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[Explaining Vermont's Charms](#)



Vermont researchers are helping the state pinpoint the attractions of the state for visitors – and who the likeliest visitors are. *(Photo: Sally McCay)*

Tourists of all types are coming to Vermont – Country Squires, New Ectopians, even the desirable Pools & Patios crowd. Tom Noordewier, associate professor of business administration, wants to get to know them all.

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UVM sophomore Michelle Panagos admits she's already playing a little academic catch-up this semester. She may not be alone in that, but her reason is novel – the junior world championships in snowboarding.

[Backing It Up](#) Todd Douglas's piercing back pain started more than 10 years ago and steadily worsened over time. Then he met Dr. Robert Monsey and Dr. James Rathmell.

[Youngblood Lecture](#)

Denise Youngblood, an authority on Russian filmmaking, will lecture on films that reflect both the "official" and counter-history of Russian and Soviet wars.

THE WEEK IN VIEW

Oct. 10 Noon Presentation: "Developing a Service-Learning Unit for a Course," Richard Schramm and Julie Richards. Severance Conference room, Kalkin. 656-1355

Oct. 10 6:30 p.m. Lecture: "American-Indian Concepts of Health, Unwellness and Disability," Dr. Carol Locust, University of Arizona Medical Center. 427 Waterman

Oct. 10 7:30 p.m. Forum on Aging Lecture: "Inventing 'Midcourse': Retirement Planning and Possibilities," Phyllis Moen, Cornell University. Memorial Lounge, Waterman. 656-3238

Oct. 10-12 8 a.m. on **Trustee Committee Meetings. Schedule: [Trustees](#)**

Oct. 14 7:30 p.m. Profile: Fran Stoddard interviews President Daniel Mark Fogel, Vermont Public Television. (Also 10/14, 2 am; 10/16, 8:30 pm; and 10/20, 1:30 pm)

Oct. 15 3:30 p.m. Lecture: "Local Economic Self-Sufficiency," Richard Schramm, community development and applied economics. 301 Williams Hall. 656-0095

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MacArthur Fellow Addresses Campus

Award-winning author and MacArthur Fellow James Edgar Wideman concluded his stay as an Buckham Writer in Residence with an Oct. 2 reading at a crowded Billings Campus Center Theater. Wideman, who can decipher the rage and love of the human heart and transform it into brilliant prose, confessed that he was mystified (but delighted) by Vermont's weather. He then read several sections from *The Island: Martinique*, his forthcoming travel memoir of the volcano-buffed Caribbean island. He was introduced by Kari Winter, associate professor of English. (Photo: Sally McCay)

Scientist Readyng Labs for Bioterrorism Response

In the panic and chaos of a bioterrorism attack, every second counts and every decision is critical. But before decisions can be made, before action can be taken, before systems can be mobilized, officials wait for confirmation of and information on the chemical or biological agent they're dealing with. Confirmation that can only come from a laboratory scientist in a clinical or public health laboratory.

This summer, Vermont was the recipient of a \$6.8 million Bioterrorism Preparedness Grant from the federal government; one of only 24 states whose plans met the criteria outlined by the Department of Health and Human Services. With guidance from the Vermont Department of Health, clinical laboratories across the state are preparing to respond in the event of a chemical or biological attack. And according to Burton Wilcke, associate professor and newly appointed chair of biomedical technologies, Vermont is farther ahead of the game than most states.

"Every clinical laboratory manager in Vermont heads up a laboratory that belongs to the state lab response network," Wilcke says. "These labs are aware of their role as first responder for a bioterrorism event – it's one of the benefits of being a small state."

New Funding Aims to Enliven Late Nights at UVM

A new drive to enliven late nights on campus is bringing everything from the hip-hop band Jurassic 5 to the independent film *My Big Fat Greek Wedding* here in an effort to build community spirit among students and keep them occupied after dark.

The push was funded in late August, when Interim Provost John Bramley and Thomas Gustafson, vice president of university relations and operations, allocated \$200,000 to the Department of Student Life to develop and market late night programming on-campus. The move fortuitously coincided with an energetic group of students taking over the reins at the student concert bureau. Several of these emerging impresarios, including former SGA President Bill Tickner, helped organize last April's "Springfest" event and wanted to continue to bring national musical acts to campus.

"There have been at best a handful of on-campus concerts here over the last few years," says David Nestor, interim vice president of student affairs. "This semester we'll have five."

The federally supported laboratory response network extends across the country, linking clinical laboratories and setting uniform standards. Depending on a laboratory's level of expertise in handling and containing select agents, it is given a ranking of A (most clinical laboratories) through D (only 2 in the nation: at the Center for Disease Control-CDC and the United States Army Medical Research Institute of Infectious Disease-USAMRID). Laboratories are then responsible for getting the bioterrorism preparedness training needed to comply with the responsibilities of the ranking.

In Vermont, all of the clinical laboratories currently are ranked as A-level labs and have completed the bioterrorism preparedness training. There is now an effort underway within the state to have some public health and clinical laboratories ranked at the B or C level, depending on their ability to detect and contain a particular agent.

UVM plays a role in continuing education as well, partnering with the Vermont Department of Health and the National Laboratory Training Network to deliver special training in bioterrorism agents, providing laboratory space and faculty to

The new emphasis on late-night and community-building events will also include coffeehouses, readings, comedy performances and films as well as performances by local and national musical acts. Nestor even points to the evening "Induction Ceremony" held for class of 2006 students during "Opening Weekend" as an example of the kind of unifying event his colleagues are trying to facilitate.

"There obviously have always been activities at night," says Pat Brown, director of student life. "What this lets us do, however, is increase the breadth of our offerings and get the word out about them more effectively."

The early indications are good. Jurassic 5 drew a sell-out 2,600 to their show at Patrick Gym, and the local music coffeehouses are increasing in popularity. Nestor and Brown plan to evaluate the success of their late-night push by looking at attendance at events, survey results and the amount and enthusiasm of student participation in organizing programs.

"It's going to be an interesting year, and we're going to learn a lot from it," Nestor says.

SGA Conducts Wide-Ranging Town Meeting

A town meeting for the campus community initiated by the Student Government Association drew approximately 100 people to Ira Allen Chapel on Oct. 2. President Daniel Mark Fogel and Provost John Bramley joined SGA President Jon Badaracco and Vice President Shawna Wells on the chapel stage, helping to guide a wide-ranging discussion on university issues.

The three-hour-long event was built around participants' response to questions. Using an electronic response system, individuals weighed in with perceptions on issues related to school spirit, an honors college and university image, among others. Vote results were projected immediately on a screen and discussion followed.

"We had some really good dialogue throughout the afternoon," Wells said. "We felt that the event did what it was supposed to do in cleaning up some gray areas in communication." Wells added that she was surprised by the high-level of UVM pride and sense of community expressed, offering potential to continue building a stronger sense of university spirit.

The SGA plans to hold another town meeting next semester, according to Wells.

insure that medical laboratory scientists working in Vermont have the latest information and technology available.

"In today's environment, we need to be aware of the global threats and educate laboratory scientists who will be ready for the challenges ahead," says Wilcke, who is looking at the development of a curriculum that addresses these emerging threats. "We must educate laboratory professionals who understand the principles of disease prevention and public health as well as they understand the ways to diagnose disease."

Wilcke has spent his career developing, improving and promoting public health laboratories, most recently as director of the Division of Health Surveillance at the Vermont Department of Health, and is an important figure at the national level. As past president of the Association of Public Health Laboratories, and current chair of its Leadership Development Task Force, Wilcke regularly presents to national audiences on public health issues. He also is leading the laboratory infrastructure development team in Zimbabwe as part of the CDC/APHL initiative to fight AIDS in South Africa.

"Whether one is talking about a developing nation with a health care crisis, or a country preparing for a bioterrorism attack," Wilcke says, "critical decision-making will be based on laboratory findings. Medical laboratory scientists need to be well educated and up to the challenges that lie ahead."

Information on Vermont's Terrorism Response Plan: [Emergency Plan](#)

CRV Calls for Awards Submissions

The Center for Research on Vermont annually confers the George B. Bryan and the Andrew E. Nuquist awards on undergraduate students for their research on Vermont projects. Submissions for the 2003 awards are due March 3, 2003; students intending to enter should send the CRV a letter of intent by Feb. 3, 2003.

The Bryan Award, named in memory of former theatre professor and center director George Bryan, is given for one-semester course projects of 15 to 25 pages. The Nuquist, offered in memory of former Political Science Professor Andrew Nuquist, is presented to a culminating study, such as an honors project, senior thesis or year-long independent study. The awards, which include cash prizes, are intended to promote excellence in student research on Vermont topics.

The winning projects, and other finalists, will become a permanent part of Special Collections Department, made available for other researchers.

Projects must have been completed with the 2002 calendar year to be eligible.

Information: Kristin Peterson-Ishaq, 656-4389,

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**Passionate Pianist**

The UVM Lane Series will present flamboyant pianist Olga Kern. For information, see story below.

Lane Series Presents Moscow Chamber, Olga Kern

Maestro Constantine Orbelian, American-born pianist and conductor will lead the Moscow Chamber Orchestra in concert with Van Cliburn Gold Medal pianist Olga Kern Oct. 11, at 8 p.m., at the Flynn Center. The program will include Shostakovich's *Chamber Symphony*, Prokofiev's *Five Vision Fugitives*. Kern will perform Haydn's and Glinka's *Grand Sextet in E-Flat Major*.

Kern, a flamboyant and passionate performer in the Russian style, won the Van Cliburn Gold Medal in 2001, the most recent competition. She was the first woman to win it in more than 30 years. A resident of Moscow, she began studying piano at the age of five.

Information, tickets: 863-5966 or [Flynn Center](#)

Terrible Gift Author to Discuss Genetic Medicine's Impact on Health Care

Author and attorney Rick Carlson will deliver a lecture on the social, ethical, and economic issues arising out of recent advances in the field of genetics – and how both individuals and the health care system will be affected. His talk, "The Genomics Wave: How it Will Wash Across Health Care," is part of a two-day cancer research symposium sponsored by the Vermont Cancer Center at UVM, and will be held Oct. 10, at 7:30 p.m., in the Radisson Hotel.

Carlson is the author of *The End of Medicine*, *The Future of Work and Health* and, most recently, *The Terrible Gift: The Brave New World of Genetic Medicine*. He will sign copies of *The Terrible Gift*

Research Unveils Women's Rights Milestone

Clarina Howard Nichols smashed gender barriers 150 years ago in an audacious address to Vermont legislators on the legal rights of married women. She was the first woman to address the all male assembly. Scholar Marilyn Blackwell will mark the milestone with a presentation of her research-in-progress on Nichols Oct. 17, at 7:30 p.m. in Memorial Lounge, Waterman.

Nichols was an early women's rights activist, yet she rarely appears in histories of the women's rights movement. She is better known in Kansas, to which she emigrated in 1854 and where she continued her activism. Her appearance before the Vermont Legislature came at a time when it was rare for women to speak publicly to mixed audiences and extraordinary for one to address a group of politicians. Blackwell will explore what drove her to overstep traditional roles and what she accomplished.

Blackwell, who earned her doctorate in U.S. history from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, teaches at Community College of Vermont. Her lecture is part of a series sponsored by UVM's Center for Research on Vermont.

Information: 656-4389 or crv@uvm.edu

Candidates for Vermont Governor to Debate Health Care

A gubernatorial forum focused on Vermont health care issues will be presented by the Vermont Association of Hospitals and Health Systems, the Vermont State Dental Society and the Vermont Medical Society on Oct. 23, at 5:30 p.m. in Carpenter Auditorium, Given.

Panelists will include gubernatorial candidates: Lt. Governor Doug Racine, State Treasurer Jim Douglas, and Con Hogan. Attendees are encouraged to prepare questions for the Q & A segment of the event.

Registration by Oct. 16: Jessa Block, Vermont Medical Society, 640-8767.

Self-screen for Depression Oct. 10

On Oct. 10, National Depression Screening Day, the Department of Psychiatry's Clinical Neuroscience Research Unit will provide self-screeners for depression, as well as general information about depression. Information tables

just before and following the lecture.

Carlson, president of The Health Strategies Group, LP, serves as a special adviser to major national health and health-care organizations on the strategic evolution of managed care. He is a principal investigator for a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation-funded project called "Understanding the Human Genome: Implications for Public and Private Decision Makers" and a research affiliate of the Institute for the Future in Menlo Park, Calif.

Information: 656-4414.

Hilberg Lecture to Spotlight Popes and the Holocaust

Susan Zuccotti will present this year's Hilberg Lecture, "Two Popes and the Holocaust: An Examination of the Controversy," Oct. 15, at 8 p.m., in the Campus Center Theatre, Billings.

Zuccotti's most recent book, *Under His Very Windows: The Vatican and the Holocaust in Italy*, is the winner of the 2000 National Jewish Book Award in the Jewish-Christian Relations category. She also wrote *The Italians and the Holocaust: Persecution, Rescue, and Survival* and *The Holocaust, the French and the Jews*.

Information: 656-1492, uvmchs@uvm.edu or [Holocaust Studies](#)

will be set up from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. outside the gift shop at Fletcher Allen's medical center campus and also outside the University Health Center cafeteria from 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Information: Sally Ross-Nolan, 847-9488 or [Mental Health](#)

Free Tickets Offered for Legends of Hip Hop

UVM affiliates can get two-for-one ticket vouchers for the first of two Building Our Community events to be presented this year.

Rennie Harris PureMovement will present "Legends of Hip-Hop" Oct. 24, at 7:30 p.m., at the Flynn Center for the Performing Arts. Bring your UVM ID and pick up vouchers at the ALANA Student Center and Center for Cultural Pluralism (Allen House). Redeem the vouchers for tickets at the Flynn prior to the performance.

Information: John Mejia, 656-7882; or Mary Romary, 656-9511.

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Awards and Honors

The USDA's Natural Resources and Environmental Management division recently named five Programs of Excellence to "recognize and speed the adoption of initiatives within state Cooperative Extension Programs." Two of those five programs were originally begun at UVM by Extension Associate Professor **Thomas McEvoy**. They are the Logger Education and COVERTS woodland management for wildlife habitat programs. See [Logger Education](#)

Declan Connolly, physical education program director and director of the human performance lab, will receive the Ray Sparks Professional Award. The award, which honors professionals who make outstanding contributions to physical fitness, will be presented this month by the Governor's Council on Physical Fitness and Sports. Connolly, an associate professor of education, speaks widely on fitness testing and muscle damage. Recent presentations include: National Strength and Conditioning Association annual meeting in Las Vegas; Tri-State Athletic Trainers Conference; Vermont Association of Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance; and the upcoming New England American College of Sports Medicine annual meeting in Rhode Island.

Ken Becker and **Chris Koliba** have accepted the positions of co-directors of the Master's of Public Administration Program in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences. Becker, lecturer in the Community Development and Applied Economics, teaches courses in entrepreneurship and co-directs the undergraduate, international service-learning experience. Previously he was deputy commissioner of agriculture for Vermont and executive director of the Northeast Dairy Compact. He has a master's degree in international administration. Koliba, research assistant professor in the education, is director of the John Dewey Project, coordinates UVM's service-learning faculty fellows program and co-chairs the committee on community engagement. Koliba previously was research associate at the Center for the Study of Voluntary Organizations and Service at Georgetown University. He has an MPA and PhD from the Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Policy.

Papers and Presentations

Burton Wilcke, chair of biomedical technologies, coauthored a Sept. 20 Morbidity and Mortality Weekly Report from the Centers for Disease Control, titled "Core Functions and Capabilities of State Public Health Laboratories: A Report of the Association of Public Health Laboratories." Read the report at [CDC](#)

Donna Kuizenga, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and professor of romance languages, gave a paper, *Traductions et trahisons : le sort du roman français en Angleterre au 17e siècle* at a conference on women and translation sponsored by the *Université de Montréal* in late September. On Oct. 4, she was reelected president of the *Société d'Analyse de la Topique Romanesque* at the society's annual meeting at Queen's University, Kingston, Ont. SATOR is an international organization that is creating an electronic thesaurus of the building blocks of French narrative prose from the Middle Ages to the Revolution; it brings together scholars from North America, Europe and Africa.

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Explaining Vermont's Charms

Tourism researchers offer state news it can use to attract more visitors

By Kevin Foley



Vermont researchers are helping the state pinpoint the attractions of the state for visitors – and who the likeliest visitors are. (Photo: Sally McCay)

Vermont tourists come from all over, and they are of every imaginable background – Country Squires, New Ectopians, even the desirable Pools & Patios crowd.

Tom Noordewier, associate professor of business administration, wants to get to know them all.

He's not greeting tour buses at Ben & Jerry's or trolling the Manchester outlets, but he is meticulously

documenting patterns of Vermont visitation, and organizing that data into, among other things, demographic clusters that the state can use to more effectively market its charms.

To a marketer, knowing that "Country Squires" are disproportionately likely to visit Vermont is pure gold. This demographic pinpointing tells tourism promoters what publications these likely visitors read, which television shows they watch and gives insights into what kind of advertising messages might inspire them to pack off to Vermont instead of Colorado, Maine or Montana.

"The goal is to produce information that we can take action on," says Noordewier of his work for the university's tourism-research partnership with the state Department of Tourism and Marketing. "This is the first year that we've refined our analysis of our visitors survey to provide highly specific information about visitor demographics. Later, we may use that to target specific groups with marketing campaigns and then track the effectiveness of those investments."

Getting the word out

Tourism is a huge business in this state – more than \$4 billion a year in economic impact, a total that is closing in on 15 percent of the state's economy. And as state government officials seek to support that crucial piece of the economy, UVM experts are working in concert with them on crucial aspects of the puzzle. Business professors like Noordewier develop geo-demographic reports for tourism marketers, a professor in Community Development and Applied Economics quantifies the economic impact of tourism for policy-makers and the School of Natural Resource-affiliated [Vermont Tourism Data Center](#) collects other useful data and helps disseminate it throughout the state.

"We do it all," says Varna Ramaswamy, the center's outreach coordinator. "We'll listen to business plans on the phone, help people with their math and point people to the right research or the right resources within the state government."

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Sophomore Gets Air

UVM sophomore Michelle Panagos admits she's already playing a little academic catch-up this semester. She may not be alone in that, but her reason is novel – the junior world championships in snowboarding.

Backing It Up

Todd Douglas's piercing back pain started more than 10 years ago and steadily worsened over time. Then he met Dr. Robert Monsey and Dr. James Rathmell.

Youngblood Lecture

Denise Youngblood, an authority on Russian filmmaking, will lecture on films that reflect both the "official" and counter-history of Russian and Soviet wars.

For years, Ramaswamy's outreach work to share the UVM research with the state, small business and community development groups has been essentially a "one person show." That changes at the end of this month, when a new Extension faculty member, Robert Richardson, arrives from Colorado State University to serve as the center's primary investigator.

"The growing involvement of Extension in our tourism research program is going to be a major step forward," says Walter Kuentzel, associate professor of natural resources and the original leader of the effort. "I think it's going to be an innovative platform for research going forward."

The state began funding tourism research at UVM in a systematic way in 1993, allocating about \$35,000 for Kuentzel to conduct a visitor's survey. The program has grown steadily ever since, as the state pressed for more comprehensive information and stronger outreach efforts. Ramaswamy was hired in 1996 to staff the then-new VTDC. Her mission was and is to make sure that the university's tourism research gets into the hands of those who most need it.

"We can't just sit around here and create all these numbers," explains Kathleen Liang, associate professor of community development and applied economics, who writes the center's annual economic impact report. "We need to get them into people's hands and have them serve multiple purposes for us to really be useful."

Ramaswamy agrees, and says the center is on the right track in achieving that goal. A relatively new, enlarged web site includes most of the tourism reports and fact sheets prepared at the university, and it's drawing increasing numbers of e-mailed queries from entrepreneurs, associations and community groups.

"It's sometimes really basic but also really satisfying: putting someone into touch with something they are looking for," Ramaswamy says. "I'm often the one person who is able to put them in touch with the information they needed without making 10 calls."

Vermont Tourism Quiz

1. Visitors come to Vermont primarily to...

- a. ski
- b. visit family and friends
- c. see fall color
- d. play on Lake Champlain

2. The biggest time of year for Vermont travel is...

- a. fall
- b. spring
- c. summer
- d. winter

3. The month with the most visitors is...

- a. September
- b. December
- c. October
- d. July

4. Most Vermont visitors come from...

- a. Massachusetts
- b. New Hampshire
- c. New York

d. Connecticut

5. Rank the following Vermont destinations in terms of their popularity to tourists:

- a. Burlington and Lake Champlain environs
- b. Southern Vermont--Brattleboro, Mt. Snow, etc.
- c. Bennington, Manchester, etc.
- d. Rutland and Killington

6. Rank the following demographic clusters in the order of their likelihood of visiting Vermont:

- a. Money & Brains
- b. Country Squires
- c. Big Fish, Small Pond
- d. New Ectopians

ANSWERS:

1. B

2. A

3. C

4. C

5. B, C, A, D

6. D, B, C, A

SCORING: Give yourself one point for each correct answer. Six points: The Vermont Department of Tourism and Marketing awaits your application; 4-5 points: You know your leaf peepers; 2-3 points: Credible effort; 1 point: Stick with modern poetry or set theory.

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UVM HOMEPAGE

Sophomore Snowboarder Hits Big Time, Big Air

By Thomas Weaver



Sophomore Michelle Panagos turned in a strong performance at the National Junior championships last spring at Mammoth Mountain in California.

The semester is young, but Michelle Panagos, UVM sophomore from Westfield, N.J., admits she's already playing a little academic catch-up. She may not be alone in that predicament, but her reason is an unusual one – two weeks of travel in New Zealand for the junior world championships in snowboarding.

Panagos is among a handful of UVM students who rank among the nation's best in

snowboard. But since there's no opportunity for high-level intercollegiate competition in the young sport, these athletes go it alone and juggle their own study, training, and competition schedules as UVM undergrads.

A Killington skier for years, Panagos made the switch-over to snowboarding seven years ago. As ski partners, her parents (sorry, mom and dad) were a little too slow for her taste. And the Killington ski instructors had grown a little too familiar, borderline boring. When Panagos and a group of friends tried snowboarding one weekend, she instantly knew she'd found a sport that was just right – everything from the spirit of her fellow athletes to the infinite jumping possibilities. The drive to Killington soon became an every-winter-weekend reality for her parents.

Back on campus after her early September trip to New Zealand, Panagos acknowledges some disappointment with her recent performance. In third after the first run of the giant slalom, she fell in the second run and ended up ninth overall. It's understandable that her expectations were high after last April when she notched her greatest performance in the sport at the USA Snowboard Association Nationals, held at Mammoth Mountain in California. Among her achievements at the competition, Panagos took first in the junior division slalom, giant slalom, and overall competition.

Panagos is modest about her achievements, saying, "There are a lot of kids at UVM competing at the same level, some at a higher level than I am."

Early morning workouts on the mountain, dry-land training, and no teammates to share your pain – life as an independent athlete isn't easy. And life as an independent student-athlete is another step harder again. Panagos is quick to thank understanding professors such as Martha Woodman, Business; Ken Golden, Math; and Laurel Pitts, her advisor through Academic Support Programs, who help her achieve the balancing act of an undergrad/international-class athlete.

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[Probing the Peepers](#)

Tourists of all types are coming to Vermont – Country Squires, New Ectopians, even the desirable Pools & Patios crowd. Tom Noordegier, associate professor of business administration, wants to get to know them all.

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Backing It Up

UVM doctors are putting a touted treatment for chronic back pain to its first comparative clinical trial ever

By Jennifer Nachbur

Todd Douglas's piercing, intolerable back pain started more than 10 years ago and steadily worsened over time. Then the Colchester resident met Dr. Robert Monsey, professor of orthopedics and rehabilitation, and Dr. James Rathmell, associate professor of anesthesia and director of Fletcher Allen's pain management center. Now, thanks to the two doctors' comparative clinical trial of a new treatment – the only investigation of its kind worldwide – Douglas finally has found some relief.

"They were the 12th and 13th doctors I went to in my grand quest across the state to find a doctor who could help me," said Douglas.

Douglas, who is married and has two young children, was originally diagnosed with arthritis and had received cortisone injections. Those helped for a couple of months, and then their effect faded. His only other recourse was daily pain medication. After he visited Rathmell and Monsey they identified the true source of his pain: degenerative disc disease.

The standard treatments for the condition are spinal fusion surgery or ongoing pain medication. But it happened that Rathmell and Monsey were recruiting patients for their clinical trial comparing the effectiveness of an experimental, less-invasive treatment for chronic low-back pain called intradiscal electrothermal therapy (or IDET) with that of traditional spinal fusion surgery. Douglas opted for the trial and was the first participant selected and the first to undergo the IDET procedure.

"IDET is used to treat degenerative disc disease when there is no evidence of nerve root compression, which causes such symptoms as sciatica or leg pain," explains Rathmell. "This study is trying to determine if IDET is a viable alternative to spinal fusion for degenerative disc disease."

IDET is a 40-minute out-patient procedure, while spinal fusion is back surgery and requires a two-day hospital stay. So the attractions of the procedure are obvious – if it works. "This treatment has been highly touted, but we were skeptical of the science behind it. So we wanted to test it," Monsey says.

Getting wired

To prepare for the procedure, Douglas had to stop taking his pain pills for several days. His back flared up with an agonizing vengeance; he could barely walk into the clinic from the parking lot the Thursday morning of his scheduled therapy. After hobbling in and reviewing the planned procedure with his doctors, Douglas laid on the treatment table while he received a series of "unpleasant pokes and picks" that identified the exact spot on the disc where the electrothermal therapy – a hot wire – would be inserted. The doctors made two small insertions in Douglas' spine and began the 40-minute process of using the hot wire to shrink collagen fibrils, the soft center of the disc, and stiffening nerve tissue to reduce pain. Douglas was conscious and talking throughout the treatment.

Following the procedure, Douglas had two days of bed rest and took medication. By the third day, he was walking comfortably and taking less pain medication. By the fifth day – a Monday – he was back at work and taking no medication at all. He also wore a back brace for about six weeks and received physical therapy for about 10 weeks. The study protocol also required that he come to regular follow-up appointments with his doctors; his last is next week.

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[Youngblood Lecture](#)

Denise Youngblood, an authority on Russian filmmaking, will lecture on films that reflect both the "official" and counter-history of Russian and Soviet wars.

"Oct. 11, 2001 is the day I got my life back after ten years of not having it," says Douglas, who now speaks to prospective trial participants about his experience with the procedure. "I hope my case will help relieve others' back pain in the years to come."

Not a miracle

Douglas's story inspires optimism, but it is only a small fraction of the trial. The study eventually will involve at least 40 patients. About 18 have been recruited already. Monsey declines to say much about how things have progressed so far – he's waiting to complete an initial analysis of the trial's results with Rathmell after 20 patients have participated. If the initial analysis is promising, the team will complete the study and publish sometime in the next 12- to 18-months. In the meantime, Monsey offers this: "We've had some good successes from IDET, but we've also had occasions where we had to repeat the procedure."

So a miracle cure it is not. Back pain still will afflict about 80 percent of the population at one time or another. "The pain," Monsey says, "is a consequence of living upright on a planet with gravity." But as research into new imaging techniques, biochemical markers and treatment procedures continues, Monsey is optimistic that the enhanced knowledge will help doctors find better treatments to an ever-present yet elusive ailment.

"Better matching symptoms to an appropriate treatment is the art and science of where we're going," he says. "That's the crux."

For more information about the study, titled "A Randomized Clinical Trial of Intradiscal Electrothermal Therapy (IDET) versus Anterior Spinal Fusion for the treatment of Chronic, Discogenic Low Back Pain," call 847-3737. Potential participants need to have low back pain associated with degenerative disc disease (but do not have sciatica or leg pain) that has lasted for six months and has not responded to more conservative treatments.

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Youngblood to Lecture on Russian Filmmaking

By Lynda Majarian



Professor Denise Youngblood, University Scholar and Russian cinema expert. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

Vladimir Lenin was quick to recognize the propaganda potential of Russian cinema to mold the views of the country's many illiterate and semi-literate citizens, claiming it as "the most important of the arts." Joseph Stalin liked to insert himself into films on the history of Russian revolution, played by a taller, more handsome actor who spoke better Russian.

These are merely two facts from the arsenal of Denise Youngblood, professor and chair of history. Youngblood is a leading authority on Russian film from the Bolshevik era to the present. She will explore and contrast films that reflect both the "official" and counter-history of Russian and Soviet wars in a lecture titled, "On the Cinema Front: World War II and Soviet Cinema," on Oct. 15, at 4 p.m., in Memorial Lounge, Waterman.

Soviet-commissioned films comprising artificial history and parroting the party line became a staple of Soviet cinema from 1925 through the mid-1970s, says Youngblood. "But these are not the films that interest me most." Her current project is a book-in-progress analyzing the cultural politics of Russian and Soviet war films, a genre that provides striking examples of how history was constructed and contested through the film medium. Her book also offers insight into the dynamics of cultural production in an authoritarian society.

"The point is to illustrate the kind of cultural dialogue that was possible in the Soviet Union in all but the most repressive years," Youngblood explains.

Her idea grew out of two articles she wrote on Russian films about World War I and World War II. "My research on these two articles suggested to me that I had barely scratched the surface of the subject," Youngblood says, "and that a book on Russian war films would provide a new way to view the complexity of the Soviet culture." The book, which is under contract to the University Press of Kansas, also will encompass the Russian Civil War, the Afghan war and the recent Chechen conflict.

Youngblood studied film history at the All-Union State Institute of Cinematography in Moscow. At the time (1979), "I was only the third American in the school's history to do so," she recalls. Since completing her studies, she has returned to Russia several times to conduct research for four books on Russian silent, popular and historic films and the country's movie making industry, including, *Movies for the Masses: Popular Cinema and Soviet Society in the 1920s*, which earned the Heldt Prize for best book by a woman in Slavic studies.

After serving for six years as assistant to the executive director of the American Association for the Advancement of Slavic Studies, Youngblood joined the UVM faculty in 1988.

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Probing the Peepers

Tourists of all types are coming to Vermont – Country Squires, New Ectopians, even the desirable Pools & Patios crowd. Tom Noordewier, associate professor of business administration, wants to get to know them all.

Sophomore Gets Air

UVM sophomore Michelle Panagos admits she's already playing a little academic catch-up this semester. She may not be alone in that, but her reason is novel – the junior world championships in snowboarding.

Backing It Up

Todd Douglas's piercing back pain started more than 10 years ago and steadily worsened over time. Then he met Dr. Robert Monsey and Dr. James Rathmell.

Youngblood recently was named a University Scholar for the 2002-2003 academic year. The award annually recognizes four distinguished, graduate faculty members for sustained excellence in research and scholarly activities. Recipients are selected by a panel of distinguished faculty based on nominations submitted by UVM colleagues. Each recipient presents a lecture on his or her scholarship for the university community and general public, sponsored by the Graduate College.

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