



Consulting, research encouraged by legislature

BY RICHARD VEILLEUX

Faculty and members of faculty bargaining units may continue to consult and do research with private and public entities, as a result of recently enacted legislation.

The Connecticut General Assembly provided that such arrangements do not violate the state's code of ethics.

The legislation provides that faculty and members of the faculty bargaining units at UConn, its Health Center, and at other public colleges and universities in Connecticut who are engaged in consulting or research with public and private entities, may use a separate process for reviewing and approving such agreements. They will not be bound by the provision in the state code of ethics that bars certain business transactions between private companies and state employees.

UConn officials were instrumental in convincing legislators of the need for the change.

"The legislature came to understand that public higher education institutions, as distinct from other state agencies, are expected to interact with private entities," says Rachel Rubin, UConn's director of compliance. "This legislation will ensure that our faculty will be able to continue their contributions to the state's economic development and quality of life without inadvertently violating the state ethics code. It puts us on a level playing field with every other research institution in the country."

The bill, adopted unanimously in the House and Senate, awaits Gov. M. Jodi Rell's signature.

The state's code of ethics is predicated on a regulatory framework that attempts to build a wall between private industries and state agencies, and between employees of those industries and state employees.

Recent interpretations of the statutes by staff of the Office of State Ethics have created a situation where UConn faculty would be prevented from conducting research in collaboration with major Connecticut companies who fund the projects and, in turn, bring new products and ideas to the state's citizens.

The ruling also severely curtailed a faculty member's ability to provide consulting

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PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

The peak of the Information Technologies Engineering Building against a cloudy sky.

Neag students improve recess at inner city school

BY JANICE PALMER

Recess – which, researchers say, improves student attentiveness, health, and social skills – just got a whole lot better at Batchelder Elementary School. That's because of the efforts of four UConn teacher education students.

During a recent ceremony held at the Hartford elementary school, the students from UConn's Neag School of Education presented the principal and his students with new recess equipment, a renovated playground, and a recess guidebook.

"As the play areas were being painted, our students became more and more excited," says principal John Laverty. "We are so appreciative of what these Neag School students have been able to accomplish on our behalf. Our kids now have more than a couple of rubber balls for recess, and a much better place to channel their energy appropriately."

Just as important, he adds, is the guidebook created by the Neag students, which he plans to copy and supply to each of his staff members.

During the past academic year, the UConn students, all juniors, were assigned to Batchelder – one of the Neag School's Professional Development Centers for training future educators. As part of their clinical experience, the students were required to identify an issue and help the school address it by developing an action plan. They called their initiative "Recess Renovation: Teaching Students to Play."

"We observed that recess had become a problem for students and for teachers," says Brian McDermott, a junior from Middlebury. "There was hardly any equipment, and students needed to learn new games."

So McDermott and classmates Annie Haylon of West Hartford, Thomas Mariani of Somers, and Ryan Quinn of Stonington

set out to change that. In constructing their plan, they sought the expertise of Neag School associate professor Jaci Van Heest, an exercise scientist, whose research focuses on childhood obesity and exercise.

"Recess is a vital part of the school day, and contributes to a child's well being," says Van Heest.

She says a report from the U.S. Department of Education's Center for Education Statistics shows that 14 percent to 18 percent of U.S. children in grades 1 through 6 get only 15 minutes or less of recess a day.

"Children need physical activity to run off bottled-up energy, so they return to their classrooms refreshed and more attentive," she says.

In addition to the health and fitness benefits, Van Heest says that during recess, children develop physical skills, social rela-

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PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

Christopher Earley, who will become dean of the School of Business in January 2008, meets with faculty members of the School. Earley is currently dean of business at the National University of Singapore.

Dorothy Goodwin dies at 92

BY SHERRY FISHER

Dorothy Goodwin, who taught economics at UConn for many years and was a former member of the General Assembly, died June 10 at her home in Bloomfield. She was 92.

Born in Hartford, Goodwin grew up in Connecticut, and graduated magna cum laude from Smith College in 1937. After graduation, she joined the Bureau of Indian Affairs as an intern, and was then hired by the Department of the Interior. During World War II, she was sent to India as a senior intelligence officer.

After the war, she joined the U.S. Foreign Agriculture Organization and was sent to Japan. She

worked on that nation’s postwar reconstruction from 1947 to 1952.

Goodwin earned a doctoral degree in agricultural economics from UConn in the mid-1950s, and taught economics at the University until 1965. She was also director of institutional research and assistant provost in charge of university planning. She published widely, particularly on issues of state taxes and state aid to education.

In 1974, Goodwin, formerly of Mansfield, ran as a Democrat and won the seat as state representative for the 54th District (Storrs and Mansfield). She served five terms. As chair of the House education committee and then as a member of the State Board of

Education, she exemplified her dedication to education.

“The University of Connecticut joins the many friends and admirers of Dorothy Goodwin in mourning the passing of this extraordinary lady,” said University President Philip E. Austin.

“During the 1960s and 1970s, Ms. Goodwin made an invaluable contribution to the University as director of the Bureau of Institutional Research – now the Office of Institutional Research – and as assistant provost for planning,” he added. “She continued a lifetime of service as a dedicated, far-sighted member of the Connecticut General Assembly. She leaves behind a wonderful legacy and will be greatly missed.”

2007 grad wins scholarship to law school

BY SHERRY FISHER

A 2007 UConn graduate is one of the first five recipients of a new full scholarship to the University of Washington School of Law in Seattle.

Salmun Kazerounian, who majored in cognitive science and philosophy, has been awarded a William H. Gates Public Service Law Scholarship.

The scholarship covers tuition, books, room and board, other fees, and incidental expenses. The program also provides support for seminars and internships and collaborative opportunities with other law schools in Washington in the area of public service law. Acceptance of the award represents a commitment on the part of each recipient to work in public service for five years following graduation.

Kazerounian is excited about his scholarship and the opportunity to pursue a law degree.

“I plan to attend law school to find ways that I can help to advance the interests of the

exploited and the oppressed, who are neither few nor far,” he says. “The scholarship allows me to engage in this kind of work without worrying about repaying a six-figure debt.”

While at UConn, Kazerounian worked for social causes, including labor, human rights, environmental, community, and student issues.

He also served as a student trustee.

“I tried to adopt positions, regardless of how controversial, that I believed to be reflective of the interests of students, faculty, and staff,” he says. Last year he organized a two-day conference on democracy and education which, he says, “is an overarching theme of my activities during the past four years.” The event included workshops, panel discussions, and lectures.

Kazerounian helped start the UConn Free Press, an alternative student newspaper. “It was primarily for opinions that wouldn’t have made it into other papers,”

he says.

He is one of the founding members of Wrench in the Works, a project in Willimantic. “It’s a coffee house and social justice center for nonprofit groups run by volunteers and funded by donations,” he says. The center, which has about 50 members, has a lending library, free movie showings, and poetry and musical performances.

Kazerounian spent a year at McGill University in Montreal through the Study Abroad program, and continues to work as a web developer for the Institute for Teaching and Learning.

He says he has enjoyed being a student at UConn. “You can find some wonderful faculty who are dedicated to their work and genuinely care about the students,” he says.

“UConn is generally a very open-minded institution and there are many ways in which to get involved and participate,” he says. “I also met a wonderful group of students, and I’ll probably remain friends with them for ever.”

Alumnus killed in Iraq

Army 1st Lt. Keith Heidtman of Norwich, a UConn graduate, was killed in combat May 28 in Iraq. Heidtman, 24, was on a helicopter mission when his aircraft was struck by enemy fire. His co-pilot was also killed.

Heidtman earned a bachelor’s degree in agricultural and resource economics with honors from UConn in 2005. He was a cadet in the Army Reserve Officer Training Corps, and earned the title of distinguished military graduate in recognition of his outstanding leadership, high moral character, academic achievement, and exceptional aptitude for military service. He attended the U.S. Army Aviation Warfighting Center in Fort Rucker, Ala., where he began his military service as an aviator.

He was a 2001 graduate of Nor-

wich Free Academy, where he excelled in academics and sports.

In summer 2002, he was a life-guard and counselor at The Hole in the Wall Gang Camp in Ashford.

He was assigned to the 25th Infantry Division at Schofield Barracks in Hawaii, and was deployed to Iraq in December.

Gov. M. Jodi Rell ordered all state and U.S. flags lowered to half staff in Heidtman’s honor.

He was buried with full military honors and posthumously honored with a Bronze Star and Purple Heart that were presented to his parents.

He is survived by his father, Kerry Heidtman; his mother, Maureen Robidoux; his stepfather, Arthur Robidoux; his sister, Keely; his grandparents; and his girlfriend, Meghan Lenehan.

Former art department slide librarian dies

Katharine Alling Farina of Storrs died at home on May 26. She was 76.

Farina was a slide librarian in the University’s art department for more than 25 years. A gifted photographer, her works are on display in several collections across the country, including one at the Stanford University museum in California.

Farina enjoyed traveling, and appreciated the art, architecture, and people of the many places she visited.

She is survived by her husband of 54 years, UConn professor emeritus of psychology Amerigo “Mig” Farina; a son, Eric; a daughter and son-in-law, Ellen and John Gilmartin; three grandsons; a granddaughter; and a great granddaughter.

Memorial contributions may be made to a charity of the donor’s choice.

Corrections

In the May 29 *Advance*, the photos of the student speakers at the Health Center Commencement ceremonies – Daniel Colonno and Justin Clemow – were switched and therefore incorrectly identified.

Also in the May 29 *Advance*, in an article about the Connecticut Youth Financial Institute, a teacher at South Windham High School was misidentified. His name is Paul Jussila.

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

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Inspections of renovated buildings to be conducted this summer

BY KAREN A. GRAVA

The University shared its plan to expedite the inspection this summer of buildings where renovations have occurred under UConn 2000 during a meeting of the Construction Management Oversight Committee on June 15.

"The goal of the inspection program is to assure that student residential facilities – including dormitories and apartments – classroom buildings, and other buildings in which students congregate are safe, as determined by the Office of the State Building Inspector, by Sept. 1," said Barry Feldman, vice president and chief operating officer.

He said the inspections will be done under the direction of the State Building Inspector, and conducted by UConn and state inspectors; representatives of a private architectural firm experienced in code inspections; and, if necessary, part-time licensed inspectors hired by the University.

Feldman also reported that to date, 56 recently constructed non-threshold buildings or buildings with additions or major renovations – including newly constructed apartment and residence halls – have been inspected for fire and building safety, have necessary corrective work either completed or underway, and have been determined to be safe.

Ten more facilities in this category will be field inspected by Sept. 1, and final inspection reports will be completed by the end of the calendar year.

The list includes 77 buildings that are part of nine dormitory complexes that received alterations, sprinkler systems, and other fire safety improvements under the UConn 2000 program, and one complex (Northwood Apartments) that was renovated with non-UConn 2000 funds.

These complexes were inspected by the State Fire Marshall between 2001 and 2004, and nine of the 10

were determined to be in compliance with the 1999 Connecticut Fire Safety Code. The 10th, the graduate dormitory complex, was in compliance, except for the diameter of a handrail.

"This group of buildings will be further inspected by Sept. 1 to confirm that basic safety requirements are satisfied," Feldman said. "Any immediate corrective action will be completed. Building code inspections of the alterations will begin after Sept. 1."

The list also includes buildings that were subject to alterations or repairs that were mostly minor and occurred in 79 buildings, of which 47 are classroom buildings. The classroom buildings and other buildings where students congregate will be inspected before Sept. 1, under the same protocol used for the dormitory complexes.

The inspections are being undertaken pursuant to UConn 2000 oversight legislation passed last year.

Event explores Latino issues in higher education



PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

Ricardo Fernández, president of CUNY's Lehman College, gives the keynote address during a conference on Latinos in higher education June 8.

BY SHERRY FISHER

Successful leaders in higher education have experience, vision, and integrity, and are passionate about what they do, says Ricardo Fernández, president of Lehman College, City University of New York.

Fernández gave the keynote address June 8 at a conference, "Advancing and Preparing the Next Generation of Latino Leaders in Higher Education." The event was sponsored by the Connecticut Association of Latinos in Higher Education.

"A leader has to have a clear idea of what he or she wants to accomplish personally and professionally," Fernández said. "You have to have a vision. You have to have the ability to grab people's attention and sustain it."

Fernández, the second Puerto Rican appointed president of a four-year school in the U.S., has had a 30-year career in education. His work has focused on how to improve educational outcomes, especially through programs that encourage and prepare larger numbers of minority students to enter and succeed in college.

He said there are "no easy answers or prescribed paths" for people who want positions in higher education administration, including the presidency: "You need educational preparation like a J.D. or M.D., experience, personal traits, and individual skills."

The pursuit of a doctoral degree "is the first step in the preparation for leadership positions in higher education – it's the calling card," he said. "However, this does not guarantee anything other than the fact that you're going to be a highly educated person in one particular area. Persistence, hard work, a positive attitude, and willingness to move are required."

Although progress has been made by Latinos in higher education in terms of college enrollment, Latinos still lag behind many other groups when it comes to completion rates, Fernández said.

"In 2002, 1.6 million Latino students were enrolled in higher edu-

cation, with 60 percent enrolled in two-year colleges," he said. "Black enrollment was nearly 2 million, and 43 percent of those were enrolled in two-year institutions. In contrast, white enrollment was over 11 million, but only 36 percent were enrolled in two-year colleges."

"Despite the best efforts of many institutions ... students who enroll initially in two-year colleges do not persist through baccalaureate completion as often as those who initially start at four-year schools," Fernández said. "What's behind the lack of continuation in higher education is a very complex matter. One issue is that almost one-third of people who go to a community college don't go there to get an associate's degree. They go to acquire a skill and move on to a job."

Fernández said that in 2002, Latinos made up 14 percent of the youth population, and received about 7 percent of bachelor's degrees conferred that year. African Americans made up 13 percent of the population and received about 10 percent of bachelor's degrees, and whites, 66 percent of the population, received 73 percent of bachelor's degrees.

Latino completion rates at the graduate level are "grim," he said: "Latinos earn 3 percent of doctoral degrees conferred. The dearth of Latinos in positions of leadership has been impacted by the low level of completion rates."

After the conference, Xáe Alicia Reyes, associate professor of education and Puerto Rican and Latino Studies, said the event provided opportunities for dialogue and the initiation of collaborations with and among Latinas and Latinos engaged in education throughout the state.

She noted that the event drew people from other states, such as Massachusetts and Michigan, as well as non-Latino professionals wanting to understand the Latino educational experience. It also offered a venue for young Latino/a professionals to model and develop their leadership skills.

Conference examines ingredients for student success in college

BY SHERRY FISHER

Elementary schools, high schools, colleges, and policy makers will have to work together to ensure that more students make a successful transition from high school to college. That's the word from Michael Collins, program director at Jobs for the Future, a nonprofit research, consulting, and advocacy organization.

"The rigid separations between [these entities] are one of the reasons for the tremendous and disappointing numbers of students who get to college but aren't successful," said Collins during his keynote address at a June 5 conference on college readiness and success.

The event was sponsored by the First Year Experience and Early College Experience programs, and the Neag School of Education.

"We've got to get at preparation for college in a very different way than we've done in the past," said Collins. Jobs for the Future is working to find ways to increase college entry and graduation.

Trends suggest that students may become ready for college by taking college courses while they are in high school, he said. "I think it's provocative, because this started out as an option for academically advanced students. But why can't we do the same for underrepresented populations?"

The hypothesis is that a dose of college-level credit might have a positive effect on students who have not traditionally considered college, or students who might be academically unprepared, he said.

The Early High School Initiative, sponsored by the Gates Foundation, has the potential to do just that, Collins said.

Early College High Schools are



PHOTO BY SEAN FLYNN

Michael Collins, program director at Jobs for the Future, speaks during a conference on college readiness and success June 5.

small schools where students earn a high school diploma and up to 60 hours of college credit. They help bridge the gap between school and college. There are 130 such schools.

"We're making our case to people who make decisions about policy," Collins said. "When they find out that their students can earn college credits while they're in high school, they're very excited."

Collins said his group is developing a system to track the students' progress.

Veronica Makowsky, vice provost for undergraduate education and regional campus administration, said the University believes in nurturing the future workforce "in a way that today's world demands in terms of globalization and diversity."

"The University cares deeply about the quality and outcomes of

the state's K-12 educational system," she added, and is "concerned about the persistent achievement gaps existing in our state."

UConn's Early College Experience provides opportunities for Connecticut high school students to take UConn courses while still in high school.

Rachel Buck, a math teacher at the Connecticut International Baccalaureate Academy, spoke at a workshop on high school models for college success.

The Academy "aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable, and caring young people who help create a better world through intercultural understanding and respect," she said before the workshop. "It's not just about academics and passing tests. We're developing students who are ready for the real world."

Health Center’s melanoma clinic strives to treat disease at early stage

BY CAROLYN PENNINGTON

The incidence of melanoma, the most deadly type of skin cancer, is growing fast. The percentage of people with melanoma has more than doubled in the last 30 years. The melanoma program at the Health Center offers patients services to help ensure that the disease is caught in its earliest and most curable stage.

The program offers multidisciplinary care through a team of doctors – dermatologists, an oncologist, and a surgeon – who have a special interest in melanoma.

“If you’ve been diagnosed with malignant melanoma, it’s important that there’s a coordinated approach, because you’re going to be seeing several different doctors who will be giving you a variety of care,” says Dr. Philip Kerr, assistant professor of dermatology and dermatopathology and director of the Melanoma Clinic at the Health Center. “Because we’re all located at the Health Center, the interface between doctors is much easier and we’re able to take a comprehensive team approach to each patient’s individualized care.”

The Health Center is the only facility in the state that offers whole body digital imaging to monitor and track potential skin

cancer in high-risk populations.

“It’s similar to your dentist keeping x-rays of your teeth and updating them regularly,” says Kerr. “Melanomas change in appearance over time, anywhere from three to 12 months. The photos provide a historical reference so we can catch changes earlier and in the long run save lives.”

They may also serve to reassure patients that a suspicious mole looks the same as it did six months ago, and may save patients from unnecessary biopsies, he adds.

Melanoma generally begins in the skin, but can spread rapidly to other organs and bones. That’s why an early diagnosis is crucial.

The Health Center has five dermatopathologists and an extremely busy dermatopathology laboratory that provides services to the hospital and private practitioners throughout the region. Using a state-of-the art microscope with multiple lenses, the dermatopathologists are able to review difficult cases together.

“It’s quality assurance,” says Kerr. “Instead of just one pair of eyes looking at a suspicious sample, you have several, and that greatly increases the odds of an accurate diagnosis.”

When a melanoma diagnosis

has been made, the degree of risk can be determined by how deeply the malignant cells are invading the skin. Research has shown if the melanoma is less than a millimeter deep the prognosis is very good. If it’s more than a millimeter deep, the cancer is more advanced and more likely to spread to the lymph nodes or the major organs in the body.

Surgical oncologist Lori Wilson specializes in sentinel node biopsies, which can better determine how far the cancer has spread.

Dr. Upendra Hegde, a medical oncologist, also has a special interest in melanoma and can help patients determine their best treatment options. He also advises patients with advanced disease about the clinical trials available and appropriate for them.

For recently diagnosed patients, the Health Center plays host to the statewide melanoma support group, which offers emotional and educational support. Oncologists, surgeons, nutritionists, and psychiatrists speak about the latest treatments and research, and answer questions.

The melanoma program has plans to expand, by developing a Cutaneous Oncology Center as a regional center of excellence.



PHOTO BY JANINE GELINEAU

Dr. Philip Kerr in the microscope room where physicians examine tissue slides of potential melanoma cases.

Funds raised at the inaugural “Imagine Ball” to be held Oct. 20 at the Wadsworth Atheneum in

Hartford will help recruit new faculty and bolster research initiatives for the new center.

UConn scientists map mass emergence of cicadas in Midwest



PHOTO BY JOHN COOLEY

Periodical cicadas such as these emerge en masse every 13 or 17 years. A research team from the lab of ecology and evolutionary biology professor Chris Simon is currently studying an emergence of 17-year cicadas in northern Illinois.

BY CINDY WEISS

A team of biologists from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences descended on northern Illinois a couple of weeks ago to map the mass emergence of millions of 17-year cicadas.

This is the first time that GPS (Global Positioning Systems) has been used in combination with computerized data entry to accurately track the spectacle of a brood of periodical cicadas emerging.

Chris Simon, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, is a leading expert on periodical cicadas. A team of researchers from her laboratory, led by research associate John Cooley, is mapping

the emergence of “Brood XIII” of the insects in the Midwest for the National Geographic Society.

Brood XIII is found from the northern half of Illinois to Iowa, Indiana, Michigan, and Wisconsin.

The cicadas in this emergence hatched in 1990, when their parents came up from underground.

On one of the first days of the Brood XIII’s emergence, more than 100,000 cicadas surrounded a single tree in a forest preserve in suburban Chicago, Cooley told the *Chicago Tribune*.

Periodical cicada broods usually take about two weeks to emerge, depending on temperatures.

The periodicals, which differ

from the less numerous, shorter-lived annual cicadas, live underground as nymphs for 17 or 13 years. There they feed on the roots of plants. When they come out, they finish maturing, mate, lay eggs in the twigs of trees, and die, leaving a litter of shells behind. The eggs hatch, the nymphs fall to the ground, and the cycle begins again.

During their brief time above ground, they dominate the landscape. They coat the trees, and their shells coat the ground. Their synchronized, dawn-to-dusk buzz (a common sound effect in horror movies) is so loud that biologists counting them often wear ear protection.

The sight and sound of the periodicals was eagerly awaited by the Simon lab research team. They packed their cars with tents, GPS units, and collection supplies, and waited for the first reports of the insects showing up in late May and early June.

The maps they make will help biologists understand more about the range of this species, where it will re-emerge in 2024, and how its distribution is affected by other broods that emerge in different years.

Simon, who receives research funding from the National Science Foundation, is interested in the DNA of the periodical cicadas, their evolutionary tree, and how new species form.

Two members of her research team, Cooley and David Marshall, have studied the songs of cicadas to help differentiate new species.

Some of the 17-year cicadas in the Midwest, a periodical cicada stronghold, switched back to a 13-year cycle and joined existing 13-year cicada groups. The life-cycle-switching cicadas formed a new 13-year species that did not interbreed with the existing 13-year cicadas.

“We found these new 13-year cicadas through DNA studies. Based on the DNA, I could tell they weren’t interbreeding (with the existing 13-year cicadas), but I didn’t know why,” she says.

Cooley and Marshall came from the University of Michigan to work as postdoctoral fellows with Simon at UConn. Their behavioral

work complemented her genetic studies, showing that cicadas sought mates among those whose songs matched their own.

In fact, in areas where the new and old 13-year cicadas overlapped, natural selection caused the new 13-year cicadas to pitch their mating song higher to enhance its difference. This phenomenon, predicted by evolutionary theory, is “reproductive character displacement,” Simon says.

Simon’s group maintains a web site well known to cicada experts, Cicada Central, which was cited in the *Chicago Tribune’s* daily updates of the recent emergence, and a blog detailing their findings.

Other members of her group traveling to the Midwest were technician Kathy Hill, graduate student Beth Jacobsen, and Gerry Bunker, an amateur enthusiast from Massachusetts.

Periodical cicadas once existed near the University’s Storrs campus. The extinction of a brood in Willington was confirmed years ago by James Slater, emeritus professor of biology; Carl Schaeffer, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology; and others.

The only other Connecticut brood occurs in the Connecticut River Valley and is not due out until 2013, Simon says.

But stay tuned. In 2008, Brood XIV is due to come out over much of the eastern U.S., from Maryland to Cape Cod (skipping Connecticut), from Long Island to Ohio, and as far south as Tennessee.

Ornamental grass goes from greenhouse to worldwide market

BY DAVID BAUMAN

UConn plant breeder and researcher Mark Brand is always seeking candidates for stardom. His latest prospect, an ornamental grass he developed and propagated for more than a decade in the greenhouses and fields of the plant science department, is about to hit the big time.

Ruby Ribbons, a new variety of *Panicum virgatum* – or switch grass – with blue-green base foliage that turns a deep wine-red color months earlier than other red switch grasses, is being launched for wholesale production this month.

The firm launching the grass, the West Chicago-based Ball Horticultural Co., is the world's largest breeder-producer of ornamental plants, with distribution companies in 19 countries around the globe. In the highly competitive horticultural industry, Ball's decision to market Ruby Ribbons to retailers such as Wal-Mart and Lowe's is equivalent to baseball's "grand slam." Every year hundreds of new plants are introduced by American breeders and growers with the hope of commercial success. Just a handful are selected.

"It's certainly nice they came on board," Brand, a professor of plant science, agrees, with modest understatement. "They have a lot of influence in the horticultural world, and when they decide to pick something up and do all the marketing, they obviously expect it to perform well for them."

Garden plants are big business. Sales of floral and bedding plant sales generated \$15 billion in 2003. With so much money at stake, companies compete fiercely to produce the next "hot" new cultivar.

Ornamental grasses are relative newcomers to American gardens but are becoming more popular, as gardeners realize their beauty and ease of care, says Brand. Cultivated for their intriguing color, varying angles of arches and plumes, and distinctive masses of foliage, they provide eye-catching appeal. And low maintenance requirements, a long season of ornamental interest, and tolerance of many soil types, have the horticultural industry scrambling to develop new varieties to meet an increasing demand among gardening consumers.

Ruby Ribbons' soft blue-green foliage emerges in the spring on upright, clumping plants. The foliage takes on a wine-red color in early summer, which intensifies as the season progresses, Brand says. Flower heads appear in late summer, followed by ornamental seed heads which, if left uncut, provide long-lasting winter interest. Plants mature at about 3 to 4 feet in height, with a spread of 2 to 3 feet.

"Ornamental grasses have become very trendy," Brand says, adding that the movement toward native plants in the landscape helps. "Grasses give lots of bang for the buck. For a \$15 plant, you get lots in return. It's the kind of thing people buying now are looking for."

Brand has previously introduced more than a dozen hardy rhododendron cultivars suited to the climate of New England. These are currently under evaluation by Monrovia, another large horticultural company, based in California.

He began the ornamental grass-breeding program in the early 1990s, with the goal of developing



PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

Mark Brand, professor of plant science, with a new breed of ornamental grass he developed, known as Ruby Ribbons.

durable grasses with new colors that would perform well in the region.

"It was clear that grasses were coming in vogue," he says, "and my thinking was to create a new variety that would develop color earlier and last longer. So I took an existing popular variety that had steel-blue foliage and pollinated it with an older cultivar that developed red foliage later in the summer."

Creating new grasses is a slow process. It took several years before Brand developed the new Ruby Ribbons variety from successfully hybridized clumps. The original Ruby Ribbons plant was selected as the best plant from among 200 seedlings in trials conducted in the field.

Initially Brand had the new ornamental grass variety evaluated by several Connecticut nurseries, including Prides Corner Farms, a large plant wholesaler based in Lebanon, Conn. When they expressed interest in negotiating an exclusive marketing license, Brand contacted Gregory Gallo, director of technology licensing with UConn's Center for Science and Technology Commercialization.

"We thought we had a show stopper," Gallo says.

"Once the folks at Prides Corner saw the color, the dramatic way this variety of grass changes color, it really caught their eye," he adds. "Their attitude was, 'This is going to be a winner.'"

Because Brand wanted to do

business with both Prides Corner and the Ball Horticultural Co., Gallo worked out a deal that allows Ball – primarily interested in wholesaling trays of small plants to intermediate growers – an exclusive license to sell propagating plants worldwide. Prides Corner – which concentrates on selling landscape plants – has a limited exclusive right to sell two- to three-gallon size plants that may retail for as much as \$22.

Gallo says it's premature to talk about the amount of royalties UConn may obtain. "What is really beneficial for the University is that UConn's name will be on all the plants sold," he says. "It gets the UConn name out before the everyday gardener everywhere."

Omega 3 taken during pregnancy improves infant problem solving

BY BETH KRANE

Mothers who regularly ate a functional food containing an Omega 3 fatty acid during pregnancy gave birth to infants with better problem-solving abilities as measured at nine months of age, according to a new UConn study to be published in the June issue of the *American Journal of Clinical Nutrition*.

The study is the first to report on problem-solving abilities during the first year of life tied to prenatal dietary intake of docosahexaenoic acid (DHA), an Omega 3 fatty acid found in particularly high concentrations in specific regions of the brain, including the cerebral cortex, synapses, and retinal rod photoreceptors.

A functional food is any food-stuff that is enhanced by additives and marketed as beneficial to health.

DHA consumption is especially important during pregnancy. The

fatty acid accumulates at a high rate during the third trimester, as the majority of brain cells are being formed for an entire lifetime, says Michelle Judge, a post-doctoral fellow in UConn's School of Nursing and Department of Nutritional Sciences who is the lead author of the study.

Yet in the United States and Canada, DHA intake during pregnancy is far below the current generally accepted level of 300 milligrams per day, which raises concern for infant neurodevelopment. That concern is compounded by the fact that fetal conversion of a more commonly consumed Omega 3 fatty acid – alpha-linolenic acid (LNA) – to DHA is extremely limited, Judge says.

"Our research confirms that it is extremely important for expectant mothers to regularly consume a direct source of DHA, ideally those cold water marine fish that are considered safe for pregnant women or a DHA-enhanced func-

tional food," she says. "Our finding of better problem-solving abilities in the group of infants whose mothers consumed a prenatal DHA supplement supports the idea that DHA plays an important role in the development of attention required for infant goal-directed behavior," Judge adds, "and suggests that DHA consumption during gestation is particularly important for infant cognitive development."

The double-blind, placebo-controlled, randomized trial involved 29 pregnant women ages 18 to 35, who were recruited through the University and through Hartford Hospital at less than 20 weeks' gestation.

The women were divided into two groups: One group received cereal bars enhanced with 300 milligrams of DHA, while the other group received cereal bars without DHA. The women consumed an average of five cereal bars a week, beginning at 24 weeks of gestation,

through delivery.

The mean dietary DHA intake for the entire group was 99 milligrams per day. The mean DHA intake for mothers in the intervention group, which included regular dietary intake of DHA and the DHA functional food, was considerably higher: 313 milligrams per day.

A two-step, means-end problem-solving test was presented to all the infants in their own homes at nine months of age, to evaluate their ability to execute a series of steps to retrieve a toy. The steps involved pulling a covered toy within reach and uncovering the toy. The test was presented to the infants five times, and all five performances were scored. The UConn researchers found a statistically significant difference between the problem solving abilities of the two groups, with the infants whose mothers had consumed a DHA functional food during pregnancy faring better.

These findings support previously published studies that have established links between prenatal DHA consumption and/or infant DHA consumption and improved attention and eye-hand coordination in toddlers and higher IQ later in childhood, Judge says.

Further studies are needed to establish recommended daily allowances of DHA for pregnant women, she adds.

Former UConn nutritional sciences professor Carol Lammi-Keefe, who is now at the Pennington Biomedical Research Center at Louisiana State University, secured funding for this project from the U.S. Department of Agriculture and served as its principal investigator.

Additional support for the study came from Nestec Ltd., the UConn Research Foundation, the National Fisheries Institute, and the American Dietetic Association Foundation.



PHOTO BY STEPHEN SLADE

Men’s basketball coach Jim Calhoun speaks to bikers participating in the Big Y Jim Calhoun Cancer Challenge Ride June 9. The ride, a fund-raiser for the Health Center’s Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center and the Coaches vs. Cancer program, began and ended in Simsbury.

GRANTS

The following grants were received through the UConn Health Center’s Office of Grants and Contracts in March 2007. The list represents new awards as well as continuations. The list of grants is supplied to the *Advance* by the Health Center’s Office of Grants and Contracts.

Department	Prin. Investigator	Sponsor	Amount	Award Period
Federal Grants				
Neuroscience	Pfeiffer, S.	National Institute of Neurological Disorders & Stroke	\$57,504	12/02-11/07
<i>Oligodendrocyte Differentiation and Myelin Biogenesis</i>				
Neuroscience	Bernstein, L.	National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders	\$33,050	12/02-11/07
<i>Binaural Processing of Complex Stimuli</i>				
Genetics & Developmental Biology	Mohler, W.	National Institute of Child Health & Human Development	\$48,803	01/03-12/07
<i>Function of the Protein EFF-1 in Cell Membrane Fusion</i>				
Oral Rehabilitation, Biomaterials, & Skeletal Development	Kosher, R.	National Institute of Child Health & Human Development	\$54,477	01/03-12/07
<i>Role of DIX-5 in Chondrocyte Differentiation</i>				
Immunology	Vella, A.	National Institute of Allergy & Infectious Diseases	\$309,344	03/03-02/08
<i>Understanding of the Mechanism of 41BB Constimulation</i>				
Neuroscience	Oliver, D.	National Institute on Deafness and Other Communication Disorders	\$67,555	12/03-11/07
<i>Synaptic Organization of the Auditory System</i>				
Medicine	Pilbeam,C.	National Institute of Arthritis & Musculoskeletal & Skin Diseases	\$56,899	01/04-12/07
<i>Regulation of the Prostaglandin G/H Synthases in Bone</i>				
Center for Vascular Biology	Hla, T.	National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute	\$68,474	12/03-11/07
<i>Cyclooxygenase-2 Regulation and Function</i>				
Genetics & Developmental Biology	Rogina, B.	National Institute on Aging	\$320,248	02/04-01/08
<i>Molecular Genetics of Caloric Restriction in Aging Flies</i>				
Genetics & Developmental Biology	Lichtler, A.	National Institute of Arthritis & Musculoskeletal & Skin Diseases	\$281,443	04/04-02/08
<i>DLX Gene Regulation of Osteoblast Differentiation</i>				
Neuroscience	Papermaster, D.	National Eye Institute	\$445,218	02/05-01/08
<i>Membrane Biosynthesis in Normal and Dystrophic Retina</i>				
Surgery	Das, D.	National Heart, Lung & Blood Institute	\$42,372	12/05-11/07
<i>Transgenic/Knockout Animals in Myocardial Preservation</i>				
Medicine	Kream, B.	National Institute of Arthritis & Musculoskeletal & Skin Diseases	\$241,976	01/05-11/07
<i>Transgenic Expression of 11B-HSD2 in Bone</i>				
Oral Health & Diagnostic Sciences	Litt, M.	National Institute on Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism	\$115,618	03/05-02/08
<i>Individualized Assessment and Treatment for Alcoholism</i>				
Genetics & Developmental Biology	Rowe, D.	National Institute of Arthritis & Musculoskeletal & Skin Diseases	\$308,728	04/05-12/07
<i>Promotor GFP Markers of the Osteoprogenitor Lineage</i>				
Neuroscience	Eipper, E.	National Institute of Diabetes & Digestive & Kidney Diseases	\$96,951	01/06-12/07
<i>Biochemistry & Physiology of Peptide Amidation</i>				
Hematology-Oncology	Mukherji, B.	National Cancer Institute	\$255,082	04/06-02/08
<i>Rescuing CTL from Activation Induced Death</i>				
Psychiatry	Hesselbrock, V.	National Institute on Alcohol Abuse & Alcoholism	\$300,569	12/06-11/07
<i>Alcohol Research Center-Core</i>				

Genetics & Developmental Biology	Li, Y.	National Institute of Child Health & Human Development	\$319,812	02/07-01/08
<i>The Role of Alternative Splicing of FGF8 in Mouse Development</i>				
Pharmacology	Pachter, J.	National Institute of Neurological Disorders & Stroke	\$191,085	01/07-11/07
<i>Microvascular Endothelial Cell Heterogeneity in the Central Nervous System</i>				

Private Grants

Hematology-Oncology	Tannenbaum, S.	Tufts New England Medical Center	\$5,875	07/94-12/10
<i>ECOG Cooperative Outreach Program DHHS CA39088</i>				
Surgery	Kurtzman, S.	University of Pittsburgh	\$1,600	06/95-05/07
<i>NSABP Breast Cancer Prevention Trial DHHS P5400-5425</i>				
Medicine	Garibaldi, R.	UConn Foundation	\$35,273	01/00-06/07
<i>James E.C. Walker MD/Primary Care</i>				
Surgery	Albertsen, P.	CTRC Research Foundation	\$2,100	09/04-05/13
<i>Selenium & Vitamin E Chemoprevention Trial DHHS 80003</i>				
Cell Biology	Claffey, K.	UConn Foundation	\$9,506	06/05-12/07
<i>To Augment Existing Research Project</i>				
Oral Health & Diagnostic Sciences	Wagner, J.	American Diabetes Association	\$100,000	01/06-12/07
<i>Relationships Among Type 2 Diabetes, History of Depression and Coronary etc.</i>				
Orthopedic Surgery	Lieberman, J.	UConn Foundation	\$28,922	05/06-05/07
<i>Chase Family Skeletal Biology Fund</i>				
Neuroscience	Zecevic, N.	Multiple Sclerosis	\$165,130	10/06-09/09
<i>Development of Oligodendrocytes in the Human Fetal Brain: Relevance for MS</i>				
Medicine	Hurley, M.	UConn Foundation	\$56,525	01/07-12/07
<i>Great Explorations</i>				
Pediatrics	Lapin, C.	CT Children's Medical Center	\$9,168	01/07-12/07
<i>CF Center Personnel</i>				
Neuroscience	D'Sa, C.	National Organization for Hearing Research	\$20,000	01/07-01/08
<i>Inactivation of Fibroblast Growth Receptor 1 and 2 in Oligodendrocytes</i>				
Oral Health & Diagnostic Sciences	Tanzer, J.	SUNY-Buffalo	\$141,458	04/04-12/07
<i>Amylase Binding Streptococci Plaque-Cary DHHS R263976</i>				
Pediatrics	Ferrer, F.	CT Children's Medical Center	\$25,000	09/06-08/07
<i>Sphingolipid Signaling in Wilms' Tumor Cells</i>				
Surgery	Albertsen, P.	Univ. Med/Dent of New Jersey	\$43,591	08/06-07/10
<i>Evaluation of Palliative Prostate Cancer among Elderly Men</i>				
Psychiatry	Tanev, K.	University of Rochester	\$2,475	07/05-06/07
<i>Cooperative Huntington's Observational Research Trial</i>				
Calhoun Cardiology Center	Stoenescu, M.	Saint Jude Medical	\$1,100	06/06-06/08
<i>Programming Ventricular Tachycardia Therapy for MADIT-II Patients</i>				
State Grants				
Community Medicine & Health Care	Gregorio, D.	Department of Public Health	\$119,567	11/06-06/07
<i>Fetal & Infant Mortality Surveillance Program</i>				
Psychiatry	Ford, J.	Mental Health/Addiction Services	\$74,965	09/04-01/07
<i>Women's Treatment & Support Diversion PGDHHS 05MHA1121</i>				
Community Medicine & Health Care	Ungemack, J.	Mental Health/Addiction Services	\$200,000	09/04-09/07
<i>CT Strategic Prevention Incentive Grant DHHS 06MHA1126</i>				
Pediatrics	Wakefield, D.	UConn-Storrs	\$1,401	10/06-09/07
<i>UConn Food Stamp Nutrition Education</i>				
Pediatrics	Rusert, J.	Easter Seals	\$4,500	11/06-08/07
<i>Mind the Gap: Reference Guide for People with Physical Disabilities</i>				
Genetics & Developmental Biology	Xu, R.-H.	DPH/CI	\$794,349	03/07-02/08
<i>Human Embryonic Stem Cell Core at UConn and Wesleyan University</i>				
Genetics & Developmental Biology	Xu, R.-H.	DPH/CI	\$172,646	03/07-02/08
<i>SMAD4-Based Chip-Chip Analysis to Screen Target Genes of BMP&TGF in HESC</i>				
Genetics & Developmental Biology	Graveley, B.	DPH/CI	\$220,000	03/07-02/08
<i>Alternative Splicing in HESC</i>				
Genetics & Developmental Biology	Carmichael, G.	DPH/CI	\$220,000	03/07-02/08
<i>DSRNA and Epigenetic Regulation in HESC</i>				
Genetics & Developmental Biology	Li, Y.	DPH/CI	\$100,000	03/07-02/08
<i>Development of Efficient Methods for Reproducible Transgene Expression in HESC</i>				
Genetics & Developmental Biology	Krueger, W.	DPH/CI	\$100,000	03/07-02/08
<i>Cell Cycle and Nuclear Reprogramming Bysomatic Cell Fusion</i>				
Immunology	Liu, B.	DPH/CI	\$100,000	03/07-02/08
<i>Embryonic Stem Cell as a Universal Cancer Vaccine</i>				
Genetics & Developmental Biology	Rowe, D.	DPH/CI	\$1,167,818	03/07-02/08
<i>Directing Human Embryonic Stem Derived Progenitor Cells into Musculoskeletal Lineages</i>				

CALENDAR

Monday, June 18 to Monday, July 23

Items for the weekly *Advance* Calendar are downloaded from the University's online Events Calendar. Please enter your Calendar items at: <http://events.uconn.edu/> Items must be entered by 4 p.m. on Monday for inclusion in the issue published the following Monday.
Note: The next Calendar will include events taking place from July 23 through August 27. Those items must be entered in the database by Monday, July 17.
If you need special accommodations to participate in events, call 860-486-2943 (Storrs), or 860-679-3563 (Farmington), or 860-570-5130 (Law School).

Libraries

Homer Babbidge Library. Hours: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday noon-5 p.m.
Dodd Center. Reading Room hours: Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; closed weekends.
Research Center hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; closed weekends.
Health Center Library. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 7 a.m.-11 p.m.; Friday, 7 a.m.-7 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, noon-10 p.m.
Law Library. June hours: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-11 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, 1-9 p.m. Except June 26-29, when the hours will be 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
July hours: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, closed.
Torrington Campus Library. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-3 p.m.; Friday-Sunday, closed.
Stamford Campus Library. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Friday-Sunday, closed.
Avery Point Campus. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday, closed.
Waterbury Campus Library. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday, closed.
Hartford Campus Library. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m.; Friday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, closed.

University ITS

Hours: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Help Desk Hours: Call 860-486-4357, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.

Ph.D. Defenses

Monday, 6/18 – Biomedical Sciences. *Elucidation of the Mechanisms by which TGF-beta1 Augments Astrocytic NOS-2 Expression*, by Mary Hmaby (adv.: Hewett). 1 p.m., Low Learning Center, Academic Research Building, Health Center.
Monday, 6/18 – Medicinal Chemistry. *Utilizing a Cysteine Substitution Strategy to Elucidate Key Residues in hCB2 and mCB2 Binding Pocket: Ligand-Based Structural Biology*, by Ying Pei (adv.: Makriyannis). 3 p.m., Room 627, Pharmacy/Biology Building.
Monday, 6/18 – Linguistics. *The Syntax of Objects: Agree and Differential Object Marking*, by Miguel Rodriquez-Mondonedo (adv.: Boskovic). 4:30 p.m., Room 311, Arjona Building.
Wednesday, 6/20 – Marine Sciences. *Top-Down Control by Calanoid Copepods in Marine Plankton Communities*, by Amy Suida (adv.: Dam). 10 a.m., Room 103, Marine Sciences Building, Avery Point Campus.
Thursday, 6/21 – Communication Disorders. *Phonological Priming in Adults Who Stutter*, by Irena Vincent (adv.: Gilbert). 9 a.m., Room 142, Phillips Communication Sciences Building.
Thursday, 6/21 – Immunology. *Shaping and Optimizing CD8 T Cell Responses through CD137 and CD134 Dual Costimulation*, by Seung-Joo Lee (adv.: Vella). 1:30 p.m., Room EGO13, Academic Research Building, Health Center.
Thursday, 6/21 – Special Education. *Novice Physical Therapists' Use of Family-Centered Practices in Physical Therapy Services*, by Deborah Bubela (adv.: Shaw). 2 p.m., Room 142, Gentry Building.
Thursday, 6/21 – Clinical Psychology. *Accelerated Head and Body Growth in Infants Later Diagnosed with Autism Spectrum Disorders: A Comparative Study of Optimal Outcome Children*, by Krista Mraz (adv.: Fein). 2 p.m., Room 109, Bousfield Building.
Wednesday, 6/27 – Neurobiology. *Role of GABAergic Synaptic Proteins*, by Wendou Yu (adv.: de Blas). 3 p.m., Room 130, Biology/Physics Building.
Friday, 6/29 – Educational Psychology. *Exploring Changes to Reading Comprehension on the Internet: Paradoxes and Possibilities for Diverse Adoles-*

cent Readers, by Julie Coiro (adv.: Leu). 10 a.m., Room 246, Gentry Building.
Friday, 6/29 – Chemistry. *Organolithium Methodologies and the Asymmetric Addition of Achiral*



PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

Nature photographs by Paul Swiacke are on display in the Stevens Gallery at Homer Babbidge Library through Aug. 17. See Exhibits.

Organomagnesium Reagents to Prochiral Ketones or Benzaldehyde, by Mark Luderer (adv.: Bailey). 10 a.m., Room A304, Chemistry Building.
Friday, 7/13 – Political Science. *Evolving Threats and Faceless Enemies: Engineering Human Security in the United Nations*, by Natalie Hudson (adv.: Boyer). 10 a.m., Room 119, Monteith Building.

Lectures & Seminars

Tuesday, 6/26 – Celebrate Women Discussion. *Shoulder and Elbow Injuries: Prevention and Treatment*, by orthopedic surgeons Drs. Robert Arciero, Augustus Mazzocca, and Kevin Shea. 6 p.m, Low Learning Center, Health Center.

Performing Arts

Tuesday, 6/19 – Benton Summer Garden Concert. Guitarist Victor Pachas. Noon, Benton Museum.

Exhibits

Through Sunday, 8/5 – Benton Museum. *Alpine Views: Alexandre Calame and the Swiss Landscape*; and *Arpilleras: Women's Protest Tapestries from Chile*; and *Connecticut Landscapes from the 20's and 30's*; and *Summer in the City*. Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday, 1-4:30

Ongoing. State Museum of Natural History & Connecticut Archaeology Center. New permanent exhibit, *Human's Nature: Looking Closer at the Relationships between People and the Environment*. Hours: Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Sunday & Monday, closed. Free admission, donations accepted.

Potpourri

Tuesdays, through 8/7 – Tons of Fun Tuesday. Fill a 32 oz. bucket with ice cream from the Dairy Bar at the Student Union Patio, 11 a.m.–1:30 p.m. \$2 with student ID/\$3 without.
Wednesdays, through 8/8 – Lively Wednesdays. Live entertainment behind the Student Union, Noon-1 p.m.
Thursdays, through 8/9 – Thrilling Thursdays. Programs in Charter Oak Suites and Northwest Dining Hall, 5-7 p.m.
Saturday, 6/23 – Natural History Museum Talk. Richard French introduces the science of pathobiology and public services offered by the pathobiology department. Adults and children ages 8 and up, accompanied by an adult. Advance registration needed: \$10 per Natural History museum member/\$15 non-member. 10 a.m.-noon.
Saturday, 6/30 – Natural History Museum Talk. *Caterpillars to Kimonos – Spectacular Silk!* Adults and children ages 6 and up, accompanied by an adult. Advance registration required: \$10 per member/\$15 non-members. 10 a.m.-noon.
Saturday, 7/14 – Connecticut State Museum of Natural History. *Mystery Tour at the Nathan Hale Homestead.* Adults and children ages 6 and up, accompanied by an adult. Advance registration required: \$10 per member/\$15 non-members. 10 a.m.-noon.
Saturday, 7/14 – Connecticut State Museum of Natural History. *Things That Go Splash in the Night!* Adults and children ages 6 and up, accompanied by an adult. Advance registration required: \$10 for members/\$15 non-members. 7-9 p.m.
Monday, 7/16 – Friday, 7/20. Archaeology Field School for Adults. Ages 16 and up. Advance registration required: \$300 for members/\$400 non-members. Contact David Colberg at 860-486-5690. 9 a.m.-3 p.m., Connecticut State Museum of Natural History.
Saturday, 7/21 – Natural History Museum Event. *Project O – In the Lab and Out to Sea.* Adults and children ages 6 and up, accompanied by an adult. Advance registration required: \$30 per member/\$40 non-members. 10 a.m.-4 p.m., Avery Point Campus.

Nature lover’s photographs on display at Babbidge Library

BY KALA KACHMAR

When Paul Swiacke jokingly asked library curator David Avery if he could hang his amateur photographs on the walls he so often touches up with paint, Avery took him seriously.

Swiacke, who holds a degree in biology from UConn and has worked in Facilities Oper-

ations for 20 years, showed Avery a small sample of his 8,000 candid nature photographs. And the two began to plan for an exhibit of Swiacke’s work that is now on display in the Stevens Gallery at Homer Babbidge Library until Aug. 17.

“Paul really has an eye for photography,” Avery says. “There’s something about his photos that makes them seem so real and alive.”

Swiacke’s photos, inspired by his love of nature, were taken almost exclusively in New England. His photographs depict such images as trees arched over a sparkling river with a triangle of sunlight illuminating the foreground, or a dragonfly with faint black stripes on its screened wings grasping a twig with lush, budding leaves behind it.
“His pictures say it all. They make you stop and

say, ‘I know that place,’” Avery says.

“One of his photos is taken on the Moosup River, where I fish,” he adds. “When I saw the image, it struck me as familiar, and then I realized where it was taken.”

Swiacke hand built the frames for the 10 large images and 58 smaller ones that are displayed in an arrangement he designed himself in the gallery. The 8-by-10 photos were printed on his own inkjet printer, while the 11-by-17 photos were sent to a digital imaging lab.

This is the first public exhibition of Swiacke’s work.

“I don’t consider myself an artist,” he says. “I shoot what I like and what’s available to me: nature.”

Swiacke spends most of his free time canoeing, fishing, and backpacking. He takes photos along the way.

“Taking photos of nature is just an extension of what I do outside,” he says. “It gives me something to do other than stand in a river all day and fish.”

Most of the photos were taken in various locations around New

England, with many from places in Connecticut including Pachaug State Forest in Voluntown, Bluff Point in Groton, and the Thames River in Norwich. “I took some of them in my backyard,” says Swiacke, who lives in Plainfield.

Some were also taken in the Adirondack Mountains in Keene, N.Y. In the past, Swiacke has shot photographs in the Grand Canyon, Mammoth Cave National Park in Kentucky, and the White Mountains with a traditional camera using film.

Swiacke has a long-standing interest in photography, but he hadn’t photographed anything in 30 years until three years ago, when he took an old 35mm camera on a trip to Alaska with his son. The trip inspired him to learn how to use a digital camera.

“I watched people who were using digital cameras,” Swiacke says. “When they were done taking the photos, they were done. I still had to have mine processed.”

Since that trip, Swiacke has taken more than 8,000 digital photos with a 5.0 megapixel Nikon

Coolpix 5700. He recently purchased a digital 35mm Nikon D200 that he is still learning how to use.

“I’m completely self-taught,” he says. “It took me six or eight months to figure out digital cameras.”

When going on outdoor trips, he carries only his small digital camera with him in case he decides to take photos. When his primary purpose is to take photos, he travels to places he’s already been, bringing along the more bulky 35mm digital camera.

He says he doesn’t make a lot of adjustments to his photos, but does use Adobe Photoshop Elements 3.0 to sharpen them, clean the edges, and adjust the lighting, if necessary.

“I don’t add any color or make any digital changes to the photos,” he says.

Swiacke has sold a few 8-by-10s and plans to submit his photos to a nature photography contest.

“I’m going to do it for fun and see where it goes,” he says. “But I don’t plan to get rich from it.”



PHOTO BY PAUL SWIACKE

A photo of an Eastern Tiger Swallowtail butterfly, taken in Pachaug State Forest in Voluntown, Connecticut.

Nursing supervisor is Connecticut Nurse of the Year

BY CHRIS DEFRANCESCO

Maureen Worley will tell you saving lives is just part of her job. It's something she's done countless times during her nearly 20 years at the Health Center's John Dempsey Hospital, where she is clinical nurse supervisor for the cardiac catheterization laboratory.

But it was a life saved away from the hospital that led to her being named the state's Direct Care Nurse of the Year.

While at Hammonasset Beach State Park in Madison one day last summer, Worley noticed people waving for help.

"I went over and found there was a man who was unresponsive," Worley says.

She performed CPR for 20 minutes until paramedics arrived with a defibrillator.

Since then, Worley has been on a crusade to get a defibrillator in every state park. She's made her case in letters to local and state officials, including the Governor.

"I believe this is why I received the award," Worley says. "I was an advocate for this patient. I wouldn't give up. I saved this man's life, but I didn't want it to stop there. I felt strongly this incident needed to be a catalyst to make Connecticut state parks a safer place to enjoy."

Worley says she never expected the honor.

"When I was nominated, I was very surprised," she says. "I'm comfortable speaking out for patient safety, and helping that man came naturally to me."

State Nurse of the Year honors are awarded annually by the Department of Administrative Services.

Ellen Leone, director of nursing at the Health Center, says it was one of the proudest moments of her career, "to introduce one of 'our' nurses to the outside world – a nurse who embodies everything I am instilling in my professional staff: patient advocacy, teamwork, high professional standards, and a sense of responsibility that goes



PHOTO BY JANINE GELINEAU
The Health Center's Maureen Worley, Connecticut Nurse of the Year.

far beyond the traditional work day."

Dr. Peter Deckers, executive vice president for health affairs at the Health Center, who was once a patient in Worley's care, says,

"She is a professional who enables a calm, pleasant atmosphere of confidence and trust for the patient and family."

Worley, a resident of Clinton, spent seven years as an emergency room nurse at Dempsey, then seven years in the intensive care unit, before joining the cardiac catheterization lab as a staff nurse.

She says Dempsey Hospital is a great place to be a nurse. "People stay here because they feel valued," Worley says. "We're respected for our skills. Patients know they can rely on us for quality care."

Deckers also named Worley the winner of the Health Center's 2007 Executive Vice President's Award, in recognition of her outstanding patient care and service to the Pat and Jim Calhoun Cardiology Center.

Ten faculty elected to CASE

Six faculty members from the School of Engineering, two from the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and two from the Health Center were recently elected to the Connecticut Academy of Science and Engineering (CASE) in honor of their accomplishments:

Luke Achenie, professor of chemical, materials, and biomolecular engineering

Rajeev Bansal, professor of electrical and computer engineering

Ann Bucklin, professor of marine sciences

Hans Dam, professor of marine sciences

Steve Demurjian, professor of computer science and engineering

Eric Jordan, professor of mechanical engineering

Dr. Mark Lalande, professor of genetic and developmental biology

Nejat Olgac, professor of mechanical engineering

Dr. David Rowe, professor of oral rehabilitation, biomaterials, and skeletal development

Quing Zhu, professor of electrical and computer engineering.

Renovating recess *continued from page 1*

tionships, and the ability to negotiate and work as a team.

A number of studies suggest that U.S. schools, under pressure to improve student achievement scores, are reducing or eliminating recess, in order to increase time spent on academics.

Van Heest is encouraged by what is going on at Batchelder. "Principal Laverty is committed to improving recess for his students and has been very supportive of our students," she says.

Van Heest volunteered to design the new play area. She identified appropriate activities for elementary school-aged children

and then drew up specifications for four distinct play areas to help organize recess. After surveying the teachers, the Neag students created an equipment wish list; but the school had no funds available to cover the Recess Renovation costs. The students were determined to turn their plan into reality, however. They raised \$5,000 in donations from several groups, including the UConn Chapter of the Connecticut Education Association and the Neag School Dean's Fund.

Dean Richard Schwab says he decided to invest privately raised funds in the project because of the

Neag School's long and productive partnership with Batchelder as a Professional Development Center.

"Principal Laverty and his teachers have been incredibly supportive in training our students and collaborating with our faculty on research," he says. "Just look at these four juniors. They demonstrate the initiative and dedication we hope all of our graduates bring into Connecticut's classrooms. Preparing high quality teachers is a collaborative effort, and John Laverty and his team at Batchelder Elementary School are extraordinary partners and mentors."



PHOTO BY JANICE PALMER
Neag School of Education students review plans for the playground at Hartford's Batchelder Elementary School.

New legislation *continued from page 1*

and research services to a wide range of firms, something that faculty at virtually every other institution in the country enjoy.

Specifically, these interpretations prevented physicians at the UConn Health Center who help develop new medications while performing research for or collaborating with pharmaceutical companies, from prescribing that company's medication to patients when performing clinical work. With the governor's signature, that, too, will change.

"The legislature protected us from rulings that could close down many avenues of faculty consulting," says Dr. Scott Wetstone, director of health affairs policy planning and an associate professor of community medicine and health care. "The bill maintains our right to continue these relationships, as long as it's done ethically and fairly."

The legislation charges the University with creating and enforcing policies to prevent faculty from engaging in collaborative research or consulting agreements that create conflicts of interest or inappropriately use proprietary information.

It also calls for an oversight committee at each constituent unit to monitor compliance with the legislation.

At UConn, these policies were recently developed, and were approved by the Board of Trustees in April.

The policy requires faculty to fulfill all their professional responsibilities to the University, and to

gain school or college and University approval prior to entering into any consulting or research agreement. Faculty who do not obtain that approval become subject to the authority of the Office of State Ethics.

Wetstone says the policies are rigorous, and provide for semi-annual audits by internal auditors.

The audits will be shared with an oversight committee comprising both internal and external appointees.

"Developing a University-wide policy demonstrated the ability of Storrs and the Health Center to work together," says Ilze Krisst, assistant vice provost at the Office of Sponsored Programs and a crafter of the internal policies. "The policy meets everybody's needs. It is a model of the campuses working together well under strict time pressures."

Another ethics ruling, which prevented companies doing business with the state, or those that are registered with the state as lobbyists, from contributing to the agencies they work with, was amended in January to allow corporations to continue making donations to UConn.

University officials successfully argued that UConn would lose tens of millions of dollars annually if corporations, who traditionally enter into research and other partnerships with the University and are among UConn's largest donors, were prohibited from doing so.