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One Good Zurn Deserves Another



The singing, studious Zurn sisters: Bridget, 20, Mary Dove, 21, and Brooks, 22, serenade *the view*. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

The three Zurn sisters are, arguably, UVM's No. 1 family act, whether singing, studying or planning for a friendly takeover of dad's business.

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Lorrie Moore Visit

Standing in John Dewey Lounge, Lorrie Moore appears as skittish and smart as one of the narrators of one of her acclaimed short stories. The author of *Birds of America* and *Like Life* spoke and read on Nov. 14.

Russian Educators Take Ideas from UVM

Two visiting Russian professors asked as many questions as they answered in a recent interview with *the view*.

THE WEEK IN VIEW

Nov. 20 7 p.m.
Reading: Major Jackson, English, from his book, *Leaving Saturn*. Fletcher Free Library

Nov. 21 10 a.m.-2 p.m. Book Sale: Hardcover books at up to 70% off. Memorial Lounge, Waterman

Nov. 22 4:30 p.m.
Panel: "Dracula in the New Millennium," Tony Magistrale, English; John Paul Riquelme, Boston University. John Dewey Lounge, Old Mill

Dec. 2 7 p.m.
President's Lecture Series: "Why Art Students Rule," Frank Owen, art. Campus Center Theatre, Billings. See article [Why Art Students Rule](#)

Dec. 4 12:20 p.m.
Lecture: "Pasture, A Resource that Can Save Family Farms," Bill Murphy, plant and soil science. Room 234 Hills building

Dec. 6 7:30 p.m. Lane Series: Kelly Joe Phelps with Louise Taylor, folk and blues guitar and vocals. Recital Hall

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"Emerging Ammonite": UVM President Daniel Mark Fogel, Rachel Kahn-Fogel and sculptor James Sardonis unveil a new piece of artwork for the renovated Perkins building. For more on the piece, see the story below. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

"Emerging Ammonite" Sculpture Unveiled

President Daniel Fogel and his wife, Rachel Kahn-Fogel, unveiled UVM's newest sculpture, *Emerging Ammonite*, at a ceremony on the Fleming Green Nov. 19. Commissioned two years ago by the President's Office, the sculpture was designed by James Sardonis, parent of sophomore physical education major Hannah Sardonis.

The sculpture's design is based on a fossil form called an ammonite, a coiled marine invertebrate that lived more than 100 million years ago and reached sizes spanning eight feet in diameter. The piece is made from black marble that came from Isle LaMotte in Lake Champlain.

"This is a great moment for UVM and for all of us who value public art," Fogel said. *Emerging Ammonite* will find a permanent home in the Perkins Geology Museum when the renovations to that building are complete, explained Barry Doolan, chair of geology.

Sardonis is a longtime resident of Randolph, Vt., and he maintains a studio in Barre. Drawing inspiration from the ancient cultures of the Africans, Egyptians, Inuits and his own Greek ancestors, among other sources, he has created work that is on display at such venues as the Boston Aquarium, Dartmouth Medical Center, Philips Exeter (N.H.) Academy and Yale University. His most well known pieces include *Vermont Family*, a marble sculpture of a father, mother, son and infant daughter displayed at the Gifford Medical Center in Randolph, and *Reverence*, a sculpture of two whales' tails off

Faculty Quoted Far and Wide in October

Faculty and administrators loaned expert support to many a press or television report in October. Their appearances included:

- *The New York Times*, *CBS Evening News*, and multiple national outlets: Periods of intense storminess have peaked in the North Atlantic region roughly every 3,000 years over a 13,000 year period, according to research conducted by UVM geologists and reported in the Oct. 24 issue of the journal *Nature* and multiple national media. Read the *Times* article at [Storms](#)
- *Providence Journal*, *Boston Globe*: **Bernd Heinrich**, professor of biology and long-distance runner, was profiled in an Oct. 20 *Associated Press* story about his recent participation in a 50-kilometer race in Brunswick, Maine. Read the *Providence Journal* article at [Heinrich](#).
- *Scientific American* magazine: The October issue featured an article on the evolution of skin pigmentation, which referenced earlier research co-published by **Dr. Richard Branda**, professor of medicine.
- *Readers' Digest* magazine: Research conducted by **Paula Fives-Taylor**, professor of microbiology and molecular genetics, was cited in the October issue. Her research supports the theory that people with gum disease are at increased risk of atherosclerosis.
- *United Press International*, *The Weather Channel*, *Daily Planet*: A recent School of Natural Resources study on sugar maple foliage received continued media attention. **Paul Schaberg**, adjunct faculty and lead author, was quoted. Read *The Weather Channel's* transcript at [Fall Foliage](#)
- *National Public Radio*: **Dr. David Fassler**, clinical associate professor of psychiatry, discussed childhood depression in an Oct. 29 interview on "Talk of the Nation." Listen to the interview at [NPR](#)
- *Los Angeles Times*: **Robert Kaufman**, professor of political science, was quoted in an Oct. 15 article about Richard Perle, chairman of the Defense Policy Board. Read the article at [Kaufman](#)
- *Washington Post*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Newsday*: **Frank Bryan**, professor of political science, was quoted about the close governor's race in Vermont in an Oct. 30 *Associated Press* story that ran in newspapers nationwide.
- *Washington Post*: **Rachel Johnson**, acting dean of the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences, discussed the new

Interstate 89 at Technology Park in South Burlington.

For more on the artist and his work, visit:
[Sardonis website](#)

Piano Students Need Children to Instruct

Music majors taking a pedagogy course with Sylvia Parker, lecturer in music, need children to instruct. Parker, who will oversee the piano lessons, says the ideal age is 7 to 9 years old. Each child needs access to a piano for daily practice.

Tuition is free for the duration of the course, although children may continue lessons with tuition and times to be arranged individually.

More information: Sylvia Parker, 656-7761, 223-117 or Sylvia.Parker@uvm.edu

Lock in to Lock on

Michael Walston, of equipment operations at Patrick Gym, says fall-semester locker renters need to renew their lockers or return their locks and towels by Dec. 13. All lockers that are not renewed by that date will be emptied on Dec. 20 so lockers can be readied for spring semester use.

Lockers can be renewed for spring for \$10.

If you have any questions or special circumstances, contact Walston at 656-7679 or Michael.Walston@uvm.edu or athleqip@zoo.uvm.edu

National Academy of Science report's recommendations for sugar consumption in the paper's "Lean Plate Club" column Oct. 29. Read the Washington Post article [here](#)

- *Providence Journal*: An opinion piece by **David Massell**, assistant professor of history and member of the Canadian Studies Program, ran on Oct. 11. Massell discussed U.S.-Canada links and the cooperation of governors and premiers following his attendance at the August annual meeting of the Conference of New England Governors and Eastern Canadian Premiers.

For a complete list of October media placements, see: [UVM in the News](#)

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Setting the bar high: Frank Owen critiques senior Christina Conant's painting. (Photo: Sally McCay)

Why Art Students Rule

Frank Owen, professor of art, will deliver the final President's Lecture for the fall semester Dec. 2, at 7 p.m., in the Campus Center Theatre, Billings. His topic will be "Why Art Students Rule."

Owen, a 2001 Kroepsch-Maurice award winner for excellence in teaching, teaches painting and is known for his sense of humor.

The President's Lecture Series for First-Year Students was initiated this fall, under the guidance of William Lipke, professor emeritus of art. First-year students who attended the series and enrolled in Art 95, "The Art and Architecture of UVM," earned one hour of academic credit.

Design TASC Contest Sets Patriotic Challenge

This year's Design TASC (Technology And Science Connection) has set high school participants the task of raising the American flag. Fifty-five teams from 30 high schools in Vermont, New York and New Hampshire will compete for cash and other prizes on Dec. 7, in the tennis facility at Patrick Gym.

The 12th annual contest, sponsored by Engineering and Mathematics, will require contestants to drop four different sized cans – of tuna, tomato paste, shortening and beef stew – into their devices to store energy that later will be used to raise the flag. The morning trials will culminate in team run-offs for finalists from 1:15 to 21:30 p.m., followed by an awards ceremony. More than 125 Vermont businesses have made in-kind donations to the event.

Class Project to Raise Money for Afghan Women

Sociology students will hold a car wash and bake sale Saturday, Nov. 23 from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the parking lot next to the Carrigan Dairy Science building. The event is a fundraiser for the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan, a political/social organization of Afghan women struggling for peace, freedom, democracy and women's rights in their country.

The catalyst for the fundraiser grew out of an assignment that Beth Mintz, professor and chair of sociology, gave to students in her course on Women and Society. Students are assigned a weekly e-mail discussion question; this one was on the film *Beneath the Veil*. Rather than discuss it online, they had the option to develop a plan to help advance social change for Afghan women.

"The idea to help Afghan women caught fire," Mintz says. Students who chose to organize the car wash and bake sale also will distribute informational pamphlets on RAWA and circulate an e-mail message to raise additional funds to benefit Afghan women.

Related link: [RAWA Website](#)

Film Tells Internment Stories

The Center for Cultural Pluralism's video series will screen *Unfinished Business: The Japanese American Internment* on Nov. 21 at noon in Allen House.

The film tells the stories of three Japanese-Americans: Fred Korematsu, Gordon Hirabayashi and Minoru Yasui. The three resisted military orders to intern Japanese-Americans and remove them from the West Coast after the attack on Pearl Harbor. The film focuses on their experiences and decision to take their cases to the Supreme Court.

Information: Alina Torres, 656-7990 or atorres@zoo.uvm.edu

Staff Council to Hold Holiday Bazaar

The Staff Council will hold its annual Holiday Bazaar on Dec. 5 from 8:30 a.m.-2:30 p.m. in Memorial Lounge, Waterman.

The items on sale will include hand-painted crafts, warm fleece garments, photographs, sparkling jewelry and more – all made by UVM staff.

The rules of the contest and the schedule of events can be found at [TASC](#)

Information: Dawn Densmore, 656-8748 or densmore@emba.uvm.edu

The council also is seeking donations for the recreation committee's bake-sale table and craft table. Proceeds from these tables will be used to fund staff events.

Information: 656-4493

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Awards and Honors

Chris Stevenson, professor emeritus of education, received the National Middle School Association's highest honor, the John H. Lounsbury Award, at its annual conference in Portland, Ore. on Nov. 2. "He hears the voice of students and can communicate their needs and concerns to teachers and administrators," said Lounsbury in presenting the award. "In Vermont he is known as 'Mr. Middle School.' " Stevenson taught at UVM for 20 years. He is a founder of the Vermont Association of Middle Level Educators and author of six books.

Peter Nobes, the primary care clinician at the UVM Center for Health and Wellbeing, was named president of the New England College Health Association. Nobes, a physician's assistant, has served on the NECHA Board of Directors since 1998 and has been instrumental in helping the group partner with the American Cancer Society and public health departments. The association, which is an affiliate of the American College Health Association, represents health centers from 156 schools throughout New England and provides members with networking and professional development opportunities.

The Association of American Medical Colleges presented Dr. **Lewis First**, professor and chair of pediatrics, with a 2002 Alpha Omega Alpha Robert J. Glaser Distinguished Teaching Award at their annual meeting in San Francisco on Nov. 9. Established by the Alpha Omega Alpha medical honor society, the Glaser Award annually recognizes four medical school faculty members who have distinguished themselves as exceptional medical student educators.

Dr. **John Gennari**, professor of medicine, received the 2002 Vermont Laureate Award from the American College of Physicians-American Society of Internal Medicine, during the Vermont chapter meeting held Oct. 18. Dr. Gennari, who has been affiliated with UVM for more than 20 years, was honored for his "abiding commitment to excellence in medical care, education, research and service."

The following members of the College of Medicine's class of '06 were named **Freeman Medical Scholars**:

Michael Ashton; Sarah Blair; Meghan Brennan; Wells Chandler; Adam Cloud; Andrew Cummins; Cindy Dion; Lisa Ellis; Peter Holoch; Alison Jaquith; Erron Kinsler; Giovanna Leddy; Webb Long; Cristine Maloney; Laura Massingham; Elisha McLam; James Metz; Sadie Mills; Cory Nohl; Jessica Panko; Elaine Parker; Dyanne Philippe; Ellen Solomon; Mattie Towle; Myles Webster; Ian Zenlea. Freeman Medical Scholars are Vermont residents who make a commitment to practice in Vermont following their residencies. Each scholar receives \$10,000 annually towards tuition through this program.

Publications and Presentations

Timothy Murad, associate professor of Spanish, gave a presentation to the Vermont Foreign Language Association at its annual convention on Oct. 25. His talk was titled, "Literatura hispanoamericana: Medio milenio y mas."

Willi Coleman, associate professor of history and ALANA Studies, presented a paper at an international conference on slavery, forced labor and women held in October at Avignon, France. Coleman's paper was titled, "Caught in the Trap of Gender/Trapped in the Gears of Race."

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One Good Zurn Deserves Another

By Tom Weaver



The singing, studious Zurn sisters: Bridget, 20, Mary Dove, 21, and Brooks, 22, serenade *the view*. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

"We are family/I got all my sisters with me/We are family/Get up everybody and sing!"

It can't be helped. Apply a memory addled by over-exposure to 1970s AM radio to a conversation with Bridget, Mary Dove, and Brooks Zurn and you walk away with Sister Sledge's 1979 hit running through your head for the remainder of the day.

The sisters Zurn are, arguably, UVM's No. 1 family act. Singing together a cappella, passing Mary Dove's baby girl, Paloma, from lap to lap or finishing one another's sentences, the three undergraduates are harmony in action. And with majors chosen to match personal strengths and the needs of the family business, there's promise that this remarkable group of siblings will be a close-knit unit for years to come.

Trading pig for piano

If the musical Zurns ever decide to explore jazz, they'll do well to work from their conversational style as a starting point. They tell their shared life story like a seasoned combo, seamlessly trading off the narrative to embellish a thought or set-up a sister solo on a favorite story.

Family and work have never been far removed for the Zurns. Their father, Karl, started his business, Medical Associates, when the girls were quite young, first running it out of the family home in East Fairfield, Vt. The firm, which manufactures electronics for research, now employs 60 people and is located in Georgia, Vt. But in the early days it was a small shop, and the girls were welcome to stop by, visit dad and maybe try a hand at soldering.

After two years of public education followed by two years of Catholic school, the Zurn sisters were home-schooled with mom (Jane), dad, and sisters all sharing the tutoring duties. When it came to a tough math question, Brooks would turn to their father. "Daddy could explain the math in a way that I could understand," she says with a smile. "And I could explain it in a way that everyone else could understand."

Jane Zurn got her daughters' music education underway by trading her neighbors help butchering their pig for piano lessons for Brooks. The sisters began singing together when they were 3, 4 and 5; and about 10 years later they began to perform professionally.

One reason the sisters decided to stay close for college was the desire to keep their singing group, Eklektik Zurn, intact. The group is well named. Ask them for a few bars and they do a Balkan folk song followed by "Goin' to the Chapel." Or, they'll perform mellow Celtic instrumentals with Bridget on violin, recorder and piano; Mary Dove on harp and recorder; and Brooks on cello and guitar. All of them play bagpipes, as well. They recall, with apologetic amusement, their

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most difficult performing moment – a gentleman at a nursing home, momentarily distressed by the sound of bagpipes amplified through his hearing aid, threatened to do bodily harm with his walker unless they cut the piping.

Most audiences are more appreciative. A couple of years ago Eklectik Zurn was booked for weddings every weekend through the school year. The sisters had to cut back when the performing became too much to juggle with college. After recording three CDs in August (wedding, a cappella and religious), the sisters say they have plans for some 15 more over the next 10 years, everything from an album of standards to a Denver/Dylan mix.

Headstart on college

The Zurns' UVM careers began with a summer session psychology course, which they enrolled in together when Bridget, the youngest, was just 15. Part of their parents' intention in enrolling them to see how the home-schooled sisters would do in a public educational setting. They did well, and other summer classes in courses such as chemistry followed.

Bridget had notched 12 credits before entering UVM full-time. She will graduate in December with a degree in computer science, earned over three and a half years as a full-time student. Next up is an accelerated master's program at UVM, where she's planning a thesis on software development in aid of the family business. Brooks, an electrical engineering major, and Mary Dove, in psychology, won't be far behind in receiving UVM diplomas.

School and work already have begun to blend as they test taking roles in the family business. Succeeding their father wasn't always the plan, but the sisters say the possibilities "just clicked" as they began to focus on their studies at UVM. They joke that they came to realize it would take all three of them to match their father's work-horse output.

Though a family business can test even the strongest relationships, there seems to be little cause for concern with the Zurns, whose mutual kindness and consideration is almost other-worldly. Asked for some assurance that they fought as kids, they say yes, and add that their mother's pat warning was: "Settle it between yourselves or I'll settle it for you." Among the many impressive facts about the Zurn sisters, this one stands out – they are a rare, documented case where that old stand-by from the parents' arsenal actually seems to have worked.

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Lorrie Moore's Art More Than Life

By Kevin Foley

Standing before the stained glass of the John Dewey Lounge, Lorrie Moore appears as skittish and smart as one of the narrators of one of her acclaimed short stories. The author of *Birds of America* and *Like Life* spoke and read on Nov. 14 in a visit arranged by English Professor David Huddle for the Buckham Writer's Workshop.

Moore writes fluidly and, seemingly, personally – many of her readers, for example, apparently know that she dropped and killed a baby at a picnic (an episode from a story Moore said she couldn't write now that she is a mother) and endured dozens of doomed and bizarre love affairs. She discussed this and other perils of the writing life in an hour-long conversation with her UVM audience, then segued into a reading with material drawn from her new novel and an older short story.

The conversation often touched on the tendency of a writer's audience to confuse art for life, tilting heavily to the life. It's a syndrome Moore is a little sensitive about, particularly since *The New Yorker* ran a photo of her next to a short story about a mother with a severely ill child, subverting the piece's artfulness into autobiography (Moore's child had been sick, but the story was fiction; more on it later). And, it turned out, the conversation brought up something else she's a bit sensitive about: she had hoped to turn in a draft for her new novel in September, but she won't finish it until next year. Given this, the first question of her UVM reading was, inevitably, "So when's the new book coming out?"

"Oh," she said, more gently and ruefully than the words on the screen will convey, "it's the writing police."

A writer's despairing question

The art is going slowly in part because of... life. Moore is an English professor at the University of Wisconsin and she has a young son. And, although she has published two novels, she also admits to having a somewhat cranky relationship with the form.

"I think of myself as a short-story writer," she said. "It's a form that resembles a song for me. You can internalize its shape... A novel, which must be read at many sittings, can't be internalized... Writing a novel, to me, is like a job."

And Moore, of course, already has a job. But she's "trying to appreciate" the job-ness of writing the novel, a process that her UVM audience is likely hoping goes well: she read a 15-minute portion of the work in progress that ended at an intriguing juncture – from the collective gasp when she stopped, it was clear her admirers are ready for more. Moore made light of the unfinished book (with six books published before she turned 40, she's not exactly a slacker), comparing her plight favorably with that of Harry Potter author J.K. Rowling, but during one exchange, she put her plight into a larger and sadder context.

"I recently asked a friend rather despairingly, 'Was there ever a major American writer who was mother to a young child and who worked full-time?' We couldn't think of any. Plenty of men, no women," she said.

"Helpless before the material"

Critics often praise Moore for how deftly her work mingles tragedy and humor. Her characters crack jokes in the midst of darkness; they shift from humor to hysteria in offbeat and unpredictable ways that feel like life, only cleverer. When asked by the UVM audience whether this trait reflected her own personality and verbal dexterity, Moore demurred.

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[Russian Educators Take Ideas from UVM](#)

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"I feel like I'm revealing how people really talk to each other – maybe I'm delusional, or maybe I'm lucky to know some really funny people," she said. "I've never been at a dinner party where every single person didn't at least try to be funny. And most people succeed. Humor is just how human beings relate to each other. It is the talk you make when you are getting off the floor, the language of recovery."

Moore, like any writer, draws more than language from her life. But again and again in her talk, she emphasized how art transforms the author's experience into something different, something larger. She spent a little time talking about her experience with *The New Yorker*, how the magazine's layout and publicity effectively transformed a personal work of fiction, "People Like That Are the Only People Here" (compiled in *Birds of America*) into an autobiographical essay. An audience member pressed her on the point, observing that story built tension by commenting on itself, as its writer-and-mother protagonist lived through, and simultaneously struggled to write about, her child's illness.

Moore largely rejected that notion. "Fiction that comments on itself is still fiction," she said.

"If you write fiction strong and well," she added, "people are going to think it happened to you."

But, she allowed, perhaps sometimes, in some small sense, it did.

"I've been writing my whole adult life, and at some point you are helpless before your material. You can only write what is on your mind," she said.

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Russian Educators Take Ideas from UVM

By Lee Griffin



Kevin McKenna, professor of Russian, center, organized a full schedule this semester for visiting Russian educators Alexey Nechaev, left, and Alexander Afanasiev. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

Reporters like to ask questions. They're a bit like actors; comfortable in other people's lives and reluctant to share their own. But two Russian educators, visiting UVM this semester, recently gave *the view's* reporter a well-deserved, turnabout-is-fair-play lesson. Mentally vowing to eschew "The Russians Have Come, the Russians Have Come," as the headline, she barely noticed when Alexander Afanasiev and Alexey Nechaev took over the interview.

Their questions – and they had many – revealed a broad interest in UVM's communications tools. What methods does UVM use to communicate with the campus and outside community? How does it get the media interested in it? (And, despite vigorous denial by *the view*, Nechaev apparently left unconvinced that UVM does not pay outside journalists to write articles about it.) How do we produce *the view*, *Vermont Quarterly*, *Vermont Medicine* and other publications? Especially interesting to Nechaev were the variety of methods we use to gather e-mail addresses for the alumni and other external friends to whom we send e-mail newsletters.

Afanasiev, chair of the physics department at Irkutsk State University in Irkutsk, Siberia, explained the reason for their visit: "We are here because there are changes in Russia, and we need to look around. ... We have limited resources and we need to borrow [ideas]."

Global exchange

The extended visit of Afanasiev and Nechaev to Burlington – and the visits of about 23 other Russian academics to universities throughout the United States – was underwritten by the Carnegie Corporation of New York, which paid for their travel, housing and per diem. The International Research and Exchanges Board facilitated the travel, visas and administrative logistics for the U.S. trip, which is the second phase of a program that began last April in Moscow.

The UVM link between the Carnegie program's phases has been Kevin McKenna, professor of Russian, who delivered invited lectures at the International Symposium on University Administration in Moscow in April. In addition to his expertise in Russian language and literature, McKenna was known to Carnegie for his work as resident director of Russian studies at Leningrad State University and as an external observer during the 1995 national elections in Russia.

"Russia," McKenna said recently, "is now preparing to launch radical reforms of its own education system," and is looking to American institutions for models. Higher education administrators, he said, are interested in numerous areas, including curricula reform, boards of trustees, quality management, research, admissions, financial planning, computer technology and federally funded

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programs. Carnegie, which has invested \$225 million into helping the Russian Ministry of Higher Education find models, wants to help strengthen their infrastructure and to foster collaborative relationships between U.S. and Russian universities and colleges. The third phase of the program, McKenna added, likely will be faculty and student exchanges.

Trading notes, trading knowledge

Three educators arrived at UVM in late September; one, Alexander Ivanov, chief provost of Kuban State University, in Krasnodar, recently was called home. Nechaev and Afanasiev will leave Dec. 4, ending a rigorous visit. They've attended faculty lectures and met with the president and provost, most deans, many faculty and staff members, trustees, librarians, even a *Burlington Free Press* editor.

Nechaev explained to *the view* that the "biggest difference between our two systems is the election of professors every five years." Russian universities do not have tenure, but every five years the chair of the department reviews the professor's teaching, research and public service. That report is passed to the faculty senate for its scrutiny and finally to the scientific board of the university. "Not often," Nechaev said, but sometimes, faculty get fired.

The biggest challenge, however, is to bring the schools in line with the new, open society. "As a closed system," he said, "Russian universities work very well." But, now the world has changed, and the universities, like society, must learn to be more open, he said. His home, Samara, was a closed city, he said; "no foreigners ever came." But nine years ago, "our city opened and began an international exchange."

Nechaev believes the most effective way to open the university would be to add a board of trustees "to improve relations with the community and to build communications." The problem is that people with power and influence have only self-interest, especially in the "wild capitalism," get-rich-quick atmosphere currently pervasive in Russia, he explained. "They'll give money, but not time, interest or their connections," he said. The solution, initially, might be that Russian schools invite people from abroad to be their trustees. "More valuable than money from the World Bank is a different vision," he said. "The most valuable thing in the world is human time."

Both educators are hoping to organize an exchange with UVM faculty for two- or three-week visits on set topics. Afanasiev would focus first on physics faculty. He has met with David Smith and Kevork Spartalian in UVM's Physics Department. He and Smith have similar research interests in spectroscopy and are trying to start a joint project while he is here. He and Spartalian have discussed putting physics problems online to work on them together.

As the mutual interviews wound down, Nechaev shifted from the practical to the philosophical. "Despite all that has happened, education is alive; it survives; it more than survives," he said. "Everything medieval was destroyed, but the next period was the Renaissance, which kept knowledge alive in monasteries. ... We can destroy cities, cultures, kingdoms, but knowledge is alive and connects generations. Universities are the keepers of knowledge; it is the reason for their being."

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