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The family Vogelmann: Tom (left) followed in the footsteps of his father, Hub, to take over the UVM botany chair. (Photo: Sally McCay)

Bare trees against a winter sky, spring peeper frogs, lightning bugs. Tom Vogelmann lists just a few of the reasons he is happy to be back in Vermont.

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Book It

Three UVM authors have published books on mainstream presses that are attracting notice both inside and outside the world of academe.

V-Day

Instead of nibbling caloric chocolates and buying overpriced roses this Valentine's Day, why not take part in a global movement to stop violence against women and girls?

Champlain Flyer

A frustrated UVM parker swaps road rage for rail relaxation.

THE WEEK IN VIEW

Feb. 13, 4 p.m.
University Scholar seminar: Don DeHayes, Natural Resources. Memorial Lounge, Waterman.

Feb. 14, 12 p.m.
Lecture: "Travels Along the Silk Road in China's Far West," William Mierse, Art Dept. 104 Allen House. Information: 656-8833

Feb. 14, 12:30 p.m.
Seminar: "Carbon and Climate Changes in the US," by George Hurtt of the University of New Hampshire. 104 Aiken Center. Information: 656-3269.

Feb. 16, 7:30 p.m.
Performance: "The Vagina Monologues." Tickets: \$8, \$5. Ira Allen Chapel.

Feb. 19, 3:30 p.m.
Lecture: "Vieques," by community leader Robert Rabin. 108 Terrill. Information: 656-0176.

Feb. 19, 7 p.m. Talk: "The Megatransect: Walking across the heart of Africa," by Michael Fay of the National Geographic Society. Billings Campus Center Theater. Information: 656-4057.

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**Lt. Governor Visits Campus**

Doug Racine, Vermont's lieutenant governor and a Democratic candidate to replace Gov. Howard Dean, visited campus on Feb. 12 to meet with students involved in volunteer and service learning programs. He is shown here with students Don Much (left) and Duffy Moran. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

Gift Will Bolster SNR Forestry Programs

Students will have expanded learning, research and outreach opportunities in sustainable forestry thanks to a \$230,000 donation from the Westford Forestry Foundation. The gift establishes an endowment fund in the School of Natural Resources, named for Marthe Kruse of Westford, Vermont, and her late husband, Henrik.

"This generous contribution will give our students broader hands-on experiences. They'll be in the forests, maximizing their exposure to sustainable practices," said Don DeHayes, dean of the School of Natural Resources. The Kruse Sustainable Forestry Fund will support sustainable forestry internships for academic credit, the establishment of sustainable forestry demonstration areas, and development of sustainable forestry seminars and outreach activities, DeHayes said.

"We wanted to support what UVM is already doing well and expand the practical opportunities so students see what's happening on a larger scale, in more locations," said Christian Kruse, son of Henrik and Marthe. The Kruse family owns and operates the 450-acre Westford Woods Tree Farm, which is home to one of the few small band saw mills and solar kiln operations in the state. Their progressive timber management and land stewardship practices also have earned Henrik and Marthe the Vermont Woodlands Association honor of being Chittenden County's Outstanding Tree Farmer in 1997.

During the past six years, UVM Forestry Professor Dale Bergdahl has been working with the Kruse

"Alternative Weekend" Going Mainstream

Since Sept. 11, student interest in community service has taken off: Volunteers in Action has recorded a surge new volunteers, the September Serv-a-thon posted 100 more volunteers than ever before, and the UVM Cares effort raised \$22,000 for the relief effort in New York City. But nowhere is the phenomenon more apparent than with Alternative Weekends.

UVM Americorps*VISTA worker Ben Zimmerman runs the Alternative Weekend program. "The most programs we have sent out in any semester since the program started in Spring 2000 is two. This semester, we're offering five programs, and already there's a waiting list," Zimmerman said.

Alternative Weekends are overnight community service trips designed to get UVM students volunteering throughout Vermont and beyond. Students get an opportunity to escape from campus for a weekend, build friendships, and learn about issues of service and community involvement. All trips are substance free and are supported with funding from the Department of Student Life and the UVM Bookstore, with a minimal cost to participants.

"Alternative Weekends are a chance for me to fit service in a busy schedule of school, work, and activities," said Kevin Jordan, a sophomore Recreation Management major from Andover, Mass., who has participated on two trips. "It's a great opportunity to get off campus and feel like I am doing something."

This spring, five trips will match ten students each with volunteer opportunities ranging from serving the homeless to performing spring trail maintenance to working with disabled skiers. Student leaders on each trip facilitate the group in service and reflection. This semester's trips, which are accepting waiting-list applications, are:

- Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports (VASS) Ski Camp, Warren, VT, January 25 – 27: Volunteers worked with children with physical and mental disabilities on the slopes at Sugarbush.
- Homeless Action Committee, Albany, NY, February 16 - 17: Volunteers will work alongside recovering and alcoholic homeless persons at a shelter.
- Vermont Adaptive Ski and Sports (VASS) Ski Race, Pico, VT, March 9 – 10: Volunteers will staff a ski race fundraiser at Pico Ski Area.
- Rosie's Place, Boston, MA, April 13 – 14: Volunteers will prepare and serve meals at a Boston shelter for low-income and

family designing and implementing sustainable forestry practices with the aid of his students. These student interns mainly have been involved with the implementation phase by getting their hands dirty working on ongoing projects such as forest health inventories, promotion of red oak regeneration and developing a geographic information system database for the property that will allow modelling of future forest growth on the Kruse land.

"The Kruses have been a great inspiration to our students and faculty by virtue of their responsible forest management practices and abiding concern for the welfare of wildlife and the forest ecosystem as a whole," DeHayes said. "We intend to emulate their private land management practices on university-owned forest land in ways that involve our students in hands-on learning experiences. The late Henrick Kruse was a passionate believer in innovation, learning-by-doing, and implementing new and improved ways of managing forests in a way that can enhance local communities," he said.

UVM intends to use the Westford Forestry Foundation's gift as a catalyst for an effort to raise \$500,000 in endowment funding for educational and research activities related to sustainable forestry. "This is the start of a solid foundation from which we can build upon," DeHayes said.

Hendley Award Nominations Sought

Know an exceptional female graduate student?

The Women's Center seeks nominations for the annual Edith D. Hendley Award. Alumni, students, faculty and staff are welcome to suggest candidates.

The award recognizes women pursuing graduate studies who have demonstrated excellence in research, scholarship and teaching (if applicable). Nominees should also have performed "dedicated service to women."

Nominations are due by March 15. Please submit them to the Women's Center, 34 S. Williams. Forms are available on request from the Office of Student Affairs.

homeless women.

- Green Mountain Club, Long Trail, April 27 – 28: Volunteers will camp out and perform spring trail maintenance on a section of the trail in central Vermont.

Solomonic Solution to Admissions Parking Crunch

Undergraduate applications are up, campus visits are on the rise – and that's created a crunch in the admissions parking lot.

In the endless revolving competition for scarce resources that is parking at UVM, simple changes yield big results. As some lots have closed, commuters have started parking in the admissions lot in greater numbers. That's fine, except during peak campus visit days, such as those during the February school holidays.

"We don't have any protectiveness over the lot – except when visitors are here," says Kim Howard, senior assistant director of admissions.

After speaking with too many irate parents who completed the long drive from Connecticut, Boston, New York or New Jersey only to find Burlington bereft of spots within a mile of the admissions office, admissions got in touch with Transportation and Parking Services and worked out a fair, if labor-intensive compromise.

An obvious, easy solution would have been to ban Zone 1 parking in the lot. But the campus visitation season is relatively brief, and eliminating spots is forever. So parking services worked out a system that maximizes parking for the campus community, while ensuring that prospective students aren't subjected to a roundabout tour of Burlington's back streets in a futile search for a spot.

"On days we know it will be busy, TPS blocks off parts of the lot," Howard explains. "We try to get every Zone 1 car parked that we can, while accommodating all the cars we have coming in for the visit program. It's taken a lot of people power in parking services, but they've done a wonderful job in finding a solution that accommodates everyone."

Of course, no solution is perfect. The blocked spots have caused mild consternation among faculty and staff unaware of the reasons for the restriction. "The frustration vanishes when we explain what's going on," Howard says.

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**Fleming Floats Away**

Students made wild masks to ride the Fleming Museum's float in Burlington's Mardi Gras festival on Feb. 9. Their efforts caught more than just *the view's* eye; a photo of the float ended up on the front page of the *Burlington Free Press* "Vermont" section on Feb. 10.

Lecture Offers Insiders' View of Iraq

Dennis Halliday, the former United Nations Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq, will discuss the country and the U.N. sanctions on Feb. 14, at 7:30pm in the Billings Campus Center Theater.

Halliday quit his position in 1998 after working in Iraq for 13 months. His resignation was inspired with his disgust over the humanitarian consequences of the economic sanctions put on Iraq following the 1991 Gulf War.

Halliday will share his view of the motives behind the US foreign policy toward Iraq, what the effects of the economic blockade are and who is benefiting from this policy and how the US policies toward Iraq relate to its policies toward other Middle Eastern states.

The lecture is sponsored by the Multicultural Education Committee of the UVM English Department. It is free and open to the public.

Career Expo Draws Dozens of Employers

Let the networking begin.

This year's Career Expo & Tech Fair is scheduled for Wednesday, Feb. 20 from 2-6 p.m. At press time, the event is set to draw 56 employers offering full-time, part-time and internship opportunities to UVM. For a list of employers – and the most current count – check the [Career Services](#) website.

In addition to hooking students up with employers ranging from IDX to Burton Snowboards to the Fund for Public Interest Research, the event gives students an opportunity to develop resume writing, interviewing and job-research skills. It is sponsored by UVM Career Services.

Investigating the Causes of Cancer

Douglas Weed, M.D., of the National Cancer Institute's division of cancer prevention, will deliver the 2002 J. Walter Lockett Lecture on Feb. 22, at noon in room 400 of the Health Science Research Facility.

Weed's talk is titled "What Causes Cancer? Lessons from Breast Cancer Research." The lecture is hosted by the Vermont Cancer Center. For more information, contact them at 656-4414.

Art Opening Promotes "Love and Understanding"

A student art show, "Love & Understanding: An Artistic Exploration of Cultural Diversity" opens at 5 p.m. on Feb. 14 in the Allen House gallery. The show is intended to affirm the positive role of love in community life.

"I have seen much art work come out in response to the September 11th disaster, and I believe that creativity is therapeutic," says senior studio art major Elyse Stoller, who helped organize the event. "This show will give students the opportunity to show some of their powerful and healing work."

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*Feb. 13-Feb. 19***Publications and Presentations**

Bridget Turner, assistant professor of Integrated Professional Studies and Education, received the Outstanding Doctoral Research award for her dissertation, "Women's Racial Identity Development: College Students Perceptions of an Antiracism Intervention," from the Educational Leadership and Policy Studies Department at the University of Maryland. Turner accepted the award and presented her research at the department's annual graduate research conference on Feb. 9.

Professors **Josh Forrest**, associate professor of political science, **Mustapha Diouf**, associate professor of sociology and **Robert Gordon**, professor of anthropology, were invited to participate in a discussion organized by the Canadian Foreign Affairs Ministry as part of their re-assessment of Canadian policy toward African countries on Feb 8.

Awards and Honors

Mark Stoler, professor of history, has been awarded a grant from the Fulbright Senior Specialist Program to spend two weeks at the University of Haifa this spring to lecture and serve as an advisor to their American Studies Program.

Branimir von Turkovich, professor of Mechanical Engineering, received an honorary doctorate degree in Materials Engineering from Politecnico University in Torino, Italy on Dec. 19, 2001. von Turkovich has been a professor at UVM since 1971.

Paula Fives-Taylor, professor of Microbiology and Molecular Genetics, is the winner of the 2002 Research in Oral Biology award from the International Association for Dental Research. The selection committee cited Fives-Taylor for her "significant contributions to the field of dental research." The award will be presented to Fives-Taylor at the association's annual meeting in San Diego on Mar. 6.

*Feb. 6-Feb. 12***Publications and Presentations**

Wolfgang Mieder, chair of the German and Russian department, has edited the book *Geht einmal euren Phrasen nach: Sprachkritische Lyrik und Kurzprosa zur deutschen Vergangenheit*. This anthology of modern poetry and short prose includes texts that portray a critical analysis of the recent German past. The various literary works comment on the use of language during the period of National Socialism and the Holocaust. They also expose the use of stereotypes and other proverbial phrases as a means of aggressive manipulation and an unfortunate way of rationalizing the inhumane actions of the Nazi period. The final chapter includes poems that call for a more responsible confrontation with the evils of the Hitler regime.

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Back to Roots

Botanist Tom Vogelmann returns to his home state and school, taking the chair his father held for 36 years

By Thomas Weaver



The family Vogelmann: Tom (left) followed in the footsteps of his father, Hub, to take over the UVM botany chair. (Photo: Sally McCay)

Bare trees against a winter sky, spring peeper frogs, lightning bugs. Tom Vogelmann lists just a few of the reasons he is happy to be back in Vermont.

"This place is just throbbing with life," Vogelmann says. "The West has spectacular scenery, but I've missed this incredible diversity of flora and fauna that we have here."

The new chair of UVM's Department of Botany and Agricultural Chemistry makes it clear that his twenty-year career at the University of Wyoming, located in a high desert valley between mountain ranges, wasn't exactly tortured exile for one with a career invested in study of the natural world. Still, it feels good to return to his native landscape, a state where family ties are strong, and a university that has made a solid commitment to the plant sciences.

"One thing leads to another"

Vogelmann, UVM Botany. If that sounds like a familiar coupling, it's with good reason. Tom Vogelmann is the eldest son of Hubert Vogelmann, professor emeritus and former chair of Botany at the university. When Hub Vogelmann retired in 1991, he closed a 36-year UVM career that included landmark research sounding one of the first alarms on acid rain's effect upon forests.

Via nature or nurture, there was little chance Tom Vogelmann would reach adulthood without a strong interest in the natural sciences. "He was always good for opening up your eyes to things," Tom Vogelmann says of his father. He admits, though, that in the early part of his childhood, "I didn't want to hear too much about plants." Fossils were another matter, and many trilobites and crinoids rattle in a long-treasured rock box that returns to native soil along with Vogelmann.

"One thing leads to another – geology, anthropology, archaeology. Ours was a family where we had a lot of discussions about science," Vogelmann says. His brother Jim also has a doctorate in botany, and brother Andy is the family maverick with his doctorate in meteorology and atmospheric sciences.

For Tom Vogelmann's part, it took five or six changes of major as a UVM undergrad to find his way to plant physiology. Passion found, he would go on to build his own career and reputation as a leader in the field. Vogelmann's particular area of research is plant adaptations. He uses biophysical techniques to study photosynthesis and how plant growth and development is affected by the environment. With a smile, he suggests that his particular interest in plants' interaction with light may have been inspired by growing up in a corner of New England where that light can be scarce.

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Vogelmann has excelled as both researcher and teacher, roles that he sees as complementary. He received University of Wyoming faculty awards for both endeavors, and he brings research that has drawn steady funding from the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Returning the favor

When Vogelmann initially explored his recent career move, location was a bonus but the position would have been a strong draw if it were in Ohio, Georgia or Utah.

"I look at the quality of this department, how we can grow and see some very exciting things on the horizon," Vogelmann says. "The university has made a commitment to build the plant sciences – new faculty positions, early planning for a new building. It is a whole new world and a very rare opportunity."

And as Vogelmann looks to strengthen Botany and Ag Chemistry, he takes his role mentoring emerging faculty very seriously. "I've had help in my career from chairs who shielded me from some of the demands that compete for the time you can give to research and teaching," Vogelmann says. "It's time I returned that favor."

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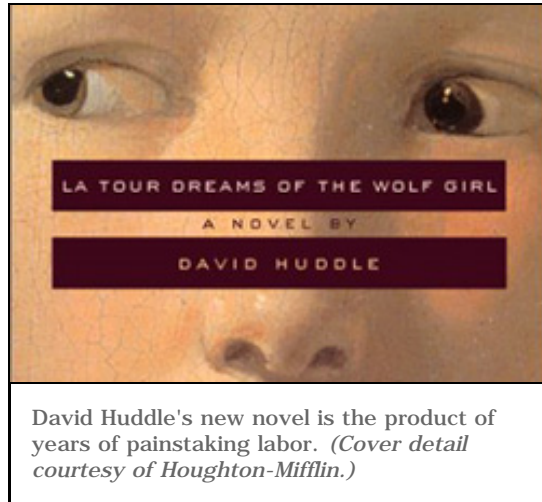
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Book It

Short profiles of three UVM authors

By Kevin Foley



Three UVM authors have published books on mainstream presses that are attracting notice both inside and outside the academic world.

the view spoke with the trio – David Huddle, Michael Stanton and Bernd Heinrich – to learn more about their thoughts and work.

David Huddle:
"Agonizing Labor"
The novelist calls his vocation an "unnatural

act."

David Huddle, professor of English and author of 14 books, published his first novel two years ago, after 30 years spent building a reputation as a poet, essayist and short story writer. He published his second novel, *La Tour Dreams of the Wolf Girl*, last month.

But the act hasn't gotten any easier.

"The novel is not my natural form. What I have a natural aptitude for is writing short stories; a novel for me is a kind of unnatural act," he says. "But I've found a way to make it happen.

"The way is to put pieces together," he continues. "Some of the pieces are whole short stories, and some are parts of stories, and others are reworked stories. I have been learning how to make a collage of narratives that form a pattern that can be called a novel."

The pattern is intricate. *La Tour* moves between contemporary Burlington and 17th century France, shaping multiple narratives and subjectivities into a novel the *New York Times* called "subtle and bracing." The book is told in episodes that constantly shift between times, locations and characters. Many of the vignettes build to unbearable image or tense moment – then the novel jumps away to work the theme in another place.

The process of constructing this collage, the painstaking work of placing and replacing narratives to form a coherent whole, was long and difficult. Huddle began writing the short stories that eventually became the novel six years ago. After discarding a plan to present the book as a collection of linked stories, he spent much of the last year and half building a novel, writing and rewriting, assembling and discarding.

"It took a huge amount of agonizing labor on my part," he says. "Mine is a very inefficient and awkward way to make a novel come about."

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Michael Stanton: "A Fortuitous Accident"

Sometimes life works like this: You spend 30 years loving and teaching a book—in Michael Stanton's case, the three books of J.R.R. Tolkien's *The Lord of the Rings*—and then the universe suddenly clicks into place. Stanton, a recently retired professor emeritus of English, calls it a "fortuitous accident." But it's tempting to call the story of how a retiring academic wrote and sold his first book as a coda to his career magical.

In the spring of 1997, while taking medical leave, Stanton began compiling the notes and observations about Tolkien's trilogy that he had gathered while teaching the books to some 1,800 students. The goal wasn't to publish; Stanton's ambitions extended only to creating the mother of all study guides. But then the project grew, and grew some more, and by 1998 Stanton began thinking about finding an agent and writing a book proposal.

"At that point, I still had no idea that the movies were coming out," Stanton says. His agent, and his eventual publisher, St. Martin's Press, were better informed of the progress of the \$250-million film trilogy. The book proposal was accepted quickly. Stanton had to amplify his original guide with new essays to create a marketable book, and then he had to endure some late wrangling with the Tolkien estate over the length of quotations (a contretemps Stanton jokingly calls "orcish"). *Hobbits, Elves, and Wizards* finally came out on Nov. 19, 2001, one month before the first *Lord of the Rings* film.

That fortunate timing launched Stanton's critical companion into Harry Potter-esque pride of place in glitzy displays at thousands of Barnes & Noble and Borders bookstores, and, for a while, made him a much in demand guest for media outlets ranging from MSNBC to the Billy Graham evangelical radio network to Baltimore's occult-oriented Hieronimus radio. By turns, Stanton has found the surge of attention "bloody annoying" and delightful.

"All in all, it's been a wonderful 15 minutes," he says.

Stanton plans to continue writing through his retirement—he's eyeing doing some article-length work on Vermont's role in the Civil War, or on the mystery writer Dick Francis—but his first book will be his last. "There's nothing that I'm interested in writing about in the same way that I wrote about Tolkien," he says.

As for the *Rings* film, Stanton approves. Although he prizes Tolkien's "richness and exuberance of language" and shares the author's dubious opinion of cinematic adaptations, Peter Jackson's film won Stanton over. "Tolkien thought the books couldn't and shouldn't be filmed—he believed that the imagination was infinitely richer than the camera," Stanton says. "But there were one or two moments in the movie when the camera showed *exactly* what I had always seen in my mind's eye when reading the books. It's remarkable, really."

Bernd Heinrich: "Stretching the Limits"

"The human experience," writes biology Professor Bernd Heinrich in *Racing the Antelope*, "is populated by dreams and aspiration. For me, the animal totem for these dreams is the antelope, swift strong and elusive."

"Most of us chase after 'antelopes' and sometimes we catch them. Often we don't. But why do we bother to try? I think it is because without dream-antelopes to chase we become what a lap dog is to a wolf. And we are inherently more like wolves than lap dogs."

Racing the Antelope is Heinrich's vivid chronicle of a life spent pursuing difficult pleasures. The biology professor attempts to make the personal universal by putting the story of his life running—from his boyhood pounding forest trails of impoverished post-war Germany, to the track team at Maine, to setting an American ultramarathon record in a 62-mile 1981 race—in a larger physiological and evolutionary context.

Heinrich softens sometimes difficult material about the intricate physiology of beetles, bees, pronghorn antelopes, camels and human adipose tissue by framing them within the elaborated story of how he prepared for and completed his record-setting race. The race gives the book shape and organization, but as the story unfolds, his "digressions" start to feel more and more central. Heinrich brings a scientist's mind and writer's eye to describing the pain and ecstasy of running, the wing-beats of butterflies and birds. His

unusual abilities make descriptions of complex physiology of, for example, how the body can fuel the running stride through fat metabolism, vivid as well as lucid.

Some of these asides are so gripping they almost undercut the book. *Racing the Antelope* climaxes with Heinrich's record-setting race, but by the time readers get that far they have long since absorbed his sense that the race is almost beside the point.

"Running," says Heinrich, "is about stretching the limits. It's about raising life above the level of existence by doing something difficult."

In that respect, at least, it's something like writing a book.

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V-Day Victory

Student -led production of Eve Ensler's acclaimed *Vagina Monologues* to benefit women's groups

By Lynda Majarian



Sophomore Elizabeth Waring rehearses a monologue for the UVM benefit production of Eve Ensler's play. (Photo: Andy Duback)

14-16.

V-Day is an international effort to raise consciousness and money that helps organizations working to end rape, battery, incest, female genital mutilation, sexual slavery and domestic violence. "The Vagina Monologues," a series of blunt narratives about female sexuality, is the centerpiece of V-Day events held on and around Valentine's Day throughout the world. Nearly 800 theatrical and artistic V-Day benefits will be held this month from Sacramento and New York to Capetown, South Africa – including nearly 550 college productions.

Anne Marie Lavalette of Colchester, a junior majoring in social work, helped the UVM Women's Center to initiate the premier production of the play on campus last year, serving as co-director and actor. A former hotline volunteer at the Women's Rape Crisis Center, she is taking a year off her studies to volunteer at the Committee on Temporary Shelter through AmeriCorps*VISTA. But she is back this year as co-director.

"It's a big time commitment, but I feel a sense of obligation," Lavalette says.

With little advance publicity, last year's two performances in Billings Campus Center Theatre quickly sold out. This year, the show will run over three nights in the 700-seat capacity Ira Allen Chapel. The curtain will rise at 7:30 p.m., but doors will open an hour earlier to give theatergoers a chance to peruse information tables staffed by local anti-violence organizations and to purchase V-Day merchandise.

Most of the cast and crew involved in the production have little or no prior acting experience. The play's message and intent, however, convinced them to conquer their stage fright and participate. And judging by last Sunday's rehearsal, the actors present themselves like real pros.

Senior Jessica Walker of Guilford, Conn., will enact a monologue based on the experiences of a Bosnian rape victim. She researched the role through reading and watching films, and the Women's Center put her in touch with a Bosnian woman living in the Burlington area. "I didn't want to misrepresent the character or myself," says Walker.

Instead of nibbling caloric chocolates and buying overpriced roses this Valentine's Day, why not take part in a global movement to stop violence against women and girls?

As part of V-Day 2002, UVM will present a primarily student run, directed and acted production of Eve Ensler's Obie-winning play, "The Vagina Monologues," Thursday through Saturday, Feb.

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Pat Fontaine, who has taught a Women's Studies course on "Mothers and Daughters" at UVM for nearly 15 years, says acting in the play both this year and last "have been life changing experiences." And Dawn Johnson, co-director and a senior political science major, insists that after seeing the play, "whether you realize it or not, you are changed for the better."

Proceeds from the benefit performances and merchandise sales here will be donated to Burlington's Women's Rape Crisis Center and Women Helping Battered Women. As part of a special V-Day initiative this year, one percent of monies raised will go to the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan.

Tickets are \$5 for students with ID and seniors and \$8 general admission. Purchase tickets at the door or in advance at the offices of the event's sponsors: the UVM Women's Center at 34 S. Williams St., and ALANA Student Center on Redstone Campus. For local information, call Stephanie Morgan at 656-4637. To learn more about the worldwide V-Day initiative, visit www.vday.org.

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Training In A chastened parker swaps road for rails

By Kevin Foley



Big wheels keep on turning... but why aren't more UVMers riding? Champlain Flyer is, for some, a convenient way to dodge Route 7 and the campus parking predicament. (Publicity photo.)

The problem with complaining is that, occasionally, someone listens and makes a helpful suggestion.

After I spent the better part of 700 words [whining](#) in *the view* about the difficulty of parking at UVM, Marilyn Burrington, director of prospect research in the development office, wrote me a note and threw down the gauntlet. "Have you ever taken the train?" she asked. "It's a great alternative, and a UVM-subsidized

pass is only \$16 a month for unlimited rides. My husband I take it daily, and love not being saddled with an auto-albatross."

No, I hadn't tried the train. I usually felt like John Wayne high on the saddle of my Honda Civic – at least until it came time to park.

Use it or lose it

But I wanted to take the train. I wanted to save gas, save the air, save myself the perils of Route 7. Taking the train is a categorical imperative for me; it was something that I wanted myself – and everyone else who could – to do. And then there was the fact that the train, which I heartily approved of yet benignly neglected, is subsidized by the state, an investment that some find hard to justify given its relatively low ridership and Vermont's perpetual budget crunch. It occurred to me that we needed to use it or risk losing it.

And then there was the final little twist from Burrington. When I asked her about riding the College Street shuttle, the bus waiting for every train that propels the hill-weary from station to campus, she scoffed.

"I don't do the shuttle," she said. "Walking up and down the hill is the core of my daily exercise program."

The core of *my* daily exercise program, much to the ridicule of my gym-inclined colleagues, is pacing maniacally while on deadline and drinking coffee, a routine punctuated by occasional guilty forays up and down the 11 steps to our office's basement Coke machine. Something had to give.

Schedules and sloth

It wasn't just sloth that had kept me away from the train. The schedule, frankly, hadn't helped. Even UVM staff fortunate to live within range of the [Champlain Flyer](#) (there are stations in Charlotte and Shelburne villages, South Burlington near Magic Hat, General Dynamics in Burlington and the terminus at Union Station) have to deal with the train's schedule, which is perfectly reasonable but doesn't jibe well with a standard 8-4:30 p.m. administrative

[Back to Roots](#)

Bare trees against a winter sky, spring peeper frogs, lightning bugs. Tom Vogelmann lists just a few of the reasons he is happy to be back in Vermont.

[Book It](#)

Three UVM authors have published books on mainstream presses that are attracting notice both inside and outside the world of academe.

[V-Day](#)

Instead of nibbling caloric chocolates and buying overpriced roses this Valentine's Day, why not take part in a global movement to stop violence against women and girls?

day.

This time of year, the trains arrive in Burlington at 23 after the hour – the Flyer, I have discovered, is Mussolini-esque in its punctuality. They depart in the afternoon on the hour from 3-6 p.m. This makes getting to work on time impossible, at least for me. A more disciplined soul could take a 7 a.m. train and arrive at work early. The schedule also hinders working late; I barely managed to catch the 6 p.m. train on one of my early rail forays. (Regular commuters can score a "guaranteed ride home card" from UVM Parking & Transportation Services.) But I am blessed with an indulgent supervisor [Indulgent? See you in my office, Foley! –Ed.], who lets me construct a work day with an 8:40 a.m. arrival, a reduced lunch and a 4:40 p.m. departure.

This commute, if somewhat awkwardly timed, is pleasant. The station gleams, the train is never crowded, and there's a sense of camaraderie among the commuters. The train cars themselves are pleasantly retro, and payment is on the honor system. There's even a brief stretch of lake views. And, as Burrington points out, the train commute offers an opportunity for exercise. Walked earnestly – that is, fast enough to ward off the chill but at under StairMaster speed – the chug up the hill takes about 15 minutes. That's only marginally slower than the shuttle.

The verdict

And that brings us to speed, the most precious commuting resource. In this, the Flyer fares reasonably well. By car, the haul from my Charlotte home to UVM takes about 35 minutes, sometimes with a few more tacked on for a parking-spot search. The train takes about 55 minutes, but 15 minutes of that time is exercise, and another 25 is reading. That's a nice deal. So once or twice a week, I'm willing, even eager, to compromise a little on flexibility and speed to gain eco-smugness points, exercise and extra time for reading and reflection.

But I'm not quite ready to ditch my "auto-albatross."

Then again, I haven't heard back from Marilyn Burrington yet.

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