

ONE MAN'S TRASH IS ANOTHER MAN'S treasure in Hale County, Ala. At least that's what students in Auburn U.'s Rural Studio class are learning. Their classroom? A construction site in one of the state's poorest communities.

Since 1993, Auburn architecture students have been using innovative methods and unconventional materials to design and build new homes and build-

Better Homes and Gardens

ings for the poor. But Rural Studio students have a leg up on most architecture majors — they're learning in practice what their peers are learning in theory back at Auburn, 150 miles away.

"All we'd done up to that point was basically arts and crafts, and then suddenly, we had to build a building!" says fourth-year student Bruce Lanier.

Not enough money for insulation? Try hay bales. No glass for the windows? Some empty soda bottles will do the trick. But it gets better — for his senior thesis, Steve Durden and two classmates designed and built a chapel out of old tires filled with sand, stacked in rows and stuccoed over. And then he got married in it.

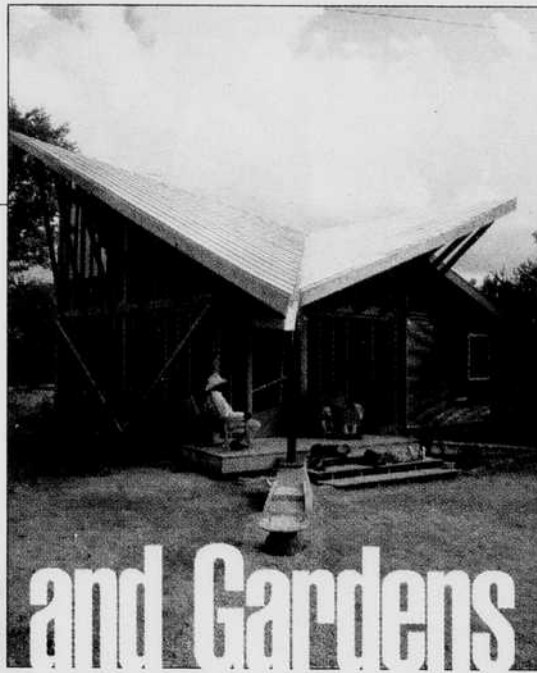
"We were taking off our tool belts and putting on tuxedos 30 minutes before the wedding," Durden says.

But happy endings aren't really a way of life for the residents of Masons Bend, a town where Rural Studio does most of its work. "When you drive up to Masons Bend and see chickens scurrying across a dirt road, mangy dogs and the houses that are there — these shacks — it blows your mind, really," says third-year student Justin Patwin.

Those shacks become chalets after students choose clients with help from the county's department of human resources and their professor, Samuel Mockbee. Each quarter, a fresh group of about 15 students comes in and builds on what the last bunch has done, sometimes even changing a design or adding a new detail.

"It puts you in your place," says Lanier, who worked on a handicapped-accessible home last year. "It totally changed the way I look at pretty much everything I do."

By Tara Andersson, Auburn U., Ala. /Photo courtesy of Samuel Mockbee



The Price is Right

EVERY WRITER HAS ONE HIDDEN AWAY. SOME KEEP IT IN their sock drawers, others deep in hard-drive files. The stash? Their collection of scripts, novels and other works they hope will help them hit the big time ... someday.

For UCLA film student Brian Price, some-day is today. His comedy script "The Many Lives of Bobby Ivers" sold to Universal Pictures for a whopping six-figure sum, an almost unheard-of feat for a first-time writer.

His big break came after he won the UCLA Screenwriters Showcase last summer with his first draft. A 15-minute reading in front of an industry audience drummed up so much interest, Price had to play hard to get as he put the finishing touches on the script.

"It's basically about a guy who goes through an aborted past-life therapy session and starts living through his past lives," Price says. The inspiration came from — of all places — a Disney cartoon. "I was watching *Aladdin* a

few years back, and I was really taken with how Robin Williams could jump from one character to another. I wanted to do something in which this jumping was a plot point rather than a character element." But characters will still make their way into Price's movie — Jim Carrey and Adam Sandler have been mentioned for the lead.

So what's next for the student screenwriter? He's sticking around for one more year of grad school and using some of his newfound fortune to pay off student loans. He has ambitions to direct, but for the moment he's planning to build on his current success with more conventional scripts, which he's hoping will give him the clout to make movies that are a bit off the beaten path.

With his track record, it won't be long before moviegoers know the Price of fame and fortune.



By Paul F.P. Pogue, Ball State U., Ind./Photo by Helen Hwang, Pepperdine U., Calif.

A RECENT OUTBREAK of pushers has taken over the U. of Oregon campus. And you wouldn't believe what they're pedaling.

Wipe those thoughts from your minds, kids. We're talking bikes here — tandem bikes, to be exact.

A service similar to the common safe-walk system most campuses use, U. of Oregon's tandem taxi service employs strong-legged student cabbies to pedal around campus five nights a week and pick up students who don't feel safe riding or walking alone.

It doesn't cost passengers a cent, but that doesn't mean it's a free ride: Backseat drivers do have to help pedal.

Effort be damned! For students like senior Derinda Gurley, two-wheelin' through campus

Big (and Safe) Wheels



Tweedledee and Tweedledum aren't the only fans of tandem biking.

with partner pedalers is the safe and fun way to go.

"I would rather call them than ride alone at night," says Gurley, a tandem taxi regular. "It's good because you don't have to worry about driving. It's faster than walking, and there's a camaraderie — it's just a lot of fun."

The entertainment isn't bad, either. "I see a lot of people who use it if they've been drinking," she says. "That pedaling sobers you up a bit."

David Niles of Green Gear Cycling in Eugene, Ore., master-minded the service. With the cooperation of U. of Oregon's office of public safety, Niles and his cabbie comrades kicked off the

program last spring and transported more than 20 students a night.

The service is simple. The cab crew cruises around the more popular parts of the 250-acre campus, such as the library, and waits for students to yell for a ride. And if the cabs are out of yelping range? No problem. Niles carries a cell phone so he's just a spoke's throw away.

"My goal is to spread this to other universities," Niles says. "I just think it's a motivator for me to improve the quality of life where I'm living, and avoiding a car lends itself to a more liveable city."

By Allison Sherry, Colorado State U. / Photo by Chad Patteson, U. of Oregon

THE BUZZ

- Almost 1 million students may be carrying weapons, says a survey from researchers at Cornell U. and Southern Illinois U., Carbondale. More than 26,000 students on more than 60 campuses responded to the survey, which found that 7 percent of respondents admitted to carrying a weapon in the past 30 days.

- The good news: Minority-student enrollment rose 2.9 percent between 1994 and 1995, according to a report by the American Council on Education. The bad news: Compared with gains of 7.1 percent between 1992 and 1993 and 4.6 percent between 1993 and 1994, progress is slowing.

- College can be a tough time, but it's rare that a student finds himself in a life-or-death situation. David Gilger, a sophomore at the Metropolitan State College of Denver, is an exception. Gilger was juror No. 6 in the Oklahoma City bombing trial, one of the 12 men and women who sentenced Timothy McVeigh to death.

- The job market for college grads is better today than it's been for the past five years, according to an annual Michigan State U. study. The survey found employers anticipate a 6.2 percent increase in hiring, as well as a 3.5 percent to 4 percent increase in starting salaries for new grads.

Wacky Classes

Those who think college is a drag obviously never took any of these classes from the past and present.

- **Montana Mushrooms** — U. of Montana — Fungus has never felt so good! And we hear the prof is a real fun guy.

- **Fields of Dreams: Baseball, American Culture and the Open Road** — U. of Alabama, Tuscaloosa — Have a ball on a five-day field trip to see games

from the minors to the majors.

- **Corn and Culture** — Radford U., Va. — Want to learn about the social, economic and religious significance of this pop-ular veggie? Radford offered 40 corny courses to students last year as part of this program.