

UMF Creative Writing Program

BFA Newsletter

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students in AWP programs. Works can only be submitted by program directors. If nominees are selected at the national level, they will receive a \$100 honorarium and publication in one of several journals, including the *Colorado Review* and *Puerto del Sol*.

Program News

The Maine Writers and Publishers' Alliance has collaborated with UMF and the **Longfellow Young Writers' Workshop** to create the **Michael Macklin Scholarship for Young Writers**. Named for a passionate Maine poet and teacher who passed away in 2012, the scholarship awards an \$800 each to two students, one male and one female, attending UMF's Longfellow Workshop. Donations to the Michael Macklin Scholarship Fund are welcomed, and can be made at: mainewriters.org/support-the-michael-macklin-memorial-scholarship-fund.

BFA students Kimberly Clark, Audrey Gidman, Nicole Byrne, and Aimee DeGroat were nominated for the **2015 Association of Writers and Writing Programs' Intro Journal Awards** by Creative Writing faculty. The Intro Journals Project is run for the discovery and publication of the best new works by stu-

UMF's official Writer in Residence and co-founder/former director of the Creative Writing BFA program, **Wesley McNair**, has received a **PEN New England writing award** for his book of poetry *The Lost Child: Ozark Poems*. PEN New England is the regional division of PEN International, a worldwide free speech, literature, and human rights advocacy organization. McNair accepted the award along with fellow Maine-native winner Carolyn Schute on April 19th at the JFK Presidential Library in Boston, MA.

Alumni Spotlight

Emma Deans, 2011



Photo credit: Ariane Kunz, Powell's Books, Portland, OR

Emma Deans recently talked with us about her experience as a student and alum of the BFA program. She works as a Marketing & Communications Associate at Thornton Academy in Saco, ME, where, she says, “[m]y job requires a range of multimedia skills. My boss and I manage the school’s website, social media, admissions materials, e-mail campaigns, and press releases. We are embedded in all aspects of *Postscripts* alumni magazine production (writing, editing, designing, photographing). I also shoot and edit videos on a daily basis.”

Emma’s position requires a wide variety of skills, and it doesn’t immediately tie back into her degree, but that hasn’t stopped her from seeing the value in her time at UMF. “The creative writing program at UMF gave me permission to listen to my inner voice and to share it with an audience,” she says. “I think many young writers discover their passion for writing through journaling and jotting down ideas for stories. The program at UMF takes that energy and focuses it into craft. I learned how to refine my ideas, establish a setting, understand narrative, and polish my grammar.”

We also asked her about her fondest memory of her time here, and she had this to say: “UMF holds a special place in my heart. It was the only school I applied to as a high school senior. I have many wonderful memories, but I will share this one: I woke up very early on the morning of my graduation from UMF. I couldn’t sleep and the streets were empty. I walked across campus, snapping photos of this small Maine town that had become my second home. It was quiet but I could feel something stirring. The winds of change had come to carry me off to another land. I was a writer and I was ready.”

“The most interesting stories are waiting for you outside of your classroom.”

Finally, we asked her what advice she would give to current and former BFA candidates.

“Take advantage of as many travel opportunities as you can! I spent a semester on exchange in California, took a May term course in England and Spain, and went to Quebec for the Winter Carnival. During summers in college I drove across the country twice to camp at national parks. After graduating from UMF I lived in Montana, Idaho, and Oregon. The most interesting stories are waiting for you outside of your classroom. Hang out at bus stops and diners. Listen in on conversations. Always carry a pen.”

Faculty News

Patricia O'Donnell, Director of the BFA Program, has been selected as UMF's Trustee Professor for the 2015-16 academic year. The Trustee Professorship is an endowed professorship awarded each year to a UMF faculty member in recognition of her or his distinguished scholarship or creative work. Professor O'Donnell will be using this opportunity to advance her work on two major writing projects: a collection of short fiction and a book-length memoir. Professor O'Donnell's nonfiction essay "Electricity" is forthcoming in the journal *Storm Cellar*, and her story "Defending the City" appeared in *The Blue Lake Review* in March of 2014. She wrote the foreword to *Maine Metaphor: The Green and Blue House*. The book was written by Susan Dorman, a graduate of UMF, and published in the fall of 2014 by Wipf and Stock Publishers.

Gretchen Legler, resident professor of nonfiction, will be on sabbatical for the 2015-16 academic year. She will be finishing and seeking an agent/publisher for a book of essays about living in rural Maine, tentatively titled *Consider the Acorn*, and working on a book of nonfiction about her recent experiences in Bhutan during her time there as a Fulbright Scholar, tentatively titled *Bhutan Time: Explorations in the Land of Gross National Happiness*. A new essay, titled "Consider the Acorn", will appear in *Orion Magazine* in fall 2015. More about Gretchen's travels in Bhutan can be found at <http://bhutandays.com>.

Luann Yetter's new book, *Bar Harbor in the Roaring Twenties: From Village Life to the High Life on Mount Desert Island*, debuts June 8th, from History Press.

Jeff Thompson has translations of the *Poems of Catullus* (from Cambridge University) coming out over the summer and his memoir, *fragile*, coming out from Red Mountain Press in late fall. He also has a chapbook of poems, *New Faces of Belfast*, coming from Anchor & Plume in the fall. The full collection of his Irish poems comes out in 2017 from Salmon Press.

Shana Youngdahl has had work accepted into the anthologies *Warning, Poems May Be Longer Than They Appear* and *Parts of the Whole: Poetry of the Body*. The release date of both books is still pending. She had three poems published in *Literary Mama* in July 2014. Shana has also taken over faculty oversight of UMF's literary journal, *The Sandy River Review*, which has gone to two online issues during the school year with an annual print issue to be produced each summer.

Alumni Updates

Patrick Bagley, 2004, has released a novel entitled *Bitter Water Blues* through Snub-nose Press. He has also had a short story, "Bad Precedent", accepted for publication in *Crimespree Magazine*.

Nicholas Berry, 2011, has been working at Treat Memorial Library in Livermore Falls, ME. He recently accepted a full-time position as Librarian for the Hartland Public Library in Hartland, ME.

Peter Biello, 2005, has accepted a position as a host of the *All Things Considered* segment on New Hampshire Public Radio. He has also had his short story, "Hurricane Leonard", accepted by *Gargoyle Magazine* for their 40th anniversary issue, due out in late 2016.

Lee Cart, 2010, has self-published a novel, *Born in the Wayeb*, which is a finalist in the 17th Annual International Latino Book Awards in the Sci Fi & Fantasy category.

Adam Chabot, 2011, now a teacher at Kents Hill School, recently presented a plan for a high-school creative writing program there, which has been approved.

David DiSarro, 2003, has had a chapbook of poetry, entitled *I Used to Play in Bands*, accepted for publication by Finishing Line Press.

Melissa Falcon Field, 1997, has had her novel *What Burns Away* named as a "Rising Star in Literary Fiction" by Amazon.

Benjamin Gadberry, 2012, has been appointed Videographer and Multimedia Coordinator at Vail Valley Medical Center in Colorado.

Alumni Updates (cont.)

Sara Gelston, 2005, was awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Creative Writing Fellowship in December 2014.

Callie Koenig, 2012, recently had a poem published in the *Apeiron Review*.

Kelsey Moore, 2013, has accepted a position in the Advancement Office of Trinity College in Hartford, CT, where she is currently a candidate for the MA in English. Additionally, she is the editor and co-owner of the online literary magazine *The Axe Factory*.

Jacques Rancourt, 2009, will be spending several months this winter and spring in Paris for a writing residency at the Cité Internationale des Arts.

Meg Reid, 2008, is editing the anthology *Carolina Writers at Home* for Hub City Press, due out in October 2015.

Kate Russell, 2006, has had a story accepted in the *Mid-American Review*.

Current Student News

Nicole Byrne, 2015, has accepted a fully-funded position as an MFA candidate at Wichita State University. She has also recently had poems accepted to *Sunset Liminal* and *Green Blotter*, and received second place in the SCCC Creative Writing Awards for College Writers in poetry, and first place in the Farmington Public Library Poetry Contest in her age bracket. Along with Audrey Gidman ('15), she has received a full scholarship to attend the upcoming Great Mother and New Father Conference in Nobleboro, ME.

Kimberly Clark, 2016, participated in this year's Symposium Day as one of UMF's Wilson Scholars. Clark presented research on bi-lingual (Spanish-English) feminist poetry of the 20th and 21st centuries, focusing on writing as a form of social activism. Additionally, she is at work on her own series of bi-lingual poems and prose poems.

Current Student News (cont.)

Nathaniel Duggan, 2016, was this year's winner of the Division of Humanities Maude L. Parks Award, which is given to a junior student at UMF demonstrating excellence in communication arts in the field of English. Nate also has had his poem "In French Pain Means Bread" accepted for publication in *Rust + Moth Magazine*, an online journal of poetry and the arts.

Audrey Gidman, 2015, placed second in the University of Maine Augusta's Terry Plunkett Poetry festival contest, for her poem "Early August in the Western Mountains of Maine". Audrey has also been accepted to the Juniper Summer Writing Institute in Amherst, and will be mentoring young writers for her fourth summer at the Champlain College Young Writer's Conference in Burlington, VT. Along with Nicole Byrne ('15), she has received a full scholarship to attend the upcoming Great Mother and New Father Conference in Nobleboro, ME.

Sam Oppenheim, 2015, was the recipient of the Division of Humanities 2015 Eleanor Wood Memorial Scholarship, an endowed prize awarded to an outstanding junior or senior English major. He also recently had his short story "Cherry Blossoms" published in the *Jewish Literary Journal*.

The BFA Class of 2015



Front: (from left to right) Jennifer Lee Gerry, Gretchen Legler, Pat O'Donnell, Shana Youngdahl, Luann Yetter

Back: (from left to right) Victoria Luce, Nicole Byrne, Jacqueline Rogers, Rachel Anderson, Caleb Rea, Nathaniel Fritts

Not Pictured: Darrian Church, Ashley Haroldsen, Hannah Huber, Kyle Manning, Jenna Silliboy

2014-2015 Wilson Scholars

William Jennings

The Book of Bill: A Brief Chronicle of 58 Years Agone

Sam Oppenheim

Cursed Be He Who Moves My Bones: Memories of Desecrated Corpses in Early Modern Britain

Darrian Church

Composing a Collection: A Poetry Chapbook

Kim Clark

Breaking Borders: The Vision and Voices of Modern Bilingual Female Poets

Michael D. Wilson Fellows and Scholars represent some of UMF's best students from across all disciplines. The program recognizes UMF student's tremendous creativity, and expands UMF's commitment to undergraduate research and faculty mentoring. Fellowship winners complete a research project or creative work and present their efforts at UMF's annual Symposium Day in May.

CW PRIZE WINNERS

Fall 2014

Audrey Gidman and Kyle Manning

Spring 2015

Jill Gingras

Beth Eisen Scholarship

Aimee DeGroat

The Creative Writing Prize is awarded each semester to a BFA candidate in the Senior Seminar who shows excellence and promise in writing.

The Beth Eisen Scholarship is awarded annually to a non-traditional student in the BFA program whom faculty believe shows a passion for creativity and promise as a writer.

Sandy River Review

Editors

Incoming - Nathaniel Duggan

Outgoing - Audrey Gidman

Assistant Editors

Incoming - Joshua Cardella

Outgoing - Nathaniel Duggan

This summer will be the launch of the first annual *Sandy River Review* prize for undergraduate writing. This national contest is open to any undergraduate who was enrolled in college in the spring 2015 semester. There are two categories: prose (fiction and nonfiction) and poetry. UMF Professor Emeritus and poet Wesley McNair will serve as the judge for poetry, and Sarah Braunstein, author of the novel *The Sweet Relief of Missing Children*, will judge the prose. There is no fee for the contest. The deadline is July 15. For more information and to view online issues visit sandyriverreview.com.

Writers' Guild News

Outgoing Officers

President - Tori Luce

Vice President - Caleb Rea

Treasurer - Nate Fritts

Secretary - Zack Peercy

Incoming Officers

President - Zack Peercy

Vice President - Audrey Gidman

Treasurer - Allie Umstadt

Secretary - Aliza Dube

2014-2015

Visiting Writers

Fall

David Gessner

V. Penelope Pelizzon

Laura van den Berg

Desi Van Til

Spring

Melissa Falcon Field

Brock Clarke

Douglas Whyknott

Beth Ann Fennely

Senior Readers

Fall 2014

Nicole Marie Byrne

Darrian Kimberly Church

Kimberly Clark

Audrey Gidman

Ashley Nicole Haroldsen

Chihiro Kamiya

Kyle Manning

Jordan S. McNair

Allura Michelle Morneau

Jenna Brooke Silliboy

Spring 2015

Caleb Rea

Eric Barry

Jacqueline Rogers

Jennifer Gerry

Jill Gingras

Molly King

Nathaniel Fritts

Rachel Anderson

Victoria Luce

Program Director's Report

The year 2014/2015 was full of good things for the BFA Program. Perhaps the biggest news is the fact that we have just approved a new minor in Creative Writing, to be available to students in fall of 2015. There has long been a demand for such a minor, and we are finally in a position to offer it. Along with the minor, we are offering a new course—taught for the first time in spring 2015 by Gretchen Legler—called Creative Writing for Non-Majors. It introduces the four major genres taught at UMF (Poetry, Fiction, Creative Nonfiction, and Screenwriting). The course is a counterpoint to ENG150, which is a recently added required course for majors, and which introduces the four genres to First-Year BFA majors.

This year's Senior Seminar in Creative Writing students offered a variety of senior projects to the campus, including the Farmington Writers Congress, which was organized by seniors Rachel Anderson and Nate Fritts, with help from Nicole Byrne. The Congress was billed as a "mini-AWP conference," offering talks and discussions on the writing and publishing life. Other senior projects ranged from poems folded into origami and scattered around the Creative Writing House, to Tori Luce's entire writing oeuvre crocheted into a small blanket. (For Exit Interview gifts, she crocheted syllabi by Pat O'Donnell and Teal Minton into pot-holders.) Members of the Writers Guild had a fantastic time at the AWP (Association of Writers and Writing Programs) conference in Minneapolis, taking more students than ever before. BFA majors continued to present their work at Symposium, and generally to wow the campus with their energy and creativity. BFA alums, please continue to send us any news of your lives—we love to hear it all! Please send any news or interesting tidbits to Pat O'Donnell at podonnell@maine.edu.

Best wishes from the BFA faculty!

Newsletter created by Caelin Kelsey (2018) and edited by Gretchen Legler.

Keep us posted! Send your alumni news to podonnell@maine.edu.