

Forging Partnerships
with Government, Industry
and Community

update on
OUTREACH
UNIVERSITY AT ALBANY



Update on Outreach Newsletter

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Division for Outreach

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This is the premier issue of *Update on Outreach*, a publication of UAlbany's Division for Outreach. Its purpose is to inform the Capital Region community of the latest UAlbany programs and initiatives that are making a difference in our community and across the state.

Albany Heritage Celebrates 350 Years of Civic Growth

Forming a partnership with a host of cultural institutions and community leaders, the University will engage in a collaborative year-long program to



(l-r) Albany Mayor Jennings, philanthropists Matthew and Phoebe Bender, and University at Albany President Karen R. Hitchcock at Albany City Hall on April 10 for commemoration of Beverwyck.

celebrate the 350th anniversary of the founding of Beverwyck (1652), the Dutch trading community that constituted the City of Albany's civic foundation.

"Albany Heritage" will seek to commemorate this anniversary in a significant way and to create an enduring legacy that supports the continuing study, preservation, and enjoyment of Albany's heritage. A series of exhibits, tours, courses, lectures, concerts and other activities will focus on people and neighborhoods, arts and architecture, archeology, transportation, and political life.

"I am pleased that the University at Albany has worked as a partner with the city, the Albany County Convention and Visitors Bureau, and many cultural organizations to develop a community-wide alliance for Albany Heritage," said Albany Mayor Gerald

Jennings at the April 10 kick-off event for Albany Heritage at City Hall.

"This program, by highlighting the city's growth from fort and fur-trading post to its present status as capital city, will make clear to countless numbers of visitors from outside the region, as well as to many area residents, that Albany is truly one of the nation's most historically significant cities," the Mayor added.

The UAlbany-based aspect of the Albany Heritage program has grown since November of 2001 when some 50 community leaders came to campus for initial talks. Since then, a support grant has been received for the project from the Bender Family Foundation. Said Matthew Bender IV: "The Foundation enthusiastically supports 'The Albany Heritage Year,' which has been organized by the University at Albany. The University's partnership with educational and cultural organizations in these programs will help inform and engage our citizens in the quality of life and the significant assets that Albany — at 350 years of age — offers."

UAlbany activities will begin in the spring and summer and culminate in the fall 2002 semester. Programming will include an enriched menu of courses and the incorporation of Albany Heritage themes into fall programs, a lecture series, and roundtables held on campus and in the community.



Assemblyman John McEnery, a member of the Albany Heritage Advisory Committee, speaks at the kick-off ceremony for the year-long series of events.

(continued on page 2)

Study of American Jewish History Enhanced by Conference



▲ Speaker Riv-Ellen Prell

Some of the most exciting work now being done in the field of Jewish studies, as well as exciting new directions for study, highlighted the Fifth Biennial

Scholars' Conference on American Jewish History, hosted by the University on June 9-11.

Co-sponsored by the American Jewish Historical Society and UAlbany's newly established Center for Jewish Studies, the conference gave scholars, researchers, students and the Capital Region community the opportunity to meet and interact informally.

"The conference was an enormous success and a boon to the Capital Region," said Mark

A. Raider, chair of UAlbany's Department of Judaic Studies Department and director of its Center for Jewish Studies. "It provided community members with a variety of unusual and special educational opportunities — from a lecture on the Jewish colonial silversmith Myer Myers to discussions of women in American Jewish life, and to reflections on the American Jewish profile of composer Aaron Copland."

Raider said the conference also served to put the Center for Jewish Studies, launched last year and inaugurated officially on April 25, "squarely on the map. The conference made a highly significant contribution to the field as a whole, and our ability to mount a first-rate academic conference, including the considerable resources required to support such an undertaking, demonstrated the Center's importance and centrality in the field of Jewish studies."

Among the conference sessions held at the University and at the Albany Institute of History & Art were "New Perspectives on American Jewish Radicalism, 1900-1950," an oral history on the lives of American Jewish women, "Race, Religion and Gender in 19th Century America," "Performing Jewish Identity," "Jews and Christians and Responding to the Holocaust," and "Jews, Judaism, and American Counter-Culture."

"The sessions included a great variety of topics and themes, highlighting the interdisciplinary nature of American Jewish studies and the important work being done," said Raider. "Also, the mix of researchers and community members at the public programs made for a most convivial and enjoyable atmosphere."

'Conversations' Vow to "Leave No Child Behind"

Leave No Child Behind, a three-day conference featuring 55 national experts on improving under-performing urban schools, held in March at the University, drew more than 300 participants in a collaborative effort across a wide spectrum of disciplines. It was also, according to participants, a blueprint on how to organize a conference of educators and practitioners that addresses the quest for happier, more fulfilled communities.

Hal Lawson, special assistant to Provost Carlos Santiago and the lead conference organizer, said the event, part of UAlbany's Conversations in the Disciplines program, will be emulated by educational institutions in

New York City, Chicago, and other urban areas.

"Most of the conference focused on positive ways for schools to access family, neighborhood, and community resources for learning and healthy development," said Lawson — "and, reciprocally, how schools can strengthen families and neighborhoods."

Henry Louis Taylor Jr., professor and director of the Center for Urban Studies at the University at Buffalo, gave the keynote speech to open the conference. Taylor, author of *Historical Roots of the Urban Crisis*, discussed "Linking School Reform to the Neighborhood Revitalization Movement."

Several UAlbany faculty, including Katharine

Briar-Lawson, dean of the School of Social Welfare, gave talks on such topics as school violence; special-needs children and youth; policy; school improvement; demographics; character development; early childhood education programs and school readiness; meeting the needs of Latino and African-American children; and dropout prevention.

Several UAlbany researchers in the fields of education, social welfare, reading, and policy studies highlighted their work with local educational bodies such as the Philip Schuyler elementary school, Albany's New Covenant charter school, community and arts centers in Schenectady, and the Boys and Girls Club of Albany.

Albany Heritage Celebrates 350 Years of Civic Growth (continued from page 1)

In addition, there will be a special exhibition at the University Art Museum: *State Street Stories: 350 Years of Albany's Heritage*. Running Sept. 13- Nov. 10, it will focus on select State Street sites as well as on the city's changing architecture.

Faculty are also working with community groups in order to develop enduring work projects, such as a November conference, "Monumental Vision and Urban Transformations in Albany, 1948-78, organized by UAlbany urban planner Ray Bromley and

co-sponsored by Historic Albany Foundation. History professor Gerald Zahavi is helping to develop an "On-line Encyclopedia of Albany History," which will create an accessible gateway to the city's history from the Colonial Era to the present.



▲ V. Mark Durand

Partnering to Battle Autism

UAlbany Professor Spearheads North Country Pilot Program

The announcement in June that the University at Albany would be home base for a New York State pilot program providing direct services to improve the lives

and schooling of autistic children came as no surprise to those who have followed the work and achievements of UAlbany psychologist V. Mark Durand.

The North Country Autism Technical Assistance Center, created through legislative grants from Senate Majority Leader Joseph Bruno and Senate Finance Committee Chairman Ronald B. Stafford of Glens Falls, will address the limited availability and rising costs of specialized services related to the education and treatment of autistic children. It will provide direct services to families, autistic children, and 15 schools districts in and around Glens Falls and South Glens Falls.

“I am extremely grateful for the support given this initiative by Senators Bruno and Stafford,” said Durand, who as director of the New York Autism Network has worked with state leaders to increase awareness of issues related to autism. Durand called the \$125,000 in funding provided by the Legislature “absolutely vital to allowing this pilot program to positively impact a significant number of families and schools.”

“The North Country Autism Technical Assistance pilot program will establish a paradigm in New York State for providing com-

prehensive services to children with autism and their families,” said Senator Bruno. “This much-needed initiative will offer expertise to faculty and professional staff, complement existing programs and services, and coordinate efforts both within and among the state’s autism agencies.”

“This program provides a much-needed, cost-effective method of helping autistic children in our local schools and the families and teachers who have sought this assistance,” said Senator Stafford. “The Senate is pleased to support this joint venture between Glens Falls, South Glens Falls and the University at Albany as we seek to improve the quality of educational services for all New Yorkers.”

Currently, most school districts in New York State and indeed throughout the nation lack the resources needed to properly educate and care for students with autism. This only exacerbates the troubling situation experienced by parents of children with autism.

“The establishment of the North Country Autism Technical Assistance Center will provide educational services of the highest quality and, at the same time, enable our schools to significantly reduce the costs associated with treating children with autism or related disorders,” said Thomas McGowan, superintendent of the Glens Falls School District.

James McCarthy, superintendent of the South Glens Falls School District, noted that his district attempts to educate as many autism spectrum disorder students as possible in their home schools. “This approach presents significant challenges, both fiscally and to staff who may not be aware of how to successfully

program these students,” he said. “A regional autism center in the North Country will assist districts and families of autistic children in meeting needs that are currently non-existent in this region.”

In his career, Durand has worked diligently to address the problem of supplying well-trained teachers to deal with the particular needs of autistic children. An international expert in autism, he has conducted pioneering research on the treatment of problems such as aggression and self-injurious behavior. His treatments and evaluative tools, such as his Motivation Assessment Scale, are mandated through federal legislation in the U.S. and have been translated into several languages and used abroad as well.

This 2001-2002 school year saw the implementation of two of three three-credit college distance-learning courses he designed to provide parents, special education teachers and others who interact with autistic children with the chance to learn the range of what is known about the illness and its treatment. Taught by Durand and administered through UAlbany, the courses have been well received in terms of large enrollments and by regard of his peers — so much so that they were featured in the Feb. 28 *Chronicle of Higher Education*.

Durand believes that the North Country Autism Technical Assistance Center will serve the same purpose as these courses: to furnish a new outlook for parents of children with autism. “We are opening up new opportunities for the children,” he said, “and also providing parents with something that has been very elusive — hope.”

“The legacy of the Albany Heritage will be a lasting infrastructure important to both academic and community interests, expanding knowledge and understanding of Albany in a regional, state and even global context,” said President Hitchcock. “It will increase access to

information by citizens and researchers at all levels — from K-12 students to local historians to university faculty.”

Mayor Jennings noted that, with another major celebration on the horizon — the 400th anniversary in 2009 of the arrival of Henry

Hudson — “this is an excellent time to collaborate in new ways to help secure the future of Albany’s distinctive and nationally significant heritage.”



In Brief...

Health Professor Zvi Gellis of the School of Social Work has been selected one of ten outstanding social work faculty nationwide to participate in a Hartford Foundation funded faculty leadership development program. The program aims to improve the well-being of older Americans by strengthening the education of social workers in geriatrics. Gellis will receive \$100,000 in support over the next two years.

As part of the program, Gellis will work with St. Peter's Home Care of Albany to conduct a preliminary evaluation of its depression screening and treatment program for elderly home care clients.

Business & Technology This spring, plastics leader Cyclics Corporation graduated from the University at Albany's pioneering East Campus incubator program. Its successful expansion and relocation to the Riverside Technology Park in Schenectady was cause for a celebration marking the achievement, held at the East Campus site in East Greenbush.

Cyclics Corporation manufactures Cyclics Resins, a plastics product that relies on unique processing and chemical attributes. The plastics are light and durable, damage-tolerant, and are recyclable and pollutant-free. The product is used for such applications as automobile parts, wind turbine blades, magnets and golf club shafts.

The East Campus, a New York State biotechnology hub since its inception just five

years ago, invited the company to join its incubator program in 1999.

Community Development The public is invited to become part of an important project by sharing memories of Albany's transformative period in the 30 years following World War II. Those with written accounts, photographs, maps, artifacts, memories and other pertinent accounts of change in Albany neighborhoods as a result of large-scale construction projects and resident displacement during that period are encouraged to contact the project's director, Dr. Ray Bromley, at 442-4766 or via email at rbromley@albany.edu.

The personal accounts will contribute to a two-day conference exploring the city's historic transformation. Titled *Monumental Visions and Urban Transformations in Albany, 1948-78* and planned for Nov. 1-2, it is co-sponsored by the University's Lewis Mumford Center for Comparative Urban and Regional Research and the Historic Albany Foundation.

Research The University's Center for Comparative Functional Genomics (CCFG) has announced the acquisition of a Micromass Q-ToF2 mass spectrometer, the only one of its kind in the Capital Region. The Q-ToF2, according to CCFG scientists, has numerous applications for research in medicine and biology, and academic and industrial research groups from the Capital Region as well as scientists from the University of Vermont and Pennsylvania

State University already have made plans to utilize it.

The Q-ToF2 was jointly acquired by Myomatrix Molecular Technologies, a biopharmaceutical company focused on treatments for cardiovascular disease, and CCFG, an interdisciplinary facility for research in genomics, bioinformatics, proteomics, microarray and mouse transgenesis. Both are based on the University's East Campus.

Arts & Humanities Free public readings from famed writers such as poet Richard Howard and authors Andrea Barrett, Joyce Carol Oates and Susan Sontag, along with courses, symposia and tutorials will highlight the 15th annual summer program of the New York State Writers Institute this July at Skidmore College in Saratoga Springs.

The UAlbany-based Institute's summer residency features creative writing courses in poetry, fiction, nonfiction, translation, and screenwriting. In these, class meetings are held three days each week, with Tuesday and Thursday afternoons devoted to round-table discussions with visiting writers.

Public readings by writers are held Monday through Friday evenings. Weekend programs include publishing symposia and student readings. The Institute's faculty comprises an extraordinary array of distinguished writers, among them winners of such major honors as the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award.

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