

Making a Difference

A monthly sampler of educational, cultural, and economic contributions of Maine's public universities



Paul Curtis

UMF Student Honored with National Award

FARMINGTON – Paul Curtis, a UMF senior from Durham, was recently honored with the National Association of Student Personnel Administrators' State of Maine Catch a Rising Star award given to an undergraduate student for demonstrated academic achievement, proven campus leadership and an interest in pursuing a career in the student affairs field.

Curtis, a business economics major, has worked with the UMF Office of Student Life since his sophomore year. Actively pursuing ways to contribute to the campus, he has served as a resident assistant at four campus residence halls over the course of three years, providing training and mentorship to new staff members. He has served with the residence life office as a special projects assistant, been instrumental in maintaining the student life website, completed a full academic year student services internship, and served as the president of the UMF Table Gaming Club.

UMaine Helps Keep Maine's Beaches Clean

ORONO – UMaine Cooperative Extension, in partnership with the Maine Sea Grant program, is working to keep Maine's coastal beaches safe and clean, and recently received funding to continue their work.

Since 2002, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has provided Maine with money to implement a beach monitoring assessment and notification program known as Maine Healthy Beaches.

The program is important because Maine's beaches are valuable resources and offer a variety of recreational and economic opportunities. Currently, 25 towns and state parks participate in this voluntary program with 60 beach management areas routinely monitored Memorial Day through Labor Day. Participating beaches span from Kittery to Mount Desert Island, and in 2008, UMaine Extension and Maine Sea Grant trained approximately 200 local level staff and volunteers to collect water samples using quality assured protocols. For more information, visit www.mainehealthybeaches.org.

UMA Features Speaker on Somalia and Darfur

AUGUSTA – Gilbert Martin, Amnesty International's Coordinator for East Africa, spoke on human rights efforts in Somalia, Darfur, and across the region at a UMA noon-time talk on February 2nd in the Holocaust and Human Rights Center of Maine.

Since 1990, Gilbert Martin has been responsible for research, coordination, and advising of human rights activities and strategies in eastern and southern Africa. He participated in the first on-site research mission reporting on the Rwandan Genocide in the summer of 1994 and is actively involved now in human rights work in Somalia and in Sudan's Darfur region.

Martin's talk at UMA focused on his work with Amnesty International and his efforts with governments, embassies, non-governmental organizations, and others to promote the respect of basic human rights in the region.

UMaine Offers Free Help with Tax Returns

ORONO – UMaine accounting students, under the supervision of Professor Steven Colburn, are offering free income tax filing assistance to the public on Monday afternoons, beginning in February.

The long-standing UMaine Volunteer Income Tax Assistance Program (VITA) is designed for low- to moderate-income taxpayers, people with disabilities, the elderly, or students who need help, but the service will be provided to anyone on campus or from surrounding communities with basic tax assistance needs. The program is sponsored by the U.S. Internal Revenue Service.

All student volunteers have taken tax preparation courses and are up to date on the latest tax law changes, and tax returns will be reviewed by faculty prior to completion. The program benefits taxpayers in the community and also is good training for accounting students. Taxpayers seeking assistance must call 581-1982 to schedule an appointment or for additional details.





UMaine Helps Mainers Save Energy and Stay Warm

ORONO – As the thermometer approached 30 below in many parts of the state, UMaine Cooperative Extension announced publication of “Maine Home Energy,” a series of bulletins designed to help Mainers keep warm, save money, heat safely, and conserve energy.

The bulletins can be downloaded at www.extension.umaine.edu (click on “Publications”). Topics currently available in the “Maine Home Energy” series include weather-stripping doors and windows, making inexpensive indoor shutters, creating insulated window coverings, heating one’s home safely, and saving energy in apartments. Information on comparing heating fuels, doing a home energy audit, and taking advantage of passive solar heating techniques will be available shortly.

UMPI Grant Will Help Native American Students

PRESQUE ISLE – UMPI was awarded a grant from the Nellie Mae Education Foundation’s Project Compass, where it will receive up to \$750,000 over the next four years to better serve its Native American student population as well as the region’s Native American community. With 65 Native American students, UMPI has the highest percentage of such students of all the University of Maine System campuses.

Project Compass is a multi-year initiative aimed at increasing the number of underrepresented populations graduating with four-year degrees. UMPI will use its grant funding to develop strategies that assist Native American students in transitioning from the native community to the university community.

With the grant, UMPI receives \$158,000 this year and can receive three more years of grant funding totaling \$750,000. The grants are contingent upon the institutions’ yearly progress on objectives developed during the planning year.

UMPI has been working closely with the Aroostook Band of Micmacs and the Houlton Band of Maliseet Indians on this project.

USM’s WMPG Hosts Film Festival

PORTLAND – USM’s community radio station WMPG (90.9 and 104.1 FM) and the USM Portland Events Board present “The WMPG Thursday Night Film Festival” on Thursdays through March 12.

Upcoming shows include: Feb. 12 - Tom Dowd: Language of Music; Feb. 26 - Always For Pleasure (1978); Mar. 5 – Devil Got My Woman and Legends of Country Blues Guitar: Vol. 3; Mar. 12 - Hated GG Allin.

The shows begin at 7 p.m. at the Gerald E. Talbot

Lecture Hall, Portland. Tickets are available for \$5 at the door, and it is free for USM students. For a complete description of each film, go to <http://www.wmpg.org>. For more information, contact station manager Jim Rand at 780-4424.

UMF Exhibit Offers View of Consumerist Culture

FARMINGTON – UMF’s Art Gallery presents the exhibit “Here to There” through March 8. The exhibit features two displays by Philadelphia artists Dana Hanmer and Travis Hanmer. Both artists invite the viewer to consider the contradictions underlying contemporary consumerist culture.

Dana Hanmer’s “Complex” employs disposable materials in the construction of fairy tale landscapes that transcend the throw-away elements from which they are constructed. Travis Hanmer’s iGEAR series is an ongoing multi-media project in which the artist explores the notion of isolation as a social event.

These UMF gallery events are free and open to the public.



Faculty Noon Seminar Series Continues

PRESQUE ISLE – UMPI’s Faculty Noon Seminar Series will feature presentations on the carbon economy, online teaching, and teaching methods. Seminars will be held on the last Wednesday of each month. The series kicked off with a presentation on Jan. 28 by President Don Zillman entitled “Beyond the Carbon Economy.”

On Feb. 25, several faculty members will offer a group presentation on “Everything You Wanted to Know about On-line Teaching but Were Afraid to Ask.” This session will be led by Drs. Mike Amey, Ray Rice, Alice Sheppard, and Jing Qi, and instructor Wendy Ross. On March 25, Dr. Harold Jones will lead a presentation on “Developing a Psychological Basis for Teaching Methods: Dream or Reality?”

The purpose of the Faculty Noon Seminar Series is to foster awareness of research and teaching activities taking place on campus and to provide a forum for dissemination between faculty members. As a campus-wide forum, students, faculty, and administrative staff are invited to present their work during the seminar series. For more information call 768-9749.



UMaine's AEWCC Receives Award for Composite Building Material

ORONO – For the second year in a row, the University of Maine's Advanced Structures & Composites Center has been recognized as an industry leader by the American Composites Manufacturers Association.

This year the Center took home the American Composites Excellence Award for Most Creative Application for its blast resistant building construction material. This is the top composites conference in North America and was attended by about 3,000 industry representatives. The ACE Award is presented for the most creative application of composite materials.

The building panels developed at UMaine are intended for use by the Army for modular building structures that are blast and disaster resistant. The technology involves a coating applied to wood that allows it to absorb five to seven times more energy in a blast or in a hurricane.

County Artist's Work on Display at UMFK Gallery



FORT KENT – UMFK's Blake Library gallery is exhibiting a collection of acrylic paintings celebrating the sacred feminine experience entitled, "Femme

Divine," by Aroostook County native, Andrea Peterson through February 28.

Much of Peterson's work comes from the incarnation of the landscape as the Mother Earth's body.

Peterson was trained as an artist at UMPI. Her use of rich and unexpected colors in her acrylic paintings often makes the connection between the spiritual and physical worlds.

USM Center for Book Arts Shows First Exhibit

PORTLAND – The Kate Cheney Chappell Center for Book Arts at USM launched its first exhibition which runs through March 19.

The exhibition, "Turning Pages," will be on display in the Glickman Family Library in Portland and will showcase the works by 50 former USM students, all practicing book artists. The exhibit is free and open to the public during library hours. For more information call 780-4270.

One of the 50 artists invited to participate is USM alumna, Susan Walker. Her piece is titled "Biblioclasm" and is a palm leaf book with paste paper, photocopier transparencies, and altered book pages with paste paper covered boards. "Biblioclasm," which means the destruction of books, was inspired by reports Walker read about the destruction of libraries during the early days of the Iraq war and, more recently, a May 2007 article reporting a car bombing near the centuries-old Mutanabbi Street Book Market in Baghdad that sent book pages raining down on rescue workers.

USM alumna Kate Cheney Chappell, professional artist and co-founder of Tom's of Maine, established USM's Center for Book Arts last year. It celebrates the innovative and engaging nature of book arts through lectures and workshops by national and regional book artists, and through exhibits of artists' books.



One of the works featured at USM's exhibit is "Her Memory Garden II" by Sissy Buck.

UMFK Hosts Firefighting Course

FORT KENT – UMFK is hosting a 32-hour wildland firefighting training course in February. The training course is free and is offered cooperatively between the Maine Forest Service and UMFK.

Upon completion of the course, students receive nationwide federal wildland firefighter credentials. The course is designed to provide students with the core competencies needed to safely and effectively perform the tasks required of a wildland firefighter. The course is taught by rangers with the Maine Forest Service and covers areas including fire behavior, tools and equipment, safety, firefighter preparedness, suppression, securing the line, mapping, hazardous materials, and fire survival. In addition to this course, an outdoor eight-hour exercise consisting of fire exercise, pumps, helicopter safety, hand tools, radios, and hands-on fire shelter is being planned for this spring.

"The Salt Coast Sages" Poets at UMM

MACHIAS – UMM's Maine Writers Series hosts The Salt Coast Sages on Thursday, February 12, 2009 at 7:00 p.m. in the UMM Art Gallery, located in Powers Hall.

The Salt Coast Sages, a group of local poets from Down East Maine, first came together in a poetry class in the Sunrise Senior College, an education program for learners over the age of fifty at UMM. Members of the group include: Sharon Bray, Donald Crane, Gerald George, Philip Rose, and Grace Sheridan. All have published poetry in literary journals and other periodicals, but each has a different writing style, background, and personality. The Sages will read from their new book, *A Rump-Sprung Chair and a One-Eyed Cat: A Collection of Poems by The Salt Coast Sages*.

To learn more about The Salt Coast Sages, visit their Website at www.saltcoastsages.com. This event is free and open to the public. For more information, call 255-1334.



Shamou will perform at the Feb. 27 Dinner

USM & Women's History Month

PORTLAND – USM's Annual International Women's History Month Dinner takes place from 5-6:30 p.m. on February 27 in USM's Abromson Community Education Center.

Following the dinner, there will be a free program and reception co-hosted by the Office of Multicultural Student Affairs, entitled, "New Mainers: Stories of Survival and Arrival." This event celebrates the release of the book, "New Mainers: Portraits of Our Immigrant Neighbors," and will feature comments by several of the women whose portraits are in the book, and traditional Middle Eastern drumming performed by Shamou. The book features photographs by Jan Pieter van Voorst van Beest and text by Pat Nyhan. The reception and book signing will take place after the program in the lobby of the Abromson Center.

The annual dinner celebrates USM's Women and Gender Studies Program. Tickets are \$20 for the public and \$10 for students, and can be purchased by calling 780-4862.

UMA Offers Screening of *Inheritance*

AUGUSTA – UMA's Michael Klahr Center will offer a screening and discussion of the film *Inheritance* at 6:30 p.m. on February 26. Admission is free.

The film is about the story of Monika Hertwig, whose father was Amon Goeth, the murderous Nazi death-camp commandant depicted in Steven Spielberg's movie "Schindler's List." The documentary follows Hertwig as she struggles to come to terms with her "inheritance" by meeting face-to-face with Helen Jonas, a survivor of Goeth's brutality, at the memorial site of Plaszow more than fifty years later. For more information or to RSVP for large groups, call 621-3530 or email infohrc@maine.edu.

Rockland Center Receives Chamber Award

ROCKLAND – The Camden-Rockport-Lincolntonville Chamber of Commerce recently presented their 2008 Education Award to the University College Center at Rockland (URock) for its contributions to higher education in Maine's Midcoast community. Approximately 350 members and guests attended the 68th annual event. Deb Meehan, director of University College at Rockland, accepted the award on behalf of URock.

Vicki Doudera, the chamber board member who presented the award, noted an example of community partnership and local economic development, where approximately 80% of the nurses working at Pen Bay Hospital have received their RN designation through this center. Since moving to Rockland, the Center's enrollment has increased by 20%.

Chancellor Names Task Force

BANGOR – Last month, UMS Chancellor Richard L. Pattenaude announced his appointment of a 12-person task force to review and recommend operational and structural changes to Maine's 40-year-old, 45,000-student state university system.

The task force will be chaired by **David T. Flanagan** of Manchester, the former president/CEO of Central Maine Power Co. Flanagan served on the University of Maine System (UMS) Board of Trustees from 1985-95, including one term as Board chair.

Other members of the task force are: current UMS trustees **Norman L. Fournier** of Wallagrass and **Marjorie M. Medd** of Norway; **Dr. Sandra Featherman** of Kennebunkport, the former president of the University of New England; **M. Michelle Hood** of Bar Harbor, president/CEO of Eastern Maine Healthcare Systems; **Dr. Allyson Hughes Handley** of Readfield, UMA president; **Susan A. Gendron** of Raymond, commissioner of the Maine Department of Education and Cultural Affairs and a current ex officio member of the UMS Board of Trustees; **Dr. Bertram H. Jacobs** of Wilton and **Dr. Robert W. Rice** of Veazie, both of whom serve as faculty representatives to the UMS Board of Trustees representing UMF and UMaine, respectively; **Charles Weiss** of Presque Isle, an undergraduate UMPI student and a representative of his school's student body at committee meetings of the UMS Board of Trustees; **James F. Bradley** of Mechanic Falls, a USM staff member and president of the Associated C.O.L.T. Staff of the Universities of Maine; and **Ronald A. Mosley** of Machias, a UMM faculty member and president of the Associated Faculties of the University of Maine System.

In addition, Pattenaude said that James H. Breece, vice chancellor for academic affairs, and Rebecca M. Wyke, vice chancellor for finance and administration, will serve the task force as non-voting, ex officio members.

Detailed information about the task force and a meeting schedule, may be found at www.maine.edu/UMSTaskForce.