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## [Bound for Success](#)



Math Professor Jim Burgmeier works with Burlington High School students Laura and Isabella in a Saturday College class. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

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[FULL STORY ▶](#)

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## [INTERview:](#) [Spalding Gray](#)

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## [Big Weekend](#) Luis

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## THE WEEK IN VIEW

**Dec. 6 12:00 p.m.**  
**Recital: [Found violins](#)**  
featuring conductor (and art professor) Ed Owre. Ira Allen Chapel.

**Dec. 7 9 a.m.**  
**Trustees: Finance and Budget Committee, Memorial Lounge, Waterman**

**Dec. 7 7:30 p.m. Lane Series: Christmas Concert with Trefoil, Recital Hall. Tickets: 656-3085.**

**Dec. 28 7 p.m.**  
**Men's Hockey vs. Lake Superior State, Gutterson.**

**Jan. 11 7 p.m.**  
**Women's Hockey vs. Cornell, Gutterson, and Men's Basketball vs. Maine, Patrick Gym.**

**Jan. 15 8 a.m. Spring Semester classes begin.**

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## Bound for Success

By Lee Griffin



Math Professor Jim Burgmeier works with Burlington High School students Laura and Isabella in a Saturday College class. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

It's 9 a.m. Saturday, and I'm hunting, simultaneously, for Living/Learning B building and a parking spot. I've worked at UVM more than 20 years, and the architectural logic of L/L still eludes me. Ditto the parking spot.

Then, serendipity strikes: A space opens up. And, thanks to mail-service-pal Larry and his key, the locked doors at the entry open. Bill, the photographer on assignment with me, has

scoped out the labyrinth and directs me. Things are looking up; I no longer regret abandoning *Weekend Edition* for a math class.

On this sunny, unseasonably warm, first day of December, I'm joining a group of high school students – members of UVM's Upward Bound program – for Saturday College, a monthly staple of the program's academic enrichment.

### Onward and upward

The classroom looks and sounds typical, except for the gallons of milk and array of yogurts on the front table. Terry Reilly, the office manager for TRIO, of which Upward Bound is one part, is taking attendance and handing out the day's assignments during the half-hour "homeroom."

The students, in their sixth straight day of classes, show little wear from the arduous schedule, an exceptional attitude it seems to me. Especially since some, like Rachel from Mill River High School, arose at 5 a.m. to catch the UVM bus for a two-hour journey. Riccardo Johnson, TRIO director, takes over, passing out compliments and congratulations – especially for those celebrating a first, second or third anniversary in the program.

UVM's Upward Bound, he explained to me earlier, is the "classic," version, meaning it offers a wide array of academics. It's targeted at students who will be the first generation in their families to attend college. Five Vermont schools participate: Burlington, Mt. Abraham, Vergennes, Otter Valley and Mill River.

Johnson proudly announces that next semester, 39 new students will join the program, bringing the total to 64.

### Helping hands

The UVM Upward Bound also is unusual in that two of the university's top professors have volunteered for three years to teach in the program. When math professors Jeff Dinitz and Jim Burgmeier (chair and associate chair of mathematics and statistics) enter, their reception echoes what Johnson has told me: "The students treat them like celebrities." Several of the students vie verbally for immediate attention, but the hubbub is cheerful, respectful.

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Burgmeier says that during their first year, the students "were mostly quiet – perhaps fearful of a math professor, even though we tried to put them at ease. Now, some of the veterans are willing to speak up, and this sets the tone for the entire class. Most feel comfortable enough to participate in class, and this makes the hour fun for everyone, including us. At least a quarter of the group seems to appreciate seeing strange, new math, and that makes it worthwhile for Jeff and me."

### **Feeling mod**

Today's lesson builds on a homework assignment of mod-7 problems. After sweeping through the first few and explaining several pathways to each solution, Dinitz introduces the concepts of patterns: "We math guys are lazy," he tells them. "We don't want to figure out all these hard problems. That's why we look for patterns." He explains the use of conjecture – "guessing based on what evidence you have so far" – and of theorem, "proving it." Several students begin shouting out their conjectures on patterns they suspect are emerging in the mod table. As they spot each one, Dinitz leads them into proof.

"We had no idea what to expect at first," Dinitz said after class. "For the first meeting, we had prepared about three times as much material as we could cover in the hour. But that was OK, it lasted us several meetings.

"The experience has been very positive for me and has gotten better over the past few years as Jim and I have gotten to know the students a little more, and they have certainly gotten to know us much better. They think the topics are 'cool,' and I guess we do also."

While they are lapping up number theory, the UB students also are banking confidence, even a little well-earned smugness. Laura and Isabella ("Bella"), Romanian sisters not yet three years in this country could only be marked "highly satisfactory" for their almost euphoric participation. The Burlington High School honor roll students couldn't speak any English when they arrived in Vermont. From Laura's report, Upward Bound has given them both an academic leg up and some social cachet. "They don't even know what mods are at school," she says with a pleased grin.

Dinitz hands out the new homework assignment – 30 problems in a variety of mods. He goes through a few on the board. Some of the trickier questions stall the group progress, so Dinitz and Burgmeier convert to one-on-one mode.

While they're tutoring, I try a few of the homework problems. I'm feeling very mod. I don't even care that I missed *Car Talk*.

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## Todd Among Century's Most Inspired Inventors

By Will Mikell



John Todd, research professor of natural resources, is profiled in a new MIT book on inventors. (Photo: Rose McNulty)

John Todd has always been a man ahead of his time. Now it appears that time has caught up with the man. Todd, a visionary in the field of ecological design for more than a quarter century, has been selected as one of the most important and inspiring inventors of the 20th century in a new book developed by the Lemelson-MIT Program for Invention and Innovation.

### Machines that live

Todd, research professor in natural resources, is in a select group of 35 inventors that includes Henry Ford, George Washington Carver and Steve Wozniak. Others, like Todd, who are profiled in *Inventing Modern America: From the Microwave to the Mouse*, may not be household names, but their inventions are part of our everyday lives. There's Douglas Engelbart, inventor of the computer mouse, Al Gross, inventor of the walkie-talkie and Percy Spencer, inventor of the microwave oven.

Todd created the "living machine" – an advanced, ecologically engineered, wastewater treatment system that mirrors the process of decomposition that occurs in the natural world. Living Machines use plants, animals and naturally occurring bacteria to degrade nutrients, separate out heavy metals and break down toxic compounds. Diverse communities of bacteria, algae, microorganisms, numerous species of plants and trees, snails, fish and other living creatures interact in the system to create an attractive environment and cleanse the water.

Todd first put his theories to the test in Massachusetts in 1984. When he applied his technique to a Cape Cod community that was dumping its sewage and other waste into a pit just 25 feet above the drinking water table, the cleaning process took 12 days, at the end of which 100 percent of nearly all major pollutants had been removed.

"What comes out is water," says Todd. "It really feels like a miracle."

While his living machines are complex, Todd's motivation is, quite literally, down to earth. "We're poisoning ourselves," he says. "The 21st century will be the century of ecology and the environment. We don't have any other choice."

### An accelerating effort

So living machines are just the beginning of Todd's work. Recently, in a lecture to a natural resources class, Todd outlined a plan to transform an aging apartment building in Boston, incorporating ecological design. On the roof is a climatic envelope that captures solar heat to warm the apartments below. The process is reversed in the summer to provide cooling. Also on the roof is a massive garden, composed of lightweight soils made in part with recycled Styrofoam, which grows food for the people who live there. Plants will scrub the inside air. Living machines will treat the waste – producing food and money

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instead of the sludge produced by conventional waste-treatment methods. The \$1 fish put into the machine in the spring becomes a \$10 fish by fall.

From large to small, Todd's living machines are growing in popularity. They can now be found across the United States and eight other countries, with more in development. One of Todd's machines treats industrial waste at a chicken processing plant where more than a million birds are slaughtered each week – producing waste that is five times as strong as the human-generated variety. Todd's machines do a better job at treating the waste than conventional treatment plants, and they use one-fifth the energy. Constructing one costs a fraction of what conventional plants cost.

"Ultimately this is about earth healing," says Todd. "Ecological design can take us where we haven't been before."

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**INTERview: Spalding Gray**

By Lee Griffin



Monologist Spalding Gray bombed at UVM, but his career has nonetheless worked out well. (Publicity photo.)

*Monologist, author and actor Spalding Gray will appear at the Flynn Theatre Saturday, Dec. 8., in "Morning, Noon and Night." Gray spoke with the view's editor from his home in Long Island about writing and performing. We began with his dashed hopes for acting in UVM's Champlain Shakespeare Festival in 1965. Gray had been invited to the Festival, he says, because of his "forceful letters and enthusiasm." That year, Director Ed*

*Feidner produced The Merchant of Venice, Anthony and Cleopatra, and Henry VIII.*

**the view: You have many fans at the University of Vermont, so we're greedy to find any connection between you and us. You once mentioned an encounter with UVM's Shakespeare Festival in the sixties. Enough time has gone by that we can probably take the heat – what happened?**

SPALDING GRAY: It was 1965, I was just out of college and determined to act in some good roles. I felt the auditions [at UVM] were very good. But the director gave me very small roles. I was devastated and so depressed by it that I went and sat under a weeping willow tree and wept. I cried for a long time because I'd done such a good job. Part of me felt diminished by walk-ons. At the same time, I was being called up for the second time by the draft. So, I went down, and this time I didn't fight it; I capitulated. But, eventually, they gave me a 1-Y – for being a little nutty and an actor, I guess.

**Did the UVM experience set you back in acting or embolden you?**

Good question. It moved me in the direction of the Alley Theatre [in Houston], and it was there I decided to perform more rather than act. Then, I went to New York, where I could be the author of my performance. So maybe it did affect me.

**Monologues and improvisations are the two scariest performances I can think of. Did they scare you?**

It wasn't scary. It was the normal outgrowth of working with the Wooster Group [which he co-founded in 1977 in New York, named for Wooster St.] and so organic that, by 1979, I set up a table in the Performance Garage and did a monologue. It wasn't big, the pressure wasn't there, it was backyard activity. And then, *Swimming to Cambodia* was no pressure because it was on celluloid.

**Why are others' lives so interesting to us? Are you fascinated with others' stories, monologues?**

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Oh, yes. I've even developed an "Interviewing the Audience" piece. We're fascinated by people's lives because we all live in this world, and it is a community. And, one of the ways of getting through it is to know the process and that people share in stories, in coping, in getting through in rough times. Highlighting the humanity that we're all the center of. I was pre-talk show. What I've tried to develop is to make the community in the room.

**What do you look for in an acting role, stage or screen?**

Last year, I said 'yes' immediately to *The Best Man* [Gore Vidal's play revived on Broadway] because the character was so close to me. I thought I could own the language. I turn down roles if I feel I couldn't own the language, couldn't say it with honesty. I'm more Brechtian in a way.

**What have been your favorite roles? Any you'd erase? Any you'd like to do?**

*Our Town* and *The Best Man* were two extremely high experiences for me. *Bad Company* with Ellen Barkin – I didn't think it was a good job on my part, didn't think the director was doing a good job. I like the role I play in *Like How High* [not yet released] with two rappers – Redman and Method Man – directed by Bob Dylan's son, Jesse Dylan. I play a black studies professor at Harvard. The rappers play disgusting iconoclasts and I'm turned on by them because of white guilt.

**Now that you're a family guy, you'll never run out of material. Is there anything you or your family feel is *verboten*?**

Yes, I won't do another piece about family. I'll give them a chance to have a private life. I'll probably do a piece on my accident. [Gray has a broken hip from an accident this past June. Nonetheless, he expects to ski this winter.]

**Which is harder, writing or performing?**

Neither. I keep journals and speak memory – mainly the monologue is improvised. Writing it jogs the memory. The hardest part of performing is traveling, flying in commercial airlines, getting through airports. The performance and writing are the dessert – pieces of cake.

**Editor's Note: Gray 's monologues include: "Monster in a Box," "Gray's Anatomy," "Swimming to Cambodia" and "It's a Slippery Slope." Among others, he appeared in the films *The Killing Fields*, *Swimming to Cambodia*, *True Stories*, *King of the Hill* and *Beyond Rangoon*.**

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## A Weekend to Forget, A Weekend to Remember

By Kevin Foley

Luis Vivanco was embroiled in two huge events last weekend.

One, despite controversy spurred by a student-led leafleting campaign and a *Burlington Free Press* columnist, was routine, even anti-climatic. The other was not.

Vivanco, an assistant professor of anthropology, organized a Dec. 4 "Symposium on Indigenous Peoples and Globalization." He invited several experts in the field, including Ward Churchill, professor of ethnic studies at the University of Colorado. Churchill's writing about the 9/11 attacks, though unrelated to the panel, inspired outrage when publicized by students infuriated by the event's UVM sponsorship.

### Raising difficult issues

That put Vivanco in an unfamiliar, but not entirely uncomfortable, role as the object of grassroots ire.

"It was refreshing to be honest," he says. "I'm glad to see students and people from the community getting involved in making claims on the university.

"The subtext to all of this, whether you're on the right or the left, is that the university is a very important place to say these sorts of things," Vivanco continues. "Not that we all agree, but that we can all have a conversation.

"The left could have raised similar objections when they brought Ollie North to UVM," he adds. "Everyone is going to have problems with the ways UVM spends its money, but the larger point is that the university has a role in society raising uncomfortable issues."

Churchill is a well-regarded scholar who has produced influential work on the genocide of Native Americans, Native Americans and the law and internal colonialism. He's also the author of a polemical essay, "Some People Push Back." The [piece's](#) rhetoric tries to tie the Sept. 11 attacks to U.S. foreign policy, specifically the increase in infant mortality in Iraq after the 1991 Gulf War and continuing "oil for food" sanctions.

What outraged UVM students, the *Free Press* and, to some extent, Vivanco himself, were Churchill's overheated statements on the victims: "If there was a better, more effective, or in fact any other way of visiting some penalty befitting their participation upon the little Eichmanns inhabiting the sterile sanctuary of the twin towers, I'd really be interested in hearing about it," Churchill wrote.

Churchill has backed off on this argument somewhat, calling his essay a "stream-of-consciousness interpretive reaction."

Vivanco disagrees with the piece, and likens it to a letter dashed off in anger that was best left unsent. "If I were him, and had written something like that, I would have left it on the computer and forgotten about it," he says.

### Guilt by association

Vivanco points out Churchill was invited to campus to speak on indigenous people and globalization – not the war. And, as it turned out, the panel discussion dealt with its stated topic exclusively and did not delve into Churchill's views on 9/11. The atmosphere was civil; symposium attendees said

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there was little or no visible protest from Churchill's opponents.

Vivanco expresses some regret that some of the other panelists were tarred with "guilt by association" because of Churchill's extreme views on an unrelated subject.

Despite the essay, the media coverage, and the campus protest flyers, the indigenous peoples symposium came off more or less as planned, except for Vivanco's presence, or lack thereof. As it turned out, he had to leave the panel he organized after only a few minutes.

And that brings us to a more memorable event in the professor's busy weekend. Vivanco left the event because his wife was in labor. His new baby daughter, Isabel Luisa Oneill Vivanco, was born the next day.

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### 2001 Space Odyssey

Students from high schools in Vermont, New York and New Hampshire spent the fall semester designing their "2001 Space Odyssey" machine for this year's Design TASC competition on Dec. 1. The contraptions had to launch pingpong balls mechanically at "planetary targets."

The College of Engineering and Mathematics sponsors the contest.

Sharon Academy won the Grand Prize; Enosburg Falls, the Performance category; and Gailer School the Portfolio category.

Dozens of teams from 29 schools competed in the 11th year of the contest. *(Photo: Bill DiLillo)*

### Charlotte Kids Turn Tables on Environmental Educators

When fourth and fifth graders from Charlotte Central School deftly completed a role reversal on Dec. 4, travelling to UVM to teach a class to the UVM environmental education students who spent much of the semester teaching them, a mutual admiration society was born.

"My students are always blown away by the understanding of the Charlotte kids and the rich content of their presentation," says Tom Hudspeth, associate professor of environmental education, who collaborated with Charlotte teacher (and UVM alumna) Cher Feitelberg. "They're also amazed by their technical sophistication: In some years, the children have produced great PowerPoint presentations."

The elementary students and their teacher gushed as well. Feitelberg calls the biannual project and exchange, which has gone on since 1990, an exciting "self-esteem builder." The children, she says, love showing off their knowledge to UVM role models and teachers. Feitelberg also lavishly praised the environmental education students who came to her class.

"They not only worked with our kids phenomenally, they worked with each other wonderfully as well," she says. "Their spirit, the fun in which they did it, and the way they balanced that fun with a passion for the environment, was delightful. It was just an extraordinary way to represent the university in the community."

### Dana Medical Library Makes the First Move

In preparation for its eventual move in four years to the new Fletcher Allen-UVM Education Center, the Dana Medical Library will be moving to transitional space in the Given courtyard in the Given Medical Building.

Library hours will be reduced beginning Dec. 15, and the library will be closed from Dec. 21-26. The library will reopen, with reduced hours, in its new location on Dec. 27. Regular library hours will resume on Jan. 2.

Until Jan. 2, library users who do not have CatCard access to the Given building will need to call the Dana circulation desk, 656-2200, to gain access after 7 p.m.

Information, library hours: 656-4309.

### Early Applications on the Rise

Hudspeth's environmental education class assigns students (student interns from outside the class also participated) to develop an activity and field-test it with a real client group. The idea is build a place-based program, one that imparts a better understanding of a particular area. This year's Pease Mountain project, which put the area in the larger context of the five-town Lewis Creek watershed, included field workshops in Charlotte and culminated in the construction of a web site, [Pease Mountain Stewardship Program](#). (Caveat Internet: The site is still under construction.)

The program will next take place in 2003. Feitelberg is already looking forward to it.

"This program is a showcase for the caliber of the environmental school, the kind of passion, skill and professionalism the UVM students are bringing even as novices," she says.

Hudspeth will also enjoy the next round.

Applications for the Class of 2006 began pouring into the UVM Admissions Office in September and October to meet a Nov. 1 early application deadline. The 1,561 applications represent a 16.5 percent increase over last year's collection.

"It's always good news to see increases in applications to UVM, and we're delighted with these early figures," says Associate Director Susan Wertheimer. UVM's experience follows a national trend favoring early admissions programs, she adds.

Early admissions programs can be binding, requiring an admitted student to enroll, or non-binding; UVM offers both options.

Notification of the admission decision will be mailed to anxious applicants in mid-December. Students applying through UVM's regular admissions program must submit applications by January 15 and will be notified in late March.

"Every year, my students are surprised to see that the elementary school students know things that they didn't learn until they went to high school, even college," he says. "It's wonderful to see Vermont raising the bar for youth environmental education."

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**Fiddling with Sculpture**

Professor Ed Owre's art and teaching are guided by invention, fearlessness and humor. Aspiring artists in his classes do well to learn from his example and, in fact, were challenged to do just that when Owre assigned them – and himself – to build violins as an end-of-semester project.

Owre urged the Three-Dimensional Studies class to explore the "extravagant and unknown." He also told them, "If these don't play, you're going to be embarrassed."

You can see and hear for yourself when the form and function of the student-made violins are put to the test at noon, Thursday, Dec. 6, in Ira Allen Chapel. Owre's 15 students will take the stage to play "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" in unison on instruments crafted with materials ranging from foam core to cardboard to a stainless steel sink.

Leading the way will be the professor on his own viola-sized instrument of scrap lumber, copper flashing and galvanized sheet metal rescued from the Williams Hall dumpster.

Owre promises that if the musicianship doesn't match the ingenuity, he'll have his boom box on-hand to close the recital with some Jascha Heifetz performed on a ho-hum Stradivarius.

*Story by Tom Weaver. Photo by Sally McCay.*

**CTL Session to Cover Residential Classes**

Annie Stevens, interim assistant vice president for student affairs, and Char Mehrtens, director of Living/Learning, will conduct a workshop for all faculty interested in offering a residentially based class for fall 2002. The workshop, which will include lunch, will be held Friday, Jan. 25, 12-1:30 p.m., at the Center for Teaching and Learning in Bailey/Howe Library.

Stevens and Mehrtens will discuss why such classes are worthwhile, the proposal format and timeline and the benefits to faculty and students.

RSVP by Jan. 15 to [cmehrtens@zoo.uvm.edu](mailto:cmehrtens@zoo.uvm.edu), 656-4200, or the CTL, 656-61155.

**Ski Area Offers UVM Package**

Present your UVM ID at Jay Peak's ticket booth and you can purchase a lift ticket for as little as \$32. (The Vermonter rate is \$35).

The ski area also offers a UVM group day that includes an all-day ticket, luncheon or après ski party and a fun race or other snowy activity. The cost is \$37 per person, available any day except Saturday. Also available are cross-country ski and snowshoe tours and other on-mountain activities.

Information, Jen Poreda Lian, 656-7890.

**Magic of Science**

Children and adults are invited to discover "The Magic of Science" at UVM on Saturday, Dec. 29. The free, public event, billed as "a holiday extravaganza of amazing phenomena," will begin at 1:30 p.m. in the Angell Lecture Hall, room B106.

Geared to interest children in science, demonstrations will showcase flashy elements of science described as "amazing adventures with atoms, molecules and electrons."

Sponsors are UVM's departments of chemistry and physics and the Dreyfus Foundation.

Because limited seating is available, and tickets ran out quickly for last year's event, those interested in attending are encouraged to obtain free tickets in advance. Tickets: Judy Hamilton, 656-2594 or [judith.hamilton@uvm.edu](mailto:judith.hamilton@uvm.edu)

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**Awards**

**Bob Pepperman Taylor**, associate professor of political science, has received a \$40,000 research fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities to research and write a book on the Progressive Era in American history. The era spanned the late 1800s to World War I and was the time "when the United States became decidedly modern," Taylor said. He will be on sabbatical for the 2002-2003 academic year to conduct his NEH-funded research. During his absence, **Patrick Neal**, associate professor of political science, will assume Taylor's role as director of the John Dewey Honors Program in UVM's College of Arts and Sciences.

Students receiving mini-grants through the Hughes Endeavor for Life Sciences (HELiX) program for fall 2001 were: **Vanessa Arms** of Wardsboro; **Rachel Burdge** of Churchville, Penn.; **Dimitry Kremmentsov** of Burlington; **Robert Rix** of Manchester, N.H.; **Nick Roy** of Lewiston, Maine; **Heidi Semanie** of Feeding Hills, Mass.; and **Rima Zahr** of Acton, Mass. The grants of up to \$500 for research expenses and supplies are awarded each semester on a competitive basis to students conducting projects for undergraduate research credit.

**Publications and Presentations**

**Christina Kasprisin**, lecturer in nursing, is the content editor for Mosby's Review Questions for *NCLEX-RN*, 4th edition.

**Mary Botter**, assistant professor, of nursing, and **Janice A. Schreifer**, adjunct assistant professor, published articles in *Outcomes Management for Nursing Practice*: "Care Management;" "Clinical Pathways and Guidelines for Care Management;" and "Health Outcomes Skills for Care Management." Botter, Kasprisin, **Margaret Gagne**, assistant professor; and **Clare Conner**, assistant professor, made a presentation at the Sigma Theta Tau Biennial Convention, in Indianapolis, "Transitioning to Web-Based Curricula: Lessons Learned."

**Alan Wertheimer**, professor of political science, led a seminar on "Exploitation" at the joint seminar of the Department of Clinical Bioethics at the National Institutes of Health and the bioethics programs at Georgetown University and Johns Hopkins University.

**Wolfgang Mieder**, professor and chair of German and Russian, published an article titled, "'There is Always a Better Tomorrow': Proverbial Rhetoric in Inaugural Addresses by American Presidents During the Second Half of the Twentieth Century," in *Narodna umjetnost*, the Croatian Journal of Ethnology and Folklore Research. Mieder discusses the role of the Bible and folk proverbs in the 14 inaugural addresses by the 10 American presidents of the second half of the 20th century.