



Christyle Winn enjoys a book at Nu Attitudes Hair & Nail Salon. In the mirror, owner Michael Willis removes curlers from his wife Yvonne's hair.

## Beauty and the Books

EMS HELPS LOCAL SALONS TEACH THE IMPORTANCE OF LITERACY

When you first walk into Nu Attitudes Hair & Nail Salon in Bloomfield, Conn., it seems like any other neighborhood beauty salon. There are the usual stylists' chairs, the sound of blow dryers whining, and the smell of hair spray and other hair products all mixed together. In the past, the reading material available was mainly fashion and celebrity magazines. That is, until this past spring.

Last March, four salon owners in the North End of Hartford and Bloomfield began working with the University's Educational Main Street (EMS) partnership, which provides tutoring for schoolchildren in a number of Hartford public schools as well as other services. The new program, called Community Literacy Initiators, trains beauty salon owners to promote reading to their clients. The salons receive a bucket of free books from EMS to distribute to their customers' children.

Michael Willis, owner of Nu Attitudes since 1999, says the program is very popular with his clients.

"The mothers like it because they can bring their children to the salon with them, and the kids will pick out books and read while the mothers are having their hair done. Then when the mothers are under the dryer, the kids can sit on their laps and they read together.

"I tell the children, 'Take a book home with you. Build a library. Show everyone what you've read.'"

EMS Director Mary Christensen says the idea came to her after reading about a breast cancer activist who visited local beauty salons to promote regular mammograms.

"Our program encourages salon owners to speak about literacy in an informal, educated way," says Christensen. "Education and learning take place everywhere, not just in the classroom." ■

## Students on Capitol Hill

Marissa Cloutier, a registered dietician and a biology instructor at Hillyer College, traveled to Washington, D.C., last spring with Alexis Lemieux '07 and Angela Jacobsen '07. The trio participated in the National Center for Science and Civic Engagement Capitol Hill Symposium and Poster Session.

Cloutier, Jacobsen, and Lemieux promoted a new course, Issues of Health and Society: Weighing In, developed by Jacob Harney, associate professor and chair, Department of Biology, A&S, and Cloutier. The course, which is considered a national model, examines the nation's obesity crisis from several perspectives.

While in Washington, they also met with U.S. Rep. John Larson and U.S. Sen. Joseph Lieberman's education aide to discuss the importance of funding innovative science education. ■



# Rolling on the River

## HILLYER STUDENTS GET THEIR FEET WET

Early one morning in late May, 12 kayaks went into the chilly waters of the Connecticut River. Ten of the kayakers, dressed in sweatshirts and life jackets, were Hillyer College students enrolled in a Summerterm course to learn more about the river and its surroundings. The other two kayaks were paddled by Assistant Professor of Sociology Renwick Griswold and river guide Scott Larkham, whose business outfitted the trip.

For five days, the group paddled down the river, starting at Middletown, Conn., and ending near the mouth of the river in Old Saybrook. At the end of each day, they pitched their tents and eventually fell into their sleeping bags after a few conversations around the campfire.

The students kept journals during the trip as they learned about the river from various perspectives: anthropology; archeology; social history; socioeconomics; race, class, and gender; and environmental studies. They then combined what they had learned in these discussions with their own personal experiences on the river to produce a significant paper at the end of the course.

Griswold, who is also the coordinator of the Hillyer Environmental Studies concentration, was delighted with the students' response to the intensive experience. "The students were wonderful. They were with the program 110 percent. The whole experience greatly exceeded my expectations."

The student response was equally positive. Said one, "This class and this adventure changed me. Not only because it was fun, but because it made me a more informed and responsible citizen." ■

## Mock Trial Society Vies with Ivy League Teams

The University's new Mock Trial Society (MTS), established in September 2006, enjoyed a successful first season that included competitions with such powerhouses as Yale, Harvard, Trinity, and Brandeis. The society, which draws students from all majors, is a member of the American Mock Trial Association ([www.collegemocktrial.org](http://www.collegemocktrial.org)).

The Mock Trial program aims to give undergraduates a chance to learn firsthand the work of trial attorneys, understand the judicial system, develop critical thinking, and enhance communication skills.

Hartford's two teams performed well in two invitational competitions early in the season, winning both rounds against the University of New Hampshire and tying with Harvard and Brandeis at Brandeis. At the Yale invitational, Penny Bonhomme '10 won All-Regional Best Attorney, and Darren Mudge '10 won All-Regional Witness. Associate Professor of Legal Studies Sharon Pope, who is also an attorney, serves as faculty advisor to the MTS. ■