

[NEWS BRIEFS](#)[EVENTS](#)[NOTABLES](#)[SEARCH](#)[PRINT THIS ISSUE](#)[PRINT PAST ISSUES](#)[FEEDBACK](#)[UVM HOMEPAGE](#)

[Burning Anxiety](#)



Michael Zvolensky poses with flyers advertising his programs for relieving the anxiety and panic issues that can make quitting smoking extremely difficult. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

While the idea of quitting smoking might make some feel a little panicky, the habit inspires actual panic in many. This creates special difficulties to quitting – difficulties that an innovative program created by UVM psychologist Michael Zvolensky might combat.

[FULL STORY ►](#)

PREVIOUS ISSUE

[Shenandoah Shakespeare Express Visits Nov. 9](#)

[Fleming Museum Kids' Program Celebrates 20th Year on Saturday](#)

[Sustainable Enterprise Is Theme of Upcoming Vermont Research Seminar](#)

[Semester's Last Presidential Lectures Will Explore Terrorism](#)

['English Patient' Author's Visit to UVM Much More Than a Reading](#)

[Talk Will Discuss Vermont's First Physicists](#)

[Meetings Will Explain Flexible Spending, Medical Benefits Before November Deadlines](#)

[Life on the Interface](#)

[Student Fulbright](#)

When Laura Tilghman graduated in May she had some unfinished business. Her junior semester of study abroad had introduced her to many of the challenges facing developing countries and sparked an interest that couldn't be satisfied with one visit.

Quietly Leading It's not in Germain Mopa Njila's nature to talk about himself. But the senior basketball player, who has quietly helped lead the Catamounts to the best three seasons in school history, has earned the right to brag.

THE WEEK IN VIEW

Nov. 11, 4 p.m.
Lecture: "DNA Analysis and Microarray Facilities: What We Can Do for You," with Timothy Hunter, Manager, VCC DNA Analysis Facility, 400 Health Science Research Facility. Information: 656-2500

Nov. 15, 3 p.m.
Colloquium: "Between the Muses and the Mausoleum: Museum Discourse in/and Modernist Literature," with John Pedro Schwartz, Henderson Fellow in English at UVM and Ph.D candidate at the University of Texas. John Dewey Lounge, Old Mill. Information: 656-3056

Nov. 15, 3 p.m.
Lecture: "Masculine Ideals in the Bush Administration's Foreign Policy," with Matthew Hannah, geography. Marsh Lounge, Billings Student Center. Information: 656-7892.

Nov. 15, 4 p.m.
Lecture: "Interdisciplinary Scientific Research: Microbial Geochemistry's Example," with Greg Druschel, geology. A presentation of the McNair Scholars Program. 200 Lafayette. Information: 656-4546

Nov. 17, 3 p.m.
Lecture: "The Power of Rain and the Reign of Power: Rainmaking and Political Ecology in

NEWS BRIEFS

EVENTS

NOTABLES

SEARCH

PRINT THIS ISSUE

PRINT PAST ISSUES

FEEDBACK

UVM HOMEPAGE

NEWS BRIEFS

Arctic Stream Expert's Findings Help Inform Climate Change Report

William "Breck" Bowden, who has been studying Alaskan streams and their relation to the landscape since 1987, contributed to the Arctic Climate Impact Assessment released this week. The landmark four-year report from 300 scientists concludes that Arctic temperatures are rising twice as fast as the rest of the Earth, and within a century 50-60 percent of the ice will become water.

"I believe this report is one of the most cogent cases to make the case for warming in the Arctic," says Bowden, who is the Patrick Professor of Watershed Science and Planning at the Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources and Director of the Vermont Water Resources and Lake Studies Center. "It's no longer 'if' and it's no longer 'when.' It's occurring now. We now have statistically supported evidence to say global warming is happening. The key questions now are 'how much?' and 'with what impact?'"

As part of the National Science Foundation Arctic Long-Term Research program, a consortium of about 100 researchers at several sites worldwide that are considered important biomes, Bowden has seen his work transition from trying to decipher the workings of a little understood biotic community, to grappling with the consequences of warming on resources and the indigenous plants, animals and people.

Bowden and others based at the Toolik Lake Field Station, about 130 miles south of Prudhoe Bay and 350 miles north of Fairbanks, analyze the changing landscape. This area has been a research subject continuously since the 1970s and other records go back to the 1920s and 30s. Undergraduate and graduate students travel with him, often staying during the research season May-September while Bowden typically visits four times a year.

Because the Alaskan Arctic is warming faster than any other place in the world, it offers a fast-track laboratory to study climate change. While the rest of the world has warmed about one degree over the past century, the Arctic's ice and snow magnifies temperature changes and the bare terrain starts absorbing heat. Computer models predict that during the next century the Arctic will warm an additional 7 to 12 degrees Fahrenheit.

For his part, Bowden has measured steady lake temperature increases and snow decreases for years, but in August 2003 his team found something new and dramatic: a gaping hole in the permafrost as long as a football field, half as wide

Event Officially Launches University Heights Construction

UVM celebrated the construction launch of the new University Heights Student Residential Learning Complex on Nov. 9 with a cornerstone-and time capsule-laying ceremony. Blasting and other site-preparation work for the project has been underway since late August.

"The launch of this exciting new residence hall is one more way that the ideas for the future of UVM we laid out in 2002 are more than a vision; they're becoming a new reality," said President Daniel Mark Fogel during brief remarks.

Michael Monte, director of the Community and Economic Development Office of the City of Burlington, and Bryant Jones, president of the Student Government Association, also spoke at the event.

The \$53 million project will consist of two complexes, each housing 400 students in a variety of room types, including singles, doubles, lofts, and suites. The first complex is scheduled to open in 2005, with the second due to open in 2006.

The new residence halls will be a model for the residential college system, integrating the academic and residential missions of the university, that the university will be implementing throughout the campus in the coming years. In addition to the range of room types, the new housing will contain faculty offices, study space, and classrooms, and will offer social events growing out of the academic program.

"The overall effect is a richer interaction between students and faculty," Fogel said.

The north complex of the new residence hall will become the home of UVM's new Honors College. The south complex will house UVM's Environmental College, open to students in a variety of disciplines who are interested in the environment.

Fogel emphasized that the entire building complex will be a model of green building practices. The project is being designed to achieve a LEED (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design) certification, with energy-efficient windows, walls, roofs and mechanical equipment, a heat recovery system, and natural materials in finishes and carpets with low off-gassing rates for high indoor air quality. The complex will also feature a "green roof" to absorb storm water, an on-site storm water run-off collection and treatment system, and a composting toilet and waterless urinal in

and 8-10 feet deep, whose surface collapsed eroded and washed down the nearby Toolik River. The cave-in is called a "thermokarst."

"Usually an entire hillside slips off but in this one, it really surprised us at the time, a tunnel had formed, collapsed and caved in down the slope. The bottom fell out of the stream," Bowden says.

Last summer's trip was more startling.

"We noted at least two new thermokarsts with failure modes similar to the one observed in 2003 along with numerous slip failures. Although the terrestrial area impacted by these thermokarsts is limited, the aquatic habitat altered by these failures is extensive. It is likely that warming in the Arctic foothills region will lead to additional and perhaps accelerated thermokarst formation which may have considerable impacts on aquatic ecosystem over wide areas and at least decadal time scales," he and colleagues told the American Geophysical Union Fall Meeting in San Francisco.

That means that while thermokarsts look small against the vastness of the Arctic, their sediment washing down a river can measure a half-inch deep 20-30 miles downstream. It appears that accelerated warming will lead to more of these arctic mudslides that smother moss, algae and other life.

"This a phenomenon we have not observed in our 30 years on the site – but in the last two years we've discovered a dozen in the wider area. We need to be able to identify them automatically in a wider spatial area and to determine if these are new," he says. Thermokarst study may emerge as a separate focus as the team pursues the possibility of tracking them by remote sensing and aerial photography.

Special Collections Book Auction Sets Records

Seventy-five bidders, including many top dealers and collectors, spent close to a quarter-million dollars at a Nov. 6 book auction to benefit Special Collections. The sale, conducted by Hinesburg auctioneer William Parkinson, grossed \$240,410 and set new record prices for several titles.

All of the Vermont imprints auctioned off came from the bequest of Gertrude Mallery and were duplicates of items held by Special Collections. The Americana titles were either duplicates or items that fell outside of the department's collecting scope. The highest prices paid were \$20,500 each for the 1779 edition of *A Narrative of Colonel Ethan Allen's Captivity* and the 1778 *Constitution of the State of Vermont*. The same editions, in slightly less pristine condition, brought \$5,500 and \$6,250 respectively in a 1991 benefit auction.

Though high-end items brought excellent prices, some of the stand-bys of past sales did not fare as well. The five volumes of Abby Hemenway's *Vermont Historical Gazetteer* sold for a total of \$600, while a set of the 1792-1793 edition of Jeremy Belknap's *History of New-Hampshire* (with

the public restroom.

The building complex will also feature landscaping and outdoor amenities, including a new campus green, an amphitheater, and outdoor courts, that will enhance a sense of community on the University Heights campus, which is also home to three other residence hall complexes.

Fogel also said that by offering 800 student beds and programming designed to keep students occupied on campus, the new residence hall demonstrates the university's commitment to being a good neighbor to residents of Burlington and South Burlington.

The cornerstone was put in place by Fogel, Monte and Bryant. Objects ranging from the "vision statement" Fogel wrote in 2002 to a photograph of the first Honors College class to a study of the university's environmental practices from 1990 to 2000 were placed in the time capsule.

Brennan Says He'll Retire at Season's End

Tom Brennan, dean of America East men's basketball coaches, told an overflow crowd at a Nov. 4 press conference at Gutterson Fieldhouse that he will retire at the end of the season, ending his 19-year coaching career at UVM.

"It's a very happy time for me, except for the fact that I've got to leave seven kids behind," Brennan said. "Whenever you go, you have to leave somebody behind. I've been very, very lucky, very blessed."

Brennan, who was hired in 1986 as the 14th head coach in the 105-year history of the basketball program, said the timing is right for him personally and for the program. The seven seniors on the 2004-2005 team have compiled the winningest record in school history, having posted three consecutive 20-plus win seasons while leading the Catamounts to a first-ever NCAA tournament in 2002-2003 and again last season. Brennan said he felt lucky to be able to retire on his own terms and thanked UVM for allowing him the chance to develop as a coach after a tenure that started with just 14 wins and 68 losses. "That's not something that would never happen in college athletics today. They just kept saying 'keep up the hard work.' I started out 8-50 and they (administration) were telling me to stay positive and hang in there. Are you kidding me? That just doesn't happen today. I'm so thankful for all the support I've received over the years... but it's a different time, a different era and it's time for me to do some other things."

Brennan's tenure is the second longest as a Vermont head coach and the longest of any America East mentor in the league's 25-year history. He is the career leader in games coached at Vermont and is second all-time in coaching victories with 239 behind John 'Fuzzy' Evans, who won 261 games from 1940 to 1965. His 18-year record at Vermont is 239-269, while his overall record in 24 seasons is nine wins shy of 300 victories (291-343).

some minor flaws) went for only \$100. A complete set of the gazetteer sold for \$1475 in the department's 1994 auction.

This was the fourth auction held by the department. The first, in 1987, brought in \$30,000. Repeats in 1991 and 1994 yielded \$108,000 and \$60,000 respectively. The revenues generated by these events have gone into endowment funds for the purchase of books, manuscripts and other historical materials. Proceeds from the 2004 auction will also be placed in an endowment, and the interest from the fund will be used for acquisitions and special projects.

Faculty Receive Service-Learning Grants

The Office of Community-University Partnerships and Service-Learning announced winners of fall planning and implementation grants on Nov. 7. Seven projects will receive grants of up to \$1000 from CUPS to aid them in injecting service-learning pedagogy into their courses. A new grant cycle will offer possibilities for funding in spring 2005.

The faculty winners are:

- Mary Canales and Judy Cohen (nursing) to create service-learning opportunities for graduate nursing students enrolled in a new course, "Policy, Organization, and Financing of Healthcare," through partnerships with local health care organizations that would benefit from policy research, policy-writing, legislative assistance, etc.
- Susan Comerford (social work) to integrate a service-learning component into a social welfare policy practice course. The project will help students to become familiar with the process of policy formulation and policy analysis through key partnerships with legislative bodies and/or nonprofit human service agencies.
- Jane Mekkelsen (education) for improvements to the service-learning elements of the America Reads/Counts program and the Education seminar in which literacy tutors participate.
- Roulef Boumans and Saleem Ali (Gund) to provide equipment that will help to facilitate a partnership between the Gund Institute and Chulalongkorn University in Peru. The partnership will explore conflict resolution, and will help to provide ecological, economic, and social welfare evaluations of potential construction and maintenance of gas pipelines through remote areas of Peru.
- Fran Kahn (Learning Cooperative) to improve the service-learning element of a course cross-listed with Community Development and Applied Economics and Human Development and Family Studies called "Finding Community Voice." The course will most likely partner with the Vermont Refugee Resettlement program and the Visiting Nurses Association to address the needs, and find the strengths, of a growing population of Congolese, Sudanese and Bantu Somali refugees.

Considered a player's coach, members of his team said that although they were prepared for the possibility that Brennan might step down after the season, they were still saddened by his decision.

"He's the most unbelievable man I've met and I think I'll ever meet in my life," said senior David Hehn. "The things that he brings to the table are unbelievable. He makes me strive to be so much like him. If I live a life even close to his I'll be very, very happy."

Of the 56 head coaches who began with their school in the 1986-87 season, only three, Brennan, Jim Calhoun of UConn and Fang Mitchell of Coppin State remain at the same program. Brennan is one of 14 current coaches to serve at the same school in Division I for 18 or more seasons.

"Tom has left a mark of distinction on our athletic program, the university, the community and on the student-athletes who have played for him. We are blessed to have worked with him and to call him a friend," said Athletic Director Robert Corran. "He has been, first and foremost, an educator who has used the game of basketball to teach the essential values of life. As a result, he has earned the utmost respect of his players, his colleagues, and the entire basketball community. We are grateful for his lifelong contribution, and we wish him the very best in his retirement."

Almost every one of Brennan's four-year players earned their degree at UVM with many of them excelling in the classroom. Over the past three seasons, the Catamounts have had the best grade point average among America East men's basketball programs. Last season the starting lineup for the 2004 conference champs all earned a 3.4 GPA or higher. In 2003 and 2004, Grant Anderson '03 and Hehn '05 became the first Catamounts to be selected the America East Scholar-Athlete for men's hoop.

"I congratulate Tom Brennan on an outstanding career at UVM," said President Daniel Mark Fogel. "A career that has beautifully reflected Tom's strong personal values and UVM's educational mission: caring for the wellbeing of our students, balancing athletic success with academic achievement, and always displaying compassion, commitment, and creativity in teaching them skills that will last a lifetime. We thank Tom for all he has done for UVM and I personally wish him the very best in his future pursuits. We will miss him greatly, but he will always be a cherished member of the university community."

A native of Philipsburg, N.J., Brennan began his coaching career in the fall of 1971 as a graduate assistant at Georgia under Ken Rosemond. Corran will lead a national search for Brennan's successor to ensure a smooth transition.

- Ellen Marsden (Rubenstein School of Environment and Natural Resources) to create a service-learning project between students in ichthyology (the study of fishes) and ECHO at the Leahy Center for Lake Champlain. The project will help ECHO to create programming for visitors through student presentations.
- Charles Rathbone (education) to create a mentoring project between middle school students in Burlington and UVM students that fosters exploration of diverse cultures and diverse learning styles in a course titled "Learners and the Learning Process."

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NEWS BRIEFS

EVENTS

NOTABLES

SEARCH

PRINT THIS ISSUE

PRINT PAST ISSUES

FEEDBACK

UVM HOMEPAGE

EVENTS



Neil Simon's upscale urban farce *Rumors* opens at the Royall Tyler Theatre on Nov. 10. (Publicity photo)

Theatre Presents Neil Simon Play 'Rumors'

The Department of Theatre will present the contemporary farce *Rumors* by Neil Simon starting Nov. 10. The play runs Nov. 10-13 and 18-21 at the Royall Tyler Theatre. Tickets are available online at www.uvmtheatre.org.

One of Neil Simon's most loved plays, *Rumors* opens at the upscale apartment of the deputy mayor of New York where a posh dinner party is about to commence. As the guests arrive they find that the food is uncooked, the hostess is missing and the host is in crisis. The show is directed by Sarah E. Carleton. The ensemble cast includes Evan Beamer, Hannah Blum, Leigh Branson, Molly Cameron, Lizzie Chazen, Michael Feinberg, Shaun-Meghan McNally, Shawn Ross, Ted Szadzinski and Alex Vallecillo-Bone.

Curtain time is 7:30 p.m. for all performances except for the Sunday matinee on Nov. 21 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$15 for adults; \$12 for non-UVM

Science of Smell Keynote Topic for Neuroscience Forum

A neuroscience forum begins Nov. 15 at 3 p.m. in Given E210 with a keynote talk, "Recent Advances in Olfactory Research and their Relevance for Human Smell Perception," delivered by Dr. Gordon Shepherd, a professor at Yale University School of Medicine. College of Medicine Dean John Evans will introduce Shepherd.

Following the keynote, a research poster session and reception will take place in the HSRF Gallery from 4:15 p.m. to 6:15 p.m. The poster session is sponsored by the Vermont Chapter of the Society for Neuroscience.

The event opens a two-day external review of UVM's progress at the Center of Biomedical Research Excellence in Neuroscience, which is funded by a \$10.7-million grant provided by a unit of the National Institutes of Health.

Information: 656-2230

Cohen to Read on Nov. 18

Literary nonfiction writer Rachel Cohen will give a free, public reading and lecture on Nov. 18 at 4:30 p.m. in John Dewey Lounge, Old Mill.

Cohen is the author of the book, *A Chance Meeting: The Intertwined Lives of Writers and Artists, 1864-1967*, a compilation of 36 encounters between 30 prominent figures that was a finalist for this year's prestigious First Book Award from the *London Guardian*. A Harvard graduate, Cohen currently teaches creative nonfiction writing at Sarah Lawrence College. Her essays have appeared in journals including *Threepenny Review*, *Doubletake*, *McSweeney's* and, most recently, the *New Yorker*.

Students, UVM faculty/staff and seniors; and \$5 for UVM students. Tickets are available online, by phone or at the box office weekdays from 12-5 p.m. and two hours before performances on weekends. Every second Thursday performance is ASL interpreted for people with hearing impairments and every second Friday performance is audio described for people with problems seeing.

Tickets are also on sale now for the annual *The Toys Take Over Christmas* on Dec. 4-5 at 10 a.m., 2 p.m. and 6 p.m. Tickets are \$10 for adults and \$5 for children under 12. There are no discounted or group rates for these performances.

Information, tickets: 656-2094

Cohen's visit to UVM is presented by the English Department Writers' Workshop series.
Information: 656-3056

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[News Briefs](#) | [Events](#) | [Notables](#)

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NOTABLES

November 10, 2004

Awards and Honors

Dr. **David Krag's** lab has received approval for a National Cancer Institute R01 grant titled "Targeting Breast Cancer with Small Ligands." This three-year, \$862,972 grant is a continuation of Krag's work to develop previously identified ligands that bind to molecules important in breast cancer. ErbB2 and Grb7 are involved with signal transduction, and inhibition of them is thought to be important in slowing growth of cancer. For more details, see [this](#) story.

Publications and Presentations

Many College of Medicine faculty delivered oral presentations and educational sessions at the scientific sessions of the American Heart Association in New Orleans on Nov. 6-9. Dr. **Mary Cushman**, associate professor of medicine and pathology, delivered an educational session titled "Novel inflammatory and thrombotic biomarkers for cardiovascular risk prediction: CRP and beyond" and an oral abstract presentation titled "D-Dimer, Cardiovascular Disease and Mortality in the Elderly". **David Warshaw**, professor and chair of molecular physiology and biophysics, presented a lecture on "Myosin: Insights from Molecular Motors". Dr. **Philip Ades**, professor of medicine and director of cardiac rehabilitation, delivered a presentation titled "Barriers to Exercise in Overweight Patients." Dr. **Peter VanBuren**, associate professor of medicine, presented a talk on "Thin Filament Regulatory Proteins in Failing Myocardium" and an abstract poster titled "Human Atrial Fibrillation is Associated with an Alteration in Calcium Cycling Protein Expression without Change in Contractile Protein Performance." Dr. **Naomi Fukagawa**, professor of medicine, presented an oral abstract session titled "Influence of Sex and Diabetes Mellitus on Acto-Myosin Crossbridge Kinetics of Human Myocardium." Dr. **Martin LeWinter** presented on "Functional Consequences of Myofilament Alterations in Failing Myocardium."

November 3, 2004

Publications and Presentations

Mark Byrne, who recently received his degree in physics, and **Sanjeeva Murthy**, an associate professor of physics, published an article in collaboration with scientists from National Chemical Laboratory in Pune, India, in the journal *Polymer*. The article is titled, "Effect of Molecular Orientation on the Crystallization and Melting Behavior in Poly (ethylene terephthalate)"

David Jones, an assistant professor of business administration, presented two papers with colleagues to a NATO Task Force Group on Military Recruitment and Retention in Brussels, Belgium. One of the papers, which has been conditionally accepted for publication in the *Journal of Applied Psychology*, was a meta-analysis of the recruitment literature intended to identify the most effective practices for affecting applicant attraction to organizations and other relevant outcomes (e.g., application decisions, job offer acceptance). The second presentation, a theoretical paper Jones wrote with colleague, discussed the effectiveness of particular recruitment strategies within the context of the research literature on persuasion and attitude change.

Kenneth Rothwell, professor emeritus of English, recently published a second edition of *History of Shakespeare on Screen* with Cambridge University Press. Rothwell updated the book, first published in 1999, with revisions and an additional chapter updating the chronology to 2004.

NEWS BRIEFS

EVENTS

NOTABLES

SEARCH

PRINT THIS ISSUE

PRINT PAST ISSUES

FEEDBACK

UVM HOMEPAGE

Burning Anxiety

By Lynda Majarian

Article published Nov 09, 2004

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Michael Zvolensky poses with flyers advertising his programs for relieving the anxiety and panic issues that can make quitting smoking extremely difficult. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

While the idea of quitting smoking might make some feel a little jittery, the habit inspires literal panic in many. And that poses special difficulties to quitting – difficulties that an innovative program created by UVM psychologist Michael Zvolensky might combat.

People with panic disorders smoke at a disproportionately high rate, about 40 percent versus 24 percent of the general population, and they have a harder time quitting and relapse more often. Another 5

percent of American smokers may develop panic symptoms or even panic disorder when they try to quit. But typical anti-smoking interventions such as nicotine replacement therapy and counseling don't treat these underlying issues, says Zvolensky, an assistant professor of psychology and director of the Anxiety and Health Research Laboratory.

Research citing that smoking often precedes panic disorder and may increase the risk of developing the malady led Zvolensky and his team to pioneer new prevention and treatment programs now being duplicated elsewhere. The programs entail giving at-risk populations tools to prevent them from smoking in the first place, as well as teaching smokers with panic-related vulnerabilities to deal with their symptoms through gradual exposure, coping strategies and mentally correcting illogical fears.

"Once conditioning has happened, you can't undo it," says Zvolensky. "We don't try to remove panic-related symptoms, but we offer an alternative model to teach people to tolerate and/or alleviate symptoms."

Confronting panic

Smokers with panic disorder, who often turn to cigarettes to avoid the uncomfortable, "appear to be super-motivated to quit," says Zvolensky, "but they also appear to have a much harder time quitting and are more likely to relapse." That's not hopeful news, considering that more than 90 percent of smokers in the general population who quit on their own and up to 85 percent who attend traditional treatment programs relapse within a year.

Zvolensky became interested in anxiety disorders while working at a drug rehabilitation program during his training at Brown University, where he found the staff had little understanding of the illness. Since then, he's come to believe that mental-health professionals have largely ignored cigarette smoking. Little is understood of how smoking relates to anxiety disorders other than panic disorder, he says, but studies do indicate that a history of heavy smoking may increase the chance of developing a variety of emotional disorders.

Zvolensky and his team – which is comprised of psychologists, post-doctoral candidates, and graduate and undergraduate students – are currently

Student Fulbright

When Laura Tilghman graduated in May she had some unfinished business. Her junior semester of study abroad had introduced her to many of the challenges facing developing countries and sparked an interest that couldn't be satisfied with one visit.

Quietly Leading

It's not in Germain Mopa Njila's nature to talk about himself. But the senior basketball player, who has quietly helped lead the Catamounts to the best three seasons in school history, has earned the right to brag.

evaluating two models. The first is a random prevention method for nonsmokers who have high risk-factors for smoking. "We have good instruments to measure sensitivity levels and vulnerabilities," he explains.

Once at-risk patients are identified, they participate in a 90-minute program that provides education, therapeutic exercises and strategies for making behavioral changes. The second model is a treatment program geared to smokers who have vulnerabilities for panic disorder (even if they don't recognize the vulnerabilities themselves) and consists of 16 weeks of group meetings.

Before attempting to quit, participants in the second group learn to accept and tolerate panic symptoms that are induced through methods like hyperventilation or CO2-enriched air. "They learn to accept and to react differently to bodily sensations, and to give themselves different messages about them," Zvolensky says. For instance, they learn to recognize that a racing heartbeat isn't the onset of a heart attack. "People need this information," Zvolensky adds.

He has conducted research in both the United States and Russia, but it's citizens of Nova Scotia who are trying out the UVM prevention treatment models through a collaboration with the psychiatry department at Dalhousie University, and laboratories elsewhere are duplicating his studies, which have been documented in more than 30 articles in peer-reviewed journals such as *Addictive Behaviors* and *Clinical Psychology Review*.

"Michael will redefine how we treat panic disorders," says Robert Lawson, professor and chair of psychology, noting that Zvolensky has secured more than \$2 million in grants over the three years he has worked at UVM.

He is also turning his attention to adolescents, launching a multi-year smoking intervention program within Franklin County schools and medical practices with doctoral student Ellen Leen-Feldner. "The number of kids smoking hasn't gone up, but their dependence on nicotine has increased," Zvolensky explains. High school, he says, is one of life's most stressful phases; and again at about ages 25 and 50 people are more susceptible to stress that may lead to smoking. He would like to compare the rural high school group with adolescent smokers in Chittenden County, with the long-term goal of making the treatment available to other communities.

Another recent grant will allow his team, in collaboration with Laura Gibson, clinical assistant professor of psychology, to examine a possible connection between cigarette smoking and posttraumatic stress disorder. "The two disorders share some of the same symptoms," he says.

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NEWS BRIEFS

EVENTS

NOTABLES

SEARCH

PRINT THIS ISSUE

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FEEDBACK

UVM HOMEPAGE

Bioprospecting in Madagascar

Fulbright grant supports recent graduate's trip to Africa to continue research she began with her senior thesis

By Jon Reidel

Article published Nov 10, 2004

Laura Tilghman, who graduated earlier this year, received a Fulbright grant to continue her research on bioprospecting in Madagascar.

When Laura Tilghman graduated in May she had some unfinished business. Her junior semester of study abroad had introduced her to many of the challenges facing developing countries and sparked an interest that couldn't be satisfied with one visit.

The next year, Tilghman, who received a degree in environmental studies and environmental science, started work on a thesis on bioprospecting, a

practice that often involves the extraction of indigenous plants for research and subsequent use by pharmaceutical, agriculture and nutrition companies, using Madagascar as her case study. Despite two trips to the immense island off the southeast coast of Africa to interview policy makers and local organizations, Tilghman wanted to do more research.

"Most of the scholarly work on bioprospecting has focused on India and Latin America, but very little has been done with African nations," Tilghman says. "In Madagascar there aren't as many activists or indigenous protests. They aren't as aware of how much money pharmaceutical companies are making off their indigenous plants."

Lacking funding for another trip to advance her research, Tilghman applied for, and won, a student Fulbright grant as a senior through the U.S. Department of State. The \$23,000 grant – the only one given to a UVM student last year – gives recent graduates the opportunity to conduct career-launching research abroad.

Balancing indigenous needs, research

Tilghman left for Madagascar on Nov. 7 to continue her examination of bioprospecting, which is currently one of the most hotly debated topics in conservation and indigenous rights. It's a particularly intense issue on the island, which, because of its isolation, is a place where 80 to 90 percent of its plants are unique, a potential trove for researchers.

"They are prospecting for gold in the form of new drugs. Some huge blockbuster drugs have come out of some countries with no compensation for the country of origin," Tilghman says. "Definitely in the past pharmaceutical companies have taken advantage of the countries that had no sense of the value of their indigenous plants. But a lot of pharmaceutical companies are trying to do good things like giving money to the governments."

Tilghman stresses that her primary goal isn't to expose various companies for using plants they do not own. Instead, she intends to write reports to give to communities and researchers to promote better relationships that result in

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Burning Anxiety

While the idea of quitting smoking might make some feel a little panicky, the habit inspires actual panic in many. This creates special difficulties to quitting – difficulties that an innovative program created by UVM psychologist Michael Zvolensky might combat.

Quietly Leading

It's not in Germain Mopa Njila's nature to talk about himself. But the senior basketball player, who has quietly helped lead the Catamounts to the best three seasons in school history, has earned the right to brag.

environmentally responsible continued research that is beneficial to all parties involved.

In her grant proposal, Tilghman says that people living in such ecosystems often have an “intimate knowledge of the uses of local natural resources and can aid in research advances.” With this in mind, her project is designed to study the debates and dilemmas encountered when seeking useful approaches to addressing local needs and research innovation.

With Madagascar being one of the poorest countries in the world, Tilghman says there is a tremendous need to find ways to bring economic stability to its people. She uses an example of one of the most well known cases of bioprospecting to show that “since biological compounds do not respect national borders, their commercialization does not necessarily bring ensuing benefits back to where they came from.”

In her proposal, Tilghman writes about two successful anti-cancer drugs produced by Eli Lilly, a US-based pharmaceutical company, that came from chemicals found in the rosy periwinkle, a plant native to Madagascar. “Since Madagascar had no technical capacity for in-country research and development, nor any laws to ensure compensation or benefit-sharing for products made from its resources, it receives none of the \$100 million Eli Lilly makes annually from the sale of these drugs.”

The country’s government recently passed legislation to regulate bioprospecting contracts at the national level and to ensure that all research meets certain standards and protects the right of the local people. What’s lacking, according to Tilghman, is information on how it could be implemented at the local level.

“In order to understand how to do so in a way that involves local people properly, we must first understand local conceptions of ownership and access to knowledge, as well as local development and conservation needs,” writes Tilghman, who says some indigenous people don’t want traditional plants messed with in any way.

Her Fulbright trip starts in the capital of Antananarivo where she’ll look at national and institutional policy. The last two phases of the project focus on the question of how to address local needs and values in the bioprospecting process. She’ll travel to the Masoala peninsula – an isolated area that has recently received research scrutiny – to look at local knowledge of medicinal plants. She’ll then visit the protected area of Zahamena to look at the impact of bioprospecting on local people and their knowledge systems. She’ll return to Antananarivo to share her findings with a number of Malagasy research organizations.

“I’m hoping to write some reports to give to local communities and researchers to help them better deal with this issue,” Tilghman says. “I’d like to publish an article on it because right now there’s not much out there. Hopefully the research will help the country and the companies work together.”

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Quietly Leading

By Jon Reidel

Article published Nov 10, 2004



Senior Germain Mopa Njila has quietly helped lead the men's basketball team to two consecutive NCAA Tournament appearances while pursuing his degree in computer science. (Photo: University Photography)

It's not in Germain Mopa Njila's nature to talk about himself. But the senior basketball player, who has quietly helped lead the Catamounts to the best three seasons in school history, has earned the right to brag.

As a member of the 2004 America East All-Conference team and Academic Honor Roll, Njila, a native of Yaounde, the capital city of Cameroon, carries a 3.3 GPA in computer science and information systems and interns at IDX in Burlington. His story of coming to

America in hopes of winning a basketball scholarship to pay for the college education his mother insisted on is boast-worthy

You just won't hear much about it from the French- and English-speaking player, who rises at 6 a.m. during the off-season to run and who spends basketball season studying late into the night long after practice and weight-lifting sessions end. The words of others best capture the 6-foot-4 inch, 200-pound guard's demeanor, perseverance and success.

"He's got this kind of inner peace," says senior David Hehn, whose locker is next to Njila's. "He doesn't say too much, but if you spend any time around him you'll know how much he wants to win and how dedicated he is to the school, his friends and his teammates. He's a great friend, definitely someone you can talk to. You never ever see him get upset and start yelling. He just knows how to deal with himself very well. It's not that he's afraid to talk; it's just that he only talks when he has something to say."

Coming to America

Njila's journey to Burlington is a tale of perseverance and chance. He grew up in a city of one million located in West Africa, the son of a police officer mother who also owns her own business. Having grown up playing soccer, he saw basketball was viewed as a recreational sport played for fun.

Njila would discover that he stacked up well against his high school hoop counterparts in America after being accepted to the Berkshire School in Homestead, Fla. for his senior year. The chance to play at Berkshire, an international school with students from 16 countries and a basketball team with 12 future Division I players, was a dream come true for the player because it allowed him to follow his older sister to America.

"It was a good learning experience for me," says Njila. "It wasn't easy. Some people think, well, it's America the land of dreams, it's easier there; but it was hard at first. Even just to play was not that easy because you had so many good players. It was good for me to have that good competition because it made me work hard."

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Student Fulbright

When Laura Tilghman graduated in May she had some unfinished business. Her junior semester of study abroad had introduced her to many of the challenges facing developing countries and sparked an interest that couldn't be satisfied with one visit.

After a successful year at Berkshire, Njila took his game to The Master's School in West Simsbury, Conn., where he would continue to improve and catch the eye of a handful of Division I schools, including UVM assistant coach Kevin Jefferson, now at American University. One visit to Burlington and he was sold.

"I met coach (Tom) Brennan and he was a very happy person; a good guy, very funny," Njila says. "I didn't know where to go to college at first. It's such a huge choice where to spend the next four years. I remember at one point being really stressed about it. I wanted to go somewhere I could have a good education and play basketball and have fun. And thank God, you know, I always say that he answered my prayers. Both playing basketball and going to school are very important, but the degree is something you will have for the rest of your life."

Playing in the shadows

No one is more pleased with Njila's choice than Brennan, who gladly allows his defensive star to arrive a little late to practice this fall due to a heavy course load. When he talks about Njila, Brennan speaks first of his contributions to the university and the community. Secondly, almost as an afterthought, he mentions Njila's unheralded contributions on the court.

"I have so much respect for him because he's come from so far away not just to survive here, but to thrive here," Brennan says. "He's a great student and a wonderful player and a better teammate. He's an entire credit to the university and the community. He has a great appreciation for this gift that he got come to America. He gives of himself all the time. It's just a great story. I love that kid."

Brennan says Njila has never once questioned his role of backing up pre-season all-American candidate Taylor Copenrath and first-team all conference selection T.J. Sorrentine.

When Sorrentine was out with an injury two years ago and Copenrath missed a few playoff games last season, Njila stepped up to fill the void. In the 2003-2004 playoffs he averaged 12 points and 7.3 rebounds in three wins to help lead the Catamounts to their second straight NCAA tournament appearance. He led the team in steals that year and was third in scoring and rebounding.

"When I came here we weren't winning, but I could tell we were going to do something," Njila says. "I didn't come here and say 'oh they've never won, so that's the way it's going to be.' I have great respect for Taylor and T.J. who can score. I try to get them the ball because it helps us win. We've got people who can score, pass and play defense. I try to keep it simple and listen to the coaches."

Mopa Njila would like to see his hard work pay off in the form of a job at a company like IDX and with a first-ever NCAA tournament win for the Catamounts. Both would be major accomplishments.

Just don't expect him to brag about them.

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