Sarah Trent

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Administrators, audit declare USM “a mess”

Matt Dodge & Sarah Trent
Editors

The USM budget is a mess. The administration says so. Faculty and department heads say so. PricewaterhouseCoopers, an independent firm hired to perform an audit at the university, agrees.

At a recent Student Senate meeting, interim Provost Mark Lapping spread his hands out over a row of 2-seat-wide Luther Honney tables. “Right now, we have a table-and-a-half covered in data,” he said. “This place is a mess.”

The PricewaterhouseCoopers audit was a $40,000 job paid for by the Board of Trustees and system chancellor Richard Pattanadee, USM’s former president. It aimed to give the administration and the public a better look at USM’s financial situation and help USM regain financial footing.

Not only looking to demystify the university’s finances, PricewaterhouseCoopers was asked to give recommendations on how USM can improve its budget and financial reporting practices.

The first of the six recommendations listed in the audit calls for USM to identify the full amount of its deficit. This revealing recommendation sheds light on the ethereal, intangible reporting and budgetary practices that have governed USM finances and left the school without a clear idea of exactly how deep in the red it is.

The audit says that USM had “reportedly little consequences for fullimations, and that this practice ‘over time, created an expectation at the departments that other suspensions would be available to make up their deficits.’”

Treating the budget as a sort of pool, moving money around when and where it needed to be in order to balance the budget, USM was able to get by, despite the difficulties in accounting for the movement.

See BUDGET page 7

Uncovering the budget

Sarah Trent
Executive Editor

“Sometimes, you’ve got to be a provocative SOB,” said interim Provost Mark Lapping, as two members of the Free Press pored through the plans and letters supporting the 26 programs to whom suspension has been threatened.

Plans and evaluations like this should happen on a more regular basis, according to a number of administrators, including Lapping.

He said that the Board of Trustees requires that programs undergo a review every seven years. Those reviews, he said, have not formally been occurring.

In their temporary positions, Lapping and interim President Joe Wood have made bold moves to incite change in the university, primarily in response to the financial crisis that has become more and more apparent over the past year.

The plans they make public – the list of 26 programs, the soon-to-be-announced $6-7 million in budget cuts and a clearer picture of which positions will be eliminated – come after much deliberation and planning.

Last fall, Lapping tried to initiate cuts by introducing the idea to reorganize colleges and programs, which would cut administrative costs.

For example, he said, “physics and chemistry are right next to each other. They share an office, administrative assistants, even a coffee pot.” He admits that combining these two particular programs might not have saved a lot of money, but says that their reaction to the idea was disheartening.

“God forbid you combine them,” he said, paraphrasing the departments’ reactions.

Other programs and colleges were asked, similarly, to think about the possibility of joining forces.

Business and the School of Applied Science, Engineering and Technology were asked how they might cooperate, under the assumption that both institutions were most concerned with innovation.

See LIST page 6

4th annual Thinking Matters symposium

Debate over student-professor conflict prompts student-professor conflict

David O’Donnell
Sports Editor

It started with an annual tradition known as “poster days,” where science students would gather to share visual presentations of the year’s major projects.

This piqued the interest of some in the history department, who noticed an exchange of work and letters supporting the 26 programs to whom suspension has been threatened.

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David O’Donnell
Sports Editor

The keynote event that kicked off this year’s Thinking Matters symposium saw students sounding off on their interpretations of the term “academic freedom,” as it may apply when a conflict arises between students and educators.

They didn’t expect to see a real-life demonstration.

The event was run as a panel discussion, overlapping with the conclusion of the Gloria S. Duclos Convocation on Academic Freedom. The panel was moderated by senior history major Daniel Chard, and was feature a few oral presentations and panel discussions...

The result was Thinking Matters, which last week sprawled out across the Portland campus for its fourth straight year. Running April 17-18, the symposium enjoyed strong university support – from the glowing welcome by interim President Joe Wood that graces the program guide to permission for all university staff to leave their posts if they wished to attend.

See THINK page 5

Words + Images published without images

Artists upset, editor tries to explain

Jenna Howard
Arts Editor

Art student Marie Follayttar rushed into the office of Words + Images the morning that it was set to debut. She couldn’t wait to see her artwork in print.

Sarah Skelding, a poet editor for the publication, looked at Follayttar and said, apologetically, “I didn’t get the e-mail!”

“I could tell it was a hard thing for her to say,” Follayttar told the Free Press.

Words + Images is an art and literature magazine that publishes every year. This year, it has no images, no art, for the first time in its 28-year history — and artists like Follayttar, who submit- ted work and were told it had been accepted, are less than impressed.

As she stood before Skelding, there was nothing Follayttar could do.

The 2008 Words + Images had been published. The books were in boxes in the office. Without art.

“I am upset and somewhat humiliated,” I rejoiced and shared that I was being published,” said Follayttar.

Ryan Gato, the publishing editor, said it was a mistake.

Although their constitution calls Words + Images an ‘arts journal,’ it also gives the publishing director freedom to make de- cisions. And by ‘arts,’ this year, the audience will get ‘literary.’

Gato said he made a last minute executive decision to exclude all art, although he also said they received the usual amount of art submissions. In the fall, when the group traditionally advertises for fullimations, it advertised in two national literary journals, but no ads were put out to encourage art submissions, according to staff.

“This was not intentional,” said Gato in a phone interview. He served as the fiction editor for See WORDS page 14
Your Piece of Maine

Pets ALLOWED

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The economy

$sucks$ Part 2 of 3

How economic strife can be good for enrollment.

Kind of.

David O’Donnell
Sports Editor

As if the economy wasn’t compli-
cated enough.

Despite what we expected, accord-
ing to some experts around campus, USM may not have to worry about enrollment being dragged down by an impending recession.

The dread “r” word is bound to have undesirable effects on the state, the school and your personal fi-
nances – but an enrollment shortfall for USM is not expected to be one of them, if historical precedent is any in-
dication.

Economic downturns, such as those the U.S. saw in the early ’90s and 2001, tend to have a counter-cyclical effect on university enrollment. In other words, they can actually be a boon to getting more students in the door – despite their having less money to pump into education.

Recession trends

The 1991 recession is probably more informative than the most recent one, which preceded – but was wors-
ened by the events of Sept. 11.

While the 2001 recession touched Maine a lot less than other states, ac-
cording to Charles Colgan, professor of USM’s Muskie School of Public Service, the recession 10 years earlier hit the Northeast as hard as any other region in the country.

And it’s a prime example of the expected trends: school-wide enroll-
ment had been climbing in the latter half of the 1980s, and then there was a sudden drop-off in part-time students.

Simultaneously, the full-time numbers continued their upward climb, and by slightly greater margins.

Meaning? Students taking courses for enrichment’s sake – part-time students who aren’t seeking a degree – tend to drop off during recessions, because they often find it’s more im-
portant to devote time to working and making money, rather than spending on classes that won’t help fill their wallets in the short-term.

Degree-seeking students, on the other hand, tend to increase: reces-
sions often send people in search of new careers, in part because of lay-
offs, so they head back toward univer-
sities in search of new options.

USM’s current image is tightly linked to its part-time students, who often have careers but attend a class or two to broaden their horizons. When the economy plummets, they’re often forced to make quick decisions, es-
pecially if they find themselves laid off or facing lower wages and longer hours.

Some add to the trend of increas-
ing full-time enrollment, hoping to strengthen their skills or switch ca-
reers. Some seek work and money else-
where, and put a pause on their schooling.

In the 2001 recession, Maine was one of the least-affected states in the nation. And still, according to Colgan, anxiety over a shrinking economy may have contributed to the signifi-
cant enrollment spike USM saw in the fall of 2002.

While the recessions of the last two decades stand out as examples be-
cause of their sheer scope and mag-
nitude, Colgan is not anticipating that kind of a free-fall for Mainers this time around.

“We’ll be flat,” he says, “but we’re probably not going to see the big neg-
 ativ e effect you’ll be seeing in places like California. It’s not going to be pleasant here, but we’ll see a lot worse over there.”

But, he adds, “a five percent boost in enrollment wouldn’t be entirely un-
likely.”

According to Scott Steinerberg, the director of undergraduate admissions, his department has already seen a five percent increase in applications over this time last year, and 16 percent over two years ago (although administra-
tors warn this data might be skewed by changes in how applications are processed).

Mortgage crisis & stu-
dent loans

Another area where recession rears its head and complicates things is in the realm of financial assistance.

Keith DuBois, director of Financial Aid, has also seen an increase in applications – a 10 percent jump in the number of Free Applications for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA)s reaching his office this year versus mid-April 2007.

According the Rosa Redonnett, the vice president of enrollment man-
agement, this doesn’t just speak to swelling enrollment, but also to the economic situations of existing stu-
dents.

She suspects a substantial portion of those new FAFSAs come from stu-
dents who may not have had to worry about the form previously, but that “this year, their liquidity is very dif-
ferent.”

But their options for financial assis-
tance have also changed.

Colgan says that the sub-prime mortgage crisis, so intertwined with our lagging economy, has directly affected students’ ability to acquire loans.

There are three major variet-
ies of loans: those directly from the government, government-subsidized, and private “alternative” loans from financial institutions.

In recent years, there was tremen-
dous growth in this third sector: banks packaged student loans in much the same way that they would a mortgage,

putting the money into securities that are then sold to world debt markets.

But in the face of the sub-prime debacle of recent months, lenders’ enthu-
iasm has dried up.

Nobody wants to buy them; nobody wants to buy your student loan,” says Colgan. “They look at you – no offense – as potentially another sub-prime mess.”

This has forced the United States Congress to look at strengthening its involvement in assisting college stu-
dents. A revised Higher Education Act addressing this will go before the House of Representatives in the next month, and on to the senate by the end of spring.

The state of Maine

It all adds up to a complicated and de
cidedly unique situation. Now, for in-
stance, the school faces increased competition from SMCC, which only became a full-fledged community col-
lege after the last recession.

That could increase the drop in part-
time students, says Redonnett.

SMCC’s much lower tuition makes it a likelier choice for students seek-
ing a part-time education – including those who can no longer afford USM.

Economic woes mean the school will also see less money from the state, which provides about 30 percent of its budget. Though appropriations for next year are not decreasing compared to last, USM’s proposed five million dollar increase has been slashed.

So despite “a few students going from two classes to four classes a se-
mester,” says Colgan, not all the news is positive. While an increase in full-
time enrollment will help balance a recession’s impact on USM, “it’s not enough to offset what we’re losing.”

Next week, part 3 will take a closer look at USM’s financial crisis within the context of the national economic slump.
Darfur refugee says “enough” isn’t enough

Brandon McKenney
Staff Writer

“How many of you know one solid fact about Darfur?” asked Alexandra Petropolous, a member of STAND (Students Taking Action Now: Darfur). The nearly two-dozen members of the audi- ence in Luther Bonney’s Talbot Lecture Hall remained silent as she continued.

“How many of you know that Darfur is a country in Africa?” A few students cautiously raised their hands.

Darfur is not a country—it’s actually a region in the northeast African country of Sudan—but Petropolous’ trick question proved her point: the lack of information about the region and the ongoing genocide going on within its bor- ders could be to blame for the lack of action.

Following these questions, Petropolous began her presenta- tion as part of STAND’s “Darfur: Just the Facts” event that took place last Tuesday.

Petropolous presented facts to the audience about the history of Darfur and the genocide that is still taking place.

She then handed the stage off to Mansar Ahmed, a refugee from Darfur who is now living in Portland.

“Six years of genocide, while the international community stands by,” Ahmed began as the emotion of the topic choked up his voice. Ahmed is one of nearly 90 refugees who fled from the vio- lence-racked country and are now living in Maine.

Some of the refugees have started a group to speak out about the genocide, the Fur Cultural Revival, in recognition of the Fur tribe they belong to.

He went on to explain the histo- ry of his country and how and why the genocide began. In the 1980s, he said, the Janjaweed, an Islamic militia responsible for the ongoing genocide, began killing “impor- tant people.” This included teach- ers, missionaries, and sheiks—the leaders of Arab villages.

Ahmed explained that in the 1990s, the level of violence in- creased as they came in larger numbers to villages and began killing ordinary civilians.

“What else can you do but defend yourself, or else you would be killed,” said Ahmed.

After local militias retaliated against the Sudanese government, the “real genocide” began. The killing in Darfur has been going on for six years now, has claimed upwards of 400,000 lives and displaced millions of others.

The Janjaweed carry out rape and murder and burn down whole villages, backed mainly by the Sudanese government.

“The international community, he said, has remained ineffective in taking strong action to end the violence.

Ahmed and Petropolous told the audience that the younger gen- eration needs to step up and force the world’s leaders to take strong action. They explained that while the Bush administration has been one of the leaders in calling for action in Darfur, it has amounted to little more than strong words.

“Students are supposed to stand for action,” said Ahmed.

The two speakers urged students to stay informed and pass on what they learn to others. Petropolous explained that hand-written let- ters to government leaders are the strongest means of communicat- ing the need for action, along with divestment from Sudanese-linked companies and donating to hu- manitarian aid efforts.

The presentation wrapped up with a clip from the movie Hotel Rwanda, which is about the 1994 genocide in Rwanda that saw little action from outsiders until between 800,000 and one million people had been killed.

Ahmed explained that so many genocides have happened through- out history, but they continue be- cause action is never taken until it’s too late.

“We’re still saying enough is enough,” he said. “Well, enough is supposed to mean ‘no more.’”

Students lay down their arms, and their bodies

Anti-handgun protest hits USM sidewalks

Brandon McKenney
Staff Writer

Twenty students laid down for three minutes on the side- walks outside Luther Bonney last Wednesday in a silent pro- test against handgun violence and U.S. gun laws. It happened on Wednesday because that was the one-year anniversary of the Virginia Tech massacre; it lasted the amount of time it took the shooter, Seung-Hui Cho, to purchase his handgun.

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The protest was a joint effort by a group called Maine Citizens Against Handgun Violence and USM students, many of whom had found out about the protest through a group on Facebook.

The Maine Citizens group started a similar protest last August in Monument Square.

USM student Erica Robertson found out about the group through an article in the Portland Press Herald, and joined so as to be active on an issue for which she is concerned. “It’s affecting students nationwide,” said Robertson. “If we don’t act, who else is going to?”

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The Free Press | April 21, 2008

NEWS

4th Annual Thinking Matters Symposium

From THINK page 1

By all indications, it was still a grassroots-style collaboration between students and faculty. That’s how the symposium started, and how it maintains quality control – there is no jury or competition, only a strong mentor-student relationship guiding the development of each presentation.

“I think there are a lot of students here who are really engaged in their education, and sometimes they don’t realize they’re not alone in that,” says Adam Tuchinsky, professor of history and one of the founders of the symposium.

“So we try to bring all of the exceptional and creative work that gets done around campus into one place, so we can see just how much is getting done here.”

If there is a common thread in projects this time around, it is because mentors tried to encourage more service learning and civic engagement in the projects, which means that students applied themselves to some sort of outreach, community-oriented effort.

Undergrads in the recreation and leisure program, for instance, got elementary school students involved in fund-raising to build playgrounds for impoverished children in Haiti.

But despite this year’s focus on civic engagement, the symposium is always fairly open-ended. Some presentations are of classroom projects that evolved into extra-credit. Others, especially in the oral portion, are meant to hand students training for those considering a future in academia.

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–professor Adam Tuchinsky

Open-source, standards-based software system for internet accessible geospatial data warehouse

Computer Science graduate student Matthew Blanchette and a team of several other computer science graduates are actively developing a system that will eventually be implemented by the Maine Geo-Library Board. It offers a way to manage a database of geospatial information, to which anyone across the state can contribute and access. A key aspect is the ability for teachers to log on from another computer and friends have developed a computer game to educate elementary school students about lobster fishing, observing trends and making decisions based on changing environmental conditions. A key aspect is the ability for teachers to log on from another computer, either to help out or simply to monitor a student’s progress.

Global Educators ‘08

In honor of USM’s 10th straight year of hosting a Model United Nations conference, this team of political science undergraduates traveled to local high schools, teaching students how to be model delegates themselves. Together, the group has probably mentored more than 100 students at a variety of schools across Maine, some of whom will show off their skills at the Model UN conference this May.

Students, professor conflict at event

From CONFLICT page 1

The symposium is comprised of two prize-winners in the convocation’s essay contest: Aramis Lopez and Adom Harfik (a third winner, Kristien Neilson, was unable to attend). The contest asked undergraduates to respond to the question, “Must the academic freedom of professors be in conflict with the academic freedom of students?”

The first-place, $500 prize-winning essay belonged to Lopez, a senior classics and philosophy major. His paper stressed that the defining difference between students and professors was a matter of experience – the student being an undeveloped “embryo of intellectual activity.”

At one point during the question-and-answer session, Lopez briefly mentioned a link between the disintegration of analytical, discussion-based learning in both the United States and France. That immediately drew a sharp rebuke from Nancy Erickson, a French professor, as she thumbed through a copy of Le Bon Usage in the back of the room.

“No, I don’t think that’s true,” she said. “I think the curriculum (in France) is oriented towards a firmer rooting in discussion, and questioning … and an engagement in the material that’s just not present in most United States classrooms.”

“I mean, look, we’re sitting here, and who is talking? Only professors,” she added.

That provoked some laughter and much disagreement from others in the audience. Lopez and Erickson then engaged in a lengthy, energetic back-and-forth, mostly on the state of French higher education. There were several sarcastic exchanges. Citing too much information on her side, the professor “withdrew” from the debate several times, only to jump back in.

A student in the audience responded to Erickson’s mention of student apathy.

“I think that sometimes students, what they’re scared of is that they cannot talk to (a professor) without one or the other being so involved emotionally or culturally, that we can’t engage in a dialogue.”

Later, with 20 minutes remaining, Erickson and history professor Eileen Engan got up and left the room. When asked why they had left, the women mentioned that Erickson had a class coming up, but also admitted feeling alienated by the patriarchal tone of the panel.

After the event, organizers and students in the room were a bit taken aback by that characterization, but history professor Adam Tuchinsky pointed out that it was an excellent live-action companion to the winning essays, and an interesting start to the symposium.

Join us for the Gorham Block Party!

Where: April 26 from 11am to 3pm
Where: Gorham Village
Come down to the Village and have some fun!
Visit our on-site artists, feel the local culture.
Learn more about local culture.
What’s happening soon? Two on-site artists.
What’s happening soon? Two on-site artists.
Learn more about local culture.
"Sometimes you've got to be a provocative SOB."
-Interim Provost Mark Lapping

"I'm going to be a pariah one way or another, so I might as well start."
-Interim President Joe Wood

From LIST page 1

Lapping was hoping to cut two dozen programs from which would have totaled nearly half a million dollars, including salaries and benefits. “We’d much rather cut administrative costs,” he said, but the faculty weren’t psyched about the idea, and, because USM operates under governance shared by the various staff and faculty senates, the idea didn’t fly. President Wood is looking to cut between $6 and $7 million from the budget. He went to the incoming President Selma Horman with a clean slate, and Lapping thinks that had two deans been cut and some programs found ways to collaborate, that number would have been easier to reach.

He does say that the program evaluations would have gone on regardless.

To read summaries of the plans submitted by each program, see “26 plans” on our website: www.usmfreepress.org

Sarah Trent
Executive Editor

Discussions for creating a list – or two – of programs to consider for suspension began last fall, said Provost Mark Lapping. Filed alongside the plans “listed” programs presented to him to get themselves off that list are email correspondences between Lapping, Wood, and others. The first we could find referenced the need to suspend program dates to Nov. 5.

The email is from Wood to Lapping, and says (we did not correct Wood’s typos):

Nov. 5

I need to put out a list of programs for evaluation for suspension or elimination… Recognizing that we have to carry students presently in some program to completion. I just don’t want to admit more into them. Here’s my starter list for you for me to discuss before anything else—all based on either low enrollments/graduates or no faculty. Some of this list is political—to see if we can find an angel…

BS in ENS/H
BS in Geosciences
BS in Physics
MS in Counseling: Voc Rehab
MS in Statistics
Also worth asking what is required for BS in Econ as opposed to BA in Econ, based on # of grads, etc…

Same with some music degrees…

Joseph S. Wood

Various emails went back and forth, and the list – or rather, two lists – got longer.

In a correspondence we don’t share here, it was noted (and confirmed by Lapping in person), that originally there would be two lists, one which was a serious threat of suspension, and one which would list programs that needed to justify their resources in comparison to the number of students in the program.

“The key question,” said Lapping, “is if you serve a lot of students in a service capacity (rather than for a degree), do you need to have a major?” He cites the physics program as an example: it has a low number of graduates, but serves many other majors, and is therefore difficult to cut.

In early Jan., another email from Wood to Lopping notes some frustration in the lack of movement toward creating solutions, and outlines an even larger list for possible inclusion on the lists. Original types have not been corrected, and a series of handwritten notes are put in (brackets) because Wood uses parentheses and brackets in his email.

Jan 5 08

Mark

I’m going to be a pariah one way or another, so I might as well start, given...

A little headway on reorganization ineffective response to my request for consideration of what we stop doing...

Increased urgency from state budget situation, etc., etc., etc. (we can discuss these)

I’d like to announce next week “suspension of admissions” effective Fall 2008 for the following programs based on annual numbers of graduates. Suspension of admissions allows us to review thoroughly and consider alternative means for supporting these programs, if justified... For Statistics to a Professional Science degree, etc…or get industry support for Environmental Health and Safety, or merge FPM and CPD. Linguistics with Languages, etc. Ideally, I announce to the University on Thursday or Friday and to BOT on Sunday in public.

But I want your involvement in this, while also hugging you a bit to be the judicious arbiter over the next 12 months with the new president…

And you and I will find some time to discuss more. I especially want to notify deans and faculty of each program before I announce… even if only by a few hours. Some of these suspensions leads to any faculty termination, but allows us to refocus our instructional resources...

So here is my preliminary list.

BA/BS:
- Arts and Humanities (LAC) [check marks]
- Athletic Training
- Biochemistry (crossed out, no absolute faculty?)
- Chemistry [-]
- Environmental Health and Safety [- go talk to John Whig]
- Geoscience [-]
- Linguistics
- Physical Science (LAC [rough one here, --- ]
- Physics [-]
- Technology Education plus Applied Tech Edc. and Applied Tech Leader (yes I deleted these last year) [suspended]
- Women’s Studies (alas we can’t then go forward with the MA — or that replaces the BA?)

Plus programs in russian, german, CLASS, etc. …

[Rehab Counseling – suspension]

MA/MS:
- Accountancy [crossed off]
- Adult Education [crossed off]
- Applied Literacy [talk to Betty Lou]
- Computer Science [- suspended]
- Community Development and Planning [- suspended]
- Health Policy Management
- Manufacturing Management (already suspended) [- suspended]

Statistics [-]

Plus review:
- Biology (note unreadable)
- Immunology (note unreadable)
- Leadership and Organizational Studies (note unreadable)
- Music [- music-]

CAS:
- All of them in Education, or Adult and Continuing Teacher Education (all require review and assay)
- All of them Nursing

P&D:
- Public Policy [already suspended] [-suspended]

I know this is a highly politicized list, but putting it out is critical to getting some real traction here. ... --- Again— issue is suspension admissions to these programs in order to review real potential for sustainability of the programs—and of the University.

Joe

The public announcement that 26 programs had been put on a list did not come for another month.

Several days after the Jan. 3 email, one went to Margo Wood, the associate provost and dean of graduate studies, and “Mary,” whom we could not identify.

January 7 2008

Margo and Mary—In confidence...

Mark and I want to move to suspend admissions for the following. I will make this public in due time, ideally within a week, but for now need your cooperation in implementation:

MS in Computer Science
MS in Manufacturing Management (already suspended admissions? Any other movement to suspend?]
MS in Counseling/Program in Rehabilitation Counseling
PhD in Public Policy (faculty have already recommended this action)

Any admissions in any of these yet for Fall 2009?

I will be asking several other programs to reorganize (e.g. like Statistics is doing), and if they fail, I will move to suspend admissions on them too.

More as I can. Thanks. Joe

On Feb. 8, the final list of 26 went public, in announcements to the faculty and student senates, as well as over the employment email list-serv in the form of a news-letter from interim President Joe Wood.

Programs were given until April 1 to submit responses, nearly all of which have come in. The final decision to suspend admissions “to a small number of programs” will come July 1. The process of suspension takes one year, as unions and trustees need to be contacted and notified.

To read summaries of the plans submitted to the provost, see “26 plans” on our website, www.usmfreepress.org.
The audit reveals need for structure

From BUDGET page 1

When enrollment started dropping, the numbers got harder to fudge.

How USM got here

In a Sept. 2006 report to the Faculty Senate, then-Chief Financial Officer Sam Andrews said that enrollment was down 1.5 percent – when it was only predicted to be a 2.5 percent decrease. Also mentioned is a $2 million short-fall, which he said he “would help soften.”

It didn’t make enough of a dent, enrollment continued to decrease and financial practices remained difficult to ac-
count for.

Following the Andrews’ retirement in February 2007, the breadth of the mess began coming to light.

Since Dick Campbell took over as CFO, USM has been made more and more aware of the depth of its financial hole: the most recently reported numbers put it at $8.2 million.

In an effort to leave incoming President Selma Botman with a cleaner table to work from, interim President Joe Wood and the university administration is planning to cut nearly $7 million from next year’s budget.

According to Provost Mark Lapping, this will be done primarily through cuts to administrative offices, by cutting full-time staff to part-time hours (while maintaining their fringe benefits), suspension of a small number of programs and through picking “low-hanging fruit” – the non-strategic, temporarily convenient “savings” from retiring faculty and staff who, under the hiring freeze, will not be replaced.

Feeling helpless

The historically “opaque” nature of the USM budget, ac-
cording to Lorrainne Carroll, has been a cause of concern for some faculty at USM.

Carroll, the interim director of the women and gender studies program, realized just how ingrained the poor ac-
countability system was when she stepped into her interim job in January.

“I asked the director and provost to explain the budgeting system to me, and they replied with a shrug, throwing their hands in the air,” said Carroll, although she realized that the PricewaterhouseCoopers report is a step towards understanding it.

Adding that the budget process “is mysterious and infan-
tilizing,” Carroll emphasized that some departments were left feeling a little lost.

It also left departments without any sense of which funds they were entitled too, a practice Carroll likened to an “Oliver Twist” atmosphere in which departments were pleading “please sir, I want some more.”

Reacting to the audit

“The more we deal with this now, the better,” said CFO Campbell. “If it turns out we need to change our plan as much as this audit suggests and oversight should be improved in an effort to decrease and financial problem.”

The audit says

1. The full amount of the deficit must be identified and reported to the president for assessment of its realism. USM finances need to reconcile all the positions in the current budget for USM personnel who are actually being paid, including their fringe benefits.
2. Calls for actual costs of running pro-

CFO. The Audit Committee should be reconstituted to provide objective moni-
3. Budget and reporting disciplines must be greatly improved. An analysis capability should be created to enable the office of the CFO to prepare and assess these reports.
4. The finance function at USM should be improved.
5. PeopleSoft should be fully implemented.
6. Oversight should be improved.

For more information contact Shoshana Hoose 207-623-4511, shoshana

Elder Lee, an organizer of this year’s Deaf Film Festival, is shown here signing with another student volunteer at the festival’s reception – which attracted more than 90 people from the local deaf community.

Saturday April 26

3rd Annual USM Knap-In. USM Geography-Anthropology Student Assoc. present their 3rd annual event. Flintknappers, or stone-tool-makers, practice their art and exchange ideas and materi-
als. The only one of its’ kind in Maine, this event draws participant from all over the world, attracts an attendance of ALL AGES and levels of experience and is a great way to bring the community together for a great time. Raffles, contests, vendors and much more! Bailey Hall, Gorham Campus/ 10am-4pm/ For more information contact Ann at awittmangirl@yahoo.com or call USM 780-5321.

USM Craft Show- Field House, Gorham/ 8am- 5pm.

Black and White Formal- Sponsored by the USM Dance Team, Portland Events Board and the Student Senate Tickets are $15 for USM students, $20 for non-students. Tickets are on sale at the Student Involvement & Activities Center in the Woodbury Campus Center from Monday April 21 to Monday April 28. Tickets are available at the Student Center.

Sunday April 27

“Great Maine Bike Swap”. The Great Maine Bike Swap returns to the gym bringing together people buying and selling used bicy-
cles and gear. USM Sullivan Gym - Portland Campus/ 10am-2pm/ For more info contact Shoshana Hoose 207-623-4511, shoshana@ BikeMaine.org
LETTER FROM THE EDITOR

Midway through production on Saturday night, the handful of Free Press staff still awake to copy-edit pages decided that this was our “exposé” issue.

Full of attempts to uncover what’s going on around here—telling why Words + Images was our “exposé” issue. Yes, I hope that there will be more like it. Yes, faculty, administration, students— we’re paying attention.

And while we welcome the chance to write about your accomplishments, please understand that sometimes, it’s better for the university when we cover a little bit more.

Sarah Trent
Executive Editor
Taylor to keep representing USM students in the best possible manner. I truly believe he will, and I hope you can support him throughout next year. It is a tough and often thankless job, with longer hours than you may realize, but someone needs to do it, and I’m glad that someone got to be me this year.

While my time at USM has come to an end, that’s not the case for many of you who will read this. I cannot encourage you enough, if you are not already, to get involved at USM, and to try and make a difference in the university community. All year we have been bombarded with disheartening news, about a favorite teacher’s contract not being renewed, or a possible jump in our tuition rates. What we haven’t heard about is students taking proactive measures to try and be a part of solving these issues.

One of the greatest events of the entire school year for me was “Change ’08” in February. Students from every facet of the university including Greeks, athletes, residents, commutors and senators came together to discuss and create plans to solve persistent problems at USM. For the first time in my four years at USM, I saw students who usually did not get involved in creating positive change at USM making their opinions and ideas known in order to do some good. I hope that before you leave, you can do the same at next year’s “Change ’09”, by running for student government, joining a student organization, or in any of many other ways.

USM, do not let the time slip by like it did for me. One thing that jumps at me when I think back on my time at USM is that this is an amazing school, despite all of its challenges and shortcomings. We are all collectively responsible for the successes and failures of our school. The way I see it, USM is the commonwealth of its students, staff and faculty. It’s easy to point out and criticize what is wrong or what hasn’t worked at USM, but what we need to start doing more as students is to try to fix what doesn’t work, and to get involved in order to positively impact the entire student experience, and yourselves as well.

Thank you again for allowing me to be your Student Body President, I have enjoyed every minute of it. I wish you all the best in your future.

Sincerely,
AJ Chalifour
Former Student Body President

My Fellow Students:

Well, it’s been a hell of a year hasn’t it? With all of the events and happenings swirling around campus this year, it seems to have ended more quickly than I could have imagined. In a year marked by a new incoming president, budget woes and worries, new buildings, new construction and tough times for those within the student involvement community, I am looking towards graduation while trying to summarize not only the last year but my last four years at USM.

As I look back on my experience here at USM as a whole, it has been the best four years of my life. There is no period in time where I can say that I was happier, that I was more productive, more involved and engaged. I look at my impending graduation and departure from USM like a train heading towards a wall at 150 mph, and there is no time to hit the brakes. There so much more I would love to do here, so many people and things I will be leaving behind, and I will miss it dearly.

I had the honor and privilege to serve as your student body president for the last year, and I cannot thank you enough for giving me that opportunity. My experience in student government is one in which I particularly feel that I have to let go just as soon as I was really getting good at it. I keep wishing that I had gotten involved much sooner, and that I had been able to be a student senator before becoming student body president, or that I had more time with the Model United Nations Organization.

In any event, I hope that I was able to represent you well in every meeting or event I attended this year, and that the path is set for my successor Ben
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Students protest
Husky Film Fest
Organizers refuse to include ‘Shit Hard’

Jenna Howard
Arts Editor

More than 50 students protested the Husky Film Festival last week after only one of 10 submissions was not chosen to be shown at the event.

The film not chosen by the selection committee was titled “Shit Hard,” and its supporters turned up holding signs and wearing white T-shirts with variations of “Live Free Shit Hard” written on them. Some had duct tape over their mouths.

The filmmakers and many of their peers see their not being chosen as a form of censorship.

The event was put on by the Community of Arts (COA), which is one of the special-interest floors in Robie-Andrews. The committee responsible for choosing films was made up primarily of Robie-Andrews staff, several resident directors, and some grad assistants.

Danielle Descoeur, a protestor, said that as members of the community and as residents of the floor, “we are protesting our RA’s decision, essentially.”

In past years, offensive content in the form of graphic violence and language, implied sexual acts, criminal activities, racial and homosexual stereotypes and jokes about mentally handicapped infants have been featured, said protestors.

The rules say that students can submit a film under ten minutes long, and they must follow USM campus conduct codes: for example, no real guns could be shown, as well as no real alcohol consumption by minors.

A week before the festival the films were due in final form, and after review, the committee decided not to show the four minute, twenty-four second film.

Students preparing the film festival were instructed not to comment to the Free Press as to why it was not included.

In the college-humor inspired film, an increasingly absurd father asks his son questions about his first date with a girl named Debbie.

Katie Wilher, a member of the COA and the programming assistant of the group, was not a member of the selection committee because her own film was included, but said that as far as she knows, all the films are usually shown. She knows of only one other film that almost didn’t get shown, but she understands why this one was not.

“It was extremely offensive,” she said, “it was derogatory toward women. The film showed a father asking his son what sexual activities he had done. I personally found the language and content offensive.”

Justin Brown, a COA resident and the director of the film in question, commented on the double standard of the entertainment focus of Gorham campus.

“The same institution that allows the unrated director’s cut of “Knocked Up” to be shown in the Brooks Student Center isn’t letting “Shit Hard” be shown at the Husky Film Fest,” he said.

Although many of the protestors left when the actual festival started, the four students who made “Shit Hard,” including Brown, writer-actor Stefan Henegar, Daniel Littlefield, and Joey Lusardi, went inside to take part in the event.

“We didn’t want to disrespect the other filmmakers,” said Henegar. “The COA floor (our floor) had another film in the show, Dan even acted in it. We didn’t intend to disrupt, only to make a point.”

The four said that they wanted to send the message that they were disappointed that their film was censored, but that they supported the people whose films were shown.

The event was co-sponsored by the Gorham Events Board and the Community of Arts, whose mission is to create an environment for students to integrate their artistic studies and their residential experiences. It involved a ‘red-carpet’ dress code and a table of student-activity-fee-sponsored food.

An audience of about sixty gathered for the showing. The Viewer’s Choice Award went to George Murray for his “Last Prayer of the Mighty Gazelle.”
The Bachelor of Fine Arts student show

The “cold critique” of students’ final creations

Jeffrey Lipton stands in front of a crowd of about 40 beside his 22 ceramic pieces as classmates, professors, and local professionals fire questions at him.

They ask about form and function, they tell him his presentation, which sits on pine shelves in the middle of the gallery, is too heavy. The questions continue to be swiftly directed at him but Lipton doesn’t break a sweat. This man is an art student.

Although most of a public speaking class would shiver at the thought of being put on the spot about their own creations, that is the point of this type of critique.

The 30-minute critique session, a degree requirement, calls for a lot of poise and represents one aspect of the anticipated art career that Lipton and his classmates must master — and it’s no easy task.

The format of the critique this year is modeled after common graduate school practice, the “cold critique,” in which the artist does not give an opening statement describing or defending his or her work.

Instead, classmates and others act as critics and prod and examine work from their perspective as viewers.

The artists are asked questions about their choice of subject and thought process. It’s not uncommon that more specific “why did you do that?” wonderings are verbalized.

Fifteen graduating art majors are participating in the show, whose name cleverly implies both process and product: PRODUCE.

The four-plus years of these contemporary artists’ early careers cover the walls of the Gorham Art Gallery, and are evidence of the processes they’ve learned over those years.

Following tradition, this year’s show sends off the art department graduates, and their final critiques are open to the public for the next two Thursdays from 4:30-7 p.m.

For the first round of critiques, a guest panel was also invited to criticize the student’s work alongside all the professors in the department.

This panel included Bruce Brown, curator Emeritus of the Center for Maine Contemporary Arts; Meggan L. Gould, a visiting professor of art at Bowdoin, and Sage Lewis, the curatorial coordinator of the Portland Museum of Art.

Next week the Free Press will look into five more of the graduating seniors’ work and critiques.

Photographer Mary Jones showcased a wall of 128 close-up photos of traffic signs, organized like wallpaper, adjacent to three large, framed, “portraits” of signs.

Her intention was for the viewer to be disoriented before a moment of recognition, but many of the critics focused on finding the cracks and imperfections, the personality of each sign.

Her studio practice probed into full understanding of the capabilities of her and her camera, something that will come in handy as she pursues a graduate degree in photojournalism at Syracuse next year.

Ryland Cook incorporated painting and relief sculpture into a wall installation that took a creepy look into the world of medicine, according to most viewers, although he began by mentioning a viewer who told him how hopeful his images were to her.

While he was probed for his interpretation of portraits taken inside medical institutions, the panel saw stronger, more subtle messages in anonymous factory-like buildings painted with red crosses in two of his four paintings.

Large red industrial cross sculptures loomed over the paintings. Viewers grappling with his mixing media, subject, and style, and Cook defended his notion that “Everybody Hurts” dealt with the spot about their own creations.

Critics voiced the need to move the paintings around, because they covered floor and leaning unhung against the wall, were first to the chopping block.

Senior Donald S. Zaluski and his stacks of various-sized still-life paintings, stacked on the floor and leaning unhung against the wall, were first to the chopping block.

Critic voiced the need to move the paintings around, because they covered floor and leaning unhung against the wall, were first to the chopping block.

His studies were hung at eye-level to be pawed through, urging the viewer to look at his process — his main concern, and what he deemed the point of his body of work.

Printmaker Gavin McCannell stood before a dark green wall as a silhouette in his like-ness held a pregnant woman, representing his wife. Thousands of tiny printed birds were cut individually and made up the two figures, resulting in the title, Birds of a Feather.

A readable image of the silent joy of pregnancy, intimacy, and affection in the form of the pregnant couple holding each other, and looking forward in the same direction, was disrupted when Sage Lewis of the Portland Museum of Art asked, “does anybody else see this as something we shouldn’t be seeing?” suggesting that the intimate moment was indicative of the closeness involved in the sexuality of creation.

McCannell was asked what he meant to say about the obvious heterosexual message apparent in the happily wedded couple that he first described as universal, and then pointed at the womb as a universal spot as well.
Not your grandmother’s classical music

Students to present their own compositions in April 25 concert

Jessica Purser
Contributing Writer

Contributing Writer

Mozart, Haydn, and Beethoven all wrote music, sounds like the beginning of a bad joke, right? The modern equivalent is happening right now at USM in the Composer’s Ensemble, a class offered every semester through the USM School of Music.

Daniel Sonenberg, the ensemble director, conceived the idea for the ensemble when he started teaching at USM four years ago. Students start the semester with a concert date and no music. Over several months, they work on their own compositions.

Sonenberg prefers if the pieces utilize the entire ensemble and asks composers to write for the instruments available, but there are no strict requirements. Some compositions are long, some are short, others are loud, and still others are hauntingly beautiful. They are all new, modern, and nothing like any other ensemble performance on campus.

Most symphonic music is written for strings, but the only string instrument in this semester’s ensemble is a cello, and it’s not used at all in several of the pieces.

Concerto for ‘Persecutionists,’ composed by Tim Burns, involves percussion, as its name implies, but only percussion – from a small drum set to a Chinese gong to tiny finger cymbals.

Other compositions utilize horns, traditional wind and brass instruments, piano and electric bass and guitar.

Sarah Montalvo’s Study in A Minor and Paul Thomas’ Vacation Music are somewhat more traditional than Burns’ percussion piece, but even their pieces are different from ‘normal’ ensemble music.

Compositions are supposed to be turned in about three weeks before the concert, but there are always stragglers: one student hadn’t finished writing his on April 2, the “official” due date, and the concert is April 25.

“That can be terrifying,” Sonenberg says, “but because the class is a work in progress, the ensemble has generally seen most of what they’ll eventually perform (by the due date).”

Sonenberg credits the class for an increased interest in composition at USM.

“I have nine students in my composition class this semester. There weren’t that many when I started teaching here,” he says.

He also thinks it is incredibly valuable experience for fledgling composers. Since most concerts and universities focus on the classical repertoire, few opportunities are available for new composers to have their music heard, let alone hold on their own concert, which can be costly.

The Composer’s Ensemble also offers room for learning and mistakes.

“They have immediate feedback. If something doesn’t work, they can hear it and fix it.”

For instance, the composer might think a series of notes on the oboe is perfect for their piece, but it could be impossible for the oboe player to actually play it without becoming a contortionist.

The composer would then work with the instrumentalist to figure out how to get the sound out, or feeling in a way playable.

Last semester, one student wrote a flute section of low notes that were playable but came out as more of a grumble and were not particularly loud, he said.

The clarinet would have served those specific notes better, and because it was written in a classroom, the composer had the opportunity to change instrumentation.

In its third year now, the ensemble has evolved.

At the start, says student Nick Boland, “it was sort of a group for composers who played instruments. It has grown to include a wide instrumentation in addition to members who exclusively perform or compose.

Boland is a composer and has been part of the ensemble since its inception. He is currently planning on going to graduate school for music composition and says that the ensemble has given him a huge advantage.

“It’s the nature of the class to have a pretty unorthodox instrumentation which forced me to write different pieces that I might not have done otherwise,” he says. “I think it was important for the schools I applied to to see that I had experience dealing with and writing for specific musicians and that I was taking part in a contemporary music scene.”

Marshunda Smith has played with the ensemble for several semesters.

Unlike Boland, Smith is emphatically not a composer. She plays cello, helps with percussion on occasion, and is the assistant conductor.

“Professor Robert Lehmann suggested that I join so I could have practice conducting new works,” she says. “I’ve stayed because it’s fun.”

Several others have also been part of the ensemble for more than a year, but there are also new students each semester.

Sonenberg thinks it keeps the music and ensemble fresh, and even those like Boland who compose music frequently find it a new challenge since the instrumentation is different each time.

In addition to Burns’, Montalvo’s and Thomas’ compositions, there are at least seven other student-composed works that range from a “punk-driven piece” to a “wild crossover between downtown minimalism and progressive rock,” according to Sonenberg.

This is a concert that can’t be missed, much like a collaboration between Beethoven, Haydn, and Mozart would have been if that much genius could have been contained in one room 200 years ago.

The Composer’s Ensemble gives the rest of us mere mortals a taste.

Go see them play Friday April 25 at 8 p.m. at the concert hall in Corbett Hall.

The Free Press | April 21, 2008 13

USM Singers finish Maine tour; prepare for Europe

In May, Chamber Singers begin European romp

Jenna Howard
Arts Editor

They’ve sung on the Eiffel Tower. They’ve sung in “the county.”

They performed seven concerts in three days over March break, but it was all just practice: the USM Chamber Singers have been touring the state as a warm-up for a European tour.

Next month, they’ll sing in Prague, Vienna, Slovakia, Auschwitz and Krakow.

“They don’t hesitate to stop and sing where the feeling strikes them,” says Dr. Robert Russell, who has been directing the group since he came to USM 29 years ago. “We have six established concerts over the 14-day (European) tour, but we perform much more. We stop and perform in markets and town squares, in churches and yes, even atop monuments.”

The Maine tour over vacation began in Augusta, stopped in Ellsworth, and then headed into Aroostook County before swooping back to Bangor and heading home. The 34-member troupe traveled this area throughout the school year.

It’s a highly selective audition process to get into the a cappella group, and it requires a full year of training to get there.

Russell also directs the USM Chorale, in which about 100 students participate each year. While the Chorale has one major performance each year, the Chamber Singers perform at least a dozen times a semester, according to Russell, and they often tour the region and give concerts for the community.

Jon Coons, in his 10th semester as part of the group, said that the Chamber Singers has been an important part of his path toward becoming a professional opera singer.

Clockwise from left: Austin Hodges, Alexandra Dietrich, Becca Garthoff, Jessica Purser, Jon Coons, in his 10th semester as part of the Chamber Singers group, said that the ensemble has been an important part of his path toward becoming a professional opera singer.

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“Without a doubt, aside from training me to become a better singer, it has opened me up to a whole world of networking,” he said. “In fact, it was through a Chamber Singers contact that I wound up in my current job as a church choir conductor.”

As far as the pressures of auditioning, he admits, “it’s easier for a guy to get into the group,” which is just a matter of the ratio of male to female students.

Jon traveled Europe with the group during his sophomore year at USM. He describes “goosebumps moments” when they sang at St. Mark’s Basilica in Venice.

“There is no way that you could recreate that experience.”

Their tour will stop in large venues and small town concert halls, and perform for many different kinds of crowds. They’ll sing for worshipers in churches and services and to heavy applause in the smaller towns, which are usually in a unique way that we could never do simply by ourselves.”

This week, catch their Saturday performance in Corbett Hall. If you miss them next fall when they perform with the Portland Symphony Orchestra.
Artists’ work accepted, not published

From WORDS page 1 the 2007 issue of the publication, and plans to serve again as pub-lishing editor next year.

“We messed up. It was a prob-lem between the publisher and myself. It was a deadline thing — we didn’t have all the rights from submitting artists. It was a last-min-ute decision I made in order to meet deadlines .”

Gato said that out of the submissions received by the December deadline, the editorial board chose four artists, includ-ing one from USM, to be part of the 2008 edition. All of them were sent an e-mail in March like this one sent to Follaytarr.

Dear Ms. Follaytarr,

We are pleased to inform you that your black and white photograph

Glasses has been selected for the

asking for another con-fi-dence letter tells the artist that unless

this one sent to Follaytarr.

of the 2008 edition. All of them

submissions received by the

lem between the publisher and

Artists’ work accepted, not published

Gato also gave work support funds over the summer so that he could get started on the journal.

The journal did not fill the po-sition of artists editor this year. It is unknown whether or not they advertised the opening.

It did take on a managing editor, a position that was cre-ated by Gato this year, and filled by English major Jennifer Rybeck.

In a final phone interview as the Free Press went on print on Saturday, Gato explained and de-fended the journal’s 2008 year’s edition, “I really don’t want to be competitive, a full semester in which submissions could be laid out onto pages. Templates for those pages were not created until the week before the journal was due to the printer, according to staff.

When Pennor received the file -- the final copy of the book -- it did include any images.

The students involved in pub-lishing the book anticipated being able to include images outside of the center of the book, but in order to meet their goal of having the journal finished in time to sell at the April 3 reading by novelist Jennifer Egann (an event Words + Images paid several thousand dollars to sponsor), there was not time to enter art.

An interview with Egann is fea-tured in the journal, as well as in-

ing each submission times the staff number of review.

The Words + Images team said there had been no such confusion by me. There’s a mishandling by me. There’s a serious problem considering the publication’s tight deadline.

For the 2007-08 school year, the Free Press went on print on

the next month. She checked only artist they heard back from.

two of the artists, Gato said.

The Words + Images Staff

Thank you and congratulations!

also send along a brief biography.

This year’s book was rede-signed, their initial

ed, their initial

fended what happened. “We’re

We messed up. It was a prob-

“The" word is all caps in the journal.

This year’s edition,” it said. “I really

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during which submissions could

be competed, a full semester

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serious problem considering the

the computer publishing program,

printer.

Gato, said there had been no such

issue on their end and that they

were not the publisher, only the

printer.

the problem, it seems, lay in

typing each word on a keyboard.

The Words + Images team

used their concept of the di-

chotomy between experimen-
tal and traditional to separate

Positive change

This year’s book was rede-

signed to be smaller in size, with one half printed upside-down to mark traditional versus experi-

mental styles.

The Words + Images team used their concept of the di-

chotomy between traditional and separate illustrations, poetry, and fiction. USM student Steve Gibbins has a poem and short story pub-

lished, and alumni are featured on their website.

The new, smaller format cut pro-

duction costs, naturally, so they

had more colored pages and will cost $10.00, about half what it has cost in the past.

The staff also accepted sub-

missions electronically, which cut

down the costs of copy-

ing each submission times the number of staff for review.

For the 2008 book, Gato Exploration, which is going to confuse some people and avoid mis-

understandings by explaining yourself clearly.

This pick up the tabloid and see what you can learn.

Gato plans to run the jour-

nal next year, but depends on a nomina-

tion by his staff and his accep-

tance by the student body President Ben Taylor, who over-sees the heads of all student senate entities.

Taylor agreed in an April Senate meeting to in-

vigate the situation with the lack of images in the journal, after it was brought up in the “concern-

section” of the meeting.

This week, go for a picnic.

This week, try catching up on hy-

drating your potential masterpiece. Go for a walk.

Try pairing your books with a nice cup of coffee to read.

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Digging up the Robie-Andrews ghost
Try to pin down a 100-year-old legend

Laura Fellows
Intern

Even before I moved into Robie-Andrews Hall last September, I’d heard it was haunted. Rumors abounded about a pregnant student, jilted by her boyfriend, who supposedly hung herself there in the early 1900s—and whose ghost continues to haunt the building.

Some say her name is Sarah. At that time, the building was part of the all-women’s Gorham Normal School.

While I haven’t encountered anything ghostly in person (unless you count the old elevator door opening and closing repeatedly, for no apparent reason), I’ve heard several accounts from students, mostly second-hand, about odd but harmless incidents—things falling off the wall, doors closing and opening on their own, sounds of tapping where it shouldn’t be, and cold spots in the building.

Granted, more than a century of use can add a certain ‘character’ to any building (and its wiring), and most likely the interpretation of these events will depend greatly on the viewer’s—or listener’s—preconceived ideas of ghosts.

“I think it’s pretty legit,” says Basil Yu, a student who lived in Andrews last year.

He recounts a time when his roommate listened to a phone message from a friend about an exercise on TV. Right after the message, their coffee pot suddenly started boiling, and turned around in its spot, so that the handle was facing the opposite direction.

Another student recalled leaving a computer unattended, and returning to see a second-hand, about odd but harmless inbounds (and its wiring), and most likely the inherence in person (unless you count the old elevator door opening and closing repeat-

I, however, am no a ghost-hunter—I wanted to take a more historical look, so I dug into the Free Press archives to get some idea of how long this legend has been going on.

As it turns out, I’m far from the first writer to try uncovering it.

In 1978, Peter Davis wrote an article in which he fused several versions of the story into this: a female student in the early 1900s was something of a loner, and very homesick. She would climb up to the Robie-Andrews windows tower and look out in the direction of her home, calling to her parents.

One night, after long depression and ill-

ness, she hung herself from a ceiling beam using her scarf.

Recently, it turned out that her par-

ents’ house had burned down, which is why they didn’t answer her letters.

Reading this melodramatic story sug-

gests that either the legend has changed much over the years, or it is based more than one death in the building, consider-

ing how different this is from the current rumors.

In another 1970s article, Rodney Labbe wrote his own sensationalized account of the terrors of fourth-floor Andrews and mentioned seeing a box lid rising on its own.

The letters in response to the article were not favorable, and a friend revealed that Labbe had made up parts of the story.

In the early ‘90s, a Free Press journalist reported sighting and attempting to inter-

view the ghost—but was left with nothing but the sound of her own voice on the tape recorder.

Some articles also brought up the pos-

sibility that the whole legend was simply concocted to scare incoming freshmen.

Nevertheless, it has caused USM to be listed on ghost-hunting websites, such as StrangeMaine.blogspot.com and GhostsOfMaine.org.

It has also helped to inspire student creativity, such as the short film “Triple Digit,” which Franklin Kendrick directed for the Husky Film Festival in 2006.

I’m sure any of the local newspapers of the time would have written about this sui-

cide, but the trouble in researching a story as general (and old) as this is that the dates are vague.

On the ‘haunted buildings’ listings, most accounts say this legend dates back to the 1900s.

That would be a very small window of time, because Robie Hall was only built in 1897.

But the Andrews side of the building (with the uninhabited attic in which the ghost is said to reside) wasn’t built until 1910.

Not only is it impossible to know which date to look for, but it’s hard to know which newspaper to research first.

Scanning hundred-year-old death re-

cords from the Eastern Argus on microfilm had me pretty sea-sick, so I gave up my search.

Covering this much media from such a general time period would take weeks, months, and more than one pair of eyes.

Although I don’t believe everything I read, I still have enough faith in newspa-

papers to believe that if something as horrendous as this really did happen in Robie-Andrews, and wasn’t deliberately covered up, it surely must be recorded somewhere.

But I’ll leave that for the next Free Press writer to uncover—it’s going to take more than one stressed-out college kid to dig this one up.

From the Windham, Maine, Records of Deaths, courtesy of the Windham Historical Society.

### RECORD REVIEW

**Destroyer: Trouble in Dreams**

Merged, 2008

Dan Bejar’s new Destroyer album, Trouble in Dreams, is his ninth full-length LP. It is his most accessible work to date, but in a way that considers class rather than marketability.

It is a clean, punctual and glassy record, a likely and comfortable next step from his 2006 masterpiece Destroyer’s Rubies.

Bejar is a consistently prolific artist. Between Destroyer albums, he contributes to the New Pornographers and Swan Lake. This may suggest he is, as an artist, infal-

"He’s not trying to be hip or brilliant, it just sort of happens that way.

Like Dylan before him and John Darnielle of the Mountain Goats and Loammi, Bejar’s songs usually people can’t seem to get past his voice.

It is throaty, wide-eyed and sometimes whispe-

ry; he accents odd syllables.

Some people think it’s silly, but I’ve never had an issue with it. In fact, I love it.

Bejar is and always has been a virtuoso lyricist and conjurer of great musical ideas, and his voice gives everything a hospitable home.

Each Destroyer record is greatly different than the one before it, but Dreams does occupy the familiar veritable rock textures of modest guitars, piano, organs, synths, drums and voice. But nothing is tasteless, nothing is trite.

Good songwriting is the mis-

sion of Destroyer, everything con-

sistsently and impressively thought out.

He’s not trying to be hip or bril-

lant, it just sort of happens that way.

The second track, “Dark Leaves Form A Thread,” would be the single if there was one, as-

sures the listener: “Nah, it’s cool, you go, I’ll stay perfect at home with this thread. Dark leaves form a thread.” It’s a contender for chorus of the year.

Admittedly, the polish of Trouble in Dreams puts it slightly behind most of his recent efforts. The songs are tight and signa-

ture Bejar, but the album as a whole lacks the immediate whole-

ness of Destroyer’s Rubies and Streetphark: A Seduction, his two other records.

I’ll let the lyrics speak for the record’s own self-satisfaction and listener-consideration, from the epic and sprawling eight-minute “Shooting Rockets (From The Desk Of Night’s Ape)”: “You love her. You leave her. You try to achieve a breadth of vision that she has from the start. I got Street Despair carved into my heart... I got Street Despair carved into my heart... My dear, don’t you know being a chorus is a thing that bears re-

peating. The problem, as I see it, is girls stay away from that shit!”

Don’t rely on Bullmoose to have a wide selection of Destroyer albums, but the internet has got it all.

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Tyler Jackson
Staff Writer

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Bejar is a consistently prolific artist. Between Destroyer albums, he contributes to the New Pornographers and Swan Lake. This may suggest he is, as an artist, infal-

ible (which of course he’s not—although sometimes it takes convincing me).

Bejar manipulates and re-masters the pop form on a yearly basis.

For those not familiar with the music of Destroyer, it is a rock band fronted by the idiosyncratic lyrical/idea-based genius Bejar of Vancouver, BC.

He employs a diverse lineup on nearly every record, but this one is the best he’s compiled.

Good songwriting is the mis-

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Don’t rely on Bullmoose to have a wide selection of Destroyer albums, but the internet has got it all.
UPCOMING GAMES

Opponents’ names written in capital letters means the game will be played at home.

Tuesday, April 22
- Baseball vs. BATES (3:30 p.m.)
- Softball vs. PLYMOUTH STATE (DH) (3:30 p.m.)
- Men’s Lacrosse vs. THOMAS (4 p.m.)
- Women’s Lacrosse vs. Plymouth State (4 p.m.)

Wednesday, April 23
- Baseball vs. THOMAS (3:30 p.m.)
- Softball vs. ST. JOSEPH’S (3:30 p.m.)

Thursday, April 24
- Baseball @ Endicott (3:30 p.m.)
- Softball vs. BRIDGEWATER STATE (DH) (3:30 p.m.)
- Men’s Lacrosse vs. UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND (4 p.m.)
- Women’s Lacrosse vs. UNIVERSITY OF NEW ENGLAND (4 p.m.)

Friday, April 25
- Men’s Tennis @ Little East Conference Tournament (TBA)

Saturday, April 26
- Men’s Outdoor Track @ Little East/N.E. Alliance Meet @ Rhode Island College (11 a.m.)
- Women’s Outdoor Track @ Little East/N.E. Alliance Meet @ Rhode Island College (11 a.m.)
- Baseball vs. KEENE STATE (DH) (12 p.m.)
- Men’s Lacrosse vs. Keene State (1 p.m.)
- Women’s Lacrosse vs. KEENE STATE (1 p.m.)
- Softball vs. Keene State (DH) (1 p.m.)
- Men’s Tennis @ Little East Conference Tournament (TBA)

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Non-Husky sports at USM

John Forestell
Staff Writer

The University of Southern Maine’s intramural sports program is one of the best-kept secrets at the school.

Each semester, various recreational and competitive intramural sports and activities are put on display, much to the enjoyment of the masses that simply just want to have fun without having to worry about the nuances of being a full-time student-athlete.

“Each semester we try and offer a variety of sports and activities such as: flag football, dodgeball, basketball, ping-pong tournaments, Xbox 360 tournaments, volleyball, whiffle ball, floor hockey and fantasy football to name a few,” said Bob Prince, the assistant coordinator for recreational sports.

While some sports might have to advertise extensively to get games going (ping-pong has a Facebook group set up for tournaments), activities like basketball, flag football, and volleyball usually have strong followings.

“Some sports and activities attract more people,” said Prince. “We just had an Xbox 360 tournament that attracted a high number of people.”

Flag football is usually played in the fall, while floor hockey, basketball and volleyball happen sometime between winter and spring.

With the vast arrangement of sports and activities to pick from, students at USM can choose whatever they fancy.

“Our numbers have increased with regards to participation over the last 4 years,” said Prince. “The other nice thing is that it’s not just the same group of people for each sport or activity, but a much more diversified group, which is still one of our major goals (in the recreation department), intramurals are offered to all students, resident or commuter, staff, and faculty.”

Some students prefer to take it to the next level and create their own club team. USM currently has 4 club teams: sailing, volleyball, cycling, and a dance team.

The club volleyball team, which was established in 2003 is a member of the New England Collegiate Volleyball League which includes 40 teams from across New England and New York.

The dance team regularly performs at basketball games during halftime, and has created a popular following.

If you find yourself so lucky as to not be in Gorham, you can simply log onto the university’s athletics website and go to the recreational sports page. Although it hasn’t been updated in the last couple of years, you can view all the current programs as well as fill out a team submission form for the activity of your choice.

If you have any other additional questions, you can call the office at 780-5649.

Non-Husky sports at USM

18 The Free Press | April 21, 2008

Husky Scoreboard

Baseball
4/15 - USM 12, Bowdoin 1
4/16 - USM 16, Colby 9
4/17 - St. Joseph’s 7, USM 6

Men’s Lacrosse
4/12 - UMass Dartmouth 14, USM 0
4/14 - University of New England 11, USM 3

Softball
4/12 - UMass Dartmouth 5, USM 2
4/12 - USM 9, UMass Dartmouth 5
4/15 - USM 11, UMass Boston 3
4/15 - USM 8, UMass Boston 3
4/17 - Bowdoin 11, USM 6
4/17 - USM 6, Bowdoin 3

Tennis
4/12 - USM 7, Western Connecticut 2
4/15 - Bridgewater State 8, USM 1
4/17 - Colby 9, USM 0

Women’s Lacrosse
4/12 - USM 10, UMass Dartmouth 9
4/14 - Bates 20, USM 5

Sofia Soares is a freshman, who enjoys soccer and basketball. She finds that these are great for staying fit, but also fun. "We just had an Xbox 360 tournament that attracted a high number of people," said Bob Prince, the assistant coordinator for recreational sports. Of course, there are also clubs for those who want to take it to the next level. USM currently has 4 club teams: sailing, volleyball, cycling, and a dance team. The club volleyball team, which was established in 2003, is a member of the New England Collegiate Volleyball League. The dance team regularly performs at basketball games during halftime, and has created a popular following. If you find yourself so lucky as to not be in Gorham, you can simply log onto the university’s athletics website and go to the recreational sports page. Although it hasn’t been updated in the last couple of years, you can view all the current programs as well as fill out a team submission form for the activity of your choice. If you have any other additional questions, you can call the office at 780-5649.
**SPORTS**

**HUSKY HERO**

Interview and photo by John Forestell

**Thomas Boothby**

Year: Junior  
Major: Business  
Sport: Lacrosse

**FP:** How long have you been playing lacrosse?  
**Tom:** I started playing in the 7th grade, so probably eight or nine years. I switched from baseball to lacrosse when I was a kid.

**FP:** What made you want to play lacrosse instead of baseball?  
**Tom:** Well football was my main sport, and I wanted to get faster for football so I tried out lacrosse in the spring; plus my friends wanted me to play.

**FP:** Did you play any other sports growing up?  
**Tom:** No, just football and lacrosse.

**FP:** Why did you decide to play lacrosse in college?  
**Tom:** Mostly the size factor for football, and I wanted to get faster for football as well.

**FP:** What position do you play in lacrosse?  
**Tom:** Mostly the size factor for football, but I guess I could say I mostly play defense.

**FP:** I heard you’re a transfer student, where did you play before attending USM?  
**Tom:** Springfield College in Massachusetts.

**FP:** What made you want to transfer from Springfield?  
**Tom:** I’m from a relatively small town in Maine, so I guess the biggest reason was because of the location and size of the city.

**FP:** Is there anything you want USM to know about the “real” Thomas Boothby?  
**Tom:** I’m a pretty laid back guy and I’m easy to talk to. Go SOX.

**Softball**

Huskies split with Polar Bears  
Huskies split with Polar Bears

**Indoor Track**

Connolly and Towlie earn track and field honors

Freshman Christina Connolly (Boise, Idaho) and coach George Towlie were both honored for their efforts during the 2008 indoor track and field season. Connolly, the 2008 New England Alliance pole vault champion and third place performer in the New England Div. III Championships, garnered Rookie Field Athlete of the Year honors, while George Towlie was named Coach of the Year after his eighth consecutive LEC/Alliance championship in his 11 years guiding the huskies.

**HUSKY HIGHLIGHTS**

Senior Anita Dixon (Linthornton) crushed a two-run home run to power the Huskies to a 6-3 win over Bowdoin College in the second game of a non-conference doubleheader in Brunswick. The Huskies jumped out to an early 5-0 lead in the first game, but Bowdoin was able to surmount the early deficit to win 11-6. In the second game, senior Kristina Groden (Sanford) slammed eight hits and allowed just two earned runs to move her record on the mound to 7-2. Freshman Stacy Stuard (Belgrade) got things started for the Huskies with a two-run single in the first inning and never looked back after Dixon’s bomb.

**Men’s Outdoor Track**

Spaulding shines at Holy Cross Decathlon

Junior James Spaulding (Lewiston) of the men’s outdoor track and field team set a school record at the Holy Cross Decathlon even in Worcester, Mass. Spaulding notched a second place finish in the 28-competitor event with a score of 6,251 points and broke his own decathlon record by 411 points. With his performance Spaulding provisionally qualifies for the NCAA Championships and only missed automatic qualification by 349 points.

**Women’s Lacrosse**

Laxers win again

The Huskies took an 11-7 win over Castleton State on Saturday. The hot-streak Huskies have tallied five wins in their last seven games, improving their record to 5-7 for the season. Sophomore Jessica Knight (Afton), freshman Mary Vaughan (Brunswick) and senior Shannon Kynich (South Burlington, Vt.) each grabbed two goals, while senior goalie Kaito Quaruccio (Poughkeepsie, NY) had eight saves.

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**MIKE ON SPORTS**

Columnist

**Mike Tardiff**

I’m twenty-one, but I’ve still got heroes: my parents, Jim Koch – the founder of Sam Adams, and athletes from Maine who have made it to the pros. I’ve always loved seeing people from Maine make an impact at the highest level. I’ve always held people like former Cy Young nominee Billy Swift of Scarborough and former gold-glover and Winterport native Mike Bordick in the highest regard.

I’ve spent hours tracking the progress of Mainers like Nik Caner-Medley and Tip Fairchild who are on their own grueling quest towards the top.

Because it’s people like these who give people like me hope. It’s guys like Bordick and Swift who inspired me to play in my first Little League game and aspire towards the Major Leagues, even though I was from Maine. Over the years my affection has grown to include people who have played college sports in Maine and gone on to athletic glory.

Mostly hockey players, this list also includes a few football players who have graced the fields in Orono: people like Lofa Tatupu of the Seattle Seahawks, Brandon McGowan of the Bears and, until just a few days ago, Stephen Cooper of the San Diego Chargers.

But since the former UMaine standout tested positive for a banned substance -- ephedra, which he claimed he didn’t know was banned though it has been since 2001 -- Cooper has lost my respect and made me take a second look at athletes just like him.

When Cooper was coming out of college he was by no means a lock to be in the NFL, let alone be a starter. But through apparent hard-work, determination and sheer will he worked his way onto an NFL roster and his player profile became permanently bookmarked on my computer so I could track his stats. In 2006, when he inked a $15 million deal that would keep him in a Charger uniform until the 2011 season, it seemed like we’d be seeing him as an NFL starter for a long time: not bad for a kid from Wareham, Massachusetts and the University of Maine.

By no means do I want to run Cooper’s name through the mud. He’s still an inspiration to anyone who wants to play in the NFL, lead his team in tackles and make big-time money.

But he’s not my hero anymore.

He’s burned me twice and made me even more cynical than I was before. I think that justifies losing idol-status.

While he was at UMaine, Cooper got pulled over on I-95 and 1,000 steroid pills were discovered in his duffel bag. He later claimed he had never taken steroids, but was planning to in preparation for making a run at his lifelong goal of playing in the NFL.

Maybe I should have known right then and there that Cooper wasn’t the type of guy I should look up to. But I gave him the benefit of the doubt, like I hope someone would give me.

After his draft-stock plummeted and he was forced to sign as a free-agent, I jumped back on Cooper’s bandwagon and became one of his biggest fans.

But after his second offense in six years, I just think of Stephen Cooper as someone who cheated to get to the top, someone who manipulated the system to fatten his wallet, someone who let me and the people who invested their faith in him down.

In an era when the greatest athletes are turning out to be cheaters -- Roger Clemens, Barry Bonds and Marion Jones to name just a few -- it’s really too bad that even the humble heroes, the guys living the American Dream, the feel-good stories, are falling subject to the cynicism they have forced unto me.

-- Roger Clemens, Barry Bonds and Marion Jones to name just a few

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It’s too bad when even the underdog can’t be my hero.

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**Huskies win again**

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**Source www.usm.maine.edu/athl**
Paint the streets green

Also participating in the Bike Swap is Green Streets, a group of volunteers “comprised of people who commute through, live, work in, study at, or send children to school in Greater Portland.”

Lead organizer Sarah Cushman wants everyone to know about the group, which uses an incentive program to “get folks to communicate and use alternate transportation, such as walking, biking, using buses, trains, ferries, and well as carpooling.”

The group, which started in September of last year, has had around 850 participants thus far. On the last Friday of every month, members of Green Streets wear something green while they commute “green” for something they like to call “Green Streets Day.” During the entire day, green-wearing participants can enjoy free coffee or tea at places like the North Star Café.

There is also a raffle every month, with prizes like free magazine subscriptions and theater tickets offered.

“We really want to encourage folks to sign up online if they are participating; that way we can document it,” said Cushman. She adds that the online database will expand up to UMaine, based on popular demand.

The money people make from selling their bikes really “depends on the type and condition of the bike,” said Hoose. Often people can expect to receive a good amount of money back.

The event had a great turnout last year, with about 200 bikes available to be sold to new owners.

More than just serving as a bike market, the swap will include workshops for bike repair, a bike decorating station, exhibits, entertainment, refreshments and tables for other non-profit groups.

Once you’re happily outfitted with a new vehicle, you can head down to the Earth Day Bike Parade around Back Cove at 1 p.m.

The parade is put on by Green Streets, a local group that encourages “green” transportation for Portland. Registration for the parade starts at 12:30 p.m., immediately following the swap.

“Interest in biking has increased dramatically over the last few years,” said Hoose. “People want to reduce their carbon footprint. I see a lot of people biking around Portland, even in the winter.”

The Bicycle Coalition of Maine really encourages people to bike, even just for a short distance. “We try to push this from a health and environmental standpoint,” said Hoose. “If you can cut down on short drives and bike instead, it makes a difference.”

If you, too, are considering ditching your gas-guzzler, the bike swap is a great way to find a new set of wheels and learn how to maintain them, as well as support a few local non-profits.

Volunteers will be available to help price and fit bikes, as well as help not-so-savvy riders choose from the mass of handlebars and pedals. There will also be a testing area to help customers determine which bike is best.

The Bicycle Coalition of Maine puts on many other events, including: a BCM Benefit at Flatbread’s, the Women’s Ride for Heart Health on June 1st, and the Fryeburg Maine and National Bike Rally. For more information about the Bicycle Coalition of Maine, visit www.bikemaine.org or e-mail info@BikeMaine.org.
Join the club

The Outing Club at USM will also be helping out at this year’s bike swap. If you’re looking for a way to connect with other USM students and share your love for the outdoors, they’re the only student-run outdoors group on campus.

They’re taking an overnight biking trip this weekend before the swap, leaving campus Friday and returning Saturday. They plan to make the journey up to Sebago Lake, camp out if possible and bike around the lake. Club president Eric Favreau says “anyone can join; you don’t have to be a member.”

For more information, contact the Outing Club at usm.outing.club@gmail.com.

You’re not the only one with a helmet clipped to your backpack

Anna Korsen
Year: Senior
Major: Sociology
Years biking to school: Two and a half
Kind of bike: Shogun, an “old style road bike” that she bought used at last year’s Bike Swap

Do you ride in all seasons? Not in winter

Pros? I don’t own a car, so I miss out on tickets and buying gas. Biking is really fun. It’s great exercise.

Cons? Cars don’t really respect your right to be on the road, biking up Munjoy Hill can be hard.

Any interesting encounters? I was biking and my boyfriend was skateboarding next to me, he did a trick and flipped the skateboard over, I went flying!

Robert Louden
Job: Professor of philosophy
Years biking: since the ’80s
Kind of bike: Old, second-hand road bike, 10-speed with narrow tires

Time it takes to bike to work: 5-10 minutes, about one mile.

Do you bike in all seasons? Yes, except January-March

Pros? Don’t have to hunt for a parking space, can ride around town (within 10-15 miles); I can actually get to places quicker on my bike.

Cons? The snow and ice, worrying about other cars on the road.

Do you own a car? Yes.

Would you recommend biking to anyone? Sure.

Jeff Walker
Job: Professor of biology
Years biking: Two years (drove to work prior)
Kind of bike: Multiple, Trek old style hybrid commuter

Time it takes to bike to work: 24 minutes

Do you bike in all seasons? Not during the winter, worried about cars sliding on the roads.

Pros? It’s a way of life, fitness program, get to see wildlife.

Cons? None, drivers are generally courteous of bikers, they have to obey traffic laws.

Do you bike anywhere else? Sometimes running errands on the way, it gets harder when you have kids.

Do you own a car? Yes.

Would you recommend biking? Yes, it’s a lifestyle commitment change to not be dependent on a car; anyone can bike who has a confident and aggressive personality.

Last year’s bike swap drew upwards of 1500 people. About 200 bikes were for sale, and nearly every one sold.

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You can too teach old athletes new tricks
Small program lets seasoned Huskies try a new sport

Mike Tardiff
Staff Writer

Until this year Melissa Rivet and Megan Higginbotham had never played lacrosse.
Now, just four months removed from
their introduction to the sport, they’re playing in a Division III college program.
That might seem like an anomaly, but it’s nothing unusual for Sue Frost’s seven-year-old program.

Without any interscholastic high school lacrosse in the northern half of the state and only pockets of interest elsewhere, Frost has continually had to supplement her rosters with athletes who have never before played the game.

Enter Rivet and Higginbotham.

Last year, it was Jessie Hobgood, Alicia Croteau and Cristina Hickey, all track transplants with athletes who have never before

playing the game.

Handed a lacrosse stick at the beginning of preseason, Higginbotham didn’t know what to do and often found herself overwhelmed by the practiced skills of her teammates.

“You have Amy McNally and Mary Vaughn doing all kinds of crazy stuff,” she says, “If I try what people around me are good at and I’m not, I get frustrated.”

Despite Rivet’s defensive prowess and remarkable adaptation to the new sport, she, too, has found the nuances of the game to be frustrating at times.

“I always want to ask the ref about the call, but I don’t want them to think that I am being smart, so I just wait until I get off the field,” she says. One of the rules she’s had to get used to is that when the whistle blows, all players have to stop in place. When she forgets and keeps running, “[the refs] yell at me to hold my position.”

When Rivet was frustrated last year, it was because her grandparents had

playing for the majority of their lives, Rivet has developed a formula that has helped alleviate some of the angst.

“There are times when I was frustrated,” she says, “but I just try to look at this as having fun.”

Watching second-year player Shannon Kynoch become a key part of the Huskies’ 3-1 start in conference play has also helped the duo realize that, while they may be a little late to the table, their impacts can still help carry the team to new heights.

Lacrosse has also proven to be a vehicle of new and unexpected opportunities for the two rookies.

For Higginbotham, it has meant wearing a skirt for the first time since her senior prom and playing a sport her grandparents didn’t know existed.

“When I told my grandparents I was playing lacrosse, they thought I was transferring to Holy Cross,” Higginbotham says. “So now whenever I tell them about a game, they ask me if I’m still at Holy Cross.”

At the same time, the game has allowed each of these women an opportunity to enjoy their experiences at USM even more.

“Everyone has been real supportive, like if I drop a pass or get blown by on defense, the girls will tell me not to worry about it and to keep trying,” Rivet says.

Ideally, as the program grows, inexperienced players will become a thing of the past, provided that coach Frost and others can help spread the game’s popularity in Maine.

When she inherited the program three years ago, the majority of her players were coming to the sport with little experience, just like these two.

But now, with former players coaching at places like Scarborough and Gorham, Frost hopes that more people will pick up a lacrosse stick long before their junior year in college.

In the meantime, however, she continues to tweak her approach to finding and extracting untapped potential.
The USM women’s softball team showed their offensive prowess last week, sweeping UMass Boston 11-3 and 8-2 in their first “real” home doubleheader Tuesday afternoon.

The Huskies, who have been playing their scheduled home games at St. Joseph’s and the University of New England’s fields because theirs was unplayable, finally got to step on their home grass.

The team has been frustrated always playing on the road, said head coach Bonny Brown-Denico. But they took full advantage of their first game at home and came out firing right from the start.

Senior Kristina Grondin (Sanford) paced the Huskies to an early 8-0 lead in the second inning with a three-run homer over the left-field fence, adding to an already impressive offensive output.

With Beacon pitcher Courtney Houles on the mound, the Huskies managed to scatter 11 hits over five innings, including two hits from freshman Sarah Deroche (Portland) and a triple from freshman Devon Carroll (Plymouth).

“We are a pretty young team,” said Denico, “but we’re progressing.” She explained by saying that though the Huskies know how to hit, their defense has struggled because the team is so young.

Against the Beacons, the women stood behind sophomore hurler Larissa O’Connor (Farmington) as she pitched her second win of the season by only allowing two runs in three innings off of four hits and a walk.

In the second game of the doubleheader it was much the same for the Huskies—their offense started out strong in the first frame with three runs coming across the plate, including an RBI triple from Grondin.

Grondin also dominated on the mound, striking out five and only allowing five hits and two runs in seven innings.

Grondin, the only senior on the team earned, her sixth win of the season.

“Kristina pitched really well,” said Denico.

The Huskies scored two more runs in the fourth to take a 5-0 lead into the fifth.

UMass Boston came back with one in the fifth, but the Huskies countered, scoring three more times in their half of the fifth, securing an 8-1 lead. The Beacons had one more chance to gain momentum in the top of the seventh, but Grondin took out the next two batters, and the score was sealed at 8-2.

Deroche led the second game with two runs batted in, and Grondin led the night, with four hits and five RBI’s over the doubleheader.

See the Huskies at home all week – they play doubleheaders against Plymouth, St. Joe’s and Bridgewater State on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday, respectively. The first game starts at 3:30 each day.

Deroche winds up to fire a pitch.
Christina Connolly sails over the bar with ease. Unafraid of the daunting sport from her start at age 13, Connolly was recently named Rookie Field Athlete of the Year for her championship performance in the indoor track season.

A Brief History of Pole Vaulting

It’s all fun and games now, but pole vaulting actually grew out of necessity — in the middle ages, Europeans used a primitive version to shoot themselves over watery canals.

The idea of aiming for height rather than distance first occurred to German gymnasts in the 18th century, where it became a popular competition.

A much more familiar technique was developed in the United States in the late 1800s. Poles were first made from bamboo, then even stiffer aluminum and steel. Needless to say, the event was altered further and athletes launched higher with the development of flexible fiberglass and carbon fiber.

Aside from being one of the four standard jumping events in track and field, pole vaulting is also the eighth event in the decathlon.

In this modern, standardized version, only fifteen people are known to have cleared six meters (approx. 20 feet). These elite comprise what is known as the ‘six meter club.’

Last week, she was named LEC Rookie Field Athlete of the Year for her performance in the winter indoor track season — the first-year athlete captured the pole vault title in the New England Alliance and Little East Conference championships with a 6.05 meter jump that was 31 centimeters higher than the second place vault.

She took third in the New England Division III championship and 10th in the Eastern Collegiate Athletics Conference championships, where she had her best vault of the season — 10 feet, 6.75 inches.

A senior on the men’s team, Adam Haggerty is a star in his own right: on April 14, he matched the USM record of 15 feet, 3 inches, set by Nick Joy in 2000. Haggerty is currently the state’s Division III indoor champion.

“You can tell some people just like they’d be natural at it,” he says, as he watches Connolly prepare for a vault. “Sometimes people just have a different personality to them, they don’t have that fear. The psychological factor in pole vaulting is huge — if you can’t get past that, then you’re never going to go very high.”

Though Haggerty is the highest-flying Husky, another man at practice has been even higher: the USM vaulting coach, Mike Drummey, holds the New England record of 18 feet, 6.5 inches, and just about every member of the team likes to talk about it. The world record is just over 20 feet.

Injuries have taken him out of competition, and so today, Drummey stands next to USM’s cross bar, offering feedback as his vaulters bounce of the mat.

April marked the change in season from indoor to outdoor track, and nearly all the athletes were free for both seasons.

Outside, vaulting is essentially the same — with a few factors like wind and rain, to make things more interesting.

“My biggest is a 16 feet pole,” says Haggerty. “And that’s basically a sail when it’s straight up in the air and you’re running down at a full sprint and there’s a breeze.”

And water in the box — that trapezoidal groove — can make the crucial plant, which determines how their forward momentum is transferred to the bending pole, a lot less reliable.

USM doesn’t have an outdoor venue for track and field, or we’d direct you to their next home event. If you’re ever in the field house on a Wednesday night, their