

Fall 2000

## UNLV Magazine

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Fall ♦ 2000

# UNLV Magazine

FOR ALUMNI, FACULTY, AND FRIENDS OF THE UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, LAS VEGAS

## Exotic Travels, Serious Research

Also: Food for  
Thought

Plus: Taming  
the Dust in  
the Wind

UNLV political science  
professor Steve Parker





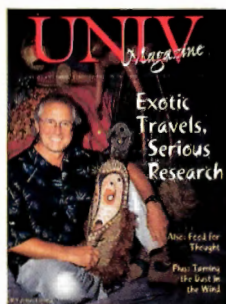
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*on the cover:*

*UNLV political science professor Steve Parker.*

*Photo by David Phillips.*

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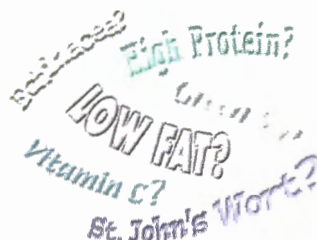
*Mike Upchurch may have started out as a student of comedy, but it didn't take him long to turn pro. The UNLV alumnus now has an Emmy Award to show for his years of dedication to the art of comedy writing.*

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## Women's Athletic Programs Receive \$3 Million in Gifts

UNLV women's athletic programs have received more than \$3 million in gifts from four generous Las Vegas donors.

The donors are the Donrey Media Group; James Rogers, president of Sunbelt Communications; Jerry and Sue Lykins; and the Las Vegas Founders Club. The private financial support will provide nearly \$1.9 million of a total construction cost of \$2.1 million for a new women's softball stadium and a \$1 million endowment to establish a new women's golf program, as well as operating support for that program.

"This tremendous support for softball and the new women's golf team is vitally important and will help us

move UNLV even closer to true equity between men's and women's athletics programs," said UNLV President Carol C. Harter.

The Donrey Media Group, a subsidiary of the Stephens Group Inc. of Little Rock, Ark., has made the largest gifts for the two programs. Those donations include \$1.25 million for the softball stadium and a \$1 million charter gift to establish a women's golf endowment.

James E. Rogers and the Rogers family have also provided \$500,000 in support of the construction of the softball stadium. The Rogers family has been extremely generous to UNLV and particularly the William S. Boyd School of Law; the Rogers' gifts

and pledges of future support to UNLV academic and athletic programs now exceed \$29 million.



Jerry and Sue Lykins are longtime donors to UNLV academic scholarships and athletic programs. The Las Vegas Founders Club has provided additional funding to the women's golf program.

The new softball stadium will be located on the northeast corner of Harmon Avenue and Swenson Street on the west side of the UNLV campus. The facility is expected to be completed in time for the 2001 women's softball season. The facility will be built by the UNLV Foundation, to whom these gifts are being made.



## Alumni Association's Campus Improvements Under Way

The efforts of the UNLV Alumni Association to beautify and improve the university are visible in several projects currently under way across campus.

A new Alumni Court has been developed on the east-west academic mall near the Thomas T. Beam Engineering Complex. Six picnic tables, a kiosk, and a bulletin board mark the location.

The association also recently purchased 100 clocks to replace those not working in classrooms across campus. The clocks will

be computerized and linked to a central university system so that they all will be synchronized.

"This gift to the university is for UNLV students and is a perfect example of how the association is looking not only at major projects, but also at little things it can do to make the university a better place," said Jim Kirkwood, a member of the alumni association board and chairperson of its marketing committee.

Additionally, the association has pur-

chased five new kiosks that will be placed at various locations on the 335-acre campus.

The association is also working with university staff to further enhance the appearance of Alumni Walk, which is located near the softball fields and serves as a primary entrance to campus from the parking lots at the Thomas & Mack Center.

The association can be reached at 895-3621 or via the Internet at [www.zunlv.com](http://www.zunlv.com) or [www.unlv.edu](http://www.unlv.edu).

## Music Professor Virko Baley Named Distinguished Professor

UNLV has awarded the title of distinguished professor to longtime music faculty member Virko Baley.

An internationally known conductor and composer, Baley has been a member of the UNLV faculty since 1970. Among his many accomplishments has been the founding of the Nevada Symphony Orchestra.

He was named distinguished professor based on the recommendation of a university commit-

tee. The designation of distinguished professor is not made every year; the honor is granted only after very serious consideration of a highly select group of faculty. Nominees must have demonstrated extraordinary qualities both as teachers and scholars and must have achieved national and international recognition in their fields of study.

A native of the Ukraine, Baley founded the Nevada Symphony Orchestra in 1980 and served as its music

director until 1995. He also served as the music director and conductor of the Las Vegas Chamber Players and Sound Trek Series from 1974 until 1995. Today, in addition to teaching at UNLV, he is the principal guest conductor of the Kiev Camerata in the Ukraine.

Baley's compositions have included orchestral, instrumental, and vocal works. Additionally, he has composed one opera, titled *Hunger*.

He has received numerous grants, commissions, and awards over the years.



Virko Baley

## University Receives Reaffirmation of NASC Accreditation

UNLV has received notification that the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges has reaffirmed accreditation of the entire university, UNLV President Carol C. Harter announced recently.

"This is exciting news for UNLV," Harter said. "It confirms our belief that UNLV is making substantive progress in reaching its goal of becoming a premier urban university. We are delighted about this development and would like to acknowledge all of the hard work the campus has done to make it happen."

Harter said the Northwest Association of Schools and Colleges' Commission on Colleges recognized – and was impressed by – UNLV's ability to meet the challenges presented by the university's tremendous growth and its attendant pressures.

She said the commission commended the university for pursuing its goal of "becoming more student-focused, as exemplified in strong interactions with faculty and staff."

"They also praised us for initiating a planning process that emphasizes participation by all campus groups and for being increasingly responsive to the needs of our local and regional communities, and thus contributing to the economic, social, educational, and cultural vitality of the community and the region," Harter said.

She added the commission also noted the university's impressive record of recruiting and retaining an increasingly diverse and highly qualified number of new faculty members who "join a dedicated and engaged faculty and staff, whose adeptness in dealing with the effects of rapid change and inadequate infrastructure is impressive."

Among the recommendations of the commission are that the university should work closely with the Board of Regents of the University and Community College System of Nevada, the governor, and the Legislature in the review of the funding formulas for revisions that take

into account new conditions, responsibilities, and aspirations; that the university should continue in its efforts to institutionalize and coordinate planning processes that involve all segments of the campus; and that the university should continue its efforts to evaluate the effectiveness of the institution and its programs.

Every 10 years UNLV, like other universities and colleges, is reviewed for accreditation in what is called a "full-scale visit." In this year's visit, which occurred in late April, a 15-member team of professors and administrators from other institutions across the United States examined all aspects of the university to assess its quality and effectiveness.

## William S. Boyd School of Law Receives Provisional Accreditation

UNLV's William S. Boyd School of Law has been granted provisional accreditation by the American Bar Association, UNLV President Carol C. Harter has announced.

Provisional accreditation means that graduates of the school are now permitted to sit for state bar examinations across the country.

"This is exciting news for the Law School and the university," Harter said. "In less than two years after opening its doors to the entering class of 1998, the Boyd Law School has achieved provisional accreditation, which means that it substantially complies with the standards of the ABA for the approval of law schools. This is yet another form of recognition for the Boyd School of Law and one that speaks to its credibility and high standards of quality, as well as the dedication of its faculty and administration."

Having achieved provisional accreditation, the Boyd Law School will seek full accreditation at the earliest possible time – two years from now, according to Richard Morgan, dean of the school.

"The Boyd School of Law, which is the only law school in Nevada, already enjoys a great deal of support from the state, from the university and university

system, from the legal profession, and from the community," Morgan said.

"Dr. Harter has been unwavering in her support of the Law School from the time she arrived here. Her

contributions to the Law School's success – her vision, her commitment, and her planning – have had a tremendous impact on our ability to get to this point. This

provisional accreditation will now enable us to continue moving forward with our plans to make the Boyd School of Law a great law school and a very important resource for UNLV and Nevada."

The Law School submitted its application for provisional accreditation in the summer of 1999, which was the earliest possible time for it to do so under the ABA rules; the school was visited by a site inspection team from the ABA in November of that year.

The report of that team formed the basis of a positive recommendation from the ABA Accreditation Committee in April 2000, and that recommendation led to a favorable decision on provisional accreditation in June by the ABA's Council of the Section of Legal Education.

The ABA's House of Delegates then concurred with the decision of the council, resulting in the granting of the provisional accreditation.





## Bowers Receives Association's Outstanding Faculty Award

UNLV political science professor Michael Bowers has been selected as this year's recipient of the UNLV Alumni Association's Outstanding Faculty Award.

"During the 16 years that Michael has been here at UNLV, he has always been very student-focused," said Fred Albrecht, vice president for university and community relations. "He has been exceptionally dedicated to helping and advising students. I'm extremely pleased to have him receive our award."



Michael Bowers

In addition to authoring numerous scholarly articles, Bowers has written two books on Nevada issues, *The Nevada Constitution: A Reference Guide* and *The Sagebrush State: Nevada's History, Government, and Politics*.

Bowers, who served 11 years as the associate dean of UNLV's College of Liberal Arts, has received many honors during his time at the university. Among those have been the William Morris Award for Teaching Excellence in the College of Liberal Arts, two research fellowships from the Nevada Humanities

Committee, and the Liberty Bell Award, presented for outstanding contributions to the law by the Clark County Bar Association.

Bowers said he is delighted to have received the award.

"It would be an understatement to say that I was stunned by this very great honor being bestowed upon me," he said. "We have many wonderful faculty at the university. To be recognized within such an outstanding and distinguished group is truly a pleasure and provides me with a great sense of accomplishment."

## Added Benefits Available to Alumni Association Members

Additional benefits are now available to members of the university's Alumni Association.

"We recently have added several new corporate partners to our already extensive list of companies that provide special benefits to UNLV Alumni Association members," said Kevin Page, president of the association.

Corporate partners are companies that affiliate themselves with the Alumni Association and pledge to offer something special, such as discounts, to association members.

"The ever-growing list of corporate

sponsors is a tribute to both the support that UNLV has in the community and to the value of a membership in the Alumni Association," said Chip Johnson, the membership committee chairperson for the association. "We not only give everything back to UNLV students that we can, but we also give our members a good value for their \$30 annual dues payments."

New corporate partners include wine.com, North American Van Lines, All-American Sport Park, Callaway Golf Center, St. Andrews Golf Shop, Las Vegas Embassy Suites, the Fairfield Inn,

and the Wellesley Inn & Suites.

Association membership packets contain additional information on these and other membership benefits.

"Our alums shouldn't forget about our other benefits, such as the Children of Alumni Scholarships and the reduced out-of-state tuition for children of alumni whose biological parents are either lifetime members of the association or have paid their dues annually for at least three years," Page said.

Companies wishing to become corporate partners should call the association at 895-3621.

## New State-of-the-Art Lied Library To Open January 2001

Some things are worth waiting for, and the new five-story, \$55 million Lied Library is one of them.

Several construction delays have resulted in the postponement of the move into the state-of-the-art facility. It is now set to occur in December and early January to accommodate the lengthy, two-part process of "commissioning" the building into service.

The commissioning of the building – which will involve both physically moving the library collections (some

40,000 boxes of materials), as well as preparing and installing its remarkable electronic infrastructure of computers and other equipment – is expected to require some 370,000 staff hours.

"A physical move at any time other than the summer or winter breaks would seriously undermine the educational experience of UNLV's students and faculty," said Ken Marks, dean of libraries at UNLV. "It would mean that the library would not be available for use for a substantial

amount of time."

Marks added that it is the goal of the university to open the facility only when it is 100 percent ready for use by students, faculty, and the community.

"We feel we owe it to the campus and community to open the Lied Library in a time frame that allows us to provide all of our constituents with the sophisticated, high-quality educational facility that the library was designed to be," he said.

## University People



*This is a new column designed to note a variety of developments in the university community, including promotions, awards, resignations, deaths, and other events pertaining to UNLV faculty, administrators, and staff.*

– UNLV has hired **Anthony Flores**, the former associate vice chancellor for business and finance at the University of California, Davis, as the new vice president for finance. Flores had held the associate vice chancellor position at UC-Davis since 1996. Prior to that he was Davis' assistant vice chancellor for finance and director of fiscal operations at California Polytechnic State University at San Luis Obispo.

– UNLV Provost **Douglas Ferraro** has resigned his position to join the faculty in the psychology department. **Ray Alden**, dean of the College of Sciences, has been named interim provost while a national search is conducted.

– UNLV has hired the former director of public safety at the City University of New York to lead its department of public safety. **Jose Elique** had been director of public safety at the 200,000-student CUNY



Jose Elique

since 1991. CUNY's public safety officers number some 800. From 1970 to 1991 he held increasingly responsible positions with the Port Authority Police of New York and New Jersey.

– Vice President for Student Services **Robert Ackerman** has announced that he is stepping down from his post to take a position as clinical associate professor of educational leadership in UNLV's College of Education. Ackerman came to UNLV in 1986 from Saint Leo College in Florida, where he was vice president for student affairs for 11 years.

– **Rebecca Mills**, the former senior advisor to the president at UNLV, has been appointed interim vice president for student life. Mills has been a member of the College of Education faculty since 1987. She was named special assistant to the president in 1995 and senior advisor to the president in 1998.

– UNLV communication studies professor **Richard Jensen** has been named senior advisor to university President Carol C. Harter. Jensen, who joined the UNLV faculty in 1992, previously taught at

the University of New Mexico. He also has taught at Indiana University, California's Humboldt State University, and the University of Oregon.

– **Carl Cook**, assistant director of Alumni Relations, has accepted the position of executive director of Alumni Affairs at California State Polytechnic University, Pomona.

– **Ronald L. Sack**, the former director of the School of Civil Engineering and Environmental Science at the University of Oklahoma, has been named dean of the Howard R. Hughes College of Engineering.

– Longtime Antarctic researcher **Margaret (Peg) Rees** has been named UNLV's new associate provost for academic budget. Rees, a professor in the geoscience department, joined the UNLV faculty in 1985.

– Four UNLV professors were recently honored for their outstanding

efforts in the field of scholarship. **Christopher Kearney**, associate professor of psychology, and **Carol Kimball**, professor of music, each received the Barrick Distinguished Scholar Award, which carries with it \$5,000. Assistant professor



Rebecca Mills



Carol Kimball

of mathematical sciences **Zhonghai Ding** and associate professor of philosophy **Paul Schollmeier** were presented with Barrick Scholar Awards and \$2,500 each.

– UNLV English professor **John Bowers** has been awarded a prestigious fellowship by the Guggenheim Foundation. Bowers, who is an expert on Medieval literature, will use the fellowship to work on his next book while on sabbatical from UNLV during the 2000-01 academic year. The book will explore the early potential development of English literature.

– **Deaths:** **Thomas Cassese**, 65, who retired in 1994, died Feb. 26. He began his UNLV career in 1969 in the College of Education and later served as vice president of University College. He also served as a counselor in both the College of Education and the Career Planning and Placement Office. **Luther Strange**, 74, retired associate professor of building science, died Feb. 5. Strange, who taught at UNLV from 1990 until 1997, died in Still Waters, Ala. **P. Diane Turnbough**, 56, retired assistant professor of psychology, died Dec. 14, 1999. She taught at the university from 1974 until her retirement in 1999. She had moved to Spokane, Wash.





# True Grit

*UNLV engineering professor David James and his research team have used their expertise to help corral the “fugitive dust” causing pollution in the Las Vegas valley. Their study on the effectiveness of dust suppressants shows one of the ways engineering research can solve real-life problems.*

BY BARBARA CLOUD

IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE YOU GRIT YOUR TEETH – literally.

If you've lived in the Las Vegas valley more than six months, you've learned to dread those days when the wind picks up and a veil of dust obscures the surrounding mountains.

Some say the dust is the price of living in the desert, where the soil is almost always dry and thus easily airborne.

Not necessarily so, say others, including the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and the Clark County Health District, who insist that we don't have to pave the desert to reduce dust and improve visibility on a windy day.

Some 85 percent of the air pollution in Southern Nevada is attributed to what is called “fugitive dust,” and much of it escapes from the numerous construction sites and vacant lots in the valley

where the soil has been disturbed.

Contractors and landowners agree that capturing this “fugitive” is highly desirable but insist that controls must be cost-effective or they will impact Southern Nevada's booming economy. However, federal, state, and county officials are demanding action to improve air quality.

While the policymakers and contractors debate, researchers in UNLV's Howard R. Hughes College of Engineering have been using their expertise to seek ways to reduce dust levels.

David James, associate professor and chair of the department of civil and environmental engineering at UNLV, is one of those researchers.

James recently completed a comparative study of dust suppressants – products that can be applied to loose soil to

prevent, or at least inhibit, it from being blown into the air with a gust of wind. These products are becoming increasingly popular, he says.

“A lot of companies are seeking to supply dust suppressants,” James explains, “and there are likely to be more because of new dust control rules that have been submitted by Clark County to the state of Nevada and the Environmental Protection Agency for approval.”

However, finding the ideal suppressant is somewhat difficult, James says, in that it should “last forever; be non-toxic to plants, humans, and animals; and shouldn't cost very much.”

So, working in cooperation with several local agencies, James and two of his faculty colleagues, Barbara Luke and John Gambatese, developed a research project to compare the

effectiveness of nine dust suppressants.

“We were interested in providing contractors, landowners, and regulators with more information about the suppressants so they can make informed decisions about which one will work best,” says James, who has been working with the Clark County Health District since 1994 when he was asked to test soil in different parts of the valley for their susceptibility to wind erosion.

Using equipment and operators donated by a vendor of dust-control services, James and his team – which included several graduate and undergraduate students – applied nine commercial dust suppressants on plots of land, each approximately 50 feet wide and 150 feet long. As a control measure, a 10<sup>th</sup> plot was treated with water, currently the most commonly used suppressant.

“Water is fine in situations in which you can keep the soil



moist, and some kinds of soils react well to water treatment," James says. "But we wanted to determine whether these commercial suppressants worked better."

Once the plots were treated, the team of researchers tested the effectiveness of the suppressants periodically during the following five months. They used a mobile wind tunnel that they themselves built to produce simulated wind at the sites; the device also collects the fine dust resulting from the wind it generates. They then performed a series of measurements to determine what levels of dust were produced at each location.

The research project was conducted in two phases, although that was not the original plan. A key variable in dust control is weather, and in 1998 when the project began, weather was particularly unpredictable in Southern Nevada. El Niño had produced an unusually wet season – including a surprising snowfall – that wiped out the suppressants that had been put in place in the test area. As a result, James decided to repeat the experiment to be sure the initial measurements were valid.

The follow-up study, which was conducted in the first half of 1999, was effectively ended by the 100-year flood in July; however, by that point, the researchers had enough data to draw some conclusions.

In order to understand the nature of the project and its findings, James says it's necessary to explain some of the terms used.

When air quality experts talk about fugitive dust, they do so in terms of the size of particulate matter, or PMs, especially PM<sub>10</sub> or PM<sub>2.5</sub>. The numbers refer to particulate matter that is less than 10 microns in diameter in the case of PM<sub>10</sub>, or smaller than 2.5 microns, in the case of PM<sub>2.5</sub>. A micron is a millionth of a meter – finer than a human hair.

Clark County has established a committee known as the PM<sub>10</sub>/PM<sub>2.5</sub> Research Advisory Committee to deal with dust issues, and it was this committee that recommended the \$68,000 grant that

funded the UNLV project.

The goal of James' research was to determine how effective the various suppressants are in reducing the amount of PM<sub>10</sub> that gets into the atmosphere.

The tested suppressants fell into seven categories: asphalt/petroleum emulsions, fiber and mulches, lignin sulfates, polymer emulsions, recycled aggregate, salts, and water. The commercial products were applied in amounts recommended by the manufacturers; most of them are in liquid form and are applied either by a water truck with a fine spray, by a hand-held hose, or by a water cannon mounted on the top of a truck.

Although there was not enough funding to measure the impact of different amounts of each suppressant, a couple of accidental variations in application suggested that the amount would make a difference.

"It's just like applying fertilizer to a bed of flowers," James says. "The response depends on how much you put down. When you apply it too diluted, it doesn't work; when you use too much, you're wasting money."

It was important to test the effectiveness of the suppressant over time, James says. Soil that has been wetted tends to have a crust that, as long as it isn't broken up, is unlikely to cause a significant dust problem.

"However, some soils, as they dry, expand and contract, and eventually crack," he says. "If you've ever been in a mudflat, you'll have seen the dinner-plate-sized chunks that are formed by the cracking."

These mud plates tend to curl up around the edges.

"If they curl up enough, the wind comes in and flips them over," James says. "This exposes the untreated soil underneath, and the soil is freed to become dust."

Part of the research project was designed to measure the amount of cracking that takes place in soil treated by each suppressant. "Some worked better than others at holding the soil together," James says.

Then, after the initial measurements were completed, the researchers set out to create what they termed "a mechanical failure": they deliberately broke up the crusts by driving a truck over the plots of treated soil, accelerating and decelerating to simulate conditions similar to those at construction sites or at vacant lots used by kids with motorbikes.

After that, the researchers began analyzing their data.

James is quick to point out that the research was a fact-finding mission; he's not in the business of recommending any particular product. But armed with the data collected in the research, he says, contractors, landowners, and regulators will be better able to decide which of the suppressants will best meet their needs in complying with federal, state, and county air quality requirements.

His report to the health district suggests that while all the products worked fairly well under undisturbed conditions, two stood out as superior when the researchers drove vehicles over the testing plots.

"It turns out that if the suppressants can keep the soil intact, they all perform pretty well over time," James says. "What's more interesting is how they performed in the 'mechanical failure' portion of the testing."

The two suppressant categories that seemed to work best were fiber mulch, which consists of newspaper bits and plaster of Paris, and acrylic emulsions, which consist of polymers suspended in water. The mulch is more expensive but tends to last longer, James says.

The researchers also examined the potential toxicity of the suppressants to the environment and the creatures that live in it through a careful review of the information provided by the manufacturers; a summary of the risk factors was included in the report. Several of the suppressants, including the newspaper mulch and the acrylic polymer emulsions, had very low levels of toxicity, James says.

The cost effectiveness of each suppressant was also investigated. James and his



Engineering professor David James notes that about 85 percent of the air pollution in Southern Nevada is attributed to what is called "fugitive dust," which escapes from vacant lots and construction sites where the soil has been disturbed.

colleagues found a wide range in the product cost, which is measured in applied cost in dollars per acre. That measurement reflects how much it would cost to have one of these products applied to an acre of land. They found the costs ranged from \$500 to use water as a suppressant to \$5,000 for recycled aggregate; the two most effective suppressants, which cost about \$1,000 per acre, represent the average.

James is confident the study provides contractors, landowners, and regulators with additional information, which was the primary goal of the study. But the collaboration between the team of UNLV

researchers and others in the community was another success of the project, he says.

He emphasizes that the study couldn't have been completed without the extensive collaboration of many people and agencies. In addition to receiving the grant from the health district, researchers had the use of a former sludge-drying bed provided by the city of Las Vegas, access to rainfall data from Clark County Regional Flood Control, and site selection assistance from the Southern Nevada Water Authority/Las Vegas Valley Water District and the Clark County Department of Aviation.

Further giving credit where it is due, James says the project could not have been

carried out without the energy and skill of graduate student Tina Gingras, who "basically ran the project," as well as graduate students Jon Becker and Sherrie Edwards, and undergraduate students Johan Pulgarin, Gina Venglass, Ana Licon, Christa Swallow, and Lisa Denmark.

James says the students who worked on the project gained a great deal from participating in it.

"Participation in a field research project increases their understanding of both engineering design and scientific investigation," he says. "They must understand how the wind tunnel works, keep it running, and be able to understand how to process the data obtained in the field experiments."

An environmental engineer who has previously researched water quality and wastewater treatment, James says working with air quality and soils has led him in new directions. In fact, he has also recently completed another health district-funded study on fugitive dust.

In that study, James and Gambatese, who has since left UNLV, examined ways to prevent dust from becoming airborne during the movement of soil, such as from a front loader into a dump truck.

"It was clear that putting a mobile spray on the truck could help reduce the dust that rises up from the truck bed when a loader dumps soil into it," James says.

He adds that they used a wooden truck model they built behind UNLV's Thomas T. Beam Engineering Complex to test various configurations of spray nozzles and water pressures until they determined the optimum combination.

They then made arrangements to test the nozzles and pressures on a UNLV dump truck under real conditions; their report to the health district provides specifications and cost estimates for using truck-mounted water sprays to capture fugitive dust.

James says he enjoys working on local real-world problems, especially ones that can have a positive impact on people's lives.

"I enjoy helping to find ways to improve the quality of life in the Las Vegas valley. I think it's one of the best things that UNLV researchers can do." □



# Comic tendencies



UNLV alumnus Mike Upchurch

*Mike Upchurch may have started out as a student of comedy, but it didn't take him long to turn pro. With an Emmy Award for comedy writing and a three-year stint with The Chris Rock Show to his credit, the UNLV alumnus is definitely the one laughing now.*

BY SUZAN DIBELLA

IT'S STILL A MATTER OF SOME EMBARRASSMENT to Mike Upchurch.

It was 1992, and he was an aspiring young comedy writer who also happened to be a graduate student in communication studies at UNLV. As part of his research for his master's thesis on the narrative of sketch comedy, he hoped to interview a few famous sketch comedians in order to glean new insights into his area of research and do a little networking.

"Basically, I hatched this plan to go to New York and talk to Al Franken, and I figured I could somehow angle my way on – to what I'm not sure," says Upchurch, who was surprised and pleased when Franken, who was the head writer on *Saturday Night Live* at the time, consented to meet him at a New York sushi bar for a little shop talk.

But things didn't go exactly as planned, Upchurch notes. As he was cleverly weaving into the interview some of the scholarly terms he was applying to sketch comedy in his thesis – ostensibly for the purpose of impressing Mr. Franken – it began to dawn on him that Franken thought he was taking this academic thing way too far.

"I was just a real egghead with sketch comedy," Upchurch says. "I was writing sketches at the time and doing very well at it. I mean I knew *how* to write sketch, but I was trying to be analytical about it for the thesis. And real comedy writers aren't very analytical about it. Al Franken was just kind of shaking his head and saying, 'Ah, well, we don't exactly use terms like that. We pretty much think of something funny, and if it makes us laugh, and then we can find some way to bring it to a close, that's important. But we don't really use a lot of terms while we're working on it.'"

Then, as if to add an unintentional comic-relief-coup-de-grace to the whole experience, Upchurch managed to dip his elbow in a dish of soy sauce.

"That was the low point," he says with the resignation of someone who has had plenty of time to get used to the discomfort of a particularly embarrassing moment. And, he added, no, the interview didn't get him on – or into – anything in the world of big-time comedy.

But to say things have turned around for Upchurch in the last eight years would be a bit of an understatement. Since the Franken interview, the UNLV alumnus made his way to L.A. and on to the writing staff of *Mr. Show with Bob and David*, a critically acclaimed, Emmy-nominated



Upchurch, top left, describes winning the Emmy Award as an "incredible, surreal experience." Here he poses with his colleagues from *The Chris Rock Show* right after winning the Emmy in the category of comedy writing last year. He has been nominated again this year for his work on the show.

sketch comedy show. From there, he went on to join the New York-based writing staff of HBO's *The Chris Rock Show*; last year, he won an Emmy Award for comedy writing for his work with that team and has been asked back for a third year. In the meantime, he has been given a contract by industry giants Imagine Entertainment and DreamWorks SKG to write, produce, and direct a sitcom short for their recently created Internet entertainment company called "POP.com."

Upchurch is, of course, ecstatic at the success he has achieved so far – or as ecstatic as a low-key but affable guy like him seems to get. Despite the considerable success he's achieved at the age of 34, he's not exactly crowing about it. He is a bit subdued, maybe just this side of shy, when you first meet him. But the initial demeanor wears off after you get him going, and he lets on to the fact that he has plans – lots of them. He's hungry, as they say in

the business; one senses he knows he's into something good, something that he loves, something that seems to love him back. And he's not willing to stop for too long to look over his shoulder to see how he got there. But when *UNLV Magazine* asked him to do just that – tell us how a local boy like himself made it to the big leagues so early in his career – what's a low-key but affable guy to do but answer?

To this day, Upchurch is not sure if it was the wise-cracking of *Mad Magazine* that got him started or the insanity of *Monty Python's Flying Circus*. But somewhere along the line, he got hooked on comedy.

"*Mad Magazine* was a really big influence in my life," he says, recalling that while growing up in Boulder City, the owner of the local collectibles store used to call him "the Mad Man" because of his





Dubbed "the Mad Man" by the owner of the local collectibles store, Upchurch was a devoted fan of *Mad Magazine*. He says that the publication contributed to the development of his cynicism at an early age.

attempts at getting his hands on every copy of the publication he could.

"I guess *Mad* kind of set in place my cynicism early on because I became a practicing cynic as a really young kid. Then when I was 9 years old, I saw *Monty Python's Flying Circus*, and it was great. It was just so insane and so funny – and there was nothing like it on American television. I just thought it was great. I watched it religiously every Sunday night."

Although he was almost compulsive in his consumption of comedy while growing up – and began writing sketch comedy at about age 11 – he didn't make a conscious decision to pursue it as a career initially. In fact, when it came time to enroll at UNLV, he decided to major in finance.

"I figured that clearly I was going to be wealthy, and so I had to know what to do with the money," he jokes, noting that he took only one finance course before recognizing how ill-suited he was to that major. "So I ended up taking a lot of classes that looked interesting and eventually began gravitating toward communications courses because I liked working in television. I liked doing the projects and getting my hands on the equipment."

In his senior year, he found a perfect outlet for his knack for comedy writing when he received a grant from CSUN, UNLV's student government, to produce a series of commercial parodies. The project firmed up his interest in the field of entertainment and taught him a great deal

about the process of guiding a production.

"I learned a lot in my classes, and I especially learned a lot when I got that grant," he says. "A commercial parody is just a microcosm of any other big production. It's smaller, but all the things you have to do are the same."

Scouting talent and locations – both of which he often found on campus – renting

equipment, doing publicity, and handling post-production were valuable learning experiences for him.

After finishing his bachelor's degree in 1989, the thought of teaching communication classes appealed to Upchurch, so he enrolled in graduate school and became a teaching assistant. He hoped to find a way to incorporate his fascination with sketch comedy into his graduate work; his adviser, former communication studies professor Brad Chisholm, helped him develop a scholarly approach to examining sketch comedy, and his thesis topic was born.

Despite his chagrin at perhaps over-analyzing the subject in the presence of Franken, Upchurch remains proud of his thesis.

"I'm pretty sure it was the first study on sketch comedy that's been done," he says. "When I first starting researching it, I was worried that I would find that I'd been scooped. You just assume that somebody's all over it. But I found very little, and what I did find was pretty shallow. There was a lot of stuff on what is funny, what makes you laugh. But I really didn't care about that. In fact, I think that's almost a sacred thing. You don't want to break it down into elements because that tends to encourage a formulaic approach, and then it really *isn't* funny anymore. I just wanted to look at narrative structure – beginnings, endings, through-lines, things like that." He describes his definitions of the three different types of sketch comedy as

his "big closer."

Now that he's a pro, he admits he doesn't exactly bring up his former academic pursuit in the company of his colleagues. It's not that he's not proud of it, but, as he points out, there is probably nothing so patently un-funny as *studying* comedy.

"Looking back, I even thought it might be a pretty asinine thing to do," he says, quickly adding a qualifier. "But I took it pretty seriously. I mean there were a lot of footnotes...."

After the poverty years of graduate school, Upchurch decided to look for a more substantial means of support. After taking a variety of odd jobs, he decided to move to L.A. with a friend who was a stand-up comic.

By day, he worked a series of what he describes as lousy temporary jobs.

"I had a really crummy first year in L.A., but it's not like I could write a novel about it," he says. "It wasn't that bad. I can't complain about my suffering; I didn't suffer *that* much. It was just a drag. I had temp jobs. I worked at this place that did hair transplants."

When he wasn't writing during his off-hours, he spent time in nightclubs watching stand-up acts with his friends, several of whom were (and still are) aspiring comedians; it was at one of those clubs he met Bob Odenkirk (the Bob in *Mr. Show with Bob and David*), who gave him his big break.

"I was so ready for the job," he says. "I had so much material by then; I was writing like crazy. I'd come home from my temp job and write for another four or five hours. I found out later that there were writers also pitching material to Bob who had credits on incredibly popular shows like *The Simpsons*. So I think I was just a little more eager than everyone. I definitely wanted it more than everyone else. And I pitched so much material to them that I think they just decided to give me a shot."

Aired at the time on Comedy Central, *Mr. Show*, which had received abundant

critical praise, was composed entirely of a series of sketches linked together, Upchurch notes. It was right up his alley.

He recalls that at the time he was offered the job, he was stunned by the money offered. Although the show hadn't received a great deal of financial backing, the producers were able to offer the Writers' Guild minimum wage.

"Bob and David [Cross] were telling me that they didn't have much money and that it was a very low-budget production and so on. Then they broke the news to me: I was going to make \$2,200 a week. I about fell over. I told them, 'You know, I was going to hold out for about eight bucks an hour.' I'm like, 'Get outta here – I would've done it for free.'"

Upchurch served on *Mr. Show* for one very important season in 1997, learning what it was like to work on a writing staff in an ultra-creative environment.

"When you're writing on a sketch show, you begin your day by sitting and reading newspapers, magazines, and anything you can get your hands on to get input to generate ideas," he says. "It's a sketch show. You can write about anything you want. So I had a little reference library. I had a concise encyclopedia. I had a movie book. I had a bunch of stuff to draw from. I would just thumb through them and think of topics."

"And then I'd use my walls as bulletin boards," he says. "I'd think of a sketch title and write it down on a little piece of paper with maybe a few notes on it. Then I'd pin it up, so I'd have ideas all over the walls."

When it was time for a brainstorming meeting, he'd grab his best material off the wall and pitch the ideas like he'd been doing it all his life.

"At any point, someone might come in and say, 'Meeting – quick!' And we'd have to run in and be funny," he says. Sometimes Bob and David would ask the writers for their ideas for new sketches; at other times they would be working on an idea and turn to the writers for concept development.

"So they'd call the writers in, tell us the premise, and we'd just sit around and brainstorm and order lunch in," he recalls. "We ate horrible diets of just fast food and junk."

Though the on-the-job nutrition was poor, the climate at *Mr. Show* had a wonderful effect on creativity.

"It was a very generous room. Basically, the word 'no' was not really

of his career.

That was two years ago, and in that time, he has adapted to the stepped-up pace of a New York show and its corresponding responsibilities. Each day he still absorbs large amounts of source material to generate ideas and has begun writing jokes as well as sketches. He has also developed an addiction to coffee to meet his joke



Upchurch wrote sketch comedy for *Mr. Show* with Bob and David for one season. He's seen here in a pitch session with members of the *Mr. Show* comedy writing team, including the show's namesakes, Bob Odenkirk (far right) and David Cross (arms extended).

welcome. You wouldn't say, 'No, but,' no matter what the idea was. You'd say, 'Yes, and....' It was just the unspoken rule that if somebody puts an idea out there, you don't shoot it down." The net result was so hilarious, he says, that the show gained an almost cult following and became very well respected among comedy writers.

Three of his sketches made it on the air that season – as many as any of the other writers got on – including a rather bizarre one about America blowing up the moon that came from an idea he had been carrying around with him for years.

*Mr. Show* was nominated for an Emmy Award for comedy writing that year; *The Dennis Miller Show* won. Though *Mr. Show* didn't ask Upchurch back the next season, *The Chris Rock Show*, which had also been nominated that year for an Emmy for comedy writing, picked him up, and he was off to New York for the next phase

writing deadlines.

"I never drank coffee until I started writing monologue jokes," he says. "I discovered it makes you kind of talkative. I remember one Wednesday, the day before the joke deadline, I was thinking, 'I've got *nothing*. I'm looking at the subjects, and nothing's coming out.' And somebody said, 'Hey, you want to go have some coffee?' I went and had a double espresso, came back, and in about 45 minutes, I'd written about 10 or 12 jokes. I'm like, 'Hey, there's a connection here.' But I still don't consider myself a coffee drinker. Now, I administer it to myself like medicine."

A small price to pay, most would think, for the kind of success he has achieved on the show. Last year, he and his colleagues on *The Chris Rock Show*

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# A Scholar in Paradise

*Political science professor Steve Parker's travels to some of the world's most idyllic settings have produced some of his field's most revealing insights into the issues surrounding the industry of ecotourism.*

BY DIANE RUSSELL

**"I**T'S A TOUGH JOB, BUT SOMEBODY'S GOT TO DO IT." With a wink and a smile, that's how UNLV political science professor Steve Parker responds to the ribbing he often gets about his work-related travels.

He points out that with tourism having now surpassed petroleum as the world's largest international industry, *someone* needs to study tourism and its effect on the environment. And if that means some dedicated scholar like himself has to travel to such exotic and alluring locales as Fiji or Papua New Guinea to study the subject, well, that's just a sacrifice that will have to be made in the name of research.

While Parker manages to maintain a sense of humor when faced with good-natured teasing about his travels to some of the world's most idyllic island settings, the fact remains that he is deadly serious about the subject he researches in those locations – government natural resource policy, its effect on tourism, and what it means for the future of the planet.

As a political scientist, Parker, who has taught at UNLV since 1979, is interested in tourism from a public policy standpoint, or, more specifically, how governments can manage the environment by managing what is termed "ecotourism."

The goal of ecotourism, he explains, is to promote ecologically friendly industries that do little damage to the natural surroundings, while at the same time providing people who live in the areas with a way of making a living.

"'Ecotourism' combines the words 'ecology' and 'tourism,' but it also combines 'economics' and 'tourism.' 'Ecotourism' really stands for both," Parker says. "The idea is to help the environment generate money for native peoples because, if it can bring them a living, then they are going to have an interest in preserving and conserving it."

Many of the places where ecotourism comes to the forefront are places that only recently have become tourist destinations – places that have not yet been harmed by herds of unruly

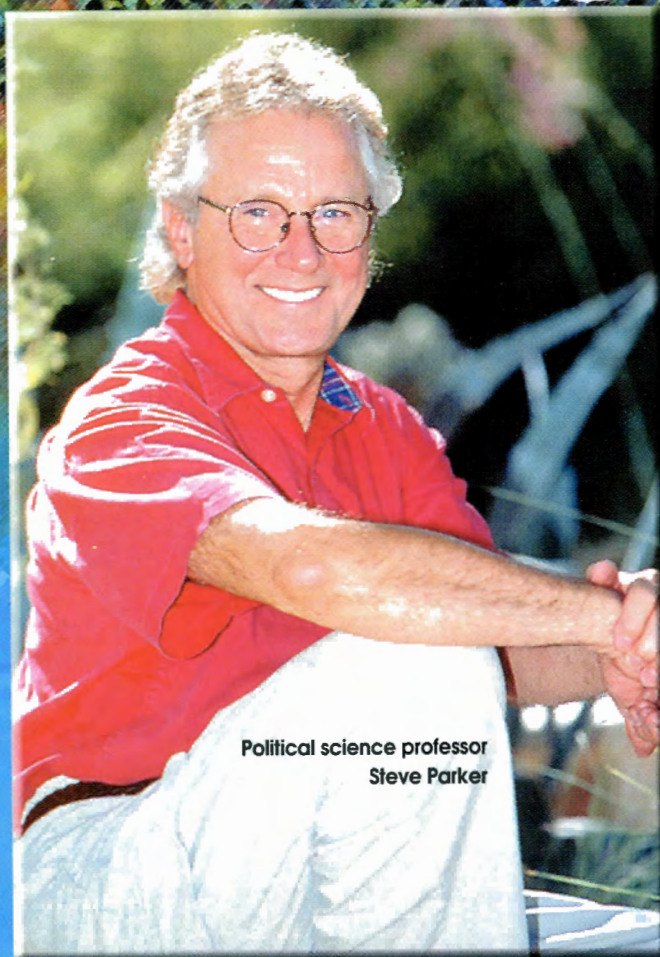
travelers or by locals who, often unknowingly, destroy unique surroundings in order to support themselves and their families. Someplace like Papua New Guinea.

It was in Papua New Guinea that he spent much of the spring of 1998 on sabbatical from UNLV to further his research into public policy and ecotourism.

He chose Papua New Guinea as a location to study because it has begun attracting large numbers of tourists only recently, and its government, therefore, is just beginning to make major decisions that will profoundly influence the future of the island nation.

The indigenous people of Papua New Guinea have the choice of opting for profitable, but highly destructive industries, such as logging or dynamite fishing, or choosing more environmentally friendly options, such as ecotourism.

On an island roughly the size of California where there are only 4 million people and where more than 700 languages are



Political science professor  
Steve Parker





During Parker's 1998 sabbatical, he also spent time in Blue Mountains National Park in New South Wales, Australia, and other national parks studying conservation practices and protected-area management.

spoken, uniform, nationwide decisions are impossible to make, according to Parker. Instead, each tribe or village currently is left to decide for itself what role, if any, ecotourism will play in its future.

"Ecotourism is not an absolute good," Parker says. "It's a relative thing. It's the lesser of two evils. When Western civilization in one way or another comes into an area, there are going to be lots of changes, many of which are not good. So the question is, 'What else is there that is less destructive?' Natives know that there's a money economy out there. They've got to earn money somehow."

"The question is not, 'Should we or can we just leave these people alone as though it was 2000 years ago?' That would be nice, but it's unrealistic," Parker says. "The real

question is, 'What other ways are there by which these people can use their environment to earn the money they want?'

"Ecotourism policy advises that, 'Instead of destroying a reef by using dynamite for fishing, locals should take scuba divers and snorkelers out there in their boats; they should become the dive masters, and they should be paid for their services.'"

This is a prime example, according to Parker, of the maxim of ecotourism: "If nature pays, nature stays."

Papua New Guinea, located on the equator about 150 miles north of Australia, proved

an ideal spot for Parker's studies. It was only in 1935 that outsiders – mostly miners and missionaries from Europe and Australia – began making their way into its interior. With the influence of Western civilization intruding on the native culture only so recently, visitors to Papua New Guinea even today are likely to feel as if they're experiencing some form of time travel that has taken them into the distant past, according to Parker.

With its lush locales, ranging from pristine coastlines with beautiful coral reefs to glacier-capped mountains rising to 15,000 feet, the country has much to offer nature and recreation enthusiasts who are willing and able to pay for the uncommon trip, Parker says.

A steadily increasing number of people

are visiting the country. Recent figures show a tourism rate of about 20,000 people a year, according to Parker, who has used his ecotourism research in Papua New Guinea, Australia, and other locations as the basis for scholarly articles that have appeared in publications such as *The Encyclopedia of Ecotourism*, *The Journal of Sustainable Tourism*, and the *Handbook of Global Environmental Policy and Administration*.

Many of the travelers to Papua New Guinea are seeking ecologically friendly vacations that provide them access to unspoiled beauty far away from the tourist crowds found elsewhere.

For the most part, the people of Papua New Guinea seem to be making good choices about how they will earn money, says Parker, who earlier this year was honored with the UNLV Distinguished Teaching Award.

Dynamite fishing – a profitable way of obtaining great quantities of fish in a short period of time – only recently has begun making its way to Papua New Guinea. Dynamite fishing is exactly what it sounds like: fisherman row out from shore, throw dynamite in the water, and harvest the fish that float to the surface. The damage to the coral reefs is tremendous.

The destructive results of this practice can be seen in places such as the Philippines and Indonesia where irreversible damage has been done to precious natural resources, Parker says.

Another destructive form of fishing is the practice of stunning fish for capture for the aquarium industry. All over the South Pacific today, natives go out in their canoes and dive down to find fish hiding in coral reefs. They next squirt a sodium-cyanide solution in the direction of the fish, killing most of them. Some are merely stunned but survive. These are netted and sold to aquarium wholesalers. Ultimately, the same sodium cyanide that kills so many fish, kills the coral reef as well.

Fortunately, neither practice has yet taken hold in Papua New Guinea where, for the most part, tribal and governmental leaders seem to be taking the more conservation-oriented route, he says.

But for them to continue to make these ecologically friendly decisions, someone needs to provide them options that generate money as well preserve resources, Parker points out.

In Fiji, where Parker traveled in July of this year, one such option has been provided by an entrepreneur who built 16 cabins that now serve as a dive resort. He leases the property from a nearby village and agrees to hire approximately 50 natives to work at the resort. He also buys meat, fish, and vegetables for his resort from the villagers. Thus, the beach and the nearby reef are now generating money for the locals, who have a monetary incentive to preserve the reef, beaches, and rain forest.

A comparable venture is taking place in the highlands of Papua New Guinea. In a particularly picturesque setting just outside the village of Tari, an Australian engineer and his wife have built Ambua Lodge.

"The main thing that brings about 1,200 tourists per year to Ambua Lodge is its exotic bird-watching," Parker says. "Worldwide, there are 43 species of the bird



As these natives prepared to give a dance performance in Yesenbit Village in Papua New Guinea, they told Parker that performing for visitors gives one generation a chance to teach the rituals to the next.



Parker found that artisans, like the man seen here with his child in a village on Papua New Guinea's Sepik River, have continued to learn the skills necessary to execute intricate wooden carvings. Tourism helps to keep these skills alive by creating demand for the pieces.

of paradise; 39 of these can be found in Papua New Guinea.

"The lodge operator pays a fee of two kina per guest (equal to about one U.S. dollar) to the local Huli tribe. However, his arrangement with them specifies that these payments will continue only so long as there is a consistent level of bird sightings by lodge guests," Parker says.

"It is right here, of course, that one can see the logic of ecotourism, since the plan gives the Huli a reason for habitat preservation and a powerful incentive to not sell off logging rights to hungry multinational corporations."

No one has to hire wardens to patrol the area to protect the birds or their habitat, he notes. The villagers, who now have an economic incentive for conservation, see to it that no one bothers them. It would be considered extremely disgraceful for a villager to be caught destroying the habitat or, worse yet, harming a bird of paradise, he says.

Another important facet of ecotourism is cultural preservation, Parker says.

Tourists to remote locales are usually eager to experience the native culture, he

points out. This translates into commerce when visitors pay the villagers to perform traditional dances and music or offer to buy native crafts.

While the tastes of the outsiders may be somewhat intrusive and may have a negative impact on the traditions – tribe members may make more of a certain kind of mask, for instance, if they realize it's the one tourists want to buy – in many cases the tourists' preferences may also be the only thing keeping those ancient traditions from being lost, Parker maintains.

With Papua New Guinea having had no written history before the arrival of the missionaries in 1935, oral tradition – in which elders tell younger tribe members of past events, teach them the traditional dances and music, and show them how to make the traditional crafts – has always been of extreme importance.

However, that oral tradition has been endangered in recent decades. First, the missionaries put a stop to the carvings the tribesmen were doing because, from the missionaries' viewpoint, these carvings constituted idolatry. Later, as the natives

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LOW FAT? Echinacea? High Protein? Green Tea? St. John's Wort? Vitamin C?

# Separating Food Fact From Fiction

*Confused about all of the herbal remedies, fad diets, and "healthful supplements" out there? You're not alone, says UNLV's nutrition sciences program director Susan Meacham. She's hoping her new program and its graduates might be able to help consumers sort out what good nutrition really means.*

BY DONNA MCALEER

**S**USAN MEACHAM BARELY HAS time to say what she does for a living before the questions begin.

"So what about this high protein diet? Is it good for you?"

"Does echinacea really help colds?"

"Is green tea the best source of antioxidants?"

"Is St. John's Wort harmful in any way?"

As a registered dietitian and a nutrition

researcher, Meacham is used to these kinds of queries from people who find out she has a professional's understanding of the myriad unresolved issues in the field of nutrition. She doesn't mind answering their questions when the answers are available; in fact she is pleased when people express an interest in her field.

"Food is fuel for the human body," says Meacham, who is the founding director of the new UNLV nutrition sciences program.

"It's what we run on, but most people give more thought to the gas they put in their cars – the brand, the grade, the price – than they do to the fuel they put in their bodies."

Currently, Meacham says, most people are confused about the barrage of conflicting claims about vitamins, supplements, and herbal remedies and what each is supposed to do. Add to that all the claims about which fad diet will result in the greatest

weight loss, and it's easy to understand why there's so much confusion.

"Eating what's good for you can seem like a complicated business if you believe all the marketing and media hype about the latest food fads," she says, adding that the growing public need to separate nutrition fact from fiction is one of the reasons UNLV started its program in nutrition sciences two years ago.

Part of the problem, Meacham says, is that people lack context for the information they receive about nutrition. For instance, despite some increase in awareness of nutrition matters in recent years – due in part to greater governmental regulation of the food manufacturing industry – many people still do not understand the bewildering array of facts listed on the labels of food containers. People often not only lack an understanding of what the information means, but they also haven't the foggiest idea of how it's generated.

Hence, a little background on how nutrition information is produced is helpful, says Meacham, who holds a doctorate in human nutrition and foods and has researched the subject at several universities, as well as for the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

She notes that nutrition facts labels are generated with a computer program that accesses detailed information on each ingredient's calorie, mineral, and vitamin content; the computer then summarizes the overall nutritional breakdown.

But how is the basic information gathered in the first place?

The answer is slowly and carefully, Meacham says, adding that the meticulous nature of nutrition research – and the resulting pace at which it is conducted – may also be contributing to the lagging public understanding of some nutrition matters.



An apple a day is still good nutrition advice, according to Susan Meacham, director of UNLV's new nutrition sciences program.

"My field is a bit behind the curve. There is so much research yet to be done before we can really determine the effectiveness of various substances," says Meacham. For example, she points out, many of the herbal remedies that are currently on the market have yet to be analyzed properly in objective scientific studies.

When research on those substances is conducted, however, painstaking care will be taken in all aspects, particularly in the testing of human subjects and the effects of each dietary variable; after all, she points out, when you're dealing with people's health, attention to safety and well-being is of the utmost concern.

A look at one of Meacham's most recent studies illustrates how the research process works in her field – and how much

attention to detail must be paid.

Many of Meacham's publications have focused on boron, a naturally occurring "ultra-trace" element. While it is not found in large quantities like the more well-known elements of calcium, iron, or potassium, it plays an important role in properly metabolizing other minerals, especially calcium. Meacham is interested in analyzing how the element relates to chronic diseases, including cancer, osteoporosis, and arthritis.

"We usually associate only calcium with bone density, but farmers have known for years that if you add boron as well as calcium to the soil, you get stronger, sturdier plants. The trick is to know the proper proportion," Meacham says.

She compares the calcium and boron interaction that produces human bone

Photo location courtesy of Vons at Tropicana and Maryland Parkway.



strength to mixing mortar. If the elements are combined in the right mix, the mortar will be strong and long lasting; if the mix is off, the mortar may crumble prematurely.

But what is the proper amount for a trace element like boron? Researchers must first establish how much of it exists in the typical American diet before they can suggest guidelines.

Meacham's most recent work, which was completed in collaboration with U.S. Department of Agriculture research biologist Curtiss Hunt, establishes benchmarks for 12 different minerals (aluminum, boron, calcium, copper, iron, manganese, magnesium, molybdenum, phosphorus, potassium, sodium, and zinc) found in foods common in the American diet. They have also estimated mineral intake in the following age groups: infants, toddlers, male and female adolescents, adults, and seniors.

In Meacham and Hunt's study, 234 foods, including milk, peanut butter, pizza, meatloaf, cheese, bread, blueberry muffins, spinach, popcorn, beans, and vanilla ice cream, were analyzed to determine the benchmarks.

The process they used for measuring the mineral levels was thorough and rigorous. First, each sample was blended and put into a solution. Then, three identically sized samples were removed from each of the 234 foods being analyzed. Since there are traces of boron and other minerals in glass, special test tubes were used; also, contact between the samples and metal was avoided at all times. Water for food preparation was distilled and deionized.

Once the food samples were properly prepared in triplicate, acids that mimic those released during digestion were put into the solutions. Then, each sample was analyzed by a process called "inductively coupled argon plasma emission spectroscopy," which measures the trace mineral levels.

"The data from this study establishes how much boron and other minerals the U.S. population ingests," she says. "It also provides technical information needed for the development of special diets to be tested in future studies."

These types of studies must be conducted before research on humans can even begin, she says, noting that one of the challenges in studying nutrition in people is creating a safe way to research a diet in humans.

"It would not be ethical to study a diet missing some essential element people need. Instead of studying what would happen on a deprivation diet, we study a mineral-depleted or mineral-supplemented diet," says Meacham, whose own work with human subjects has focused on female athletes and low-income women.

In the future, Meacham would like to do more research with minerals used in complementary or alternative medical therapies. She believes that some minerals hold promise as agents that are hostile to cancer cells; in fact, she thinks scientific scrutiny may in some cases support anecdotal claims. But until research is completed on the substances that have spawned these claims – as well as many others – she is concerned that marketing efforts, not nutritional facts, drive consumer decisions.

"We need to assist people so they can decide what's credible. Nutritionists want to help people make informed decisions," she says, adding that manufacturers of nutritional supplements have elaborate web sites and slick infomercials making grand nutritional claims with little or no supporting evidence.

"Products need to be evaluated independently by registered dietitians," Meacham says. "People need to make decisions based on science, not marketing. Nutrition needs more of a science base to strengthen its assertions and to examine alternatives."

That's where UNLV's new nutrition sciences program enters the picture, she adds.

The program is designed to teach students about the complex nutritional and health variables associated with food, she says, and will focus on the medical aspects of nutrition, including disease prevention and treating illness.

The program offers students the opportunity to major or minor in nutrition

sciences, or, for those majoring in health sciences, to select nutrition as a focus area.

According to Meacham, the field of nutrition is closely tied to many other subjects, including biology, chemistry, nursing, kinesiology, and health education. There's a big dose of science, particularly chemistry, in the program, she says, but there is also an element of art to it. To be effective, dietitians must understand the blend of social and cultural factors that influence what people eat.

Professionals in the field work closely with patients, doctors, physical therapists, nurses, and pharmacists in a variety of settings, including hospitals, wellness centers, school districts, private practices, and health spas, says Meacham. She notes that there are ample job opportunities in the field.

Now that the program is under way, Meacham says the next step is to help its graduates seek professional credentials to become registered dietitians.

"Our students at UNLV will be well prepared to meet professional standards. Credentialing is very important in this field," Meacham says. "The initials R.D. behind someone's name indicate that person can offer medically appropriate nutritional advice."

Meacham says she is pleased to be directing a program that will produce graduates capable of guiding members of the Southern Nevada community in their decisions about nutrition.

"I was very excited to be a part of something new and growing," says Meacham, who joined the UNLV faculty in 1998. "It's a wonderful program, and one that is certainly needed."

As for providing some helpful nutrition tips, she says the average person can begin improving his/her nutrition quite simply.

"It turns out Mom was right," she says. "Eating five servings of fruits and vegetables a day is a great way to get many of the vitamins and minerals we need. So reach for the apple."

And Meacham and her colleagues, in the meantime, will reach for the inductively coupled argon plasma emission spectroscopy to analyze it. ☐

## Scholar in Paradise

continued from page 17

became aware of the money economy, they began spending their time on endeavors such as mining and logging that could generate more money. Little by little, the dances, music, and handicrafts began to be lost as the younger people no longer took the time to learn them.

Today, tourists often are invited to "sing-sings" at which villagers, decked out in eye-catching costumes created from a variety of materials, including sea shells and feathers, perform ritual dances and music.

"What I witnessed time and time again in regard to cultural activities was young men who had stayed behind in the villages wanting to learn the dances from their elders – and the elders were there just like the choreographers teaching them what to do. The younger men are learning it primarily because they're going to be paid by the tour operator. And if it weren't for the tourists coming in, these rituals would not be getting transferred to the next generation with the same degree of speed that they are. Fifteen years ago these rituals were dying out; now they're making



Some indigenous people, like this Papua New Guinea Karawari River chief, continue to create and wear ritual dress in the interest of drawing tourists.

a comeback."

It no doubt is true that the traditions no longer have the same religious significance they once did, but at least they are being preserved, Parker says.

"They're learning the steps. They're learning how to make the costumes," he says. "These things would be lost otherwise and in that sense it's a public preservation strategy."

The money that comes in from ecotourism often is not enough alone to sustain the villagers, but when it is combined with other nondestructive micro-industries, such as butterfly farming or timber harvesting with walk-about sawmills (small

portable devices that allow villagers to cut planks from fallen trees, thus discouraging the clear-cutting of forests), it can help preserve the world's natural and cultural resources, he says.

Parker provides one telling final example of the contribution of ecotourism to cultural preservation.

The Fly and the Sepik are the two major rivers in Papua New Guinea. The carving of various items such as masks and musical instruments long had been a valued tradition among the inhabitants of the villages that dot the banks of both rivers. But after the arrival of the missionaries the carving died out.

"As a result, for about two generations this art form, which is religious in nature, disappeared on both rivers," he says.

Then the tourists began arriving in Papua New Guinea. With two boats traveling up and down its waters, the Sepik gets as many as 5,000 visitors a year; the

Fly, which has no boats, gets none.

"There is no indigenous carving occurring on the Fly, but there are thousands of pieces being produced every year on the Sepik," Parker says, displaying a flute on which a combination bird-crocodile-man is carved from a single piece of wood. "The villager who made this learned the skill, the craftsmanship, and the design from his father. The know-how was transmitted from one generation to the next because there was a market."

"If nature pays, nature stays." ☐

Readers who are interested in finding out more about this type of travel should contact The Ecotourism Society. Known by its initials simply as TES, it provides education programs, helps to establish professional guidelines, and offers a wide range of informational services. Information about the society may be found on the web at <http://www.ecotourism.org>.



The impact of tourism on the environment in national parks is also a subject of interest to Parker, seen here surveying trail erosion in Springbrook National Park, Queensland, Australia.



# CALENDAR

## September 2000

1-3 **Men's Soccer:** UNLV vs. Ohio State - Sept. 1, 7pm. Notre Dame - Sept. 3, noon. JF. 895-3900.

1-30 **Art Exhibit:** Todd Herbert and Emily Joyce - Recent Work. Call for times. DBFA. 895-3649. (Runs thru Oct. 7)

7 **Women's Soccer:** UNLV vs. Idaho. 7pm. JF. 895-3207.

8 **University Forum Lecture:** "Childhood Developmental Disorders in Adults." 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

8-9 **Volleyball:** UNLV vs. Idaho State - Sept. 8, 2:30pm. Alabama - Sept. 8, 7:30pm. Boise State - Sept. 9, 9:30am. San Jose State - Sept. 9, 5pm. TMC. 895-3900.

10 **Men's Soccer:** UNLV vs. Grand Canyon. Noon. JF. 895-3207.

11 **Women's Soccer:** UNLV vs. Bowling Green. 7pm. JF. 895-3207.

12 **President's State of the University Address:** 2pm. JBT. 895-3201.

14 **Grand Opening/Open House:** UNLV Downtown Center. 6pm. Old Fifth Street School, LV Blvd. & Clark St. 895-3076.

15 **Performing Arts Center's Best of the New York Stage:** Opening Night with Marvin Hamlisch. 8pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

16 **Football:** UNLV vs. North Texas. 7pm. SBS. 895-3900.

17 **Performing Arts Center's The World Stage:** Ladysmith Black Mombazo. 2pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

18-30 **Art Exhibit:** Communicating America's Vision - The Nevada Bell Collection. MSM. Call for times. 895-3381. (Runs thru Nov. 10)

20 **University Forum Lecture:** "Thomas Jefferson, Mark Twain, and Ice-Age Ground Sloths of Nevada." 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

**Concert:** Alfonse Anderson and James Giles in recital. 7:30pm. BBT. 895-2787.

21 **Barrick Lecture Series:** Mark Russell. 7:30pm. Free, but tickets required. AHCH. 895-2787.

22 **Men's Soccer:** UNLV vs. Cal-Poly. 7pm. JF. 895-3207.

23 **Women's Soccer:** UNLV vs. San Francisco. 7pm. JF. 895-3207.

28 **University Forum Lecture:** "Election 2000: The Presidency and the Congress." 7:30pm. CBC A-108. 895-3401.

28-29 **Volleyball:** UNLV vs. New Mexico - Sept. 28, 7pm. TMC. Air Force Academy - Sept. 29, 7pm. LG. 895-3900.

29 **Men's Soccer:** UNLV vs. Drury. 7pm. JF. 895-3207.

29-30 **Play:** *Threepenny Opera*. Call for times. JBT. 895-2787. (Runs thru Oct. 8)

30 **Football:** UNLV vs. Air Force. 4pm. SBS. 895-3900.

**Jean Nidetch Women's Center:** 7th Annual Community Job Fair. 8:30am. MSU. 895-4475.

## October 2000

1 **Men's Soccer:** UNLV vs. Louisville. Noon. JF. 895-3207.

2 **University Forum Lecture:** "Revolutionary Dreams: African-American Women in the Black Arts Movement." 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

**Concert:** UNLV String Orchestra. 7:30pm. BBT. 895-3949.

5 **Concert:** UNLV Wind Orchestra I. 7:30pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

**Jean Nidetch Women's Center:** Take Back the Night Annual Candlelight Vigil, March & Rally. 7pm. Alumni Amphitheatre. 895-4475.

6-8 **Women's Soccer:** UNLV vs. Wyoming - Oct. 6, 6pm. Air Force - Oct. 8, 2pm. JF. 895-3207.

**Men's Soccer:** UNLV vs. UC-Santa Barbara - Oct. 6, 8pm. Cal State-Northridge - Oct. 8, noon. JF. 895-3207.

7 **Football:** UNLV vs. UNR. (Hall of Fame Weekend) 4pm. SBS. 895-3900.

**Volleyball:** UNLV vs. San Diego State. 4pm. TMC. 895-3900.

**Performing Arts Center's Best of the New York Stage:** Mingus Big Band. 8pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

10 **University Forum Lecture:** "Keys to Relationship Success." 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

13 **University Forum Lecture:** Tony Hoagland Poetry Reading. 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

13-22 **Play:** *As Bees in Honey Drown*. Call for times. BBT. 895-2787.

14 **Performing Arts Center's Charles Vanda Master Series:** Iceland Symphony. 8pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

16 **University Forum Lecture:** "Transportation and Society: Reflections on the Past and a Peek into the Future." 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

16-17 **International Gaming Institute:** Casino Surveillance Seminar. 9am. BEH 240. 895-3412.

18 **Women's Soccer:** UNLV vs. New Mexico. 7pm. JF. 895-3207.

20-21 **Volleyball:** UNLV vs. Utah - Oct. 20. BYU - Oct. 21. 7pm both days. TMC. 895-3900.

**Dance:** Dance Arts Fall Concert. Call for times. JBT. 895-2787.

21 **Homecoming Football Game:** UNLV vs. Wyoming. 4pm. SBS. 895-3900.

22-24 **Concerts:** UNLV Jazz Ensemble I - Oct. 22, 2pm. UNLV Jazz Ensembles II & III - Oct. 24, 7:30pm. JBT. 895-2787.

25-29 **Theatre:** Annual Fall One-Act Play Festival. Call for times. PHT. 895-2787.

26 **Concert:** UNLV Jazz Faculty. 7:30pm. JBT. 895-2787.

27 **Women's Soccer:** UNLV vs. Western Michigan. 7pm. JF. 895-3207.

29 **Concert:** 76 Trombones + 4. 2pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

30 **University Forum Lecture:** "Overcoming Losses: Enjoying Late Life No Matter What Happens." 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

31 **Concert:** Music Department Gala. 7:30pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

## November 2000

2 **University Forum Lecture:** "The New York Times and American Journalism: Biography, the Ochs, the Sulzbergers, and Modern Media." 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

5 **Men's Soccer:** UNLV vs. New Mexico. Noon. JF. 895-3207.

**Performing Arts Center's Charles Vanda Master Series:** Nadja-Salerno Sonnenberg and the Assad Brothers. 2pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

6 **University Forum Lecture:** "An Evening With Henry David Thoreau" (performance). 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

8-11 **Volleyball:** UNLV vs. UNR - Nov. 8, 7pm. Wyoming - Nov. 9, 7pm. Colorado State - Nov. 11, 7:30pm. TMC. 895-3900.

# CALENDAR

9 **University Forum Lecture:** "The Changing Images of Mexican Americans, 1920-1950" (slide-illustrated). 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

10-19 **Play:** *Charge*. Call for times. BBT. 895-2787.

11 **Football:** UNLV vs. New Mexico. 1pm. SBS. 895-3900.

13 **College of Sciences:** Science and Technology Day. AHCH Green Room & Lobby. 895-1155.

**Concert:** UNLV Symphony Orchestra I. 7:30pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

15 **Concert:** UNLV Community Band I. 7:30pm. AHCH. 895-3733.

16-30 **Art Exhibit:** Cantor Print Collection. DBFA. 895-3649. (Runs thru Dec. 16)

17 **Men's Basketball:** UNLV vs. Northern Arizona. 7:35pm. TMC. 895-3900.\*

18 **Performing Arts Center's Best of the New York Stage:** Gregory Hines. 8pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

20 **University Forum Lecture:** "Germany's Place in the European Union." 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

21 **Concert:** UNLV Wind Orchestra II. 7:30pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

25 **Men's Basketball:** UNLV vs. Cal State-Northridge. 7:35pm. TMC. 895-3900.\*

28 **University Forum Lecture:** "Lenin Loses His Head in a Strip Casino: Contextual Irony and Contemporary Las Vegas Culture" (slide-illustrated). 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

30 **University Forum Lecture:** "The Tradition of New England Humor: A Lecture Performance." 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

**Winter Concert:** University Choral Ensembles. 7:30pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

## December 2000

1-10 **National Finals Rodeo:** Call for times & ticket availability. TMC. 895-3900.

2 **Performing Arts Center's Charles Vanda Master Series:** Rising Stars of Classical Music, featuring The Eroica Trio with Jubilant Sykes and John Bayless. 8pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

3 **Concert:** Bach Celebration, UNLV Symphony Orchestra II. 2pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

3-10 **Play:** *Hamlet*. Call for times. JBT. 895-2787.

5 **University Forum Lecture:** "Icelandic Winter" (slide-illustrated). 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.



The Eroica Trio  
Dec. 2

For more information on UNLV events and publications, visit UNLV's World Wide Web home page at <http://www.unlv.edu>

## Building Abbreviation Guide

AHCH: Artemus Ham Concert Hall  
BEH: Frank and Estella Beam Hall  
BBT: Black Box Theatre  
CBC: Classroom Building Complex  
DBFA: Donna Beam Fine Art Gallery  
JBT: Judy Bayley Theatre  
JF: Johann Field  
LG: Lied Gymnasium  
MBMA: Marjorie Barrick Museum Auditorium  
MSM: Marjorie Barrick Museum of Natural History  
MSU: Moyer Student Union  
PHT: Paul Harris Theatre  
SBS: Sam Boyd Stadium  
TMC: Thomas & Mack Center

Events are subject to change/cancellation.



Marvin Hamlisch  
Sept. 15

UNLV Soccer





# CALENDAR



## FAMILY WEEKEND

UNLV students and their families are invited to attend Family Weekend 2000, a fun-filled weekend of academic, athletic, and social activities.

Family Weekend 2000 will be held Sept. 15-17 and is an excellent opportunity to learn more about UNLV and its programs and services, meet members of the UNLV administration and faculty, and enjoy a pool-side barbecue, football tailgate, and/or Sunday brunch.

For more information on times and locations of Family Weekend 2000 activities, call the event hotline at 895-1754.

**10 Performing Arts Center's Best of the New York Stage:** *A Vegas Broadway Christmas*. 2pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

**11-12 International Gaming Institute:** Casino Surveillance Seminar. 9am. BEH 240. 895-3412.

**14 University Forum Lecture:** "Dragons: History, Mythology, Reality." 7:30pm. MBMA. 895-3401.

**16 Men's Basketball:** Las Vegas Showdown-UNLV vs. Cincinnati. 9pm. TMC. 895-3900.\*

**17 Commencement:** 3pm. TMC. 895-3229.

**18-20 Men's Basketball:** UNLV vs. Alaska-Anchorage - Dec. 18. Chicago State - Dec. 20. 7:35pm both days. TMC. 895-3900.\*

**20-21 Musical Performance:** *Amahl and the Night Visitors*. 7:30pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

**22 Men's Basketball:** UNLV vs. Pepperdine. 7:35pm. TMC. 895-3900.\*

**22 Performing Arts Center's The World Stage:** *Fiesta Navidad*. 7:30pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

**28-30 Men's Basketball:** UNLV vs. Monmouth - Dec. 28. Mississippi State - Dec. 30. 7:35pm. both days. TMC. 895-3900.\*

## February 2001

**2 Performing Arts Center's Charles Vanda Master Series:** Russian National Orchestra. 8pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

**10-12 Men's Basketball:** UNLV vs. BYU - Feb. 10, TBA. Utah - Feb. 12, 9pm. TMC. 895-3900.\*

**14-24 Art Exhibit:** Master of Fine Arts Exhibition, Shawn Hummel. DBFA. 895-3649.

**18 Performing Arts Center's Best of the New York Stage:** Andrea Marcovicci. 2pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

**23 Performing Arts Center's Charles Vanda Master Series:** St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, featuring Bobby McFerrin. 8pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

**23-24 Dance:** Dance Arts Spring Concert. Call for times. JBT. 895-2787.

**23-25 Play:** Sarett Playwriting Competition Winner. Call for times. BBT. 895-2787.

**25 Concert:** UNLV Jazz Faculty. 7:30pm. JBT. 895-2787.

## Women's Basketball

The following is the tentative schedule of the Lady Rebels basketball team. All games are at the Thomas & Mack Center at 7:30pm unless otherwise indicated. Call 895-3900 for ticket information.

Nov. 7	Team Australia, Kilsythe. 5pm.
11	National Women's Basketball League
20	University of Texas, San Antonio
24	Texas Southern
25	UNC-Charlotte or St. John's. TBA. (Rebels Shootout)
Dec. 19	Cal State-Northridge. TBA.
23	University of the Pacific
28	UNR. 5pm.
30	Prairie View A&M. 5pm.
Jan. 6	University of California, Irvine. 5pm.
11	Utah
13	Brigham Young
Feb. 1	Colorado State
3	Wyoming
15	Air Force
17	New Mexico
24	San Diego State

\*Tentatively scheduled at press time.

## January 2001

**2-8 Theatre:** Winter Fight Workshop. 8am. BBT. 895-2787.

**3 Men's Basketball:** UNLV vs. Loyola Marymount. 7:35pm. TMC. 895-3900.\*

**8 Men's Basketball:** UNLV vs. Air Force Academy. 7:35pm. TMC. 895-3900.\*

**14 Performing Arts Center's The World Stage:** Les Ballet Jazz de Montreal. 2pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

**16-30 Art Exhibit:** The Adventures of Eddie Leon. Ray Madison. DBFA. 895-3649. (Runs thru Feb. 10)

**17-21 Play:** Senior Adult Theatre Production. 8pm. PHT. 895-2787.

**21 Performing Arts Center's Best of the New York Stage:** Debbie Gravitte and Stephen Schwartz. 2pm. AHCH. 895-2787.

**22 Men's Basketball:** UNLV vs. New Mexico. 9pm. TMC. 895-3900.\*

**27 Men's Basketball:** UNLV vs. San Diego State. 7:35pm. TMC. 895-3900.\*



Bobby McFerrin  
Feb. 23

## comic tendencies

continued from page 13

took home Emmy Awards for comedy writing, beating out such big names as David Letterman and Conan O'Brien, as well as his former pals from *Mr. Show*.

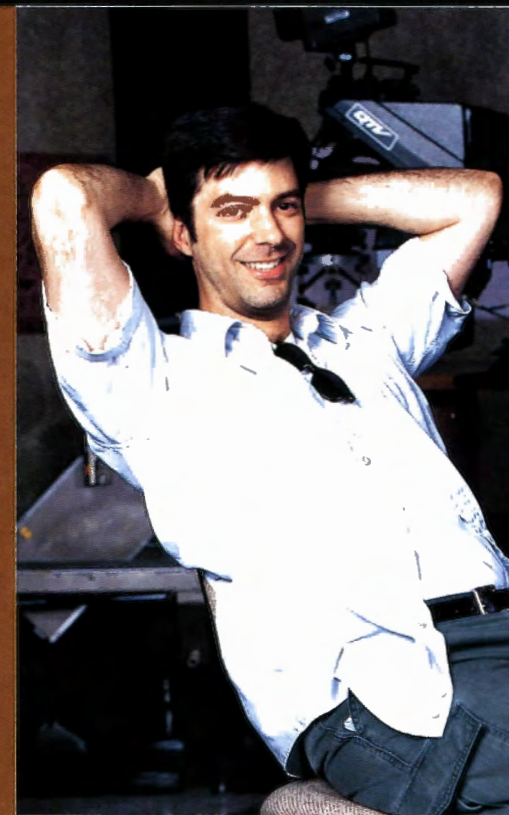
To Upchurch, it was, as one would imagine, a high point.

"It's great to be nominated. It's exciting, and there's tension up to the point when they announce the winners," he says, recalling his experience at the awards ceremony the year before for his work on *Mr. Show*. "And then if you don't win, you basically start wondering what they're going to serve at the Governor's Ball.

"But if you win, it's tension all the way up to the same time, and then it's this incredible, surreal experience. There are all of these flashbulbs going off, and people are asking you questions, and you have to get up on stage for the acceptance speech. I was ready to go back to my seat, but no, no. You go right off the stage and the interviews begin. You go down the red carpet walk into one room full of photojournalists from all over the world. So you stand there with so many flashbulbs going off, and you're trying to keep a good expression on your face the whole time. Then you go into another room where the print journalists are, and then on to another room where the TV journalists are. And they're all shouting questions."

Chris Rock answered most of the questions, he points out, noting that his biggest burden of the evening was carrying around the statue all night to a number of fabulous parties.

"I carried that Emmy around for the



In addition to his work on *The Chris Rock Show*, Upchurch is currently serving as writer, producer, and director of a sitcom short for POP.com, an Internet entertainment company.

next 12 hours and the next 12 beers," he says. "From that evening until dawn of the next day, it was just a peak. We were laughing and talking about it the whole time. It was a lot of fun."

Aside from receiving a huge number of calls - some from people he hadn't talked to in years - life returned to normal pretty quickly, he says.

"We had to hop on a plane the next day. We had to get going on our first show of the second season I was on, so we had to go back and write jokes. I had been able to have all of the newspapers delivered to the Four Seasons while we were still in L.A., and then I sat by the pool and made notes for the show before we left."

In the long term, he recognizes the Emmy has had its effect, but more on his reputation than on him.

"It certainly helps with the career in that it gives people a comfort level with your abilities," he says. "That way if a

show tanks, they can say, 'Well, look, we hired Emmy-Award-winning writers! We went to the right people!' They have a level of deniability about anything that goes wrong. So it really helps in that way. But my first response to winning the Emmy was, 'Oh, this is good because it will now be easier to make things happen in my career.' But it went straight to my resume and not to my ego."

He now looks forward to returning to *The Chris Rock Show*, where he enjoys a great rapport with the team of writers and another extremely creative, albeit different, environment.

"It's a little less frantic at *The Chris Rock Show*," he says. "We have scheduled pitch sessions, and it's more laid back than *Mr. Show*. Chris is great to work with; he's probably

different than most people would think. In a pitch session, you pitch five to seven ideas, and he'll just sit and be very analytical. He doesn't really laugh a lot; of course, he doesn't want to because he would have to paint a smile on his face for everybody for two hours. So he just listens, and he laughs when something is funny. But it's a tough room because it's tough to get people laughing. At *Mr. Show*, people were bouncing off the walls."

The environment at *The Chris Rock Show* is enhanced further by its location, he asserts.

"I can see the Chrysler Building out my office window," he says. "Our offices are on 43rd Street in Manhattan in the same building that used to be occupied by the writers of *The New Yorker* in the '30s and '40s. It has a historical marker on it. So I look out the window, and think, 'Who knows? Maybe James

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## CLASS NOTES

### 1960s

**Dominic Daileida**, '64 BS Accounting, is a certified public accountant who retired last year from the CPA firm of Daileida Murphy McCarthy & Kaster. After retiring, he moved to Friday Harbor, Wash. He was the first recipient of the Nevada Centennial Medallion, given each year to the UNLV graduate with the highest grade point average. His daughter, **Tammy Daileida Lewis**, '87 BA Fine Arts, is the office manager at Daileida Murphy McCarthy & Kaster. Previously, she worked as the office manager for Geotechnical & Environmental Services Inc....**Jill Flemington Schutte**, '65 BS Elementary Education, is a mentor teacher in Anaheim, Calif. She is also a preventive guidance counselor and science teacher leader. She lives in Yorba Linda....**Connie B. Carter**, '69 BS Education, '72 M.Ed., '82 M.Ed., is the director of La Madre Mountain School.

### 1970s

**Debby Ackerman Hauth**, '76 BS Business Administration, '94 BA Communication Studies, '99 MA Communication Studies, is the public information officer for the city of Las Vegas department of public works – the city's largest department. She has been with the city since 1992 and was selected its employee of the year in 1997....**James M. Hilz II**, '94 BA Political Science, is an attorney in private practice. He concentrates on personal injury, criminal defense, and family law. He founded Las Vegas Sports Management Inc. in 1999 and is a licensed sports agent with the NFL Players' Association and the NBA Players' Association....**Jerry Griffiths**, '77 BS Business Administration, is vice president and chief financial officer of the Fremont Street Experience. He previously spent 10 years with Becker Gaming as vice president and chief financial officer....**David Randel**, '77 BS Hotel Administration, is the director of sales and marketing for Marriott in Florida. He has been with the company for 22 years. He lives in Orlando....**Ken Fong**, '78 BS

Business Administration, was elected president of the Las Vegas West Rotary Club. He is a partner in Fong and Associates, a real estate company....**Rick Strunk**, '78 BS Hotel Administration, serves as membership director of the Pennsylvania Travel Council Western Region. He is also executive director of the Greater Pittsburgh Hotel Association....**Deborah-Kim R. Wallin**, '78 BS Accounting, established her own certified public accounting firm, DK Wallin Ltd., more than 15 years ago. She is the chair of the ICMA Board of Regents, which issues certifications for certified management accountants (CMA) and for certified financial managers (CFM)....**Ruben O. Rodriguez**, '79 BS Business Administration, '92 M.Ed., is director of education and training for the Riviera Hotel & Casino.

### 1980s

**Craig A. Primas**, '80 BS Engineering, is a civil engineer and the owner and president of Primas and Associates Consulting Engineers/Land Surveyors. The company has offices in Las Vegas; Scottsdale, Ariz.; and Durango, Colo. He has been married more than 20 years to **Anne Primas**, '99 BS Hotel Administration. She is the business manager for Primas and Associates....**Sal Semola**, '81 BS Hotel Administration, is vice president of table game operations for Greektown Casino in Detroit. He lives in Grosse Pointe Park....**Mae Lyn Woo**, '81 BS Business Administration, has been appointed chief operations officer of American Champion Entertainment, a provider of entertaining and educational television programming for families that is based in San Jose, Calif. She joined the company in 1998 as vice president and chief financial officer after spending 10 years with the Levi Strauss Co....**Bruce David Ansteth**, '82 BS Hotel Administration, is an artist living in Kalamazoo, Mich. His two paintings, "Autumn

Scene" and "Jackie O at 18" were recently placed on display at the West Michigan Cancer Center in Kalamazoo....**Don Soderberg**, '82 BA Communication Studies, was named chair of the state Public Utilities Commission last year by Gov. Kenny Guinn. He was first appointed to the commission in 1995. In 1997 he joined the newly created Transportation Service Authority, but returned to the PUC in 1998. He is an attorney....



Lynn Forese, '83

**Christine Deschaine**, '83 BA Communication Studies, is a principal in Lee & Associates Commercial Real Estate Services. She lives in Los Angeles....**Lynn Forese**, '83 BS Accounting, earned her MBA from Northern Arizona University. She is the director of operations for Resources Connection in Nevada, an international company providing project- or interim-based technology, accounting and finance, and human resources professionals to clients in a broad range of industries....**Sidney Green**, '83



Sidney Green, '83

BA Sociology, is the head men's basketball coach at Florida Atlantic University in Boca Raton. Before joining the Owls, he served as head coach at the University of North Florida and at Southampton College in New York. An All-American during his playing days at UNLV, he was a first-round draft selection of the Chicago Bulls. He is co-founder of the Shoot-for-the-Stars Foundation in Las Vegas....**Mary Rose Loney**, '83 Master of Public Administration, is president of the New Jersey-based Travelways Inc., the second largest motorcoach and package tour company in the nation. Previously, she served as the commissioner of aviation for the Chicago Airport System....**James E. Reppert**, '85 MA Communication Studies, is an assistant professor of mass communication and director of broadcast journalism at Southern

Arkansas University. He was one of 30 American broadcast educators competitively selected last year for participation in the inaugural International Emmy Nominee Festival and also was named last year as a winner of the Stephen H. Coltrin Award for Excellence in Communications Education. He lives in Magnolia....**Margaret J. Desruisseaux**, '87 BS Business Administration, has been appointed director of management services and development for Faith Lutheran JR/SR High School. She oversees finances, facility development, expansion, and maintenance....**John C. Futrell**, '87 BA Psychology, is president of Futrell Financial Management, a wealth management company, and is the financial commentator for KVVU Fox 5 News. He also is president of the Southern Nevada Financial Advisory Council....**Michael W. Thompson**, '87



Margaret J. Desruisseaux, '87

M.Ed., is principal of Cedar Ridge Middle School in Logan, Utah. He lives in Smithfield....**Tami Belt**, '88 BA Communication Studies, was named one of the 10 finalists in the International Newspaper Marketing Association's Holbein Memorial Scholarship essay competition and was recognized in the July/August edition of *IDEAS* magazine....**Tim Kinsella**, '88 BS Hotel Administration, works for MarketSoft Corp. as an account executive. He previously served as director of sales and marketing for destination products for Newmarket Software International. He and his wife, Teri, celebrated the birth of their first child, Cole Robert, on January 14, 1999. They live in Newburyport, Mass....**Ric Jimenez**, '88 BS Marketing, is president of Pueblo Landscape Company, a full-service landscape concern....**Kimberly McDonald**, '88 BA Psychology, '96 Master of Public Administration, was elected national secretary-treasurer of the American Business Women's



John C. Futrell, '87

Association for 1999-2000. She is the public information officer for the city of North Las Vegas and also serves as a management analyst in the legislative and special affairs division and as a member of the city's lobbying team....**Tony Radovich**, '88 BS Business Administration, owns and operates the Madison Ave. Bar and Grille....**Ted Williams**, '88 BS Accounting, is a project manager in financial process improvement for Kellwood Co., a Fortune 500 apparel company. He coordinates new business processes for accounts payable. He has worked for Kellwood for 10 years. He lives in St. Louis.



Kimberly McDonald, '88

### 1990s

**Bernadette Bransch**, '90 Bachelor of Liberal Studies, '99 MBA, is the assistant general manager of the new Saks Fifth Avenue store in Palos Verdes, Calif. Previously, she was the human resources manager for the Saks store in Las Vegas....**J.E. Coates Jr.**, '90 BS Biology, has accepted a trauma surgery/critical care fellowship at University Medical Center's trauma center. Previously, he was chief surgical resident at Garden City Hospital in Garden City,

Mich....**Thomas van Betten**, '91 BS Finance, earlier this year became the regional director of a start-up Internet company, RealCentric, a commercial real estate-related Internet site. Previously, he was a partner in Colliers, a commercial real estate brokerage firm in Las Vegas. He lives in Del Mar, Calif....**Jenna Meyn Ross**, '91 BA Communication Studies, recently moved to Germany where her husband is working with the Army. She was previously an independent coaching and training development consultant in New Mexico. She recently completed a master's degree in organizational management....**Mark Skidmore**, '91 BS Hotel Administration, is the associate director of the NT Technical Services group at 20th Century Fox. He is responsible for all the Windows NT Servers. He



Bernadette Bransch, '90

previously worked for Sony Pictures and for NBC. He lives in Los Angeles....**Jamie Villareal-Beyer**, '92 BS Health Care Administration, earned a master's degree in organizational management from the University of Phoenix in 1997 and currently is employed with Sun Health Corp. in Sun City, Ariz., as the collection coordinator for hospital billing. She lives in

Glendale....**Ken Carroll**, '93 BA Political Science, earned a law degree and a master of public administration degree from Golden Gate University. He now lives in Washington, D.C., where he directs a fair-housing program of the Equal Rights Center, a civil rights agency dedicated to enforcing laws that prohibit discrimination in housing, employment, and public accommodations....**Ron Kachel**, '93 BS Hotel Administration, founded ATV Action Tours Inc. in 1996 and serves as its president and chief executive officer. In 1997, he was presented with the Nevada State Governor's Award for Tourism Development. The company, which specializes in off-road itineraries, opened its first international office in Brazil and plans to open offices in Europe....**Sean S. Muggli**, '93 BS Accounting, is the comptroller for National Vacuum Corp. in Niagara Falls, N.Y. He lives in Lancaster....**Robin Allen Phillips**, '93 BS Secondary Education, is the placement coordinator for the Tacoma (Wash.) Goodwill Services. She supervises programs intended to help people who face special challenges in finding employment, such as people who are disabled, homeless, or on public assistance. She lives in Federal Way....**David A. Cherry**,

'94 BA Communication Studies, is deputy press secretary for U.S. Sen. Harry Reid, D.-Nev., in Washington, D.C....**Wonseok Han**, '94 BS Hotel Administration, works for HANS Valley Co. Ltd. Previously, he worked at the Novotel Ambassador Toksan and at the Olympia Hotel Seoul....**Scott Gulbransen**, '95 BA Communication Studies, was recently promoted to senior account executive at Ballard Communications. He heads the professional service, high-tech, health care, and litigation public relations teams and also deals with crisis management for various clients....**Jennifer Sims**, '95 BA English, graduated from New England School of Law in Boston in 1999. She lives in Revere....**Kimanthi A. Thompson**, '95 BS Marketing, is vice president of sales and marketing at Entertainment on the Web Inc., an Internet organization that produces search engines. Previously, he worked at Smartpages.com as national sales manager. He lives in Palmdale, Calif....**Ken Tomory**, '95 BA Communication Studies, is a fund manager at the University of California, San Diego. He manages \$3-\$5 million in research funds for the endocrinology and

## 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 head-and-shoulders photograph of yourself to accompany your Class Notes entry.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Year Graduated \_\_\_\_\_ Major \_\_\_\_\_ Type of Degree(s) \_\_\_\_\_  
(e.g., Bachelor of Arts, Master of Science)

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone Numbers: Home \_\_\_\_\_ Office \_\_\_\_\_

Career or Personal Information \_\_\_\_\_

Entries should be mailed to: Diane Russell, UNLV News and Public Information, 4505 Maryland Parkway, Box 451012, Las Vegas, NV 89154-1012



## CLASS NOTES

general medicine divisions of the department of medicine....**Leeman Abdulai**, '96 BS Economics and Management Information Systems, is an analyst with Microsoft Corp. in Redmond, Wash., where he works with the volume licensing group in the Worldwide Operations Division. Previously, he was a software engineer with UTICS Corp. in Las Vegas....**Eric Chiang**, '96 BA Economics, received a master's degree in economics from the University of Florida in 1999. He is now working on his doctoral degree in economics there....**Kathleen "Kitti" J. Hammons**, '96 BS Business Administration, received her MBA from Loyola Marymount University in 1998. She now works for Mattel Corp. as a senior operations planner for the Barbie team at Mattel's corporate headquarters. She lives in Redondo Beach, Calif....**Gretchen Prins**, '96 BS Marketing, is a sales consultant for Sankyo Parke Davis. She handles the company's diabetes/cardiovascular product sales in Nevada. Previously, she worked as a senior pharmaceutical sales consultant for SmithKline

Beecham Pharmaceuticals....**J. Margaret Hume Surz**, '96 BA Criminal Justice, is a state trooper in Illinois. She patrols the highways in Chicago. She lives in Chicago's northwest suburbs....**Ron Gibson**, '97 BA Communications Studies, is a public information officer for the city of Tallahassee, Fla. Previously, he worked for the city of Valdosta,



Ron Gibson, '97

Ga.; Valdosta State University; and NASA's Marshall Space Flight Center....**Bong-Shik Lee**, '97 BS Hotel Administration, is the assistant manager for the Shilla Hotel Resorts in Seoul, Korea....**Scott F. Murray**, '97 MA Ethics and Policy Studies, is a major in the U.S. Air Force. He was awarded the bronze star last year for meritorious achievement. He served in Kosovo. He is now stationed at Spangdahlem Air Base in Germany....**Dallen K. Ormond**, '97 BS Nursing, helps children with heart problems in his job as a cardiology nurse practitioner at Primary Children's Medical Center in Salt Lake City. In 1999 he

received a master of science degree in nursing as a family nurse practitioner from Brigham Young University. He lives in South Jordan....**Jay So**, '97 BA Film, received a master of fine arts degree from the American Film Institute in 1999. He has formed a film production company, LSA Productions Inc., and has plans to shoot a feature film in Brazil. He lives in Southern California....

**Gregory West**, '97 MBA, is helping pioneer the world of online promotions for Yahoo! Inc. in Santa Clara, Calif. Previously, he spent two years working in promotions for radio station KLUC in Las Vegas. He lives in Fremont....



Jeffrey A. Breeden, '98

**Jeffrey A. Breeden**, '98 BS Accounting and Financial Management, is a staff accountant at the CPA firm of Stewart, Archibald & Barney LLP. He achieved the second highest score statewide on the May 1999 CPA exam....**Ramzi Iskandar**, '98 BS Hotel Administration, works for Four Seasons Hotels and Resorts at

the Regent Beverly Wilshire in Beverly Hills, Calif. He is an assistant restaurant manager....**Karl E. Neff**, '98 BA Human Resources, is working as a human resource employment specialist at Barrick Goldstrike Mine. He lives in Elko....**Lynette Boggs McDonald**, '98 Master of Public Administration, recently joined Thomas Puckett Advertising as president of the company. Previously director of marketing and community relations at UNLV, she has been a member of the Las Vegas City Council since 1999....**David Scott Sorensen**, '98 BA Criminal Justice, attends the Whittier School of Law in Costa Mesa, Calif., and plans to graduate in December.



Lynette Boggs McDonald, '98

As you can see, we have changed our format to accommodate more Class Notes submissions. We are committed to getting your Class Notes information out as soon as possible, so keep those cards and letters coming!

## comic tendencies

continued from page 25

Thurber could've been looking out the same window."

In stark contrast to the prime real estate at which he resides professionally, the tiny New York apartment in which he actually lives is mostly a testament to the cost of rent in the big city.

"Right now, I am bicoastal in the most pathetic way," he says. "If you took both of my apartments, the one in L.A. and in New York, you'd have a room roughly the size of a standard faculty office here in the [Flora Dungan] Humanities Building."

He keeps his apartment in L.A. for his frequent trips to the West Coast to pursue other projects, such as the one he's doing with POP.com. The project is a live-action short sitcom that appears exclusively on the Internet on the site recently created by

Imagine Entertainment and DreamWorks SKG. Upchurch is visibly excited about it.

"The Internet is the future, even in comedy," he says. "And our show is great. It's about Carl, an office worker who does a secret webcast from his cubicle. He is a master loafer who has avoided doing any actual work for years but has managed to convince his coworkers that he's the hardest working guy in the company."

Carl is played by Upchurch's longtime friend and fellow UNLV alumnus Alfredo Treferis, who is a stand-up comedian and writer. Upchurch himself plays Russel, Carl's colleague who usually gets stuck doing all of the work.

"I'm not an actor, but I had to do the part for economic reasons," he says, adding that despite having big-name backers, the project is not very well funded. "After reviewing the tapes, I decided my fake acting doesn't ruin the show. I think I might actually fool someone. We've shot the first six episodes, and it looks to be hilarious."

Soon the show will be accessible to the

general public via the Internet at [www.POP.com](http://www.POP.com), Upchurch says. And he has other projects pending, including several screenplays, that he plans to promote as tirelessly as he has promoted himself and his writing up to this point. After all, he notes, work in the entertainment biz can be as fleeting as fame.

But Upchurch's optimism about his career seems to be more firmly planted these days; shortly before this issue of *UNLV Magazine* went to press, he received word that he has been nominated for an Emmy Award again this year for his work on *The Chris Rock Show*. So, it would seem, things are continuing to go his way.

While he doesn't talk about the narrative structure of sketch comedy much with anybody anymore, he says the concepts are still in there, floating around in his head. He figures they might have helped him in the long run somehow. And who knows, he muses. Maybe Al Franken would be willing to revisit the subject with him someday. ☺



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