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Diving in: Bogac Ergene, assistant professor of history, is enthusiastic about his second full year of teaching. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

Even as his field, Middle Eastern studies, pushes to develop "terrorologists," Bogac Ergene remains resolutely a classicist.

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THE WEEK IN VIEW

Jan. 15 4 p.m
Commemorative service for Rev. Martin Luther King, Jr. Keynote address by Dean Emeritus Lawrence McCrorey, also music and a candlelight recession. Ira Allen Chapel. Followed by a group reading of *Selma, Lord, Selma*. 656-8818

Jan. 15 7 p.m.
Women's basketball vs. Albany, Patrick Gym.

Jan. 17 7:30 p.m.
Lecture: "What Ever Happened to Racism?," Rev. Harold T. Lewis will discuss racism in America. Cathedral Church of St. Paul, Burlington. 864-0471

Jan. 21 12:15 p.m.
Martin Luther King Day Program: "In the Spirit of Martin: the Living Legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King," Vermont Historical Society. Dewey Lounge, Old Mill. 479-8500

Jan. 22 7 p.m. Men's basketball vs. Maine, Patrick Gym.

Jan. 22 7:15 p.m.
Reading group: "The Writings of Nel Noddings," John Dewey Project. Discussion is in advance of Noddings's visit to Vermont on Jan. 28. Food provided. Grace Coolidge Room, Waterman. 656-1355

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Team "Wayne Newtons" from Sharon Academy won the IBM Grand Prize at this year's 2002 UVM Design TASC, "The Energy Challenge - Raise the American Flag!" They are the first team to win four years in a row. The students will exhibit their device Jan. 19, at the University Mall, noon-3 p.m. (Photo: Rob Evans)

Poet is Finalist for Prestigious Literary Award

Leaving Saturn, the first collection of poetry by Major Jackson, assistant professor of English, has been nominated for a National Book Critics Circle Award.

In a July 2002 review in the *Boston Globe*, the book was described by critic David Mills as "an homage to the inner-city ugly duckling, which, through Jackson's humanistic powers, is transformed into a swan."

Jackson's poems speak of his passions – music, urban life, the power and beauty of language, and the struggle, dignity and brilliance of African Americans. The book's title alludes to avant garde jazz great Sun Ra.

Jackson, who joined UVM in 2002, said he was "stunned" at hearing of his nomination for the prestigious award. "I feel like a bonsai in a forest of redwood," he said. "I am simply happy to be named and associated with my heroes, the other nominees. They are all fantastic, masterful writers of verse. This is the honor for me."

As reported by the Associated Press on Jan. 14, Jackson's fellow finalists in the poetry category are B. H. Fairchild, Harryette Mullen, Sharon Olds and Adam Zagajewski.

An alumnus of Temple University and the University of Oregon, Jackson's honors include the

Hilberg Honored in Munich for Holocaust Research

Raul Hilberg, professor emeritus of political science, was awarded the Geschwister Scholl Prize for the German edition of his 2001 book, *Sources of Holocaust Research*, and for the body of his life's work, which laid the foundation for studies on the persecution and murder of European Jews by the Nazis. The award was presented in Munich, Germany, on Dec. 2 and widely publicized in the European press, including the German newspaper, *Der Spiegel*. The Scholl prize, named for German resistance leaders Hans and Sophie Scholl, is funded by the Association of Bavarian Publishers and the city of Munich.

Born in Vienna in 1926, Hilberg emigrated to the United States in 1939 and joined the U.S. Army in 1944. As a member of an intelligence unit during the occupation of Germany in 1945, he discovered Hitler's private library, which had been packed in crates and stored in Munich. It was this experience that inspired him to begin an investigation of all historical records that might shed light on the political and bureaucratic structures as well as the individual acts of violence by which Hitler and his followers carried out the Holocaust. He published his findings in 1961 in the three-volume *The Destruction of the European Jews*, a landmark in the field of Holocaust studies.

In his most recent book, *The Politics of Memory: The Journey of a Holocaust Historian*, Hilberg writes movingly of his youth in Vienna and his experiences as a refugee in Cuba and New York. The heart of his work recounts the 13 years he spent sifting through more than 40,000 German documents while researching his masterwork.

To learn more about Hilberg's career as an author and preeminent Holocaust scholar, see *Vermont Quarterly Online*: [In Pursuit of Terrible Truths](#).

UVM-Trinity: The Deal is Done

University officials signed legal documents for the purchase of Trinity College on Dec. 30. The university had entered into a purchase and sale agreement three months ago to acquire the college's entire campus property for \$14.3 million.

"Now that the purchase has been completed and the Trinity campus is officially part of the University of Vermont, we will complete plans for the use of the property," UVM President Daniel Mark Fogel said. "This is truly a great opportunity.

Bread Loaf Writers' Conference Stanley P. Young Fellow in Poetry, 2002; Louisiana Division of the Arts Artist Fellowship, 2002; a Pushcart Prize nomination, 2001; and a Pew Fellowship in the Arts. His work has appeared in several periodicals, including *The New Yorker*, *Philadelphia Inquirer* and *American Poetry Review*. *Leaving Saturn* was published last year by the University of Georgia Press.

Grants Will Fund New Initiatives in Asian Studies

The Asian Studies Program recently received three grants to develop new educational initiatives to help children and adults learn about China and Japan.

The U.S.-Japan Foundation will contribute more than \$438,000 over three years to enhance the study of Japan in Vermont schools from kindergarten through 12th grade. The grant will provide additional opportunities for Vermont teachers to study Japanese culture in Japan, and will increase the staff of the Asian Studies Outreach Program, which promotes study of Asia in Vermont schools. Since 1984, ASOP has organized programs in China, Japan and Thailand for Vermont teachers and students.

The Freeman Foundation has contributed more than \$216,000 for Asian Studies faculty to create an educational game that promotes learning about China. To be designed for a target audience of junior high school students through adults to use in schools and homes, the game will be distributed worldwide.

A third grant of \$30,000 from the Paramitas Foundation will sponsor events and programs in Asian Studies for both the UVM community and general public and fund faculty research. Paramitas is a private charitable foundation based in San Jose, Calif., and chaired by Intel executive Winston H. Chen.

Asian Studies is an interdisciplinary program comprising 16 faculty members in 10 academic disciplines.

Athletics Raffle Tickets on Sale

If you don't win the trip to Jamaica from the Fleming's raffle, try your luck with the Athletic Department give-aways. The drawing for numerous prizes will be held Feb. 22 at the men's hockey game against Harvard. Proceeds benefit student-athletes and athletic programs; tickets can be purchased at home athletic events and from student-athletes.

The grand prize is four round-trip tickets for anywhere in the continental United States, courtesy of Jet Blue.

Other prizes include: a La-Z-boy Recliner from the La-Z-boy Furniture Galleries at the Superstore in Williston; two general-admission season passes for all men's hockey and men's and women's basketball games in 2003-04; a weekend getaway

We intend to make use of the facilities for the educational and related purposes that the Sisters of Mercy of Vermont so deeply care about."

In general, the campus will be used to consolidate some dispersed UVM operations, provide much needed housing and fulfill other important needs such as childcare, classrooms and office space.

Administration Appoints New Director for Government Relations

The university has appointed Gretchen Babcock, former commissioner of the Vermont Department of Banking, Insurance and Securities, as the director of government relations. Babcock's mandate is to enhance relations between the university and state and federal governments and ensure that UVM's interests are represented with state officials and legislators, key state and federal executive branch members and congressional members and staffs.

"We're lucky to be able to add to our team a person of Gretchen's stature," said Karen Meyer, vice president for state and federal relations. "Her experience and proven track record at the national level, along with her background as a public servant in Vermont, fit the requirements for this position very well."

Babcock served as the executive director of state government relations for Blue Cross and Blue Shield Association in Washington, D.C. for nine years. She influenced legislation at the state level through direct advocacy, worked with federal lobbyists and Congressional staff to advance policy goals and designed national strategies for communications.

Babcock also has served as counsel for the Board of Governors of the Federal Reserve System in Washington, D.C. and the Office of the Attorney General in Montpelier. Babcock was educated at the University of Rochester and is admitted to the practice of law in Vermont.

Fleming Will Fly Two to Jamaica

In celebration of its current exhibition, "Soon Come: The Art of Contemporary Jamaica," the Fleming Museum will raffle off two round trip tickets from Boston to Jamaica. Airline tickets were donated by Air Jamaica.

Only 250 tickets will be sold. They can be purchased, for \$5 each, at the front desk of the museum during gallery hours. The drawing will be held Jan. 31.

Information: 656-0750

at the Sheraton Burlington Hotel and Conference Center in South Burlington; a three-hour session of relaxation, including an aroma steam and massage, from Athena's Day Spa in Essex Junction; and six Stowe cards for discount days from the Stowe Mountain Resort.

Information: 656-1744.

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Actor, author and professor Anna Deavere Smith will perform on campus on Jan. 23. For more details, see the story below. (*Publicity photo.*)

Actor, Author Anna Deavere Smith to Present "Race in America"

Playwright, actor, professor and author Anna Deavere Smith will present "Race in America: Crossroads of Ambiguity" on Thursday, Jan. 23, at 7 p.m., in Ira Allen Chapel.

Hailed by *Newsweek* as "the most exciting individual in the American theater," Smith explores issues of gender, race, community and character in America. She combines the journalistic technique of interviewing subjects from all walks of life with the art of recreating their words and stories in performance, ultimately presenting controversial events from multiple points of view.

A professor of the arts at New York and Stanford universities, Smith was awarded the prestigious MacArthur Foundation Genius Fellowship in 1996 for creating "a new form of theater – a blend of theatrical art, social commentary, journalism and intimate reverie." In addition to her theatrical work, she appears regularly on television's *The West Wing* and has performed in the films *Dave*, *Philadelphia* and *The American President*.

A question and answer period will follow Smith's performance, which is free to students, staff and faculty with UVM identification.

Date Set for "Mastering the Maze"

The 2003 edition of the annual "Mastering the Maze" conference for the professional development of staff has been set for Thursday, March 20.

"Quest" Draws On University Experts

A new television series devoted to northern New England features six UVM-affiliated experts in its premiere season.

The show, which debuted on Vermont Public Television on Jan. 7, is devoted to finding intriguing stories about nature and science. It will air the next five Tuesdays at 8 p.m. The program's premiere episode featured Hub Vogelmann, former chair of botany. UVM connections in subsequent episodes include:

- "Autumn," Jan. 17 at 12:30 p.m. (originally aired Jan. 14): Includes Alan Strong, Vermont Monitoring Cooperative/UVM ornithologist, and Bernd Heinrich, professor of biology.
- "Winter," Jan. 21 at 8 p.m. Includes Bernd Heinrich.
- "Remote Sensing," Jan. 28 at 8 p.m. Includes Lesley-Ann Dupigny-Giroux, state climatologist and UVM geographer.
- "Food for Thought," Feb. 11 at 8 p.m. Includes Rachel Johnson, professor of nutrition and acting dean of CALS.

The program was produced by Maine Public Radio and is narrated by author and commercial fisherman Linda Greenlaw. For more on the show and its programming schedule, see www.vpt.org.

A Television Trove is Set for Sports Teams

Five athletic events, including Vermont's first-round game in the America East Women's Basketball tournament, will be televised on Vermont Public Television this year.

The athletic events shown on VPT are in addition to games aired on the cable Adelphia Channel and New England Sports Network.

VPT will open their coverage with the UVM men's hockey game with St. Lawrence at the Gutterson Fieldhouse on Feb. 15. Other games televised will be men's basketball games with Boston University, Feb. 22, and Albany, March 2; and the women's basketball matchup with Maine, March 5. The network also will broadcast the women's basketball first-round America East playoff game in Hartford, March 13, at a time to be announced.

NESN, Adelphia and ESPN are scheduled to air several games in the conference tournaments for men's and women's hockey and basketball in March. Some of these slots may go to Vermont teams depending on their performance in the

The theme for this year's event is, "Cultivate the mind, define the future."

events.

The program will include seminars, speakers and films. A detailed agenda has not yet been set. After detailed event plans are finalized, consult [Mastering the Maze 2003](#) for more information about registration and programming.

theview

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Publications and Presentations

Will Miller, assistant professor of philosophy, attended the 5th Biannual Radical Philosophy Association – the conference title was "Activism, Ideology and Radical Philosophy" – at Brown University, Nov. 7-10, 2002. He chaired and was a discussant on a panel titled, "Examining Political and Religious Discourse," and helped develop the conference web page at www.uvm.edu/~radphil/rpa2002.htm.

Brian Reed, associate professor of physical therapy and associate dean of the College of Nursing and Health Sciences, has been invited to be the keynote speaker at the First International Physical Therapy Congress in Fortaleza, Brazil, April 10-13. He will be speaking on "Advances in the Clinical Use of Modalities and Physical Agents."

Wolfgang Mieder, professor and chair of the Department of German and Russian, has published the chapter on "*Sprichwort*" (Proverb) in a volume edited by Hannes Fricke, *Kleine literarische Formen*. The book contains chapters on such so-called "simple forms" as anecdotes, aphorisms, emblems, parables, riddles, jokes and proverbs. Mieder's chapter deals with the definition, form, origin, dissemination, history, use and function of proverbs.

Catherine Donnelly, professor of nutrition and food sciences, was quoted in an article that appeared in the Dec. 4 edition of the *Journal of the American Medical Association*. Donnelly expressed some impatience with the pace of regulatory reform regarding listeria in the piece, which is available at <http://jama.ama-assn.org/issues/v288n21/ffull/jmn1204-2.html>

Garrison Nelson, professor of political science, recently published the four-volume *Committees in the U.S. Congress, 1789-1946*. His book was the subject of a story in the *Boston Globe*, among other outlets. He presented and was a panelist at the annual meeting of the Northeastern Political Science Association in November, 2002.

Awards and Honors

Leaving Saturn, the first collection of poetry by **Major Jackson**, assistant professor of English, has been nominated for a National Book Critics Circle Award. Jackson's fellow finalists in the poetry category are B. H. Fairchild, Harryette Mullen, Sharon Olds and Adam Zagajewski. The award will be announced Feb. 26.

Denise J. Youngblood, professor and chair of history, has been elected to a three-year term with the professional division of the American Historical Association. She also will serve a term as chair of the committee on the status of women of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies.

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Theory and Practice

Emerging Islamic law scholar Bogac Ergene favors documents over doctrine

By Kevin Foley



Diving in: Bogac Ergene, assistant professor of history, is enthusiastic about his second full year of teaching. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

Even as his field, Middle Eastern studies, pushes to develop "terrorologists," Bogac Ergene remains resolutely a classicist.

The assistant professor of history, who grew up in Turkey and focuses his scholarship on Islamic law, started teaching just two weeks before Sept. 11. The rippling resonance of the terrorist attacks meant that the newly minted Ph.D. found his

adjustment to a new job and new city complicated by dozens of requests, formal and informal, to discuss fundamentalism, terrorism and military response. Those topics are, in many ways, as remote from his scholarship on the Ottoman legal system of the 17th and 18th centuries as Jalalabad, Afghanistan is to Jericho, Vermont.

But Ergene, an upbeat and quick-to-smile man as comfortable discussing Ohio State football as abstruse social theory, has no complaints. "I was very lucky to be living here after 9-11," he says, praising Burlington's progressiveness. "It's a fascinating period," he continues. "Many students take my classes trying to understand fundamentalism, or 9-11, which I do not even talk about. There is certainly some pressure to become a terrorologist instead of a historian, but this is understandable. It is a topic people want to know about."

His department chair, Professor Denise Youngblood, finds Ergene's work last fall somewhat more impressive. "It's hard enough to be a first-semester junior faculty member, and then that," she says. "But teaching his material, coming from the Middle East, he rose to those circumstances beautifully. He accepted all kinds of speaking engagements and was always articulate, persuasive, reasoned."

People and practice

Ergene grew up in Ankara, Turkey, a quiet city in the central portion of the country. He went to college there, earning undergraduate and graduate degrees in economics. But as he moved deeper into the subject, the restrictions of neo-classical economic theory began to chafe against his personality and political beliefs.

"I became bored with economics," he says. "My training treated the discipline as a science – it was mathematical and assumed that everyone acted with purely utilitarian tendencies. I was frustrated by those assumptions. I wanted more complexity."

In search of that nuance, he began gravitating toward economic history, pursuing graduate study at the London School of Economics. But even there, he tired of working with models of theoretical human interactions and longed to


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[Librarians Rally](#)

Librarians might be trained to speak softly, but threaten censorship or abridgement of free speech and they'll speak volumes.

[Fighting Weight](#)

As any veteran of a scrapped New Year's weight resolution knows, the real trick is not losing the weight – it's keeping it off. Which is not to say that losing weight is easy. But it is simple, at least if you're talking with Jean Harvey-Berino.

begin writing history based on the stickier interpersonal relationships of living individuals. He dropped his economics studies and entered a doctoral program at Ohio State, where in 2002 he completed a dissertation analyzing the classical practice of Ottoman law.

Much of this work involves close reading of actual court documents, and figuring out how litigants related to court personnel during the heyday of the Ottoman Empire. The school of justice that the Ottomans operated in is still influential in the Islamic world, particularly in Central Asia, but many of its historians tend, in Ergene's opinion, to excessively focus on the system's theory rather than its practice.

"My contribution is looking at what they actually did, rather than what they should have done," Ergene says. As an example, some histories of the Ottoman courts attribute the lack of peasant rebellions during the period, in part, to the legal system's fairness. But Ergene's closer look at the bribes and machinations necessary to be heard under some circumstances reveals that many litigants actually worked hard to avoid the system. Instead of relieving peasant resentments, the system often exacerbated them.

Taking on these questions involves painstaking use of hard-to-find primary sources documenting the litigation and adjudication of actual cases, but Ergene also tries to tie the specific cases to larger theoretical concerns. His work borrows from anthropological literature, particularly a rich body of ethnography and theory describing dispute resolution, to extend the reach of his arguments. He has published extensively in both English and Turkish, and a book derived from his dissertation is under review for publication.

"Bogac is engaged with sources that nobody uses and he uses them creatively and thoughtfully and integrates them with theoretical concerns," says Sean Stilwell, an assistant professor of history who has read Ergene's manuscript. "By bringing in the theory and anthropological stuff, he can make bigger arguments and comparisons that will engage scholars outside his specialty."

Talking to the big shots

Despite being extremely early in his career, Ergene's work already has won substantial recognition within his field. At the Middle East Studies Association annual meeting last November, he was awarded the Malcolm Kerr Dissertation Prize, the group's most prestigious award for young scholars.

"When I got the letter saying I won, I couldn't believe it. My advisor had gone behind my back and nominated me," he says. "I had to call up the office at MESA to make sure the award was really for me. It was an incredible thrill going up before the big shots in the field and presenting my work."

Back at UVM, as he enters his second full-year of teaching and juggles the publications and ongoing scholarship he'll need to earn tenure, he's also focusing on developing his voice and style as a classroom teacher. He's been heartened by the strong evaluations he has received so far, but allows that his teaching is a work in progress after spending years as a teaching assistant and only making the transition to professor last year.

Denise Youngblood is enjoying watching his progress.

"Bogac is really unusual in that he combines a formidable intellect with a winning, down-to-earth personality," she says. "He can shift easily from really abstract ideas to explaining the principles of Islam to undergraduates. He's so approachable, that even with his difficult and now politically sensitive subject matter he makes students feel very comfortable about asking him questions."

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Librarians Rally to Protect Patrons' Rights

By Lee Griffin



Laws in 48 states, including Vermont, protect the confidentiality of library users. Trini Magi, of Bailey/Howe Library, says the USA PATRIOT Act changes all that. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

Librarians might be trained to speak softly, but threaten censorship or abridgement of free speech and they'll speak volumes.

Their current target is Public Law 107-56. Better known as the USA PATRIOT Act (the torturous name shaped to create its stand-and-deliver acronym is Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism Act of 2001),

the law was passed in October 2001 and has drawn a slow but widening resistance, with librarians and bookstore owners in the lead. They object to what they see as its assaults on academic and intellectual freedoms and to its prohibitions on speaking about government inquiries into their records.

Opening the debate

Critique of the law, particularly the manner of its passage, was swift. "I wouldn't say it's unprecedented," says Peter Spitzform, library assistant professor, "but it's up there in terms of having zero public hearings and almost no congressional debate – it was just pro forma – and it's a huge law."

Huge and verging on inscrutable. An article last March in the *Chronicle of Higher Education* aptly described it as "a 132-page patchwork of amendments to [other] laws..."

"It's a major research project to understand what it says," says Trina Magi, library assistant professor who, with Spitzform and others, is helping to raise awareness of the act's implications. Spitzform especially worries that mainstream media are parroting the administration's line and not raising awareness about the act's constitutional issues. They "don't really cover this stuff in ways that would raise people's anxieties to an appropriate level," he says.

The two librarians recently testified at the Burlington City Council, which became one of 21 U.S. cities – and counting – to pass a [Resolution](#) in response to the law's perceived threats to civil liberties.

The fears

"Librarians believe it is critical to our mission that people feel safe in our library and use it without the judgment of others," Magi says. Among the fears stirred by the USA PATRIOT Act, she adds, is that "what you do in a library might not be private. Books, web sites could be monitored, even if you're not suspected of committing a crime. Prior to this [law] an agency would need a court order that showed probable cause."

Scott Schaffer, library assistant professor at Bailey/Howe and a former lawyer,



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concur. "The government always had the right to do these investigations," he says, "when there was probable cause that a crime had been committed or would be. The difference now is that isn't the standard anymore. They don't need to make that kind of showing."

"My biggest concern," Schaffer says, "is ... harassment of individuals of Middle Eastern descent – like the Hoover days of harassing anyone they don't particularly care for."

The act also could have a chilling effect on scholarship and research, Magi says, with users becoming self-censors, questioning if they should use "this particular combination of books, web sites, etc." That would be "detrimental to our being an informed citizenry and that's critical to our country," she says.

Magi, who is past president of the Vermont Library Association, recently appeared at a press conference at Fletcher Free Library in Burlington convened by U.S. Rep. Bernie Sanders, I-Vt., the only one of Vermont's congressional delegation who voted against the act.

Sanders explained that he voted against the bill because he "feared that it could lead to an unnecessary, dangerous and broad expansion of government's reach into our private lives. ... One of the most troubling uses of the PATRIOT Act is the expansion of surveillance, monitoring and investigation into our libraries and booksellers," he said. "And to top it all off, librarians or bookstore owners served with a search warrant ... are forbidden by law from telling anyone that the search has been asked for by the government, that records have been given to the government or that the library or bookstore is being monitored."

Reaction

Schaffer says the act has "caused libraries to think about what kind of information we maintain and why. If we don't have the information, then they can't get it." Bailey/Howe, for example, has stopped maintaining records of materials used in the past. No longer does it track specific uses of materials; rather, it keeps count of the times a material has been used but not by whom. Records of patrons' recent borrowings are kept only for the duration of the loan.

Although the Faculty Senate hasn't debated these issues, Michael Gurdon, professor of business administration and president of the Senate, says the body is collaborating with United Academics to plan one or more presentations by invited speakers later in the semester.

"I'm certain that most people are supportive of reasonable measures taken to enhance national and personal security," Gurdon says. "The trick is to make sure that surveillance and restrictions on activities don't go beyond a standard of reasonableness and begin to inhibit the process and the benefits of free inquiry in a democratic society."

Gurdon says he finds it "interesting that the monitoring of the purchase of firearms in this country is minimal and so obviously inadequate, yet there is now a real danger that the exploration of ideas, the advancement of knowledge, will be subjected to much more intrusive monitoring than in the past."

"As I understand it, the PATRIOT Act and subsequent related legislation have placed restrictions on the research activities of foreign students and scientists, especially in regards to working with select biological agents within laboratories. The United States has become the world leader in multiple fields of higher education in part because it has been able to attract so many of the best and brightest young minds from abroad. And remember that a further byproduct is that graduates and scholars return to their home countries with a deep understanding and appreciation of American society and its values. To restrict that inflow of talent and potential goodwill will only be self-defeating."

Dean of Libraries Mara Saule says "the USA PATRIOT Act undercuts the fundamental values not just of libraries, free inquiry and open access to information and the values we share in all of higher education, but also verges on an attack on first amendment rights and on the whole idea of individual privacy. ... The implications are large. We need to be vigilant about any slippery slope that threatens our civil liberties and our First Amendment rights."

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Fighting Weight

By Kevin Foley



Portions are key: Weight-loss and nutrition researcher Jean Harvey-Berino distills weight loss to burning more calories than you consume. (File photo: Bill DiLillo)

As any veteran of a scrapped New Year's weight resolution knows, the real trick is not losing the weight – it's keeping it off. Which is not to say that losing weight is easy. But it is simple, at least if you're talking with Jean Harvey-Berino, associate professor and acting chair of nutrition. Simple but elusive.

"The more we study obesity, the more complicated it is," she says.

Losing weight means consuming fewer calories than your body needs to meet its daily energy requirements. For most of us, especially the 80 percent of the adult population defined by the Centers for Disease Control as overweight, this means eating less and exercising more. Helping patients do this successfully over time mixes physiology, psychology and nutrition, and it's one of Harvey-Berino's prime research focuses. In 2000, she was awarded a \$1.1 million National Institutes of Health grant to compare long-distance weight-control counseling, such as that provided over the World Wide Web, with in-person counseling.

Though her first publication on the subject was far from a resounding victory for the Internet, Harvey-Berino says that long-distance counseling and support is cost-effective and is better than no treatment at all. Some of her recent work involves predicting which patient factors determine success or failure for Internet weight-loss. This, she hopes, will lead to more effective programs.

"There are great clinics for treating obesity, but they aren't very accessible. If we could develop techniques over the Internet that work and are cost-effective, we'd be doing people throughout rural Vermont a huge service," she says.

the view is definitely not the kind of effective, weight-fighting Internet tool that Harvey-Berino hopes to help develop. We nonetheless asked her to share some thoughts on ways to approach weight control that might help keep readers from resigning on their resolutions.

- **Know your BMI....** Body-mass index, a science-based relation of height to weight, is the most reliable tool out there for assessing your size. Check yours at [Body Mass Index Calculator](#). A reading of 25 or under is normal, while a mark of 30 or over is considered obese. Higher readings, even at the top of the normal range, tend to be associated with increased risk of health problems. "The numbers are not pulled out of a hat," Harvey-Berino says.
- **...but don't freak out about it.** "I'd recommend most people with a reading of around 25 to just stay there," she says. "They don't need to lose weight unless they really want to." Even more important than the number, she says, is context. A reasonable waist measurement (excess



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Theory and Practice

Even as his field, Middle Eastern studies, pushes to develop "terrorologists," Bogac Ergene remains resolutely a classicist.

Librarians Rally

Librarians might be trained to speak softly, but threaten censorship or abridgement of free speech and they'll speak volumes.

abdominal fat is strongly correlated with mortality) is a good sign; so is regular physical activity. "Some people are lean but not fit – but new research says it is far better to be a little heavier and fit," she says.

- **Losing weight starts with smaller portions.** We're surrounded by huge quantities of tasty, cheap, high-calorie food that advertising and social norms encourage us to eat with abandon. So the first step to losing weight is cutting back. "People think they ate one Costco muffin – but the portion size is three muffins," she says. She advises reading nutrition labels carefully, as many seemingly one-serving packages contain multiple servings. Harvey-Berino is quick to point out that a calorie is a calorie; a sustained excess of beans and rice will contribute to weight gain as surely as a proclivity toward tanker-sized soft drinks will. That said, the best of all worlds diet includes reasonable portions and includes regular servings of healthful foods.
- **Learn to picture those smaller portions – and the calorie math.** Consult package labels or published guides for portion sizes, so you can visualize, say, a proper portion of pasta when you cook at home. This will also make eating out responsibly easier. As for calories, your doctor or any number of books can give you a ballpark estimate of how many calories you need to maintain your weight given your size and activity. "Then work on understanding this in terms of portions of different kinds of foods," Harvey-Berino advises.
- **Plan ahead.** "I tell my patients that willpower is not enough," Harvey-Berino says. "You need to change your behavior and environment." One simple way to do this is to bring healthy food with you to work, and having it conveniently on hand at home, reducing the chances that you will end up rushing famished into a hamburger joint. "You do it consistently, it becomes a habit, and you can stop thinking as much about it," she says.

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