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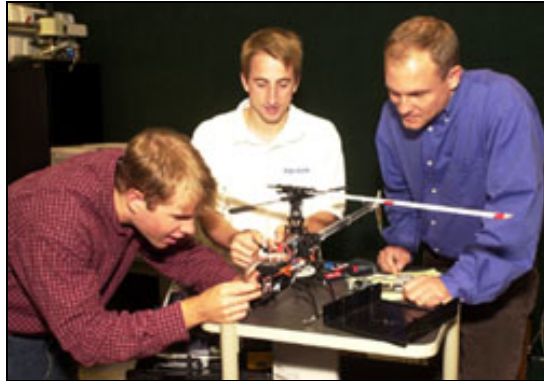
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Ned Lecky, assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering, challenges his students to find the lessons in both aha! and whoops moments. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

Ned Lecky dares to fail in front of his students, a quality that helped him win a Kroepsch-Maurice Award.

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THE WEEK IN VIEW

Sept. 27 3:30 p.m. Math Colloquium: "The Paradox of the Hare and the Tortoise," Anatole Beck, University of Wisconsin. 001 Kalkin.

Sept. 28 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Aiken Lectures and Alternative Transportation Expo: "After Oil: The Future of Personal Transportation," Patrick Gym. See article in News: [Aiken Lectures](#)

Oct. 1 3:30 p.m. Lecture: "Ecological Design and Living Machines," John Todd, natural resources. 301 Williams Hall. 656-0095

Oct. 1 6 p.m. Community Medical School: "Living with the Threat of Bioterrorism," Dr. Christopher Grace, infectious diseases unit. Carpenter Auditorium, Given. Register: 847-2886

Oct. 1 7:30 p.m. Research Seminar: "The Times They are A-Changin: Gender and Hunting in rural Vermont," Marc Boglioli, University of Wisconsin. Dewy Lounge, Old Mill. 656-4389

Oct. 2 7:30 p.m. Opening Night: "Dancing at Lughnasa," by Brian Friel. Royall Tyler Theatre. See story in Events at [Lughnasa](#)

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Creating the costumes for the Royall Tyler Theatre's production of Brian Friel's "Dancing at Lughnasa" was an immersion experience for junior Alyssa Rose Leach. The show opens Oct. 2. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

Undergrad Dresses 'Lughansa' for Success

The UVM Theatre's production of Brian Friel's "Dancing at Lughnasa" doesn't debut until Oct. 2, but junior Alyssa Rose Leach has been working on the production since last spring. That's when she began countless hours of research to guarantee that the costumes would accurately reflect both the clothing worn in working-class Ireland in 1936 and the spirit of each character in the play.

Although this process is a familiar one to professional costume designers, creating 13 authentic costumes was a rigorous assignment for a college student with a full course load.

"It's a delicate balance," Leach admits. "Classes are very important, but this production is part of my career and is a priority too. It's not hard to spend hours at a time in the costume shop."

A theatre major with a concentration in costume design and a minor in art, Leach says it was unique experience for an undergraduate to develop a peer relationship with faculty designers.

"It's wonderful to see a young, competent designer take on a project with some challenges, yet one that is manageable enough to offer practical experience designing a show from start to finish," says Martin Thaler, costume designer and professor of theatre. "What I love about Alyssa is that she's so open-minded to the process. She approached the experience eager to learn."

UVM Partners with City on a Hill

Thirty-seven 12th grade students visited UVM last week from Boston's City on a Hill school, one of two new high schools with whom the university has developed partnerships.

Under the terms of the partnership, modeled on the one UVM established with Christopher Columbus High School in the Bronx three years ago, the university provides ongoing counsel to City on a Hill students and parents, beginning in ninth grade, on the process of applying to college, the intricacies of financial aid and the academic and social challenges of college life.

UVM will host additional visits from City on a Hill students during the year and admissions staff and faculty members also will travel to Boston, conducting workshops for students and parents at the small charter school, whose population is predominantly African American.

City on a Hill president Steven Leonard sees clear advantages to the UVM partnership. Not only does it help him meet his mission of placing all of his students in college, it also offers additional benefits.

The ongoing relationship with UVM that younger City on a Hill students develop, along with the fact that a cohort of friends likely would enroll at the university, will have a positive impact on retention, according to Leonard.

"I want to see our students go to college," he says, "but I also want them to stay there and graduate."

UVM's director of admissions and financial aid, Don Honeman, is a firm believer in the partnership model. "It has been a very effective strategy for bringing a more diverse student population to the UVM campus," he says. For all partnership students unable to afford the cost of attending UVM, he adds, the university is committed to meeting their full need with a combination of federal and additional resources.

UVM also has formed a new partnership with the High School for Environmental Studies in Manhattan, and, this fall, 19 new students from Christopher Columbus enrolled at UVM, joining 13 who came to the university in 2001.

McKibben, Alternative Vehicles Highlight Aiken Lectures

The United States, with few oil reserves of its

In addition to her work with the UVM Theatre, Leach spent the summer honing her skills as a stitcher for the Berkshire (Mass.) Theatre Festival. Last year, she was an assistant costume designer for the Vermont Stage Company's production of "Our Town."

"This summer I realized that costume design is definitely what I want to do," Leach says, "but I've still got a lot to learn."

"Dancing at Lughnasa" tells the story of five sisters living in a small Irish town during a festival celebrating the god of music and light. The play, directed by Peter Jack Tkatch, associate professor of theatre, will be performed on the Royall Tyler stage Wednesday, Oct. 2, through Sunday, Oct. 13. To purchase tickets or for more information, go to www.uvm.edu/theatre or call 656-2094. The theatre box office is open Monday through Friday, noon to 5:30 p.m.

own, consumes 25 percent of the world's oil; more than 40 percent of that fuels our cars. This year's George D. Aiken Lectures will offer both expert opinion and hands-on experience with solutions to reversing that dependency.

"After Oil: The Future of Personal Transportation," is hosted by the College of Engineering and Mathematics and will feature Bill McKibben, award-winning author of *The End of Nature*. The daylong event will be held Sept. 28, from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. in Patrick Gym, in conjunction with the "Alternative Vehicle Expo," in the Patrick Gym lobby.

Participants will be able to test drive vehicles powered by electricity, propane, compressed natural gas, hydrogen fuel cells or a hybrid of energy sources. Demonstrations, between 10:30 a.m. and 12:30 p.m., will explain each vehicle's under-hood workings.

McKibben will speak at 1:30 p.m. in the gym, followed by panelists discussing "Transportation Fuels: Now and the Future"; and a plenary panel, "Where are we going and how do we get there from here?"

The event is free and open to the public. Reservations for the lecture and panels: 656-2085 or [Aiken Lectures](#)

Complete schedule: [Aiken Schedule](#)

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Fantasy artist and UVM alumnus Donato Giancola is giving a talk on campus. For the story, see below. (Artwork by Donato Giancola)

Alumnus' Fantasy Art Focus of Two Events

Alumnus and New York City graphic artist Donato Giancola will present a slide lecture, "The Art of the Lord of the Rings," at Bailey/Howe Library, Special Collections reading room, Sept. 26, at 4 p.m. RSVP attendance at 656-2138.

Born in Colchester, Giancola attended the College of Engineering and Mathematics from 1985-88 and received a BFA from Syracuse University in 1992. He has done cover illustrations for J.R.R. Tolkien's works and for more than 170 novels for adults and children. He specializes in science fiction and fantasy.

On Sept. 27, Giancola will join English professors Tony Magistrale and Mike Stanton in a panel discussion about the artist's works, at 1:30 pm in 108 Terrill Hall. Magistrale, who teaches courses in gothic and horror genres, is the author of *Poe's Children* and *The Films and Novels of Stephen King*. Stanton's recent book is *Hobbits, Elves and Wizards: Exploring the Wonders and Worlds of J.R.R. Tolkien's 'Lord of the Rings.'*

Information on Giancola: [Donato Giancola](#)

Annual Spaghetti Dinner to Benefit Roberson Fund

The tenth annual spaghetti dinner to benefit the Kevin Roberson Memorial Fund and the Friends of UVM Men's Basketball will be held Oct. 2, 5-8 p.m., in Marsh Dining Hall. The event also will help kick off UVM's 103rd year of men's basketball – this year's players are the defending

Acclaimed Author Wideman to Speak

John Edgar Wideman, the acclaimed and prolific fiction author, essayist and memoirist, is giving a reading and lecture on Wednesday, Oct. 2 at 5 p.m. in the Billings Campus Center Theater.

Wideman, whom *The New York Times* called "one of America's premier writers of fiction," is the English Department's Buckham Writer-in-Residence for this fall. He will be on campus from Sept. 30 to Oct. 4 to read his work, teach and meet with students and faculty.

Wideman was the first writer to win the PEN/Faulkner Award twice. His memoir *Fatheralong* was a finalist for the National Book Award. His most recent book is *Hoop Roots*. His upcoming book *The Island: Martinique*, a travel memoir, will be published next January. Wideman is currently a professor of creative writing and American studies at the University of Massachusetts at Amherst.

UVM, St. Mike's Faculty Discuss Responses to Terrorism

The Catholic Center at UVM will host a panel discussion on "Moral and Ethical Response to Terrorism," Oct. 1, at 7 p.m.. Guest speakers include Denise Youngblood, professor of history, and Robert Kaufman, associate professor of political science. Fr. Joseph McLaughlin, S.S.E., of St. Michael's College, will serve as respondent.

Information: 658-2945.

Soon Come Comes to Fleming

A new exhibit at the Fleming Museum draws its title from a Jamaican vernacular expression, soon come, which means "great things happen when the time is right." *Soon Come: the Art of Contemporary Jamaica*, includes works by 20 artists working in several media. It opens Sept. 26 with a lecture by Alfred Snider, Edwin Lawrence Professor of Forensics, at 5:30, "Jamaica: The Stone that the Builder Refused."

An opening reception will follow with music by Camomilla, percussionist and musical director of the Montpelier-based Pan Ashe Steelband, and Brazilian singer and guitarist Angela Patua, recently voted best acoustic performer in Miami.

The exhibit, which ends Dec. 15, will be accompanied by related lectures on Oct. 23, Nov. 20 and Nov. 27 and "Fiesta Jamaica," the annual community family day at the museum, on Nov. 2.

America East regular season champions.

Head Coach Tom Brennan, associate head coach Jesse Agel and assistant coaches Pat Filien and Jeff Rush will host the evening, and members of the 2002-03 Catamounts will serve the meal, prepared by Mary Anne ("Mama Gooch") Gucciardi and the Friends of UVM Basketball. .

Roberson, one of UVM's all-time great players, finished his career with 1,503 points and is the Catamounts' all-time leader with 1,054 rebounds and 409 blocked shots (also third-best in NCAA history). His uniform number 33 was retired before Roberson's last regular-season game in 1992. He was killed in an automobile crash in his hometown of Buffalo, N.Y. in May 1993 and was inducted posthumously into the UVM Athletic Hall of Fame the following October.

The Kevin Roberson Memorial funds scholarships for needy student-athletes of all sports at UVM. The dinner has raised over \$55,000 in its first nine years.

Red Priest Returns

The Lane Series begins its new season with a return performance from one of last year's most popular offerings, the British baroque ensemble Red Priest, Sept. 27, at 7:30 p.m. in Recital Hall.

Critics heap praise on the quartet – one called it “sonically supercharged” – for combining superb musicianship with flamboyant showmanship.

“A high-energy baroque hoe-down,” said the *Los Angeles Times*.

“The enormous liberties taken in these performances are the freedoms one takes when one is completely at home with the style of music ... Red Priest is creating a whole new standard in baroque music performance,” according to *AMAZON.COM*

Tickets: 656-4455 or [Lane Series](#)

Information, complete schedule: [Fleming Museum](#)

October Events Focus on Disability Awareness

“Among the gifts higher education can give us is the opportunity to experience the world as it is experienced by others,” said President Daniel Mark Fogel. “It is in this spirit of deepened and broadened understanding that we observe Deaf and Disability Awareness Month at our university. The month-long series of events will strengthen and enrich us as individuals and as a community of varying abilities.”

Throughout October, UVM will host several programs designed to provide information about people of different abilities, their contributions to campus life and how to create a welcoming and accessible learning and working environment. Events, workshops and presentations are free and open to the public and include:

- Oct. 5, 1 p.m. Allen House Gallery: Opening reception for an exhibit that showcases the extraordinary range of art in a variety of media created by people with disabilities, with several of the artists in attendance.
- Oct. 10, 2 p.m. Memorial Lounge, Waterman: David Sagi of Vermont's Vocational Rehabilitation Office takes a look at the Americans with Disabilities Act, its impact on the workplace and how to achieve positive results for all parties.
- Oct. 15, 2 p.m. Memorial Lounge, Waterman: John Kelly's spinal cord injury has required him to cope with the taboo subject of incontinence and many other challenges. Kelly will explain why keeping incontinence in the shadows may lead to deadly consequences.
- Oct. 17, 3 p.m. Marsh Lounge, Billings: Kevin Veller, health and disability director for U.S. Sen. Jim Jeffords, and a panel of advocates working at the grassroots level will discuss their experiences as disability rights activists and share proven strategies in landmark decisions.
- Oct. 28, 3:30 p.m., Memorial Lounge, Waterman: Sean Barron has an incredible story to tell about the challenges, patience, determination, obstacles and love his family experienced due to his autism. *There's a Boy in Here*, written by Barron and his mother, is available at the UVM Bookstore.

For a complete listing of Deaf and Disability Awareness month events: See [Awareness Events](#) or call Kristin Wright at 656-3368.

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Sept. 25-Oct. 1

Awards and Honors

The **Area Health Education Center** program received a two-year, \$1.35 million grant from the Health Resources and Services Administration. The AHEC program's primary goals are to provide off-campus training opportunities for medical and health science students and residents, increase Vermont's healthcare workforce, and improve access to care for rural Vermonters. The program, which is directed by **Dr. Mildred Reardon**, associate dean for primary care at the College of Medicine, has three regional centers located in St. Albans, St. Johnsbury, and Springfield.

The following members of the College of Medicine' Class of 2003 were recently elected to the Alpha Omega Alpha Honor Medical Society: **Julie Bard; Laurel Barkell; John Battiston; Andrew Goodwin; Sarah Howland; Sean Kumer; Bethany Milliken; Eric Newton; Jackie Panko; Satya Stewart; Tammy Teller; Agostino Visoni**. The AOA faculty councilor is **Dr. William Raszka**, associate professor of pediatrics.

Christopher Berger, associate professor of molecular physiology and biophysics, was elected to the Council of the Biophysical Society, a professional organization with 7,000 members in the United States and 45 countries. Berger's research focuses on fluorescence spectroscopy, single molecule biophysics, muscle, motor proteins and protein dynamics.

Kathleen Liang, assistant professor in community development and applied economics, was recognized as Coleman Entrepreneurship Scholar by the Coleman Foundation and has received a scholarship to participate in the 2003 United States Association of Small Business and Entrepreneurship conference in Hilton Head, South Carolina.

Diane Trono, coordinator of the UVM Council of Community Advisors and the UVM Community Service Scholarship Program, recently was appointed by Governor Howard Dean to the Vermont Commission on National and Community Service. The commission is presently made up of 20 citizens appointed by the governor. Commissioners are actively engaged in community service, both nationally and in-state.

Publications and Presentations

Kurt E. Oughstun, professor of electrical engineering, computer science and mathematics recently gave a presentation on his research regarding electromagnetic precursors at the National Academies building in Woods Hole, Massachusetts. The presentation was by invitation of the National Research Council Committee to Assess Potential Health Effects from Exposures to PAVE PAWS Low-Level Phased Array Radiofrequency Radiation. The PAVE PAWS (Precision Acquisition Vehicle Entry Phased Array Warning System) radar located on Cape Cod is currently being investigated by the National Academy of Sciences because of local concern.

Two recent co-authored publications from **Kathleen Liang**, associate professor of community development and applied economics:

- "Fallacies Versus Realities In Financial Planning And Management Among Entrepreneurs: Lessons From The Trenches," in the Spring/Summer 2002 *Journal of Small Business Strategy*.
- "The Impact of Starting a New Venture on the Entrepreneurs and Their Families: Expectations, Reality, and Willingness to Start Again," originally

published in the *Journal of Business and Entrepreneurship*, was re-published as the "feature paper" in the September 17, 2002 issue of the Small Business Advancement National Center's newsletter.

Richard Vanden Bergh, assistant professor of business administration, presented a paper, "Non Market Strategy in Complex Institutional Environments: Buying Agencies through Legislatures", at the August Academy of Management meetings in Denver.

Erica Hurwitz, visiting instructor of religion, offered an Associated Press reporter some context for the ascendancy of socially conservative religious denominations. "These more strict churches make people feel they are in a community," Hurwitz said. "This gives them a sense that their life has a kind of structure in a world that can be frighteningly unstructured."

Donna Kuizenga, associate dean of the College of Arts and Sciences and professor of romance languages, recently published an article titled "Writing in Drag: Strategic Rewriting in the Early Epistolary Novel" in *Early Modern France: Strategic Rewriting*, edited by David Lee Rubin.

Sept. 18-Sept. 24

Awards and Honors

Steve Beville, in his fifth year as head coach of men's lacrosse, will be inducted into Washington College's Athletic Hall of Fame on Oct. 5, in Chestertown, Md. As an undergraduate there, Beville started every game for four years. He was a First Team All-American and National Defensive Player of the Year in Division III in 1984 and 1985. He also was co-MVP of the team in 1985 and was a two-time winner of the Joe Mclain Most Valuable Defensive Player Award. Washington College participated in three national championship games during his career.

Publications and Presentations

Catherine Donnelly, professor of nutrition and food sciences, was quoted in the Aug. 19-26 food issue of *The New Yorker*, in an article on raw milk cheese. The article cited a study that Donnelly conducted on raw milk cheese for the Cheese of Choice Coalition. Donnelly, a lover of aged, raw-milk cheeses, notes that they "have enjoyed a remarkable safety record," with illnesses associated only in cheeses contaminated *after* pasteurization. As an added bonus, Donnelly has since been contacted by colleagues and UVM alumni, from all over the country, who read the piece.

Robert Gordon, professor of anthropology, will present an invited paper on "'Dirty Words': The history of labeling African populations" at a workshop on "Origins of humanity and diffusion of human populations" at the Lanzerac Wine Estate in South Africa, Sept. 17-19. The workshop is organized and sponsored by the African Human Genome Initiative.

Michael Wilson, professor of mathematics, has published a paper, "Paraproducts and the exponential-square class," in the *Journal of Mathematical Analysis and Applications*. Two other papers of his recently were accepted for publication: "Weighted two-parameter Bergman space inequalities," in *Publicacions Matemàtiques*; and "A semi-discrete Littlewood-Paley inequality," in *Studia Mathematica*.

Dana Hardy, a pre-veterinary senior in animal science recently presented her undergraduate research at the annual meeting of the Poultry Science Association held at the University of Delaware in Wilmington. The title of her presentation was "The Effects of Feeding Raw and Heated Velvet Beans (*Mucuna pruriens*) on the Histology of Selected Organs in Male Broilers." Her work was supported by UVM's SUGR/FaMe program and by the Rockefeller Foundation project, "Increasing Mucuna's Potential as a Food and Feed Crop." Dr. **Lyndon Carew** professor of animal science, is her academic advisor, and **Scott Mischler**, associate director of animal care management, and **Ela Zakrzewska**, visiting scholar in animal science, and Abel Gernat of the *Escuela Agrícola Panamericana*, Zamorano, Honduras were co-authors.

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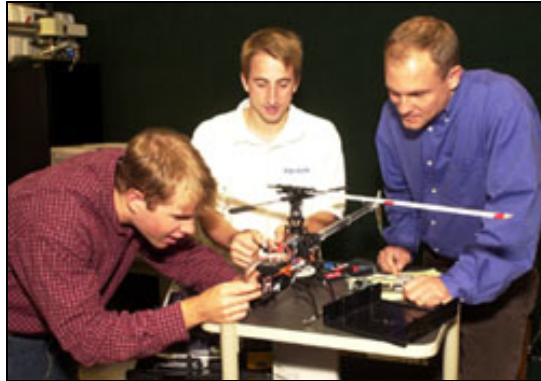
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At Play in the Field of Computers

By Cheryl Dorschner



Ned Lecky, assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering, challenges his students to find the lessons in both aha! and whoops moments. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

In a third-floor laboratory in Votey Hall, John (Ned) Lecky, assistant professor of electrical and computer engineering, hastily scribbles formulas on the blackboard, the resultant sound the chalk equivalent of a pileated woodpecker. His computer engineering students echo with rapid scratchings in notebooks. Ideas whiz about the room, hover, then land in a batch of complicated electronic assemblages, bringing them to life.

Truth be told, the students are playing with toys, animating them to move as they never have moved before. A "monster" jeep, formerly radio-controlled, is now a computer-driven "autonomous vehicle" that steers itself about the hallways, measuring distances and recording the location of obstacles for future reference.

A helicopter that would be the perfect size for "Homeland Security Barbie" is festooned with computer chips that could, someday, with a little more tinkering make it hover. Across the room is a red, six-legged K'NEX-like creature, slightly amputated, next to a pair of highly inventive vehicles held together with duct tape. In the background, a robot – looking much like the arm of the Hulk – rotates, reaches, and picks up a metal plate.

It may look like the play room of precocious Syd in *Toy Story*, but this is where and how learning takes place in many of Lecky's classes.

"There's a lot of math to make that happen," Lecky says, observing one of the toys making a complicated move. "You've got to design things on the chalkboard and on the computer before you design them in reality. I do things step by step. I give out all my lecture notes in advance, deliver them on Power Point and then half the class time is demonstration."

' Sounds simple. But Lecky does something most instructors wouldn't dare. He demonstrates things he's never tried before and isn't sure will work. It's exactly that kind of teaching on a tightrope that earned him UVM's top honor for undergraduate teaching, the 2002 Kroepsch-Maurice Excellence in Teaching award.

"It's true, I try to do things that I haven't done before. It's a high-risk approach, performing without a net," he admits. "I'll say, 'let's design a microprocessor in a half hour,' and students can see how it's done and how they could add on to it themselves. If I leave out a dash or a semicolon, I get a long line of gibberish instead. Then we go back and find out what went wrong." Sometimes all goes well in an assembly yet it doesn't come as intended. Or everything is right but the timing. "The difference of a nano-second is the

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For award-winning poet and English Lecturer Eve Alexandra, a blank computer screen is a "physical space, a stage, a place for performance."

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difference between what works and doesn't," Lecky says.

Students catch on quickly and begin troubleshooting as Lecky demonstrates. "Frequently they'll catch potential errors before they happen, because they're watching. These live demos – inventing and fixing as we go along – that's what keeps them engaged. They know that's what they'll have to do in their own assignments."

"If Dr. Lecky has one fault, it would be that he uses too much electricity during those 75 minutes," quips graduate teaching assistant Jacob Galbreath. "He uses every A/V device imaginable – simultaneously – and unlike most professors, he even knows how to use the remotes.

"It's amazing that he doesn't charge admission," continues Galbreath. "Perhaps even more amazing, is the fact that we, the students actually understand 90 percent of his demonstrations."

Before joining the UVM faculty three years ago, Lecky had an 18-year, business-world resume that included experience in industrial machine vision, robotics, mechatronics and motion control. That background helps him problem-solve on the spot, take risks and be customer- (in this case student-) oriented, he says. "Having been in business helps me with my advising," Lecky says. "I also give students help with their resumes." Likewise, as any businessman would, he keeps a close eye on evaluations.

"There is a steady stream of students at his door asking for advice – the students think very highly of him," says Lecky's colleague, Dale Critchlow, research professor of electrical and computer engineering. "He is a natural teacher...able to get even relatively difficult concepts over to the students with ease."

Student Galbreath echoes that sentiment. Plus, he says, in Lecky's classes students make the leap that every teacher wishes for, "grades lose their importance. Assignments are completed with pride of authorship."

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Treacherous Waters

By Kevin Foley

A blank document on a computer screen, cursor flashing insouciantly, terrifies some writers. But it usually inspires English Lecturer Eve Alexandra. "The page is not one-dimensional for me," she says. "I think of it as a physical space, a stage, a place for performance."

Her manuscript, The Drowned Girl, was selected by the poet C.K. Williams for the 2002 Wick Poetry Prize and will be published next fall. The honor was hugely meaningful for Alexandra – both for the rare and precious opportunity to publish a book of poems, and for the fact that the judge, C.K. Williams, was himself championed by Anne Sexton, a writer who strongly influenced Alexandra's work.

the view sat down with Alexandra, a former stage actor, to discuss her writing, creative antecedents and the peculiar perception of female poets.

THE VIEW: How did you begin writing poems? Do you remember your first efforts?



EVE ALEXANDRA: I didn't get serious about writing until I was an undergraduate at Sarah Lawrence. I started working with Mark Doty, who is now a prestigious poet, but who was just starting out then. Before that, I had always been a theater student and had worked as an actress in New York. But that form began to feel limiting. I started doing some creative writing for a theater company... and then poetry sort of chose me. I never set out to become a poet. I didn't go to school to start writing. But then something clicked.

Where does your work come from?

I don't write a lot of poems from personal experience. I don't have a broken heart and go out and write about it. I'm not drawn to conventional narrative poems about a tortured childhood. A lot of poets operate in a very confessional mode, like Sexton and Lowell and Plath did in the 1960's. That was revolutionary and exciting then, but I'm not sure those tricks work as well now.

But of course I'm drawn to certain subjects for personal reasons. There are seeds in my mind that I mull over. For example, my poem "Heroine." Some of that comes from Chekhov, whose plays I loved as an actress. And Adrienne Rich: the notion of diving into the wreck, exploring the self, is powerful and personally resonant. I have a constant awareness of what has been said before me. Every time I write as a female speaker in a poem I have to wade through what has been written before me. The heroine in that poem has got to go through Chekhov, Sylvia Plath, Anna Karenina; she has to eat all those heroines that are part of herself before she can speak authentically. It's a problem for female poets, generally and me personally. While in grad school, I wrote a sexually charged poem called "Poetess Carnivorous." When people spoke to me about it, they kept calling it the "Erotic Poetess," even though that wasn't the title. I felt a little like they couldn't see and hear me because of what came before me.

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Your work often concerns sexual themes. How problematic is that?

It's hard to find an interesting and new language to talk about sex in a way that is not gratuitous. I'm interested in how we talk about sex and the problems of it – I'm not interested in the act per se. More how do you talk about it as a female speaker? I have a figure in a lot of my poems, the girl, who is not a human child but more of an archetype, the girl is struggling to be sexually empowered but also protect her sexuality. It's a hard lesson for women, anyone really, but women especially. For women, too often being sexually empowered is translated into being exploited. A lot of my poems are about the girl trying to navigate those waters.

Your work tends toward these solid blocks of text – prose poems. Why does that form appeal to you?

Some of it goes back to the idea of "the wreck." The prose poem to me is a body of water, in that water are some beautiful fish, but you also might have garbage and old shoes, everything's in there. There's more space in a prose poem, I think; you can pack more into them. At some point, I started feeling like line breaks and more formally constructed poems weren't right for me. They seemed precious to me, a little too decorative. I spend a lot of time focusing on beauty and sensuality in my language, and I feel like I need the solidity of a prose poem because it doesn't play into that. Perhaps that language, in a poem with more conventional line breaks, or an elegant form like a villanelle, would seem too beautiful, almost sugary. I also like the form because I feel like I can build momentum in them. I tend to write in fragmented language, not complete sentences. Prose poems put the fragments into context; the poem becomes almost a kind of film, with each sentence fragment being an individual frame. Obviously, being a film junkie and former actor has had a huge influence on my life and work. There's a performance quality to it.

Do you think much about your audience as you write? Is there space for poetry in our culture

Yes. I'm always shocked when writers say they don't. I feel like as women we don't have that luxury, I'm always very aware of my audience and the way that the poems will be received. I'm also very interested in the writer-reader relationship, which is often taken for granted. So yes, I'm aware of what the reader is thinking. But I'm not catering the poem to them, just recognizing that the work does not exist in a vacuum. When you write the poem and send it out into the world, it has a life of its own.

As for the more general question: One of my "Introduction to Poetry" students said the audience for poetry was, "Other poets." There's some truth to that, but people are saying that poetry has undergone a renaissance in the United States over the past seven years, and I think there's some truth to that. I found it gratifying that people turned to poems after September 11. People recognized that poetry has something to say. Some poets, like the poet laureate Billy Collins, now have mass appeal. I'm not sure that my writing is that kind of writing. It's pricklier.

Alexandra photo by Sylvia Parker.

Exile

Hull white as bone
no more compass, no more tongue.
The dory rocks like a ouija,
wings beat. Choirs of anemone
open and close, fish flash their metallic pinks,
their ancient greens. *There at starboard–*
flotsam and jetsams, sirens twitch and shimmy.
Not quite Ophelia, hair tangled
and ghostly as weed, but the wind, the wetness–
it is a kind of death. The old words
stream out in her wake, until she is empty,

shoreless and naked. And she is coming
silence is coming
the great blue body beneath her salty
and steady as a lover.

This poem first appeared in the Journal of the Academy of American Poets.

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Aiken Scholars Move Ahead

By Cheryl Dorschner



David Hirth, associate professor of natural resources, interacts with Aiken Scholars Kelly Hayes (center) and Joanna Hatt (right) during a seminar class. (Photo: Sally McCay)

Three years ago, when School of Natural Resources Dean Don DeHayes floated the idea of an honors program for outstanding first-year students, some colleagues were skeptical.

"But you're not giving them any money," pointed out David Hirth, associate professor of wildlife and fisheries.

But DeHayes persisted – he believed the brightest students were looking

for more than scholarships.

"There's good data in the literature that students leaving high school, particularly the most highly motivated academically, are hungry to get engaged in the field in which they hope to study in college," DeHayes says, explaining his insistence on a first-year program. "This is driven by their growing disinterest with high school, where they have a very generalized education. They're really champing at the bit to get engaged with the subject they want to study."

SNR students have their pick of a smorgasbord of enrichment programs – internships, field labs and independent research opportunities. But the door to most of those academic delights typically doesn't open until the junior and senior years. For students already bored in high school with overly general coursework, that's too long to wait. "We wanted to take students who were uniquely able and highly motivated and give them an engaging opportunity from the get-go," DeHayes says.

Membership has its privileges

The plan was that the top-rated SNR applicants (based on their high school records) would be offered the honor, given preferential registration, enroll in the first-year honors seminar and, if their grades warranted it, be eligible for future SNR honors courses. In 2000, the honor program's second year, it was christened the Lola Aiken Scholars program to honor one of the school's most influential and active supporters.

Twenty first-year students joined the honors program during its first year; this year, there are 29 first-year Aiken students. That's a bit over a third of SNR's entire entering class, which is posing a "wonderful problem" for DeHayes and his colleagues. To maintain the intimate, close ties between Aiken scholars and their professors, DeHayes says the program will have to control its growth. "Next year, we're going to have to raise the bar even higher on the selection criteria because we're enrolling too many for a small, personal seminar class," he says.

The program's payoff for individual students is obvious: they get access to a

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For award-winning poet and English Lecturer Eve Alexandra, a blank computer screen is a "physical space, a stage, a place for performance."

[Bells Take a Toll on Performer](#)

Music Professor David Neiweem is in charge of ringing your chimes. Got any requests for him?

special seminar and some registration preferences. But the program's return is also considerable for SNR and the university as a whole. Aiken scholars have a higher retention rate than the university as a whole. And Hirth, who has gone from a mild skeptic to a full-fledged proponent of the program and teaches this year's seminar, says the Aiken program has "doubled" the school's yield of "strong students."

"Considering that these are the best students with the most other choices, that's pretty good," Hirth says. An example of the program's appeal comes from Luke Kirsch, a first-year student from Long Island. He had acceptances from several highly selective schools, but his Aiken invitation helped tip the balance to UVM. "Being offered the honors program here definitely influenced my choice," he says.

A chance to connect

Michele Palmer, now a junior Aiken Scholar, also was attracted by the program. She found the seminar intellectually stimulating but also appreciated an opportunity to connect with more of her classmates and teachers in a smaller setting. "The first-year seminar provided an outlet to learn about environmental issues and to discuss them at length," she says. "It was also a great opportunity to meet other first-years and faculty and to explore beyond the campus."

Another junior, Kevin Jordan, also lauds the program's ability to make connections between students and professors. He says the seminar was a chance "to meet other students in my year who were studying the same thing I was and who were as serious students as I was." Jordan has gone on to contribute to Professor Robert Manning's park research by collecting data.

DeHayes is aware that the truest measure of the program's success will be what participating students do on campus – and off. Since the program is relatively new, there's no definitive word yet on what kind of difference it makes. But DeHayes likes what he sees so far.

"We have three classes of Aiken Scholars on campus now," he says. "These students are really showing some wonderful leadership in the school and beyond."

2003 Lola Aiken Scholars

Christopher Anderberg
Peter Baker
Richard Balouskus
Jonathan Benson
Mary Brundige
Thomas Bryan
Jamie Ebert
Andrew Giunta
Christina Golkin
Stephanie Gould
Dylan Hass-Floersch
Joanna Hatt
Kelly Hayes
Keith Jennings
David Karl
Allyson Keefe
Luke Krisch
Christopher LeBlanc
Megan McGowan
Warren Mills
Erica Moore
Benjamin Morelli
Adrienne Moretti
Jaclyn O'Riley
David Rosa
Kristen Simard
Matthew Smith
Liron Weiss

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Bells Take a Toll on Performer

By Tom Weaver



David Neiweem, professor of music and UVM's official carillonneur, is seeking listener requests for his monthly Ira Allen carillon programs. (Photo: Bill DiLillo)

Like most performing artists, Music Professor David Neiweem admits to some anxious moments on stage. Understandable for one who has conducted numerous choral groups and sung as a baritone in the United States and Europe. Understandable when performing Beethoven's Ninth or Berlioz's *L' enfance du Christ*. But when plunking out "Shave and a Haircut, Two Bits" on a keyboard?

A little perspective: As Neiweem played those seven notes recently, they were being broadcast across the campus from a tower 168 feet in the air – and that could make anyone choke up a bit. In that mini performance, Neiweem was running a test on his newest instrument – the Ira Allen Memorial Carillon.

"Every time you put your finger on a key there could be an irate telephone call to the university," he says, not totally in jest. "It would be a powerful weapon in the wrong hands."

Neiweem, in his new role as the University Carillonneur, succeeds emeriti professors of music James Chapman and Francis Weinrich. He brings a sense of commitment, art and fun to his duties playing what he calls "the loudest single musical instrument in the city of Burlington." But, he also is mindful that the carillon is a memorial to UVM students who died during their time on campus. He says, "I can't think of a better way to remember the many souls who have been a part of this university than to send this incredible sound from the highest spot in town."

Neiweem developed his carillon chops at the University of Wisconsin, where he completed his graduate work in the late 1970s. Playing the 56 bells in the Memorial Carillon Tower in Madison, Neiweem learned the "incredible choreography" involved in manipulating the wooden batons and pedals of an acoustic carillon.

On the Ira Allen Memorial Carillon, the musician creates a tone by striking a key on a two-tiered keyboard located in the chapel's choir loft. Striking the key rings a tuning rod, which creates an acoustic tone that is amplified through the loudspeakers in the chapel's belfry. There are 40 pitched tuning rods, covering nearly four full octaves, on UVM's carillon.

Neiweem says he strives to create the sound of a carillon of cast bells through his playing technique. "I keep in mind the reality of pulling levers, ringing bells, the huge machine that an acoustic carillon is," Neiweem says. "You can't play it completely evenly."

Is it Dave or is it Memorex?

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[Aiken Scholars](#)

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Don't expect that you're hearing Neiweem every time a melody pours down from the tower. Usually, you aren't. The University Carillonneur performs at convocation, commencement and other special ceremonies, such as the Sept. 11 observance this month. Most days, the carillon is on auto pilot, tolling the hours from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and playing a randomly selected set of music from its library Billings building manager Jennifer Purvee oversees the daily routine. (Editor's note: Yes, we agree the number for "Raindrops Keep Fallin' on My Head" seems to come up a bit too often.)

Neiweem hopes to record his own keyboard work for the chapel's pre-programmed selections and begin a regular series of concerts at noon on the first Tuesday of each month.

Neiweem says he'll take requests, would love to have them, in fact. Though he apologizes that his pop and rock repertory is not terribly deep, he is open-minded. He likes, for example, the musical pun potential in playing Paul McCartney's "Michelle" (*ma belle*) and has been trying to work out the "filigrees" on the Simpsons' theme.

Whether your tastes run to Copland's "Appalachian Spring" or the Commodores' "Brickhouse," let Carillonneur Neiweem know what you'd like to hear. E-mail us at theview@uvm.edu (or just hit "Feedback" in the left column to tell us your suggestions) and we'll pass them on.

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