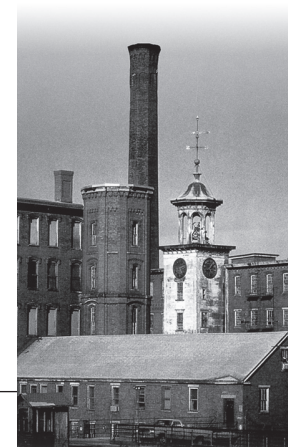




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# University of Southern Maine American & New England Studies

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## From the Director



This summer, between Tuesday morning and Thursday evening, I commuted to USM from Stonington, Maine, a three and half hour drive each way. I like driving. Since cell phones don't work along most of the rural roads I travel, it's easy to unplug, think, and plan. What I like most, however, is the signage that paves the way: hand-written placards on trees, homemade advertisements for pies, berries, fill, dolls, animals and services of all sorts, political hopes pinned to mail-boxes, and, of course, the ubiquitous bumper sticker. This summer, however, there seemed to be a theme: "Keep Belfast (Union, Freedom, Bucksport, Searsport) Weird," the signs pleaded.

Maine towns are hardly alone in this longing to be weird; it has cropped up in Austin, Texas, Venice Beach, California, and, so I am told, in Martha's Vineyard, where traces of weirdness disappeared long ago. But why weird and why now?

Some have suggested that it speaks to public concerns over development, fears of standardization, and loss of identity. For others, it also signals a commitment to diversity, non-conformity, and artistic sensibility, what the geographer Steven Hoelscher, recently defined as the kind of the "weirdness" unique to American Studies. "Tolerance, indeed celebration, for difference in all its manifestations; uniqueness of topics and approaches; a prioritization of effective, lyrical expression—these are the traits that define what's happening in American Studies. "Keeping American Studies Weird," in other words, is about preserving the best traditions of the humanities.<sup>1</sup>

Walk into any ANES classroom and weirdness blooms. Standard answers, easy solutions, intellectual certainty, conventional thinking, rigid "truths," and fixed identities, have no place at the seminar table or in the curriculum. As you will see in this newsletter,

students, alumni, and faculty have not only explored roads not taken, they have mapped them, and then built a few new routes of their own. If weirdness is a desire for opening up conversations rather than shutting them down, honoring doubt over moral certainty, stretching intellectually, stimulating creative thinking, scrutinizing the conventional while interrogating difference, then ANES is weird.

Still, hovering over every quest to "keep things weird" is the threat of loss: a recognition that the unique, creative, thoughtful, different, and original are always at risk. Like all public universities, USM is feeling the effects not only of the recession but also of a calculated

national effort to undermine the "public" in general, and public education in particular. "Private," we are told, works well while all things public stand for big, bad government. Since 1967, Maine appropriations to the University of Maine system fell 15.2 percent to 6.2 percent in 2006, a 37 percent drop in real terms. We need to reverse this trend.

For all of us, these are challenging times and as you'll read in this newsletter, one of biggest challenges ANES faces will be the retirement of Professors Joe Conforti, the founding director of New England Studies and Richard Maiman, Professor of Political Science who *see next page*

## ANES Professor Wins Award

Last April, The Maine Humanities Council presented Joe Conforti with the Constance H. Carlson Award. The award, established to commemorate the "power of the humanities to enrich our lives," is named after Constance Carlson who served as the first female president in the University of Maine System. The founding director of what in 1987 was, The New England Studies Program, Joe Conforti is also one of three Distinguished University Professors at U.S.M.

*of Regional Identity from the Pilgrims to the Twentieth Century and Saints and Strangers: New England in British North America*—and his awards (the Richard Beale Davis Prize of the Modern Language Association and the Northeast Popular Culture Association's annual best book award), as well as his generosity and accessibility to organizations and students."

It is a much deserved and timely award that caps a long and successful career in American Studies scholarship, including twenty-three years with ANES. We will all miss Professor Conforti and the intellectual guidance he brought to the program. We wish him well, and hope that his legacy, embodied in the excellent reputation of ANES and the many opportunities the program has afforded students over the years, continues to remind us all that graduate studies in the humanities is essential for USM, the region, and the nation.

Good luck Joe. You will be missed.

And finally, I forgive you for telling me when you interviewed me on that ice-cold day in March, 1988 (when the temperature was five degrees), that Maine was really not much colder than Boston. Ha! And thanks.)



Douglas Woodbury, Chair of MHC, Eric Jorgensen, Executive Director MHC, Joe Conforti, Geoffrey Gatwick, Chair of awards committee, Bill Ferris, former director, National Endowment for Humanities

The award reads: "Joe is well known in the humanities world for his books and publications—*Imagining New England: Explorations*

"did I mention that my washing machine broke?" With Professor Joseph Medley (ECON) Carroll continues to work on the manuscript *Whooping it up for Rational Prosperity*, a book that examines the rhetorics of the IMF and World Bank in light of literatures from areas most affected by their policies. She is the author of *Rhetorical Drag: Gender Impersonation, Captivity, And the Writing of History*.

**Richard Maiman** (Political Science) taught "New England Political Culture" this summer for ANES and will be teaching and writing in South Africa next spring on a Fulbright Fellowship. This spring he published *Lobbying for Rights During the 'War on Terror: The American Civil Liberties Union After 9/11*, in *Strategic Visions for Human Rights; Essays to Honor Professor Kevin Boyle*. Richard was also a founding member of the ANES faculty serving on its board for more than a decade and offering classes in New England political culture for over twenty years. Like Joe Conforti, Richard will be retiring this fall, a dynamic duo that will be sorely missed.

A member of the University of Maine System

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## Theses/Projects Completed

Clare Forstie Spring 2010  
*"So Much More Than a Bar: The Shifting Meanings of Lesbian Identity at Sisters, A Local Bar"*

## University Recruitment Scholarship

Rachel Miller  
B.A., English, Vassar College  
Kate McMahon  
B.A., Art, USM

## Osher Scholar Opportunity

Karin France  
A.B., Art History and History, Bowdoin College

## Graduate Assistantships

2010-2011

### OSHER MAP LIBRARY

Marieke Van Der Steenhoven  
B.A., Art History, Smith College  
Renee Keul  
B.A., History and International Relations, Bethel University  
Lucinda Hannington  
B.A., History, St. Lawrence University

### SPECIAL COLLECTIONS

Karin France  
A.B., Art History and History, Bowdoin College

### FACULTY RESEARCH ASSISTANTS

Jamie Kane  
B.A., History, University at Albany, SUNY

## Internship Sites

Institute for Doctoral Studies in the Visual Arts  
Portland Museum of Art  
Yarmouth Historical Society  
Saco Museum  
Maine State Archives  
Bowdoin College Museum of Art  
Mashantucket Pequot Museum

## FROM THE DIRECTOR, *continued*

was there from the beginning offering wise council, expertise, and jam-packed courses. We will miss their professionalism, knowledge, and good humor. You'll see as well that ANES has not lost its energy, commitment to excellence, and uniqueness. Whether as interns at the Portland Museum of Art, Ph.D. candidates in the nations' finest universities, advanced teachers in area high schools and community colleges, oral historians preserving the stories of Gorham's farmers, lecturing across Portland and around the nation, writing books, or as engaged citizens and ambassadors sailing to Italy on a Fullbright Fellowship or to South Africa in the People to People program, ANES students, faculty, and alumni continue to represent the best traditions of humanities scholarship—serving the region and nation by keeping, if you will, the “weird” alive (and at a fraction of the cost of a for-profit or private institution).

Welcome to the program, stay in touch, and let's all work to keep ANES “weird.”

—Ardis Cameron

<sup>1</sup> Steven Hoelscher, Keeping American Studies Weird, *Main Currents* (University of Texas at Austin, 2010): i.

## Retirements



Richard Maiman



Joe Conforti

**Joe Conforti**, founding director and distinguished professor in American and New England Studies, and **Richard Maiman**, professor of political studies, will retire this fall. As you can read in the faculty highlights and awards, both are distinguished founding members of the ANES program whose dedication and commitment has helped the program attain its reputation for excellence in the region and nation. We wish them the best of luck, good hiking shoes, and clear mountain trails.

## Student and Alumni News

**Anthony Antonucci**, who is currently a Ph.D. candidate in history at University of Connecticut, won a graduate student Fullbright Fellowship. Based in Naples, he will be in Italy for nine months, doing research for his dissertation.

**Penny Davis-Dublin** presented a lecture titled, “White Hoods and Shillelaphs,” at the Maine Heritage Center in Portland in May. The paper explored the history of the Irish in Portland and their street clashes with the Ku Klux Klan. Davis-Dublin is also teaching two classes in English composition at the Southern Maine Community College. She spent January in India and will compete in the New England tennis sectionals this summer.

**Clare Forstie** was accepted into the Ph.D. program in sociology at Northwestern University. She was also offered a Graduate Fellowship.

During the summer of 2010, ANES students **Karin France** and **Marieke Van Der Steen-**



Karin France



Marieke Van Der Steenboven

**hoven** interned at the Portland Museum of Art (PMA). Working with Susan Danly, Curator of Graphics, Photography, and Contemporary Art at the PMA, and Elizabeth Bischof, Assistant Professor of History at USM, they helped to prepare the exhibition catalogue for a show titled *Maine Moderns: Art in Seguinland*, 1900-1940, which will be on view at the PMA in the summer of 2011.

The exhibition focuses on Georgetown, Maine, or Seguinland as the region was also known. During the first half of the 20th century a variety of photographers, painters, and sculptors, all in some way associated with New York gallery owner and artist Alfred Stieglitz, spent time in this area of Maine. Although Georgetown was not

a formal artist colony, the Photo-Secessionists and modern artists that gathered there found respite from city life and a community of like-minded individuals where they could create works of art inspired by the unique coastal landscape. The artists represented in *Maine Moderns* include F. Holland Day, Clarence H. White, Gertrude Käsebier, Max Weber, John Marin, Marsden Hartley, Paul Strand, Gaston Lachaise, and Marguerite and William Zorach, among others.

Karin and Marieke's tasks included securing image reproduction rights, writing catalogue entries for works by the sculptor and painter William Zorach, and assembling and formatting the manuscript's bibliography and image captions. They were also tasked with selecting relevant clips from the home movies of Clarence H. White, Jr., captured between 1929 and 1935. These clips will be projected in the exhibition gallery and depict the journey from New York to Georgetown Island and the various forms of rustication that took place during the summertime.

The Board of Trustees of Victoria Mansion has announced the appointment of **Thomas B. Johnson** as director. Johnson, who joined the museum September 1, brings over thirty years experience in museums and historic preservation. A graduate of American University with an M.A. in American and New England Studies from the University of Southern Maine, he has been director



Thomas B. Johnson

of Maine Preservation and currently serves of the Maine Historic Preservation Commission. For 14 years Johnson was on the staff of the Museums of Old York in York, Maine, as curator and acting director. Most recently, he was Curator of Collections at Canterbury Shaker Village in New Hampshire.

**Cynthia Melendy (Richardson)** has been selected to be a delegate historian in the People to People Citizen Ambassador Program to South Africa this October. She will be in Africa for several months participating in cultural exchange and history studies.

**Robin O'Sullivan**, who recently finished her Ph.D. in American studies at the University of Texas, has accepted a full-time tenure-track position at Troy State University in Alabama.

**Darren Wallach** has been awarded the 2010 Rotary World Peace Fellowship and will be studying peace and conflict resolution in Bangkok, Thailand this spring. He will be living with a group of 22 academics, lawyers, NGO workers, and human rights activists from 12 countries around the world. Darren will return to Maine and teach in the public schools.

**Michelle Morgan**, who is currently in her second year at Yale University in the Ph.D. program in American studies, gave a talk last winter at the Freeport Historical Society. Her thesis on the culture and language of postcards was part of the popular exhibit, “Greetings From the Heart.”

**Morgan Witham** was an Island Education and Library Fellow on Isle au Haut from 2007-2009. Morgan was married this summer to an islander. Her article “Isle Au Haut,” about her experience on the island appeared in the 2010 issue of *Island Journal*.

## Faculty Highlights

**Donna Cassidy** gave lectures for the Farnsworth Art Museum, Portland Ovarations, and the Tides Institute and Museum of Art over the past year. She also traveled to Washington, D.C., Nova Scotia, and New Haven to do research on her forthcoming exhibition, “Beyond the Northern Border: U.S. Artists in Quebec and Atlantic Canada,” which is scheduled for the Portland Museum of Art in summer 2013. Her Nova Scotia itinerary included vacation time in many spots like Lunenburg and Chester that were destinations of U.S. artists. In her travels she visited lots of museums—from the National Museum of the American Indian to the Maritime Museum of the Atlantic in Halifax—all in preparation to teach ANE 670 Public History and Culture in spring 2011.

**Joseph Conforti** completed a new book manuscript titled, *Another City upon a Hill: A New England Memoir*. It is currently under review for publication. He also wrote two invited articles. One, *New England Landscapes and*

*Regional Identity* will appear in a book titled *A Landscape History of New England* to be published by MIT Press next year. The other titled, *Connecticut: A Historic Identity-Free Zone?* will appear in a special issue of *Connecticut History*. This summer, he and his wife Dotty spent time hiking in various locations: Death Valley, California, the Red Rock country of Nevada, Acadia National Park and the White Mountains. He spent much time watching the Portland Sea Dogs at Hadlock Field and second guessing the Red Sox management for their personnel moves over the off season.

**Matthew Edney** and his wife Kathy (ANES 1998) are just about settled into their 1823 cape in Freeport. The hardest part of the move and organization was dealing with the books. The same can be said about the reopening and reorganization of the Osher Map Library: the official ribbon cutting took place last October; since then the library staff have been working on getting the rare and reference collections in order. Matthew's work on early mapping continues along several fronts including a long essay reexamining John Smith's famous map of 1616 in the art history journal *Word & Image*.

**Kent Ryden** finished a new book titled, *Sum of the Parts: The Mathematics and Politics of Region, Place, and Writing*, to be published in April 2011 by the Iowa University Press. Ryden also completed two chapters that will appear in edited collections of essays about the history of the New England landscape and bioregional literary criticism. But of course, he managed to find time for other adventures. Ryden also drove cross-country crossing another state (Arkansas) off the list of American states (44) that he has visited. He also combined households with his partner Brenda, which meant that her three cats plus his three cats now equal, well, a cathouse of cats. All happily reside in a new house they built in Yarmouth. Kent reports that his electric guitar skills improved from “pathetic to dreadful.”

**Ardis Cameron** gave talks at the University of New England, U. Maine Farmington, and the Bethal Historical Society. She conducted an N.E.H. funded workshop for high school teachers in Lowell this summer. Invited to speak at Miami of Ohio this winter, Cameron had to cancel this and other activities for several months due to contracting mononucleosis;

age, it seems, is no defense. She did, however, travel to Hollywood where work continues on the film *Grace* and on her manuscript *Unbuttoning America*. Her review of the *American Abyss* will appear in the journal *Labor: Studies in Working-Class History of the Americas*. In-between restructuring meetings she read *Wolf-hall* by Hillary Mantel and came to appreciate court intrigue in new ways. She also added a King Eider (2) and a tufted duck to her life list. Cameron has been named treasurer of the Berkshire Conference of Women Historians.

**David Carey Jr.** (History) taught “Hispanic America” in the fall of 2009. Carey was awarded the USM Trustee Professorship in Spring, 2009. He used the award to escape Maine's winter and conduct research at the University of California Berkeley and the University of Texas Benson Latin American Library. While in Austin, he presented a paper entitled “Runaway Mothers and Daughters: Crimes of Abandonment in Guatemala, 1898-1944.” In both places he and his family enjoyed great Mexican food and speaking Spanish. He is the author of *Engendering Mayan History: Mayan Women as Agents and Conduits of the Past, 1875-1970*, and most recently, *Latino Voices in New England*, (co-authored with Robert Atkinson). Forthcoming are several articles on Guatemalan women and cultural resistance.

**Patricia Erickson** (Adjunct) designed and taught a “blended” course this past spring called “Top of the World: America in the Arctic” using Web 2.0 tools. Last fall, Erickson finished the installation of the exhibit “History in Motion: Public Transportation Connecting Maine Communities,” at the Seashore Trolley Museum in Kennebunkport, Maine. She gave talks at Mystic Seaport Museum and the American Anthropological Association and published an essay, *Holistic History Online: Collaboration Among Tribes, Museums, and Schools?* for the online Society for Applied Anthropology.

**Lorrayne Carroll** (English) taught “American Contexts of Witchcraft.” This summer she gave a paper at the Native American and Indigenous Studies Association Conference in Tucson, AZ entitled, “To remove the fear: *Nicolar's Historiographic Work in the Classroom.*” Professor Carroll then “hosted every single one of my siblings in succession.” She then painted the guest room, gardened, and cooked,

*see next page*