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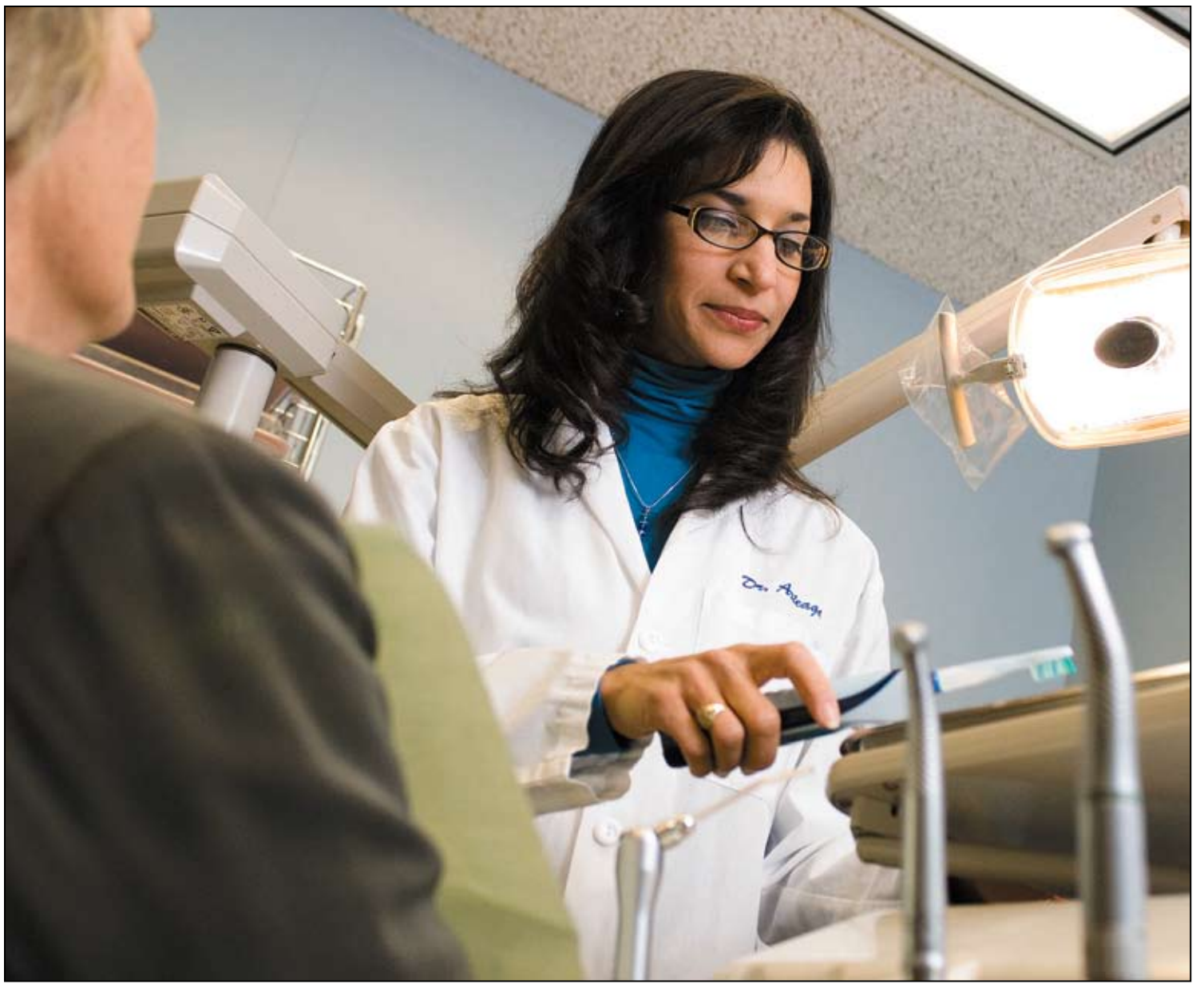

Photo by Al Ferreira

Dr. Sarita Arteaga, an assistant clinical professor of oral rehabilitation, biomaterials, and skeletal development, is president of the Hispanic Dental Association. The Association seeks to improve access to dental care for Latinos and recruit more Latinos to the profession of dentistry.

UConn dentist seeks to promote oral health for Latinos

by Kristina Goodnough

As one of the few Hispanic dentists in Connecticut – indeed, in the country – Dr. Sarita Arteaga relishes her role as president of the Hispanic Dental Association.

"I'm kind of a pioneer," says Arteaga, assistant clinical professor in the Department of Oral Rehabilitation, Biomaterials, and Skeletal Development. "Our organization is young, established less than 20 years ago, and I feel like I'm helping build the collaborations and partnerships that support our mission to improve oral health for the Hispanic community. I can see how much we are growing, and I feel my opinions and my work will affect how we move forward."

Elected president in July, Arteaga will serve for 18 months, as the organization changes the appointment from a fiscal year to a calendar year term.

She runs board meetings and oversees committees for the group, which has 2,500 members – including dentists, dental hygienists, and dental assistants – and 31 student chapters (with four more in the works). She also attends national and regional meetings with other dentists, legislators, and government officials to discuss important oral health care issues and suggest strategies for improvement.

The group focuses on improving access to care and recruiting more Latinos into dentistry. "We know people are more likely to go to a provider they feel comfortable with, yet Latinos and African-Americans make up less than 10 percent of the country's practicing dentists," she says.

Other roadblocks facing the Latino community are lack of access to treatment because of transportation problems; dentists' reluctance to accept Medicaid; and language and cultural issues, such as lack of knowledge about the importance of daily dental care.

Arteaga says the Association is developing a cultural competency curriculum for dental students and practitioners, including a Spanish class for use in the dental office. It is also preparing training materials for

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Blumenthal suing for cost of law library repairs

by Michael Kirk

Attorney General Richard Blumenthal announced Feb. 14 that his office is suing contractors, architects, suppliers, and others who built or helped build the library at the UConn School of Law in Hartford for construction, design, and other flaws. The flaws resulted in pervasive water leaks and cracked exterior walls.

The action seeks more than $15 million – the estimated cost of repairs – plus damages and other costs.

"The law library building is really a story of a dream diminished," says University President Michael J. Hogan. "What was supposed to be a signature piece of architecture has instead turned into a disaster. I'm deeply grateful that the attorney general has launched this initiative."

The 26-count action against 15 different defendants charges them with negligence, breach of contract, product liability, breach of fiduciary duty, intentional misrepresentation, and negligent misrepresentation, according to Blumenthal's office.

"Instead of a landmark law library, contractors left a structural mess and a legal morass," Blumenthal says. "These companies did shoddy and substandard work, sticking the law school with a building riddled with leaks, cracks, and defects. Far from lasting 100 years, this structure required massive repairs after barely a decade. The flaws were so fundamental and far-reaching that the building's exterior must be rebuilt and its moisture protection system replaced. Contractors at every stage – design, construction, installation, inspection – incorporated or ignored obvious flaws, dooming the building to swift deterioration."

Construction of the $23 million law library, located on the school's Elizabeth Street campus, started in 1994, before the UConn 2000 program began. The project was managed by the State Department of Public Works and completed in 1996. The five-story, 125,000 square foot structure was to be a "landmark" building lasting at least 100 years.

Leaks appeared soon after the building's opening on Jan. 31, 1996, however. The leaks worsened over the years, damaging books and interior finishes and forcing relocation of books. Cracks appeared in the building's façade, necessitating placement of a chain

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Photo by Frank Dahlmeyer

Rachel Clark, a senior majoring in painting, at work in her studio.

Julias Elias, former dean, dies at 82

by Sherry Fisher

Julius Elias, a former dean of the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, died Feb. 25. He was 82.

A resident of Storrs, Elias came to UConn in 1974 as dean of liberal arts and sciences and as a member of the philosophy department. He served as dean until he was appointed interim vice president for academic affairs in 1986, where he served for two years. He retired in 1992.

"He was a visionary, a hard worker, and a caring spirit," says David Carter, chancellor of the Connecticut State University System and former associate vice president for academic affairs at UConn. "He was my boss, my friend, and my father all in one. He was so special. As long as I live, there will always be a place in my heart for him."

Carter adds, "He was brilliant, but he never lost the common touch. His spirit will always be with those whose lives he touched."

Philosophy professor Joel Kupperman describes Elias as a "very good dean, highly intelligent, cultured, and responsive to the faculty. He taught aesthetics in the philosophy department, and by all accounts was an extraordinarily good teacher. The aesthetics course wasn't just about theory; he really taught a sense of the arts.

"He continued his scholarly pursuits, which is hard to do when you're busy as a dean," Kupperman adds. "The fact that he published *Plato's Defense of Poetry* during that time is amazing."

Richard Norgaard, professor emeritus of finance, was part of a group of retired UConn faculty that met for lunch every other Wednesday. Elias was a member of the group.

"Julius was very knowledgeable and we enjoyed having him with us," he says. "We'll miss him."

Karl Hakmiller, professor emeritus of psychology, describes Elias as a "cultured gentleman with a first-rate intellect."

Elias was born in London. In the years after World War II, he was chief of the voluntary agencies liaison division of the International Refugee Organization, where he helped Jewish orphans and other victims of the Holocaust.

He came to the United States and studied philosophy at Columbia University, where he earned his bachelor's degree in 1955, an A.M. degree in 1958, and a Ph.D. in 1963.

His first teaching position was as a lecturer at the City College of New York in 1960, where he became a professor in 1972.

While he was dean, Elias taught regularly and earned high student ratings, in both the philosophy and music departments. He taught courses in philosophy of literature, aesthetics, and ethics, and published scholarly articles. He also taught graduate seminars in opera, and published scholarly articles and operatic libretto translations.

He was an editor of the *Journal of the History of Ideas* for 12 years.

He was also an opera aficionado. His friends and colleagues talk about his vast collection of opera tapes and DVDs, with multiple copies of a given opera performed by different singers. He translated about a dozen opera libretti for Columbia Records and other companies; gave graduate seminars in the music department on the major composers; and published articles on operas.

After he retired, he continued to teach opera at UConn and at the University of Hartford, and took groups to New York and to Europe and Australia to study opera.

Elias was predeceased by his wife, Wilma. He is survived by his son Anthony, his daughter-in-law Ellen, three grandchildren, a brother and a sister, and a longtime friend and colleague, Patricia Cremins.

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members who want to sponsor cultural awareness classes or other programs to reduce some of the roadblocks Latinos face in getting care.

"We want to be able provide speakers and materials to help our members and others improve care for Hispanics," she says.

Arteaga first learned about dentistry in grade school, when she helped her mother, a single parent raising two daughters in the South Bronx, study for a degree in dental hygiene.

"That sparked my interest," she recalls.

After graduating from New York University with a bachelor's degree in biology, Arteaga earned a D.M.D. at UConn's School of Dental Medicine and did a general practice residency at Bronx Municipal/Albert Einstein Hospitals. Returning to Connecticut in the early 1990s, she worked as an associate at several private practices, and began teaching operative dentistry and prosthodontics in 1995.

She joined the Hispanic Dental Association in 1997, becoming treasurer, vice president, president-elect and now, president. She also serves as advisor to the student chapter in the School of Dental Medicine, a role she plans to continue when her term as president is over.

Says Arteaga, "We want students to understand the need for our mission before they go out into the community and start providing treatment."

Day-long conference on gardening set for March 14

Kitchen gardens, organic lawn care, and gardening in deer country are among the topics to be discussed during an all-day garden conference, to be held Friday, March 14 in the Rome Ballroom on the Storrs campus.

Keynote speaker Rick Darke, a noted garden designer, photographer, lecturer, and author of gardening books on sustainable design and ornamental grasses, will discuss "Livable Landscapes for a Changing Environment."

Additional speakers include:

Jennifer Bartley, a landscape architect, author, and illustrator, who will speak on "Designing the New Kitchen Garden," based on her new book;

Kerry Mendez, a garden consultant, designer, writer, and teacher. Her talk is titled "Don't be a Deadhead! Surefire Maintenance Shortcuts for Showcase Gardens;"

Ellen Zachos, lecturer, author, and proprietor of Acme Plant Stuff in New York City, will talk about "Gardening in Deer Country;" and

Scott Reil, certified Connecticut nurseryman and corporate trainer for SafeLawns and Landscapes LLC, will discuss "Organic Lawn and Garden Care."

Early registration is $80 per person ($90 if post marked after March 7 or paid at the door), and includes an information packet with session summaries, parking, lunch, snacks, and beverages, opportunities to purchase selected autographed books, and a wide array of gardening books.

The conference is sponsored by the Department of Plant Science and the Cooperative Extension System.

Contact: Richard McAvoy at 860-486-0627 or richard.mcavoy@uconn.edu.

For more information, go to www.hort.uconn.edu/2008garden.

Katrina disaster topic of Law School talk

Carol Anderson, the 2008 Day Pitney Visiting Scholar, will give a talk at the law school titled, "When the Levees Broke: The Un-Civil Rights Movement in America." The event will take place on Wednesday, March 5, at 11 a.m. in Starr Hall.

Anderson will discuss how the human catastrophe of Hurricane Katrina was not the result of an accident, but was instead the product of decades of deliberate public policy decisions made in the international realm.

Anderson is an associate professor of history at the University of Missouri. Her research and teaching focus on U.S. international relations and public policy, especially concerning human rights and African-Americans.

She has received fellowships and grants from prestigious institutions such as the Ford Foundation and the National Humanities Center. Most recently, Professor Anderson completed a fellowship at Harvard University's Charles Warren Center for Studies in American History.

Publication notice

The *Advance* will not be published on March 10, owing to spring break. The next issue will be published on March 17. Enjoy the break!

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Advance

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Research concludes many not helped by antidepressants

by Cindy Weiss & Beth Krane

A study conducted by UConn psychology researchers and others has found that several commonly prescribed antidepressants provide little benefit for most people with depression.

The study was published Feb. 26 in the online journal *PLoS Medicine*.

It analyzed a large amount of data from 35 complete clinical trials submitted to the federal Food and Drug Administration (FDA) from 1987 to 1999. The dataset, which included study results not before made public, was obtained from the FDA through a Freedom of Information Act request.

The analysis of the data from trials of four popular new-generation antidepressant drugs was conducted by two researchers from UConn's Center for Health, Intervention, and Prevention (CHIP): post-doctoral researcher Tania Huedo-Medina, and Blair Johnson, a professor of social psychology. The study was led by Irving Kirsch, a psychology professor at Britain's University of Hull, who is a professor emeritus of clinical psychology at UConn. He retired in 2003.

The study relied on meta-analysis, which pools data from independent studies.

Before antidepressants – the most commonly prescribed class of drugs in the United States in 2006 – are approved for licensing by the FDA, they must undergo clinical trials. These compare their ability to alleviate depression with the effects patients experience when taking a placebo. Neither the patients nor the researchers in the original studies knew who was receiving the drug and who the placebo.

Clinically significant improvement appeared only in studies of very highly depressed patients. For studies involving people with less severe depression, the advantage of taking the drug was modest, and did not approach clinical significance, says Johnson.

Indeed, many people in the trials still exhibited high levels of depression even after taking the drugs.

One strength of the investigation was its use of complete data sets, including results that the drugs' manufacturers did not publish.

The clinical trials analyzed involved four selective serotonin reuptake inhibitors (SSRIs): the drugs fluoxetine (Prozac), venlafaxine (Effexor), nefrazodone (Serzone), and paroxetine (Paxil), which have been widely prescribed in the U.S. The trials lasted from four to eight weeks and included 5,133 adult patients, of whom 3,292 were randomly chosen for medication and 1,841 received placebos.

Two drugs that were originally included in the study – citalopram (Celexa) and sertraline (Zoloft) – were ultimately excluded because the researchers were not able to obtain complete data sets.

The study showed that those who took the antidepressants did get a bit better. But those who took the dummy pills also got better – a phenomenon known as the placebo effect.

The placebo effect in the trials was exceptionally large, the authors found. On average, it was about 80 percent as large as the impact of the drugs. For comparison, in trials of pain medication, the average placebo effect is about 50 percent as large as the effect of taking the genuine drug.

In the study, only samples of the most severely depressed patients showed clinically significant improvement on a scale that measures the severity of depression. The authors found this improvement seemed to come about because these patients did not respond as well as less depressed patients to a placebo, rather than because they responded better to the drug.

"We find that the overall effect of new-generation antidepressant medications is below recommended criteria for clinical significance," the paper states.

"Given the large placebo effect we observed in our study, it would make sense for clinicians to exhaust other treatment options for depression before prescribing medication for all but the most severely depressed patients," Johnson says.

"Taking any medication, whether a real drug or not, provides a trigger for improvement, an expectancy of improvement," he adds.

Kirsch's previous research, much of it conducted at UConn, already had cast doubt on the effectiveness of new-generation antidepressants.

The focus of this study was to determine whether patients' baseline severity of depression, as measured by professionals, affected their response to medication.

Kirsch tapped his former colleague Johnson, who specializes in studying social influence, to participate in his latest study because of his expertise in meta-analysis.

Johnson, a principal investigator with the Center for Health, Intervention, and Prevention and a member of its executive committee, has published 25 such studies in his 20-year career, and has numerous publications centering on the methods involved in meta-analysis, including software. His Synthesis of HIV/AIDS Research Project, funded with $3 million in grants from the National Institutes of Health over the past decade, has directly supported 10 meta-analyses in the areas of HIV prevention, HIV risk behavior, and HIV medication adherence.

Huedo-Medina, who works with Johnson, is a post-doctoral researcher who focuses on quantitative methods, especially meta-analysis. She already has participated in four large-scale research synthesis projects.

The psychology department at UConn was recently ranked fifth in the nation in a National Science Foundation listing of the top institutions for psychology research, both in federal research expenditures and total research expenditures for 2006.

Photo by Frank Dahlmeyer

Blair Johnson, left, professor of psychology, with post-doctoral researcher Tania Huedo-Medina. The two were part of a research group that recently published a study on the efficacy of antidepressants.

New contracts lower cost of electricity at several UConn campuses

by Richard Veilleux

By using an innovative way to secure electricity, UConn is saving more than $3 million in energy costs.

The savings will be achieved through two new 20-month contracts that resulted from a purchasing mechanism known as a reverse auction. The auction was conducted late last year in conjunction with the state's Office of Policy and Management (OPM).

One of the contracts will provide electricity to the Depot and regional campuses and the School of Law for approximately $735,000 less than the University would have expected to pay during that period.

The UConn Health Center, which uses considerably more electricity than the regional campuses, will fare even better: it has secured a contract with through June 2009 that will save the facility nearly $2.5 million annually.

Additionally, the Health Center's current seven-month contract, which was bid individually before the OPM-sponsored reverse auction, will have saved nearly $1 million when it expires in March.

Twelve percent of the Health Center's energy will come from renewable sources.

"We're very proud of our participation in the renewable energy program and our record of holding down energy costs," says Daniel Penney, associate vice president of facilities management at the Health Center.

Penney says the Health Center used about 75 million kilowatt hours of electricity per year when it opened in the mid-1970s with 1.4 million square feet of space. Today, the Health Center encompasses 2.1 million-square feet and in 2006-07, used about 79 million kilowatt hours.

"That speaks directly to what we've done, not only to offset costs, but what we've done to increase efficiency and decrease consumption," Penney says.

Storrs-based officials already procure contracts for the delivery of natural gas, the fuel needed to run the co-generation plant for the main campus. The plant is operating at approximately 85 percent capacity and is saving the University several million dollars annually, primarily by reusing heat generated by four turbines to provide electricity on the Storrs campus.

The electricity auction was conducted last September by World Energy, a firm hired by the state to run the auction for any interested executive, judicial, or higher education unit in Connecticut.

The auction was designed to evaluate potential energy cost savings by comparing the auction bids against World Energy's projected current energy costs, and the future cost estimates provided by the University's energy advisor, Energy New England. The state also wanted to determine what contract lengths would be offered and how much renewable energy would be involved.

Ultimately, the pricing was favorable, and several choices were available in both contract length and the amount of renewable energy each offer provided. UConn officials chose the longest term available – 20 months running through June 2009 – and the offer that included the largest amount of power derived from the use of wind, solar, and geothermal methods. The new contracts require that 20 percent of the campuses' energy needs be provided from renewable sources such as these.

Thomas Callahan, associate vice president for operations, says it is advantageous to lock in prices when future cost directions are volatile and uncertain.

Without a disciplined approach to securing expected future energy requirements, he says, "the University is exposed to significant unbudgeted energy expenses that negatively impact the resources available for other priorities."

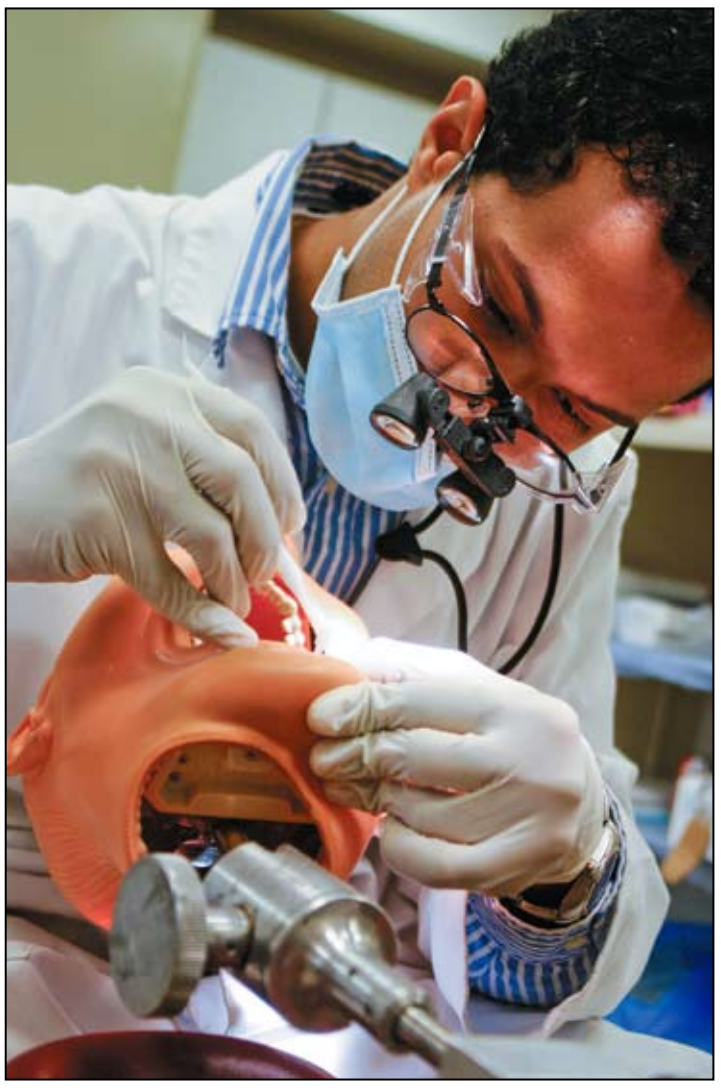


Photo by Jordanna Hertz

Dental student Gary Warner practices on a model at the Health Center.

Gift in memory of dental professor will support student scholarships

by John Sponauer

A $100,000 gift from the widow of one of the first faculty members at the School of Dental Medicine will carry on his legacy by supporting student scholarships.

Barbara Levine has made the endowed gift in memory of her late husband, Philip, a professor emeritus of oral biology who died in August 2006. It will support academically outstanding second- and third-year dental students with demonstrated financial needs.

Dr. Levine was a decorated paratrooper and dental surgeon in World War II, as well as a practicing dentist and professor in the Boston area after the war. He was recruited to Farmington in 1967 to become a professor of dental medicine.

"Dean [Lewis] Fox knew Phil professionally, and at a conference said to him, 'You should come to Connecticut to see what we're planning.' Once Phil saw the plans for the Health Center, things moved quickly, and within three months, we had moved from Massachusetts to Connecticut and never regretted our decision," says Mrs. Levine.

The first class of students entered in 1968. Dr. Levine served as associate dean for student affairs, and later as acting dean. He retired in 1982.

"He gave so much of himself to the UConn Health Center," Mrs. Levine says. "Being there at the beginning was a very positive experience for him. He enjoyed his work very much, especially interacting with students and the community."

Mrs. Levine recalls days when students came to their home in West Hartford to meet with her husband, and also the long hours spent by Dr. Levine building relationships with dentists in the local community.

Encouraging women to enter the field was a priority for him. He actively sought to increase female enrollment through recruiting videos for prospective students, highlighting the advantages of the field for women at the time.

When the first class was formed, there were no women in it; by the time he retired, about 25 percent of the class was female.

Mrs. Levine says her decision to fund scholarships with her gift felt like "the right thing to do," in light of her husband's dedication to dental students.

"Philip Levine's legacy of supporting students lives on today," says Dr. Monty MacNeil, dean of the School of Dental Medicine. "Mrs. Levine's gift of scholarship support will allow us to attract and retain the next generation of dentists and researchers who have the skill to succeed but may lack the financial means to continue their education.

"We're very appreciative of what this means to the future of our entire field," MacNeil adds, "and it's especially meaningful coming in memory of someone who was here from the very beginning."

To support the School of Dental Medicine, please contact Catherine Gibbons-Way at 860.679.6034.

Graduate fellowships help students develop multidisciplinary skills

by Joan Bothell

The environmental problems of the 21st century require solutions that bridge traditional academic disciplines, according to Michael Willig, director of the Center for Environmental Sciences and Engineering (CESE).

The Center aims to help the next generation of researchers gain the skills needed to develop such solutions by offering awards to graduate students for multidisciplinary environmental research.

The awards encourage students to apply the resources of more than one discipline to a given problem by requiring that each award recipient have two faculty mentors from different disciplines – and preferably different departments – who will collaborate in the research.

"Emerging environmental problems—such as the loss of biodiversity, environmental illnesses, and the effects of climate change—and their solutions do not fit into neat disciplinary pigeonholes," says Willig, a professor of ecology and evolutionary biology. "To meet the challenges posed by these multidimensional environmental issues, the new generation of researchers will need state-of-the art tools, perspectives, and capabilities to engage in collaborative, multidisciplinary work."

The first set of awards, given in 2007, went to 25 graduate students in the College of Agriculture and Natural Resources, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, and the School of Engineering. Their projects involved a total of 17 departments, including such diverse fields as anthropology, chemical engineering, ecology and evolutionary biology, environmental engineering, marine sciences, and materials science.

Award recipient James Reinhardt, a doctoral student in marine sciences, investigated the spread of an invasive sea squirt that threatens the ecological health of Long Island Sound. The sea squirt can cover enormous areas of the sea floor, keeping native species from accessing their food and habitats.

Reinhardt worked with mentors Robert Whitlatch, professor of marine sciences, and Montgomery Shaw, distinguished professor of chemical engineering. Besides applying methods of marine sciences to conduct microscopic analyses, Reinhardt used techniques and equipment from materials science to measure changes in a colony's tensile strength – its ability to stretch without breaking.

Reinhardt states, "The award forced me to step outside the usual boundaries, to think in an interdisciplinary way." As a marine sciences student, he had never taken an engineering course, but the award helped him build beneficial relationships with researchers in engineering and gain access to new knowledge and resources, such as high-tech engineering equipment.

Whitlatch, one of Reinhardt's mentors, is enthusiastic about the benefits for students and faculty alike. "The beauty of this program is that it brings together individuals of different backgrounds and interests," he says.

Reinhardt's project not only generated useful information about the material properties of the invasive sea squirt, but also opened avenues for future interactions between researchers in marine sciences and materials science, Whitlatch adds.

J. Pablo Arroyo, a doctoral student in ecology and evolutionary biology, is combining the disciplines of ecology, forestry, and remote sensing to study the effects of logging on tropical rainforests.

Arroyo, who says his work tries to focus on multidisciplinary approaches whenever possible, worked with mentors Robin Chazdon, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, and Daniel Civco, professor of natural resources management and engineering. He says the CESE award enable him to analyze data from the field and from satellite and aircraft sources. Some of his research will be published as a chapter in a forthcoming book on multidisciplinary applications of remote sensing.

Thanks to the CESE awards, students have applied multidisciplinary approaches to the investigation of a host of pressing environmental issues, including alternative energy sources, pollution prevention, biodiversity, climate change, genetic engineering, and sustainability.

Besides conducting research, award recipients participate in a multidisciplinary graduate colloquium, write a short summary of the project for the public, and produce a final report or poster that summarizes their accomplishments and future directions. The research summaries are available at www.cese.uconn.edu.

CESE expects to offer another 20 to 25 awards in 2008. The awards are open to graduate students throughout the University to engage in collaborative environmental research during the summer. The new awards will be announced by March 15.

Photo by Frank Dahlmeyer

Biology graduate student J. Pablo Arroyo, center, received a fellowship from the Center for Environmental Sciences and Engineering for an interdisciplinary project with Robin Chazdon, left, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology, and Daniel Civco, professor of natural resources management and engineering.

UConn scientists join expedition to study how pollutants travel

BY SCOTT BRINCKERHOFF

In summer 2005, a UConn chemistry professor joined a multinational research team on an icebreaker that made its way from Sweden to Barrow, Alaska, across the Canadian Arctic.

Today that same researcher, assistant professor Penny Vlahos, is again working to expand human knowledge of how pollutants travel, this time in a very different part of the world. Vlahos and other UConn scientists are participating in an expedition in the Southern Ocean surrounding Antarctica, one of the harshest environments on earth.

Vlahos, a chemical oceanographer, is part of a UConn team sampling wind and water in an effort to understand how pollutants reach the most remote parts of the globe, many thousands of miles from where they were generated. The scientists are also studying how carbon dioxide is exchanged between the ocean and atmosphere under various wind, wave, and other conditions.

Vlahos' seagoing research focuses on two areas: persistent organic pollutants (POPs) and dissolved organic carbon (DOC). POPs derive from "perfluorinated" compounds used in such products as nonstick cookware, waterproof clothing, cleaning and personal care products, and stain-resistant carpeting.

"Sometimes, the properties that make these chemicals so useful are also the reason they build up in the environment and are not broken down easily," Vlahos says. "They are of world-wide concern."

Unlike the POPs that are always regarded as harmful when they make their way into the environment, DOC occurs naturally and provides essential benefits to freshwater and marine ecosystems. Carbon is needed for life; but sometimes there's too much of a good thing, and that is one aspect of what Vlahos is studying.

"Everything on our planet cycles, including carbon," Vlahos says. "But our use of fossil fuels is unprecedented. Burning fossil fuels creates carbon dioxide, and as it accumulates in the atmosphere, land, and continental shelf, it changes life in many ways by shifting global balances."

For example, increased carbon in the atmosphere also adds to carbon levels in the sea, affecting the ocean's pH level and the many organisms that depend on pH stability.

Computer modeling had predicted the presence of various perfluorinated compounds and their concentration in arctic water, air, fish, and mammals, but Vlahos and her team were the first scientists to actually go to the Arctic to take measurements and validate these models.

She said, "It's no surprise that Connecticut, with its population density, is a hot spot for these pollutants; but when they show up in remote areas, that raises all sorts of questions."

Toxins in remote areas are like "canaries in the mine," Vlahos says, providing early evidence of environmental threats.

Toxic chemicals accumulate in fish and are passed directly to humans who eat them, she says, citing the recent concerns about high levels of mercury in blue fin tuna and other fish. All species – humans included – also pass toxins to their young, she adds, and some toxins have been shown to affect reproductive rates.

To evaluate air samples, the scientists pump air through very fine filters and materials that the pollutants stick to, while keeping careful track of where the air samples were taken. The results are matched up to wind patterns to try to determine where the pollutants originated.

The DOC sampling involves filtering water and then subjecting the tiny compounds to mass spectroscopy. The goal is to understand how materials gathered from various water conditions change at the molecular level.

Vlahos, an environmentalist both personally and professionally, says she is encouraged by "clever engineering" that has led to the development of pesticides that degrade in the atmosphere far faster than the now-banned DDT.

"Green engineering," she said, can design manufactured materials, such as polymers used in plastic bags, with the environment in mind. "Light-sensitive polymers, for example, will break down far faster in the environment than some of the polymers being used today," she says.

PHOTO BY FRANK DAHLMEYER

Penny Vlahos, assistant professor of chemistry, is part of a team studying pollution in the Southern Ocean surrounding Antarctica.

On the Southern Ocean expedition, which began in late February and runs until April 12, the UConn participants include Vlahos; assistant professor Heidi Dierssen of UConn's Coastal Ocean Laboratory for Optics and Remote Sensing; and associate professor James Edson, a marine meteorologist who investigates how the atmosphere and ocean interact.

Alejandro Cifuentes, a doctoral candidate in marine sciences, will also be on board the *RV Brown*. For the duration of the cruise, he will co-manage various experiments with colleagues at Columbia University's Lamont-Doherty Earth Observatory and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA).

The expedition, sponsored by NOAA and NASA, includes dozens of scientists, each with their own projects. The ship leaves from Chile and will be in open ocean the entire time, in contrast to the arctic voyage. On that trip, the scientists were fortunate to see such wildlife as polar bears and whales in their natural habitat, but Vlahos says the only likely Southern Ocean escorts will be albatrosses and other long-distance flyers.

Vlahos has high hopes for the expedition and its results. "The data that Heidi, Jim, and I and our non-UConn colleagues are gathering will expand knowledge, both on the academic and political side," she says. "Decisions relating to climate change, chemicals in our environment, and potential threats to biota or our food systems need that kind of data."

Couple who lost daughter to bulimia reach out to UConn students

BY ELIZABETH OMARA-OTUNNU

Andrea Smeltzer was an attractive college student with a talent for opera and foreign languages. As a freshman, she began dieting. Less than two years later, she died from an electrolyte imbalance resulting from bulimia, a disorder involving binge eating and purging.

Since her death in 1999, her parents, Doris and Tom Smeltzer, have resolved to make her voice heard through the presentations they make around the country on the topic of eating disorders. On Feb. 26, they spoke to a full house in UConn's Student Union Theatre.

Eating disorders are widespread among students nationwide. In 2006, a national poll taken on college campuses found that nearly 20 percent of the respondents believed that at some point they had suffered from an eating disorder.

The Smeltzers said eating disorders are not primarily about food. They begin as a coping mechanism for other problems, but can soon get out of hand.

"Eating disorders may begin as a focus on diet or fitness, but ultimately they are about far more than food," said Andrea's mom.

She said her daughter's eating disorder was a way of coping with her feelings of fear.

In a journal from which her dad read excerpts, Andrea wrote, "I have to remember to win this war against my body."

"Disordered eating is about something in your life that's out of control," said Tom Smeltzer. "Food is one thing we can do something about, take control, and feel this little part of our life is working. But ultimately the eating disorder takes control."

"Not every diet leads to an eating disorder, but nearly every eating disorder begins with some form of weight loss diet."

Doris Smeltzer, mother of Andrea, a California college student who died from bulimia

Doris Smeltzer described an eating disorder as an addiction, and dieting as the "gateway drug."

"Not every diet leads to an eating disorder, but nearly every eating disorder begins with some form of weight loss diet," she said.

She maintained that dieting is not normal. It is based on deprivation, sacrifice, and guilt. Food is a basic need, she noted, as are water and sleep. When these needs are not satisfied, people crave what they are missing. And when the need is finally met, more than a normal amount is required.

Yet dieting has become normalized in American culture, she said. "Dieting is a $50 billion-a-year industry."

She said others may unwittingly contribute to disordered eating behavior by complimenting a person for losing weight.

The Smeltzers said the idealized portrayal of women's – and men's – bodies in the media has a devastating effect.

They showed a magazine cover photo of a movie star's face with someone else's legs and body, making her appear taller and more slender than she is.

"Airbrushing is common," they added.

The look that Andrea desired didn't exist in reality, they noted.

Doris Smeltzer said her daughter was well aware of the risks of eating disorders, but was in denial that the risks applied to her.

When, at the end of her first year in college, Andrea made herself vomit for the first time after eating, said her mom, "she stepped over the line into what would become a psychological and emotional addiction."

Andrea's mom said it's important for friends and family to express concern for the person in a non-judgmental manner: "Every single voice helps chip away at denial."

She said friends and family should not wait until the person has a full-blown eating disorder before seeking professional help. "You wouldn't want a leukemia patient to wait till they got sicker before beginning treatment," she said, "yet we often don't respond to an eating disorder until it fits the model."

Andrea sought professional help during the summer after her freshman year, and seemed much better when she returned to college. But after a boyfriend broke up with her, she resumed the bulimic behavior.

"We thought Andrea could heal over one summer and then all would be well," said her mother. "We did not understand that recovery is often full of movement forward and back."

She said she and her husband misinterpreted the warning signs and did not recognize how sick their daughter was. They thought her exercising was a healthy behavior, not recognizing that it had become obsessive.

"Andrea did not look starved," said her mom. "She was consistently cold, but we didn't realize she was suffering hypothermia. On the day she died, she was the picture of health."

Doris Smeltzer said friends and family can help a loved one by showing acceptance of their own bodies. They can also focus conversation on topics such as movies or books instead of on personal appearance, and replace the common greetings "You look fantastic" or "Have you lost weight?" with "It's good to see you."

The Smeltzers also said prejudice against overweight people must be recognized as a form of discrimination, and they urged the audience to complain to advertisers about images that are offensive.

Professional help for students with eating disorders is available through Student Health Services, including counseling and mental health services, nutrition services, and peer support; the Women's Center; and the Humphrey Center.

Juliana Kenny, a senior, performs one of the monologues in the *Vagina Monologues,* Feb. 21, in von der Mehden Recital Hall.

Photo by Jessica Tommaselli

GRANTS

The following grants were received through the Office for Sponsored Programs (OSP) in December 2007. The list represents only new proposals awarded, and excludes continuations. The list is supplied to the *Advance* each month by OSP.

Alphabetical, by Principal Investigator

Prin. Investigator	Department	Sponsor	Amount	Award Period
Best, S.	Center for Survey Research & Analysis	Pew Charitable Trusts	$40,000	10/07-12/09
Consulting Agreement				
Boelsterli, U.	Pharmaceutical Sciences	Pfizer Inc.	$298,587	12/07-12/09
Assessment of Drug-Induced Idiosyncratic Hepatoxicity in Vivo Using the Heterozygous Sod2+/- Knockout Mouse Model				
Bohlen, W.	Marine Sciences	Northeast Utilities/ Environmental Science Services Inc.	$381,647	9/07-12/08
A Field Investigation of Sediment Resuspension and Dispersion Associated with the Removal and Replacement of Submarine Electrical Power Cables Crossing Long Island Sound-Norwalk, Conn., to Northport, N.Y.: Construction-Post-Construction Studies				
Bruno, R.	Nutritional Sciences	U.S. Dept. of Agriculture	$458,868	1/08-12/09
Evaluation of the Bioactivity of Green Tea in an Animal Model of Hepatic Oxidative Stress				
Bucklin, A.	Marine Sciences	Woods Hole Oceanographic Inst.	$18,000	8/07-10/07
Charter of R/V Connecticut by Woods Hole Oceanographic Institution				
Bucklin, A.	Marine Sciences	IXSEA Inc.	$5,700	10/07-10/07
Charter of R/V Connecticut by IXSEA				
Bucklin, A.	Marine Sciences	WET Labs	$23,100	11/07-11/07
Charter of R/V Connecticut by WET Labs Inc.				
Bucklin, A.	Marine Sciences	Office of Naval Research /Univ. of Rhode Island	$3,300	10/07-10/07
Charter of R/V Connecticut by University of Rhode Island				
Carstensen, F.	Conn. Center for Economic Analysis	Keystone Cos.	$11,400	8/07-1/08
Evaluating Real Estate Values in Mansfield, Conn.				
Carstensen, F.	Conn. Center for Economic Analysis	Town of Preston, Conn.	$14,600	8/07-1/08
Evaluating Alternative Developments of the Norwich Hospital Site				
Civco, D.	Natural Resources Management & Engineering	Nature Conservancy	$10,000	10/07-9/08
Connecticut's Changing Salt Marshes: A Remote Sensing Analysis of Sea Level Rise and Possible Salt Marsh Migration				
Harel, O.	Statistics	Veterans Admin./Health Services Research & Dev./Puget Sound Health Care System	$39,192	12/07-11/09
Detection of Intimate Partner Violence IPA Assignment to Veterans Affairs / PSHCS				
Kerstetter, J.	Allied Health Sciences	National Cattlemen's Beef Association	$63,000	10/07-9/09
Exploring the Mechanisms of Dietary-Protein Induced Increases in Intestinal Calcium Absorption				
Kraus, C.	Center for Survey Research & Analysis	Town of West Hartford, Conn./Seniors Job Bank	$6,000	10/07-6/08
Community-Based Transportation Network Project				
Kraus, C.	Center for Survey Research & Analysis	Stamford Public Schools, Stamford, Conn.	$42,700	11/07-7/08
Survey Research & Administration for Stamford Public Schools				
Kumar, C.	Chemistry	National Science Foundation/Thoughtventions Unlimited, LLC	$24,999	1/08-6/08
Biocatalysts for the Sequestration of Carbon Dioxide				
Magnusson, R.	Electrical & Computer Engineering	Dept. of Defense/Army/ MilSys Technologies LLC	$11,000	11/07-4/08
Environmental Sensor for Autonomous UAVs				
Mangle, H.	Extension	U.S. Dept. of Agriculture /Cornell Univ.	$8,500	9/07-9/08
CYFAR Conference Coordination Program				
Mason, R.	Marine Sciences	Nat'l Oceanic & Atmospheric Admin./Ocean & Coastal Resource Mgmt./Univ. of NH/Coop Inst. for Coastal & Estuarine Environmental Tech.	$205,211	9/07-8/09
Development of a Suitable Method for the Measurement of the Dry Deposition of Elemental Mercury and Reactive Gaseous Mercury to Coastal Ecosystem				
O'Donnell, J.	Marine Sciences	Dept. of Commerce/ Nat'l Oceanic & Atmospheric Admin./Rutgers Univ.	$491,692	10/07-9/10
Phased Deployment and Operation of the Mid-Atlantic Regional Coastal Ocean Observing System				
Volek, J.	Kinesiology	National Dairy Council/ Dairy Management Inc.	$1,255,873	10/07-11/10
Investigation of Whey Protein Supplementation for Physiologic Enhancement to Resistance Training and Dietary Regimes in Young Adults				
Wilhite, B.	Chemical, Materials & Biomolecular Engineering	Dept. of Defense/Navy/ Office of Naval Research	$97,055	12/07-12/08
Analysis of Hydrogen Purification Membranes for Use in Fuel Cell-Based Naval Power Systems				

Law library repairs *continued from page 1*

link fence as a precaution.

Engineers eventually had to disassemble parts of the library to fully assess design and construction flaws. They found:

- The leaks were pervasive, the result of substandard materials, improper installation, and design shortcomings. The leaks were primarily in the windows, walls, and parapets.
- Anchors securing exterior granite walls are defective, leading to cracks.
- Sections of the backup walls behind the façade lack steel reinforcing bars.

The suit alleges that the builders, designers, consultants, suppliers, inspectors, and insurers either knew or should have known about the flaws.

"Everyone at the law school is grateful to Attorney General Blumenthal and all the attorneys working on this important case as they seek to recover funds from those responsible for the serious problems with the law library's initial construction," says Jeremy Paul, dean of the law school. "Our library collection is not only a flagship asset for our students and faculty, but an invaluable resource for the state's entire legal community. We are pleased that all necessary steps are underway to restore the building to top-flight condition, and we're confident that the legal system will ensure a just outcome in holding those responsible accountable."

Fixing the defects requires removing, repairing, and re-anchoring the stone façade; removing and replacing the entire moisture protection system – insulation, waterproofing, and flashing; installing missing steel bar reinforcement in interior walls; and repairing or replacing all windows.

The repair work began in December 2007 and is expected to take about 18 months. The initial phase of repairs confirmed the findings of the forensic engineers.

CALENDAR Monday, March 3, to Monday, March 17

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 in the database by 4 p.m. on Monday for inclusion in the issue published the following Monday. **Note:** The next Calendar will be published after spring break, and will include events taking place from Monday, March 17, through Monday, March 24. Those items must be in the database by 4 p.m. on Monday, March 3. 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).

Academic

Sunday, 3/9 – Spring recess begins.
Saturday, 3/15 – Spring recess ends.

Libraries

Homer Babbidge Library. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-2 a.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-10 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-10 p.m.; Sunday, 10 a.m.-2 a.m. 3/7-3/15: Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday, noon-5 p.m.
Dodd Center. Reading Room hours: Monday, 10 a.m.-7 p.m.; Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturday, noon-4 p.m.; Sunday, closed.
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. Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-11 p.m.; Friday, 8 a.m.-9 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, 1-9 p.m. 3/8-3/9: closed; 3/10-3/14: 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
Avery Point Campus Library. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed weekends. 3/9-3/15: Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-6 p.m.; Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed weekends.
Greater Hartford Campus Library. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 9 a.m.-9 p.m.; Friday- Saturday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, closed. 3/8-3/15: Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; closed weekends.
Stamford Campus Library. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8 a.m.-9 p.m.; Friday 9 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday, 11 a.m.-4 p.m.; Sunday, closed. 3/9-3/15: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; closed weekends.
Torrington Campus Library. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 9:30 a.m.-6:30 p.m.; Friday-Sunday, closed. 3/9-3/15: Monday-Thursday, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Friday-Sunday, closed.
Waterbury Campus Library. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; Saturday, 10 a.m.-2 p.m.; Sunday, closed. 3/9-3/15: Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m.; closed weekends.

University ITS

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

Meetings

Tuesday, 3/12 – Joint Audit & Compliance Committee. 12:30 p.m., Room 7, Bishop Center.

Ph.D. Defenses

Wednesday, 3/5 – Chemistry. *Textural/Structural Tuning and Nanoparticle Stabilization of Copper-Containing Nanocomposite Materials; Generation of Reducing Agents for Automotive Exhaust Gas Purification via the Processing of Hydrocarbons in a PACT (plasma and catalysis integrated technologies) Reactor*, by Yu Xing (adv.: Suib.) 1 p.m., Room A304, Chemistry Building.
Thursday, 3/6 – Chemistry. *Synthesis of Natural and Unnatural Ligands for NKT Cells and Cross-Metathesis of Exocyclic Enones*, by Ravinder Raju (adv.: Howell.) 9 a.m., Room A304, Chemistry Building.
Wednesday, 3/12 – Cellular Biology. *Biomechanics and Molecular Mechanisms of Amoeboid Cell Movement*, by Maria Lombardi (adv.: Lee.) 1 p.m., Room 131, Biology/Physics Building.

Lectures & Seminars

Monday, 3/3 – Museum of Natural History Lecture. "For the Prevention of Cruelty," by Diane Beers, Holyoke Community College. 3 p.m., Room 130, Biology/Physics Building.
Monday, 3/3 – Sackler Human Rights Lecture. "Perplexing Predicaments in Human Rights Law: Women, Terror, and Tribunals," by Patricia Wald. 4 p.m., Konover Auditorium.
Monday, 3/3 – Health & Wellness Lecture. "Nutrition, Empowerment, and Motivation: A Special Series for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing." $130 for six-week series. 6:45-8 p.m., Low Learning Center, Health Center.
Tuesday, 3/4 – Humanities Lecture. "David Mamet's Confidence Games," by Brenda Murphy. 4 p.m., Room 301, CLAS Building.
Tuesday, 3/4 – Marine Sciences Lecture. "Women in the Coast Guard," by Judith Keene, Coast Guard Academy. 7:30 p.m., Room 103, Marine Sciences Building, Avery Point.
Wednesday, 3/5 – Law School lecture. "When the Levees Broke: The Un-Civil Rights Movement in America," by Carol Anderson. 11 a.m.-2 p.m., Davis Courtroom, Starr Hall, School of Law.
Wednesday, 3/5 – Judaic Studies Faculty Forum Lecture. "What's This Life All About? What Scripture, Psychology, and Literature Say About Life's Meaning," by Yonatan Freund. Noon, Room 162, Dodd Center.
Wednesday, 3/5 – Molecular Medicine Seminar. "A Food-Based Approach to Cancer Prevention of Aerodigestive Tract Cancers," by Gary Stoner, Ohio State. Noon, Room EG052, Academic Research Building, Health Center.
Wednesday, 3/5 – Stamford Faculty Colloquium. "Where the Unspeakable Meets the Unimaginable: Reflections on the Sexual and the Religious," by Frederick Roden. Noon, GE Global Learning Center, Stamford Campus.
Wednesday, 3/5 – Out-to-Lunch Lecture. "The House of Cards: Smart Social Advocacy for the GLBTQ Community," by Barry Schreier. Noon, Room 403, Student Union.
Wednesday, 3/5 – Nanotechnology Research Forum. Engineering faculty presentations in nanotechnology. 1-4 p.m., Konover Auditorium.
Wednesday, 3/5 – Statistics Colloquium. "Accounting for Spatial Correlation in the Scan Statistic," by Ji Meng Loh, Columbia University. 4 p.m., Room 344, CLAS Building.
Wednesday, 3/5 – 'Recent Cases' Law Lecture. Open to the community. 5 p.m., Room 110, Chase Hall, School of Law.
Thursday, 3/6 – Comparative Pathology Seminar. "Portal of Entry and Haven of Refuge: Mucosal Responses to Infection in the Small Intestine," by Philip Griebel, University of Saskatchewan. Room A001, Atwater Building.
Thursday, 3/6 – CHIP Brown Bag Lecture. "Daily Diary Research Using Interactive Voice Response Technology," by William Barta. 12:30 p.m., Room 204, Ryan Building.
Thursday, 3/6 – Ecology & Evolutionary Biology Seminar. "Wood Density and Sapwood Hydraulic Function: Trait Trade-offs and Coordination," by Amy Zanne. 4 p.m., Room 130, Biology/Physics Building.
Thursday, 3/6 – Stamford Faculty Colloquium. "Agency Content on Real Estate Licensing Exams: Assessing Professional Competency," Katherine Pancak. 5 p.m., GE Global Learning Center, Stamford Campus.
Friday, 3/7 – Animal Science Seminar. "Effects of Lactate on Beef Pigment Oxygenation," by Ranjith Ramanathan. Noon, Room 209, George White Building.
Friday, 3/7 – Environmental Engineering Seminar. "Optimizing Hydrogen Production from Organic Wastewater," by Yogesh Sharma. Noon, Room 212, Castleman Building.
Friday, 3/7 – Physics Colloquium. "Superconducting Quarks: Condensed Matter in the Heavens," by Mark Alford, Washington University. 4 p.m., Room P38, Gant Science Complex.
Friday, 3/7 – Linguistics Colloquium. "Unaccusativity, Ditransitives, and Extra-Argumentality," by James Huang, Harvard University. 4:30 p.m., Room 317, Arjona Building.
Monday, 3/10 – Celebrate Women Lecture. "Hope for the Overactive Bladder." Noon, Low Learning Center, Health Center.
Monday, 3/10 – Health & Wellness Lecture. "Nutrition, Empowerment, and Motivation: A Special Series for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing." $130 for six-week series. 6:45-8 p.m., Low Learning Center, Health Center.
Tuesday, 3/11 – Celebrate Women Lecture. "Women and Colon Cancer." 6 p.m., Low Learning Center, Health Center.
Thursday, 3/13 – Celebrate Women Lecture. "Preparing for Menopause." 6 p.m., Onyiuke Dining Room, Main Building, Health Center.
Friday, 3/14 – Hydrologic Science Cyber Seminar. "Flooding in the Urban Environment," by Jim Smith, Princeton University. 3 p.m., Room 306, Castleman Building.
Monday, 3/17 – Stamford Faculty Colloquium. "Congress and U.S. Foreign Policy after September 11," by Eugene Kogan. 12:30 p.m., GE Global Learning Center, Stamford Campus.
Monday, 3/17 – Humanities Lecture. "The Fugitive Slave Law and Remapping of National Politics, 1850-1860," by Robert Bonner. 4 p.m., Room 301, CLAS Building.
Monday, 3/17 – Hascoe Distinguished Lecture in Physics. "Visualizing and Controlling Picometric Quantum Ripples in Molecules," by Kenji Ohmori, The Graduate University for Advanced Studies, Japan. 4 p.m., Room P38, Gant Science Complex.

Exhibits

Friday, 3/7 through Sunday, 4/20 – Alexey von Schlippe Gallery. *The Question: "If there is a God, what one question would you ask?"* by Pamela Gordinier; photographs by Gretchen Higgins; paintings by Lise Lemeland; and paintings by Annelie Skoog. Weds.-Sun., noon-4 p.m. Admission $3; members and students free.

Photo by Gerry Goodstein

Kate Shine, left, as Moth and Richard Ruiz as Don Armado in Connecticut Repertory Theatre's production of Shakespeare's romantic comedy *Love's Labour's Lost,* playing now through March 9 at the Nafe Katter Theatre.

Through Friday, 3/7 – Student Union Gallery. *S.H.A.P.E.* Also, Thursday, 3/13-Saturday, 3/15 – *True Colors.* 11 a.m.-9 p.m., Room 310. Free admission.
Through Friday, 3/7 – Homer Babbidge Library. *Design for the Real World: Student Work in Communication Design at the University of Connecticut,* Gallery on the Plaza; *Photographs at a Different Wave Length,* by Marcia Reid Marsted, Stevens Gallery.
Through Friday, 3/7 – Dodd Center. *Rail, Rural, and River: The Art of John Fleming Gould,* Gallery; *His & Hers, New Yorker Cartoons*, by Michael Maslin & Liza Donnelly, West Corridor.
Through Wednesday, 3/12 – Celeste LeWitt Gallery. *Morocco at a Glance,* paintings by Emese El Bissatiné Pásztor, and *Wild America,* photographs by Gary Melnysyn. Daily, 8 a.m.-9 p.m., Health Center.
Through Sunday, 3/30 – Stamford Campus Gallery. *UConn Stamford Art Show,* works by students, faculty, and staff. Hours: Monday-Thursday, 8:30 a.m.-7 p.m.; Friday, 8:30 a.m.-5 p.m.; Saturday, 9 a.m.-noon. Free admission.
Through Sunday, 3/30 – William Benton Museum of Art. *The Art of Gaman: Arts and Crafts from the Japanese American Internment Camps 1942-1946.* Also, Pamina Traylor's *Tagged*, photo images. Also, through Sunday, 5/11, *Rome, Italy and Europe.* Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday, 1-4:30 p.m. Free admission. Wednesday, 3/5 – Fe Delos-Santos discusses *The Art of Gaman*. 12:15 p.m.
Through Thursday, 4/3 – Contemporary Art Galleries. *Ornithology: Looking at Birds.* Hours: Monday-Friday, 8:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m.
Through Wednesday, 4/30 – Health Center. *Quilting Pleasures,* by Phyllis Small. Daily, 8 a.m.-9 p.m., Main and Mezzanine Lobbies.
Ongoing. State Museum of Natural History & Connecticut Archaeology Center. *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 welcome.

Film

Monday, 3/3 – India Film Series. *Bombay.* 6:30-9 p.m., Room 106, Fine Arts Building.
Monday, 3/17 – India Film Series. *Kuch Kuch Hota Hai.* 6:30-9 p.m., Room 106, Fine Arts Building.

Performing Arts

Tuesday, 3/4 – Symphonic Band. David Mills, conductor. Featuring music by Eric Ewazen and Kenneth Fuchs. 8 p.m., von der Mehden Recital Hall. Tickets $7, free with student ID.
Thursday, 3/6 – Czech Philharmonic Orchestra. Music by Dvorák. 8 p.m., Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts. Tickets $33-$40 regular, $7 for students. Call 860-486-4226.
Sunday, 3/9 – Junie B. Jones Children's Performance. New musical. Recommended for ages 5 and up. 2 p.m., Jorgensen Center for Performing Arts. Tickets $13 adults, $11 children. Call 860-486-4226.
Through Sunday, 3/9 – Connecticut Repertory Theatre. William Shakespeare's comedy, *Love's Labour's Lost.* Tuesday-Thursday, 7:30 p.m., Friday and Saturday, 8 p.m.; Sunday, 2 p.m., Nafe Katter Theatre. Tickets: $11-$28. Call 860-486-4226.

Sports

Monday, 3/3 – Women's Basketball vs. Rutgers. 7 p.m., XL Center.
Tuesday, 3/4 – Women's Lacrosse vs. Quinnipiac. 3 p.m., Sherman Family Sports Complex.
Saturday, 3/8 – Women's Ice Hockey. Hockey East Championship. Noon, Freitas Ice Forum.

Potpourri

Wednesday, 3/5 – Mansfield League of Women Voters. 7 p.m., Audrey Beck Municipal Building, Mansfield.
Tuesday, 3/4 – Social Work Discussion. "Why Organizers Can't Organize: Understanding the Barriers Behind Community Organizing." 12:15-2 p.m., School of Social Work.
Wednesday, 3/5 – Book Reading. Lawrence Goodheart will read from his book, *The Most Solemn Sentence of Death: Capital Punishment in Connecticut, 1636-2005*. 1 p.m., Room 333, Waterbury Campus.
Wednesday, 3/5 – Poetry Reading. Cheryl Pelle will read from her book *Down to the Waters.* 6:30 p.m., Hogan Lecture Hall, Torrington Campus.
Wednesday, 3/5 – Japanese American Internment Remembrance Event. Poet and author Lawson Fusao Inada. 7 p.m., Benton Museum.
Friday, 3/14 – Garden Conference. 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m., Rome Commons. $80 early registration, $90 post-marked after 3/7 or at the door. Go to www.hort.uconn.edu/2008garden.
Saturday, 3/15 – Museum of Natural History Excursion. Old Sturbridge Village. 10 a.m. Advance registration required: $30 non-members, $25 Museum members.

Vocabulary study may boost learning among Spanish-speaking adolescents

Photo by Frank Dahlmeyer

Elizabeth Howard, assistant professor of curriculum and instruction, specializes in bilingual education.

by Karen Singer

English language learners often have trouble improving their vocabulary, leading to reading comprehension difficulties and problems with learning in all academic content areas.

Elizabeth Howard is among a group of researchers who think that teaching native Spanish speakers about cognates – words comparable across English and Spanish because of their common Greek or Latin roots – may facilitate the process.

Howard, an assistant professor of bilingual education in the Department of Curriculum and Instruction, is co-investigator of a four-year study exploring the use of cognates to promote vocabulary development and reading comprehension among native Spanish speaking adolescents.

The project, which received a $1.8 million grant from the federal Institute of Educational Sciences last year, expands on previous research by Howard, who has spent most of her career in bilingual literacy and language acquisition and development.

"One reason for focusing on cognates is that a high percentage of words in academic texts are cognates," she explains. "It's essential for students to acquire both the technical vocabulary and other academic language as they move into the higher grades and are expected to learn increasingly demanding content in science, social studies, and mathematics."

The need to learn academic language in science has become more urgent, Howard adds, since science testing was added to "No Child Left Behind" assessments in the 2007-08 school year.

Another reason for the focus on cognates is that the Spanish counterparts of academic words in English are frequently common, everyday words in Spanish.

"The idea is, if you have kids who are native Spanish speakers – particularly those who are literate in Spanish – cognates may be a real leveraging point for them, to help bootstrap their learning of academic English," Howard says.

The study is being designed to test the effects of one cognate-based intervention, delivered in two different ways.

Both versions incorporate meaning-making activities to help students learn words in context, and structural analysis activities focusing on word parts.

Some students will learn words only in English, with no mention of cognates. Others will learn bilingually, studying the words in both English and Spanish with explicit references to their common roots.

The objective of both approaches is to promote the use of word learning strategies, and to stimulate an interest in words so kids can and will continue do it in on their own.

Howard says research by colleagues has already shown that learning cognates is an effective approach with upper elementary students.

What she hopes to discover among adolescent Spanish speakers is whether either of the specific interventions is effective, and if so, whether the effects vary depending on the students' educational backgrounds and Spanish proficiency levels.

A "foreign service baby" born in Venezuela, Howard lived on three continents, and was cared for by a German nanny.

"That kind of set the course for me," she says.

Howard majored in Spanish language and literature at the University of Maryland, then went to Costa Rica as a Peace Corps volunteer. She earned a master's degree in educational psychology at the University of California-Berkeley, while working as a bilingual elementary teacher, and a doctorate in human development and psychology at the Harvard Graduate School of Education.

Before arriving at UConn in 2006, Howard spent nearly 10 years working at the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, D.C., where she concentrated on two-way immersion programs, in which native English speakers and speakers of another language are taught all subjects in both languages.

Howard and her co-investigators, including UConn colleague Betsy McCoach, are spending the first year of the study negotiating site selection, finalizing the research protocol, and developing curricular materials. Data collection will begin in the fall, and will take two years.

Howard hopes the results of her research will be used to improve instruction for English language learners and to help all teachers work with a rapidly growing population of Spanish-speaking students.

"Over 70 percent of school districts in Connecticut serve English language learners," Howard says. "Unfortunately, while their presence is increasing, their academic performance continues to lag behind. Learning more about how to work effectively with all English language learners should be a concern for all educators in Connecticut."

Memoir recounts Southern childhood and family differences

by Sherry Fisher

Margaret Gibson's parents often referred to her as their Connecticut Yankee daughter. Although she was raised in Richmond, Va., Gibson moved to the Northeast after college, leaving behind Southern customs and culture she could not embrace.

Gibson, an emeritus professor of English and noted poet, tells the story of her life in her new memoir, *The Prodigal Daughter, Reclaiming an Unfinished Childhood,* published by the University of Missouri Press. The book follows on the heels of her ninth book of poems, *One Body*, which was published last year.

Gibson and her sister grew up during the 1950s in what she calls a "southern and very traditionalist, conservative culture.

"My sister stayed in Richmond and lived a very conventional married life and didn't change her views about the social and political world," says Gibson. That world was defined by racial segregation, the division of rich and poor, and a strict fundamentalist religion.

"I was coming of age during a period when real changes in society were beginning to happen, particularly in the area of integration," she says.

When she reached her teens, Gibson became acutely aware of the differences between herself and her family. "I realized that the reasons for segregation were not valid," she says. "The changes I went through during the civil rights movement and the Vietnam War put me over on the left. My parents didn't understand that. Also, I wanted to become a poet, and my parents didn't understand that either.

"I grew up in a culture in which to say you were different from someone meant that you didn't have to deal with that person," Gibson says. "The natural differences with my sister became magnified by the fact that I grew up in a culture in which division and separation was the normal state of affairs."

She adds: "Most of my rebellion was interior, and rather than remaining in Virginia to try to change things, I left."

Gibson says the opening and closing chapters of *The Prodigal Daughter* are about her restored relationships with her parents and her sister. The bulk of the book, she says "falls into the genre of childhood memoir, remembering what it was like to grow up in my particular family of origin in Richmond."

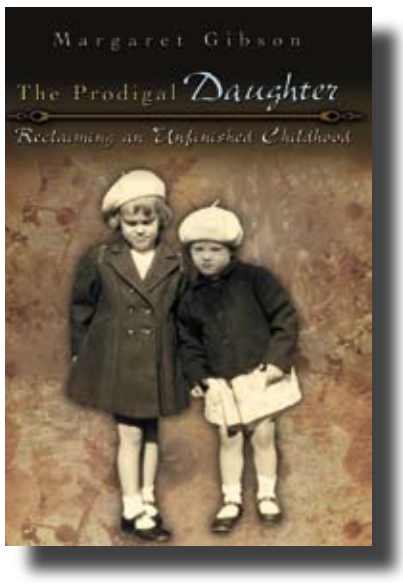
She says she and her sister were close in age "but that was about as far as it got. We were temperamentally very different."

When her sister had a stroke in 2000, Gibson went to Virginia to help her.

"My sister had become totally dependent," she says.

They spent a good deal of time talking about their childhood, and became friends.

"My big discovery – it took my breath away - was that underneath all this difference, I had always loved my sister," Gibson says. In the opening chapter of the book,



Gibson recounts a visit to her sister following the stroke. She writes:

"As I massaged her legs, as my body faintly rocked back and forth to increase the rhythm, all the years I forgot to remember her, all the years I scorned and disregarded part of my own heart, fell away, and it came to me in a shudder of surprise that I had, all these years, loved her without knowing that I loved. What was it in me that had concealed that love so stubbornly? How was it possible to love and not to know?"

Gibson says writing a memoir "helps you as much understand yourself as you are now, as it helps you understand the way you were then. It's as if in recreating the voice and the context and the character of who you once were, you become more able to understand who you are and the distance you've come."

She says writing a memoir was much harder to write than poetry in one respect: "When you write a memoir, you make a pact with the reader that you're going to write what really happened. You may compress things to make it a work of art, but you tell the truth."

That wasn't always easy, she adds: "I thought, 'Am I really going to write about my father's nervous breakdown? Is that too private?' But making the pact to tell the truth means that you walk around with a little bit more of yourself out there than you might like."