

UMF BFA

Creative Writing Newsletter

Dear BFA Alums,
First, thanks to those who answered our letter way back in May of 2008, asking for information about where you are in your lives these days, and here's hoping that this first newsletter will inspire others to send in news (and maybe even pictures). News of what our alums are up to is important to us as BFA

faculty, important to other alums, and also important to our current students, as they ponder what to do after graduation. These are the responses that we got back from our 2008 solicitation and some we've received since. Please send updates about anything—your further education, your writing life, your family life, adven-

tures of various kinds, and jobs, to Gretchen Legler at gretchen.legler@maine.edu. We hope to publish the newsletter at least once a year. If you do Facebook, Pat O'Donnell also has a BFA alumni news section that you can plug into. Be well and do good work.

—Gretchen Legler

UMF Creative Writing Faculty News

Poetry Professor **Wes McNair** has retired and is now a Professor Emeritus. You can check up on him at <http://blackwidow.umf.maine.edu/~wesmcnair/>.

Filling McNair's place is **Jeffrey Thomson**, an up-and-coming, award-winning poet who was approved for tenure and promoted to Associate Professor in 2008. More information about Thomson can be found here: <http://faculty.umf.maine.edu/~thomson/>.

Gretchen Legler's book about Antarctica, *On the Ice*, came out in 2005. Check it out here: <http://www.amazon.com/Ice-Intimate-Portrait-McMurdo-Antarctica/dp/157131282X>

UMF's **Visiting Writers Series** is still going strong. Come join us for a reading! Find out more on the Creative Writing website at: <http://creativewriting.umf.maine.edu/>.

Another addition to the Creative Writing House is the **Small Press Center**, run by Diane Kruchkow, who has taught first year composition at UMF for many years. The center is in the process of housing Diane's personal collection of small press materials including magazines and other publications that focus around the small press movement of the 70s and 80s. To learn more, visit the center, or contact Diane at kruch2@verizon.net.



Photo by Silas Lunetta

Our new home— The Creative Writing House, formerly the Center for Human Development, houses faculty offices, a seminar room, and a cozy loft where the Writer's Guild meets.

Pat O'Donnell's story "Gods for Sale," published in fictionweekly.com, has been nominated for Dzanc Books' Best of the Web Anthology (the 2010 print edition). The Story is reviewed here: <http://fivestarliterarystories.blogspot.com/2009/05/fiction-weeklypatricia-odonnellmary.html>. Her poem, "Preparing for Grief," appeared in the anthology *beloved on the earth* published by Holy Cow! Press. She is finishing a memoir of growing up in Parkersburg, Iowa, a town decimated by an F5 tornado last year.

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Cynthia Brackett-Vincent, 2005
brackett-vincent@encirclepub.com.

Since graduating she has been enjoying the new roles of grandmotherhood (3 and counting!) and photographer. She sells her line of blank photo greeting cards at <http://www.encirclepub.com/cards/gnstore> and in fine gift shops. She continues to publish the Aureorean poetry journal (<http://www.encirclepub.com/poetry/aureorean>). Her poetry and photography was recently seen on YankeeMagazine.com. <http://www.yankeemagazine.com/blogs/memories/mainereflections>. In 2008 her creative nonfiction and poetry appeared in the United Kingdom in the anthology *Forever Friends*. Cynthia is also the co-editor of the recently published anthology *Contemporary American Women: Our Defining Passages* (All Things That Matter Press, 2009).

Aaron Witham, 2005
pasaqody_indian@hotmail.com:

Aaron was hired on the spot to teach English Composition at New Hampshire Technical Institute as an adjunct instructor right after graduating with his BFA. He's also been working on publishing an online journal of poetry and artwork with another UMF graduate from the creative writing program, **Tessa Parmenter** thelonlyeth@hotmail.com). Tessa is currently living in Somerville, Massachusetts, outside of Boston and working at TechTarget using her degree to edit documents and write newsletters for the company. She also works at HP

from home, proofreading technical computer writing that comes in the mail. In other words, she's super successful! Aaron lives in Michigan.

James Ryan, 2002 crocodilepen-cil@gmail.com. After completing an MA in Theological Studies from Boston University, James moved to California with his family, where he worked as a teacher of writing and as a filmmaker. He's currently pursuing an MFA in Creative Writing.

James' teaching experience was in a composition course for the department of Childhood and Adolescent Studies at California State University Fresno. He says, "Teaching is really, really fun. I lucked out on this gig. I've got a Masters in Psychology of Religion, so no English department will touch me, but I happened to have a friend who works in the Childhood and Adolescent studies department, and they happen to have their own 300-level writing course which they just happened to be willing to let me teach."

Jeremiah Hackett, 2002 Jeremiah has finished his fourth year teaching at Maine Central Institute in Pittsfield. He was just accepted into a Master's program for Social Work at the University of New England.

Sarah Seveney, 2006 sasa-fras70@hotmail.com. "As of mid-April (2008), I successfully completed my one-year teaching contract at the ESL school in Korea. I'm currently staying in Madrid, Spain. I've been here about a week, and I'm getting settled in nicely. I'm taking a one month, 120-hour TEFL certification class here in the city, and then I plan on teaching at an English language immersion summer camp in rural Spain for the summer. I should be back in the US sometime in mid-August, and after that, who knows? One thing I have decided on is the general path I want my education to take. Instead of pursuing a graduate degree in English or writing, I'm now thinking seriously of getting one in education (specifically, ESL). There are lots of interesting programs for that around, so at the moment I'm just doing a little research on it all, mulling over the possibilities."

Sarah is now looking at graduate programs at USM.

Peter Biello, 2006 peter-biello@yahoo.com. Peter got his MFA in fiction writing from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, and went on to work as a radio journalist for NPR. Here is one of Peter's radio features. <http://www.npr.org/templates/story/story.php?storyId=93478109>. Peter is currently a producer and announcer for Vermont Public Radio. He writes, "It's a lot of fun. Currently I'm filling in for the host of Morning Edition, but usually I'm on air from 1-4."

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David DiSarro, 2003 drdisarro@bsu.edu. “Some of you have heard from me recently, some have not heard from me in quite a long time; regardless, I just wanted to send all of you a link to my website so you folks can see what I've been up to since I graduated. For those that don't know, I'm currently at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana working toward a Ph.D. in Rhetoric & Composition. I'm still writing whenever I get the chance, but between the rigors of Ph.D. work, adjusting to the Midwest, and family life (I got married in the summer of 2006 and my wife and I had our son, Holden Christopher DiSarro, in the winter of 2007), I haven't had as much time as I'd like to for writing creatively. I switched concentrations from fiction to poetry in my Master's program, so when I do write it's mostly poetry. I've been sending things out to several publications, but no acceptances as of yet (I'm trying to keep my chin up, revise, resubmit, etc., but I'd be lying if I said I wasn't getting frustrated). I did, however, co-write a screenplay and ‘star’ in a docu-drama entitled *Blue Moods* (which also features some of my poetry), here is the link if you'd like to check it out: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DfldCTrdYSw>

Also, if you'd like to see some of my latest work, there is a link on my website: <http://drdisarro.weebly.com>”

The Traveler's Advisory

The main streets of towns
don't go uphill,
and the houses aren't
purple like that
tenement with one eye
clapboarded over. Never mind
how it wavers
backward, watching you
try to find second gear.
You've arrived
at the top of the town:
a closed garage
where nobody's dog
sits, collarless,
and right next door
a church which seems
to advertise Unleaded.
Who's hung this
great front door
above no steps? No one
you'd know.
And what suspends
the avalanche
of barn? Nothing,
and you will never escape the
bump,
lifting shiny with tar.
And you won't
need the sign that says
you are leaving Don't Blink,
Can't Dance,
Or Town of No.

-Wesley McNair, UMF Writer in Residence (taken from bostonreview.com)

M i n a M a t h e w s , 2001 araminta.star@gmail.com. Araminta S. Matthews obtained a Master of Fine Arts degree in Creative Writing from National University in La Jolla, California in 2007. She currently (2008) works as a freelance writer and as an adjunct instructor of College Writing and Literature at various universities and colleges through-

Board of Directors of the Literacy Volunteers of Androscoggin County and she is the founder and Artistic Director of UU Theatre, a theatre dedicated to feminism, gender inclusion, and glbtq rights through the production of plays with social justice themes. In addition, she is a book critic for Front Street Reviews.

Jan Elizabeth Watson, 1995 jan-elizabeth.watson@gmail.com. Has published her new novel *Asta in the Wings*. She would be happy to personally respond to any queries about the novel. See reviews below:

"Like Alice after tumbling down the rabbit hole, Asta takes us on a journey through a confounding world filled with remarkable characters. A compassionate tale mixed with hope and sorrow, Asta In the Wings evokes both the tenderness and the danger of one child's struggle to find a place for herself in a world she is only beginning to understand. It's a gem of a book."— Aryn Kyle, author of *The God of Animals*

"In Asta in The Wings Jan Elizabeth Watson has created one of the most appealing fictional heroines I've encountered in a long time. Asta is brave, resourceful, intelligent, and loyal. She also happens to be seven years old, which means she's at the mercy of the unreliable adults who rule her world. The result is a vivid and suspenseful narrative where, over and over again, Asta shows us the world from her own very particular angle. A highly original debut." — Margot Livesey, author of *The House on Fortune Street*

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Bianca Garber, 2006 biancagarber@hotmail.com. Bianca sends no news of herself, but news of her mom! "My mom, Anita Holt, has recently put up a blog of her artwork. She hasn't yet gotten to the point of trying to sell her work online, but the artwork that is posted is really great and she shows you the process of creating a couple paintings. So, take a few minutes, check it out, tell your friends so they can tell their friends and I can begin the process of starting an Anita Holt movement! I hope you visit the blog and enjoy it as I have. The url is : <http://anitajholt.blogspot.com/>"

Ben Tracy, 1998 benjamin.tracy@gmail.com. "I graduated in 1998 with a BFA in Creative Writing. In the fall of that same year, I accepted a job as a graphic designer at Hamilton Marine in Searsport, Maine and I've been there ever since. My wife Jessie and I were married in October 1999 and have two daughters, Lydia, born in 2004, and Ruby, 2006. We live in an old farmhouse in Winterport. I've recently started shopping around my first novel, and hope to get published someday, but if not, there's always the blog. I'm looking forward to seeing my college friends on Facebook!"

Leanne Scorzoni, 2004 scorzi@gmail.com. "Since I graduated in 2004 I was accepted into the Master's degree program for Creative Nonfiction at The New School in New York City, but wasn't happy with the school so I left after one semester. After

a series of odd jobs (nanny, hostess, temping) for the past two years I have been working as an Executive Assistant for Leslie E. Robertson Associates; the engineering firm that designed the World Trade Center and the Shanghai World Financial Center. I currently live in Brooklyn with my boyfriend of three and a half years."

Cynthia Ravinski, 2005 cynthia.ravinski@gmail.com. "I'm currently attending Seton Hill University's MA in Writing Popular Fiction program with a focus on Fantasy Fiction. In order to support this undertaking, I am currently working as an Administrative Assistant in the IT department at IDEXX Laboratories Inc. in Westbrook, Maine and living in Portland, Maine."

Valerie Suffron, 2003 vsuffron@kent.edu. "I am (still) a graduate student in the NEOMFA program through Kent State University in Ohio. I am getting my MFA in poetry (more specifically, I write prose poetry). I was awarded a teaching assistantship and have taught classes in both Composition and Creative Writing, though now I am working solely on my thesis (it has taken me a little longer than I expected). After I finish the degree I hope to find adjunct work somewhere teaching Writing and/or Comp. part-time.

I've also had a little experience in publishing. I was the fiction editor at Whiskey Island Magazine at Cleveland State University in 2007, and as part of my grad

school assistantship I worked for the Wick Poetry Center as a Publications Assistant. I also wrote grants for Wick for a year, including a major NEA grant which they received.

My last publication was in Caketrain last year, a lit mag from Pittsburgh, PA.

Linda Lawson, 1996 llawson123@hotmail.com. "After leaving UMF in 1996 I earned an MFA in writing from Vermont College and then a MA in teaching from City College New York. I currently teach English at Concord High School in Concord, NH. Writing while teaching is a challenge, but I'm committed to finishing the rough draft of a memoir by the end of this year. (2009 has already been earmarked the Year of Revision.) Most of my writing since leaving UMF has been nonfiction."



Tina Fox (formerly Marquis), 2001 tinafox_2005@yahoo.com. "After graduation, I worked for a couple of years then decided to take a different turn... I quit my job, started writing a book and applied to the Kennebec Valley Community College, where I studied to become a physical therapist assistant. The PTA program there devoured my life, so

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that I could not even work part time, forget having any time whatsoever to write. I have been working now as a PTA for over 2 years; I began working at a brain injury facility and am now working with the elderly. I have no excuse for not writing as much as I should have the past couple of years. I just celebrated my 3rd wedding anniversary and am expecting my first child late November/ early December. I am now seriously thinking more about a desire I have had to write a childrens' story/ book. My husband is a very talented drawer working on an animation career, so I am thinking that it may be a great collaboration for us, especially as we become new parents! We will all have to wait and see....”

Hailey (Santoro) Kehrli, 2001
hsantoro@mhs.sad59.k12.me.us.
Has been accepted to Stonecoast, Maine’s low residency MFA program.

Louy Castonguay, 1994
louyc@verizon.net. Lives in West Farmington, Maine. He writes: “I was one of the firsts out of the BFA, in '94. I've wanted to start a writer's workshop or writer's meetings or something, but the few who have tried have received no response. I'd be happy to hear about graduates from the program at UMF and where they are and how they are doing. I have been published in Timbercreek Review and had a story in last year's ('07) Fifth Anthology of Crime, Stillwaters by Level Best Books. I have written numerous short stories and books, but I'm

still looking for an agent and a publisher. I write all across the board, mostly fiction, and mystery is my favorite.”

Mechele Cooper, 1994
MCooper@centralmaine.com.
“I've been a Central Maine Newspaper reporter since I graduated from Farmington with a Creative Writing Degree, at both the Kennebec Journal and the Sentinel. I've always wanted to go further in my education, but as a mom of three that just never happened. I've won a few writing awards for the paper, nothing worth mentioning about except for my support of domestic violence. I've done a lot of stories on that subject. That citation was given to me by the governor's wife years ago. I'm glad I was able to find a job in the writing profession.”



Steve Scharoun, 1993
scharoun@maine.edu. “Since graduating with the BFA in 1993, I earned a Master’s of Arts degree in American and New England Studies in 2003, and have since been a project director/historical archaeologist at the UMF Archae-

ology Research Center, where my principal tasks involve research and writing on project-related topics. The writing is place-oriented and the research is aimed at creating a historical context for these places. Much of this work, predominantly by contract, is required as a result of the Historic Preservation Act, ca. 1966. I hope in current economic times, this Act of Congress will remain intact.

Jason MacLeod
jmacleod@gmail.com. I attended the UMF BFA program in Creative Writing during the late 90's. I took classes with both Pat & Wes and we even had the senior seminar in my apartment one semester. I've also earned degrees at Grinnell College (B.A., English) and Iowa State University (M.A.) where I was the Pearl Hogrefe Fellow in Creative Writing. I'm now all-but-thesis at the University of Montana where I should have my M.F.A. in Poetry by late spring. I've won two Academy of Poets Prizes and have been published in the *North American Review*, *The Kennesaw Review*, *The Vermont Literary Review* and several other publications. I currently teach online composition & communication courses though, of course, I will be hunting for those ever elusive Creative Writing teaching gigs once I have the MFA in hand.

Maria O'Connell
landry_maria@hotmail.com.
Maria writes: *Wazee Journal* will be publishing a story of I first wrote for Pat O'Donnell's class in the fall of 2001! . . . I'm the

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Project Coordinator for a consulting firm in Newport, about ten minutes from where I live in Pittsfield (ME). I do a lot of different things, but one of my major duties is editing the reports we create. I absolutely love it, although I'm sure some of my co-workers don't appreciate all of my red ink! I'll also be doing some research and writing in the New Year to improve the content of our reports. I've continued writing whenever I have the time, and I had a personal essay published this fall by *Slow Trains* literary journal (www.slowtrains.com).

Mike Boardman, 1995 mike@mikeboardman.com. Mike graduated in '95 with a BA in English and a BFA in Writing with a French minor. He writes: "I'm currently in California writing and consulting. I consult businesses on business and marketing plans, oftentimes helping them to achieve the funding they need for capital improvements, hire employees, and/or to support other growth challenges. I also consult a full range of marketing needs from copy writing, creative (design), multi-media advertising, and P R . In the meantime, I have writing material (creative non-fiction and short stories) that I want to aggressively market.

Note: Mike says that he'd like it if there was more support from UMF to help former students to nurture and successfully achieve their writing goals. Anyone interested in working on a solution to this? What kinds of networks would be helpful for you as a grad?

Carla Worden, 2007 carla.j.worden@gmail.com. "I'm working in Human Resources at Alpine Meadows Ski Resort. I have been writing our employee newsletter that is distributed to roughly 700 employees bi-weekly. I have also been writing memos, emails and letters. I am in charge of our employee recognition program, which requires corresponding to numerous other ski resorts in the California area to trade batches of tickets. Though it's not the most glamorous of jobs, I would say that my degree has enhanced my level of responsibility within the department. Additionally, I have shared my portfolio, from my internship with Jennifer Erikson, with the marketing and public relations department at Alpine. They were really impressed with my writing and we may discuss an internship for next year, depending on my schedule."

Jesse Miller, 2000 received his M F A in Fiction from Goddard College (2002). He teaches Creative Writing, Composition, Literature and Professional Writing courses at the University of New England, Southern Maine Community College and Kennebec Valley Community College. He lives in South Portland. He can be reached via email: JesseMiller17@gmail.com

Shanna Miller McNair, 2002 is attending the MFA program at Stonecoast (USM) for Fiction (2012). She is also presently teaching a writing workshop through a partnership of Stone-

coast and NAACP of Portland, Maine, around the writings of Martin Luther King, Jr. She is the founder of the forthcoming Maine-based literary review, *The New Guard*, a semi-biannual. She formerly worked in online and print journalism at VillageSoup (www.villagesoup.com) as a beat reporter and arts editor for three years. Her play, *Fat Sushi*, which she directed and produced, won a spot in the Belfast 15-minute Festival in 2005. Look for her poetry in the Winter, 2010 Naugatuck River Review. She lives in South Portland. Feel free to email: mcshanna@gmail.com.

Chelsea Goulart, 2007 Chelsea.Goulart@itg.com Chelsea has applied to Emerson Colleges Masters Degree Program in Publishing and Writing. She went on to have some wonderful adventures as a Hollywood screenwriter (almost) and, after pursuing other avenues for graduate study, including law school, has appropriately settled on publishing and writing.

Chelsea is also working as the coordinator of The Campus Kitchens Project, a hunger-relief program located on high school and college campuses nationwide (her branch is on the University of Massachusetts, Boston campus). The Campus Kitchens Project works with the university's dining services to create nutritious and nourishing meals with "leftover" food that would normally be thrown away.

Chelsea is married to Marc Craig.

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Mary Ellms, 2008, writes “I’m living in Bangor, and I work for a community action program in the transportation department. It’s actually kind of a perfect fit for me since I grew up in and around my dad’s transportation company *and* I get to work with a lot of people! I’m trying to save up for grad school at some point, but there’s nothing definite yet. I’m still doing a ton of theater stuff; I played Maria in *West Side Story* back in October, and now I’m working on a couple of other musical performances. I graduated in 2008, and yes, I was a Wilson Scholar. My project was an updated version of the Biblical book of Esther, written to take place during World War II in Nazi Germany. I’m still working on it, actually! It’s at almost 150 pages now.”

Tanya Miller, 2003, writes, “As for me, I am currently living north of Chicago (just got back from spending nearly a year in Dallas, TX). I earned an Interior Decorating Certification in 2006 and am hoping to start work as a Furniture Design Consultant next month. While I am still writing (I have a blog I post daily: www.ordinarywonderment.blogspot.com), my creative passion has led me to moonlight as a freelance photographer. To date, I have taken photos for two restaurants and had a couple shots on display at the 2009 Chicago Flower & Garden Show at Navy Pier.

James Doucette writes that he is still writing!
doucbrother@yahoo.com

Danielle LeBlanc, danielle.r.leblanc@gmail.com, writes, “School has been wonderful--there is a lot that goes into the life of a book! Emerson really focuses on the business side of the written word as a “product” to be marketed, but I feel like my time at UMF gave me an undying love for the art of the thing that has provided a healthy (and optimistic) base in these changing financial times. All in all, I’m excited to finally be graduating--I cannot remember a time in my life where I wasn’t a formal student! It’s about time for some adventuring.

“Currently I am finishing up my last semester of my MA in Writing and Publishing from Emerson College in Boston. I work as a freelance copy editor and am trying to squirrel away small pockets of time to progress my writing. For my Wilson scholarship, I studied the Chicano poetry movement and current poetry about immigration between Mexico and the United States. I used the grant to spend 14 days in various parts of Mexico observing and writing a small manuscript of 14 poems about my experiences.”

Emily Cramer writes that she misses Farmington, is still looking for a job in the writing/publishing world, and working at a bakery part time, where she has realized more than ever her love of baking, and of cooking. “Perhaps I should freelance some stuff to a food magazine, or then again, I could just start my own newsletter, online of course, and build my resume that way. I

also just moved into a bungalow. It is so tiny, but I love its coziness and retro charm. I am thinking about making a bucket garden...I have a small patio that is aching for some fresh greenery. It is almost tulip season here. I must send you some pictures.” cramer.emily@gmail.com

innumerable ones

How to count? Begin with one, or $n + 1$ where n is the number of ants in a colony,
and 1 is you looking over your own shoulder,
looking into the earth, driving a stick down
into the mound like a gifted chimp,
pulling it out
to count the inscrutable bodies, huge headed
warriors sawing the wood. Where n is bacteria
and 1 is your colon, the wealth of *E. coli*
colonizing and shifting upriver, where n is the burger you ate yesterday and 1 is you
heaving into the sink and falling back wracked with fever. Where n is brine shrimp
and 1 the stink they make on a hot day, the light above the Great Salt Lake gone flat
and gauzy. Where n is the caribou cresting
across the Porcupine in the Yukon and n^2
the mosquitoes that blind them—eyes jammy
with crushed bodies—and drive them mad.
Where 1 is the Cessna and the rifle,
where 1 is the bullet and the carcass resting on the tundra’s mossy sponge.

-Jeffrey Thomson, UMF Professor of Poetry (taken from fishhousepoems.org)

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Jessica Dafni, 2004, writes, “I live in La Mesa, CA which is in the greater San Diego area. I moved here in October 2009 with my husband of 2.5 years, J. Tanner Keilty, a Sergeant in the U.S. Marine Corps. He and I used to ride the school bus together in Middle School. We have two rambunctious dogs and are all thoroughly enjoying the California sunshine. I work from home writing, editing, desktop publishing and maintaining websites. One of my employers is Jai Yoga in Brunswick, Maine. My title there is "Marketing Coordinator." The other is Missouri University of Science and Technology in Rolla, Missouri (our last residence). My title there is "Technical Editor." I am also a registered yoga teacher and have been teaching on and off for the last 3 years. I was just recently certified in Thai Massage. I keep a blog, which is where I combine all of my different interests, which aside from yoga and writing include cooking (and eating), traveling, music, dogs, books, being in the outdoors and creating useful things from repurposed goods.”

Jaques Rancourt, 2009, writes, “I graduated just last may, 2009. As far as recent events, I'm in my second semester of my MFA at University of Wisconsin-Madison. I'm the poetry editor of a new online journal, Devil's Lake, which will launch in May. I also recently had a poem taken by Linebreak (www.linebreak.org) which should be up in a few months, as well as winning the literary award (judged by Mark

Doty) from Allegheny Review for a poem I wrote in one of Jeff's classes. It was a submission from my undergrad years, and as it was an undergrad contest, it lists UMF in the journal.

“My Wilson scholarship project was to hike the 100-mile wilderness two summers ago and to use that experience as a platform from which to write at least 8 poems. Although I wrote the initial 8 for the symposium, I am finding myself writing more and more about the Appalachian landscape and mythology.”

Erin Nolan, 2003, writes, “I am currently living in Farmingdale, NY and working for a media marketing company. Writing is still a huge part of my life. I have a regular freelance job writing once a week about film for the website Film.com and am currently working on expanding my entertainment writing career. I also run a critique group for writers in my area. I love keeping in touch with fellow UMF grads and can be found on Facebook, on Twitter (@erinjnolan) or through email (erinnolan81@yahoo.com).

Katie Baum is working in the Activities and Marketing department at OceanView Retirement Community in Falmouth, Maine. At the end of March, she will be attending Southern New Hampshire University to pursue an MBA in Social Media Network Marketing. (katius@gmail.com)

Owen Curtsinger writes: “Dear Friends, Enemies, Associates, and L o v e d O n e s ,

Please forgive the spam. This is just to say that Owen Curtsinger has a new email address. It's significantly more logical and easier t o s p e l l t h a n ‘stratospherical.’ The new address is: ocurtsinger@gmail.com Please update your address books and feel free to give me a shout if it's been a while since we last talked. Hope you're all doing swell.”

Tara Gagnon writes that since graduating she has volunteered as a writing tutor and in spring 2009 and received 1st place at the Maine Poetry Festival competition. Currently she's writing articles on writing-related events in Maine for The Valley Voice, an independent publication.tara.gagnon@live.com

Don Bishop has been accepted to Simmons College, where he is pursuing a graduate degree in teaching English as a Second Language. don.bishop@gmail.com.

There was a **Mark Rice** and **Christopher C. Clark** sighting over the Christmas break, 2009. They were seen in the Farmington Hannaford's shopping for dinner. Mark is teaching high school students in New Hampshire, and we think Chris is helping to build b o a t s i n F l o r i d a. Mark.r.rice@gmail.com

Paul Rees II sent us this email: paulsrees@gmail.com

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Anthony Martins (2002) is living in Denver, Colorado with his loving partner, Aaron, and his cuddly cats, Avery and Bella. He is still writing, but he has not yet pursued publication. However, Anthony says that “hearing of the achievements of other alumni would be very inspiring. For fun and money, he teaches and works with foreign exchange students. Just for fun, he attends a poetry circle, attends a philosophy circle, volunteers at church, and runs a small role playing game development LLC, Grimwood Games. He's happy. He's attached a current photo. Anthony is on the right, Aaron's on the left. Anthony's email is: <quizoid@gmail.com>



Meg Reid (2008) me-gireid@gmail.com writes: “I am working towards my MFA in nonfiction at University of North Carolina Wilmington. I work in the education department and am currently working on an apprenticeship with the literary journal *Ecotone*. While living 2 miles from the balmy North Carolina coast and staring at palm trees, I still seem to be mostly writing snowy scenes of growing up in Maine.

Kate Levin (2002) writes: I'm currently living in Manhattan and working as a Production Artist and Graphic Designer. I was working at Marvel Comics for a while and moved onto Harper-Collins Publishers. For almost two years now I've been working as Production Artist at SpotCo, one of the top Broadway Advertising agencies in the world. I make print ads seen in the NY-Times, billboards, subway posters, taxi tops/bus sides and theater Front of House for such shows as

Chicago the Musical and Billy Elliot the Musical. I also do freelance Graphic Design work. I'm still writing and currently looking for an agent to take on my finished novel. Kate's email is: kplastic@gmail.com

Small Moment of Elation

The orb of the universe
pulls its own weight—the way
the clouds heave from the Earth
will tell you this; the way the wind
murmurs the grass is a song itself.

A short time ago, we flew
from the womb, and now
look at us; the way our bodies
move against the atmosphere
or, the way we fall in love.
In such a short time, I forget—
and then that instant recognition
springs forth and the whole world
plummets! like the base of the sun rising.

-Elizabeth Kelly, winner of the *Sandy River Review* spring 2010 Editors' Choice Award

BFA students win Wilson Scholarships

Creative Writing students have been well represented as recipients of UMF's prestigious Wilson Scholar grants. Wilson Scholars must secure a faculty sponsor and write a grant proposal stating what they will use the Wilson funds (\$700) for, and how their creative project will benefit their work at UMF. Winners will present at the spring Campus Symposium upon completion of their projects. Past winners have included:

Dani LeBlanc (2008): Dani used her Wilson funds to travel to Mexico

City to research a novel she was writing.

Amy Blankenship (2010): Took Amtrak from the east coast to the west coast—part of research for a fiction project.

Trevor Spangle (2009): Hiked the Oregon Coast trail and wrote a draft of a booklength memoir about his adventures.

David Bersell (2010): Is planning on writing a long essay about his and his father's fascination with baseball paraphernalia. He plans to use his Wilson funds to travel to a national

baseball card convention.

Lee Cart (2010): Used her Wilson funds to travel to Guadalajara, Mexico, where she spent winters as a child. She is working on a series of essays about her growing up in Mexico and Maine.

Jacques Rancourt (2009): Hiked and camped in the 100-Mile Wilderness, a section of the Appalachian Trail, and wrote poetry about it.

Kelsey Lowe (2011): Is creating a “create your own mystery” for adults.

BFA Student News

The **UMF Writer's Guild** executive board and members attended the **Associated Writing Programs annual conference in Denver** this April. Writers Guild and UMF Journalism Club officers have attended AWP conferences in past years in Chicago, New York City and Austin, Texas. Other recent and ongoing Guild events include a regular Writers' Guild lock-in every semester and "Spoken Word" poetry readings by students. The Guild also sponsors the UMF Visiting Writers Series and funds the publication of the *Sandy River Review* twice a year.

For the first time in recent memory, *Sandy River Review* editors **Dory Diaz and Kate Chianese** organized a "launch" for the Spring issue of the *Sandy River Review*. Fans and contributors met in the Creative Writing house for good food and readings. We hope this will become a tradition. There are also plans afoot to get the *Sandy* on line!

Graduating BFA candidates will present their work at the BFA Senior Reading at 7:30 p.m. in the Landing on the UMF campus on May 6. This is always an exciting event. The readers will in-

clude: David Bersell, Richard Campbell, Kate Chianese, Ariel Cohen, Caitlin Flaherty, Laura Jennings, David Laforge, Sam Shepard, Lauren Taylor, Amy Blankenship, Joanna Dickman, Elizabeth Kelley, Denise Taylor, Dennis Taylor and Gordon Wilson.

Four BFA graduates were accepted to **MFA programs** for the fall of 2010: **Dory Diaz, Marlena Clark, Harry David, and Matt Luzitano**. Several of these were accepted to multiple programs. Congratulations!

Thomson given Maine Literary Award for Poetry

Jeffrey Thomson, UMF associate professor of creative writing, has recently been awarded the Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance 2010 Maine Literary Award for Poetry. Thomson received the award in recognition of his fourth collection of poems, *Birdwatching in Wartime*, (Carnegie Mellon 2009) in which he explores the way questions of beauty, grief, and desire are filtered through landscapes and natural images.

"I was thrilled with this recognition and, honestly, happy to be included in the company of authors whose work I think the world of," said Thomson. "As a writer, it's always an honor when your work--something that's such an intrinsic part of you--is acknowledged by the literary community."

Rough Cradle by Betsy

Scholl, *Winter Tenor* by Kevin Goodan, and *Bitter Withy*, by Donald Revell--all published by Alice James Books, a non-profit cooperative poetry press affiliated with UMF since 1994--received honorable mention.

Founded in 1975, the Maine Writers & Publishers Alliance is a non-profit membership organization whose mission is to enrich the cultural life of Maine by supporting writers, publishers and the literary arts. Given each year to recognize Maine's literary talent, the Maine Literary Awards were first awarded in 2006 and are awarded for both published and unpublished works.

Thomson is the author of four full-length collections of poetry, two limited-edition art books, and the co-editor of an anthology of emerging poets. In recent years, Thomson has been

honored with a Fellowship in the Literary Arts from the Maine Arts Commission in 2008, a Creative Artists Fellowship in Literature from the Pennsylvania Council on the Arts in 2006, and a Literature Fellowship in Poetry from the National Endowment for the Arts in 2005. He has also received fellowships from the Wesleyan Writers Conference, the Sewanee Writers Conference and Writers @ Work.

Thomson's work has appeared in *Quarterly West*, *Isotope*, *Indiana Review*, *Sycamore Review*, *Brilliant Corners*, *Gulf Coast* and *Willow Springs*. He received his Ph.D. in creative writing from the University of Missouri.

BFA Alumni News

Brenda Espinoza writes: “This past summer (2009), I was an intern at the Rumford Falls Times, newspaper. I really enjoyed myself and met a lot of people in the community. I loved the variety of stories that I had the opportunity to work on with the editor. Bruce Farrin, the editor, has asked me if I would be interested in free lance writing for the Times. I am very excited to say that I am now very involved with writing a weekly series involving many local businesses, asking them how they are coping with today's economy. The Rumford Falls Times is a weekly paper and is published on Wednesdays. If anyone would like to read my stories, check out the Mantor Library each week on the front page of the Rumford Falls Times. espinoza269@roadrunner.com

Trevor Spangle is living in Oregon, working as an instructional assistant / behavioral coach for first graders who need a bit more “direction.” The school district in which Trevor works has expressed interest in sponsoring his teaching endorsement (something that doesn't happen often in Oregon). In the next few months, Trevor hopes to start his Master's in Special Education.

Trevor has also released a book of poetry called *Father I Am Waiting by the River*. He has already sold about 250 copies. In addition to his busy schedule, Trevor has had the opportunity to do a few readings and lectures in his community.

Melanie Coutts sent us this email:
meloniecoutts@yahoo.com

Kate Russell had a story published in Fringe Magazine. Here's the link: <http://www.fringe.org/lit/fiction/hunters/>

Elliott Vogel writes that he has had an article published in the October issue of Common Ground, a free magazine in the Bay Area for alternative health. elliott.vogel@gmail.com

Don't see your name?

Did you send us something but we forgot to include it?

Have something new to tell us?

Email:

gretchen.legler@maine.edu

We'll put it in the next issue!

Longfellow Mountains Young Writers' Workshop

The Creative Writing BFA program at UMF is proud to announce that it will be launching Longfellow Mountains, a week-long summer workshop program from July 18-24, 2010 for rising high school juniors and seniors.

The program will introduce its participants to the intensity and rigor of the BFA program while providing them with a comfortable place to kindle their passion and hone their skills as writers.

A typical day will begin with those involved breaking off into small groups of no more than 15 students to write poetry, fiction, or nonfiction.

During the afternoon, students will have a chance to listen to

professionals talk about their craft; to hear their peers present original work; or to relax while hiking, swimming, or doing yoga.

Students will live on campus in dorms with people who are the same age and are interested in the same things. Also living among the participants will be students who are currently enrolled in the BFA program. Approachable and friendly, these students who have a passion for writing will be there to offer support and advice every step of the way.

Faculty will include these seasoned writers: Sarah L. Thomson, Michael Burke, Wesley McNair, Gretchen Legler, Jeffrey Thomson, Patricia O'Donnell

Bill Roorbach, Carey Salerno, Matt O'Donnell.

For more information or to find out if you can help, go to creativewriting.maine.umf.edu/longfellow/ or contact Jeffrey Thomson at jeffrey.thomson@maine.edu.

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