the University of Minnesota from St. Louis Park (Minnesota) High School to play Gopher football under coach Lou Holtz. In 1986, the journalism major won an internship with WCCO Radio covering the Twins, one of the worst teams in baseball that season. Being an underdog is not Richter's style, so he veered into advertising—about the same time that the Twins went from worst to first and won the World Series.

But if his timing as a sports journalist was off, it was right on as a marketer. The Internet was just revving up when Richter signed on with a Minneapolis-based advertising firm helping clients sell products and services via Internet marketing. But it soon became apparent that his clients were more interested in his creativity and big-picture thinking and his charisma than merely creating Web content.

So, at age 25, he and a colleague opened their own agency. It was later bought by another firm, and Richter eventually figured out that what he was really selling was Sam Richter.

In 1997, while he was working at information technology firm Digital River, Richter founded SBR Worldwide (SBR stands for Small Business Resources) as a moonlight gig. The company caters to small businesses, attempting to give them the same competitive edge that big public relations firms give Fortune 500 companies. "Everyone told businesses, 'You have to have a Web site. You have to reach customers on the Internet.' But

no one told them how to do it," says Richter, who sold them on how to do it.

The James J. Hill Reference Library in St. Paul was one such operation. Established in the early 1900s by the railroad baron as a resource for small businesses, the library kept a trove of business periodicals and books, serving approximately 12,000 visitors a year, but none of its resources were available online. The library's board lured Richter away from Digital River in 2001 with a small budget and a big challenge.

"I tried to convince small businesses that they needed information [about their industry and their competitors] and that they needed to pay for it," Richter says. Under his direction, the Hill Library created a membership program that gave individuals the same access to information and expert advice as big companies, a content management system that allowed the Hill Library to create custom business libraries online for clients, and boosted users to more than a million per year.

Richter—who was named to the *Minneapolis-St. Paul Business Journal* "40 Under 40" list, an annual roster of the region's rising young business stars, in 2003—left the Hill Library in December 2007 to join ActiFi, a Plymouth, Minnesota-based company that advises financial advisers on how to increase their sales. SBR Worldwide now manages Richter's services as a speaker, sales trainer, consultant, and author.

Author? Richter points to another book on his shelf, a relatively new addition to his collection and one that he hopes up-and-coming salespeople will turn to for inspiration: *Take the Cold out of Cold Calling*, by Sam Richter.

—Sarah Barker

ENCHANTING Ireland



Go where the hills glow green, and the Blarney Stone waits for your kiss. Kilkenny is one of Ireland's loveliest inland cities. The genuine warmth and friendliness of the locals will leave a lasting impression and the city's long and colorful history has left its mark in the landscape and the architecture. Kilkenny's compact size makes it easy to explore on foot, and its many unique shops, galleries and restaurants add immensely to its charm. And you'll adore Killarney, a Camelot-like town steeped in folklore, legends and beauty. Set at the foot of Ireland's highest mountains and along the edge of pristine lakes, this colorful town is bustling with shops and lively pubs. Optional excursions include the Dingle Peninsula, Muckross House and Gardens, Kinsale and Blarney, Dublin, Glendalough and the Waterford Crystal Factory.

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Alumni Association Angle



University of Minnesota students graduating in 1961. Of all the shared rituals of college life, spring commencement is the signature moment of a college career. This spring, more than 6,000 graduating students will participate in 16 commencement ceremonies, beginning with the Medical School on May 2 and ending with the Carlson School of Management and the School of Public Health on May 19. To the class of 2008: Welcome to the Alumni Association and to the ranks of the nearly 400,000 living alumni of the University of Minnesota.

INSIDE

St. Paul Campus Reunion

Our Newest Alumni

Board the Showboat

Legislative Success

D.C. Alumni Event

Travel to Dubai



Doris Taylor

Annual Celebration Just a Heartbeat Away

Make plans now to attend the 2008 Annual Celebration on May 29 at Northrop Auditorium, featuring an address by groundbreaking heart researcher Doris Taylor, who recently created a beating heart in her U of M laboratory. Earl Bakken (B.S. '48), founder and long-time CEO of Medtronic, will introduce Taylor. Ticket sales for the dinner are closed, but program-only tickets are available by calling the Northrop at 612-624-2345.

Way to Grow!

Membership in the University of Minnesota Alumni Association continues to grow. The number of life members now stands at an all-time high of 13,788, and during this fiscal year, overall membership reached a new all-time high of 63,925. The Alumni Association extends a special welcome to new members and thanks all Alumni Association members for being ambassadors for the important work of the University.



St. Paul Campus Reunion June 26

Frostbite will be in the air at this year's St. Paul Campus Reunion June 26. Alumni from the colleges of Food, Agricultural and Natural Resource Sciences; Design; and Education and Human Development, as well as the schools of Agriculture and Home Economics are invited to attend the annual get-together at the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum on June 26 from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.



U of M apple breeder Jim Luby, shown here with a student, is the featured speaker at the St. Paul Campus reunion on June 26.

Reunion participants will hear about the development of Frostbite, the University's newest apple to be sold commercially, from featured speaker Jim Luby (Ph.D. '82), professor of horticulture and an apple breeder. Formerly known as MN447, Frostbite dates back to 1921, when the cross-pollinating of two apple blossoms was made at the U's Horticultural Research Center, now in its 100th year. The apple is actually the grandparent of the most famous U of M apple, the Honeycrisp. Luby will talk about what it takes to make Frostbite and other great apples developed at the U, including Haralson, Honeycrisp, Zestar, and Snowsweet.

Participants may also explore, on foot or by tram, Tree-ology, the summer exhibition, as well as the arboretum's gardens, model landscapes, woodlands, and wetlands. Members of the class of 1958 will be recognized during the reunion.

The registration deadline is June 13. Space for tours is limited. The cost for members of the Alumni Association is \$28 per person (\$30 for nonmembers) and includes lunch, tours, and parking. Registration plus a one-year membership to the Alumni Association is \$65. Register by mail to Mary Buschette, 190 Coffey Hall, 1420 Eckles Ave., St. Paul, MN 55108, or online at www.cfans.umn.edu/spcreunion.

Check Out University Libraries

Members of the Alumni Association have borrowing privileges at University Libraries through a discounted membership in Friends of the Library, which promotes the Libraries and advocates for strengthening them as the center of scholarly life at the U. Alumni Association members pay \$40 for membership in Friends of the Library (regular membership is \$80).

In addition to borrowing privileges, members of Friends of the Libraries receive a subscription to *Continuum*, the magazine of the University of Minnesota Libraries, as well as invitations to lectures, exhibit openings, author readings, and other special events.

Members of the Alumni Association can also access thousands of online publications through two University databases: the Academic Search Alumni Edition and Business Source Alumni Edition. A valid Alumni Association membership number is required to use this benefit. For more information on the University Libraries benefits, go to www.alumni.umn.edu/membership.



National President

Members and Ambassadors

Alumni Association members are essential to the ongoing success of the University of Minnesota. University President Bob Bruininks and all of us closely involved with the University understand that fact, but we've discovered that many alumni don't grasp how critically important they are to the U.

We've set out to change that.

The Alumni Association has done some soul-searching recently, taking a closer look at who we are, what we do, and how we communicate with alumni and others. As part of that process, we polled both members and nonmembers and discovered some unsettling facts. For example, we learned that many alumni have only a vague idea of what the Alumni Association is, have no particularly strong opinion of the organization, and aren't quite sure if they're a member or not. We realized that, while the mission of the 104-year-old Alumni Association remains strong, our message and identity were muddled and, according to our research, not particularly compelling.

Our polling revealed that most people join the Alumni Association because they want to support the important work of their alma mater. Now—after months of examining how well we convey who we are and what we do—when someone asks me, “Why should I join the Alumni Association?” my answer is, “To be an ambassador for the important work of the University.”

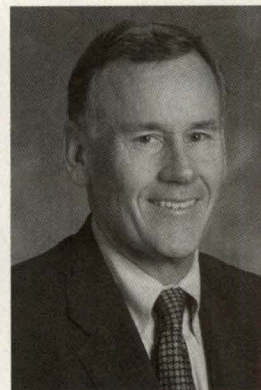
Simply by becoming a member of the Alumni Association, you become an ambassador for the University. How?

First, you're reading *Minnesota* magazine, sent to the 60,000 members of the Alumni Association, and becoming engaged and informed. But there are many ways to be an ambassador. For example:

- You are counted as someone who cares about the fate of the U.
- More than 10,000 of you advocate for legislative funding of the University, this year securing funds for new biomedical research buildings.
- Countless numbers of you mentor U students, network with fellow alumni, encourage the bright high school students you know to apply to the U, embrace the adventure of lifelong learning through Continuing Education courses, and attend campus events.
- Thousands of you played a part in bringing football back to campus.
- Hundreds of you participate in the Alumni Association travel program, taking trips, like I did last year, to places like Italy, Dubai, and Holland to see and learn more about the world with fellow alumni.
- And nearly 1,000 of you will be attending our upcoming Annual Celebration May 29 to hear guest speaker Dr. Doris Taylor, the groundbreaking researcher who recently created a beating heart in her U of M laboratory.

You are the Alumni Association, “where members are ambassadors.” You'll begin seeing those words in this magazine, on our Web site, and in other communications. And through examples and stories of the many ways members are ambassadors for the U, you'll also begin to see how crucial your role is in making the University great.

As President Bruininks has said: “When you join the Alumni Association, you become an ambassador for the University. Members play a vital role in helping the University realize its mission of education, research, and engagement and its goal to become one of the top three public research universities in the world.” ■



Tom LaSalle (B.A. '72)

An Evening on the Showboat



A scene from *The Count of Monte Cristo*, playing on the Showboat

This year marks the 50th season of the University of Minnesota Showboat Players' summertime productions. Opened as part of the state of Minnesota's centennial celebration in 1958, the Minnesota Centennial Showboat plays host to two University of Minnesota Theatre productions each year. Celebrate the Showboat's half-century mark with other Alumni Association members on June 18 or July 8 with a stage performance of *The Count of Monte Cristo* aboard the Showboat and a member-exclusive, post-show dessert reception with members of the acting company. *The Count of Monte Cristo* tells of the adventures of a dashing sailor who is wrongly sentenced to spend the rest of his life in prison by those jealous of his good fortune.

Tickets are \$30 and are available by calling 651-227-1100. Please identify yourself as a member of the Alumni Association and have your member number available.



Destination: Dubai

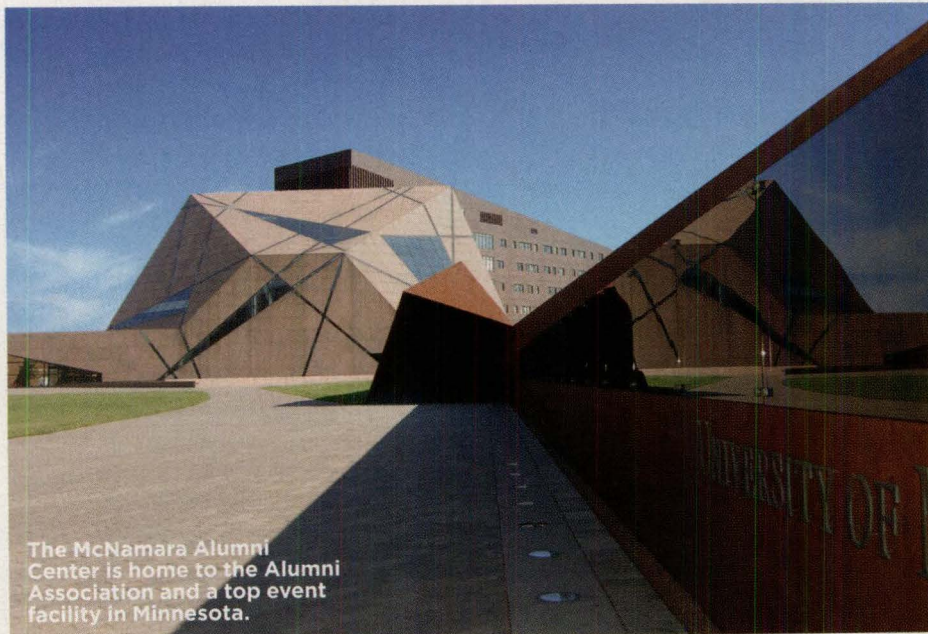
With its alluring mix of Bedouin and Western cultures, it's easy to see why Dubai, in the United Arab Emirates, has become one of the world's top tourist destinations. The Alumni Association is offering a trip to Dubai from September 20 to 28, 2008.

Travelers may visit old-world marketplaces nestled among modern skyscrapers and architecture; shop for gold, crafts, textiles, and pearls along the Dubai Creek; relax on desert oases; visit one of the city's largest and most beautiful mosques; and take in the first-class golf courses, the soon-to-be world's tallest building, and the largest sports stadium in the Middle East.

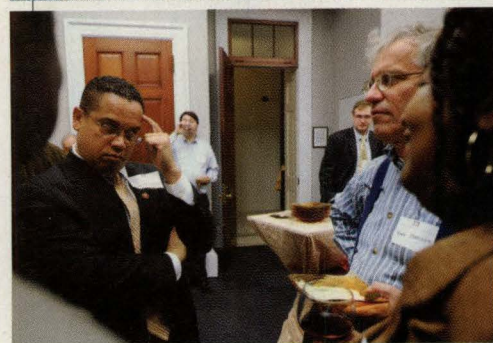
The Alumni Association sponsors first-rate tours to dozens of destinations every year. For more information on this trip and other travel destinations, visit www.alumni.umn.edu/travel or call 612-625-9427 or 800-UM-ALUMS (800-862-5867).

Center of Attention

The McNamara Alumni Center, home to the Alumni Association, was named the best non-hotel meeting facility in Minnesota by meeting and event professionals at the industry's annual "Best Of" awards in March. The award cited the alumni center's unique architecture, seven event spaces, and catering by D'Amico, another award winner. The McNamara Alumni Center opened in 2000, and in 2002 it received the Best Reception Facility Award. Life members of the Alumni Association receive a discount on rental of the McNamara Alumni Center. For more information, visit www.alumni.umn.edu/rewards.



The McNamara Alumni Center is home to the Alumni Association and a top event facility in Minnesota.



U.S. Rep. Keith Ellison (J.D. '90) of Minnesota's fifth congressional district visited with members of the Washington, D.C., chapter of the Alumni Association during a reception in his honor at the Capitol building on March 31. About 40 members attended the reception for Ellison, the nation's first Muslim ever elected to Congress.

To learn about Alumni Association chapter events in your area, visit www.alumni.umn.edu/chapters.

Hail from the Hill

Senior Moments

The Alumni Association sent the class of 2008 off with a free lunch, a new padfolio, and a few wise words at the annual Senior Send-Off April 2 at the McNamara Alumni Center. Some 600 graduating U students entered prize drawings and heard an inspiring address by Trent Tucker (B.A. '06). Tucker, a former professional basketball player who returned to the U to complete his degree after his basketball career, encouraged the graduates to stay focused on their dreams and not sell themselves short in pursuing their goals. Tucker and Goldy posed with Rebecca Frino and Sitso Bediako, who each won a pair of tickets from Sun Country Airlines.



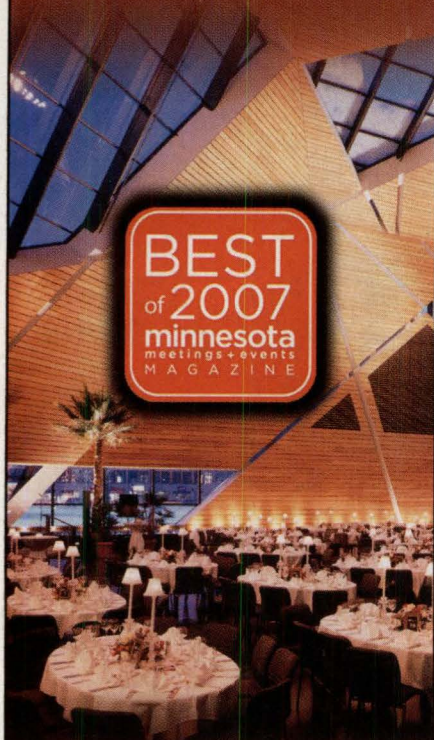
Grassroots Success

Hats off to Alumni Association members and others in the Legislative Network who visited, called, or wrote their legislators on behalf of the University during the 2008 session. Thanks to their efforts, the University achieved some significant successes. At the top of the list: \$219 million in state funding for the Minnesota Biomedical Research Program. Combined with \$73 million in funding from the U, the landmark \$292 million project will build four world-class science facilities on the East Bank campus. It took three years of persistent work to pass this legislation, and it would not have happened without grassroots lobbyists.



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McNamara Alumni Center was voted Best Meeting Facility (Non-Hotel) 2007 by *Minnesota Meetings + Events* magazine.

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Put LRT on the Right Tracks

“It doesn’t make sense to spend \$1 billion on light-rail transit and come up with a plan that doesn’t work for the U, when our students, faculty, and visitors will make up one-third of the ridership,” University of Minnesota President Bob Bruininks told the Alumni Association national board in March. He was referring to the Metropolitan Council’s recent vote to run the Central Corridor LRT line between Minneapolis and St. Paul at-grade on Washington Avenue rather than tunnel under this major campus artery.

As I noted in this space in the January–February issue, running LRT on Washington Avenue would be devastating. Adding trains to this street would split campus, gridlock traffic, be a safety hazard for

pedestrians, and reduce access to the U’s health care facilities. In fact, even a 10 percent decrease in patient visits would result in a \$100 million annual loss. What’s more, the mitigation costs of turning Washington into a transit/pedestrian mall—including diverting 25,000 cars to surrounding roads and moving sensitive University labs—threaten to far surpass the allotted mitigation costs for the entire corridor.

If you’ve been following the LRT issue, then you know that Governor Tim Pawlenty (B.S. ’83, J.D. ’86) vetoed \$70 million in state funding for the Central Corridor in April. So why am I continuing to speak out about LRT? Because there is strong support for transit and LRT and the project has a good chance of receiving funding before the legislative session ends May 19. Whether the LRT funds are designated now or later, a decision on the LRT route should be made only after careful consideration of all of the studies and data available.

The U strongly supports mass transit, and Kathleen O’Brien, the vice president of University Services, says that her team is vigorously encouraging the Met Council to consider another alternative: the Northern Alignment. The Met Council agreed that such a route could be studied, if the U paid for it, which it has done.

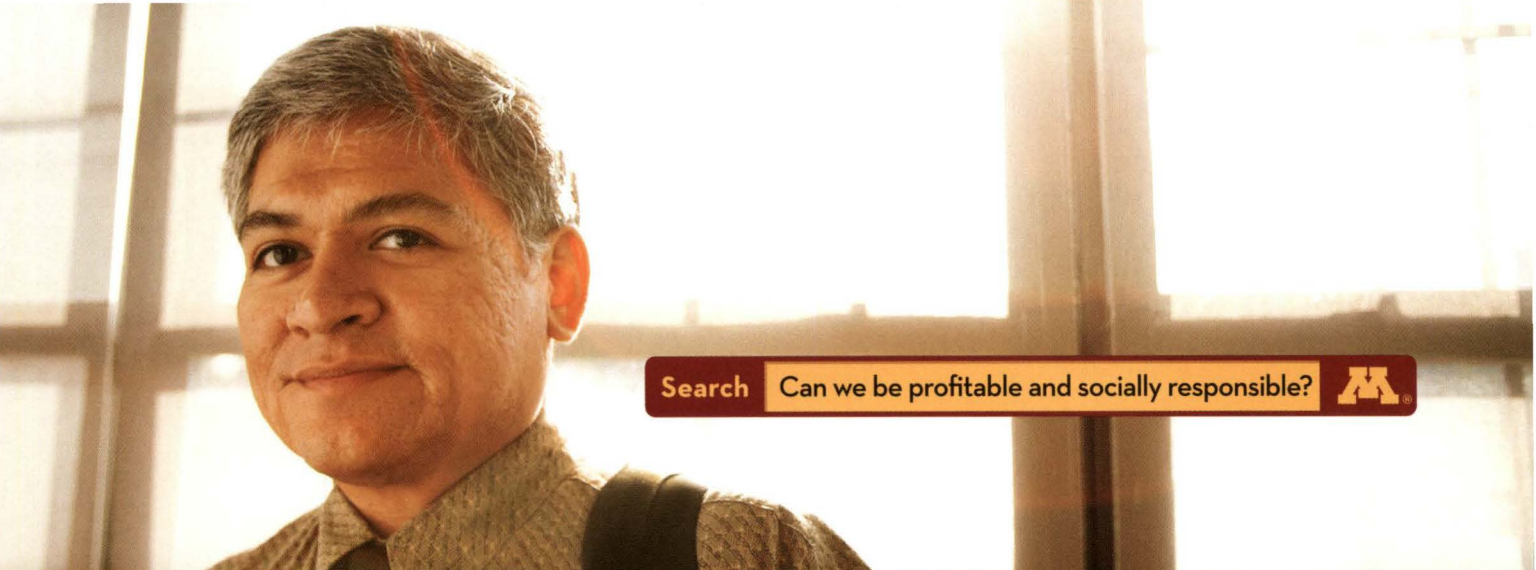
The Northern Alignment route would run light rail from east of the new TCF Bank Stadium, through Dinkytown on an existing train route, and across the Mississippi River over a railroad bridge currently used for bikes and pedestrians. Findings released in April indicate the Northern Alignment would cost \$20 million to \$23 million less than the Washington Avenue at-grade option, which would have additional mitigation costs as well, and save 90 seconds of travel time between the East Bank and West Bank. The University has asked the Met Council to carefully consider the Northern Alignment and will present its case at the Met Council meeting in May.

The Alumni Association board applauds the U for pushing for data-driven results and thoughtful deliberation of a transportation plan that will affect campus and the surrounding community for generations.

—Margaret Sughrue Carlson (Ph.D. ’83)

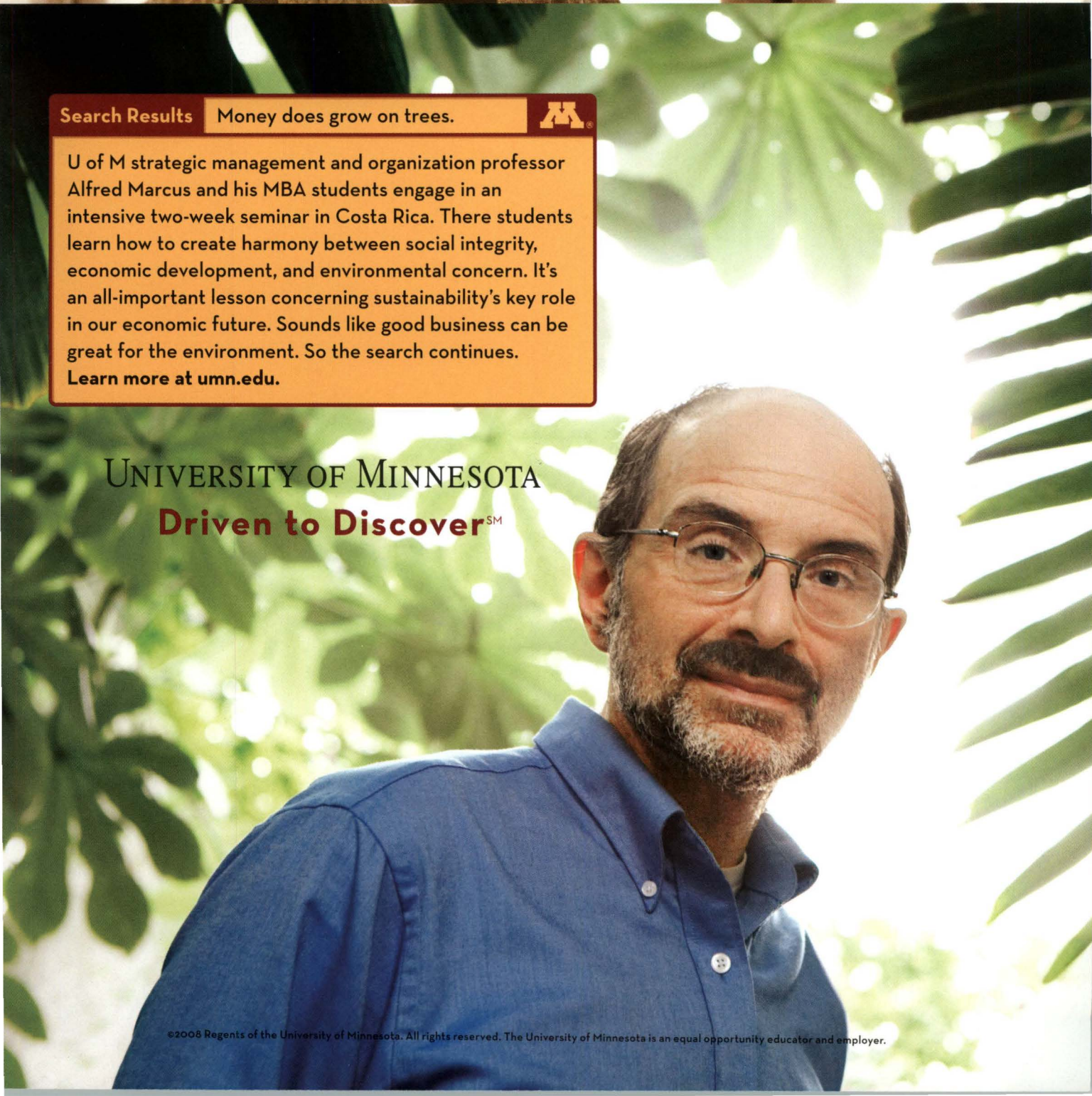


Kathleen O’Brien (left) and Margaret Carlson near the proposed LRT route through Dinkytown



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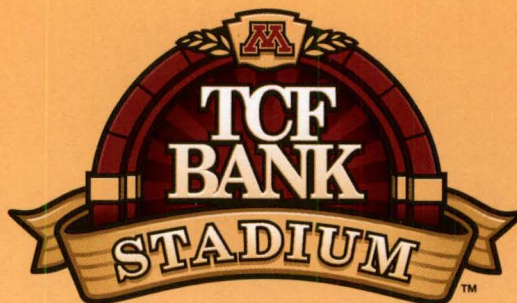


U of M strategic management and organization professor Alfred Marcus and his MBA students engage in an intensive two-week seminar in Costa Rica. There students learn how to create harmony between social integrity, economic development, and environmental concern. It's an all-important lesson concerning sustainability's key role in our economic future. Sounds like good business can be great for the environment. So the search continues. **Learn more at umn.edu.**

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History in the Making



On March 18, 2008, construction of TCF Bank Stadium continued to move forward. Just two short months after the first sections of steel were set into place, the stadium has already begun to take shape.

TCF is proud to be associated with the University of Minnesota and this exciting new chapter in Golden GophersSM history. We look forward to bringing you updates as construction progresses on TCF Bank Stadium, the new football home of your Golden Gophers.



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