Seeing the Beauty in the Beast

Komodo dragon research at UNLV
The Rebel Ring

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Great universities don’t just happen. The support of alumni and friends makes a critical difference for academic programs at UNLV. This spring, UNLV students will reach out to ask for your support. We hope you’ll think about the difference UNLV made in your life and the impact your gift will have on current and future UNLV students. We look forward to talking to you!

For more information, contact the UNLV Foundation at (702) 895-3641.
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on the cover:
One of the National Zoo's Komodo dragons. Photo by Jessie Cohen, National Zoological Park, Smithsonian Institution.

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NEWS

Banners, Historical Photos to Enhance Campus Appearance

The UNLV Alumni Association is funding two projects that will enhance the appearance of the university campus.

Sixty colorful banners are now available for placement along the lampposts along the academic mall on campus, and 54 framed historical photos of UNLV and its predecessor, Nevada Southern University, will soon be placed on the walls in the new Classroom Building Complex.

Both projects are the result of cooperative efforts by UNLV alumni, students, and staff, according to Carl Cook, assistant director of alumni relations.

The idea for the banners grew out of the efforts of Cook and UNLV Student Activities Director Becky Barnard, who arranged for several of them to be placed along the academic mall to encourage greater student participation in upcoming activities. Hoping that the banners might promote extra interest in activities year-round, the two successfully pursued approval for them from the Campus Planning Commission and funding for them from the UNLV Alumni Association's Board of Directors.

The banners will display the university's mascot, a number of education-oriented phrases, and holiday greetings. The 54 historical photos were selected by an association-appointed committee of students and alumni who searched through thousands of photographs in the James R. Dickinson Library's special collections department, Cook said.

"Today's students should be made aware of important events in their alma mater's history to truly appreciate the efforts taken to make UNLV the great university that it is," Cook said. "What better way than to display photographs of these events for them to see every day?"

Both the banners and the photographs will be installed and maintained by the UNLV operations and maintenance department at no charge.

Several Top UNLV Administrators Appointed, Reassigned

Norm Pohl, former dean of UNLV's College of Business and Economics, has been promoted to the post of vice president for finance and administration following a nationwide search.

Pohl's appointment was one of a number of personnel decisions made in recent months by UNLV President Carol C. Harter.

In announcing Pohl's selection, Harter said, "Dr. Pohl's unique combination of academic background and real-world experience, coupled with his knowledge of UNLV, made him the best choice."

Pohl served eight years as dean before being appointed interim vice president for finance and administration in 1994. In another personnel decision, Lyle Rivera was named vice president and assistant to the president for special projects. In that post he will head the university's planning and development efforts for a proposed law school and will coordinate fund raising for the UNLV International Gaming Institute.

Rivera, an attorney who has been at UNLV since 1979, most recently had served as vice president for development and university relations. From 1987 until last year he also served as executive director of the UNLV Foundation and led its successful effort to raise millions of dollars in support of university programs. In August, Harter selected longtime faculty member Joseph A. "Andy" Fry to serve as his executive assistant.

In that position, Fry's duties will include liaison work for the president's office on academic and faculty issues. Fry, a history professor, has been a member of the UNLV faculty since 1975 and has served in a variety of campus administrative posts, including chair of the history department, chair of the Faculty Senate, and associate dean of the College of Arts and Letters.

On Aug. 1, Charlie W. Cavagnaro became UNLV's new director of intercollegiate athletics. Cavagnaro came to UNLV from the University of Memphis, where he had served as director of athletics since 1982. "Charlie brings vast and highly successful collegiate athletic administrative experience, a profound commitment to academic integrity and the well-being of athletes, demonstrated expertise in marketing and generating new revenues, and an energetic, human approach to the management of people," Harter said.

In another appointment, Fred Albrecht, who had served as director of alumni relations since 1973, was named executive director of alumni and community relations. Albrecht, who has been at UNLV for 25 years, served as interim athletic director before Cavagnaro was appointed.

In addition to continuing his role in alumni relations and his work with the UNLV Alumni Association, Albrecht will be responsible for the university's government relations program, as well as internal and external communications. He will be assisted in the communications effort by Les Ruschik as director of university publications and reprographics and Tom Flagg as director of UNLV news and public information.

900 Attend Inauguration of UNLV President C. Harter

UNLV President Carol C. Harter was inaugurated as the university's seventh president on Oct. 21 in a ceremony that staged on the steps of the Performing Arts Center at the north end of the academic mall.

Attended by more than 900 guests, the ceremony featured introductory remarks by University of Nevada, Reno, President Joseph Crowley, an address by Harter, and music by UNLV music department ensembles.

Among the guests were representatives of universities across the country; state and local government officials; representatives of the University and Community College System of Nevada and the Board of Regents; representatives of the UNLV Alumni Association and the UNLV Foundation; faculty, staff, and students; and local business and community leaders. The public was also invited.

"One of the purposes of a presidential inauguration in the university setting is to reinforce the values of the academic community," said Leonard Goodsell, former UNLV president and chair of the inauguration committee. "It is a symbolic act that brings people together - members of the university community, as well as friends from the community at large - at a time of institutional change."

A colorful event, the inauguration included a procession on the mall of visiting representatives and members of the UNLV faculty dressed in formal academic robes.

Welcoming remarks were offered by representatives of the UNLV Foundation and the UNLV Alumni Association, the CSUN student government, and the Faculty Senate. UCCSN Chancellor Richard Jarvis presided over the ceremony.

The official investiture of Harter was performed by Jill Derby, vice chair of the UCCSN Board of Regents.

Immediately following the ceremony, a reception was held on Pida Plaza in front of the Moyer Student Union, and that evening world-renowned evolutionary biologist Stephen Jay Gould spoke in Artemus W. Ham Concert Hall as a Barrick Distinguished Scholar Lecturer.

More Than 600 Alumni Elect New Board of Directors

More than 600 UNLV alumni voted in September to elect new board members to Alumni Association's board of directors.

Each fall of the 18 board members are elected by dues-paying members of the association.

The new member of the board, Dr. Tony Alamo, graduated from UNLV in 1986. While attending the university, he was a founding member of the student ambassador program and served as the undergraduate representative on the academic standards committee.

Currently, he practices internal medicine at the Alamo Medical Clinic in Las Vegas.

Jim Kirkwood, a 1983 graduate of UNLV, was elected to the office of treasurer. The casino controller at Harrah's Las Vegas, Kirkwood formerly served as member-at-large on the board.

Ray Tintland, a member of the classes of '89 and '91, has been re-elected as the association's secretary. He currently works for Becker Realty in real estate marketing and investment.

Former association second vice president Rafael Villanueva, who graduated from UNLV in 1984 and 1991, was elected as member-at-large.

He serves as sales and promotion director at KLAS-TV 8.

Both Bruce Ford and Russ Petersen were re-elected as members of the board of directors. Ford, a 1986 graduate of UNLV, is vice president and manager of the lending center for Pioneer Citizens Bank. Petersen, class of '76, is the senior vice president and director of sales and marketing for First Security Bank of Nevada.

NEWS
Phone-a-thon to Help UNLV Foundation Raise Funds

Voices from UNLV will ring out through living rooms across the country this spring when student callers will be contacting alumni, past donors, and parents during “The Rebel Ring,” the university’s new telephone fund-raising campaign.

UNLV President Carol C. Harter endorsed the phone-a-thon as a major step forward in the university’s efforts to increase the private donations that supplement the financial assistance provided by the Nevada Legislature. “Together we can make UNLV a quality university,” she said. “The difference between UNLV and others—the difference between a struggling young public university and a thriving university—is you. We depend on you and rely on you to help us achieve academic excellence.”

This year’s phone-a-thon goal is $85,000 in pledges—a major challenge for those in the UNLV Foundation conducting the campaign.

“We set the target high as a challenge to ourselves, the student callers, and our donors,” said Lara Kolberg, director of annual giving for the UNLV Foundation. “Everyone is revved up and ready to kick off this exciting new venture. Nothing will be a bigger boost to morale than hearing hundreds of donors say ‘yes’ this spring.”

Phone-a-thons are the backbone of most university annual giving programs. They are the most effective way to raise private funds and maintain contact with alumni as their careers develop, Kolberg said, adding that increasing alumni participation and the number of alumni financial gift pledges are two important objectives of the campaign.

The UNLV Foundation is the university’s academic fund-raising organization. The non-profit education corporation’s mission is to raise funds for academic programs and manage all private funds donated to UNLV. Annual fund-raising activities are planned to achieve the goals and priorities set by the university faculty and administration. A total of more than $6.5 million was raised by the foundation during the 1994-95 academic year.

Donations received during the phone-a-thon will benefit the university’s annual fund. Unrestricted gifts to the annual fund support student scholarships, faculty development, special projects, facilities, equipment, and fund-raising administration. More than $826,000 was contributed to the annual fund during the 1994-95 academic year.

According to UNLV Foundation Executive Director John Gallagher, the time is right “to increase the pace to meet the rising costs of high quality academic programs.”

“This year our goal for the annual fund is $1 million. We hope that our alumni and friends will take the time to talk to our student callers, catch up on university news, and make a pledge to support UNLV.”

International Gaming Institute Receives Grant, Donation

UNLV’s International Gaming Institute has received a $100,000 grant from ACE Denken Co. of Japan to compile a training manual for the gaming industry, according to Vincent Eade, director of the institute.

ACE Denken Co., a manufacturer of gaming equipment for the pachinko industry, has been a strong supporter of UNLV’s William F. Harrah College of Hotel Administration. A $2 million endowment created by the company and its president, Takahiro Takemoto, in 1992 enabled the college to launch its Ph.D. program in hospitality administration and a research journal.

The $130,000 grant will be used to collect and publish the material from a series of seminars that the UNLV International Gaming Institute has presented to ACE Denken employees over the past two and a half years, Eade said. The material includes lectures, related information, and numerous case studies.

The book will cover such topics as casino marketing, human resources management, computerization and technology in the gaming industry, customer service, security and crisis management, financial issues, regulatory and legal issues, internal control procedures, and trends analysis.

A $25,000 donation from First Interstate Bank of Nevada will enable the institute to move one step closer in its quest for a new building. In recognition of the gift, the new building will feature a First Interstate Bank conference room.

The institute is developing plans to erect a new 22,000-square-foot building on the southeast corner of Flamingo Road and Swenson Street across from the Desert Research Institute. Features will include the IGT Library, First Interstate Bank conference room, a multi-purpose room, and a 5,000-square-foot gaming laboratory.

The UNLV International Gaming Institute was created in July 1991 to provide information and training for the gaming industry. Its mission is to provide educational programs, conduct gaming research, and disseminate gaming knowledge through seminars, classes, and publications.
“My head was so full of my own dreams Never took the time to think about you and me” — from Emerson’s ballad “No Longer Blue”

She now reflects on the irony of the fact that she never sent in the paperwork to collect the cowboy boom she won in the talent contest. Whether it was an indication of her ambivalence toward the country style or just an unwillingness to deal with the paperwork, she isn’t certain. But after Nashville, she knew one thing for sure: Pure country western wasn’t in the cards for her. The experience, she says, enabled her to come to a clearer understanding of what her music is really about and how she wanted to pursue it.

“Well, I found out that I wasn’t strictly country, and I wasn’t going to try to fit into that mold anymore. And I decided to quit my day job,” she says. Since then, Emerson, a UNLV alumna, has been performing her original folk and blues tunes for audiences in local venues ranging from the Summerlin Hills Park to Green Valley coffee houses. She has also done short tours in Arizona, Texas, and California and has opened for the fusion band The Yellowjackets, singer/songwriter Wray Kaytt, and New Age musicians R Carlos Nakai and Will Eaton.

Though she acknowledges that a bit of country still lingers in her sound, she’s not pursuing all of her dreams with broken dreams. “I was by no means ready to call it quits without a fight,” she says, adding that she wishes she had kept up with them. “But I wanted a guitar. When I was 13, my mother’s friend, who was an art historian, was writing a book and asked me to take notes for her during a visit to the Met in New York. As my payment for that, we went to a little guitar store, and she bought me a $30 guitar. I had been wanting one for a very, very long time.”

Emerson’s forays into songwriting at 16 out of loneliness more than anything else, laced with a bit of alternative rock. “I really lean in my heart and soul toward blues and folk,” she says, adding that she was calling herself a female Lyle Lovitt for a time. “He’s got so much gospel in him, and he’s got that country thing going on. He’s so mixed up.”

“‘If you’re not already famous, it’s definitely harder to perform your own music. It’s harder to get an audience for it. But it’s really a thrill when you start to play a song, and the audience recognizes the song that you’re playing and it’s yours.”

Emerson says, acknowledging that she is driven to write, but she says, adding that she recently played to a crowd of more than 700 people. “I love it really feed off the audience. It’s great to be able to unleash that. I had that naturally as a kid, but something happened, and it just totally went into this inner thing. It was hard. It was like I was ashamed of that part of myself. I think it’s healthy, though, if that’s what you are, that’s what you are. You can be a more often, but has found Las Vegas to be a tough town. “I’d love to work every weekend, but it’s really hard. I can’t do it here yet. It’s strange; most towns I visit and play have specific venues for original stuff. I think Las Vegas is just starting to get into it, but the clubs here haven’t tapped into it.”

She says she drives to write, but enjoys performing. “I thought when I first started out that I wouldn’t like the performing part of it, but I really do,” she says, adding that she was at work to a crowd of more than 700 people. “I love it really feed off the audience. It’s great to be able to unleash that. I had that naturally as a kid, but something happened, and it just totally went into this inner thing. It was hard. It was like I was ashamed of that part of myself. I think it’s healthy, though, if that’s what you are, that’s what you are. You can be a more often, but has found Las Vegas to be a tough town. “I’d love to work every weekend, but it’s really hard. I can’t do it here yet. It’s strange; most towns I visit and play have specific venues for original stuff. I think Las Vegas is just starting to get into it, but the clubs here haven’t tapped into it.”

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Seeing the Beauty in the Beast

Through his studies of the cardiovascular development of reptile embryos, UNLV physiologist Carl Reiber gets an eggs-ordinary research opportunity as he plays parent to the world’s first Komodo dragons hatched in captivity.

BY BARBARA CLOUD

I N MYTHIC LOR E, THE DRAGON IS A huge, ferocious, terrifying creature. In real life, the dragon is a huge, ferocious, terrifying creature.

And if you didn’t believe there was a real-life dragon, you haven’t met Varanus komodoensis, the Komodo dragon, a beast that may not actually breathe fire, but that otherwise lives up to its “dragonian” reputation.

“Komodo dragons thoroughly enjoy eating people,” says Carl Reiber, a physiologist in UNLV’s department of biological sciences who studies the world’s largest lizards. “They are predators, bone-and-marrow predators. They tend not to be able to eat full-grown adults, but there are numerous occasions reported when these animals have attacked children.”

Zealously, which are found in nature on the island of Komodo in Indonesia, stalk and ambush their prey — usually goats, sheep, and other small animals, but sometimes humans.

“They don’t usually take them down immediately; it’s not like a lion that slays his prey and gorges on it by the throat, suffocating or destroying blood vessels so that it bleeds to death. Komodo bites their victims, and these animals have foul mouths. They have a bacterial and fungal population in their mouths that is absolutely horrible.” So when a Komodo bites its prey, it infects the animal, rendering it greatly weakened within 24 hours.

“All this time the animal has been running around, and the Komodo is following, tracking him, ready to move in when he drops.”

And if you didn’t believe there was a dragon, you haven’t seen the Komodo dragon, where he began a collaborative study of the dragons with another physiologist, Geoffrey Birchard. The two scientists have been working with the National Zoological Park in Washington, D.C., since 1992 in its effort to produce healthy offspring from the only two Komodos to have been bred in captivity — Friendly, a male, and Sobat, a female, both given to the zoo by Indonesia in 1988.

Since 1934 the National Zoo has exhibited seven Komodo dragons. The captured reptiles never lived more than a few years, even though in the wild they are thought to live as long as 100 years.

Early specimens were the largest animals that collectors could capture. (Komodos have been recorded at just over 10 feet and more than 350 pounds.) However, modern zoo curators realized that the very large, old dragons were stressed by capture, travel, and their new surroundings and that this undeniably hastened their demise. Hence, curators began seeking younger and smaller specimens, such as Friendly and Sobat, who have grown since arriving at the National Zoo, but still measure only about 6-7 feet and weigh 50-115 pounds. They have already lived longer than any previous Komodo in captivity.

Modern zoos also offer animals more natural surroundings than were common 60 years ago, and the National Zoo’s Komodos have warm conditions and deep soil in which they can burrow as they do in the wild. Their diet, too, has been improved. In 1934, one specialist advised feeding the Komodos chicken, beef, lobster, pheasants, and pigs three times a day; Friendly and Sobat get a more realistic, diet: a feast of rats once a week. As the zoo staff continued to improve the dragons’ living — and breeding — conditions, they began to wonder what might happen if their efforts at matchmaking paid off. What if the Komodos did breed and the female laid a clutch of eggs? What could they do to increase the likelihood that the eggs would hatch?

That’s when Reiber and his colleague entered the picture. As experts on the cardiovascular development of reptile eggs, they were called in to help. “The zoo decided it didn’t want to put all of its eggs in one basket,” Reiber says with a straight face. “So when 26 eggs were discovered in the female’s burrow, the zoo titled 10 of them ‘to be hatched and abandoned.’”

The first problem for the physiologists was to determine optimum hatching conditions. Because Komodo dragons are not the kind of creatures that invite scientists to poke around in their burrows, little was known about conditions in their nests. And since the climate in the Komodo’s natural habitat can vary greatly, Reiber and Birchard faced added uncertainty in determining the right incubation temperatures.

“In the wild these animals can be exposed to temperatures of 100 degrees plus, and it doesn’t rain for long periods of time. Then they are inundated with monsoon rains,” Reiber says. “The limited previous observations of
the eggs absorbed too much water on that combination.

"They looked like they were going to burst, just like water balloons," Reiber recalls, "so we had to dehydrate them back down and let them lose weight. However, once the researchers controlled for excessive water absorption, Reiber says, "it didn't seem to matter which of the lower moisture levels was used for incubation." From their study of the 10 eggs from the first clutch and eight more the next year, they found no significant difference in weight or incubation time for the hatchlings when the incubation material was dry as a desert or as damp as a rainforest. That finding was one in a series that would perplex the researchers. "With other reptile eggs, you usually see a month of energy required to go from one point in development to the next."

The success in getting Komodo dragon eggs to hatch has meant the eggs not be allowed to hatch. The scientists are now able to peel back the leathery outer layer of the shell, count the number of blood vessels present in the cam, and compare their findings with what is known about other reptiles. Reiber says the findings so far are surprising. "We expected because of the metabolism of the animal that it would have looked much more like birds, that it would have had a lot more blood vessels than it has. [That was not the case] so there's obviously something else going on here," Reiber says, "so there's obviously something else going on here." Analysts of the data is continuing.

The dragon egg studies have been conducted in a laboratory at George Mason University, and Reiber spends two or three months a year there. Meanwhile, continued on page 24
A Temporary Fix

UNLV sociologist Robert Parker warns of the perils of corporate America's increasing reliance on temporary workers.

By Diane Russell

True or False?

The typical temporary employee in America is a woman who works such jobs by choice. The prevailing notion that the majority of temporary workers — women or men — have opted for these part-time jobs because of scheduling flexibility is a myth, according to UNLV sociology professor Robert E. Parker.

While temporary employment is fine for those who truly choose it, Parker says, those who don’t have it are in the minority. The truth is that the majority of employees in the temporary work force are there because they can’t find permanent work.

Those workers suffer because they often make less money than they would if they had a full-time job, and — perhaps of even more importance — they usually receive none of the benefits associated with full-time employment, such as group health insurance or paid sick leave, Parker says.

And, while company CEOs may be putting themselves on the back for having saved the company money by shifting to a part-time job, Parker believes those supposed gains will prove fleeting. Eventually, problems caused by low morale and absence of loyalty to the company will take their toll, he predicts. Parker, the author of Flesh Pedieters and Warm Bodies: The Temporary Help Industry and Its Workers, has been researching the temporary work industry since 1983 when, as a doctoral student at the University of Texas, he came across a government report citing the temporary work industry as one of the fastest growing industries in the nation.

Sensing great research potential in the subject, Parker began delving into it, only to discover that little study had been done on it.

Parker's creative approach to researching the temporary help industry was to hire out as a "temp" worker for five months to see for himself exactly what the working conditions were like.

That experience, coupled with one-on-one interviews of temporary employees and employers, provided Parker with the basis for his dissertation.

It also sparked his ongoing interest in the temporary work industry, which has added to both the publication of his book and an invitation to make a formal presentation about the contingent work force to the U.S. Senate Labor Subcommittee. He presented that statement in 1994 at the request of the subcommittee's chairman, Sen. Howard Metzenbaum, D-Ohio.

Today, Parker, an associate professor in UNLV's sociology department, continues his research in this field and sometimes uses it as the source of lectures for courses he teaches on the sociology of work.

And when that happens, Parker tells his students about his stint as a "temp" worker in Texas, where he signed up with five agencies. He was sure he requested both clerical and industrial jobs, which he says make up the two dominant segments of the temporary work force.

The clerical jobs were unremarkable for the most part. He usually worked as a data entry operator; other times he stuffed envelopes.

The industrial jobs were repetitive, too; they typically involved warehouse work. But one job he took that summer in Austin stands out in his mind.

It was more than 100 degrees and humid in the warehouse. The work he and the other "temps" were doing involved moving heavy appliances such as washing machines. Sometimes they used forklifts. Other times the workers were up on two or three levels of scaffolding, moving items around.

"We were doing things that many companies wouldn’t even allow you to do because they would be too afraid that you would slip and fall, and they would have a major lawsuit on their hands."

Parker could see why those companies might worry, "I was afraid for my neck," he recalls. "Doing sociology is great, and doing research is great, but I really don’t want to break anything in the process."

One thing the two types of temporary work had in common for Parker were that they both gave him an eerie reminder of the "real" temporary employees he needed to interview.

Parker revealed to some of the agencies that he was a researcher collecting information for an article. In other instances, no one from the agency was told. But he told all of the temporary workers he interviewed about the nature of his research.

Surprisingly, the temporary agencies that were told of Parker's research intentions had no objections.

"They [the agency managers] thought they were showing me really uplifting organizations that benefitted the workers and the employers mutually and that there was no big advantage to either side," he says. In order to help preserve that picture, he adds, "They would make sure that the only people I ever saw were happy temporary workers."

But happy temporary workers, in Parker’s view, are in the minority. Again and again, when he asked temporary workers what they most
wanted from their temporary jobs, the answer was “a permanent job.”

In contrast to the popular public perception — which Parker says is supported by the temporary employment agencies — he did not find people who wanted sporadic, part-time work so that they could spend time with their families or pursue leisure activities. What he found were people who wanted permanent, full-time jobs with benefits, but who couldn’t find those positions.

The only people he interviewed who said they wanted only temporary employment were teachers who were working as “temps” during their summer vacations. All others, Parker said, reported that they wanted full-time work. Some had hoped to find it via the temporary work assignments, but that wasn’t happening.

The reason it wasn’t happening is understandable, Parker says, when you become aware of the fact that most temporary help agencies charge an employer a substantial fee — $1,500 is typical — if that employer hires one of its “temps” as a permanent employee.

The reason for the fee is sound, Parker says. Without it, temporary help agencies would find themselves acting as free employment agencies, which they are not.

But that distinction is not always clear to the temporary workers, Parker says. “People go there and think the temporary work agency is there to help them find a job,” Parker says. “But they’re not there to help them find a job. They’re there to help employers find workers on a temporary basis. That’s where some of the resentment about the companies being ‘flesh peddlers’ comes from.”

Parker points out that the notion that temporary work agencies help workers find permanent jobs is only one of many myths surrounding the temporary work industry. Another is that women deliberately choose temporary work over full-time employment.

“This has been a big myth about temporary work for a long time — that women choose temporary work, that it’s voluntary, that it allows them to be mothers and homemakers and workers all at the same time. [The myth is] that for them, it’s definitely a win-win kind of situation,” Parker says. That notion also has a patronizing aspect to it, according to Parker. He found literature from the 1970s that talked about “how women were afraid, had expediations about entering the labor market and that temporary work would give them this sort of easing into the labor market — a way of segueing into the labor market where they wouldn’t otherwise have a path to get there.” In one article, temporary work was described as a “halfway house” for women afraid to get a full-time job, he says.

A third myth is that the temporary work industry provides a solution to core unemployment, Parker says. While temporary work may be better than no work, the truth is that many temporary workers cannot begin to get anything approaching a 40-hour work week and, therefore, cannot support themselves, he says. The fact that they often work less than full-time employees and that they typically receive no benefits only makes the situation worse.

Additionally, Parker notes, the hardcore unemployed are often people who lack basic work or social skills. Those people are no more likely to be hired by a temporary agency than by an employer, he says.

When people go into a temporary agency to sign up, what they often don’t realize is that the agency personnel are sizing them up, just as prospective employers would, Parker says. “They’re smelling you, looking at you, and wondering if you would interact well with an employer, if you are the type to give somebody a hard time, or if you are a troublemaker.”

The failure to pass that inspection are unlikely to be sent out on many jobs, even if they pass the skills tests, according to Parker.

Another misconception is that providing people with temporary work helps reduce social welfare expenditures, he says. That myth exists because most Americans don’t know the basic facts about temporary employment and don’t realize that many temporary workers are not able to earn enough money to stay off of all types of welfare programs, he says.

Yet another myth might be one the companies themselves are buying into, Parker says. That is the myth that companies benefit by reducing their permanent work force — either through layoffs or attrition — and switching to less costly temporary workers.

Though that practice may save money in the short term, Parker believes it has some negative long-term consequences for the companies.

Temporary workers tend not to feel the same loyalty toward the company that permanent workers do, Parker says, noting that this is particularly true for temporary workers who are resentful about being able to find only part-time work.

This lack of loyalty can translate into poor morale, which can lead to increased absenteeism, more job turnover, and say America has been kind of slow to catch up and stay on top of things,” he says.

As American companies found themselves lagging behind international competitors, they often responded by laying off employees. In many cases, once those workers were laid off, Parker explains, companies were hesitant later to rehire permanent workers, even when the economy improved, for fear there would be another downturn, prompting another round of layoffs. So, when economies improved and they needed additional employees, they shifted to temporary workers.

“Now we’re not laying off as many workers, but we’re changing the way we hire them and retain them,” Parker says.

But international competition was not the only problem. In the 1980s things were also dicey on the domestic front. “It was the decade of the acquisition, of the hostile takeover, of the mergers,” he says. When two companies with eight vice presidents each merge, the new mega-company finds itself with 16 vice presidents. What does it do? It reorganizes and starts laying off, Parker explains. These developments affecting the job market have led to a profound change in the social compact between American employers and employees, he says.

For years American workers believed that if they worked hard for their employers and were productive, they would be assured their jobs until they retired and would receive regular pay increases along the way, he says.

Many people still believe that is the case, especially as they watch their parents retiring after 30 or 40 years with the same employer.

Parker’s approach to researching the temporary employment industry was to hire out as a “temp” worker for five months to see for himself what the conditions were like.
Unconventional Therapies for An Unrelenting Disease

A UNLV study of alternative therapies used by HIV-infected patients offers health care practitioners insights on how and why these diverse approaches are being used to fight AIDS.

BY LAURIE FRUTH

Some meditate, some wear crystal pendants, and some pray. Some even crunch macrobiotic beans and grains while watching their favorite Lettermen reruns.

At first glance, the people described above might seem to have little in common based on the diversity of their behavior. But in reality, they share two critical qualities that have led them to choose different paths they hope will lead to the same destination: They are all infected with the HIV virus, and they are all using unconventional therapies to fight their deadly disease.

It is their use of these therapies that has brought them to the attention of UNLV nursing professor Carolyn Sabo, who — along with two of her colleagues — conducted a study last year examining what is known in the health care field as alternative therapy.

According to Sabo, alternative therapy is a catch-all phrase that encompasses a number of diverse, nontraditional approaches to health care that can take such familiar forms as prayer, yoga, and meditation. But the term also refers to such esoteric practices as chakra balancing and aromatherapy.

For some patients, alternative therapy means watching funny movies to maintain one's sense of humor. Still others engage in more structured activities such as reiki and massage to improve circulation and relieve stress.

Sabo's interest in the subject was kindled by the growing body of research on alternative therapy used by chronically ill patients. She was particularly intrigued by one major study that reported improved survival rates among women with breast cancer who participated in support groups.

She quickly discovered that alternative therapy as it's used by HIV-infected patients had not been studied extensively and, thus, decided to take a closer look. Specifically, she was interested in how and why HIV-infected patients use these unconventional therapies.

Building on prior research linking alternative therapy use to such chronic illnesses as diabetes and cancer, Sabo developed a seven-page survey asking patients to indicate which of 34 different alternative therapies they used and with what frequency.

Questionnaires were distributed at three sites: the local office of Aid for AIDS of Nevada (AFAN), the HIV Wellness Clinic associated with the University Medical Center, and the office of a local physician who treats a number of HIV-infected patients.

"All of the 127 people who completed the survey are HIV-positive," Sabo says. "Some of the respondents have AIDS, some are battling opportunistic infections, and some are relatively healthy."

The majority of her respondents indicated that they use alternative therapies to improve the quality of their lives. Some indicated that they use the therapies to improve their spiritual lives, while others said alternative therapies are part of their "positive approach" to life.

Sabo explains that some patients with chronic illnesses search for ways to eliminate negative or stressful elements in life, and alternative therapies often help them achieve that objective.

"Although it is very difficult to point to an alternative therapy and say that that therapy increased a person's life for six months to a year, there is a perceived benefit to the use of such therapies," says Sabo, who currently serves as interim dean of the College of Health Sciences.

"Particularly when you're looking at the HIV disease process, which..."
Grant Committee on AIDS will listen.

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"What these kids don't know is

surprising," Manning says. "For

example, one student didn't know

that the virus could be transmitted

by oral sex or that not all condoms

are equally effective.

Another is the increasing

awareness about AIDS is through

special events, such as those held

on campus Dec. 1, World AIDS

Day. This year the Campus

Committee on AIDS scheduled 72

hours of events, including a 15-

minute dunking of the campus

from the Moyer Student Union to

Great Hall, a human red ribbon

formation, free HIV testing at the

Student Health Center, a candle

nominational memorial service,

and a feature film festival.

"The committee feels that it's

important to offer both community

outreach events and education in-

house to our population," Manning

says. "We have the adult popula-

tion and the educational resources.

It's time that the university took

the lead in this fight."

Another reason might be that

physicians are becoming more receptive

to the use of alternative therapies when

they are combined with more traditional

therapies, she adds.

"One of the things that we're

learning from individuals in this

study is that some physicians tend to be

open to a number of ideas and are not focused on just

one type of therapy about which

they'll talk or give information," Sabo

says.

The value of this type of study, according to Sabo, is

that it seeks to provide health

care practitioners with more information about what their

patients are doing on their own;

they can then perhaps offer additional guidance.

For example, if a physician

knows that a patient is taking mega doses of

vitamins, he or she can advise that

patient about the proper dosage. The

physician might also have a list of

reflexologists or support groups to

recommend to a patient, Sabo says.

"I would be interested in future

analyses with bigger numbers in the sample to learn how much of this

information patients gathered on their

own, how much they gathered from

friends or family, and how much they gathered from people they met

at the clinic or at AFAN.

"This will give us some idea about

how people are coming to decisions about using alternative therapies.

Something made in the participants in this study change their minds about the value

of using alternative therapies. "Sabo says, adding that she would like to know what

that "something" was.

She is also interested in the case of

such therapy. Additional results from the

survey revealed that some HIV-infected patients spend little out of pocket, while

others spend as much as $450 per month on alternative therapies.

Further analysis of the data will

3

continued from previous page

populations. The university needs
to tailor its programs for specific

populations.

Manning agrees, add ing

that the committee is working to

reach out to students in specific

environments.

"We are particularly interested in

working with graduate students,

African-American students, Hispanic

students, and students in residential

life. A mandatory, campuswide

AIDS awareness class would help,

but we need students to tell us

how to develop programs and

materials that will be meaningful
to different subcultures.

One way the committee reaches

students is through its speakers'
bureau. Individual committee

members speak to fraternities and

sororities, student organizations,

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"What these kids don't know is

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can extend for a number of years, if a

patient believes he or she feels better or has more energy as a result of using

the alternative therapy, then that is clearly a benefit."

Results of the survey revealed that prayer, meditation, laughter and humor, and self-indulgent relaxation techniques were the most frequently used alternative therapies.

"These are things that people can do on their own, privately and with minimal expense," Sabo says.

"It's not surprising that patients would choose therapies that they can do when they want and as often as they want."

What was surprising, however, was the extent of alternative therapy use by HIV-

infected patients, she adds.

"What we found most impressive was that only 20 percent of the people who completed the survey used alternative therapies before they were infected, but 100 percent used alternative therapies post infection," she says, noting that previous studies found that only about one-third of those with chronic illnesses use alternative therapies.

Although Sabo says the limited number of respondents in her sample prevents her from drawing firm conclusions about the larger population of HIV-

infected patients, she says her study seems to suggest that they are more likely than other chronic disease sufferers to use alternative therapies. She is interested in gathering more data on the subject so that she can find out why.

She speculates that one reason for these patients' propensity for such therapies might be the strong communica-

tion network within the HIV-infected community.

"There is a tremendous sharing of information within the HIV-infected community both through formal informational channels, such as newsletter,

and through informal sharing between patients in clinics and self-help

groups."
20 Women's Tennis: UNLV vs. Kansas State. 1pm. Fortierra Tennis Complex. 895-3207.
21 Women's Tennis: UNLV vs. Purdue. 1pm. Fortierra Tennis Complex. 895-3207.
22 Women's Tennis: UNLV vs. Idaho State. 1pm. Fortierra Tennis Complex. 895-3207.
25 March 12, 1:30pm. University Theatre: Mediterranean Plays. 8pm. Judy Bayley Theatre. 895-3801.
26 April 1996
28 Music Department: Philharmonic. 8pm. Black Box Theatre. 895-3801.
31 April 1996
31 Concert: University Musical Society. 8pm. Black Box Theatre. 895-3801.
31 April 1996
31 April 1996
31 April 1996
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31 April 1996
31 April 1996
BETTY E. LUTTRELL, '64 Education, was a member of the first graduating class at UNLV. She retired from the Clark County School District in 1982. She taught at Vegas Verde Elementary School for 24 years.

Kathleen Leonard Magne, '69

Kathleen Leonard Magne, '69 BS Education, '76 Master of Education, was one of the first recipients of the Nevada Family Foundation National Educator Awards. She received $25,000 as part of the award. Magne taught at Cresenta Valley Elementary School, where she works with academically at-risk students as part of the federally funded Title I program. Employed by the Clark County School District since 1969, she taught at Mitchell Elementary School in Boulder City for 25 years. She is also a part-time instructor at UNLV.

JIM FAMNH, '74

JIM FAMNH, '74

ALMA GARCIA VINING, '76

CLIFFORD J. KLIMCHUK, '78 MTS Consulting, is a director of corporate human resources for SuperPawn, a chain of pawn shops that is preparing to expand nationally.

KEVIN J. BROSUK, '80 BS Hotel Administration, has been employed by Hertz Hotels since graduating from UNLV. He currently serves as director of human resources for the Four Points by Sheraton, an advanced financial planning group. He lives in Gervaisport.

CHARLES G. LEBELLO, '84 BS Psychology, received a law degree from Pepperdine University Law School in 1986 and a master's degree in law from George Mason University in 1992. He is now in private practice in Las Vegas with his brother, Mark A. Lebello, '87 BS Business Administration.

STEVEN SEGAL, '84 BS Hotel Administration, owns an advertising agency in Englewood, Colo., that specializes in business-to-business marketing. His work has been featured in USA Today and in its magazine. He lives in Laramie.

THOMAS J. SMITH, '85 BA History, received a master's degree in Library Science from Indiana University. He works as a reference librarian at the Las Vegas-Clark County Library District. He is also editor and compiler of the recently published Nomad's Founding Documents, which lists funding sources for non-profit organizations.

ROBERT J. RINGLE, '90 BS Business Administration, is a co-owner, publisher, and business manager of Scope magazine, a guide to the Las Vegas music and cultural scene.

We'd Like To Hear From You!

We would like to invite all UNLV alumni to submit information about themselves to UNLV Magazine for inclusion in the Class Notes section. Please fill out the form below completely, type or print clearly, and avoid abbreviations. Also, please supply home and office telephone numbers so we can reach you if there is a question about your entry. We encourage you to submit a black and white photograph of yourself to accompany your Class Notes entry.

Name:__________________________

Year Graduated:________________

Type of Degree(s):______________

Address:________________________

City:________ State:____ Zip:_____

Phone Numbers: Home ______ Office ______

Career or Personal Information:________________________________________

Entries should be mailed to: UNLV Class Notes, University News and Publications, 4056 Maryland Parkway, Box 451012, Las Vegas, NV 89154-1012
Beast

continued from page 11

if he wants to observe a Komodo closer
to home, he must travel to the San
Diego Zoo.

But Reiber doesn’t keep all of his
eggs in one basket either. His studies of
the Komodo dragon have led quite
naturally into his research on another
reptile, one indigenous to the Las Vegas
area: the endangered desert tortoise.

“The reason for working on these
really stems from the Komodo dragon
work in that they are such different
eggs,” he says, comparing the leathery
shells of the Komodo eggs to the more
brittle eggshells of the tortoise, which are
similar to chicken eggs. And, while the
dragon eggs apparently can tolerate
considerable extremes in conditions, they
would have a hard time in Southern
Nevada’s exceptionally arid climate in
which the tortoise eggs thrive.

“If you took a Komodo dragon egg
and put it in a Las Vegas environment,
it would not hatch,” Reiber says. “It
would dry up and blow away. If you put
a snapping turtle egg [the subject of one
of Reiber’s earlier studies] in the Las
Vegas environment, it wouldn’t hatch.
Yet these desert tortoises — their eggs sit
in the air, and they don’t lose water.
This capability to conserve water is
unique.”

As with the dragons, Reiber is trying
to discover how the tortoise egg’s
cardiovascular system handles incubation
conditions. “We are looking for optimal
hatching conditions, but also how the
cardiovascular system deals with such a
dry environment. Is the egg dehydrated
proportionately to other reptiles’ eggs,
and if so, does it have an effect?”

Yet another subject of Reiber’s
research is the crayfish, specimens of
which he collects in the Flamingo Wash,
not far from the UNLV campus. Reiber
focuses on newly hatched crayfish, so tiny

Temporary Fix

continued from page 15

insurance now that employers have
pulled back and have created another
kind of arrangement for employing
their staffs?

“Does it mean that we’re just going
to have laissez-faire capitalism 1890s-
style? Or does it mean that the govern-
ment is going to have to stand up and
take a role and say, ‘Look, employers,
we’re going to require you to prorate
benefits,’ or ‘You’re just going to have to
offer these people the same benefits you
offer everybody else.’”

Or does the government step in and
provide universal health care coverage as
President Clinton has proposed?

In short, Parker says, “We’ve got a
really big problem on our hands.”

But he doesn’t believe that either
American employers or workers are at
the point of recognizing the severity of
the situation. Therefore, a turn away
from hiring temporary employees is
unlikely, particularly within the next five
years, according to Parker.

In the meantime, he says, corporate
America would be well-advised to
consider his admonitions. “Maybe some
farsighted chief executive officers will say,
‘Look this is hurting us more than it’s
helping us.’ Maybe then we’ll see some
changes.”

Therapies

continued from page 18

enable Sabo to determine how much
money was actually spent over the course
of a year, how much was covered by
insurance, and how much patients were
willing to spend on specific alternative
therapies.

In the meantime, Sabo and her
coauthors of the study — Vicky Carwein,
the former dean of the College of
Health Sciences, and health care admini-
stration professor Mary Patterson — were
invited to present the results of their
investigation last fall at the Eighth
Annual Conference of the Association of
Nurses with AIDS in Boston.

Sabo is pleased that her research

and transparent they are barely visible in
the tanks that line his lab in the Juanita
Greer White Lifesciences building.

Although the techniques for studying
the crayfish hatchlings differ from those
used to analyze reptile eggs, Reiber’s
objective is still to measure cardiovascular
pressures and flow rates in an effort to
discover how the system works. When
does the heart start to beat? What effect
does the oxygen supply have on the
developing system? What role does the
cardiovascular system play in regulating
development?

Reiber would be the first to acknowl-
dege that while he might find a greater
number of subjects nearby for his work
on the crayfish and the tortoise, they
can’t compete with the Komodo dragon
when it comes to generating interest in
his research. The dragon would win
hands down every time in a contest
gauging public appeal, he notes.

That is, of course, unless the contest
were held on the island of Komodo.

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For more information about UNLV, call the Admissions Office at 895-3443.
Faculty, regents, alumni, several former UNLV presidents, and other dignitaries joined in the processional for the inauguration of UNLV President Carol C. Harter, held Oct. 21 at the north end of the campus academic mall. See inauguration story, page 3.