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Bobby Fischer Goes to War

Fellowship Key to Book Project

—By David Edmonds '02

It's 5 p.m. on Tuesday, July 11, 1972, and the seats filling the arena of the sports hall in Reykjavik's featureless leisure complex are sold out. On the platform, the world chess champion, Boris Vasilievich Spassky, sits alone at the chessboard. He glances up at the other side of the board. The expensive low-slung, black-leather swivel chair, specially provided for his challenger, the American Bobby Fischer, is empty.

It was the beginning of a remarkable two months in which the hitherto unpublicized world chess championship competed for front-page headlines with Vietnam, Northern Ireland, Chile, Uganda, and the deepening Watergate scandal. Later, the match would become immortalized in film, on stage, and in song. But why?

Partly, what gripped popular imagination was the idea that this U.S.-Soviet clash was both microcosm and symbol of the cold war hostility between the superpowers. The lone American star's success would do more than simply win him the title: It would dispose of the Soviets' boast that their chess hegemony reflected the superiority of the socialist system. The American challenger was profoundly convinced of his epochal role. The match was, he said, "really the free world against the lying, cheating, hypocritical Russians..."

In fact, the reclusive and mercurial Fischer made an incongruous U.S. hero. And it was also the American's dysfunctional personality that ensured front-page column-inches for the match. An unquestioned genius at the board, he was consumed by chess to a degree that surprised even other grandmasters. This obsession was accompanied by a notorious lack of social grace, a pachydermic insensitivity to others, and a capacity to strike real fear in his



The ever-difficult Bobby Fischer being helpful

opponents. He was also fixated on the conditions under which he played. Over the years, he had insisted upon, and secured, greater and greater control over arrangements, proving himself ready to risk all to have his way.

Though not much was known about him in the West, the genial, dapper, ever-courteous Spassky could not have presented a greater contrast. The London *Sunday Times* described him as "the more benign type of Soviet bureaucrat." However, behind the Soviet monolith, his peers saw him variously as artist, joker, nihilist—a free spirit. Most significantly, they regarded him as an un-Soviet man (an epithet he cheerfully accepted). A Russian nationalist, he was a headache for the authorities in his refusal to toe the party line and honor his political role as a Soviet world champion.

Those summer months of 1972 were part farce, part tragedy off the chess board, titanic struggles on it. At first Fischer refused to show up at all, demanding more money. Then, complaining about the presence of the TV cameras, he forfeited the second game. In our book *Bobby Fischer Goes To War*, John Eidinow and I describe how he eventually powered his way to an historic victory.

En route, we meet a cast of colorful characters. The cameo roles include a millionaire British businessman, the KGB, Henry Kissinger, and a rock-dancing Icelandic bodyguard.

The book was conceived before my Fellowship in Ann Arbor, and completed after my return home, but without the spell in Michigan it would have been a lot less fun to write. When not fueling up on foul-tasting but strangely addictive sherry* in Wallace House, I was buried in the library grazing through the newspaper archive. I also spent many happy hours in the Donald Hall film library collection,

watching scores of movies, all of which had one chess scene or another. Though it never made the final cut, we had planned a chapter on how chess is deployed as a highly affective literary signalling system—used to create atmosphere and tone, and to make instant narrative references to personality, temperament, and states of mind.

Typical is representation of chess players as malevolent and Machiavellian. In *Rambo III* (1988), for example, Rambo is sent on a mission in support of the embattled Mujahideen forces and to rescue his erstwhile boss from a region of Afghanistan governed by a Soviet commander, Colonel Zaysen. The Colonel is a chess player. Enough said. The western audience needs no more information to know that he is without feeling, cunning, and capable of brutal torture.

Sherry apart, the process of researching and writing the book was far from torture.

—David Edmonds is current affairs editor for the BBC. He and John Eidinow are the authors of *Bobby Fischer Goes To War: How the Soviets Lost the Most Extraordinary Chess Match of All Time*, published by HarperCollins.

*N.B. Against tradition and the wishes of top management, Wallace House sherry has been upgraded.

Photo by Ted Russell/Time Life Pictures/Getty Images

From the Head Fellow

By Charles R. Eisendrath '75

A Spirited War Debate at KWF London Reunion

The occasion was the first reunion of Fellowships' alumni in Britain, and the setting was important. Fitzmaurice House, the rambling quarters of the Lansdowne Club in Berkeley Square, formerly belonged to Lord Shelburne, the Marquess of Lansdowne. It had been he, nearly alone among British peers, who argued publicly in favor of giving the American colonists their independence. It had been he, as Prime Minister, who drafted the Treaty of Paris (in "The Round Room" adjoining the bar where we gathered). And it had been he, this friend of America, who negotiated with Benjamin Franklin the final document in Paris that put Michigan in the United States. (In 1783, it could just as logically have become part of Canada.)

The topic of dinner debate that February evening was "the trans-Atlantic divorce" much in the news. Prime Minister Tony Blair was under siege for taking Britain to war in Iraq with the United States. France and Germany were just beginning to find ways back into the good graces of the Bush administration after refusing to take part. Most of the 13 Fellows around the table were from the BBC, and some guest/spouses were also British.

It would be understating things badly to suggest that opinion around the table was heavily against the war and Blair's decision to join it. Hotly so, in fact. To have been otherwise would have been remarkable. Throughout a full week of intensive media consumption and journalism junky-ing, I found little support for the official U.S./U.K. position.

England taught many things when Julia and I lived there in 1969-70 on assignment for *Time*. One was the tradition of friendly but pointed debate over the last wine at dinner. The idea is to be a little provocative. As it happened, a perfect little provocation had been hatching in my thoughts in recent weeks.

Briefly put, I found the idea that Europe

had no business aiding an American initiative just because of disagreement or even disapproval, was utterly preposterous. Yes, you read that correctly—preposterous. Here is why:

As Lord Shelburne could amply remind us, the two sides of the Atlantic have been trading world leadership for 200 years, in the sense of assuming the lead role on the global stage, whether to good reviews or otherwise.

Following the curtain-up of the



BBC alumni and guests reunite at Lansdowne Club in London.

Revolutionary War, Europe called the shots, often literally, as in the War of 1812. We tend to think of the Civil War as a purely domestic affair, but it wasn't. At dinner, I mentioned the troublesome stances of Britain and France in the 1860's. Both had textile industries that needed American cotton from the South the way U.S. refineries now need oil from the Middle East. They did not come actively to our aid until it was clear that "we" (the United States) would ultimately vanquish the Confederacy.

To many Europeans, a similar hanging-back-until-the-worst-was-over described America's delayed entry into World War I. But from our shores, it seemed an exclusively European affair and a massively, stupidly pointless one, at that. Even then, however, American doughboys went "Over There, Over There," as the popular song put it. Over 320,000 American troops joined the millions killed, gassed, maimed, and missing without ever having an idea why, other than "saving" France from Germany, which happened to be the largest single source of the American population!

In World War II, it took Pearl Harbor to draw us in, but although the strike came from Asia, American arms first went to "save" Britain and "liberate" France. The script remained the same throughout the numerous localized wars following joint endeavors even when the thinking behind it was fractious. This was famously the case in the Balkans. Only after American initiative did Europe deal with what was a strictly European affair.

So why should it seem odd, let alone outrageous, for Americans to assume help from Europe in dealing with Iraq? Was the American judgment that something new was required in the Middle East, even if badly and/or misleadingly explained, so different from the European decisions to change the map in various ways? Not so, I argued. The image of fathers, grandfathers, and great-grandfathers dying in Europe, in the cause of various European grudges,

remains as vivid in the American psyche as the American cemeteries behind the beaches of Normandy.

Was there agreement around the table in Fitzmaurice House? Thunderous applause at the brilliance of my analysis? Of course not. I faced veterans of Wallace House, after all. What followed instead was engagement over an important subject, some of it heated, much of it edifying, all of it, as Lord Shelburne might have put it, most satisfactory.

Afterwards, around a lively fire going in the bar, one room away from where the treaty of American independence had been drafted, Sarah Ward-Lilley of the BBC approached me with a relieved look on her face. As managing editor for newsgathering, she has been organizing our exchange with the BBC but had never visited Ann Arbor. "You know," she said, "I talk to our people before they go and do these mysterious things at Michigan, but I've never really understood what goes on there. I get it now."



CLASS of 2004

Jennifer Babson, 32, Keys bureau chief, *The Miami Herald*. Diaspora, identity and community in Latin America.

Mehmet Yavuz Baydar, 47, ombudsman, *Milliyet* (Istanbul). Islam and democracy in the Arabic world.

Eve Conant, 31, Moscow correspondent, *Newsweek*. Radioactive and chemical pollution in developing countries.

Rob Daumeyer, 38, editor, *Cincinnati Business Courier*. Race and inner city economics.

Nancy Nall Derringer, 45, columnist/reporter, *The News-Sentinel* (Fort Wayne, Ind.). Old media, new media and an informed public.

Adi Gold, 34, editor, *Seven Days* (Tel Aviv). Scriptwriting.

Vahé Gregorian, 43, reporter, *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. The history and apparent demise of sportsmanship.

Jung-mi Hwang, 35, reporter, *The Segye Times* (Seoul). U.S. policy decision process.

L'Tanya Joyner, 43, business writer, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. 9/11 and the sense of loss.

Salwa Kanaana, 33, correspondent/web editor, *Al-Quds Al-Arabi Newspaper* (London). Press freedom and political stability in the Arab world.

Dharma Lingam, 35, freelance journalist (Sri Lanka). Media of the oppressed.

Mary Losure, 50, environmental reporter, *Minnesota Public Radio*. International environmental issues.

Chris Lydgate, 37, assistant news editor, *Willamette Week*. Emerging diseases and syndromes.

Pam O'Toole, 46, reporter, *BBC World Service* (London). Migration and asylum.

Vince Patton, 40, environmental reporter, *KGW-TV* (Portland). Native Americans and environmental law.

Matilde Sánchez, 43, editor, *Clarín* (Buenos Aires). Mental illness.

Fatih Turkmenoglu, 35, producer, *CNN-Turkey* (Istanbul). Psychology and literature.

Jay Weiss, 42, producer, "Nightline," *ABC News*. American foreign policy/international law.

Andrew Whitehead, 47, editor, "The World Today," *BBC* (London). Origins of the Kashmir crisis.

Holly Yettick, 30, education reporter, *Rocky Mountain News*. Bilingual education.

Fellows Report



on Fellowship

So You Want to Write a Screenplay?

—By *Nancy Nall Derringer*

Mention you're writing a screenplay to someone with experience in showbiz, and sooner or later she makes some version of this speech: "What a horrible idea. If you want to write fiction, do a novel. As soon as you turn a screenplay in, it's not yours anymore. Idiots tear it apart, and after a while, it bears no resemblance to what you worked so hard on."

In other words, it sounds exactly like the newspaper business.

Maybe that's why so many journalists are drawn to screenwriting—the potential to suffer the same editorial abuse we're used to, only at a much higher salary.

I signed up for Terry Lawson's Screenwriting 310 on something of a lark; my friend Ron French, '03, had taken the class and encouraged me to do the same, so we could someday do a project together, one we'd been discussing for a while. (There's a man, an execution, and a media circus. Discretion prohibits me from saying more.) Lawson spent much of the first class channeling the "Amityville Horror" house (Get OUT!), telling us this would be the "most challenging class we'd ever take at the University of Michigan." I thought it was just show, to drive out the dilettante undergrads. A screenplay is, what, 100 pages? Most of it white space? How hard could it be?



Nancy Nall Derringer

Plenty hard, it turns out.

Like lots of things that look easy but aren't, screenwriting has its own immutable grammar, a set of rules that at first seem enormously restrictive. There must be three acts, a key decision made between pages 20 and 30, building to a climax around page 80, raising the stakes to dizzying heights, after which you have about another 20 pages to wrap everything up. That white space is not your friend; it requires you to keep things as lean as an actress on Oscar night. You must fall out of love with your own prose, your fancy vocabulary—it sounds stupid coming out of the mouths of your characters, who must talk the way regular people do. And you must remember, always, that the best stories come from great characters.

Hmm. Stories about people, no wasted words, and the quotes have to be right. This does sound familiar, doesn't it?

There were many days when I felt like Barton Fink, staring at his false start, unable to go further. Lawson, whip in hand, was no respecter of anything so wussy as writer's block. We turned in pages weekly, with a rigidly enforced completion deadline at term's end. And so, little by little and with a few 20-page spurts, my own story, about Amish teenagers in a coming-of-age crisis, took form on the armature of screenplay structure. I could scarcely believe it and was delighted when Lawson, in his comments, said it was "very sellable."

That lasted only a few days, until I read a story about a new reality TV series planned for this summer on UPN—"Amish in the City," a ghastly-sounding take on my very own topic, which leads me to believe that while my idea may well have been sellable, someone else sold it first.

I hope, after all this, I've earned the right to say: That's showbiz.

—*Nancy Nall Derringer is a columnist and reporter for The News-Sentinel (Fort Wayne, Ind.).*

Se Habla Español?

—By *Holly Yettick*

I met Rosa three years ago in Denver while working on a story about her third-grade teacher. The teacher spoke no Spanish. Rosa spoke no English. She seemed to be a smart, lively child, yet she spent much of her time playing or gazing off into space because she rarely understood what was happening in class. As an education reporter, I wanted to know what Rosa's parents thought about this. So I approached the child's father one afternoon as he picked her up from school. I had been told that the family's legal status in this country was precarious. I could see immediately that Rosa's father was scared and confused at being questioned by an unfamiliar Anglo woman wearing a badge—my press pass. I tried my best to explain myself in English, sign language, and broken Spanish. But I managed only to frighten him, not interview him. I felt not only frustrated by my inability to include the family in my story but also remorseful about the unnecessary anxiety I might have caused.

If I were to meet Rosa's father today, I could communicate with him easily. That is because my study plan topic is bilingual



Holly Yettick

education. This plan has allowed me to spend the past school year studying Spanish intensively at the University. While I cannot claim to be fluent, I certainly have the ability to use that language to explain that I am a reporter, not an immigration agent, or a school administrator, or a policewoman. I believe that the language-learning opportunities provided by the Fellowship will allow me to give voice to many Spanish-speaking families who have traditionally been left out of mainstream, English-language newspapers.

My study plan also called for me to find out more about the educational research and policy decisions that affect Spanish-speaking English learners, who are disproportionately poor and enrolled in poorly performing public schools. To accomplish this, I have been taking courses in the University's School of Education. Last semester in Joanne Carlisle's language development course, I learned how children acquire language at home and at school. I learned about the advantages educated parents provide their children by reading to them and providing the type of vocabulary children need for school by speaking about abstract subjects. In David Cohen's seminar on international education, I learned how different cultural conceptions of schooling can deeply affect what students learn and how they perform on standardized tests. For instance, the French conception of equal schooling calls for a curriculum that is much more rigid and standardized than our own, but also, objectively, much more equal.

I am also taking a course in the Spanish department on Hispanic Culture. This class, which is conducted mostly in Spanish, focuses on the challenges faced by Spanish-speaking students in North American schools. A book assigned for the class, *Con Respeto*, has opened my eyes to the gap between the expectations of many of our nation's public-school teachers and the attitudes and assumptions of many poor and working-class Mexican families.

The Knight-Wallace Fellowship has been a life-changing experience for me. My only regret about the year is that I cannot turn back time to that afternoon I met Rosa's father and use the knowledge I have now acquired to get the information I needed then.

Holly Yettick is education reporter for the Rocky Mountain News.

An Open Door to Madness

—By Matilde Sánchez

Open Door used to be a traditional hospital for the mentally ill with a well-established medical reputation. Located in the outskirts of

Buenos Aires, this venerable state-run asylum was founded in the mid-1920s to house patients in a friendly environment. True to its name, Open Door favored contact with nature over physical restraint and the straightjacket. Its turn-of-the-century buildings and patients' wards were a reflection of scientific optimism and Argentina's former prosperity. However, as military regimes took power in the country and prosperity gradually faded away, Open Door turned into one of the most overcrowded and forgotten human depots, housing thousands of aging madmen and offering living conditions worse than poverty level.

In the 1980s, a macabre story made the front pages of the national papers in Argentina. A dozen mysterious deaths at Open Door led to the discovery of a horror plot going on behind its walls, involving blood and organ traffic. Open Door was investigated, and its superintendent—in an unintentional parody of the scientific genius who goes nuts—ended up in jail.

The Open Door story was one of my first assignments as a journalist for a weekly magazine, and its drama and dark undertones stayed on my mind all these years. Last year I decided to turn that true story into a fictional thriller that would follow the rise and fall of a major medical institution as it goes through a scandal more suitable to a horror tale. Since I wanted the novel to be highly realistic, I began to study the period's psychiatric trends and milieu. Besides a couple of good books dealing with the history of Argentine medical institutions in the early 20th century, there is virtually no recent bibliography on the general history of psychiatry available in my country. Nor have any of the well-regarded general histories of psychiatry been translated or brought to Argentine libraries. Finding the right historians in this particular field would have taken months of search.

The Knight-Wallace Fellowship meant not only the chance to spend extended time in the most extraordinary libraries of the University of Michigan, where I am found every morning, but also it brought an enlightening dialogue with several outstanding scholars in the history of medicine. Joel Howell opened my eyes to how relevant the system and manner of medical protocols are to understanding scientific discourse on madness and therefore the relationship between patient and doctor. Joel Braslow's research on Californian



Matilde Sánchez

asylums took me to the heart of somatic treatments extensively used in Argentina, ranging from bath therapy to electroshock, while Jonathan Metzl, who has written on the marketing techniques behind widely used drugs such as Valium and Prozac, helped me understand medical labeling of the mentally ill.

But above all, it has been my meetings with Saulo Ribeiro, a Brazilian psychiatrist based at the University's Depression Center, and his guidance—encompassing both scientific knowledge and a wealth of literary and philosophical references underlying medical attitudes—that have steered my readings in the maze of essays and psychiatric textbooks. He has also become a friend I hope to keep for the future. By the time my Fellowship ends, my time in Ann Arbor will have allowed me to build an accurate background for my narrative and will have provided me with intellectual tools not easily available in my country.

Matilde Sánchez is an editor at Ñ, the culture magazine of Clarín (Buenos Aires). She is the author of three novels and a narrative in collaboration with Hebe de Bonafini, head of the Mothers of Plaza de Mayo.

From Mad Cows to Christopher Columbus

—By Chris Lydgate

Like a lot of fellows, I came to the University of Michigan with a well-laid plan. Mine was to write a book about a sinister neurological disorder named Creutzfeldt-Jakob Disease. Within weeks, this idea sprung a major leak when I discovered that a Pulitzer-prize winner had already written a fabulous book on the subject (oops!). My first instinct was panic. But gradually I came to see this as an opportunity in disguise.

I was fortunate enough to take a course from Marty Pernick on the history of medicine which focused on the devastating epidemiological impact of Columbus's voyage to the New World. It's well known that European invaders gave native Americans devastating diseases like smallpox and measles. What's less well known—and still hotly debated—is whether the Americans returned the favor and gave the Europeans syphilis.

I found myself completely absorbed by



Chris Lydgate

—Continued on page 8

Our Great Geniuses



A KWF first:
Kyoko Gasha takes over Times Square.

Kyoko Gasha '92, a New York-based correspondent for *Reuters*, is currently assuming larger-than-life proportions: Her photo is displayed on the NASDAQ tower in Times Square. "It had always been my dream to work as foreign correspondent," Gasha writes. "So when *Reuters* offered me a job as a financial TV reporter in New York three years ago, I snapped it up. It has been quite an experience to live in this city with my daughter, Anna (I named her after Ann Arbor)." The September 11 attacks occurred shortly after Gasha's arrival in New York, and her apartment was two blocks from the World Trade Center. She and her family were evacuated and forced to move seven times in two years. "Somehow we overcame the obstacles, and I am still here at *Reuters*, talking about the American stock market every day. I even have a weekend show to cover American business. It's been a real challenge!"

Last June, a new column called "One Spirit" by **David Crumm '02**, made its debut in *The Detroit Free Press*, where Crumm is religion writer. "I had resisted doing a column for many years for all the obvious reasons—the biggest one being that it's a locked-in-steel weekly deadline I have to meet in the midst of my

other work," Crumm says. "But, the launch of the column, which focuses on everyday spirituality across a broad range, has taken off like a shot with readers. Among other things, we've got an interactive feature where each week we invite feedback and, then, run a sidebar the following week reflecting what readers thought. It's become a minor sensation, frankly, and is reshaping my work here in ways I didn't expect. I was invited just recently to write a chapter for a new scholarly book coming out next year on religion and American culture."



David Crumm

Ken Franckling '84 was named 2003 Jazz Photographer of the Year by the Jazz Journalists Association. He is hoping to publish a jazz writing and photography book of his coverage and interviews from the past 20 years.

Jane Holligan '02, a freelance journalist based in Dundee, Scotland, has published a book with Sally Bowen titled *The Imperfect Spy: The Many Lives of Vladimiro Montesinos*, about the spy and security chief to President Alberto Fujimori. The book was published late last year in Peru by Peisa. "As several dozen trials

against Montesinos continue in Lima, we are still learning the extent of the corruption web woven by Montesinos while he was President Fujimori's right-hand man and Washington's principal ally in Peru in the fight against drugs," Holligan says. "His corruption web spread across several countries, and there are estimates of a personal fortune of hundreds of millions of dollars."

Richard Leiby '01, who reported last year on the Iraq war for *The Washington Post*, has taken over as the paper's "Reliable Source."

The much-read gossip column appears in the paper's Style section.



Richard Leiby

"I thought it would be great fun to cover gossip instead of war, but both can be equally exhausting," Leiby says. "I'm writing four columns a week, and the items require extensive reporting. (We fumigate gossip at *The Post* and

magically turn it into well-sourced material.) At the Oscars I had to walk down the Red Carpet, face a swarm of paparazzi and attend six different parties in one weekend. How many times can a man make conversation with Hobbits and stare at Paris Hilton's rear end? The horror, the horror..."

At Casa Rosada with Argentina's President



Argentine President Nestor Kirchner (center, second row) and his wife, Senator Christina Fernandez de Kirchner (center, front), and Alberto Fernandez, Chief of Cabinet (front, fourth from left) meet and brief the Knight-Wallace Fellows.



Jon Morgan and Diane Brozek Fancher

Jon Morgan '01, was named state politics editor at *The Baltimore Sun*, supervising coverage of state government and politics. "It's a big change," says Morgan, who previously covered sports, "but I spent six months filling in as an assistant city editor and found I liked the work, though not the hours. It's fun to be back in news." Morgan reports to another KW alum—**Diane Brozek Fancher '82**, the *Sun's* Maryland editor.

Eve Byron '99, natural resources reporter for the *Helena Independent Record*, won first place in investigative reporting in the Pacific Northwest Excellence in Journalism Competition with the Society of Professional Journalists. She also won a first-place award from the SPJ Inland Pacific competition. "The awards were for a series I wrote last spring on environmental groups, called "Growing Green," Byron writes. "Remember how my fellowship involved



Eve Byron

research on the Internet? I used that training to find financial information on the Net about environmental groups that were active in Montana, specifically those groups that file tons of lawsuits to block timber sales.

The Green groups howled when the stories came out, but acknowledged that everything was accurate—it just wasn't something they thought their members needed to know."

Kevin Lowther '77, regional director for Southern Africa for Africare, has published with C. Payne Lucas an updated paperback edition of *Keeping Kennedy's Promise*, which Westview first published in 1978. The book critiques the Peace Corps' formative years, Lowther says, and includes a new introduction

which attempts to place the Peace Corps in a post-September 11 context. He also has published op-ed articles on Africa and development issues for *The Washington Post* and several other newspapers. A recent edition of *American Legacy* magazine carries a feature article Lowther wrote on the roots of the back-to-Africa movement, which is based, in part, on research during his Fellowship year.

Elizabeth Pond '77, a Berlin-based journalist, is the author of *Friendly Fire: The Near-Death of the Transatlantic Alliance*, published by the Brookings Institution Press and the European Union Studies Association. She is currently writing a book on the Balkans war.

Bob Williams '02, senior writer for the Center for Public Integrity, received an award from the Online News Association last year in its enterprise journalism category for "Well Connected," the center's look into the cozy relationship between the FCC and the broadcast industry. The center's work has already sparked two investigations by the General Accounting Office and two Congressional hearings. "As for the future," Williams says, "I have been turned loose on the oil companies for the next year. Hoping to find some groundbreaking stories in this new role."

Send your doings to **Birgit Rieck** at brieck@umich.edu

Michigan is for Lovers!



▲ **Jiri Nadoba '03 and Eliska Karhanova** wed on August 2, 2003 in Pilsen, Czech Republic. Pilsen beer was flowing, but there wasn't enough to entice any fellow Fellows to make the trip.



◀ **Michelle York '03 and Frank Polvino** tied the knot on October 11, 2003 in South Bristol, N.Y. at a writer's retreat with six fellow Fellows witnessing the affair.

▶ **Scott Huler '03 and June Spence** got hitched on November 29, 2003 in Raleigh, N.C., with four KWFers in attendance.



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this 15th-century public-health debate, and fascinated by the bizarre “cures” that medieval doctors invented to combat this terrifying new disease (one favorite treatment included greasing pox victims with mercurial salve and sticking them in an oven). More peculiar still were the doctors who refused to treat the pox because it was God’s punishment for sin. When I discovered that syphilitic hair loss touched off the 17th-century craze for wigs, I was hooked. I am now working on a book proposal on the history of syphilis, though I try not to talk about it at parties.

Chris Lydgate is assistant news editor at Willamette Week.

Where Have All the Sportsmen Gone?

—By Vahé Gregorian

“I read the sports pages first because they record man’s accomplishments,” former U.S. Supreme Court Chief Justice Earl Warren once said. “The front pages record his failures.”

That distinction, alas, now is negligible. Today’s athletes routinely can be seen on trial for murder or rape or in the spotlight for allegations of drug abuse. Supposed beacons of integrity such as college campuses and the Olympic movement frequently have been incubators of athletic scandals.

Moreover, the chivalrous traits once associated with athletes have been replaced by boorishness. Showmanship and gamesmanship—if not outright cheating—are the prevailing trends and are greeted with approval in many quarters. “In hockey, if you’re not cheating, you’re not trying,” Joel Quenneville, the former

St. Louis Blues coach once said, but he needn’t have limited his comment to hockey.

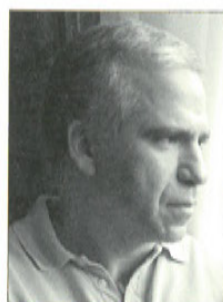
As a sportswriter at the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*, I have long been interested in the apparent demise of sportsmanship. But the topic didn’t become a fascination until after it was called to my attention a few years ago by Harry James Cargas, a University of Michigan graduate and a remarkable scholar in St. Louis.

One day Dr. Cargas called to discuss a project he had in mind. When we met, he handed me some notes he had collected on sportsmanship. He told me he was tired and not well and asked if I’d be interested in working with him on a book about it. When I got home, I knew at a glance that this was a promising idea.

Some days later, I opened the *Post-Dispatch* and was stunned to see Dr. Cargas’ obituary. That was 1998. It felt as though I’d been passed a torch, but I felt paralyzed and was unable to look at the notes again.

Until last fall, when I was given the chance to come to Michigan and explore this vast, complicated topic. The pursuit has been exhilarating in ways I couldn’t have anticipated.

For instance, my adviser on campus is Bill Martin, the University’s athletic director and acting president of the U.S. Olympic Committee. Bill has been generous with his time and wisdom, and I’ve enjoyed getting to know him. One of our seminar speakers at Wallace House was Richard Pound, a member of the International Olympic Committee and president of the World Anti-Doping Agency. In addition to a dinner with these two



Vahé Gregorian

influential men, I had time to speak with and interview Mr. Pound when I drove him to and from the airport.

The University’s library system has provided resources that would take years to exhaust. And I was amazed to find courses that addressed key matters, including Sports and Life in Ancient Rome; Sports and Society; and Sport and Empire (U.S. and British). In addition to Bruce Madej, the University’s Sports Information Director, several faculty members—including Andy Markovits, Bruce Watkins, Vince Diaz and Damon Salesa—took interest in my project.

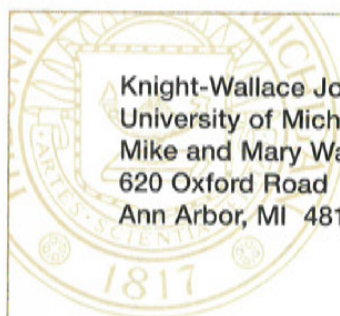
As for that project’s ultimate direction, I’m still trying to sort it out. If this project is ever to become a book, many decisions loom about its scope. But I’ve learned that my view of the overarching theme is different than what I had expected.

Since time immemorial, sports have been tainted by cheating and unseemly behavior. Sports historically have mirrored the times, meaning they typically have been corrupted in the context of that time and place. Mythology about athletes nonetheless prevailed, but it has been exposed now, for numerous reasons. And consider that this society is increasingly shameless, often sees the ends—money and winning—as more important than the means, and is saturated with shrill, voyeuristic entertainment media.

The combination has meant more raw coverage of less virtuous characters, blurring front-page news and sports news—which arguably has gone from merely reflecting society to contributing to its erosion.

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All Fellows’s photos by Vince Patton



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