



# University of Southern Maine American & New England Studies

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## From the Director

It seems like only a year ago that I was writing in this space about our losing a valued administrative assistant. Oh, wait, that's because I was. Due to changes in her husband's employment, Susan Seagers had to move out of commuting range and thus had to resign her position with us. She was very sorry to leave ANES after only one academic year, and believe me, the feeling was mutual. Fortunately, we have recently brought Arline Palmer aboard as the newest member of our team, and I hope you'll take the opportunity to meet her soon.

Looking over the contents of this newsletter, it strikes me that ANES is going Hollywood. Professor **Ardis Cameron** has recently been in California to consult on a new film about Peyton Place author Grace Metalious, student and William Wilberforce biographer **Kevin Belmonte** was the historical consultant on the major studio release *Amazing Grace*, and I was recently channel surfing aimlessly when I suddenly came across new student and historical novelist **Jim Nelson** serving as an on-camera expert for a program about pirates on the History Channel. All this activity has me wondering whether I should start peddling the film rights to one of my books and whom I should suggest to play me in the movie version.

What all this activity probably means is that, as ever, the interests of our students and faculty are vital, interesting, and relevant. Whether it's a topic in twentieth-century popular culture or a subject from the more distant past, we always seem to have insightful things to say. And I'm glad that the TV-watching and movie-going public are getting to see what we in the program have known for nigh onto twenty years. (And now I want to ask Jim if pirates really said "Arrrgh" all the time.)

As you'll see in the coming pages, while not all the work of our students and faculty is necessarily Hollywood-worthy, we've once again logged another year of excellent accomplishment across a wide range of topics and disciplines. I hope you enjoy reading about it.

—Kent Ryden

## Colonial Dames Scholarship

**Rebecca Lamet** was awarded the American History Scholarship by the Colonial Dames of Maine. This honor is awarded each year to a graduate student within District 11, which represents the Dames organizations from the six New England states, all of which contribute to the scholarship. She received the award for the master's thesis project she is working on, titled "Spreading the Word: Classified Advertising and Consumer Culture in York County, Maine, from 1900 to 1919," in which she is applying the methodologies of print culture studies to classified advertisements in a York County newspaper in order to assess the self-representation and participation in public commercial discourse of York County residents.



The National Society of the Colonial Dames of America, founded in 1891, is a 15,000-member organization that promotes the study and preservation of American history through the preservation, restoration, and interpretation of historic sites, through educational programs and scholarships for national service, and through promoting research and educational publications.

## Thompson Scholarship

The ANES Program has been fortunate to have the Thompson Scholarship to award to a first-year ANES student who is interested in Maine history and culture. Given in the names of Mary Rines and Dr. Phillip P. Thompson by a family member, this scholarship celebrates their many contributions to the greater Portland community and their passion for Maine, its history, and its culture.

**Allison Ryall** is the sixth recipient of the Thompson Scholarship. Allison finished her B.A. in history and Russian studies at USM in December 2006. She is very active in several regional and national genealogical associations, and brings to ANES a particular interest in ethnicity in New England and Maine, particularly Slavic immigration and culture. We welcome her to the program and look forward to working with her.



## Maine Historical Society Internship

For the past several years, the ANES Program has offered a joint graduate assistantship/internship with the Education Department at the Maine Historical Society. Interns have assisted in a variety of department activities, from working with the Maine Memory Network to helping interpret the Longfellow House and its history.

**Jessica Graham** was the MHS intern during the spring of 2007. Every year, MHS mounts two museum exhibits and creates a curriculum unit for each one for use by teachers bringing their classes to the museum. Jessica completed the unit

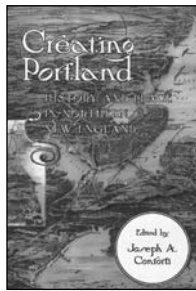


for Amazing! Maine Stories and was able to test the program by working with fourth- and fifth-grade students from three elementary schools in the Gardiner area. The curriculum materi-

als have been adapted for use in conjunction with a digital version of the exhibition the Maine Memory Network ([www.mainememory.net](http://www.mainememory.net)).

## Creating Portland Receives Honors

On November 20, 2006, Portland Mayor James I. Cohen issued a proclamation recognizing the publication of *Creating Portland: History and Place in Northern New England*, edited by Joe Conforti. Professor Conforti was present for the proclamation at a meeting of the Portland City Council. The proclamation notes that “*Creating Portland* is an extraordinary historical and cultural reference which will serve to help current and future citizens of the City better understand their past and appreciate how the interplay of continuity and change, history and geography, leadership and citizen engagement have shaped Portland as a unique and vibrant place.”



The 2005 book, which also includes contributions by ANES professors Donna Cassidy and Kent Ryden, has also received a Certificate of Merit from the Association for the Study of State and Local History.

## ANES Student and Alumni Activities Students

**Kevin Belmonte** spent five years as the lead historical consultant for the motion picture *Amazing Grace: The William Wilberforce Story*, directed by Michael Apted and starring Albert Finney and Ioan Gruffudd. He attended the film’s premiere in New York City on February 12. He was also invited to give a lecture at the State Department in Washington as part of the Secretary of State’s Open Forum celebration of the life of Dr. Martin Luther King. His lecture, which ties William Wilberforce’s work to that of Dr. King, has been posted on the State Department Web site at <http://www.state.gov/s/p/of/procl/79224.htm>.

**Lynne Chabot** received an Honorable Mention in the L.L. Bean Health and Wellness Photo Contest, and the photo was included in the company’s Health and Wellness calendar for 2007. The scene is of Harrison Pond in Albany, Maine, and a copy of it is on display at the ANES office.

**Penny Davis-Dublin** presented a paper titled “Irish Ethnicity and Maine Politics” at the annual New England American Studies Association conference at USM in September 2006. She is also USM’s graduate student representative on the steering committee of the Jean Byers Sampson Center for Diversity at the Glickman Library.

**Lee Roberts** is working for Maine Public Radio.

**Michelle Smith** was selected for an Elizabeth Bishop Perkins Fellowship in Museum Practice and Research at the Museums of Old York for the summer of 2007.

**Bjorn Swenson** is coordinator of educational programs at Greater Portland Landmarks.

## Alumni

**Chris Barbour** teaches special education in the Topsham school system.

**Jennifer Blanchard** received her Ph.D. in American studies from the College of William and Mary. The title of her dissertation was “More or Less than Kind: Brothers and Sisters in Nineteenth-Century American Literature.”

**Alan Casavant** was elected to the Maine State Senate.

**Ann Colford** won a national writing award for first place in food writing from the Association of Alternative Weeklies, among papers with circulation of less than 50,000. The winning article was called “Patience is Sweet,” and there is a link to it at [www.aan.org](http://www.aan.org). She was also promoted from writer-at-large to associate editor at the *Pacific Northwest Inlander*, as of July 2006.

Since 1998, **Ellen Marlatt** has conducted research, authored dozens of reports, and presented papers on archaeological projects in New Hampshire, Maine, Massachusetts, and Vermont, covering subjects ranging from an eighteenth-century African burial ground in Portsmouth, N.H., to nineteenth and twentieth-century textile mills, to farmsteads in northern Maine. She writes, “I have been fortunate to be able to apply ANES principles and approaches to expand our knowledge of the history of northern New England through the growing field of historical archaeology.”

**Cynthia Melendy (Richardson)**, Ph.D., is a visiting assistant professor in the history department at the University of South Florida, teaching courses in environmental history and material culture as well as the American history survey. She is the book review editor for *H-Environment*, and has an article on film and environment in Florida coming out in the journal *Environmental History* along with several book reviews.

**Beverly Mobley** is a research analyst with the Research Division, Constituent Services Unit, Legislative Counsel Bureau, Carson City, Nevada. As a volunteer for the Nevada State Museum, she wrote a piece for the museum's Web site about the Stewart Indian School, including photos from its collection and images of objects associated with the school. Her contributions can be seen at <http://dmla.clan.lib.nv.us/docs/museums/cc/exhibits2.htm>.

**Rebecca (McDonald) Pritchard** is teaching courses at Southern Maine Community College.

**Marie Sacks** received the James Phinney Baxter Award from the Maine Historical Society for her scholarly article "The Two Faces of Ballstown: Religion, Governance, and Cultural Values on the Maine Frontier, 1760-1820," which appeared in the journal *Maine History* in January 2007. The Baxter Award is given annually by the editorial board of *Maine History* for the best paper to appear in that journal in the course of a year.

The subject of **Doug Watkins's** ANES project, the Edmund and Rachel Coffin Clark Homestead in China, Maine, was listed on the National Register of Historic Places on October 4, 2006, largely, according to the Maine Historic Preservation Commission, as a result of Doug's work and effort.

**Peggy Wishart** had parts of the research she conducted for her exit paper on the Lawton Family of Freetown, Massachusetts, and their participation in the region's maritime economy in the eighteenth and nineteenth century, included in the annual issue of the *Lawton Ledger*, a newsletter about the Lawton family and their descendants.

**Kate Woodbury** is teaching courses at Southern Maine Community College and at Andover College.

**Marie (Curcio) Yarborough**, program coordinator at the Abbe Museum in Bar Harbor, Maine, was the co-creator of "Passamaquoddy History and Culture: A Traveling Teaching Kit for Grades 5-8," which won third place in the curriculum category of the National Association for Interpretation annual media award competition. The competition is designed to promote excellence in the delivery of natural, cultural, and historical nonpersonal interpretive services. A downloadable version of the kit may be seen at [www.nps.gov/acad/forteachers/passkit.htm](http://www.nps.gov/acad/forteachers/passkit.htm).

## Faculty Activities

**Ardis Cameron** was awarded USM's Trustee Professorship for 2007-08. She published "Spaces of Encounter: The Cultural Labor of Class Difference," in the *Journal of International Labor and Working-Class History*; "Cultures of Belonging: Women, Popular Culture, and Activism," in the *Journal of Women's History*; and "Never Enough: Peyton Place and the Making of a Literary Sequel," an introduction to *Return To Peyton Place*, University Press of New England. In addition, she presented recent work on *Peyton Place* at the Maine Literary Festival in Camden in November; gave a paper, "The Other Side of Writing: Peyton Place and the Place of Writing in Working Class Life and Culture" at the annual convention of the Organization of American Historians in Minneapolis; and was on a panel in June in Camden, celebrating the 50th anniversary of the filming of *Peyton Place*. She was also an invited speaker at the University of Connecticut, the University of New Hampshire-Manchester, and in Laconia, New Hampshire. She was flown to Los Angeles, Calif., in June to work as a consultant with Carol Brawn Productions on the forthcoming film *Grace*, starring Sandra Bullock. She has also been a member of the USM Research Council.

**Donna Cassidy** gave several lectures on her new projects on transnationalism, region, and American modernist art:

Marsden Hartley, Transnational Modernist," at the Maine Humanities Council's Humanities Fest at Bates College last October; "Marsden Hartley, Transnational Modernism, and Region: From Provence to Maine," at the Harn Museum of Art, University of Florida, Gainesville, also in October; "Making Geography Trivial: Marsden Hartley, Provence, and Transatlantic Modernism," at USM in January; and "Looking North: American Artists in Quebec and the Canadian Maritimes" at the Ogunquit Museum of Art in July. She was on sabbatical last spring semester continuing her research on these projects, which included spending a month in France.

**Joseph Conforti** was named distinguished professor at USM. His history of colonial New England, *Saints and Strangers*, was named an Outstanding Academic Book for 2007 by *Choice* magazine. His edited volume, *Creating Portland*, received a Certificate of Merit from the Association for the Study of State and Local History. In October Conforti spoke at the Maine Humanities Council's 30th anniversary conference at Bates College. His topic was "New England and the Sea." In November, he spoke on "Imagining New England and Maine" at the Maine Literary Conference in Camden. In May he spoke to the Yarmouth Historical Society on "Creating Portland: Writing a Community's History for the Twenty-first Century." In May he also spoke to 200 high school students as part of a panel of writers discussing "Maine Writing and the Sense of Place."

**Matthew Edney** was on leave for 2006-2007, continuing to direct *The History of Cartography* series at the University of Wisconsin-Madison; the big news is the publication in June 2007 of *Volume Three, Cartography in the European Renaissance*, edited by the late David Woodward, which clocks in at some 2,300 large pages! Edney will return to USM in September 2007 on a reduced-time appointment, which will permit him to continue

directing the *History*, and continuing to coedit *Volume Four, Cartography in the European Enlightenment*. Even so, he very much looks forward to getting back to Maine and to teaching again. Professionally, he's been very busy, with many presentations in North America and Europe (Oxford, Barcelona, Amsterdam). He completed a significant update to his online publication, "Recent Trends in the History of Cartography," ver. 2.1, Coordinates, ser. B, no. 6 (April 2007) <http://purl.oclc.org/coordinates/coordinates.htm>.

**Kent Ryden** published a short piece titled "Why Your World Looks the Way It Does and Why It Matters: Cultural Landscape as Visual Culture" in the journal *Visual Arts Research*, and published entries on "Down East Maine," "Geography," "Landscape," and "New England" in *The Encyclopedia of American Folklife*, edited by Simon J. Bronner. He has two essays scheduled to appear shortly: "How Could a Weed Be a Book?": Books, Ethics, Power, and AS and County Almanac," in *ISLE: Interdisciplinary Studies in Literature and Environment*, and "Beneath the Surface: Natural Landscapes, Cultural Meanings, and Teaching about Place," in *On Location: Adventures in Place-Based Teaching*, edited by Laird Christensen and Hal Crimmel (University of Nevada Press). He gave a paper titled "Culture Region or Bioregion? Russell Banks, New England, and New York" at the biennial conference of the Association for the Study of Literature and Environment, presented a paper titled "Folk Landscapes of a Changing Town: An Ecofolkloristic Approach" at the meeting of the American Folklore Society, and gave invited talks at the University of

Connecticut, the Bethel Historical Society, and the Portland chapter of the Mayflower Society.

## Internship Sites

Bethel Historical Society  
Maine Historical Society  
Maine Humanities Council  
Maine Preservation  
Portland Harbor Museum  
Town of Wiscasset, Office of Planning and Development

## Theses/Projects Completed

- **Thomas Bennett**, "Vital Statistics, Historical Demography, and Population Change in Cumberland, Maine: Vital Records as Source Documents for Local History"
- **Benjamin DalPra**, "Poor Ti Jean: Mapping Jack Kerouac's America—Heretical Cultural Geography and Identity in Selected Works"
- **Gabrielle Daniello**, "Ghost Street: The Restless World of Portland's India Street in the Early Twentieth Century"
- **David Farrington**, "The Only Security in All the World Today: The Camp Berea Plays of Edith Chaffee"
- **Susan Melcher**, "Cycling Through American Landscapes"
- **Marie (Curcio) Yarborough**, "Maine Archaeology, Federal Preservation Policies, and Native People"

## Graduate Assistants 2007-2008

*Osher Map Library*

**Michelle Hammond**, B.A.,  
Anthropology, San Diego State University

**Elsbeth Mantler**, B.A., English,  
Salisbury University

*Special Collections, USM Library*

**John Calavitta**, B.A. and M.A.,  
English, Cleveland State University

**Michelle Smith**, B.A., English,  
Providence College

*Faculty Research Assistants*

**Michelle Morgan**, B.A., Arts and  
Humanities, USM's Lewiston-Auburn  
College

**Aaron Eaton**, B.A., American Studies  
and Sociology, Hobart College

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