

Making a Difference

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

Graduation Snapshot: A Congratulatory Kiss



The seven universities of the University of Maine System awarded an estimated 5,330 degrees to graduates in May.

Feds Award \$30 Million Grant to UMaine Partnership

ORONO – The Department of Energy announced on April 18 that it will fund a \$30 million research grant aimed at commercializing UMaine technology.

A partnership involving UMaine, Red Shield Environmental, and American Process Incorporated will use this funding to develop a near commercial-scale demonstration plant to create ethanol from forest-based biomass. This project will continue the work being conducted by researchers in UMaine's Forest Bioproducts Research Institute.

President Robert Kennedy noted that the development of new, renewable energy sources is critical to UMaine's future, and that this grant demonstrates the great potential for creating fuel from forest bioproducts.

This cutting-edge work is driven, to a large degree, by UMaine's researchers, including Hemant Pendse, chair of UMaine's chemical and biological engineering department, who is leading this effort.

This is the largest grant ever involving University of Maine research and certainly is one of the largest for any academic or research organization in the state.

UMFK Serves Community During Flood Emergency

FORT KENT – Classes resumed at UMFK on May 5th – just days after the campus was closed due to the record flooding that impacted the entire St. John Valley and beyond.

The tumultuous week included evacuating dozens of residence hall students to UMPI and Northern Maine Community College, when the town of Fort Kent had to shut down the municipal sewer system due to the flooding. Water from the nearby Fish River crept toward campus buildings and flooded several basements—at one point, Cyr Hall had more than three feet of water in the basement.

Despite the many challenges presented during the epic flood event, UMFK continued to serve as a vital resource to the community. The university's Sports Center served as the Red Cross Shelter for displaced local residents. The campus dining facility served hundreds of meals around the clock to local, county, state, and federal emergency personnel, in addition to the university's own emergency response team. As university-related updates were posted on the UMFK web site, staff also included information helpful to local residents such as where to obtain bottled water and well test kits, as well as the day-to-day availability of important transportation links such as the International Bridge and Fish River Bridge.

As a testament to the hardy reputation of folks from The County, the end of semester activities took place without a hitch and, just days after the flood, graduates received their degrees—right on schedule.



As part of the UMFK campus evacuation, a student boards a bus headed for UMPI.

UCB Holds Animal Wellness Expo

BANGOR – On May 3rd, students in the University College of Bangor's Veterinary Tech program held an Animal Wellness Expo at Camden Hall on the UCB campus.

During the Expo, students were offered a wide range of free services for people's pets, including baths, ear cleanings, and nail trimmings. Also offered were educational activities, a training demonstration provided by Green Acres Kennel, an Adoption Fair hosted by the rescue groups Save Our Strays and the Animal Orphanage, and a rabies clinic.

USM's Muskie School Receives \$560K Grant to Study State Health Plans

PORTLAND – Earlier this month, USM's Muskie School of Public Service was awarded a \$567,000 grant from the Robert Wood Johnson Foundation to conduct a two-year study which will assess the impact that premium requirements and cost-sharing have on the access to health care in three New England states.

Muskie School Professor Beth Kibreth is working in partnership with a colleague from the Harvard School of Public Health to study DirigoChoice (Maine), the Commonwealth Care initiative (Massachusetts) and the new Catamount Health initiative (Vermont).

Their team of health economists, political scientists, and health services researchers will review how people respond to cost sharing requirements by looking at who enrolls in the plans and how they actually use health care, once enrolled. Analyzing health benefit claims will be a key part of the process, as well as a qualitative policy analysis of the dynamics in the three states—for example: how policymakers arrived at the program designs they chose, and how well political support is maintained for the programs.

The study is expected to result in a report targeted to state policymakers.

UMF Features Alumnus and Award-Winning Poet in Lunchtime Poet Series



Tryfon Tolides

FARMINGTON – UMF's Creative Writing program presented award-winning poet Tryfon Tolides as its Lunchtime Poet for spring 2008.

Tolides read from his work on May 1, at the Olsen Student Center. The reading was open to the public and was followed by a book-signing by the author.

Tolides is the author of "An Almost Pure Empty Walking," which won the National Poetry

Series in 2005. He moved to the United States when he was only six, but his work is rooted in the mountains, wind, and the deep interior of his birthplace, Korifi Voiou, a tiny village in Greece. His poems express a longing and a searching for peace, home, beauty, and escape. He has a B.F.A. in creative writing from the University of Maine at Farmington and received an M.F.A. in creative writing from Syracuse University.

UMFK Offers GIS Workshop to Community

FORT KENT – The University of Maine at Fort Kent is offering a Geographic Information System (GIS) workshop, May 19-20. The workshop will focus on using ArcGIS, a professional level GIS software package. This is the fourth in

a series of training sessions designed for community members and regional professionals. During the past two years, UMFK offered workshops on Global Position Systems (GPS) and introductory GIS. This year the workshop is geared to land managers, consultants, government officials, and other professionals seeking introductory training in GIS with professional level software.

Training on the professional level GIS software is traditionally offered by commercial vendors for thousands of dollars. These sessions are offered at a reasonable cost as part of the University's commitment to community outreach.

UMFK also offers more advanced courses in GIS during the school year.

UMPI & Magnet School Collaborate: College Credit for High School Students

PRESQUE ISLE – Representatives from the Maine School of Science and Mathematics (MSSM) in Limestone and UMPI signed a collaborative agreement last month that allows MSSM students to get a head start on college and get experience in a college setting while still in high school.

The agreement gives MSSM students the opportunity to complete at least one semester of college credit prior to graduation at the high school level. The agreement will allow MSSM graduates with an academic average of B minus or higher to be automatically accepted at UMPI.

In addition, the two institutions will establish a reasonable fee to allow MSSM students access to the University's health and wellness center, as well as cultural events, lectures, and other public events. UMPI and MSSM administration, faculty, and staff also will meet regularly to consider other collaborative arrangements that will benefit both schools.

The Maine School of Science and Mathematics is a public residential magnet school chartered and funded by the Maine State Legislature. Opened in 1995, the MSSM has over 100 students from 81 towns and cities.

UMaine Offers Outreach in Mathematical Biology to Maine High Schools

ORONO – Starting this fall, Maine high school students can work alongside University of Maine researchers as part of a unique outreach effort at the SPEED (Spatial Population Ecological and Epidemiological Dynamics) Lab. Under the guidance of David Hiebeler, a professor in the Department of Mathematics and Statistics, the lab's research team builds computational and mathematical models of populations, which describe their behavior over time under a variety of simulated environmental conditions.

Hiebeler will offer introductory mathematical biology talks in schools this spring; and later this fall, interested high school students will meet weekly on campus to begin training and become directly involved in SPEED Lab research projects. For more information, visit <http://www.math.umaine.edu/faculty/hiebeler/speedlab>.

UMaine Research Partner Receives \$12.9M Federal Contract

ORONO – The U.S. Dept. of Defense announced on April 24 a \$12.9 million grant to Maine Secure Composites, a UMaine Advanced Engineered Wood Composites Center partner company located at UMaine's Target Technology Incubator.

The money will be used to support continued work on the secure shipping container project that began at AEW. This project involves developing secure shipping containers made from composite materials. The containers are equipped with sensors that can warn shipping and port personnel if there has been tampering. This work has significant potential implications for both the shipping industry and for homeland security.

The composite materials and design also make the containers lighter than those currently in use. The first part of the new grant will involve further development of the container designs and work on a process for mass production.

UMaine students have already benefited from the opportunity to participate in R&D work, and the new grants will create even more opportunities for current and future students.

UMF Presents Spring Band and Chorus Concerts

FARMINGTON – UMF students and western Maine community members presented two musical events in Farmington during May.

• Concert Band

The UMF Concert Band, comprised of UMF students, community members, and local high school students, presented its spring concert on May 2.

The program included marches by Percy Grainger and R.B. Hall, the movement "Jupiter" from Gustav Holst's "Planets" and highlights from Andrew Lloyd Webber's "Phantom of the Opera." Also on the program is the Dixieland standard "Tuba Tiger Rag" arranged by Luther Henderson, featuring Ron Small on the tuba.

• Community Chorus

On May 10, the UMF Community Chorus presented two performances of their spring program.

Celebrating its twenty-sixth year, the UMF Community Chorus brings together community members from throughout western Maine with University of Maine at Farmington students, faculty, and staff to present two programs every year.

The concert featured "Mass in C, Op. 86" by Beethoven, a large-scale choral work with orchestra. Choral members Roger Condit, Elaine Eadler, Lisl Fuson, Mardie Porter, Carol Ramz, Paul Stancioff and Daniel Woodward were featured as soloists.

USM Team Receives Recognition at Regional Competition

PORTLAND – USM's SIFE (Students In Free Enterprise) team returned to Portland as winners after participating in the SIFE USA Regional Competition earlier this month in Providence.

The team presented a report of their year-long community outreach projects to a panel of business leaders, which named them a SIFE USA Regional Champion. The team now advances to the national level of SIFE competition this month in Chicago.

SIFE is an international non-profit organization active on more than 1,400 university campuses in 48 countries. SIFE teams create economic opportunities in their communities by organizing outreach projects that focus on market economics, entrepreneurship, personal finance, success skills, and business ethics.

During this academic year, the USM SIFE team organized seven projects in the community, including the Long Creek project, where USM students taught and mentored juvenile detainees in job hunting, financial literacy, and entrepreneurship skills. The USM SIFE Long Creek project has been growing and evolving over the course of four years and strives to have an enduring effect on the individuals at

Long Creek.



USM's SIFE team members are (back row): Jason DeCampos (Hallowell); Mike Corson (Yarmouth); Timothy Pulsoni (Portland); Nevin Shawn Duffey (Yarmouth); and (front row) Heather Reed (Waterboro); Buddy Lalemand (Auburn); and Sara Willey (Windham).

Thinking Matters Symposium

PORTLAND – USM and Southern Maine Community College students presented research findings on a variety of projects at the 2008 Thinking Matters symposium in April.

Covering 230 topics, the symposium included a student-led panel discussion, oral sessions, poster sessions, a keynote event, and roundtable discussions. Through these projects, students learn how to pursue their own research agenda, creating their own questions and pursuing the answers.

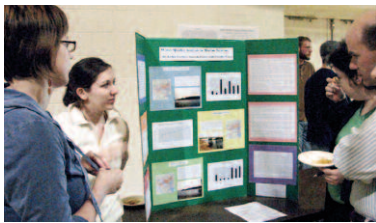
Among the student projects presented: use of remote sensing software to track 20 years of urban development in the greater Portland area; media studies students created a film for Portland Trails to supplement that group's efforts to making school playgrounds places to learn as well as play; exercise physiology students studied how useful iPod's PumpOne program is in motivating students age 18-25 to fight weight gain through exercise; and a political science student examined how political groups in Europe exploit the passions of soccer fans to advance their agendas.

For more information about the annual symposium, visit: <http://research.usm.maine.edu/thinkingmatters/>.

Celebrate UMM: Year of Scholarship & Service

MACHIAS – The UMM community took time out on April 30 for Celebrate UMM: A Year of Scholarship and Service. It was the fourth year for the event in which students displayed table-top posters for their academic work, and student groups shared their activities both on- and off-campus.

Awards for outstanding service to campus and community were plentiful. The two clubs that received the student organization service award were the 100% Society and the Green Council. The Society organized Pride Week in early April, culminating with the first Rainbow Ball outreach event, a prom for high school students statewide who may not be able to attend their own prom with the person with whom they would like. The Green Council initiated several new sustainable-living practices on campus, and finished first



A UMM student talks to others about her marine studies project as part of Celebrate UMM.

among all Maine campuses in Recyclemania, the national online competition that measured per-capita recycling over 10 weeks, January through April.

CentRO Summit Explores Educational Preparation for Tourism Careers

ORONO – The University of Maine System's Center for Tourism Research and Outreach (CentRO) held a Tourism Education Summit in Belfast to explore Maine's tourism-related higher education programs.

Participants discussed existing tourism-related academic programs in Maine and how comprehensively they address the state's travel, tourism, recreation, and hospitality needs. The discussions provided an opportunity to identify new curricula in terms of addressing unmet needs.

CentRO staff will prepare a report on the proceedings of the meeting, seeking collaborative strategies among the university and community college campuses and higher education systems for enhancing educational programs that prepare today's young people for careers in tourism and hospitality.

For additional information: www.umaine.edu/centro.

UMA: Hitler's Holocaust Lecture Series Takes Place in Bangor and Augusta

BANGOR & AUGUSTA – UMA hosted a seven-week speaker series entitled Hitler's Holocaust from February through mid-May. The series, which was free and open to the public, was organized by Libra Professor Jonathan Goldstein.

Presentations took place in Bangor and Augusta.

Topics and speakers included: Nazi Cartoons: Antisemitic Caricatures and Stereotypes by Professor Russel Lemmons, Jacksonville [Alabama] State University; My Escape from the

Nazi in Vienna, 1938, by Alex Wilde, Holocaust survivor, Brewer, Maine; Music of the Holocaust, by Professor Phil Silver, University of Maine; Iranian Holocaust Denial, by Dr. Matthias Kuentzel, Hamburg, Germany/Vidal Sassoon Institute for the Study of Antisemitism/Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Arab Holocaust Denial, by Professor Raphael Israeli, Truman Institute, Hebrew University of Jerusalem; Ambassador Fengshan Ho's Holocaust Rescue Efforts in Vienna, 1938, by Manli Ho, independent scholar and former China Daily correspondent; and The Goldhagen/Browning Controversy on Holocaust Causation, by Professor Peter Hayes, Zev Weiss Professor of Holocaust Studies and German History, Northwestern University.

Hitler's Holocaust was produced with the generous support of the Libra Foundation, Bangor JCEA, and the Holocaust and Human Rights Center of Maine.

UMM's 'Thou Art Fair' Helps Local High Schoolers Create

MACHIAS – "Creativity" took on many meanings at once at UMM, where more than 100 area high school students participated in Thou Art Fair last month.

Thou Art Fair is the annual April production of UMM's Interdisciplinary Fine Arts department.

The multi-dimensional fair in the university gymnasium feted all manner of fun, mostly around music, dance and art. Students came from eight Washington County high schools: Machias Memorial, Washington Academy, Jonesport-Beals, Lubec, Calais, Narraguagus of Harrington, Shead of Eastport and East Grand of Danforth.

"It's totally awesome," said Ben Lithgow, a Washington Academy senior, as he tried his hand with an accordion. The fun extended across the campus. High school students in the Performing Arts Center watched a UMM student theater performance and there were demonstrations of book arts in the school's new, dedicated book arts studio.

UMPI Students Build Online Health Portal for the Region

PRESQUE ISLE – UMPI students gained important hands-on experience building a web site that will serve as a health care resource for the region thanks to a partnership with the University of New England and The Aroostook Medical Center.

A group of students in the University's Management Information System program built the web site www.arostookhealth.org to serve as a "health services portal" for the local community.

The web site includes a vast database of health care providers, services, information on chronic conditions, and the resources available locally as well as throughout Maine.

Students worked from 4 to 6 hours per week on the project. The health portal, now up and available for use, has more than 200 web pages that include a wide array of health care resources.