

MINNESOTA

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

SPRING 2013

Lila!

GRAMMY-WINNING
ALUMNA LILA DOWNS
RETURNS TO CAMPUS

A Better Way
to Change DNA

A Scroll through
the Gopher Annuals

Craving Our
Caveman Days



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BY TIM BRADY

ON THE COVER: Lila Downs, photographed by Elena Pardo. This page, clockwise from top: *Gopher* annuals; illustration by Douglas Alves; illustration by Pierre Mornet

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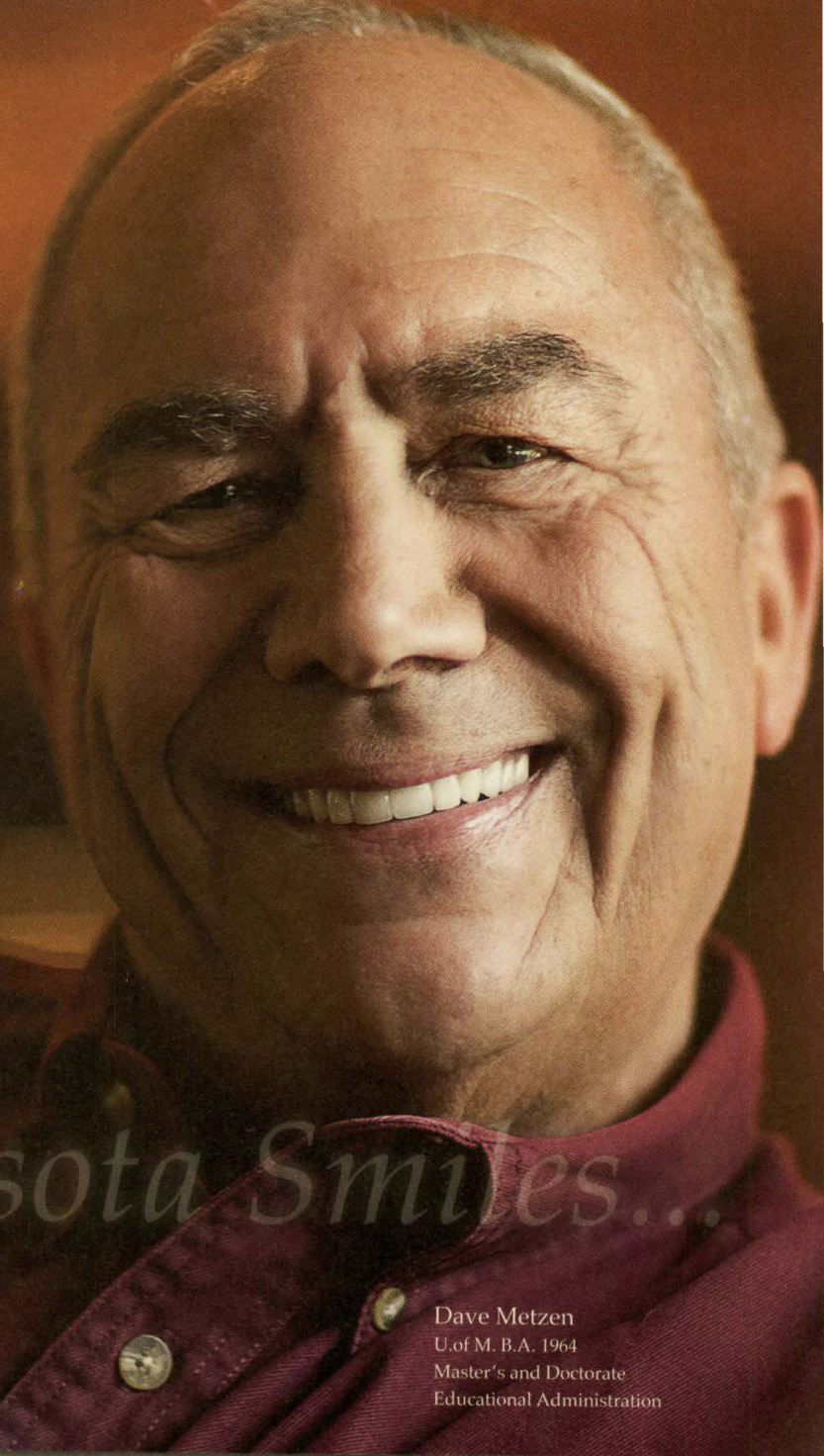
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Editor's Note

Irrepressible U

The description for the Sucker Society—a supposed student organization listed in the 1923 *Gopher* annual—caught my eye: "This is one of the few organizations whose membership is not based on merit, but rather on a submissive mind and a ready check book," wrote the wisecracking student editors.

I could picture the punch-drunk staff having a ball producing that 656-page tome. For 80 years beginning in 1888, U students attempted to preserve their college years in a leather-bound volume. As a result, they created a record of how much students—and their campus and world—have changed. (See "Nostalgia Unbound" beginning on page 32.) I lost myself in the pages of these recently digitally archived yearbooks, wondering if students in their day could possibly imagine what was coming for their alma mater—what would shape it and the students who would one day inhabit the place.

Students of the 1960s would have difficulty forecasting the fiscal woes that befell campus in the 1980s. The 1982–83 *Gopher* editors reported drastically reduced support from the state legislature, 150 faculty positions eliminated, and a 21.7 percent tuition increase.

U students of the 1950s would not be surprised to see the atomic age continuing to mushroom a decade hence. As reported in the 1963 *Gopher*, fallout shelter signs were placed on campus buildings, U students protested French atomic tests, and the *Minnesota Daily* interviewed Soviet Premier Nikita Khrushchev. But could they fathom the explosion of computers at the U? The 1963 editors describe them as "massive, shiny, and lifeless" with master control panels "that look much like an airplane cockpit."

Likewise, students of the 1940s might not be alarmed to see a chilling photograph in the 1953 *Gopher* of U students gathering around a TV to watch a televised atomic blast (the flash was so brilliant it blacked out the screen). But they would certainly wonder about the photos of something called Campus Carnival, where "sex was toned down," wrote the editors, "but shows that featured it attracted big and attentive audiences."

Students of the austere 1930s would marvel at the transformation of their campus in the 1940s. Indeed, the 1943 *Gopher* opens with the Pledge of Allegiance, and subsequent pages feature the University's many wartime initiatives: research into finding a new source of rubber in a Russian dandelion, Ancel Keys's starvation studies, and tests to treat wartime burns and gas gangrene, to name just a few.

Those students of the rip-roaring 1920s would find campus of the 1930s sobering—despite that Prohibition was "legislated into obscurity" in 1933. The editors of that year's *Gopher* noted that "worldwide economic stress and unrest . . . conflict in the Orient . . . devastating earthquakes in southern California" all provided the "kaleidoscopic background" against which the annual made its appearance.

And students of the 1910s would find indecorous such descriptions in the 1923 annual: "Notoriety is not fame—but it takes less effort and brings more admirers."

Though hard-pressed to see a clear picture of what shaped campus life in the spare 1913 *Gopher*, an alert reader will find a few hints. Among the balls and symposia, the "Events of the Year" listing mentions a post-exam riot.

The new digital archive of the *Gopher* annuals preserves it all—the embossing of the leather covers and the yellowing pages in between. But, above all, it captures generations of U students' enduring and irrepressible spirit. ■



Shelly Fling

Shelly Fling is editor of Minnesota. She may be reached at fling003@umn.edu.

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KEEP UP THE QUEST

The story on Judy Helgen’s passion to get answers on the cause of the deformed frogs hit home with me [“Judy Helgen Wants Answers,” Winter 2013]. I was on the board of the Women’s Cancer Resource Center in Minneapolis (now closed) in the 1990s. We were concerned about environmental links to cancer. Our group protested at Governor Jesse Ventura’s office when funding for more

research on the frogs was eliminated. The frogs were telling us something. How sad that we don’t listen to our small creatures. How much longer will it take for us to protect our kids and grandkids? How sad that the MPCA had lost its mission. How fine of Helgen to keep up the quest.

Betty Beier (B.A. '77)
Edina, Minnesota

LEAPFROGGED

I’m an alumna from the Department of Genetics and Cell Biology at the University of Minnesota and worked in the lab of Professor Robert McKinnell in 1985. My job for a quarter was to categorize numerous frogs caught from a certain region in southwestern Minnesota to note any abnormalities in pigment, form, shape, etc. So I was surprised when I read “Judy Helgen Wants Answers” and saw no reference to the earlier work that McKinnell had been doing in this same area.

McKinnell is considered the authority on frogs in Minnesota, having specialized in herpetology for over 50 years.

In fact, in 1996 he and Helgen obtained a \$150,000 grant from the state to study frog deformities. Why would McKinnell not be noted in this story? I would think that *Minnesota* editors would want to give full credit to the study of this issue, especially when more than one alum has been involved.

Dina Wellbrock (B.S. '88)
South St. Paul

FOOTBALL’S RIGHTFUL PLACE

Two letter writers preferred that the Fall 2012 *Minnesota* cover had emphasized research rather than football [“Bears Fans,” Winter 2013]. I disagree.

Playing football does not preclude academic performance. Stanford, an annual top-five academic institution, completed this year’s football season ranked eighth. Michigan’s and Northwestern’s teams finished in the top 20, and Northwestern and Stanford annually compete for the highest graduation rate by football players.

Instead of denying the existence of an important and traditional aspect of campus life, perhaps alumni can help support higher graduation rates by student athletes or research into better protective sports equipment.

J.R. Riehle (B.S. '66)
Hayden Lake, Idaho

A SHOUT OUT FOR FOOTBALL ART

After reading the published criticism in the current issue [Letters, Winter 2013], I must let you know that I thought the fall cover was the best ever. The art was absolutely beautiful and I thought it was a wonderful selection for your issue. Please do not shy away from football or art on your cover!

Susan Goldstein (B.S. '88, M.B.A. '92)
Minneapolis

CORRECTION

Minnesota misspelled Jan Anderson Meyer’s name in the list of Alumni Service Award winners in the Winter 2013 issue. The editors regret the error.

Submit a letter at www.MinnesotaAlumni.org/opinion or write to Letter to the Editor, Minnesota Magazine, McNamara Alumni Center, 200 Oak. St. SE, Suite 200, Minneapolis, MN 55455. Letters may be edited for style, length, and clarity.

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CLOSING GUANTÁNAMO WHO DECIDES GTMO'S FUTURE?

“If it was up to me I would close Guantánamo not tomorrow but this afternoon...it's causing us far more damage than any good we get from it.”

—Paul Pataky, former US Secretary of State, June 10, 2007



In 1993, Guantánamo was “closed” by a US District Court to release HIV-positive Haitian refugees detained there. In 1996 it was “closed” again when the last of 32,000 Cuban refugees held there gained entrance to the US. Six years later, Camp X-Ray, built to discipline refugees, was repurposed for the first enemy combatants in the “war on terror.” Protests against the detention and treatment of “detainees” have erupted ever since, resulting in the still unfulfilled pledges by President Obama to “close Guantánamo.”

But what does “closing Guantánamo” really mean? Guantánamo has been both a symptom and a symbol of relations between Cuba and the US, and “closing” means different things in each country. US efforts to close Guantánamo usually refer to the detention centers. The Cuban government calls for closing the entire naval station. Fidel Castro has repeatedly disputed the legality of its lease and demanded that the US leave.

What are the different visions for the place if the station is ever closed? While serving as defense minister, Raúl Castro asserted that after its eventual return to Cuba, GTMO would be made into a museum. Diverse US and international groups have developed visions for the station's future: a hurricane evacuation center, an infectious disease research and education facility, a beach resort, an eco-tourism site, a world diplomatic center.

Today, these are unrealized visions. “Detainees” remain imprisoned; the US military constructed new sites for possible future refugees. Can GTMO actually close? Who decides its future?

SHAPE THE DEBATE

Should the US government continue to have voice in shaping the future of Guantánamo Bay?

SMS VOTE Yes or No by texting GTMO#13 to 41411. For your campaign slogan see below.

OUR POINT OF VIEW

Weigh in on the debate about the future of Guantánamo Bay. This project received support from the University of Minnesota and the National Endowment for the Humanities. We are grateful to the many people who have helped us in this project. We are also grateful to the many people who have helped us in this project.

University of Minnesota

Students from 11 universities nationwide, including the University of Minnesota, grappled with those questions during fall semester 2012 as part of the Guantánamo Public Memory Project, an initiative launched by the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience to foster a national dialogue about Gitmo. The classroom studies culminated in a

Students from 11 universities created the Guantánamo Public Memory Project's traveling exhibit, with each university's panel exploring a different question. The University of Minnesota's panel is pictured here.

traveling exhibit that was launched in New York City in December and will travel the nation, including the Minnesota History Center in St. Paul in 2014.

“Besides helping create something that we are really proud of, an equally great benefit of participating in this project

was that we got to really see how quickly and easily events can be forgotten,” says Maximilian Regan, a University of Minnesota junior majoring in American studies and American Indian studies. “I think what we most took away from this project is that it is up to each of us to remember in case one of us should forget.”

The Guantánamo Public Memory Project hosts public discussions and invites interaction on its website at gitmomemory.org.

—Cynthia Scott

Prodding the Public's Memory

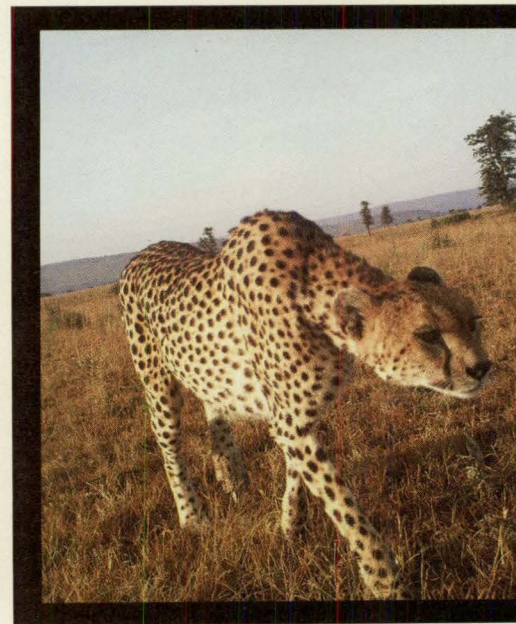
The United States Naval Station at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, has cast a long shadow since the United States declared the “war on terror” following the attacks of September 11, 2001. Gitmo, as it's known, evokes fundamental questions about national security, human rights, terrorism, detention, and torture.

But Gitmo was part of American politics long before 9/11. Cuba first leased the 45-square-mile base to the United States in 1903, and since then several U.S. presidents have closed it—only to have their successors reopen it and put it to new uses. For example, it became a refugee camp in 1991 when 32,000 Haitians fled their country following the overthrow of the government. The United States detained almost 800 prisoners there in the early 2000s; it currently has 166 detainees. Who are they? Why has Guantánamo been so hard to close? How does its history shape its future?

Malty milk will haunt me forever.”

University of Minnesota food science graduate student Ann Pataky, quoted in the *St. Paul Pioneer Press*. Pataky placed second in the national Collegiate Dairy Products Evaluation Contest in Springfield, Missouri, in November, narrowly missing the championship by not detecting a slight defect in milk.

To watch interviews with people involved in the Guantánamo Public Memory Project, go to www.accessminnesotaonline.com.



Senior goalie Noora Rätty became the NCAA's all-time-career-wins record holder on February 6.



Skating into History

Gopher hockey is having an ascendant season, with both the men's and women's teams at or near the top of the national rankings. But the women's team, ranked No. 1 every week since the beginning of the season, has been historically dominant.

On January 25 the team won its 33rd consecutive game, breaking the all-time NCAA record for consecutive games won or tied with a 2-0 shutout of Wisconsin.

But that's only the tip of the iceberg. The defending national champions' first milestone of the season came on November 17 when they broke Harvard's consecutive win record of 21. On December 7 they broke Mercyhurst's consecutive road wins mark of 16. By the time the Gophers clinched the regular season WCHA title on February 2 with a 6-2 win over the University of Minnesota, Duluth—sweeping the season series against UMD for the first time in history—they had outscored opponents 158-22.

The Gophers host both the WCHA Final Face-Off (March 8-9) and the NCAA Frozen Four (March 22-24) at Ridder Arena. By that time, they might well have broken Wisconsin's all-time records for most wins in a season, 37, and fewest losses, 1. —C.S.

Up Close on the Serengeti

It doesn't take a rocket scientist to distinguish a striped hyena from an aardwolf. It takes a citizen scientist. University of Minnesota graduate students Ali Swanson and Margaret Kosmala, along with famed U lion researcher Craig Packer, created Snapshot Serengeti to enlist the public's help in identifying wildlife—such as the cheetah pictured at left—in Tanzania's Serengeti National Park.

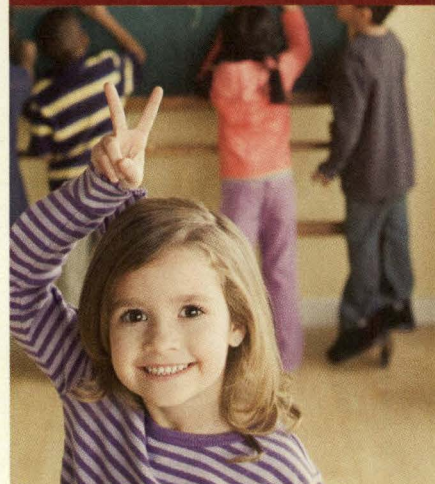
Swanson, who spends about half the year researching large mammals in the Serengeti, placed 225 motion-activated cameras over 1,000 square miles to capture close-up shots of animals. Since the

site launched in December, volunteers have helped identify millions of images that the three researchers would not have been able to classify on their own.

Swanson says the cameras have captured images she has never before witnessed, such as a lioness taking down a zebra and porcupines mating, to name just two. "I drive out on the Serengeti day in and day out and don't see some of these things. It's just sort of Candid Camera of the Serengeti," she says.

For more information, including links to other citizen science projects, go to www.snapshotserengeti.org. —C.S.

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About Campus



A Wall of Pride

Teresa Logemann (B.Arch. '11) and Kit Casey (B.S. '07) have designs on the University of Minnesota Boathouse. The two former Gopher rowers, also graduates of the College of Design, collaborated long distance to create a four-panel, 500-square-foot mural on the inside wall of the state-of-the-art facility on the banks of the Mississippi River. Casey, a graphic designer in Boston, and Logemann, assistant coach of the Gopher rowing team, pored over thousands of digital photographs of the team taken by University Athletics photographer Eric Miller, selecting four that best represent the pillars of the rowing program: power, perseverance, poise, and pride. Logemann served as the onsite coordinator while Casey edited the photos in her Boston office.

Logemann had what she calls "a small kernel of the idea" for the mural when she was senior captain of the rowing team and wanted to hang up pictures of the team in action in the locker room. "I just wanted my younger teammates to know that Minnesota rowing has a successful history," she says.

The labor-intensive process went smoothly, Logemann says, with one exception. "When Kit was finished with the first panel, we realized that there was a fire alarm on the wall that was positioned right on the rower's face in the mural. With some last-minute picture swapping and double checking the measurements, we worked out a solution."

The mural was installed last fall.

— C.S.

My experience is that warmer winters get people to complain about how cold they are. In the old days, they dressed for it and got used to it."

Lee Frelich, director of the University of Minnesota's Center for Forest Ecology, commenting in a *Star Tribune* article about how this winter hasn't been nearly cold enough to kill insect pests and that only one vocal species in particular believes it has been cold.

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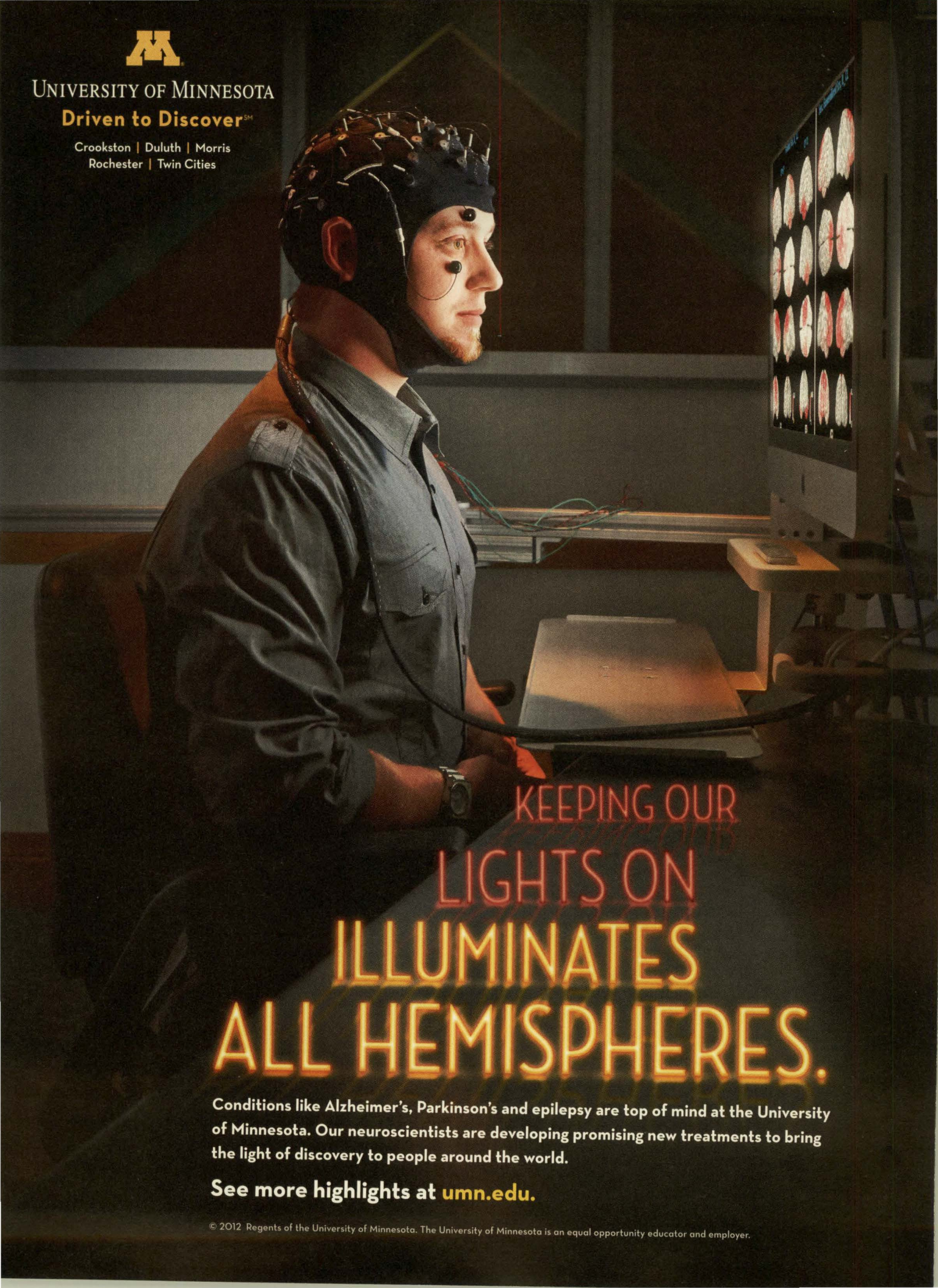
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A man with a beard is shown in profile, wearing a black EEG cap with numerous electrodes. He is sitting at a desk in a dimly lit room, looking at a computer monitor. The monitor displays a grid of brain scan images. The overall atmosphere is focused and scientific.

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MENTAL HEALTH SCREENING LACKING

The first ever national survey of refugee mental health screening practices found that most states do not provide such screenings, even though refugee trauma survivors are at increased risk of developing post-traumatic stress disorder and major depression. Researchers at the University of Minnesota's School of Social Work and Department of Family Social Sciences conducted the survey.

The survey, led by assistant professor of social work Patricia Shannon, found that 17 of the 25 states providing mental health screening relied on informal conversation rather than standardized measures. Fewer than half the states directly asked refugees about their exposure to war trauma or torture, despite the fact that many of them fled war-torn areas. States reported that lack of time, resources, and culturally sensitive measurement instruments were among the barriers to improving screening.

In 2010, the United States resettled more than 73,000 refugees from 20 countries.

The research was published in the December 5, 2012, issue of the *Journal of Immigrant and Refugee Studies*.

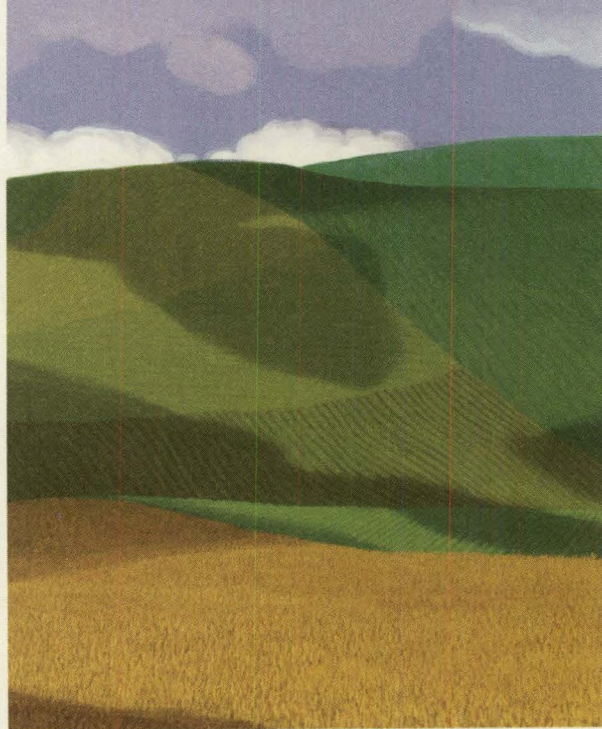
THE GREEN REVOLUTION FADES


The Green Revolution has stagnated, according to a study led by scientists at the University of Minnesota's Institute on the Environment (IonE). The Green Revolution was a series of initiatives led by Norman Borlaug (B.S. '37, M.S. '41, Ph.D. '42) that saved millions of lives by increasing food production around the world from the 1940s to the 1970s.

Led by IonE research fellow Deepak Ray, the research team discovered that corn, rice, wheat, and soybean yields plateaued or declined globally in recent years, even though virtually all regions showed an increase sometime from 1961 to 2008. Among the top crop-producing nations, China and India are seeing especially worrisome stagnation or decline.

Yields of rice and wheat were found to be declining across a higher percentage of cropland than those of corn and soybeans.

The study was published in the December 18, 2012, issue of *Nature Communications*.



 **Discoveries** is edited by **Cynthia Scott**. University of Minnesota Alumni Association members may access many of the journals that publish these studies through the Libraries Online member benefit. Go to www.MinnesotaAlumni.org/Libraries.

BEWARE BOX ELDER SEEDS

A toxin in the seeds of box elder trees causes seasonal pasture myopathy, a deadly equine muscle disease, according to a study conducted by researchers at the University of Minnesota Equine Center.

Led by Stephanie Valberg, professor of veterinary population medicine and director of the Equine Center, the researchers discovered that ingesting box elder seeds resulted in the breakdown of horses' respiratory, postural, and cardiac muscles. Further research is needed to determine what constitutes a lethal dose and why not every horse pastured near box elder trees developed the condition. The box elder seed is abundant in autumn pastures in North America and Europe.

The research was published in the November 20, 2012, issue of the *Equine Veterinary Journal*.



CANCER DRUG SHOWS PROMISE

A new drug created at the University of Minnesota has shown potential for treating pancreatic cancer in mice. The drug, Minnelide, is based on patented technology designed in the lab of Ashok Saluja, professor and vice chair of research in the Medical School's Department of Surgery. Minnelide is a type of injectable chemotherapy designed to inhibit a heat shock protein, HSP 70, which aids the growth of tumor cells. By stopping HSP 70 from working, Minnelide disperses the cells integral to the tumor's growth and the cancer disintegrates. The name of the drug is a combination of Minnesota and triptolide, a compound in the drug. Minnelide is slated to begin human trials this year.

The median survival time following a diagnosis of pancreatic cancer is six months, making it the most lethal of all cancers.

The research was published in the October 17, 2012, issue of *Science Translational Medicine*.

TRANSIENCE STYMIES ACADEMIC PROGRESS

Students who were homeless or moved frequently had chronically low levels of reading and math achievement compared with their peers, gaps that either stayed the same or worsened as they approached high school, according to a longitudinal study conducted through a partnership of the University of Minnesota's College of Education and Human Development and the Minneapolis Public Schools.

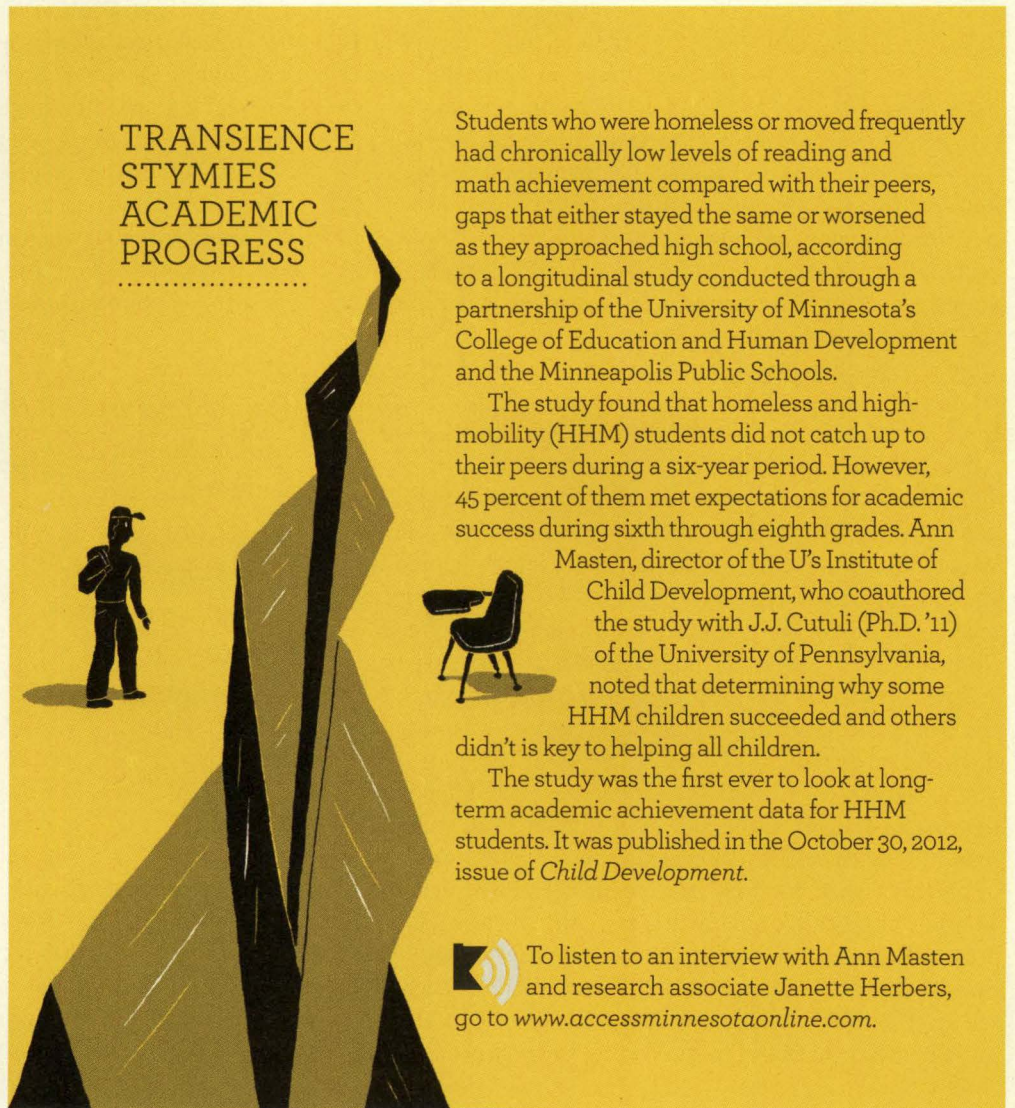
The study found that homeless and high-mobility (HHM) students did not catch up to their peers during a six-year period. However, 45 percent of them met expectations for academic success during sixth through eighth grades. Ann Masten, director of the U's Institute of

Child Development, who coauthored the study with J.J. Cutuli (Ph.D. '11) of the University of Pennsylvania, noted that determining why some HHM children succeeded and others

didn't is key to helping all children.

The study was the first ever to look at long-term academic achievement data for HHM students. It was published in the October 30, 2012, issue of *Child Development*.

To listen to an interview with Ann Masten and research associate Janette Herbers, go to www.accessminnesotaonline.com.

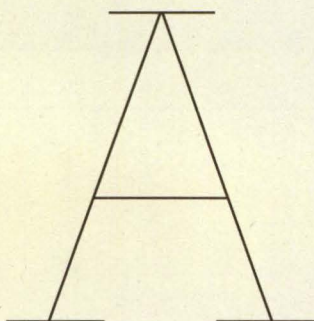


A MOTHER'S SUICIDE

Despite years of silence surrounding her tragic death, a woman's gifts live on.

"My mother's presence influenced who I was and her absence influenced who I am. Our lives are shaped as much by those who leave us as they are by those who stay."

—From *Motherless Daughters* by Hope Edelman



lthough we spent only eight short years together, I find myself separating my life into three chapters: With my mother, After my mother, and Because of my mother.

Memories of life with her are fuzzy, most probably born of wishful thinking, many generated by photographs. She was auburn-haired and slightly freckled, small-boned, and pretty. A fine arts graduate of what is now the Minneapolis College of Art and Design, she was an accomplished seamstress and cook, a lover of antiques, and a voracious reader. She married my father in the waning days of the Depression when she was 26 and he was 31. I'm told they were very much in love. I can still picture them making pewter jewelry at a workbench in the basement and reading in the living room after dinner, each in a favorite chair on either side of the red brick fireplace with the white enamel mantle.

As a first- and second-grader I longed for a store-bought dress, much the way a child of a bread-baking mother might wish for Wonder Bread sandwiches. Instead, I wore home-tailored suits and coats with covered buttons, piping-edged collars, and matching hats. Scraps of fabric under her sewing machine hinted of Christmas gifts to come. My mother and I picked wild asparagus and strawberries in the spring, green beans and eggplant from our victory garden in the summer, dried yarrow and sumac from the woods in the fall.

Our middle-class lives were seemingly full and happy until that warm, orange October day in 1947 when I ran home from Brownies, dried oak leaves crunching beneath my saddle shoes, to find my father standing alone in his beloved screen porch. In hindsight, I think I knew that something was very wrong because he seemed anxious that I not come closer, shouting out that our closest neighbors had invited me to dinner. I have vague recollections of hushed phone calls that evening, but I busied myself playing jacks and roller-skating and was excited when

asked to spend the night. The following morning I went home, crawled into my father's lap to detect, for the first time ever, tears streaming down his cheeks. No details, no explanation that I can remember—just one horrendous fact: My mother had died. I doubt I asked questions or absorbed the reality of his words. Neither my 4-year-old brother nor I attended her funeral.

Life after my mother was very different for my stricken father, my little brother, and me. We quickly fled friends, neighbors, and the green-shuttered white Cape Cod in Richfield for my grandmother's somber gray stucco in Edina, where the shades were usually drawn and my radio deemed too loud and my shorts too short. Soon I was attending a new school where no one knew the truth, where new friends were too shy, too polite, or too uninterested to ask why I lived with my grandma. As stoic Norwegian Lutherans, always overly concerned about "what other people will think," we moved on. New friends, swimming lessons, church camp, and cousins filled in gaps we never had the courage to acknowledge.

Three years later, when my father announced he was getting remarried and we would be moving from his mother's serious house to a happy bungalow in Golden Valley, I sobbed selfishly, not wanting to start over again. But a new home had its benefits, above all someone to call "mom" so I could pretend to be like the other kids. I adapted quickly. Life was full again—school, friends, clubs, pajama parties, normalcy.

My aunts said that she was an intellectual, a perfectionist, a reader of Freud. She left meat defrosting on the kitchen counter that October day. Years later, I learned she left a note.

Five years later, on Good Friday 1956, I was a high school junior modeling a new spring coat when my 41-year-old stepmother, who had been in bed all day with a cold and a backache, died before my eyes. An aneurysm, the autopsy later revealed. My father rushed home to find my brother and me in shock, eyes swollen red with tears. Without hesitation,

from somewhere deep within, I blurted out the question I'd never asked anyone before: "How did our real mother die?"

Incredulous as it may seem, I was not at all prepared for his answer. Despite years of silence and the absence of any attempt to keep her memory alive, suicide had never occurred to me. Truth be told, few of the tears I shed at the funeral were for my stepmother.

ESSAY BY KAREN LOECHLER BOWEN // ILLUSTRATION BY PIERRE MORNET



It was years before I could tell anyone that my mother had killed herself. I simply could not get the words out. But in my senior year at the University of Minnesota, when my then boyfriend proposed marriage, I felt compelled to tell him, thinking he had to know my family's "shame." I'll always be grateful for his perfect response: "How could you ever think that would matter to me?"

Through the years, I've tried to string together bits and pieces about my mother that might add up to some sort of explanation, but there is precious little data. My aunts said that she was an intellectual, a perfectionist, a reader of Freud. She left meat defrosting on the kitchen counter that October day. Years later, I learned she left a note.

My father died in 1979, and while we were close, I will always regret how little we talked about my mother or her death. What did she sound like, smell like, feel like? What were her politics? Did I call her Mom? Mommy? Mama? Why did she leave us? All questions that were never asked. Sadly, we protected one another from what we feared would cause great pain, but what I now know would have resulted in much-needed sharing and healing.

I'm not an artist, but I love color and form and shape, home and decorating, cooking and creating—like my mother did. I am blessed with the gift of four amazing daughters, and I know she is in them. It hurts deeply that she never knew them, nor they her. How I would love to have shared news of first teeth, first steps, first dates.

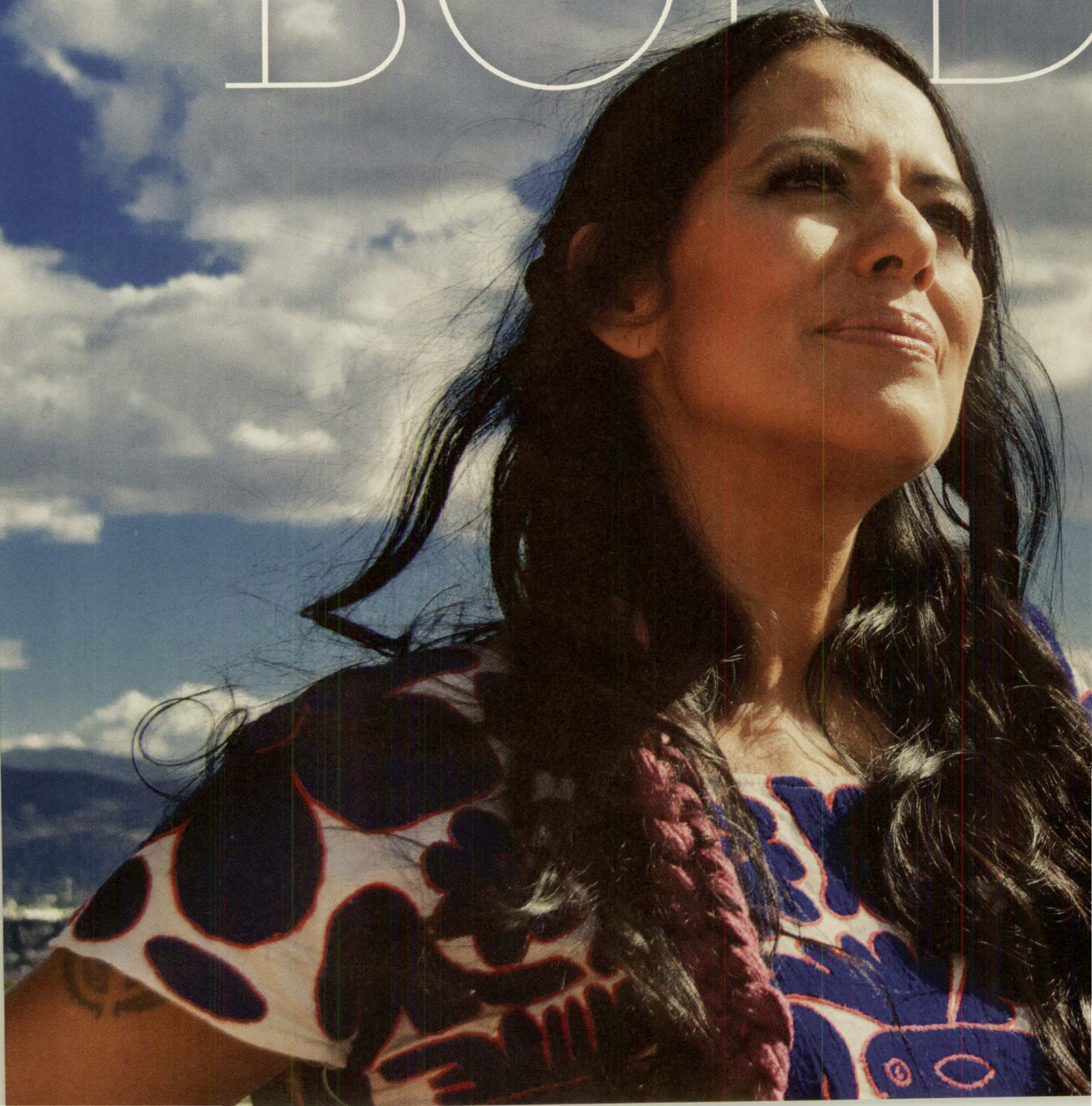
Friends wonder why I'm not bitter, not angry. How could any woman leave two children, a man who adored her? I don't know the answer, but I have come to know I'm neither angry nor bitter. Most important, I'm no longer ashamed. Surely, my mother was a feminist before her time, an intellectual who wanted to do her work, who found life untenable in ways I'll never know, whose last written words were that she couldn't be the wife and mother she "ought to be." In 1947 the world was full of shoulds and oughts. Without therapists to confide in, self-help books to read, or antidepressants to take, it was not OK not to be OK.

Sixty-five years after her death, I ache for her anguish, not mine. But still I wonder who I might have been with her, all the time knowing that I am who I am because of her. ■

Karen Loechler Bowen (B.A. '61) earned a degree in journalism from the University of Minnesota. After several years writing for community newspapers, she spent 30 years in management positions at the Minnesota Department of Natural Resources and Hennepin Parks (now Three Rivers Park District). She lives in Minneapolis and is active in the University's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute.

*First Person essays may be written by University of Minnesota alumni, students, faculty, and staff.
For writers' guidelines, go to www.MinnesotaAlumni.org/firstperson.*

GROOTS BOOTS



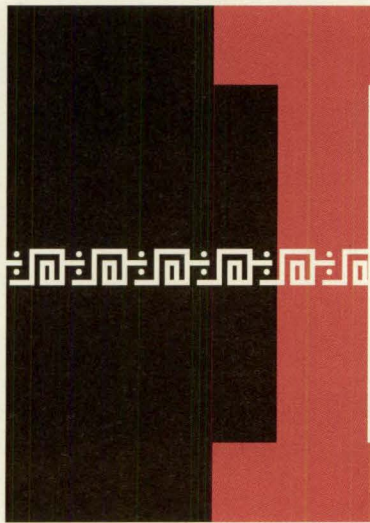
HERS



Acclaimed singer Lila Downs grew up in Minnesota and Mexico, giving her a cultural identity that once made her a stranger in both places. Today, that mixed background infuses and animates the University of Minnesota alumna's electrifying music.

BY JOEL HOEKSTRA · PHOTOGRAPHS BY ELENA PARDO





It's a crisp October afternoon, and Lila Downs (B.A. '93) is perched atop a tall chair in the lobby of the Regis Center for Art on the University of Minnesota's West Bank, watching fallen leaves whirl around the plaza outside. She's reminiscing about life on campus in the 1980s. The raven-haired chanteuse wears a black lace jacket over a dark Henley, and a black skirt over charcoal-colored leggings. Her fingernails are painted cornflower blue. Her fingers, wrists, and ears are adorned with silver rings, jeweled bangles, and gold hoops. As evidence of her lasting affection for her counterculture past, Downs points to a vibrantly colored woven bracelet. From her neck hangs a triangle pendant with an all-seeing eye.

Her voice barely rises above a whisper. "Normally, this day is sacred," says the 44-year-old singer-songwriter, who is in the middle of a multi-week tour of Mexico and the United States to promote her new album, *Pecados y Milagros* (*Sins and Miracles*). What she means is this: Downs, slated to appear at the Ordway Center in St. Paul that evening, typically eschews interviews and interactions that might sap her of energy on days when performances are scheduled.

"I need to prepare mentally, especially when I go to places that I'm emotionally attached to," Downs says. Revisiting cities and communities where she has strong associations or vivid memories can ratchet up the electricity of a show, making it difficult to maintain composure and control. "That's probably going to happen tonight," she observes.

Minnesota is rife with memories for Downs. The daughter of the late Allen Downs, an art professor who taught at the University of Minnesota from 1950 to 1977, and his second wife, Anita Sánchez, she grew up living part-time in suburban Roseville, Minnesota, returning every other year with her parents to her mother's hometown Oaxaca, Mexico, near where Lila (pronounced Lee-la) was also born. Years later, she enrolled at the University of Minnesota, earning a bachelor's degree in voice and anthropology.

On this particular afternoon, Downs, who divides her time between a residence in Oaxaca and apartments in Mexico City and New York, has stopped by the Katherine E. Nash Gallery in the Regis Center for Art to preview *Allen Downs Life and Work: Winter Quarter in Mexico*, an exhibit showcasing her father's work. Allen Downs was a prodigious creative who is perhaps best remembered on the Twin Cities campus for leading a class in Mexico that attracted dozens of talented artists, painters, and photographers during its decade-long run.

The exhibit, which runs March 5 through 30, will feature Downs's drawings, paintings, and photographs along with artwork created by 25 Winter Quarter in Mexico students. To mark the occasion, Lila Downs will present a concert, "A Song for My Father," (*Una Canción para Mi Padre*) at the Ted Mann Concert Hall on March 10 at 4 p.m. The concert is a benefit for the Allen Downs Photography and Moving Image Fellowship, which sup-



ports a University of Minnesota art graduate student majoring in either photography or a moving image medium.

Lila Downs reflects on returning to Minnesota. "It represents order, and it reminds me of so many things that I learned about morality and responsibility." She's drawing a connection between her childhood and her new album, which, she says, is about "the issue of morality." And morality in Latin America can be a slippery thing, she says. Native cultures have often had to be two-faced in order to survive European occupation. "You lie so you can survive and maintain your own traditions and yet pretend you are being colonized," she explains. In contrast, U.S.

citizens—and Minnesotans in particular—have a harder view of honesty and dishonesty.

Or do they? Aren't Minnesotans famous for telling white lies to avoid the merest confrontation? Downs pauses to consider the idea and adjust a bangle, then flashes a mischievous smile. "It's true," she says. "Minnesotans, for example, they aren't direct about emotion. They wait, and then in a civilized manner they find a way to say what they mean. . . . And, oddly enough, I'm a little bit that way too! When it happens, I always go, 'Where is that coming from?! I mean, I'm *Latin!*'"

DOWNS—WHOSE ALL-MALE TROUPE plays drums, keyboard, guitar, accordion, and even harp—is fêted around the globe for her versatility. She loves the music of her homeland, especially the *rancheras*, "farmers' songs," filled with guitars and horns, and *norteños*, the music of northern Mexico and Texas, flavored with

'70s. "Taken as a whole," Tsioulcas proclaimed, "Downs's work is a true original."

Midway through the second half of her performance on the Ordway stage, Downs steps into the spotlight wearing a feathered cape, ready to sing "Cucurrucucú Paloma." Written in the 1950s in the style of a folk song composed in mixed meter, the song has become something of an unofficial anthem in Mexico. The lyrics tell of a man who died from grief over the loss of his beloved. Following his passing, a dove alights at the window of his house, calling out as if it were the man's soul waiting for his love's return:

*Dicen que por las noches
no más se le iba en puro llorar
(They say at nights
all he could do was cry all the time)*

By the time Downs completes the song—with a thrilling *koo-ka-roo-ka-roo* ending—the entire audience is on its feet, clapping



I was very shy and introspective when I was very young. But they would say, 'Lila, sing, sing, sing.' So I would sing the rancheras, those hardcore drinking songs. Can you believe it? And there were women in my town that would say, 'Oh, little girl, I don't think that's appropriate for you.'"

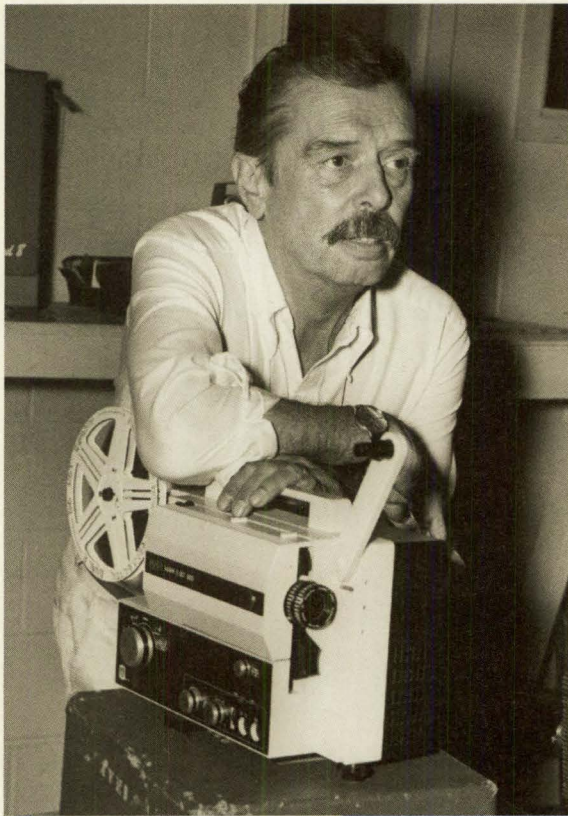


polka beats and other rhythms brought by European immigrants. But her 10 albums—she released the first one in 1994—demonstrate her affinity for jazz, soul, blues, African roots, and even rap and klezmer. Her concerts and collections are clearly curated with an anthropology major's eye.

It's an approach that impresses critics. "On [*Pecados y Milagros*], Mexican tradition is never far away," opined National Public Radio music critic Anastasia Tsioulcas in 2011, noting Downs's ability to weave together mariachi bands, ninth-century texts, and the socially conscious ballads of the *nueva canción* folk-music movement that took hold in Latin America during the 1960s and

and whistling approval. One man holds a full-sized Mexican flag above his head.

ALLEN DOWNS AND ANITA SÁNCHEZ met in Mexico City in the late 1950s. At the time, both were married. Educated in art and zoology at Kansas State College in Emporia, Downs began his career as a high school teacher but then switched tracks, obtaining a master's degree in painting from the University of Iowa in 1940 and a teaching post in the art department at the University of Minnesota in 1950. "He was a filmmaker and photographer," says Linda Passon-McNally (A.A. '64), a longtime friend of the



Downs family and co-curator of *Allen Downs Life and Work*. “He was an adventurer.” In the mid-1950s, Downs figured out a way to wed his interests in art and animals: He decided to make a film about the winter migration of blue-winged teal, following the flocks of ducks as they winged their way from Minnesota to Mexico.

Anita Sánchez had grown up Oaxaca and at an early age was forced into a miserable marriage. She eventually fled to Mexico City, where she found a job as a cantina singer. That’s where Downs first met and took an interest in her. “She was not real keen on it, because he was quite a bit older,” Passon-McNally recalls, calculating the age gap at 22 years. “But he won her over.” In 1961, they married. Seven years later, Ana Lila was born in Tlaxiaco, in the state of Oaxaca. She was named after Allen’s aunt.

The Downs family purchased a house in Roseville, but Lila and her mother spent every other school year in Oaxaca, and whenever possible, Allen traveled south. In 1972, Allen hatched an idea that would allow the family to escape Minnesota during the coldest months: He would lead an annual trip for students to Tlaxiaco during the winter quarter. Interacting with Mexican artists, the participants—U students, faculty, and other American artists—learned drawing, watercolor, ceramics, weaving, and metalwork, as well as the Mexican cultural context in which they were developed.

The professor organized field trips to nearby towns during the day and hosted parties at night, recalls Passon-McNally, who signed

up for the first quarter. The Downs household was filled with whatever interested Allen at the time: clucking hens, rare orchids, eclectic music. Allen’s record collection was diverse: He enjoyed Bach and the Beatles as well as John Coltrane and Bob Dylan.

“My father loved music, but he couldn’t carry a melody,” Lila says. “He would push me to perform. I was very shy and introspective when I was very young. But they would say, ‘Lila, sing, sing, sing.’ So I would sing the *rancheras*, those hard-core drinking songs. Can you believe it? And there were women in my town that would say, ‘Oh, little girl, I don’t think that’s appropriate for you.’”

Allen Downs retired from the University in 1977, and the Downs family moved to Oaxaca, visited regularly by guests from the Winter Quarter program, which continued

unofficially even after Allen’s retirement. But six years into his retirement, in 1983, the professor was struck down by a heart attack. He was 68.

Lila, then 16 years old, and her mother were grief-stricken. But looking back, Downs says her father’s death inspired her to commit herself to art—specifically, she recalls, “I decided to be very disciplined in music.”



Top: Art Professor Allen Downs taught at the University from 1950 to 1977.

Above: *Street Scene with Cloudy Sky*, watercolor on paper, by Allen Downs is part of an exhibit at the Katherine E. Nash Gallery March 5 through 30.



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The Downs family—
Allen, Anita, and
Lila—in the Tlaxiaco,
town square in 1976



After graduating high school Lila returned to Minnesota to enroll at the U and study voice. “I even made the finals in the regional auditions for the Metropolitan Opera,” Downs recalls. But then, on the eve of the national auditions, she dropped out of college altogether. “I realized I was filled with anger and confusion,” she says. She was ashamed of her Native American roots—her mother is Mixtec, an indigenous people of southern Mexico—and embarrassed by her mother’s culture, language, and folkways. She dyed her hair blond and hit the road to follow the Grateful Dead.

“Dropping out of school, society, and even my family made me look at my life as an outsider,” Lila says now. “Those were the first steps to figuring out who I was and who I wanted to be—the first steps toward becoming proud of my Indian roots and who I was.”

Eventually she returned to the U to finish her degree, majoring in voice and anthropology. But her interest in opera had vanished, replaced with a desire to learn more about the music of Mexico and its indigenous peoples, including *rancheras*, *norteros*, and tunes sung in Mixtec, her mother’s native language. “My mother did sing some of those songs,” Downs recalls. “But she sang to survive. So she was never very happy that I wanted to sing popular songs.”

IN 2010, AFTER SEVERAL YEARS of trying to have a child, Downs and her husband, Paul Cohen, decided to adopt. “He’s such a positive force on my music,” Downs says of Benito, now 2 years old. “We’re so happy that we found each other.”

Downs and Cohen have collaborated musically for more than 18 years. They met in the 1990s, while Cohen, an American who studied visual arts and worked briefly as a circus clown before becoming a full-time musician and composer, was visiting friends in Oaxaca. In 2001, they married in the backyard of Lila’s mother’s home, surrounded by colorful flowers and chirping birds.

Drummer Yayo Serka, a native of Chile who has played with Downs on multiple tours, says Downs has become more confident as a person and an artist. Early on, he says, she could be prickly and defensive toward criticism. Serka speculates that part of her reaction came from working as a woman in a man’s world, or growing up female in a *machismo* culture. Bit by bit, however, the edges wore away.

“She’s become more feminine and sensual,” Serka observes, yet she remains a staunch defender of women’s rights and an advocate for immigrants. “She’s still intense about what she believes,” Serka says. “But she’s more relaxed in the way that she carries herself.”

Initially, most of the acclaim for Downs’s music came from South America and the United States. But in recent years, the singer’s popularity in her own country has skyrocketed. Her willingness to address—in song—such controversial topics as women’s rights, labor issues, immigration, and U.S.–Mexican relations has also boosted her profile.

Part of Downs’s success comes from her ability to bridge

borders. "You have to remember that Lila is half-American," Serka says. "She can represent both cultures. She can make you angry or make you laugh in both cultures."

IN MID-NOVEMBER 2012, UNIVISION viewers who tuned in to the evening broadcast of the Latin Grammy Awards in Las Vegas got an eyeful. In the middle of a swirling crowd of dancers dressed like jaguars and antelope, skeletons and salsa dancers, stood Lila Downs. She swayed, danced, and beamed as she sang "Zapata Se Queda," a peppy musical homage to Emiliano Zapata, the celebrated leader of the Mexican Revolution. Singers processed through the audience and onto the stage waving feathers, carrying candles, hoisting banners that read "Tierra y libertad" (*Land and freedom*) and operating a giant puppet resembling Zapata.

The crowd ate it up and the critics loved it. Downs took home a Latin Grammy for Best Folk Album that night for *Pecados y Milagros* and, three months later in Los Angeles, won a Grammy for Best Regional Mexican Music Album.

Industry recognition is humbling, Downs says, but she feels most proud of her work when she sees people crying in the audience in response to her *rancheras* or receives e-mails from fans who thank her for giving them a sense of pride in their indigenous roots.

"I hope that they feel good about themselves, because that was a big issue for me," she says. "I was very insecure as I was growing up between cultures."

The medium of music is transcendent, Downs says, for it allows people to communicate values, ideas, anger, joy, and fear even when they lack a common tongue. "With music, you don't have to explain all these things and what they mean," she says. "You can just sing them and feel them."

For Downs, there's almost no border she won't cross. "As a singer-songwriter, it's always been my inclination to go into the eye of the hurricane," she says. "It's just my nature." ■

Joel Hoekstra is a Twin Cities-based writer and editor. For information about the Allen Downs Life and Work exhibit March 5-30, and the Lila Downs concert March 10, go to allendowns.org.



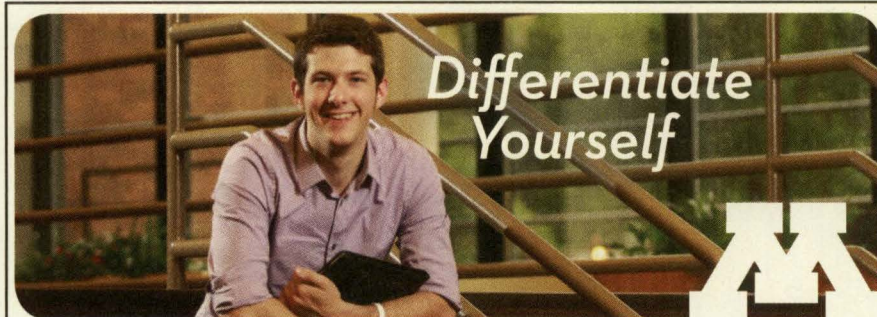
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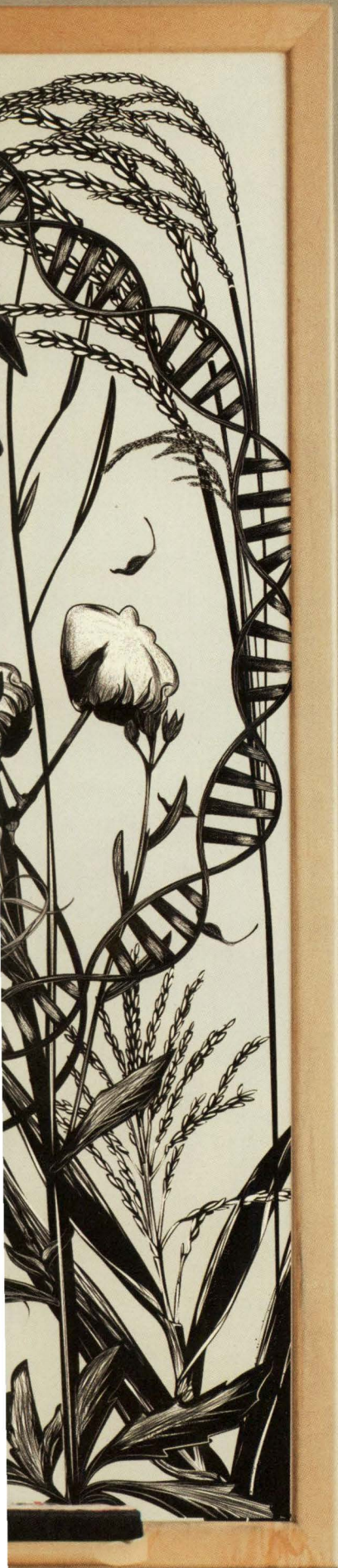
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UNTHINKABLE

Research by Daniel Voytas, a plant geneticist at the University of Minnesota, is revolutionizing the study and modification of plant, animal, and even human genes.

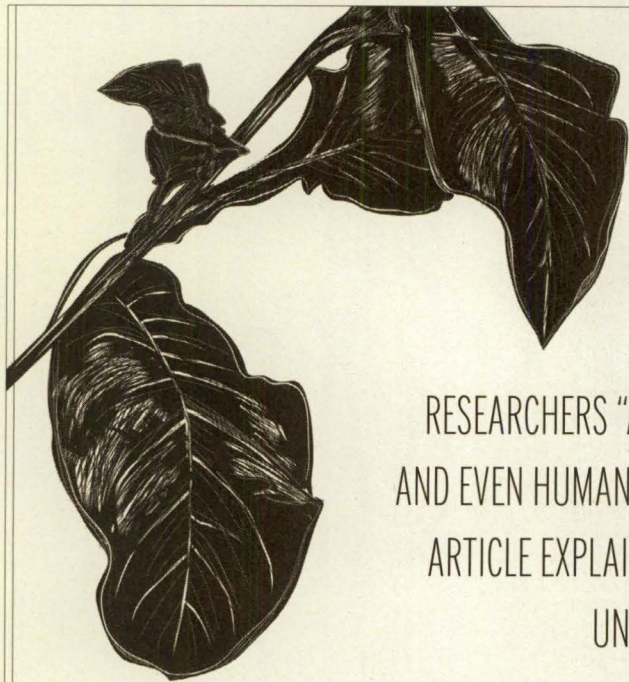
"IT'S PRETTY MIND-BOGGLING," Professor Daniel Voytas says about the past couple years of his work in gene modification. "I've experienced this feeling a handful of times in my career, where you're just plugging away, quietly doing your science, and then all of a sudden you realize that what's been happening has had profound impact."

Voytas, a plant geneticist and director of the University's Center for Genome Engineering, is at the forefront of a breakthrough in genetic engineering that is revolutionizing how scientists can modify genes in plants, animals, and even humans. A gene modification technique he helped to develop is making the selection of desired traits—such as herbicide resistance in a crop plant—easier, faster, cheaper, and far more precise than ever before.

In a special issue in December 2012, the journal *Science* named Voytas's technique one of the top scientific breakthroughs of the year. "One group of researchers used the technique to create a miniature pig useful for studying heart disease. Others are modifying the genomes of rats, crickets, and even human cells from patients with

By Greg Breining

PHOTOGRAPH BY SHER STONEMAN ILLUSTRATION BY DOUGLAS ALVES



RESEARCHERS “ARE MODIFYING THE GENOMES OF RATS, CRICKETS, AND EVEN HUMAN CELLS FROM PATIENTS WITH DISEASE,” THE *SCIENCE* ARTICLE EXPLAINS. “SUCH A BOOM IN GENOME ENGINEERING WAS UNTHINKABLE JUST A FEW YEARS AGO.”

disease,” the *Science* article explains. “Such a boom in genome engineering was unthinkable just a few years ago.”

“It’s really exciting to see how fast the technology has taken off, how many people are using it in so many different ways,” Voytas says. “Wow! It’s exciting to be involved in a process that has impact in the world.”

For thousands of years, people relied on selective breeding to obtain desired traits in plants and animals—the biggest corn plants, the best hunting dogs, the fastest horses. They bred them and then bred their offspring. These breeders didn’t realize that by selecting for certain traits they were selecting unseen variations in DNA “base pairs.”

DNA, deoxyribonucleic acid, contains the code that directs the development and function of all known living organisms. The DNA molecule is recognized by its double helix arrangement—like a corkscrew ladder. The long strings are sugar and phosphate molecules. The rungs are base pairs, joined end to end: adenine (A) to thymine (T), and cytosine (C) to guanine (G). Just as computers store all their information in combinations of 1s and 0s, DNA stores its genetic blueprint in combinations of base pairs—3 billion of them in the human genome.

Genes break and mend all the time, creating novel combinations of base pairs. In fact, they occasionally incorporate DNA from other organisms. This “horizontal gene transfer” is common among bacteria and occasionally seen in mammals and other complex organisms, such as through an insect that carries “transposons” (a segment of DNA that can replicate itself) from one species to another, causing a mutation in the DNA of the host.

Base pairs are the parts of the genome that researchers want to tweak. By identifying and “knocking out” a particular gene and introducing that genome into a developing organism—be it a tobacco plant, lab mouse, or zebrafish—researchers can study the developing organism and learn what the gene does.

Researchers also try to induce mutations by breaking the

DNA ladder. The cell, in its attempt to repair its structure, improvises a sequence of base pairs. “And sometimes,” Voytas says, “it doesn’t do it correctly so it makes a mutation.”

Or researchers may want to introduce a new swatch of DNA to confer desired traits, such as faster growth or disease resistance, in a target organism. So a researcher engineers a break in the DNA and supplies the new template to the gene. “When the broken chromosome is made, it has to use that as a repair template as opposed to just rejoining itself,” Voytas explains.

“It’s editing,” he continues. “If you think of DNA sequences as a text, we go in and we tweak it and modify the DNA alphabet in subtle ways.”

Scientists didn’t discover how genetic information is stored in DNA until 1953. Even then, they depended on genes themselves to randomly break and incorporate DNA. As a result, the process of genetic engineering was, as *Science* observed, hit or miss. “As a plant biologist, there was no way to do this at all,” Voytas says. “If you wanted to make a change to the genome, there was no way to go about creating it.”

But in the early 2000s, scientists began working with “zinc-finger nucleases.”

For years, Voytas had labored over a promising but challenging genetic modification technology involving zinc-finger nucleases.

Zinc fingers are a naturally occurring protein engineered to have extensions—or fingers—that search for and lock onto a particular sequence of DNA in a gene. A second part of the enzyme, the nuclease, breaks the strand of DNA to nullify a particular gene, induce a mutation, or patch in a new piece of genetic information in order to improve crop performance, cure disease, or achieve some other result in the organism.

Voytas is renowned as a zinc-finger expert—one reason he was recruited to the University from Iowa State University in 2008 to head the U’s Center for Genome Engineering. But zinc fingers are painstaking to engineer and limited in what parts of



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"IT'S EDITING," SAYS PLANT
GENETICIST DAN VOYTAS.
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SEQUENCES AS A TEXT,
WE GO IN AND WE
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SUBTLE WAYS."



a DNA strand they can target. "We would spend months or years engineering that protein," Voytas says.

So Voytas took notice in 2009 when Adam Bogdanove, a former colleague at Iowa State, announced a new technique for targeting specific regions of DNA molecules. The targeting enzyme was produced by a plant bacteria that infects pepper, rice, citrus, cotton, tomato, and soybeans. The enzyme was called a "transcription activator-like effector" (TAL effector for short).

TAL effectors represented something rare and brand new. Bogdanove asked Voytas if he thought TAL effectors could be used instead of zinc fingers to locate a particular code in DNA. Voytas was skeptical. He had labored for years to engineer zinc fingers. He imagined a long, frustrating road ahead.

But he and Bogdanove joined the new TAL effectors to a nuclease called FokI, a molecule synthesized by bacteria to chop up viruses and other foreign DNA invading a cell. The idea was this: The TAL effector would identify and latch onto a particular sequence of DNA. Then FokI would snip the DNA.

Voytas tested the idea in his lab on a species of yeast. As researchers watched, fluid in a reaction tube turned yellow, an indication that the engineered enzyme had snipped the DNA just as intended. It seemed almost too easy.

The enzyme, now dubbed TALEN (TAL effector + nuclease) not only worked, it worked far better than zinc fingers. "Lo and behold, we could make DNA binding proteins that would recognize pretty much any DNA sequence we were interested in," Voytas says. "It was fast, it was easy, and we could make a dozen of them in a week."

Voytas and Bogdanove published their findings in *Science* in late 2011. Other scientists realized the potential immediately. By the end of the year, the journal *Nature* lauded the technology as the scientific "method of the year." A year later, *Science* called the TALENs technique one of the top breakthroughs of the year (the number-one breakthrough being the confirmation of the existence of the Higgs boson particle).

"Zinc fingers sort of opened the door," says Stephen Ekker, a biochemist and molecular biologist who recruited Voytas to Minnesota when Ekker headed the U's Arnold and Mabel Beckman Center for Transposon Research. "And TALENs blew it wide open."

In the two years since Voytas's discovery, TALENs research has exploded. Some scientists are using TALENs to manipulate the genes of common laboratory organisms to better understand their genomes. Voytas and Ekker and other researchers, most from Minnesota, have modified zebrafish, a species often used for vertebrate research, with an enzyme they call the GoldyTALEN, named for the University mascot.

Other scientists working with crops are using TALENs to introduce desirable traits such as higher yield, greater oil content, hardiness, and herbicide resistance. "A lot of the initial applications of the technology are for traits we're familiar with," Voytas says. "Now that we have a little more control over the genome, we're going to start to create traits that we couldn't create adding one gene at a time by standard techniques.

"That, I think, is the next phase," he continues. "You're going to see a whole range of modifying multiple genes at a time, increasing disease resistance while at the same time changing fatty acids so

that the oil made by the plant, for example, is of higher value.”

Since genetically modified organisms (GMOs) must be tested for their safety, Voytas anticipates that the precision of TALENs could both ease GMO regulatory hurdles and challenge the definition of what is a genetically modified organism. Currently, a crop is defined as a GMO if it contains DNA from another organism. But if researchers were to use TALENs to, for example, introduce a modification for disease resistance from an heirloom tomato plant into a commercial tomato variety, would regulators still consider that a GMO? How would they label a plant that might have been produced by crossbreeding but instead was tweaked in a genetics lab?

“I think the U.S. Department of Agriculture would say, well, nature already does that,” Voytas says. “It’s being debated all around the world right now.” A group of scientists and agriculture industry leaders and regulators will convene at the University in June to discuss this very issue.

While the recent and rapid developments in genetic modification may be mind-boggling, where the technology could lead is mind-blowing. Voytas says researchers will soon use TALENs to explore modifications to the human gene that might cure diseases, such as hemophilia, cystic fibrosis, or sickle cell anemia. The precise engineering technology might also be used to engineer white blood cells, for example, to attack cancer cells or resist HIV.

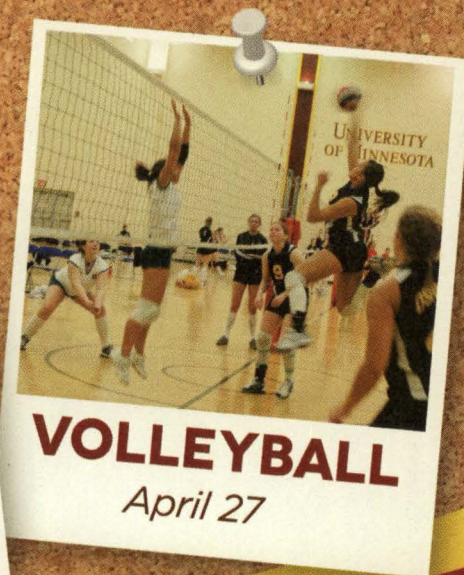
Voytas’s lab on the University’s St. Paul campus has developed a TALENs toolkit—web-based software—for use by other scientists and labs. “This is the first genetic engineering software toolkit that we’ve ever had,” says Ekker, now at the Mayo Addiction Research Center in Rochester, Minnesota. “This toolbox allows you to start asking questions you could never ask before.” Voytas has called it “gene targeting for the masses.”

Voytas is serving as chief science officer for Collectis, a French company that opened a plant genomics subsidiary in the Twin Cities in 2011 and licensed TALENs technology from the University of Minnesota and Iowa State to engineer food crops. But he remains focused on improving his new technology, especially finding more effective ways of applying TALENs to plant biology. Each species provides unique challenges.

While other scientists will broaden the application of the TALENs technique, Voytas sees great value in deepening an understanding for how plants work and function. “Our world population is going through the roof, and resources are continually limited. Plants have to grow under changing CO₂, increased drought, poor soils. Plants have a lot of work to do for humankind in the next two or three decades,” he says. “It’s going to be difficult for traditional methods to keep up, in my opinion. We’re going to need these newer technologies to ensure that plants can do the business we need them to do.” ■

Greg Breining (B.A. '74) is a writer based in St. Paul.

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gopher 1950 UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

gopher

1940 G O P H E R VOL. 6

MINNESOTA Gopher NINETEEN THIRTY NINE. VOLUME 52

GOPHER 1935

1934 Gopher

GOPHER 192

1918 MINNESOTA

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA

GOPHER

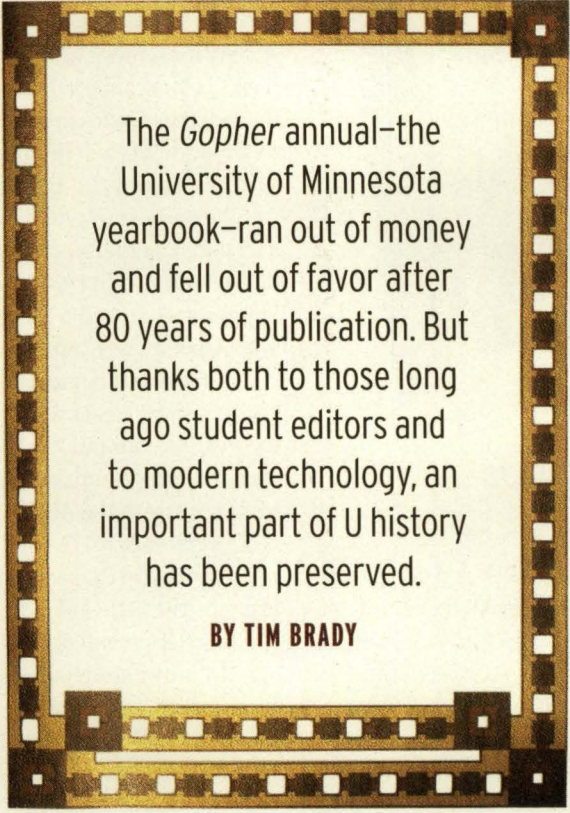
VOLUME

THE GOPHER YEARBOOK MADE ITS DEBUT at the University of Minnesota 125 years ago this spring. For the next 80 years, its production was an annual event, coming to an end only after the size and the scope of the University exceeded the ability of a single volume to tell the complete story of a U of M school year. Nonetheless, for decades ever since, hefty *Gopher* annuals have proudly weighted bookshelves wherever alumni have settled, satisfying those moments of nostalgia and reminiscence when hauled down and cracked open. One can't look back without musing: Is that really who we were?

The first *Gopher* annual, commemorating the year 1888, is a modest volume, with one major exception: The first 15 pages were given over to advertisements for the clothing stores, stationery shops, sporting goods emporiums, hatters, and tobacconists that funded the yearbook's publication. Thirty more pages of commercials for local businesses bring the yearbook to a close—a pretty high percentage for a volume that totals just under 200 pages.

After paying the bills, however, the book proceeds in a familiar fashion. A dedication to University President Cyrus Northrop is followed by sections listing faculty, the various academic classes at the U, student activities, and clubs. Interspersed among the names and offices are pithy quotes and Latinate phrases, a few selections from Shakespeare used to characterize individuals, pen-and-ink drawings of campus characters and classrooms, and a 10-page class poem replete with inside jokes about fellow students and yearbook staffers.

The yearbook offers a window to 19th century student life



The *Gopher* annual—the University of Minnesota yearbook—ran out of money and fell out of favor after 80 years of publication. But thanks both to those long ago student editors and to modern technology, an important part of U history has been preserved.

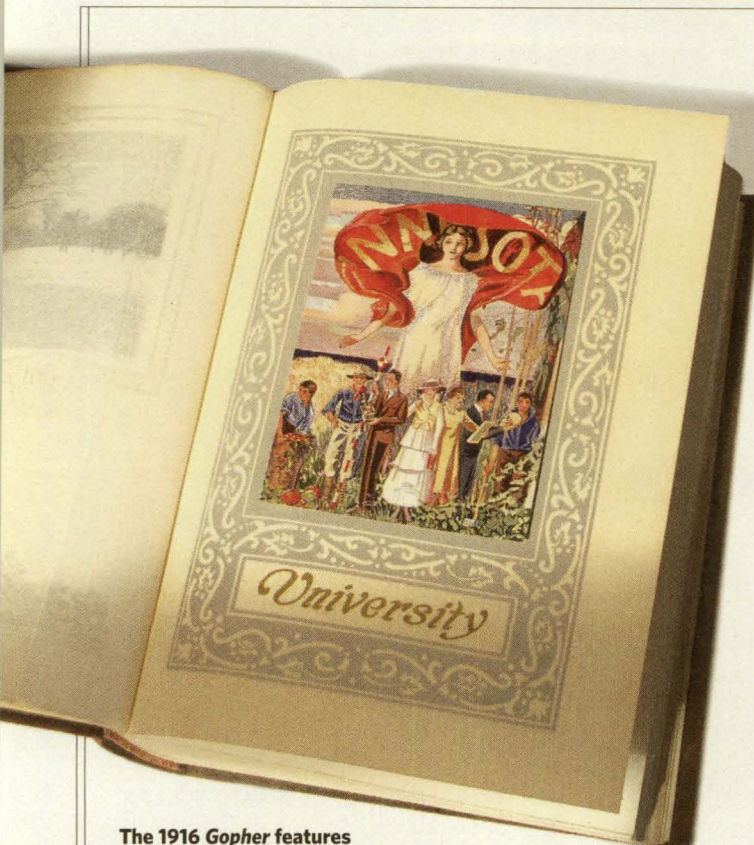
BY TIM BRADY

and lingo, listing a couple of literary societies, a club for Scandinavian students, chess and debate teams, and several military drill organizations that are categorized as athletic associations. The football coach is called a “coacher” and defensive linemen are listed as “rushers.” Two women’s sports are featured: calisthenics and bouncing. Judging from the illustration, the latter was like the blanket tossing event that still takes place at the St. Paul Winter Carnival—minus the blanket. Facing each other in two rows and interlocking their arms, “bouncers” tossed into the air and, hopefully, caught “victims” (their actual designation in the yearbook) before they came crashing to the ground.

The student body in 1888 consisted of a few hundred. The faculty, administration, and staff numbered fewer than 40. Fraternities and sororities totaled just four. The only photograph is a portrait of President Northrop. It wasn't until two years later that photos of students, both in individual pictures and in groups, came to fill the pages of the yearbook.

The growth of the campus from 1890 forward is evident in the expanding size of the yearbook. The number of pages quickly grew from 300 to 400, then 500 and 600, before coming in at a whopping 714 pages in 1916. By the 1910s, photography and artwork came to dominate the *Gopher*. At the same time, the growing population of students and their seemingly insatiable need to join any number of the myriad groups on campus led to ever-thickening yearbooks.

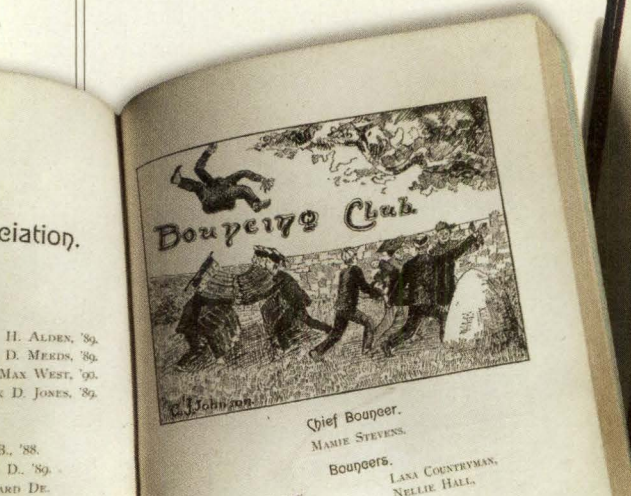
A rundown of just some of the clubs featured in photographs in the 1918 *Gopher* gives a sense both of the interests of the era and a surprising level of diversity at the University of Minnesota.



The 1916 *Gopher* features paintings by student artist Wynn Christy. All of the *Gopher* annuals may now be viewed online (see page 36).

There was the Chinese Club, founded in 1915 and consisting of 18 members; the Cosmopolitan Club consisted of about 24 foreign students from all over the globe; Der Deutsche Verein was a club dedicated to promoting fellowship between students and the German faculty; the Livestock Club and its offshoot, the Livestock Judging Team, were dedicated to promoting animal husbandry; Le Cercle Français was for Francophiles; the Menorah Society was a group for Jewish students; the Quill drew students interested in writing; and a coed group dressed

While the drawing in the 1888 *Gopher* depicts men, the Bouncing Club was also a University women's sport.



in bowed blouses and sailor caps called themselves "Trailers" (a hiking club, judging by the walking sticks they carry in an accompanying drawing).

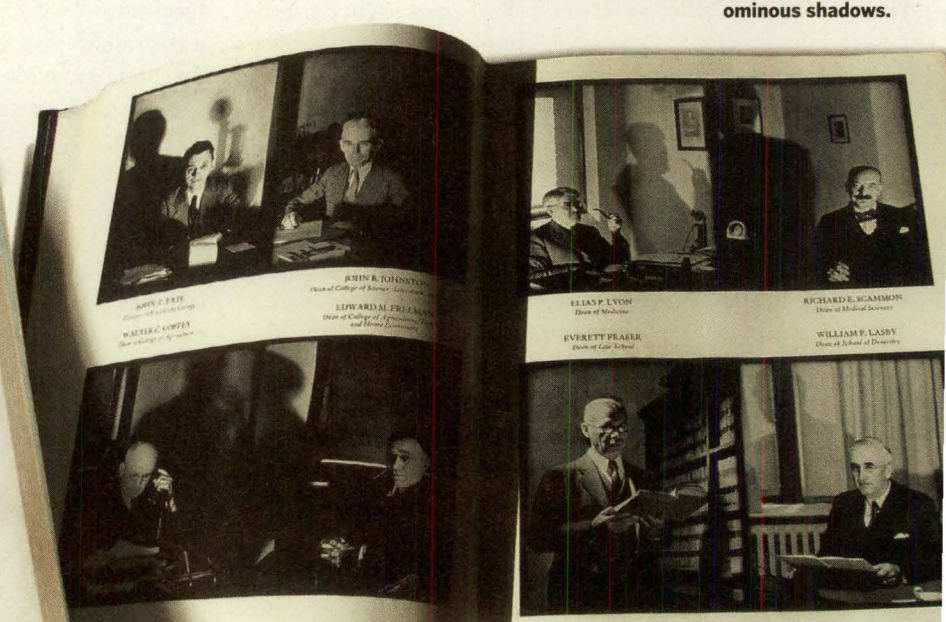
This list is just a warm-up for the literary, political, and athletic clubs that follow: the Minerva, Thalian, and Iduna literary societies are all pictured (the Iduna members in Swedish garb, for "a more intensive study of Swedish literature"). There was a club urging political equality for women and one promoting temperance, a Grey Friars fraternity interested in the general welfare of the University, and the enigmatic Skin and Bones society for senior "girls" who hid their faces, standing with their backs to the camera, but not their membership roll. The yearbook devotes more than 30 pages to football team photos and a description of each of that season's games, along with a listing of all-American and all-Western Conference teams.

The earliest *Gopher* annuals offer fascinating snapshots of social and academic life on the turn-of-the-century campus, while volumes like the 1919 *Gopher* offer moving words and images that describe life on a campus turned upside down by war. A poem, written as a letter to "Dear Old Pal," opens that year's annual. It begins: "'Twas bitter cold in the trenches last night, but my heart was warm, for I pictured myself back on the dear old campus." For 15 pages, each line of the poem is set on its own page with pen-and-ink sketches of scenes from "the front" contrasted with serene images of the University of Minnesota campus.

Beautiful artwork abounds in a number of volumes. For instance, the 1916 *Gopher*, published by Augsburg Press, includes elaborate engraved prints framing text, as well as lovely paintings done by a student artist named Wynn Christy, which open various sections of the book.

The 1932 *Gopher* is dedicated, curiously, to the spirit of Paul Bunyan and opens with several pages of drawings in the style of heroic realism made popular by Thomas Hart Benton of the era. The opening pages of the annual display the work of an

The 1935 *Gopher* cast campus buildings, landscapes, and faculty and administrators in ominous shadows.





"The romantic figure of Paul Bunyan has become the patron saint of the 1932 edition," the editors of the *Gopher* wrote in the dedication notes.

artist named Kaiser, depicting the legendary life of Paul and his blue ox, Babe.

An interesting theme of puppets and shadows runs through the 1935 *Gopher*—unfortunately, without explanation. Photos of campus buildings, scenes, even faculty and administration members, are shot with ominous shadows lurking in the background (and, in the case of the faculty and administrators, wearing somewhat dubious expressions). These are interspersed with curious puppet figures reminiscent of modern-day Claymation models: a teacher with a gigantic ruler behind her back, a football wide receiver reaching for a pass, a boy hawking newspapers. What it all means is anyone's guess.

World War II-era yearbooks saw a reduction in pages but are deeply patriotic, giving full coverage to military units and campus projects devoted to the war. Uniforms abound, as do images of civilians, both men and women, offering smiling assistance to the war effort in ways that range from USO-style dances to donating blood.

Throughout the *Gopher* annual's 80 years, finances were a problem. A costly volume to produce due to its quality and eventual emphasis on photography, the *Gopher* yearbook had ceased selling advertising space to foot the bills in 1916 and thereafter relied primarily on book sales. By 1953, some of the problems that would point to the ultimate demise of the yearbook were already evident.

That year, the staff sold a little more than 2,500 copies of the *Gopher*, a slight dip from 1952 sales. A lengthy report to the Board in Control of Student Publications, which had overseen the production of the yearbook for most of its history, detailed some of

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UNIVERSITY QUEENS



The 1966 *Gopher* featured 10 pages of campus queens. "Almost every fraternity has a queen or an official sweetheart, and so do many other groups," wrote the editors.

the obstacles to selling the yearbook. The *Gopher* sales manager pointed out that, because a major reason to buy a yearbook is that a purchaser will see his or her own picture, it doesn't help sales when the presence of that smiling photo can't be guaranteed. The great majority of photos in the yearbook featured student organizations, but most students at the U didn't participate in student activities. The likelihood of a student being pictured in the book was low, so why buy the book? The one exception was for seniors. They could sit for individual portraits to be included in the yearbook, but since they were charged a fee for this opportunity, fewer than half took up the offer.

In addition, attitudes toward the publication on campus were not universally positive. Many students felt the book revolved too much around Greek life. And *Gopher* staff neighbors in Murphy Hall, namely the editors of the *Minnesota Daily*, questioned the merits of the yearbook. The *Daily* ran probing features under the headlines, "Why Should Seniors Have Their Portrait in the *Gopher*?" "What is the *Gopher*?" and "How is *Gopher* Production Coming?"

In the spring of 1953, a referendum that would have offered an enormous boost to the annual's finances was held on campus. The plan was to attach the cost of the yearbook and a senior sitting price to fee statements for graduating seniors. Despite a vigorous lobbying effort on its behalf, the measure went down to defeat by 74 votes out of about 4,000 cast.

The *Gopher* continued to sputter as the number of students at the U continued to grow. By 1967, its last year, just 2,000 volumes were sold to a student body of 45,000.

To a certain extent, the lack of sales simply reflected other problems with the *Gopher* and yearbooks in general. The University of Minnesota, like many other large campuses around the nation, had long since changed from the sort of institution

where everyone knew just about everyone else and all relished a keepsake of a school year spent together. Now it was a giant state university with a campus sprawling on both sides of the Mississippi River and over in St. Paul as well.

Another report, written by an adviser to the student publications board, highlighted a number of difficulties with the *Gopher* yearbook in its last year. Along with ennui toward the publication in the general student body came a decided lack of students interested in working on its production. In its heyday between World Wars I and II, staff numbered between 30 and 50 students; for the last volume, the staff had shrunk to 10. Squabbles between these overworked and underpaid staffers led to more troubles, and the quality of the yearbook suffered.

It should also be remembered that 1967 was a year in which political activism rose to new heights on campus as the Vietnam War escalated and racial unrest became a familiar component of student life at the U of M. To many students of the day, the very idea of a college annual reeked of nostalgia and a lack of seriousness. The times had a—changed.

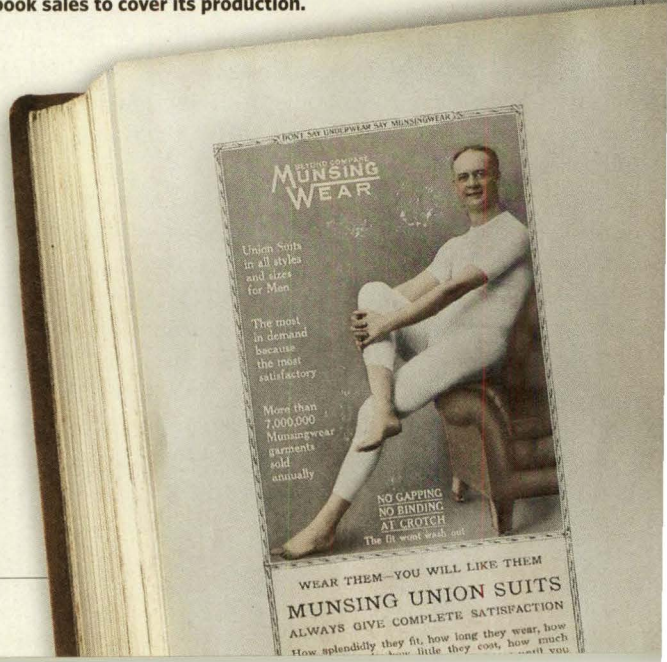
Attempts to resurrect the *Gopher* were made in the 1970s and again in the 1980s. A 1977 effort never came to fruition; a 1982–83 volume was produced but was just 60 pages and had only a few of the features of traditional annuals.

Regardless of their oftentimes corny and precious depictions of life at the University of Minnesota, the 80 volumes of *Gopher* annuals provide an invaluable archive of U of M history. And that's to say nothing of the pleasant stroll down memory lane they provide.

Fortunately, every page of all of the *Gopher* annuals has recently been digitized by the University of Minnesota Archives and can be viewed online through the UMedia Archives collection. Find them at www.MinnesotaAlumni.org/Gopher_Annuals. ■

Tim Brady is a writer living in St. Paul and regular contributor to Minnesota.

Ads of every sort helped pay the bills from 1888 through 1915, after which the *Gopher* relied on yearbook sales to cover its production.





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Peter Beniares has created a personal legacy with Gopher Athletics by adding to his student-athlete scholarships with a future planned gift.

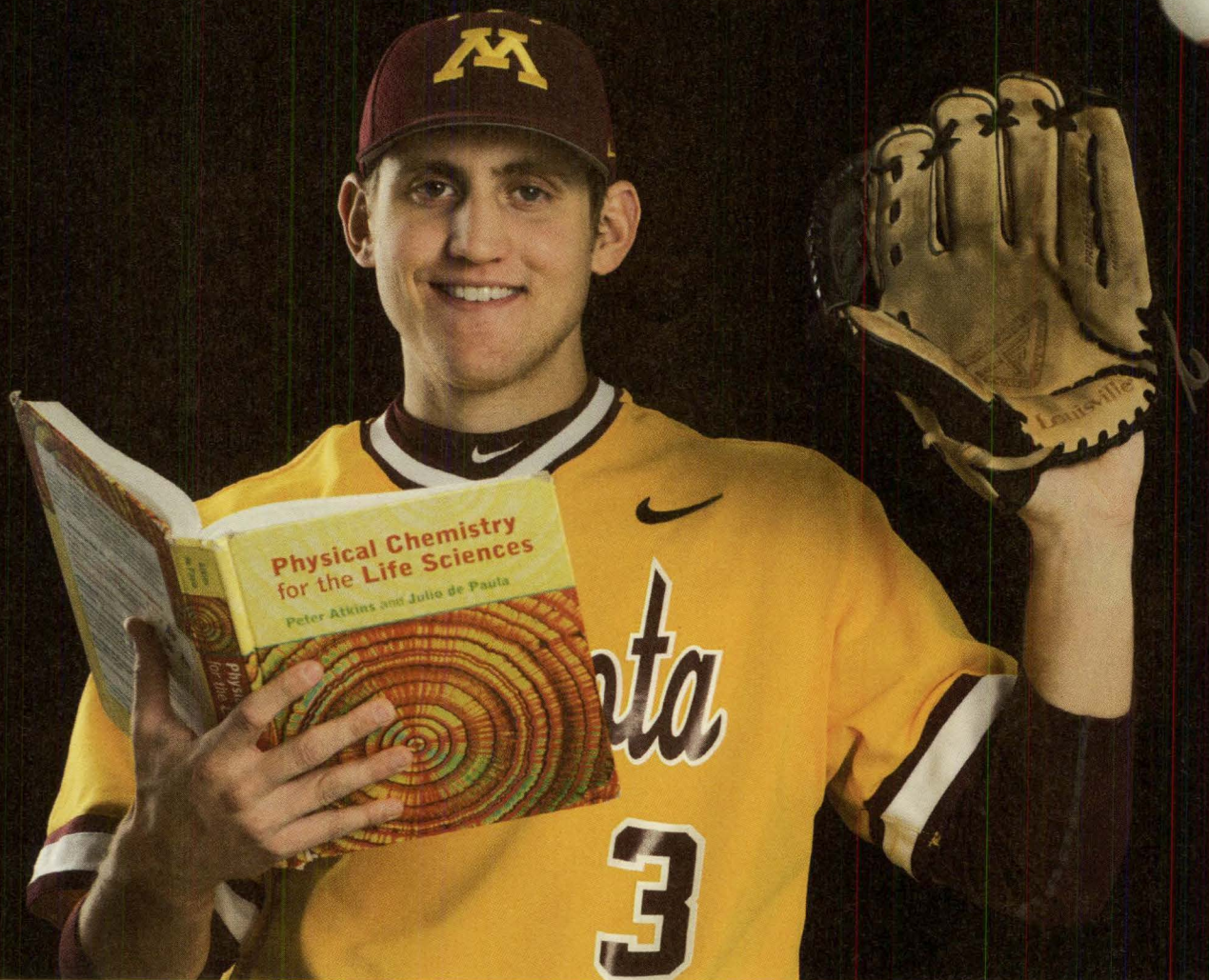
“ Knowing that my contribution helps a student-athlete accomplish their goals and improve their lives fills me with joy. I’m constantly amazed at how the student-athletes can go to school full-time while competing in their sports at the highest level, and I’m happy to provide the financial backing in order for them to accomplish that. I simply can’t imagine life without Gopher Athletics. ”



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Fielder's Choice

Troy Larson could play pro ball, but he plans to go to bat for patients instead.

Five concussions. Five broken fingers. His nose broken three times. Troy Larson (B.S. '12), a fifth-year senior who plays center field for the University of Minnesota Gophers, spent so much time in the emergency room the first 22 years of his life that he might as well have ordered a personalized gurney.

Larson's interest in medicine didn't come out of left field: All those interactions with doctors and nurses gave the academic heavy hitter a glimpse into a lifelong vocation. Larson, a three-time Big Ten Distinguished Scholar Award recipient who carries a 3.95 G.P.A., has applied

to 20 medical schools, including the U, with an eye on pediatrics.

"I've always been drawn to the medical field," Larson says. "I was injured quite frequently, so I had a lot of trips to the E.R. and different clinics. I slowly got acclimated to what physicians do. It just seemed like no matter what I presented them with, they were able to treat me. That served as my initial inspiration."

A Hill-Murray High School graduate from Oakdale, Minnesota, Larson was an academic all-American last season. He could have started medical school already—he earned his degree last May—but chose to return for his final season of

eligibility, in part because of the opportunity to play in the renovated Siebert Field. "I love being part of the team," says Larson, who joined his teammates in laying new sod at Siebert Field last November. "I want to continue playing baseball and try to get as good as I can be. I feel like I can still improve. And I think it would be really special to get a new season in the new stadium." The Gophers' inaugural game at the new Siebert Field is April 5 against Ohio State.

To be eligible for his fifth year, Larson added a biochemistry major to complement his degree in genetics, cell biology, and development. Keeping up with coursework on a busy baseball travel schedule can be as tricky as hitting behind the runner. "It is a lot of utilizing any time that you have," he says. "Trips to North Dakota or South Dakota, where you have four- or five-hour bus trips, you've got to bring

your books and study even if you don't like reading on the bus."

Alissa Allen, the athletic department's academic counselor, offers this story to illustrate Larson's diligence: On a bus trip without wireless internet, when the team stopped at a shopping mall to eat, Larson raced through the place searching for a hot spot so he could look something up for a class. He finally found one—in a cigar store.

"He's a superstar," Allen says. "I can't say it any other way."

Allen compares Larson with Mike Torchia (B.S. '10), the former Gopher cross country and track standout and now a second-year U medical student. Larson is the U's male nominee for the Big Ten's Wayne Duke Postgraduate Award, a \$5,000 scholarship named for the former conference commissioner that is given annually to one male and one female student athlete for achievements in academics, athletics, civic service, and leadership. Torchia won it in 2011.

This semester Larson is taking only four credits while serving as a teaching assistant in a biochemistry lab. He also volunteers one night a week in the radiology department at St. John's Hospital in Maplewood, assisting CT scan technicians.

"I really like working there because it's an outlet away from school, and I'm not at baseball," Larson says. "Even how minor of a part I'm playing, I'm still doing what I want to do, helping patients. It's also a great opportunity to learn more about the health care system."

With a lighter class load, Larson can devote more time to baseball. Last year he batted .304 and stole a team-high eight bases despite missing three weeks with—what else?—an injury, this time a sprained right ankle.

Baseball Coach John Anderson (B.S. '77) believes Larson could be a pro prospect if he wasn't committed to a medical career. "I remember a couple of years ago, he got letters from pro scouts asking him to fill out questionnaires," Anderson says. "He says to me, 'Coach, do I have to fill these out? I don't want to be a pro baseball player. I want to be a doctor.' He's got a passion. He's worked very hard to build a résumé academically. At the same time, he's been a productive Division I baseball player. That's impressive."

—Pat Borzi



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Craving Our Caveman Days

Sometimes it's hard not to feel mismatched to modern life. Diet- and lifestyle-linked conditions like diabetes, hypertension, and obesity, which were unknown a few thousand years ago, are now common. But does this mean we're adapted to a Stone Age diet and way of life and therefore should emulate our Paleolithic ancestors—an idea that keeps cropping up in the popular literature?

In her new book, *Paleofantasy: What Evolution Really Tells Us about Sex, Diet, and How We Live*, Professor Marlene Zuk, an evolutionary biologist at the University of Minnesota, argues that changing our diets and habits based on notions about an idealized prehistoric past is chasing a will-o'-the-wisp because human evolution is continual, bumpy, and fraught with trade-offs. Instead, we should understand how evolution works—particularly when it works fast, she says. *Minnesota* asked Zuk to explain more about this topic and her book, scheduled for publication in March.

Why did you write this book?

I think there's a widespread misunderstanding of how evolution works and particularly about how fast it happens. What's more, people often think evolution strives toward perfection of a species. I wanted to correct that notion.

What is meant by "paleofantasy"?

Paleofantasies are made-up notions about an idealized life before agriculture developed, more than 10,000 years ago, when humans were in some earlier stage of evolution. The fantasies involve small tribes with nuclear families where men hunted, women stayed with kids, and they only ate meat and plants that could be gathered. The idea is, the closer we can get to that state, the better off we'll be because with civilization there's a mismatch between the environment in which we evolved and one we live in.

Did that state of ideal adaptation ever exist?

There was never a point where we were perfectly adapted to our environment. Evolution happens in fits and starts, and it's chaotic, not directed.

What is evolution, anyway?

A change in gene frequency. For example, if blue-eyed people move into an area and have children with brown-eyed people, the frequency of the gene for blue eyes will increase in the population. But individuals themselves can't evolve.

Are humans still evolving, and if so, how?

Yes, and it happens because not all people have the same number of children, so we see different representations of their

genes in the genome. New techniques in genetics are letting scientists study the changes in the genome across populations and time to get a picture of what's happening and why. We can see that certain genes evolved recently or rapidly in what's called a "signature of selection" in the genome.

Professor Marlene Zuk near the elk diorama at the University's Bell Museum of Natural History

What about the argument that technology insulates humans from being weeded out by natural selection?

Technology can change selection. For example, people who earlier would have died from smallpox or myopia are alive now thanks to vaccines and eyewear. But we've also added selective pressures—for example, from new diseases like HIV/AIDS. Also, technology doesn't operate the same all over the world. There's still plenty of selection by disease, famine, infant mortality, etc.

What are some examples of rapid or recent human evolution?

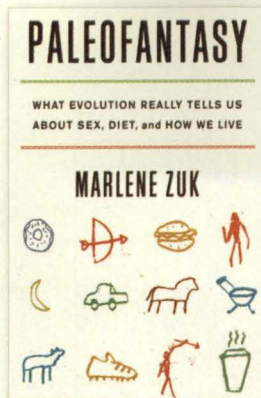
The poster child for rapid evolution is the modern ability to digest lactose—milk sugar—using the enzyme lactase. In some humans, lactase persists after weaning. The trait appeared about 5,000 to 7,000

years ago in cattle-raising tribes, and in this short amount of evolutionary time it spread and became established in those populations. Promoters of “paleo diets” say that because earlier humans didn’t drink milk, and other animals can’t after weaning, then we shouldn’t. But I say, if you have the genes, do it. That’s not to say there’s anything wrong with paleo diets, just that following one solely because it emulates a particular version of our past isn’t based on good science.

In another example, it was recently found that Tibetans who live at high altitude show unique genetic traits that allow them to function on the Tibetan Plateau, which is thought to have been populated only 3,000 to 6,000 years ago. This underscores how fast evolution can occur.

Why can't we evolve to an ideal point and then stop?

Evolution is a series of compromises and trade-offs. Genes have more than one function and interact in complicated ways.



“So early humans ate crackers. What’s the big deal?” Marlene Zuk writes in *Paleofantasy* (W.W. Norton & Co., 2013).

“The answer is that a reliance on starch in the diet calls into question the various forms of the so-called paleo diet. . . . If people are vociferous in their opinions about milk, they are positively fervent in their feelings about grains and other carbohydrates as suitable components of the diet. ‘Bread’ and ‘pasta’ seem to be fighting words for many of the proponents of a diet more like that of early humans.”

For example, the same gene that confers resistance to cholera if you have one copy may cause cystic fibrosis in double doses. And a gene that confers resistance to malaria if you have one copy causes sickle cell anemia if you have two. Also, consider a husky’s legs—longer is better for running but worse for conserving heat.

Is emulating an earlier state ever a good idea?

We can use contemporary hunter-gath-

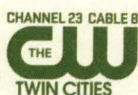
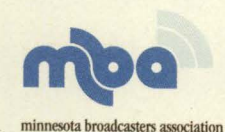
erers as a jumping-off point, but you have to get data on what is beneficial. For example, a lot of people in the world run barefoot. If people using running shoes are getting injuries, and contemporary hunter-gatherers run barefoot, the best response is to study whether barefoot running really is better for runners elsewhere. There’s some evidence both pro and con, but only because people have studied the problem.

—Deane Morrison

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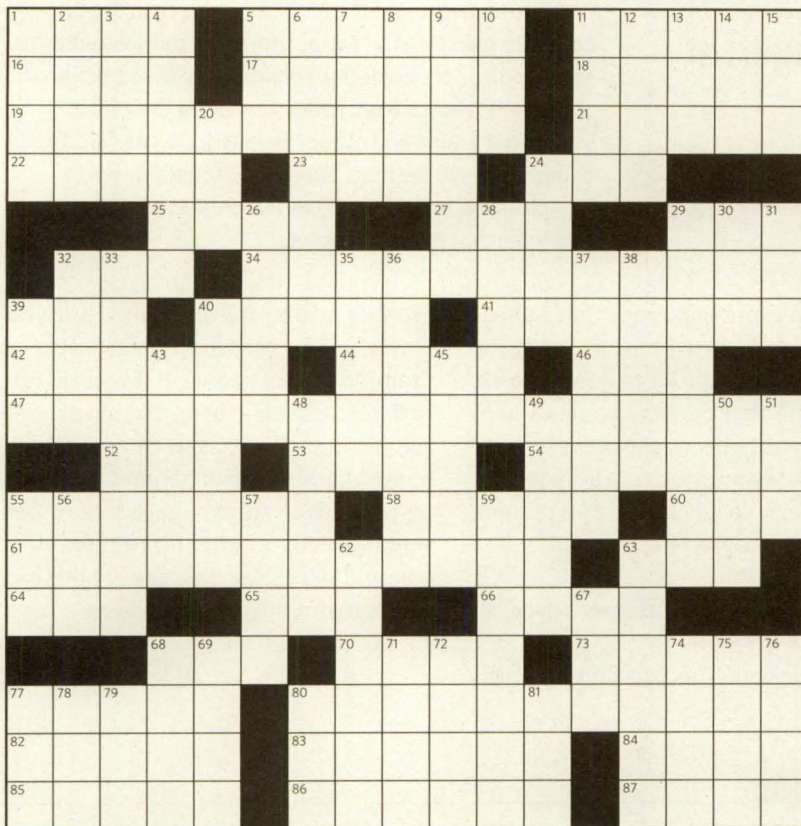
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The Gopher Crossword

Talking to U

By Deane Morrison and George Barany



ACROSS

- 1 They are for the poor
 5 Certify by oath, with "to"
 11 Check mates?
 16 Be a stinker
 17 Puerto Rican actress/singer/dancer and Presidential Medal of Freedom winner Rita
 18 Does damage to
 19 Former *Today* host, on-air colonoscopy recipient, and speaker at the 2010 47-Across
 21 Earth's is elliptical
 22 It may light your fire
 23 ___ we forget
 24 1972 DDT banner
 25 Mahogany relative
 27 Largest undergrad. div. at the U of M
 29 Firm up, as Jell-O

- 32 These, in Toulouse
 34 Higher education luminary, expert on Swedish language in America, and speaker at the 1994 47-Across
 39 Chum
 40 Ideal ending?
 41 TCF Bank, for one
 42 Canadian quint
 44 Blunder follower?
 46 Tantrum
 47 Alumni Association event that has featured 19, 34, 61, and 80-Across
 52 PX patrons
 53 Opera villainess, typically
 54 Goddess with a spear and a national capital named for her
 55 Going great guns
 58 Truck, in Stoke-on-Trent

- 60 Neeson played him in a kilt
 61 Congresswoman who told Pentagon officials that if they were women, they'd always be pregnant because they couldn't say no, and speaker at the 1993 47-Across
 63 High-altitude lab with no permanent addr.
 64 Place to take a drive
 65 Assents at sea
 66 Strong ___ ox
 68 It might be picked up in a bar
 70 It anchors a whey
 73 It may have a round bottom
 77 Controversial stunner
 80 Conservative political consultant who played herself

- on HBO's *K Street* and, with her liberal spouse, spoke at the 2000 47-Across
 82 On the ball
 83 Head cases?
 84 Walkway for a Wallenda
 85 Freshmen and sophomores, usually
 86 Dots in the sea—or the pancreas
 87 Do a slow burn

DOWN

- 1 Temple chests
 2 Neil Armstrong took a giant one
 3 Physics or data preceder
 4 Evades, as an issue
 5 *Mad Men* and *Breaking Bad* carrier
 6 A handyman carries one
 7 Tried's partner
 8 Ending for Dumas's threesome
 9 Squealer
 10 First section of a textbook, for short
 11 Hit the megamall, maybe
 12 Scarlet's stomping ground
 13 Ex or sub follower
 14 Rough fitness measure, for short
 15 Retired boomer, for short
 20 Scratch (out)
 24 Bridge position
 26 Sharp-shooting Adams
 28 Dogie catcher
 29 Moves like a serpent
 30 Ostrich of the Outback
 31 Cat's paw?
 32 He is regularly raised
 33 Stretch out
 35 Put down in writing?
 36 Sink, as plans or a derelict ship

- 37 Behind-the-line score
 38 Bunker or Piaf
 39 BlackBerry or Palm Pilot, briefly
 40 "I'll be right there!"
 43 Nights, in Nantes
 45 Was a straphanger
 48 TV host Moore or chess master Kasparov
 49 Actress Teri and family
 50 Hall-of-Famer Slaughter
 51 "A drop of golden sun"
 55 Select (for)
 56 Burns's brush-off
 57 Peck on the Pequod
 59 Take back, as a former student
 62 Hanks and Hoffman each have a pair
 63 The Middletons, to William
 67 Back on board
 68 Arctic-to-Antarctic flier
 69 They may be fine or dark
 71 Orsk is on it
 72 1984 N.L. MVP Sandberg
 74 Touched the tarmac at MSP, say
 75 Bold Ruler, to Secretariat
 76 "I ___ him, Horatio": Hamlet
 77 Sylvester, to Tweety
 78 Pale potable
 79 Match, in poker
 80 Co. acquired by Verizon in 2006
 81 Wear for rather narrow feet

Deane Morrison is an editor and science writer in the Office of University Relations and George Barany is a professor of chemistry at the University of Minnesota.



Answers to the Gopher Crossword appear on page 54. To solve this puzzle online, go to www.MinnesotaAlumni.org/crossword_spring13.

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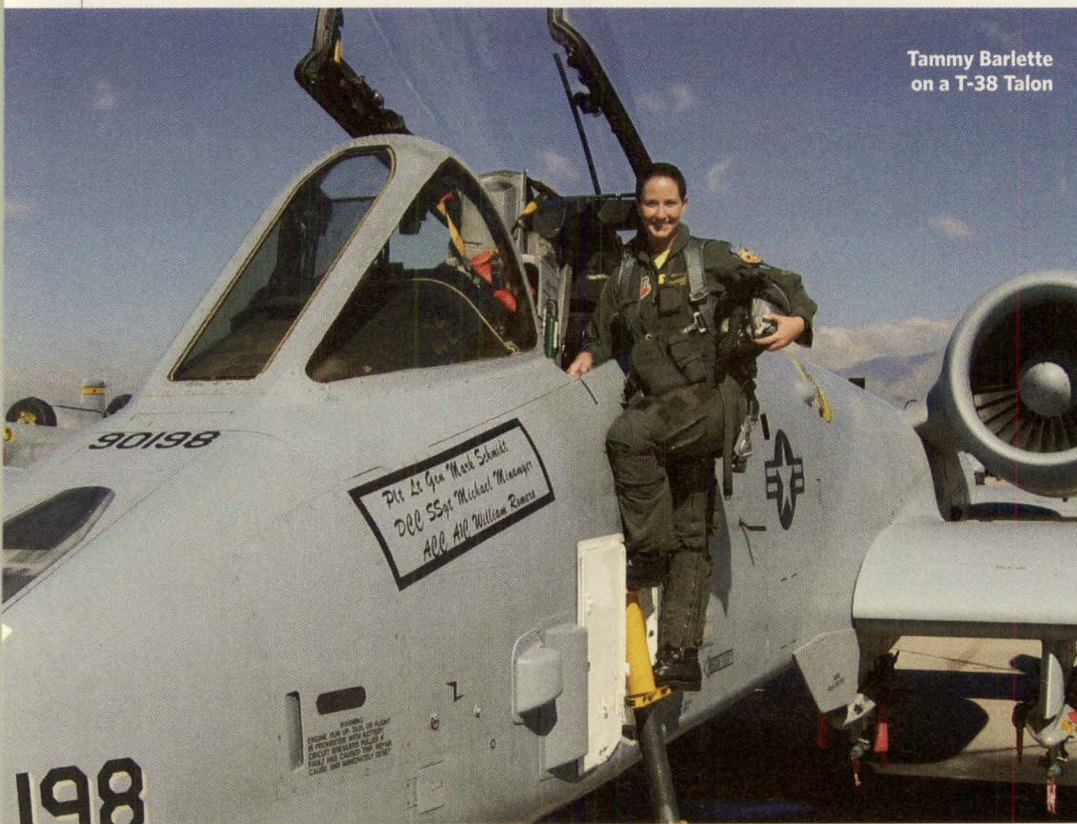
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SAVE THE DATE

Tammy Barlette
on a T-38 Talon



She's Just Got to Fly

As a United States Air Force fighter pilot instructor, Major Tamara Barlette (B.S. '98) is a rarity. Only 4.5 percent of Air Force pilots are women—and even fewer are fighter pilots. “Once in a while it dawns on me that there’s not even one other female working in this building,” says Barlette, 36, who is director of training at Laughlin Air Force Base in Del Rio, Texas, the largest pilot training base in the Air Force. And yet, Barlette—who trains primarily male pilots in a T-38 Talon, a twin-engine supersonic jet—says she has never felt out of place.

“That’s not to say I don’t get a little ‘attitude’ once in a while from some of my students,” she says. “Learning to fly a fighter jet is pretty stressful; they get frustrated and angry sometimes—usually because they’re not performing the way they want to.”

A Twin Cities native, Barlette joined the Air Force Reserve Officers Training Corps during her freshman year at the University of Minnesota. She knew she’d made the right choice almost immediately. “I was very impressed with the caliber of people in the program and how motivated they were to do their best at everything,” she recalls.

Barlette always wanted to be a pilot, but the first time she flew in an F-16, as a passenger, she doubted she had the right stuff. “I got so sick, after a few minutes, I didn’t even know what was going on,” she says. But once she learned that the same thing happens to almost everyone, Barlette let nothing stand in her way.

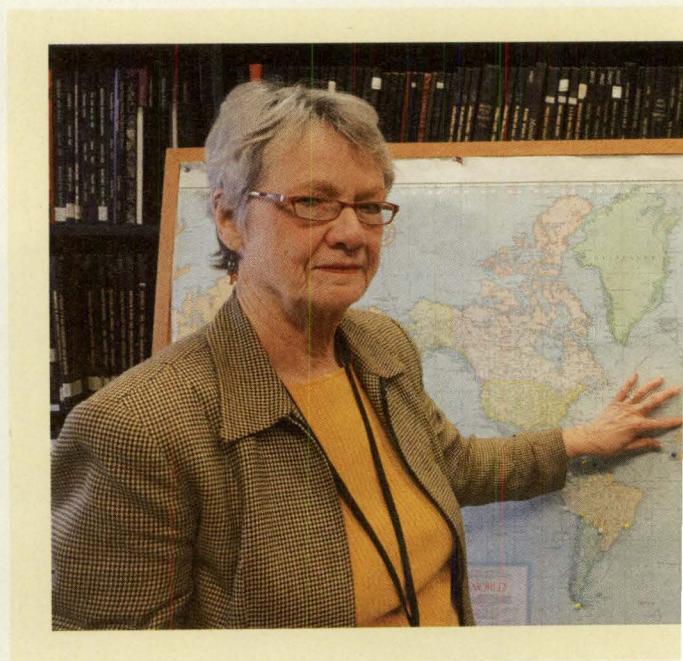
After completing Air Force flight training in 2000, Barlette began teaching other pilots to fly at Laughlin. She later served

three years of active duty in Korea as a combat-ready pilot and six years with the Arizona Air National Guard. While in Arizona, she flew remotely piloted aircraft (RPAs), commonly known as drones, completing 562 combat sorties in Afghanistan and elsewhere from a ground control station in the United States. In 2009, Barlette became the first Air Guard Reserve RPA pilot to graduate from the prestigious Air Force Weapons School at Nellis Air Force Base in Nevada.

While piloting RPAs, Barlette met and married her husband, Bob, a U.S. Border Patrol agent. They have a son, age 3, and a daughter who is 4. Last year Barlette decided to return to Laughlin, in part because she wanted a more normal home life with her family. But she also wanted to return to her passion: teaching others to fly.

“I love teaching,” says Barlette. “It’s an awesome experience to take someone who knows nothing about flying and teach them everything—from how to put their gear on, to practicing low-level tactics at 500 miles per hour. I encourage other young people—especially young women who want to fly—to aim straight for that goal and let nothing stand in their way.”

—Chuck Benda



Essential Design

Dan Yudchitz enjoyed bringing to reality the research in sustainable design he'd done as a student at the University of Minnesota. "Plus, I needed somewhere to live," says Yudchitz (M.Arch. '08). His current residence, and first solo project, is a 1,000-square-foot, energy efficient home in St. Paul that garnered a 2012 Minnesota Honor Award from the American Institute of Architects (AIA). Yudchitz dubbed it an Essential House because he designed it to be no more and no less than what is needed for comfortable living. The AIA committee said of the low-budget house, "It may point the way to our collective future."

"Buying, heating, and furnishing a 4,000-square-foot home, economists agree, will not be possible for most people, and to many consumers, not even palatable," Yudchitz says. His Essential House features open space, lots of glass that makes the backyard feel like part of the living area, and interior walls on tracks that can be reconfigured to suit his needs. The overall effect, he says, is a spaciousness that sometimes surprises his visitors.

But size isn't the only factor in the sustainable balancing act. Cost and aesthetics also weigh in. Yudchitz and his father, architect Bill Yudchitz, did most of the construction, keeping the total cost to \$160,000.

Plug-in solar panels, 12-inch-thick exterior walls, and a wall of south-facing windows that lets the sun heat the home's concrete slab floor mean the Essential House makes more energy than it uses in the summer, and Yudchitz sells the excess back to Xcel Energy. With winter's short daylight hours, he occasionally turns on the radiant in-floor heat to maintain a comfortable 72 degrees, demonstrating that sustainability is, above all, comfortable.

To watch a video tour of Dan Yudchitz's house, go to www.MinnesotaAlumni.org/EssentialHouse.

—Sarah Barker



Dan Yudchitz
in front of his
Essential House

Spanning the Decades

Fifty years ago, University of Minnesota student Evelyn Anderson (B.A. '64) spent a life-changing summer in Morocco with the Student Project for Amity Among Nations (SPAN), a student-run program founded at the U in 1947, long before study abroad was common. "It was the summer I grew up, a seminal event that continues to shape my life," Anderson says.

SPAN, which last year sent 12 students to Russia and Great Britain, is still shaping Anderson's life. She and SPAN alumna

Charlaine Tolkien (B.A. '68, M.A. '85) have returned to the program post-retirement, Anderson as a part-time employee in the West Bank office and Tolkien as a volunteer working with its approximately 4,500 alumni. Tolkien, who studied in Uganda in the summer of 1967, volunteers because of the program's lasting influence on her. "It is an honor to be part of such a long-standing and important Minnesota program."

To learn more about SPAN, visit www.spanalumni.org.

—Cynthia Scott

Evelyn Anderson (left) and Charlaine Tolkien at a map showing SPAN sites. They're pointing to Morocco and Uganda, where they spent their SPAN summers as students.



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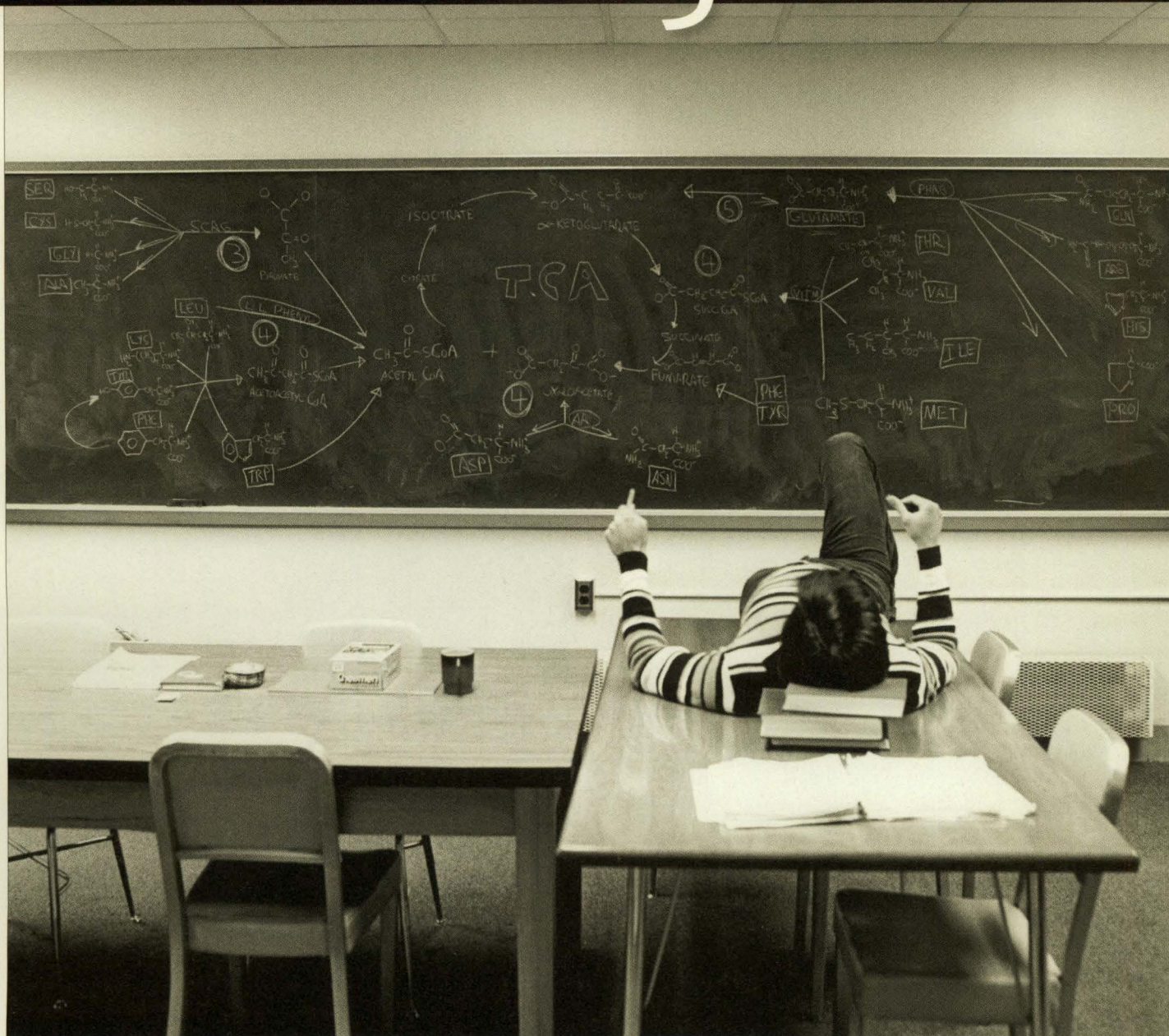
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Alumni Association Angle



Prone to Study Since this photo was taken in a University of Minnesota classroom in 1971, the formulas depicting the major pathways linking amino acid metabolism to the tricarboxylic acid cycle have not changed. And biochemistry students still slip into recumbent concentration, although likely no longer in front of a blackboard. While blackboards reigned supreme in classrooms for two centuries, they have now been phased out in favor of whiteboards at most universities, including the U.

INSIDE

Alumni Go to Cuba
Midsummer Night
on Stage
Sharpen Your
Leadership Skills
A Packed
Legislative Briefing



Alumni Journey to Cuba

The University of Minnesota's travel program hosted three trips to Cuba in November, December, and January, the first time the program has ever hosted alumni trips to the island nation. One trip was initially scheduled, but high demand led to two more, says travel program director Cheryl Jones. Thirty-six people participated in each trip.

Travelers spent two nights in Cienfuegos and five nights in Havana, with numerous daily excursions and educational programs to cultural and historic sites. Jones says plans are in the works to schedule more trips to Cuba in 2013. Other 2013 destinations include the Albuquerque International Balloon Festival, Italy, the Mediterranean, China, the Canadian Rockies, and many more.

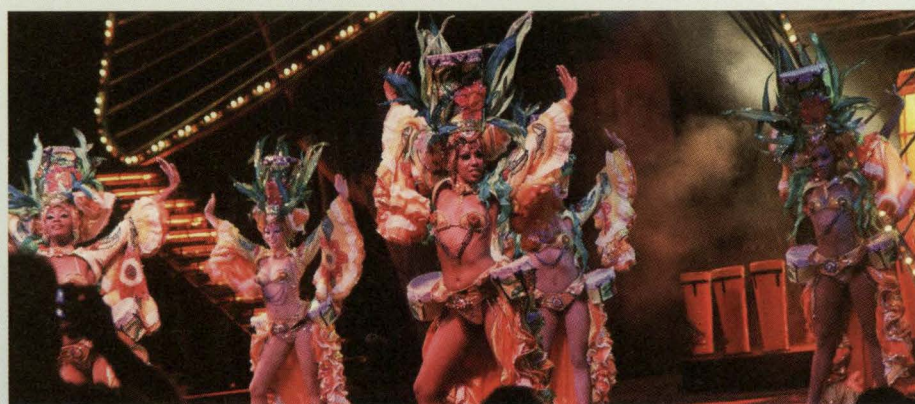
For a complete schedule, visit www.MinnesotaAlumni.org/travel.

Travelers on the December trip to Cuba shared their photographs with *Minnesota*.

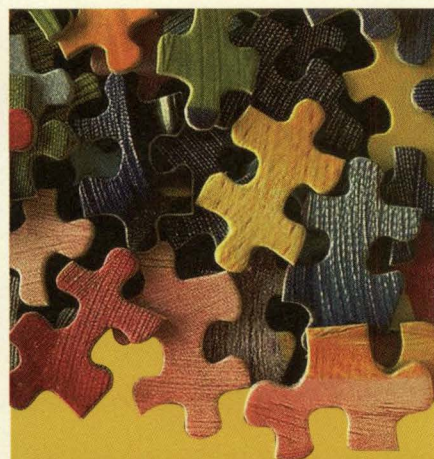


Clockwise from top: The Fortress of San Carlos de la Cabaña on the east side of Havana Harbor; David Gillette and Suzy Judd converse with art in the Old Square in Old Havana; Mike Korman and Edna Pampy enjoy a cigar in a Havana restaurant; and a man holding his sleeping baby daughter in Old Havana. Below: A view of Havana.





Top to bottom: Newlyweds ride parade-style on the back of a Ford Sunliner down the Paseo de Marti in Old Havana; a show at the Tropicana; and a street market book vendor's chess game.



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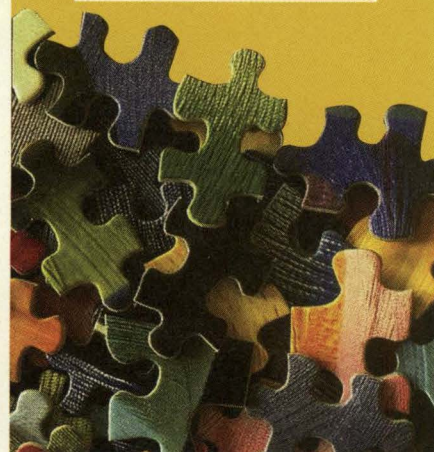
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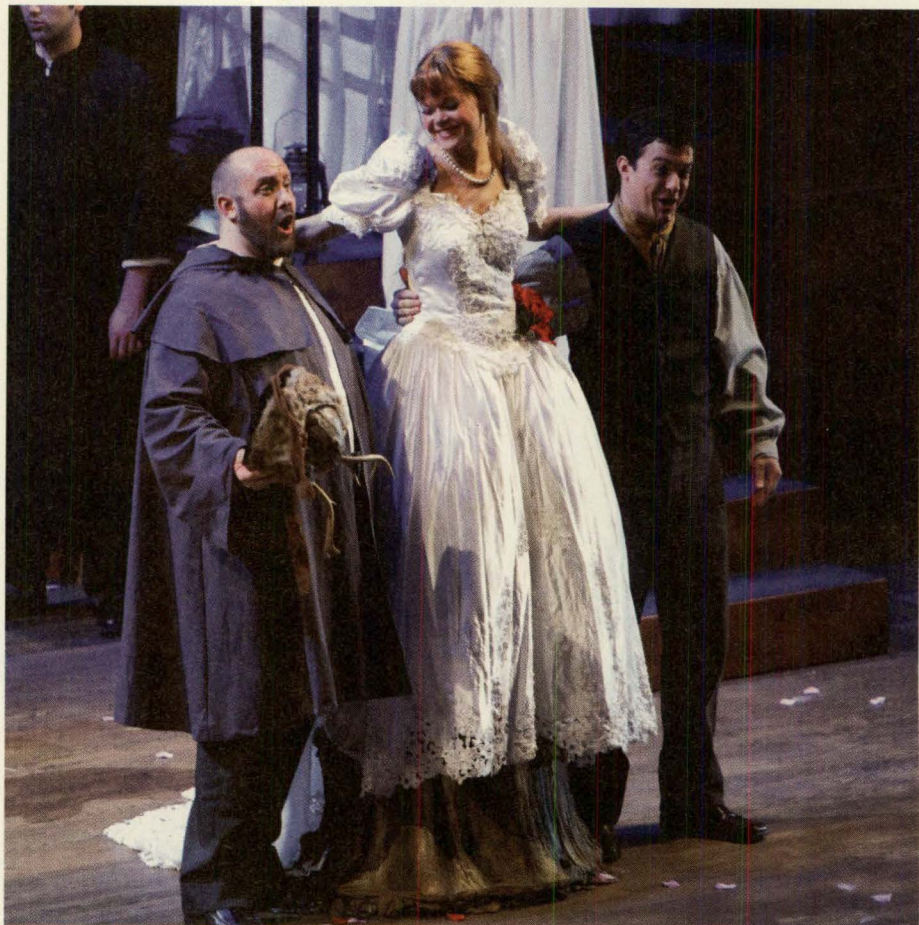
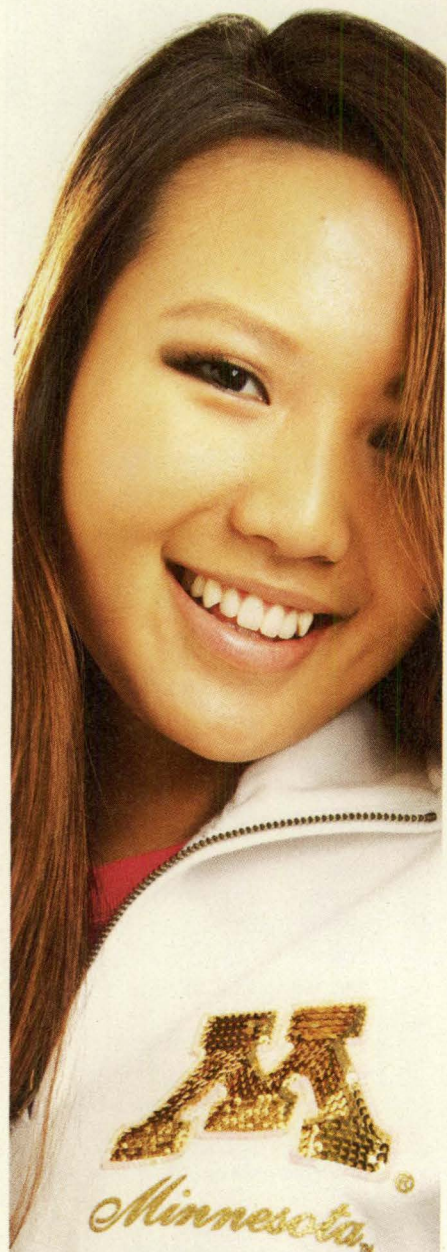
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U Opera Stages a Shakespeare Favorite

William Shakespeare's play *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, a complex piece with themes of love, fantasy, and transformation, will be staged by the University Opera Theatre April 18 through 21. Director David Walsh situates the opera in the early 1900s, an era influenced by the emergence of psychology as a way to investigate human behavior. Walsh focuses on the conflict among four young lovers—a love rectangle created by the mischievous fairy Puck.

The setting, Walsh says, adds an important element to the play, but ultimately the theme that shines through is the nature of love—as evidenced by Titania, the Queen of Fairies, temporarily falling in love with Bottom, a lowly worker with the head of a donkey. "It tells us that sometimes a very unlikely combination can be, even briefly, more loving than people who profess to be lovers," Walsh says.

Tickets are \$20, and members of the University of Minnesota Alumni Association receive two for the price of one. *A Midsummer Night's Dream* will be performed at the Ted Mann Concert Hall at 2106 Fourth Street South on the West Bank in Minneapolis. Showtimes vary. Pre-opera lobby discussions begin 45 minutes before each performance. Tickets are available at www.tickets.umn.edu or by calling 612-624-2345.

For more information, go to www.MinnesotaAlumni.org/MidsummerNight.

—Erin Lengas

Above: Students perform in the University Opera Theatre's recent production of Verdi's *Falstaff*.

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Poetry Series to Host American Book Award Winner

The University of Minnesota's Friends of the Libraries' 2013 Pankake Poetry Series reading will feature Ed Bok Lee, winner of the 2012 Minnesota Book Award and 2012 American Book Award in poetry for his work *Whorled*. He is also the author of *Real Karaoke People*, for which he was awarded the 2006 PEN/Open Book Award and the 2006 Asian American Literary Award (Members' Choice).

The reading will be held on April 17 from 4 to 6 p.m. at Elmer L. Andersen Library. Reservations can be made at z.umn.edu/pankake or 612-624-9339 and are required by April 10.

Friends of the Libraries is dedicated to keeping the University of Minnesota Libraries among the state's greatest assets. Alumni Association members who join

the Friends at the \$40 annual rate are automatically upgraded to the borrowing privileges level, which normally costs \$80 per year. Membership in the Friends brings a wealth of other benefits, as well. Members of the Friends of the Libraries retain the same borrowing privileges as students.

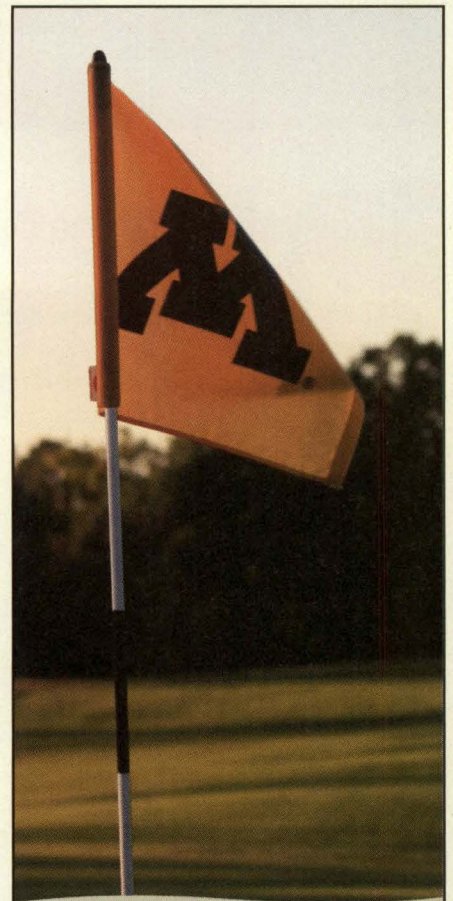
The Friends host frequent lectures, discussions, readings, and workshops on a wide range of topics; some are open only to members, and others are offered to members at a discount.

The Pankake Poetry Series was founded in honor of librarian Marcia Pankake, who hosted countless readings and poetry events at the University Libraries until her retirement in 2007.

—Cynthia Scott



Ed Bok Lee



UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION MEMBER BENEFIT



Special Season Pass price of \$1,100* plus these benefits:

- 40% off single apparel purchase on day of season pass purchase
- 20% off all apparel purchases
- \$6 off 18 hole cart fees, all season
- 2 free guest passes

*tax not included

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Legislative Briefing Draws Hundreds

More than 400 energetic advocates for the University of Minnesota, representing 65 of the state's 67 Senate districts and 101 of 134 House districts, gathered at the McNamara Alumni Center on January 23 for the 2013 Legislative Briefing. President Eric Kaler outlined the University's legislative priorities and Bill Burton (B.A. '99), former deputy press secretary to President Barack Obama, spoke about the importance of advocacy. By the end of the evening, attendees had tweeted, filmed video messages, and written messages on postcards to their state legislators urging support for the University's legislative request.

The University's biennial budget request totaled \$91.6 million. That's close to the same amount the state provided in 2001, but today the U serves 15 percent more students. Governor Mark Dayton has recommended that the U receive \$80 million, including \$42.6 million to freeze tuition; \$36 million for the creation of the Minnesota Discovery, Research, and InnoVation Economy program; and \$1.4 million in loan forgiveness for health care professionals who agree to practice in underserved areas of the state.

To view a video of the Legislative Briefing, visit www.MinnesotaAlumni.org/2013briefing.

Continued alumni advocacy is essential throughout the legislative session. For updates and more information, go to www.SupportTheUumn.edu.



Thank you for being an Alumni Association member!



More than 400 supporters joined us at the 2013 Legislative Briefing on January 23 to hear President Kaler's plan to renew the University's partnership with the state.

Attendees also recorded personal video messages for their legislators. Thank you!

Pictured here at the 2013 Legislative Briefing are students and alumni who sent tweets, texts, and other messages of U of M support to their elected officials.



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Your member dues sustain important Association and University programs including the Legislative Briefing and Support The U. Become a life member today! www.MinnesotaAlumni.org/life



Far left: Alumni Association National Board Chair Kent Horsager spoke at the briefing: "Legislators may be your next-door neighbor or they may be the person behind you in the coffee shop. Maintaining a relationship with them is vital if we want our stories to mean something and elicit action at the capitol."

Left: Alumni Terry and Ronald Ferriss of Hastings, Minnesota, address postcards to the governor and their legislators.

Events & Conferences at Student Unions & Activities



spaces & places

Alumni Association members receive 10% off the University Guest room rental rates at Coffman Memorial Union & the St. Paul Student Center.

UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA
ALUMNI ASSOCIATION
 MEMBER BENEFIT

Student Unions
 & Activities

sua.umn.edu/reservations

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 Driven to Discover™



Tools for Success

Since the introduction of the Successful Manager's Leadership Program (SMLP) in 2004, the University of Minnesota's College of Continuing Education has delivered 60 programs to more than 1,200 managers from around the world. If you're a prospective or mid-level manager seeking career enhancement, picture yourself alongside the emerging leaders pictured here at an SMLP class, learning essential insights, knowledge, and skills to improve leadership effectiveness.

This premier leadership program was developed with PDI Ninth House, a leadership development firm, based on the *Successful Manager's Handbook*. Topics include personal leadership, thought leadership, results leadership, and people leadership.

The Successful Manager's Leadership Program has delivered 60 programs to over 1,200 managers from around the world since its inception in 2004. Pictured above are participants in a recent class.

In addition to lectures, case studies, and coaching, a new feature of the program includes a 360-degree profiler, which consists of feedback on the participant's work performance from managers, peers, direct reports, and internal customers. Results provide a basis for creating an individualized development plan. Graduates of the program say results are immediate and significant.

Register for the Spring 2013 SMLP course at cce.umn.edu/SMLP. The five-day program begins on May 7 and 8, followed by a one-month break to complete the 360-degree profiler. Class meetings resume for three more sessions June 11 through 13.

University of Minnesota Alumni Association members

receive a 10 percent discount on the SMLP cost of \$2,995. Details on this offer and other savings for Alumni Association members on College of Continuing Education can be found at www.MinnesotaAlumni.org/cce.

—Jennifer Benson

Answers to The Gopher Crossword on page 42

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UNIVERSITY OF MINNESOTA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION

A special welcome to our newest life members.

(reflects October 13, 2012-January 12, 2013)

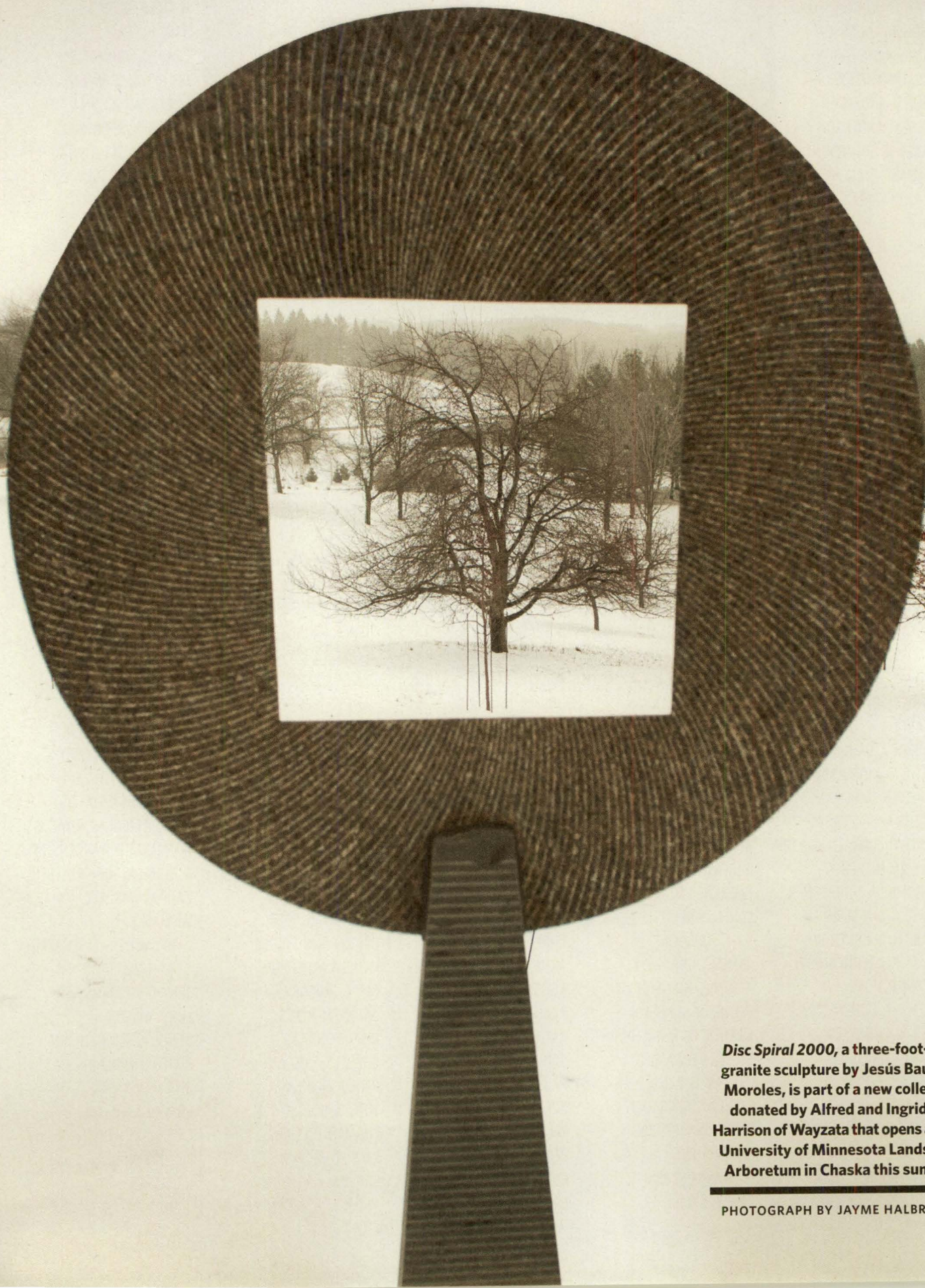
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BEVERLY A. WOOD
LLOYD T. WOOD
HSI-AN WU
JOHN T. ZUPANCIC



***Disc Spiral 2000*, a three-foot-wide granite sculpture by Jesús Bautista Morales, is part of a new collection donated by Alfred and Ingrid Lenz Harrison of Wayzata that opens at the University of Minnesota Landscape Arboretum in Chaska this summer.**

PHOTOGRAPH BY JAYME HALBRITTER

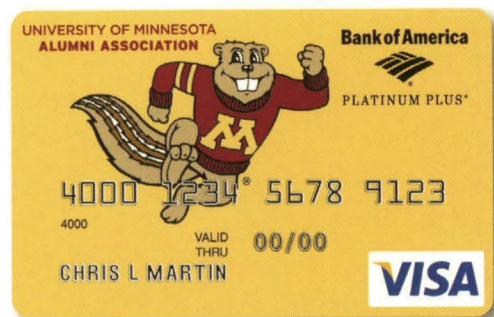


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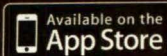
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