



University awarded funds for new transportation center

BY MICHAEL KIRK

UConn was recently awarded \$2 million in funding over four years by the U.S. Department of Homeland Security, thanks to the University's status as co-leader of the National Transportation Security Center of Excellence.

The School of Engineering was named research lead of the new Center of Excellence earlier in the year. It will provide key oversight and coordination of efforts among the seven identified partner institutions, relevant agencies of the federal and state governments, first-responder agencies, and other future partners.

The federal funding provides a minimum of \$500,000 a year for the next four years, and allows UConn to compete for an additional \$1.5 million in funding during FY '08.

"As the research lead, we will coordinate the efforts of our partners to develop state-of-the-art techniques and advanced methods to defend, protect, and increase the resilience of the nation's transportation infrastructure," says Mun Choi, dean of engineering. "We look forward to the opportunity to involve our students, industry leaders, transportation officials, and the public in building a new transportation paradigm that meets current and future needs."

The partners include Texas Southern University, San José State University, Rutgers, Tougaloo College in Mississippi, Long Island University, and the University of Arkansas.

The Connecticut Congressional delegation was instrumental in UConn's successful bid to host the center, one of a consortium of new university-based research centers established by the federal government.

UConn's School of Engineering is home to the Connecticut Transportation Institute (CTI), the Connecticut Global Fuel Cell Center, and the Booth Engineering Center for Advanced Technologies, all of which will contribute to the center's activities.

UConn will also interact with other DHS centers of excellence and federal laboratories, as well as partnering with the Connecticut Department of Emergency Management & Homeland Security.

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PHOTO BY FRANK DAHLMAYER

Ross Szabo, director of youth outreach for the National Mental Health Awareness Campaign, delivers the keynote address for Suicide Prevention Week at Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts on Sept. 9.

Reach out for help, says suicide prevention speaker

BY RICHARD VEILLEUX

Almost all those suffering from anxiety, depression, or other mental disorders who seek help recover, according to Ross Szabo. Yet, for any number of reasons, few college students struggling to control their lives ever do.

"If you had a bone sticking out of your pants leg, you wouldn't say you're all right, would you? No. You'd go get some help," said Szabo, director of youth outreach for the National Mental Health Awareness Campaign. "Your leg is just as much a part of your body as your arm, your shoulders, your heart, your head. You deal with breaks. It should be the same with your brain."

Szabo, delivering the keynote speech for Suicide Prevention Week at the Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts Sept. 9, said

that 66 percent of college students who are suffering from some form of mental distress – most commonly anxiety, depression, eating disorders, and ADHD – refuse to get help. Nor do they tell anybody, even close friends, that they're in distress.

That's a recipe for disaster, Szabo said, one that leads people to alcohol, drugs, self-destruction, and – for too many students at college and high school – attempted suicide. Each year, more than 1,100 suicide attempts among college students succeed.

Using mostly personal anecdotes – his older brother was hospitalized with bipolar disorder when Szabo was 11 years old, and Szabo himself was diagnosed as bipolar as a teenager – he kept the audience's attention throughout his funny, energetic, interactive program. Through it all, though, he

kept returning to his central theme: Talk to people. And if you notice a friend or colleague seems to be struggling, reach out and help them.

"If I didn't reach out and get help when I was in high school, I wouldn't be here today," he said, referring to his own suicide attempt.

Students, he said, also have to "choose to end the stereotypes, change your personal bias" toward people who acknowledge that they're struggling, or that they've seen a counselor, because that attitude is a key reason why people avoid discussing their problems or going to a mental health clinic.

Szabo said that those stereotypes are what pushed him onto the talk circuit.

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PHOTO BY JESSICA TOMMASELLI

Melina Calle, a freshman majoring in pathobiology, looks at a fish she may want to buy at a plant and fish sale held on Fairfield Way.

Lectures, performances planned to celebrate Year of Science

BY KAREN A. GRAVA

UConn will celebrate the Year of Science 2009 with lectures, workshops, performances, and exhibits to mark the 200th anniversary of Darwin's birth and the 150th anniversary of his publication of *On the Origin of Species*.

The year 2009 is also the 400th anniversary of Johannes Kepler's publication of the first two laws of planetary motion, and the 400th anniversary of the first telescope made by Galileo.

The American Institute of Biological Sciences, the National Academy of Science, and more than 185 professional societies, colleges and universities, museums, and corporations also are expected to participate in Year of Science 2009, a national, year-long celebration of science. Planned activities are intended to engage the public in science and to improve public understanding about the nature and processes of science.

UConn was the first university in the nation in 2007 to join the Year of Science effort and has planned a number of activities to celebrate the year and provide science information to the University community and the public at large.

"We have a wonderful opportunity to use these important anniversaries to educate people about science, both through lectures on scientific topics and through the arts," says Kent Holsinger, professor of ecology and evolutionary biology. "We would like to improve public understanding about the nature and processes of science, and highlight the historic contributions that many scientists including Darwin, Galileo, and Kepler have made to advance our society."

Some of the activities planned during the year will include:

- Darwin Bicentennial, a series of nine afternoon lectures, featuring on Sept. 25 Janet Browne, Aramont Professor of the History of Science at Harvard University, the definitive biographer of Darwin; and on Oct. 2, Daniel Dennet, the Austin B. Fletcher Professor of Philosophy and co-director of the Center for Cognitive Studies at Tufts University, among others;
- a symposium on Jan. 29 with workshops, exhibits, and lectures on science, engineering, and the health professions, which will focus on attracting and supporting the participation of groups traditionally underrepresented in science.
- an exhibit of medical illustrations at the William Benton Museum of Art from Jan. 20 through March 15;
- a performance at the Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts on Feb. 11, 12, and 13 of *Darwin's Meditation for the People of Lincoln*, a new work being created by Daniel Bernard Roumain. The play was commissioned by the Brooklyn Academy of Music and commemorates the fact that Darwin and Lincoln shared a birthday: Feb. 12, 1809. Although the two never met, Darwin abhorred slavery and Lincoln was fascinated by the concept of evolution;
- a performance Feb. 22 at the Jorgensen Center for the Performing Arts of *Toying with Science* by Garry Krinsky. Developed by the Museum of Science in Boston, the performance combines circus skills, mime, original music, and audience involvement so that children and families will investigate basic scientific information and take a look into the imaginations of scientists who explore our world;
- production of a play on March

25 at the Health Center and March 26 in Storrs called *Manya: A Living History of Marie Curie*, presented by performance artist Susan Frontcak. The play will look at Curie's childhood in Poland, her developing interest in science, and her collaboration with Pierre Curie. It will also examine the political, financial, and medical challenges she faced. Marie Curie discovered radium and radioactivity and recognized that radiation could be used to cure cancer. She was the first woman to receive the Nobel Prize, and the only person to receive two Nobels (one in physics and the other in chemistry);

- the Connecticut Junior Science and Humanities Symposium on March 8 and 9, which permits students from Connecticut high schools to display their work, make oral presentations of their work to their peers, and talk with professional scientists and visit UConn research facilities;
- a day-long program on "Science, Creativity, and the Humanities" in April, sponsored by the UConn Humanities Institute;
- Science Chautauqua, an adult education program that commemorates an original program offered in the 1920s, when Chautauqua lecturers and performers visited 45 states. UConn's program will feature four or five evening events in 2009;
- the Connecticut State Bioblitz in late May or early June, and the Connecticut Environmental Action Day in October;
- a performance of *The Life of Galileo* by Bertolt Brecht in fall 2009, at the Connecticut Repertory Theatre.

A complete list of activities, times, places and dates is available on the web at <http://clas.uconn.edu/yearofscience/>

Conference to examine body image in history

BY CINDY WEISS

Concern about "body image" may bring to mind fashion magazines, runway models, and celebrity diets.

Now historians at UConn are hosting a conference to examine how early Americans thought about their bodies and others'.

"Corpus Americanus: Deciphering Bodies in Early America" is the topic of the third James L. and Shirley A. Draper National Graduate Student Conference on Early American Studies, Sept. 18-20.

The conference will examine events, objects, and abstractions of the body in early America and the relationship that early Americans had with bodies, both physical and metaphorical.

They complained about loosened corsets and uncomfortable wigs, for starters, and they passed laws to control what people wore.

But the body had more abstract meanings for them, too. Skeletons were carved on gravestones, and the body represented an earthly home for the soul.

The aim of the conference, says Jessica Linker, a history Ph.D. candidate, is to "foster a better understanding of how various images, abstractions, and interpretations of the body shaped and entered into early American society, from the beginnings of Native American, European, and African encounters down to the middle decade of the 19th century."

Greek tragedy to be staged Sept. 21

BY CINDY WEISS

Euripides' tragedy *Bacchae* will be performed at von der Mehden Recital Hall on Sunday, Sept. 21 at 3:30 p.m. The performance is co-sponsored by the Department of Modern and Classical Languages in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and the Center for Hellenic Studies Paideia in Storrs.

The event will support the construction, already begun, of an open-air Greek theater on Dog Lane in Storrs.

The keynote speaker will be Walter Johnson, professor of history and African and African American Studies at Harvard University, a historian of slave markets and the American South. He will speak at Konover Auditorium on Sept. 18 at 4 p.m.

All talks are free and open to the public. Speakers include history graduate students from around the country. Their topics range from the minuet to medical dissection, and include talks on witchcraft, social significance in colonial American clothing, and the Pequot enslavement.

The conference is co-sponsored by the American Antiquarian Society in Worcester.

The Draper conferences are supported by the endowment of the Draper Chair, which was established by alumni James L. and Shirley A. Draper to support UConn's research and teaching strength in early American history.

Robert A. Gross, the James L. and Shirley A. Draper Distinguished Professor of History, works with the graduate students who plan the program, invite the speakers, and review the papers.

They included, in addition to Linker, Erin Bartram, Alea Henle, Linda Meditz, Gloria Boyd, Adam Jacobs, and William Mathews.

For more information, go to <http://www.history.uconn.edu/draper/2008.html>.

The production is one of 17 shows in a U.S. tour of *Bacchae* staged by Cypriot director Leonidas Loizides. It will be presented in Greek with English hyper-titles projected above the production, and has an all-female cast.

The Storrs production will feature a chorus played by UConn students and women from the community.

The play opens in New York on Sept. 16-19. Admission is \$30 for adults and \$10 for students.

Advance

UNIVERSITY OF CONNECTICUT

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Neag School to help low-performing schools as part of coalition

BY ROBERT FRAHM

A coalition of state education organizations, including UConn, has pledged to transform eight elementary schools that are struggling to address one of the nation's most perplexing educational problems.

The Connecticut Alliance for CommPACT Schools, assisted by major grants from the legislature and a national teachers' union, will help the schools redesign themselves in an effort to stem the pattern of chronic low achievement that plagues many urban and minority schoolchildren.

The coalition launched the program at a press conference Sept. 8 that included the announcement of a \$250,000 grant from the NEA Foundation, the fund-raising arm of the nation's largest teachers' union.

The schools selected for CommPACT are among the state's lowest-performing schools. None meets the academic benchmarks established under the federal No Child Left Behind Act. The schools are M.D. Fox Elementary School in Hartford, Davis Street Comer School and Hill Central School in New Haven, Washington School and West Side Middle School in Waterbury, Barnum School and Longfellow School in Bridgeport, and the Shoreline Academy in New London.

The five-year reform plan, supported in part by a \$480,000 appropriation from the state legislature, will give the schools an unusual degree of freedom to make changes in staffing, school hours, curriculum, and other areas. Faculty and staff from UConn's Neag

School of Education will coordinate the program and conduct research to monitor its progress.

By allowing teachers, parents, and principals to run their own schools, CommPACT marks a radical shift from the top-down operations common to most school systems.

The project is designed to "re-build urban schools from within," University President Michael J. Hogan said during the press conference at the state Capitol that included coalition members, state legislators, and educators from the CommPACT schools.

"Our nation's urban schools are in crisis," he said, "and Connecticut's inner city schools are

absolutely, sadly, no different."

The state's urban schools have disproportionate numbers of minority and low-income children. On a nationwide test of reading and mathematics last year, the achievement gap between low-income students and their wealthier classmates was larger in Connecticut than in any other state.

"We can do better. We must do better, and UConn is prepared to help in this process of improvement," Hogan said.

CommPACT will be guided by the Neag School's Institute for Urban School Improvement and is the latest step in making UConn a national model for school reform, said Richard Schwab, dean of the

Neag School.

"I'm not aware of any other major research university in this country that has said ... helping to restore our nation's schools is at the top of our agenda," Schwab said. Under CommPACT, experts from the Neag School will "translate [their] research to practice in the real world of schools," he said.

The CommPACT coalition is an unusual collaboration among education organizations – including teacher unions and administrators – groups that have sometimes clashed over how to run schools.

In addition to the Neag School, coalition members include the Connecticut Federation of School Administrators, the Connecti-

cut Education Association, the American Federation of Teachers – Connecticut, the Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents, and the Connecticut Association of Urban Superintendents.

The project drew praise from representatives of the National Education Association and the NEA Foundation, whose grant will be used to support research on CommPACT's progress. "We believe in this collaborative approach," said Harriet Sanford, president and CEO of the NEA Foundation. "Most important to that approach is putting the teacher at the center."

NEA President Dennis Van Roekel said CommPACT is the fourth project the NEA Foundation has supported to attack the achievement gap, following other efforts in Seattle, Milwaukee, and Chattanooga, Tenn.

"As a nation, we are losing half our African-American and Hispanic students before they ever complete graduation," he said. "There is no scenario of success for America that you can possibly envision that allows us to lose that kind of resource before they graduate from high school."

CommPACT officials say the program is expected to expand next year to include at least a half dozen additional public schools.

State Senate President Pro Tem Donald E. Williams Jr., one of nine lawmakers who spoke at the press conference, called CommPACT "a historic collaboration" that will become a model for new strategies for public schools, "where the vast majority of our children are educated every day."



PHOTO SUPPLIED BY CONNECTICUT EDUCATION ASSOCIATION

Richard Schwab, center, dean of the Neag School of Education, speaks with Dennis Van Roekel, left, president of the National Education Association, and Barry Fargo, a New London teacher, after a press conference at the state Capitol Sept. 8.

HIV/AIDS epidemic largely ignored in U.S., says speaker

BY SHERRY FISHER

America's response to the HIV/AIDS epidemic has been to keep it out of sight and out of mind, according to journalist and author John-Manuel Andriote.

That's because the disease has been associated with groups that have been treated as marginal by society, he says.

Andriote made his remarks during a lecture at the Student Union on Sept. 10. The event was sponsored by UConn's Rainbow Center.

He noted that there has been no national AIDS strategy since the HIV/AIDS epidemic was first reported in 1981. "Politically, the epidemic has not been given priority in this country for 27 years," he said.

"When you have a disease that is perceived as afflicting people who are unpopular, who are marginalized because of race, sexual orientation, or socio-economic status, or when you have a disease that can easily be seen as afflicting the 'other' and not 'me' personally, it is very easy to relegate it to the margins of your own awareness,"

he said.

Andriote, who came out as a gay man in 1981 when he was in his early 20s, has reported on HIV/AIDS since earning his master's degree at Northwestern University's Medill School of Journalism in 1986. His award-winning book, *Victory Deferred: How AIDS Changed Gay Life in America*, was published in 1999.

Andriote said HIV was viewed from the beginning as "a disease affecting the proverbial 'other' – the other who is feared, dreaded, the other who is relegated to the margins of awareness.

"We don't want to confront the reality that the bottom line is we're all human and vulnerable to a deadly microbe that is transmitted through acts of intimacy and pleasure," he said. "What an incredibly frightening thing to think about."

When HIV was first reported, he said, gay men tried to distance themselves from the disease. They sorted themselves into categories, saying, for example, "I don't have multiple sex partners, I'm not at risk."

"They found many reasons why

they didn't need to be concerned," he added.

Andriote said the U.S. Centers for Disease Control has estimated that one quarter of all new HIV infections in the country are the result of people transmitting the virus who don't know they're infected.

He said the Centers for Disease Control estimate that 56,300 Americans are infected with HIV each year, with the highest numbers among African Americans and Latinos. Gay and bisexual men of all races are still the number one group in the U.S. at risk for HIV, Andriote added.

Yet regardless of race or sexual orientation, he said, "HIV is not a disease of identity, it's a disease of behavior. It's what you do that puts you at risk."

Andriote knows this first hand. He had been going for HIV tests for 17 years, when in 2005 he got the shock of his life: He went for his annual physical and found out he was HIV-positive.

"I had no symptoms," he said. "Suddenly, what I had been writing about as a journalist became

very personal."

Andriote said he should have practiced safer sex. "I got lazy in some ways and played the game of Russian roulette."

He emphasized the need for ongoing HIV/AIDS education and

prevention efforts. While medicine has made strides in the management of HIV infection, he said, more targeted and explicit AIDS education and government support is needed.



PHOTO BY JESSICA TOMMASELLI

Journalist and author John-Manuel Andriote speaks at the Rainbow Center about the HIV/AIDS epidemic in the U.S.

Public policy experts to evaluate perceptions of disaster risk

BY CINDY WEISS

The Department of Public Policy (DPP) in the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences is expanding its homeland security research with a new six-year project to evaluate how people perceive disaster risk and how their perceptions affect preparedness.

Ultimately, the research will help identify citizen and public decision-maker strategies that would be effective in preparing for natural disasters such as hurricanes, tornadoes, floods, earthquakes, droughts, and wildfires, says Amy Donahue, associate professor and head of the Department of Public Policy.

A former firefighter herself, Donahue is the principal investigator on the study, "Risk Perceptions, Preferences, and Preparedness," which is funded by a \$566,000 grant from the Department of Homeland Security (DHS).

Public policy faculty members Mark Robbins and Bill Simonsen are also involved in the project. It is part of a larger research effort, a DHS Center of Excellence on natural disasters, coastal infrastructure, and emergency management that is based at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill and Jackson State University.

The purpose of the Center is to improve the nation's capability to deal with natural disasters and to find new approaches to coastal hazard planning, communications, and response.

The public policy investigators at UConn, headed by Robbins, recently finished a complex study



PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

Candace Fitzpatrick, left, project manager, and Amy Donahue, principal investigator, are conducting research to evaluate how people perceive disaster risk and how their perceptions affect preparedness.

for the DHS based on responses from more than 2,600 people. Using focus groups and telephone calls, it assessed their attitudes and preferences regarding homeland security prevention, detection, and response technologies. It focused on responses to a potential terrorist attack and on how much citizens would be willing to pay in additional taxes for anti-terror-

ism services.

The new study will measure what people consider and will tolerate when faced with natural disaster preparation, says project manager Candace Fitzpatrick, who received her master's of public administration degree from the department in 2006 and who worked on the earlier study.

"It will allow us to compare

perceptions of risk and associated behavior across different segments of society so that preparedness approaches can be tailored," she says.

The research will compare the risk perceptions and preparedness actions of coastal and inland residents and decision makers. Citizen responses will be gauged over time, to see whether people change their risk perception and preparedness.

First on the list of DHS topics of interest are natural hazards such as flooding from hurricanes or storm surges.

Among the questions the UConn researchers will ask is how "at risk" people believe they are.

"We are trying to gain a deeper understanding about how citizens understand risks and how they respond to them, by moving beyond existing research," says Donahue. "We hope to get at the subtleties of who citizens think are at risk, what they think the magnitude of consequences might be, how persistent the effects of a disaster are, and how long they think it would take them to 'bounce back.'"

Adds Fitzpatrick, "We are also likely to use a framework that will allow us to get a better sense of what citizens are actually willing to pay and do for preparedness."

Three random national surveys of citizens will be done, as well as surveys of 400 town and city managers and public decision makers.

Fitzpatrick is a former elected official herself, having served 15 years on the Simsbury Board of Selectmen and Board of Finance.

The data will be compared and contrasted, the citizen surveys repeated, and the information analyzed and used by the DHS in developing municipal and citizen preparedness policies.

"We do know that citizen preparedness is very low," says Fitzpatrick.

The federal agency will want to see how and whether it should invest more at the regional and local levels, she adds. Once the effect of risk perception is understood, it will want to see whether it can use that knowledge to implement policies, and whether they should be the same or different for 'high risk' and 'low risk' locations.

Donahue brings considerable disaster management expertise to the project. On a sabbatical leave last year at Louisiana State University, she served as interim director of LSU's new Stevenson Disaster Management Institute. She is a former senior adviser for homeland security to the administrator of the National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

Robbins and Simonsen specialize in public finance and policy and citizen participation techniques. Robbins is a former department head of DPP and is a member of the Government Accounting Standards Advisory Council. Simonsen recently was elected to the executive committee for the Association for Budgeting and Financial Management, the premier professional academic association for finance and budgeting.

UConn joins Natchaug Basin planning group

BY RICHARD VEILLEUX

UConn has joined a planning group that will discuss ways to maintain and improve the Natchaug Basin, a 114,000-acre tract of land and water that contains a diversity of aquatic and terrestrial plants and animals. It is the largest public surface drinking water supply watershed in Connecticut.

More than half of UConn's Storrs campus sits within the basin, and water from the basin's three main rivers – the Fenton, Natchaug, and Mount Hope – supports the water needs of the University and 22,000 residents of Mansfield and Willimantic. It is also valued for its wildlife habitat, its history, and its beauty, and as a recreation resource.

Besides UConn, the Natchaug Basin Conservation Action Planning program includes representatives from each of the eight towns located in the watershed, local conservation organizations, and state and local agencies. The Green Valley Institute, a pro-

gram in UConn's Department of Extension, is leading the effort. The group will begin meeting in October.

"UConn is a uniquely positioned partner, capable of providing scientific expertise and research as well as outreach and education," University President Michael J. Hogan said. "It is extremely important that the University contribute its resources and expertise to the preservation of Connecticut's environment, especially areas of such significance."

The planning committee will be working to identify key factors that promote the integrity of the streams, wetlands, forest, and fish in the conservation area; identify and rank the primary threats affecting the overall condition of the forest and freshwater systems; define strategies to address the threats and restoration needs; and create an action plan specific to each strategy, together with a timeline for completion.

Center of excellence *continued from page 1*

The other new national centers of excellence will study border security and immigration; explosives detection, mitigation, and response; maritime, island, and port security; and natural disasters, coastal infrastructure, and

emergency management. A total of 11 colleges and universities, including UConn, will be home to the five separate centers.

Mehdi Anwar, associate dean of engineering and director of the newly formed center at UConn,

says, "Our efforts will lead to the enhanced resilience, durability, and independence of the nation's individual critical infrastructure and key resources components, in order to minimize the impact of breaches upon society, industry, and government operation, and reduce the ripple effect within other parts of the larger infrastructure."

As research lead, he says, the center will coordinate activities including identifying the nation's most vulnerable transportation sites and networks; developing real-time monitoring and alert systems to notify rapid-response teams; modeling the complex supply/demand needs of key critical infrastructure resources; collecting, fusing, and deciphering real-time data, and transmitting it securely for reliable communications during crises; and modeling evacuation optimization strategies.

Other activities will include citizen-awareness campaigns, training of transportation and transit personnel, and developing the nation's future security workforce.



PHOTO BY PETER MORENUS

Mehdi Anwar, associate dean and professor of engineering, and director of the new National Transportation Security Center of Excellence.

Nursing professor develops medication management software



PHOTO BY FRANK DAHLMAYER

Patricia Neafsey, left, professor of nursing, discusses the medication management software she developed with honors students Gregory Lutkus and Jessica Newcomb.

BY BETH KRANE

Before tablet computers were on the market, Patricia Neafsey envisioned a user-friendly software program for older adults to learn more about their medications and potentially dangerous drug interactions.

Neafsey, a professor of nursing and a principal investigator at UConn's Center for Health, Intervention, and Prevention (CHIP), began by developing the program for individuals with hypertension.

"Patients with hypertension are an important population to study

because they will have to take medication the rest of their lives," she says. "If this kind of intervention is going to work, it should work with this population and this kind of chronic disease."

For a study of the initial version of her software, Neafsey attached touch screens to laptop computers with Velcro. Older adults with hypertension completed paper-and-pencil surveys about their medication use, and then used the modified laptops to view a series of animations about blood pressure medicines and drugs that could

interact with them.

With the help of a \$1 million grant from the National Institutes of Health, Neafsey's software has evolved to match her original vision. She now is testing her "Personalized Education Program-Next Generation" (PEP) through a clinical trial involving 264 patients with hypertension age 60 and over at 11 primary care practices across Connecticut.

She says more than 90 percent of adults age 65 or older take at least one medication daily, and almost 60 percent of adults in

that age group take five or more medications daily, including over-the-counter medicines and herbal supplements.

"Many of these agents can interfere with antihypertensive medications," says Neafsey, who has a doctorate in pharmacology.

Many patients do not know, for example, that ibuprofen actually elevates blood pressure on its own, and also counteracts the effectiveness of antihypertensive medications, she adds.

The program, which contains more than 1,600 ingredients and 183 adverse self-medication behaviors in its database, runs on a touch screen tablet computer that patients can use while waiting in doctors' offices for routine medical appointments.

Each patient answers questions about his or her medications on the touch screen. The program then ranks the medication behaviors by degree of risk, and delivers tailored, interactive educational content about them.

It also provides the patient's doctor or nurse practitioner with a summary before they see the patient, so they can discuss the issues during the office visit.

A team of UConn researchers helped develop the program, including co-investigator Carolyn Lin, a communications sciences professor, Elizabeth Anderson, an associate professor of nursing, and Sheri Peabody, a graduate student in nursing.

In a test, Neafsey found that

nine of 11 patients achieved lower blood pressure readings after using the software during just three regular office visits.

Neafsey is also mentoring two nursing honors students who are conducting a pilot study involving UConn employees age 45 to 60 with hypertension to learn whether the software needs to be adapted for people under 60.

The project, which has 11 participants, is receiving computer and statistician support from CHIP, and uses space at its offices.

Gregory Lutkus, an honors student in nursing, says PEP is extremely comprehensive. "It is next to impossible to find a medication Dr. Neafsey didn't include in the program, which is especially impressive considering the vast number of medications in existence," he says.

Lutkus and fellow nursing honors student, Jessica Newcomb, have been involved in every phase of the honors research project.

Both the clinical trial and honors research project are scheduled to conclude by the end of the year, Neafsey says, and the results from the honors research project may be used to support her team's next application for federal funding to continue developing PEP.

Neafsey hopes ultimately to adapt the program for patients with other chronic medical conditions, such as heart disease and diabetes, as well as those with hypertension.

Activities office encourages students to become involved on campus

BY SHERRY FISHER

"Are you shy? Are you a transfer or commuter student? A veteran? Interested in volunteerism, mentoring or club sports?" These are some of the questions posed to students in "The Ultimate Guide," a magazine-like publication for students new to the Storrs campus. The piece was developed by the Department of Student Activities.

"We wanted a piece that would cover more than just clubs and organizations," says Christine Wilson, director of student activities, "something that would inspire students to become involved in campus activities.

"We've found that for many students, it takes some bravery to join in and start taking part in campus life," Wilson adds. "A small percentage of students will jump right in, but most students need more than that. They're too shy to even ask another student to go someplace with them. They need a little push."

The booklet includes information boxes with headings such as, "Are you an artsy type?" "Are you in recovery?" "Are you an international student?" The accompanying text offers information about how to become involved.

"Imagine trying to jump right into campus activities as a freshman and you've just gotten back from Iraq," Wilson says. "We let those students know they can meet similar people in the Veterans'

Student Organization."

Lee Williams, dean of students says, "A quality student life experience on any campus is built on the back of a successful student activities program. But it has to be one that reaches into all corners of campus and brings students out of their rooms and their books and into the commons of the campus. There are many different paths to that commons, and this magazine provides multiple maps."

There are some 400 student organizations on campus, ranging from a cappella groups and sport clubs to economics and linguistics clubs.

Wilson says many students who become involved on campus were apprehensive at first.

"They say a friend or roommate dragged them someplace, or their CA talked them into going somewhere," Wilson says. "We address their apprehension in the book."

One way that was handled was to profile six students who are involved in different campus activities, and talk specifically about how they got there.

"We wanted new students to hear it from real people," Wilson says.

The guide also includes information on fraternity and sorority life, cultural centers, major events, fun places on campus, and religious organizations.

Anna Milot, publicity and marketing coordinator for student

activities, designed the magazine. "Our main effort in creating it was to reach multiple types of students in a new way," Milot says. "We wanted it to be all-inclusive and have an informal feel."

Addie Rodriguez was one of the students profiled in the guide. She says the guide is invaluable in helping freshmen learn "what is out there on campus. It's orientation in a booklet."

Ryan Matthews, another of the students profiled, says he became involved with a tutoring program at the Mansfield Middle School after picking up a flyer at the Student Involvement Fair when he was a freshman. He is now the

program's director. Matthews also works for Recreational Services, as a Parent Orientation Leader, and as a teaching assistant in First Year Programs.

In his profile, he advises students to "Talk to involved students. Go to all the events during Husky Wow. Or just walk through the Student Union one day. Exploring the UConn community is one of the best ways to go about getting involved."

Miguel Almodovar, also profiled in the booklet, says his love of stand-up comedy inspired him to join the SUBOG comedy committee. He wanted to have a say in which comedians came to campus.

He got involved by simply showing up at the meetings.

Wilson says the goal is for every single student to have a positive out-of-class experience.

Student Activities now has 'engagement ambassadors' at its reception desk to help students and introduce them to opportunities for involvement.

"They are being trained to be experts on all involvement opportunities on campus," Wilson says. "They're available for speaking engagements and for consultation – whether students want information on specific programs or just need to talk through available options, they can help.



PHOTO BY JESSICA TOMMASELLI

From left 'engagement ambassadors' Megan Crowley, Melissa Marsh, and Hema Mistry talk with Bryan Baille about opportunities for getting involved in campus activities.



Stephanie Mazzarella, a prospective UConn student, plays the piano in McMahon Hall.

PHOTO BY JESSICA TOMMASELLI

GRANTS

The following grants were received through the Office for Sponsored Programs (OSP) in June 2008. The list represents only new proposals awarded, and excludes continuations. The list is supplied to the *Advance* each month by OSP. Additional grants received in June were published in the Sept. 8 *Advance*.

Principal Investigator	Department	Sponsor	Amount	Award Period
Parnas, R.	Institute of Materials Science	Conn. Dept. of Econ. & Community Development	\$94,709	5/08-6/09
<i>Partnership with the Connecticut Dept. of Economic & Community Development to Develop a Biofuels Industry</i>				
Potter, D.	Chemical, Materials & Biomolecular Engineering	United Technologies -Pratt & Whitney	\$17,849	6/08-5/09
<i>Oxidation Effects on the Mechanical Properties of Gamma TiAl Alloys</i>				
Reilly, G.	Management	Dept. of Agriculture /Univ. of Wisconsin	\$10,000	1/08-8/08
<i>The Effect of Corporate Goal Systems on Executive Decision Making Effectiveness</i>				
Reiter, W.	Molecular & Cell Biology	Dept. of Energy	\$485,000	4/08-4/11
<i>Genetic Analysis of Nucleotide Sugar Interconversions in Arabidopsis</i>				
Sheckley, B.	Educational Leadership	Connecticut Association of Schools	\$45,000	1/08-6/10
<i>Evaluation of CAS Executive Coaching Project</i>				
Silander, J.	Ecology & Evolutionary Biology	U.S. Dept. of Agriculture	\$545,000	6/08-6/12
<i>A Multi-Scale Approach to the Forecast of Potential Distributions of Invasive Plant Species</i>				
Smith, C.	Ecology & Evolutionary Biology	Conn. Dept. of Environmental Protection	\$69,817	6/08-10/09
<i>Population Status, Movements and Habitat Use of Timber Rattlesnakes in the Southern Portion of Meshomasic State Forest and Surrounding Private Lands</i>				
Snyder, W.	Linguistics	National Science Foundation	\$25,514	7/08-12/09
<i>Conference-GALANA UConn</i>				
Stephens, J.	Educational Psychology	Templeton (John) Foundation/School for Ethical Educ.	\$112,252	9/07-8/10
<i>Building Moral Character through Academic Integrity</i>				

Suib, S.	Chemistry	United Technologies -Pratt & Whitney	\$30,000	5/08-11/08
<i>Investigations in Chemical Vapor Deposition Processing of Ceramic Matrix Composite Materials</i>				
Suib, S.	Chemistry	Chevron Phillips Chemical Co. LP	\$30,000	6/08-1/09
<i>Catalyst Analytical Studies</i>				
Swadlow, H.	Psychology	Nat'l Insts. of Health /Nat'l Eye Inst./State Univ. of New York, Coll. of Optometry	\$167,200	2/08-1/10
<i>A New Implantable Array of Ultra-Thin Electrodes for Recording in Awake Primates</i>				
Tang, J.	Mechanical Engineering	Gerber Scientific Inc. /Gerber Technology	\$122,948	7/08-6/09
<i>Modeling and Control of CTP Machine for High Precision Optical Manufacturing</i>				
Teplyaev, A.	Mathematics	National Science Foundation	\$170,000	7/08-6/11
<i>Random, Stochastic and Self-Similar Equations</i>				
Vinogradova, O.	Pharmaceutical Sciences	American Heart Association	\$198,000	7/08-6/11
<i>Structural Insights into the Skelemin Regulated Integrin Function</i>				
Vokoun, J.	Natural Resources Mgmt. & Engineering	Conn. Dept. of Environmental Protection	\$72,989	5/08-4/10
<i>Investigating Stream Temperature and Brook Trout Population Fragmentation: Riverscape Genetics in Thermally-Contrasting Headwater Stream Channel Networks in Connecticut</i>				
Whitlatch, R.	Marine Sciences	Environmental Protection Agency	\$595,852	4/08-3/11
<i>Interaction of Climate Change, Land Use and Invasive Species: Tests of Contrasting Management Scenarios for Coastal Communities</i>				
Wilhelm, N.	Extension	Monsanto Co./National 4-H Council	\$2,000	12/07-12/08
<i>2008 4-H Volunteer Initiative Grants</i>				
Wilhelm, N.	Extension	Cumberland Farms /National 4-H Council	\$1,400	1/08-10/08
<i>2007-08 Youth in Action Grants</i>				
Wozniak, D.	Anthropology	New York Community Trust/Fahs-Beck Fund	\$15,000	5/08-4/10
<i>Rites of Passage and Healing Efficacy</i>				
Zangari, R.	Technology Incubation Program	Conn. Dept. of Econ. & Community Development	\$750,000	6/08-9/10
<i>Technology Incubation Program Expansion</i>				

Lea's Foundation Center boosted with \$500K planned gift

BY JOHN SPONAUER

A major planned gift will support the study and care of lymphoma, related blood cancers, and other blood disorders at the Lea's Foundation Center for Hematologic Disorders at the UConn Health Center.

Allen M. Ward Sr. established a \$500,000 charitable gift annuity with the UConn Foundation, in recognition of the care he began receiving a decade ago under Dr. Robert Bona. Bona is now director of the Lea's Foundation Center at the Carole and Ray Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center.

Allen M. Ward Jr., professor emeritus of history at UConn, says his father credits Bona with saving his life. "When we first learned that Dad had a serious case of lymphoma, we looked around for the best care. Dr. [Peter] Deckers immediately told us to get in touch with Bob Bona. At our first meeting, Dr. Bona looked at the diagnosis and told my father, 'We can cure you.' That



Allen Ward Jr., left, emeritus professor of history, with his father, Allen Ward Sr.

was 10 years ago," he says. "My father and I can't say enough good things about him. He has a wonderful reputation, he takes the time to explain everything, and there's no beating around the bush. Those are traits that you have to have in that line of work to be successful."

Ward says his father took an immediate liking to Bona, and found topics of personal interest to share with him throughout his treatment regimens.

"From the beginning, they were in this fight together," says Ward. "Before long, they were talking about their love of gardening, exchanging seeds and tips, and more."

Ward says he and his father hope that the support will help make the difference in finding future cures and treatments for blood and related cancers.

Bona says such support can be instrumental in science.

"Private support gives us the flexibility

to push the envelope in research, and takes us beyond where we might be able to find funding from public and other sources," Bona says, adding that Ward's support offers hope for future generations of patients and researchers.

Allen Ward Jr. said his father was pleased to find a way to make a gift that provided support for the UConn Health Center, and tax and income benefits for himself today. A charitable gift annuity generally involves a gift of cash or securities that is donated in exchange for the promise of lifetime income.

"My father has always wanted to do something to show his gratitude to Dr. Bona," says Ward. "When we were creating his estate plans, we learned about the concept of the charitable gift annuity. For where my father is in his life and planning, it's an ideal vehicle from all points of view."

CALENDAR Monday, September 15, to Monday, September 22

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 include events taking place from Monday, Sept. 22 through Monday, Sept. 29. Those items must be in the database by 4 p.m. on Monday, Sept. 15. 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).

Academics

Monday, 9/15 – Last day for students to make up incomplete or absence grades.
Tuesday, 9/16 through Monday, 9/22 – Examinations for course credit by examination.

Libraries

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

University ITS

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

Ph.D. Defenses

Monday, 9/15 – Neag School of Education. *College Persistence: A Comparative Analysis Across Conventional and Less-Common Cohorts*, by William Gammell (adv.: Sheckley). 10 a.m., Room 412, Gentry Building.

Monday, 9/15 – School of Social Work. *The Influence of Employment Related Supports and Services on Successful TANF Exits: A Sequential Explanatory Mixed Methods Analysis*, by Patricia Carlson (adv.: Humphreys). 6 p.m., Room 220, School of Social Work Building, Greater Hartford Campus.
Friday, 9/19 – Oceanography. *Reconstruction of Dinoflagellate Genome Duplications through Proliferating Cell Nuclear Antigen (PCNA) and the Small-Subunit Ribosomal RNA (18s rRNA) Gene Evolution*, by Yubo Hou (adv.: Lin). 1:30 p.m., Room 103, Marine Sciences Building, Avery Point Campus.

Meetings

Monday, 9/15 – Health Center Board of Directors. 8:30 a.m.-noon, Room EG013, Academic Research Building, Health Center.
Tuesday, 9/16 – Parking Advisory

Committee Meeting. 2 p.m., School of Business Board Room.

Lectures & Seminars

Monday, 9/15 – India Studies Lecture. "An Indian Perspective on the 2008 U.S. Election," by Ramesh Babu. 4 p.m., Class of '47 Room, Babbidge Library.
Tuesday, 9/16 – Student Union Board of Governors. "The Female Orgasm," by Marshall Miller & Dorian Solot, authors and sex educators. 7 p.m., Student Union Theatre.
Tuesday, 9/16 – Neag Comprehensive Cancer Center Forum. "Basic and Translational Research Forum on Multiple Myeloma." 6-8 p.m., Low Learning Center Auditorium, Health Center.
Tuesday, 9/16 – Litchfield County Writers Project Discussion. "Buddha in your Rearview Mirror," with Woody Hochswender, author, and Dayne Verstandig. 6:30 p.m., Hogan

Lecture Hall, M. Adela Eads Building, Torrington Campus.

Wednesday, 9/17 – Rainbow Center. "Gay Travels in the Muslim World," by Michael Luongo, author. Noon, Room 403, Student Union.

Wednesday, 9/17 – Constitution Day Panel Discussion. "The Amistad Freedom Voyage," moderated by Jeffrey Ogbar. Panelists include a representative from Amistad America; Mary Sarah Bilder, Boston College; and Erica Whyte. 3 p.m., Konover Auditorium, Dodd Center.

Wednesday, 9/17 – Constitution Day Lecture. By Charles Ogletree, Harvard Law School. 4 p.m., Konover Auditorium, Dodd Center. Book signing to follow.

Wednesday, 9/17 – Statistics Colloquium. Nonlinear Markov Chain Geostatistics for Prediction and Simulation of Categorical Spatial Variables," by Chuanrong Zhang. 4 p.m., Room 344, CLAS Building.

Thursday, 9/18 – Ecology & Evolutionary Biology Seminar. "An Evolutionary Null Model of Species Invasions and the Future of Species Extinctions on Islands," by Dov Sax, Brown University. 4 p.m., Room 130, Biology/Physics Building.

Exhibits

Friday, 9/19 through Sunday, 11/2 – Alexey von Schlippe Gallery. *Latin Views 2008*, 38 Latin artists from 15 different countries. Wednesday-Sunday, noon-4 p.m. Free to members and students, all others \$3 donation. Branford House Mansion, Avery Point Campus. Opening reception 9/19, 6-8 p.m.

Through Wednesday, 9/17 – Health Center. *Four Seasons of the Valley*, photography by Carol Lowbeer. Daily, 8 a.m.-9 p.m., Main and Mezzanine Lobbies. Also, through Wednesday, 9/24, *Recent Paintings*, by Donald Moss and *Real Tales*, paintings by Janice Hechter. Daily, 8 a.m.-9 p.m., Celeste LeWitt Gallery.

Through Friday, 9/19 – Student Union Art Gallery. *Be Aware, Show You Care*. Suicide Prevention Week interactive art exhibit. Daily, 11 a.m.-7 p.m., Third Floor, Student Union.

Through Friday, 10/10 – Babbidge Library. *Migration Route, a Journey Through Art*, collage photographs by George Jacobi, Gallery on the Plaza; *4 in Prints* by Claudia Fieo, Margot Rocklen, Kim Tester, and Carmela Venti, Stevens Gallery; *A Reason to Remember, Roth, Germany, 1933-1942*. West Alcove. For hours, see Libraries section.

Through Friday, 10/10 – Dodd Center. *Celebrating the Sculptural Book: The Challenge of Structure*. For hours, see Libraries section.

Through Friday, 10/10 – Contemporary Art Galleries. *Alumni Biennial (One)*. Hours: Monday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Free admission. Fine Arts Building.

Through Sunday, 11/30 – The Ballard Institute & Museum of Puppetry. *Puppets through the Lens*. Depot Campus, Friday-Sunday, noon-5 p.m. Free admission, donations welcome.

Through Friday, 12/19 – Benton Museum. *Sera: The Way of the*

Tibetan Monk; also, *The Photographs of Sheila Rock*. Also, through Sunday, 10/12, 43rd annual art department faculty exhibition. Tuesday-Friday, 10 a.m.-4:30 p.m.; Saturday & Sunday, 1-4:30 p.m.

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.

Performing Arts

Monday, 9/15 – Puppet Forum. *Puppets on the Edge*, with Jim Napolitano & Tim Lagasse. 7:30 p.m., Ballard Institute, Depot Campus. Free admission. Forum preceded at 7 p.m. by guided tour of *Puppets Through the Lens* exhibit.

Wednesday, 9/17 – James Mapes Show. *Journey into the Imagination*, with hypnotist James Mapes. 8 p.m., Jorgensen Center for Performing Arts. \$2 for students/\$5 for non-students.

Thursday, 9/18 – Comedy Show. Jasper Redd comedy show. 7 p.m., Student Union Theatre. Free admission.

Films

Tuesday, 9/16 – India Film Series. *Kabul Express*. 6:30 p.m., Room 106, Art Building. Free admission.

Wednesday, 9/17 – Constitution Day. *Amistad*. 7 p.m., Student Union Theatre. Free admission.

Athletics

Wednesday, 9/17 – Women's Volleyball vs. Fairfield. 7 p.m., Gampel Pavilion.

Thursday, 9/18 – Men's Tennis vs. Rhode Island. 3 p.m., Tennis Courts.

Friday, 9/19 – Women's Soccer vs. Providence. 5 p.m., Morrone Stadium.

Friday, 9/19 – Field Hockey vs. Providence. 7 p.m., Sherman Family Sports Complex.

Friday, 9/19 – Men's Soccer vs. Louisville. 7:30 p.m., Morrone Stadium.

Friday, 9/19 – Women's Volleyball vs. Cornell. 7:30 p.m., Gampel Pavilion.

Friday, 9/19 – Football vs. Baylor. 8 p.m., Rentschler Field.

Saturday, 9/20 – Women's Volleyball vs. Maine. 12:30 p.m., Gampel Pavilion.

Sunday, 9/21 – Field Hockey vs. Michigan. Noon., Sherman Family Sports Complex.

Sunday, 9/21 – Men's Soccer vs. Cincinnati. 1 p.m., Morrone Stadium.

Potpourri

Wednesday, 9/17 – Gallery Talk. Tracy Lawlor will discuss the art faculty exhibition. 12:15-12:45 p.m., Benton Museum.

Wednesday, 9/17 – Meet & Greet. Discussion of *Gay Travels in a Muslim World*, with Michael Luongo, author. Book signing to follow. 5 p.m., Rainbow Center, Student Union.

Mondays – Al-Anon. Twelve-step meeting. Noon-12:50 p.m. For more information, call 860-486-9431.

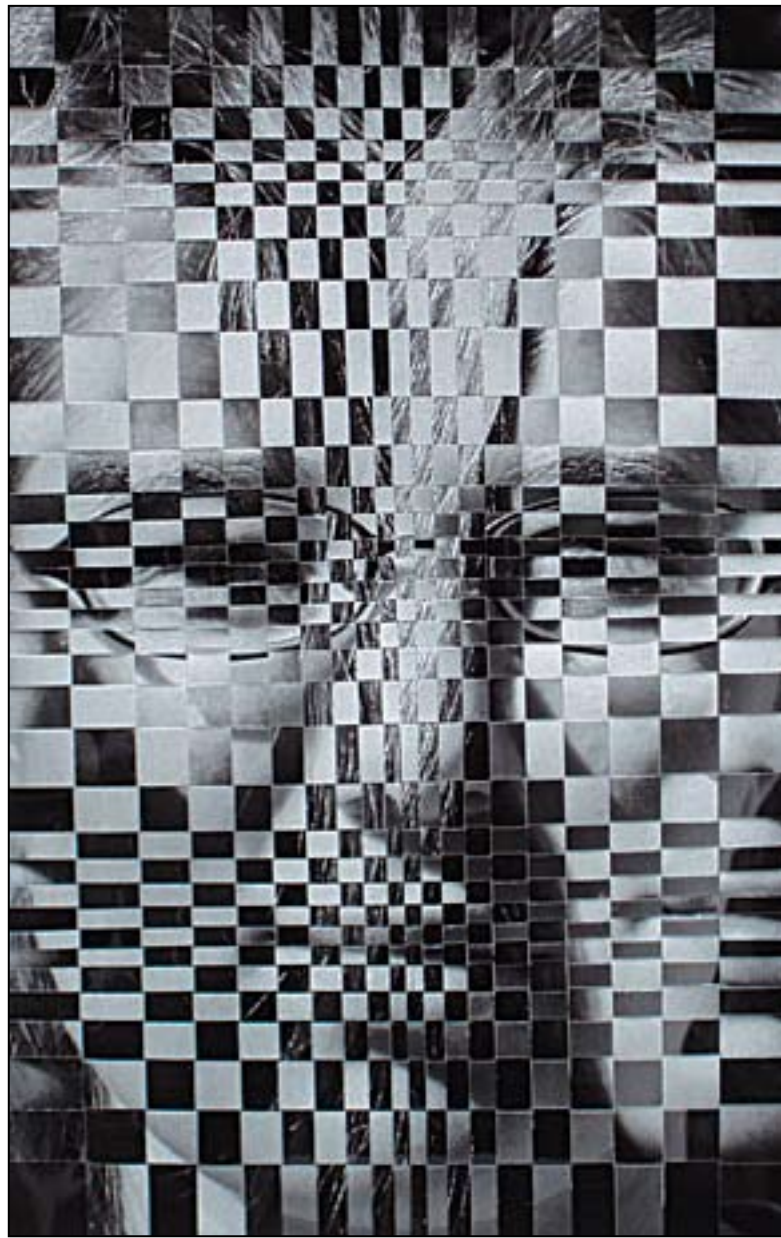


PHOTO BY GEORGE JACOBI

"Facequilt 3, Split Personality," part of the *Migration Route, a Journey Through Art* exhibit on display at Babbidge Library through Oct. 10.

Suicide prevention *continued from page 1*

Following his hospitalization in high school, a psychologist visited his high school class to discuss mental health. Throughout the talk, his classmates kept laughing. But to Szabo, just out of treatment, there was nothing funny about the talk. He pulled his teacher into the hallway and complained vigorously.

"Well, what are you going to do about it?" the teacher asked me. He challenged me," Szabo said.

Szabo took the challenge and has been speaking to high school and college groups ever since. In the seven years he has been touring colleges, he has spoken to more than 700,000 people. Last year alone, he racked up more than 180,000 miles flying coast-to-coast and everywhere in between to deliver speeches. In 2007, he was named best male performer by *Campus Activities* magazine.

Closing his talk, he again challenged the students, as his teacher had challenged him, to help themselves and help others: "We all go through something difficult at some point. You can learn to become stronger. You can make a choice how to deal with it," he said. "It takes no strength to do nothing. It takes no strength to not care. Be strong."

Although Suicide Prevention Week is now over, UConn's director of counseling and mental health services, Barry Schreier, says suicide prevention efforts will continue.

The web site created for the week – www.suicideprevention.uconn.edu – has been made permanent. The site provides links both to UConn resources and a number of external sites.

In addition, QPR (Question, Persuade, Refer) training, a nationally recognized suicide prevention program, will be

offered year-round, free of charge, to any campus groups, departments, or organizations interested. The program is also available at UConn's regional campuses.

QPR trains people in how to identify the warning signs of suicide, how to ask questions about suicide, and how to refer someone to a professional for help.

For information on QPR or other suicide awareness programs, contact Schreier at 860-486-4705.

Contemporary Art Galleries hosting exhibition of alumni art



PHOTO BY FRANK DAHLMAYER

Colin McMullan, MFA '05, left, in front of his artwork "Pulling Together: The Legends of Willimantic," speaks with Richard Klein, curator of the *Alumni Biennial (One)* exhibition at the Contemporary Art Galleries.

BY COLIN POITRAS

The work of five notable graduates from the School of Fine Arts is featured at Contemporary Art Galleries. The show is the Galleries' first exhibition of artwork by alumni.

Galleries director Barry Rosenberg wanted to showcase the exemplary talents of some of the University's most creative and accomplished graduates. The exhibition, *Alumni Biennial (One)*, is a deliberate reference to the prestigious national biennial exhibition hosted by the Whitney Museum of

American Art in Manhattan.

"To be able to bring back these artists for a show is exciting," Rosenberg says. "These artists are making a significant impact on the contemporary art world."

Richard Klein, exhibitions director for the Aldrich Contemporary Art Museum in Ridgefield, Conn., served as the exhibition's curator.

"UConn has an incredibly strong program, and the challenge of the selection process was in choosing a small group of artists who could represent the range

of accomplishment exhibited in its alumni," Klein says. "The five artists I selected also represent a cross-section of contemporary practice, including painting, sculpture, graphic design, video, and performance. If there is a thread that ties these artists together, it is their willingness to experiment and not be tied down to a particular medium or genre."

One of the key features of the exhibit is a 19-foot wooden sailboat constructed by Colin McMullan (MFA '05) and Ted Efreffoff (MFA '06).

The boat – built with the help of local shipwrights and close to 100 volunteers from the Willimantic community – is the centerpiece of a multimedia courtyard exhibition that also features video footage of the boat's construction, its journey down the Connecticut River, and interviews with project participants.

McMullan, aka "Emcee C.M.," focuses his work on people – their work, their lives, their struggle – by employing spontaneity, teamwork, play, adventure, volunteerism, learning, and discovery. Now located in New York, McMullan has presented projects in Germany, Spain, South Korea, and Serbia. He has done collaborative projects in public spaces in New Haven and New York, and has shows this year at the Bronx Museum and Artists Space in New York.

Other featured artists include:

- Ari Tabei (MFA '07), who displays a meticulously hand-crafted paper dress-sculpture entitled "Dress for Today #5." The piece is made entirely of Japanese newspaper, along with staples and black cloth. The elaborate train of the dress, which takes up a large portion of two exhibit walls, is at once fragile and delicate and overwhelming and baffling. Tabei is currently based in Brooklyn, N.Y., with residencies with New York's Lower Manhattan Cultural Council and the Vermont Studio Center. She has used the dress as a vessel for her performance art.

- Rebecca Parker (MFA '07) presents two performance projects in video. Parker curates exhibitions for the Connecticut Commission on Culture and Tourism. Her work has been included in several juried and invitational exhibitions, and she recently performed in New York and Phila-

delphia. She provides one performance video, titled "What Girls do in White Dresses," that investigates the transitional experience of growing up and the games we play. Through the reenactment of childhood activities, she questions the way in which experiences become gendered as we move away from childhood and mimic activities of adults. A second work, titled "24-Hour Conversation," features a running dialogue involving Parker, fellow artist Efreffoff, and others, in a Manhattan gallery space. Visitors to *Alumni Biennial (One)* will be able to interact with the two videos, entering their comments and impressions through a keyboard link.

- Afarin Rahmanifar (MFA '96), currently a faculty member at Eastern Connecticut State University, exhibits a series of paintings that juxtapose and combine images from mainstream American popular culture with images from Persian paintings. Rahmanifar, a native of Iran, uses her art to express her personal views of female imagery as portrayed in American and Iranian cultures.

- Apirat Infahsaeng (BFA '03) is a graphic artist and designer based in Brooklyn, N.Y. His distinctive work, described as "organic digital images," has been used by such companies as AT&T Wireless, Coca-Cola, Kodak, and Yahoo. Several pieces and posters produced by Infahsaeng will be on display in the exhibit hall.

Alumni Biennial (One) is free and open to the public. The Contemporary Art Galleries in the Fine Arts Building at 830 Bolton Rd., Storrs, are open weekdays from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. The exhibition runs through Oct. 10.

Health Center Auxiliary introduces child safety seat ID program

BY CHRIS DEFRANCESCO

A firefighter first to arrive at an accident scene hears a child crying. As he approaches, he finds an adult slumped against the deployed airbag at the wheel, and a baby secured in a child safety seat in the back.

The child shows no signs of traumatic injury. But the driver is unresponsive. No one else is in the car.

A situation like this poses special challenges for emergency responders. Who is the child? Who are his parents or guardians and how can they be reached? Does the child have special medical needs?

To help facilitate the response and rescue effort, the UConn Health Center Auxiliary has introduced a child safety seat occupant identification program called WHALE, an acronym for "We Have A Little Emergency."

The WHALE program is in place in 34 other states, originating at the local level through the efforts of volunteer groups like the Auxiliary, as well as medical

centers, ambulance companies, police and fire departments, sheriff's offices, and even town governments.

The kits include a label for the car seat, stickers for the car seat and car window, and an instructional brochure for parents.

"We printed 2,000 kits to get us started," says Irene Engel, Auxiliary facilitator.

The label is for the child's emergency information, including his or her name, the parents' or guardians' names and contact information, emergency contact information, and any medical considerations.

Parents affix the label on the back of or bottom of the car seat so it's not visible from outside the car. The stickers display only the WHALE logo and serve to alert emergency personnel that the car seat inside is labeled.

"This is a simple, inexpensive way to help emergency responders at an accident scene," says Health Center fire captain Greg Priest. "A WHALE sticker on the car tells us

we can find crucial information right away."

The Auxiliary initiated the

WHALE program in Connecticut by supplying kits to the Health Center's Family Birthing Center.

Parents take WHALE kits home with their newborns.

"We've already given WHALE kits out to more than 200 families in five dozen towns since we started the program in May," Engel says, "and the Health Center police and fire departments have been helping with the outreach, so the public safety officials in other towns will recognize the WHALE stickers."

The Auxiliary also is in the process of coordinating with other groups across the state that are interested in making WHALE kits available in their service areas.

"So far we've heard from people in almost every county," Engel says. "Ultimately we'd like this to become a statewide program."

The UConn Health Center Auxiliary supports the Health Center through fund-raising and volunteer efforts. More information about the Auxiliary is available at <http://auxiliary.uchc.edu>.

More information about the WHALE program is available at www.whaleprogram.org.



PHOTO BY CHRIS DEFRANCESCO

Newborn Lucy Doyle-Kusy naps, as her parents prepare her safety seat for the ride home from Dempsey Hospital. The sticker her parents affixed to the car seat will help first responders in the event of an emergency.