Former child soldier shares ‘the reality of war’

Ishmael Beah imparts experience and hope in rehabilitating child soldiers

Charlie Nickell
Staff Writer

Ishmael Beah spent his early years playing soccer, listening to hip-hop and attending school in his village of Mogbwemo, Sierra Leone. But by the age of 13, he was fighting alongside other children in a bloody civil war that would claim the lives of thousands.

Last Tuesday, Beah told his story of survival to a packed audience at USM’s Abromson Center as a guest speaker for the annual Douglas M. Schair Memorial Lecture on Genocide and Human Rights.

“Children were used to perpetuate violence,” Beah said. “We lost the ability to exhibit any human emotion.”

The civil war that tore the West African nation of Sierra Leone into rival factions in the early 1990’s left many youths parentless and on the run from army groups who recruited young boys to fight for them, controlling them with revenge rhetoric and combinations of powerful narcotics.

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At last Tuesday’s biennial “State of the University” address, UMaine system Chancellor Richard Pattenaude said that the University of Maine will likely layoff more employees to balance the projected four year budget deficit of $42.8 million.

“More tough decisions are coming,” he said. “Some of these decisions will be noisy; you will hear from some of your constituents about some of these. Please be confident that no decisions are being made casually or callously.”

Pattenaude asked for the continuing support of Maine lawmakers, but emphasised that, “we may have reached the tipping point – the point at which Maine has to decide whether it’s willing and able to make the commitment to higher education,” that many lawmakers have advocated.

Bob Caswell, USM’s executive director of public affairs says that USM does not plan to eliminate layoffs more employees to balance the projected four year budget deficit of $42.8 million.

“People don’t understand the reality of war,” Beah told the audience, estimated at over 1,000. “If you only see a war in the way the media presents it, you are getting a skewed view.”

Human Rights Watch, the world’s leading non-governmental research group, estimates that currently tens of thousands of children are involuntarily recruited into military service to fight in civil wars across the globe.

Beah’s effort to spread awareness has taken him across the U.S. and to parts of the globe, speaking in front of audiences to show how there is hope for former child soldiers. The popular view that child soldiers will never be able to reintegrate as functioning members of society is a myth that he has been working to disprove.

“It is possible to regain one’s humanity,” Beah said. And he is proof that it is possible to go from being an indoctrinated child soldier to shore up deficit by early May.

Pattenaude: ‘more tough decisions are coming’

Daniel MacLeod
News Editor

At last Tuesday’s biennial “State of the University” address, UMaine system Chancellor Richard Pattenaude said that the University of Maine will likely layoff more employees to balance the projected four year budget deficit of $42.8 million.

“More than 150 positions will or will be eliminated during this fiscal year though layoffs notices, attrition and position eliminations,” he said in his address before a joint session of the Maine state legislature.

“I regret to say that many more will occur over the next year and beyond.”

See DEFICIT on page 3

Maine conservatives take to the streets

Tax Day Tea Party coverage on page four

Brandon McKenney / Photo Editor

A protestor holds a ‘Don’t Tread on Me’ flag while listening to a speaker at the ‘Tax Day’ protest, last Wednesday, on the Maine State Pier in Portland.
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**Student athletes get priority in registration**

Policy accommodates hectic schedules

**Charlie Nickell**

Staff Writer

Student athletes have priority registration for the Fall ’09 semester, as part of a pilot program initiated this spring.

The program allows student athletes to register for classes in advance of regular appointed scheduling so that they will have more time to focus on their studies and sports.

“When we recruit, we tell them that they can be students and they can be athletes. We want them to be successful at both arenas. But USM makes this difficult for them,” said USM Athletic Director Al Bean at the Student Senate meeting last Friday.

Priority registration for athletes has been underway at USM. Many of the colleges and universities in the Little East Conference allow athletes to register ahead of regular students.

“Early registration privileges for athletes actually exist at a significant amount of institutions around the country,” said Bean.

The pilot program has run into some criticism from students. Senator Morgan DeBlasio said: “Being a student is the priority. The athlete chooses to participate in the extra curricular activities. It is their choice, and their responsibility. They should be able to make their schedule so they can make class.”

“Tuition is the same for all students,” said Jeremy Julie Brever said. “They deserve equal chances to get into a class that is filling up.”

Vickerson is one of four AmeriCorps VISTAs - Volunteers in Service to America - who operate out of the renovated white farmhouse shared by USM’s interfaith chaplaincy on the Portland campus. It was chaplain Andrea Thompson McCall who established the Office of Community Service and Civic Engagement in 2006.

“I’m just here to offer guidance and support,” says McCall, who coaches VISTAs in their pet projects while helping bring in faculty and students who might integrate class work with volunteer work.

AmeriCorps was founded through legislation signed by President Clinton in 1993, and envisioned as a domestically focused version of the Peace Corps.

But the VISTA program has been around much longer, beginning as an arm of Peace Corps itself back in 1965.

“It’s about 80% capacity building,” says McCall. "Whereas the majority of AmeriCorps volunteer positions would be deployed for hands-on service, VISTAs are charged with actually expanding and overseeing volunteerism."

“VISTAs are a longer term commitment. We’re teaching them how to make cuts, or boost revenues – everything that Caswell was talking about,” said Bean.

“The question that is on everyone’s mind is, how many positions are we going to have to make cuts, or boost revenues – that is our balanced budgets for fiscal year 2010,” said Caswell.

Some of these proposals may be modified or rejected. The university administration is currently in the process of identifying exactly where to make cuts, or boost revenues – that is a daunting task - especially since it must be done in less than 60 days to make sure that they will be able to produce the needed savings for 2010,” said Caswell.

The final results of this process will be shared with the community in early May, around the same time that the fiscal year 2010 UMaine system operates.

“Clearly, $4 million in cuts will necessitate renewed efforts to balance the size of the workforce within the constraints of the budget,” he said.

“The question that is on everybody’s mind is, how many positions are we going to have to eliminate? The short answer is: we don’t know yet.”

**David O’Donnell**

Staff Writer

USM should be “indispensable to the community in which it sits.”

That line has been a staple in speeches by President Botman regarding her plans to restructure the university over the next several years. But it could just as easily serve as the motto for a foursome whose time on campus is dedicated to forging stronger ties between Huskies and the unenrolled.

“They’re not students. They’re not staff. But they’re impressed with what they’ve seen so far. “This school has some of the busiest students I’ve ever met,” says Amanda Vickers, a Colby graduate. “A lot of them have three jobs, some have families, and then so many still find time to do community service work.”

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“We’re matchmakers. We’re Yenta in Fiddler on the Roof,” says Michael Wilson, who has been stationed at USM longer than any point in the current crop, going back to fall of 2007.

“We make ourselves aware and network as well as we can.” Wilson, a Bates alumus, spends much of his time working with organizations that serve neighborhoods - such as the west-end Portland group formerly known as Portland West, recently re-branded as Learning Works, which specializes in helping at-risk youth and low-income families, particularly through educational services.

Vickerson, for her part, has been charged with bolstering USM’s student mentoring program since she arrived last July.

“When I got here, I had to figure out how mentoring was happening at USM,” she recalls. “And I found that the program, as it was, was great – just not sustainable.”

Thus began months of research and outreach that last fall yielded a substantial grant, and a shot at replicating her alma mater’s’ other successful program, Colby Cares About Kids, which allows college students to act as tutors, and role models for selected area middle schoolers.

Vickerson’s research only continues from there.

“We can pick which outcomes to track - absenteeism, grade point average, self-esteem - as many as we want,” she says. “And we get to define, as part of statewide effort, how mentoring really impacts the well-being of these kids.”

Mentoring is something of a motif in the VISTA’s work. Alicia Sampson started at the same time as Vickerson, though she often finds herself in slightly more hands-on roles in isolated communities.

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**See Service on page 4**
On tax-day last week, several hundred people holding signs on the Maine State Pier watched as Fred Staples opened a box wrapped with brown paper and string. "This is the federal stimulus package," he said, as he reached into the box and pulled out a length of rusty chain, the crowd erupting in approval.

"This is the 'chains' you can believe in." On April 15, 750 groups across the country held "Tax-day Tea Parties" protesting government spending and what attendees deemed excessive taxation.

The protests were aimed at President Obama's $787 billion federal stimulus package and $3 trillion federal budget expenditures that were mocked at the rally and event signs reading: "stop making me pay for the irresponsible," and "socialism is not an American value." The protests were made up of people of all ages and were met with a counter-rally by locals for WLOB, said that the event was not about demonstrating anger.

"It was founded upon the fact that you can be taxed. It was founded on free market principles. Although the event borrowed the name of the original Boston Tea Party, last week's event lacked the fervor of the infamous 1773 uprising against British colonial taxation. Tea bags were worn as jewelry, not dumped in mass quantities in Casco Bay. We're more civilized now," said Connors.

"The type of people who come out aren't the 'rough' type, they are a lot mellower," said 18-year-old Portland resident Matthew Richardson. One of the speakers at the rally, Ray Richardson, a talk show host for WLOB, said that the event was not about demonstrating anger.

"All politics is local," he said. "If we can't win the little battles, we're not going to win the big battles… let's get 'em."
Health insurance debate comes to USM
Nursing students discuss problems of health care coverage at symposium

Abigail Cuffey
Staff Writer

Last Wednesday, the problem of health care coverage in the U.S. was debated at the Woodbury Campus Center by USM graduate nursing students, as part of National Public Health Week. Nursing and non-nursing students, professors, health care professionals and members of the public were all in attendance.

The forum, “45.7 Million: Can and Should America Cover the Uninsured?” was lead by three panelists, USM Muskie School of Public Service professors, Deborah Deatrick and Elizabeth Kilbreth, and Douglas Clopp, of Consumers for Affordable Health Care (CAHC).

In 2006, the Federal Government estimated that 47 million Americans lacked health insurance. Among those, nearly 20 percent were children, and a disproportionate number of minority groups. Citing high medical costs, about 1.5 million families will lose their homes to foreclosure each year.

Bankruptcy is also a leading factor in the health care issue. One study found that 50 percent of all filings were partly the result of medical expenses. Every 30 seconds someone in the U.S. files for bankruptcy after a serious health problem.

We need to curb the rate of growth of health care spending at a slow rate, otherwise it’s not sustainable,” said Kilbreth.

Comparing differing health care plans in countries like Germany and the Netherlands, Kilbreth says that their alternative plans are based on multiple insurers.

“Before President Obama, universal health care was non-existent,” Kilbreth said speaking about discussion of coverage for all Americans.

The second speaker was Douglas Clopp, from CAHC, a program that was founded 20 years ago aimed at providing coverage to everyone in Maine.

“Maine is one of a handful of states that has managed to cover 90% of residents,” said Clopp on the increased efforts in Maine.

According to Clopp, 17 percent of the United States’ Gross Domestic Product is spent on health care. He suggests that the health care system in the United States is ranked second out of 191 countries in terms of health care.

“Health care costs are going through the roof, and many people are looking to Obama to answer their questions,” said Clopp. He projected that we need health care coverage to match the money we’re putting in, in order for the plan to sustain.

CAHC is also part of Maine Voices for Coverage, a statewide campaign to bring the views of “everyday people” to policy makers, to ensure that all Mainers have access to health care.

Clopp briefly exchanged views on Dirigo Health, which offers health benefits to eligible individuals, particularly the self-employed, small businesses (2-50 employees) in Maine.

Deborah Deatrick rounded out the forum with a discussion on preventing high health care costs.

According to Deatrick, the three main factors determining how healthy someone is are income/economic status, education, and biology/genetics. Although 17 percent of national spending that goes towards health care, Deatrick says only 2 percent of that goes towards prevention.

Deatrick emphasized that one of the biggest issues facing our nation today is a disproportionate use of emergency rooms. With none or limited street and rural clinics, patients often turn to emergency rooms for a quick fix.

The majority of people who use emergency rooms are young adults and the elderly, 65 years and older, for nonspecific symptoms, she says.

One program that is working to help offset the health care problem is CarePartners, which gives the health care to roughly 10,000 Mainers. Through this program, doctors provide service to 10 individuals for free. CarePartners offers regular checkups and care, affordable prescription medication, lab, x-ray, and hospital services at no cost, and referrals to other services and resources.

“They provide free and low lost medication through the goodwill of providers,” says Deatrick.

Another problem is that people don’t understand their health care plan; they need to know what’s included and excluded. Mistakes can happen, says Deatrick. The solution, “It’s a simple thing to do,” she says. “Read the bill.”

During the question and answer period, one audience member asked, “What happens after 8 o’clock when CVS closes?” To prevent unnecessary visits to the emergency room, Deatrick says that nursing triage calls should be in place, since “private practice physicians are a vanishing breed.”

According to Kilbreth, nurses can make a difference by taking care of health care where the people are. “We need to band together and use the power of teamwork,” she said.


From Soldier on page 1

Beer: Alcohol, 4) Trafficking in Dangerous Knives. All items were confiscated.

‘Don’t Bogart Me’ April 7, 7:02 pm
An employee found a baggie containing a green leafy substance in Payson Smith Hall. Officer took possession and contents were destroyed.

‘Reefer Madness’ April 5, 10:58 pm
Complaint of odor of marijuana in Upton Hastings Hall. The RA and RD knocked on the door and no odor was detected - the call was canceled.
Letter from the Editor
Crashing the tea party
Liberal media provokes Maine’s conservative minority

April 15th. As proponents of limited government and free-market economics, sending away a sizeable chunk of our income to support the social agenda of a distinctly liberal government must be a difficult exercise.

The U.S. tax system is an understandable boon of contention within the conservative camp, but through characterizing their outrage as “entertaining,” and quoting only the most accusatory and intolerant sound bites from the event’s speakers, the columnist dropped a firebomb when an often-printed branch might have been more fitting.

This Fox News vs. MSNBC culture we find ourselves steeped in has us all believing that there are only two sides to an issue, and no room for anything in between. When a conservative minority is brave enough to speak up and voice its displeasure, we really need to objectively discredit their cause, and go on the offensive.

Sure, this tactic has become somewhat of a commonplace with actions and reactions scrawled all over the internet, broadcast on the 24-hour news networks, and spewed from countless talking heads.

As fun and entertaining as this debate can sometimes be, it packs a hidden toll not often recognized: dividing a country – especially now – needs to stop, to weather a time of unprecedented challenges.

Thanks for reading.

Matt Dodge

Dave Murphy
Contributing Writer

It’s difficult to not be enthusiastic while waiting for the seventh and final season of “Curb Your Enthusiasm.” I find myself scouring discussion boards for hints on what to expect; but no dice. It’s been kept so top secret that Shelby Woo would need to team up with Harriet the Spy to find out some sort of plot line for this season.

However, when I was about to call it quits and just wait for the season to begin like every other loyal HBO subscriber, I stumbled upon something amazing. It’s something that’s kept me awake night after night thinking about the hilarious possibilities that could ensue. Entertainment Weekly reported that the “Seinfeld” cast—Jerry Seinfeld, Julia Louis-Dreyfus, Jason Alexander, and Michael Richards—will be featured in a multiple-episode story arc on HBO’s “Curb Your Enthusiasm” this fall.

The cameos will mark the first time that all four actors have appeared together in a TV show since “Seinfeld” went off the air almost 11 years ago. After I found out the news I called my dad who’s also an avid fan of the show.

“Dad you won’t believe it! The entire Seinfeld cast is going to be on the new Curb.”

“David, I’ve known that for a week.”

“You don’t know what you’re talking about.”

“Because I didn’t want you to know that I’ve been reading Entertainment Weekly.”

Throughout the past 6 seasons of Curb, Julia Louis-Dreyfus has appeared in a 3-episode arc as Ann B. O’Hara, and Jerry Seinfeld appeared in 2. Jerry Seinfeld even appeared very briefly in the season 4 finale, but had no dialogue. Michael Richards has been on 3 occasions. Richards’ appearance on Curb will be his first on screen performance since his 7 episode flop, “The Michael Richards Show” in 2000.

I’m curious to see how people react to him after his controversial outburst at The Laugh Factory in Los Angeles.

Combining the “Seinfeld” cast with “Curb Your Enthusiasm” cast is like combining the best peanut butter in the world with the best jelly in the world. It’s like Palmer vs. Nicklaus at Augusta.

And I’m assuming it’s what graduating from Harvard med feels like. Mark my words this will be comedy at its finest.

Forget the “Office” (unless it’s the British one), forget “Scrubs” (which shouldn’t be hard to do), and forget the once promising “Flight of the Conchords,” because television comedy relies solely on two words: Larry David.

He’s the genius behind both “Seinfeld” and “Curb Your Enthusiasm.” He made almost $200 million dollars alone when he sold the syndication rights to “Seinfeld.” If you don’t watch Curb, the show is basically about Larry David’s life post-“Seinfeld.” He plays himself, alongside a tremendous cast including Jeff Garlin, Cheryl Hines, Richard Lewis, Ted Danson, Susie Essman and Wanda Sykes. If you aren’t a big fan of “Seinfeld” don’t fret. This show is shot very different. There is no laugh track, and most incredibly, no script.

The show is almost all improvisation. David writes a loose story line that sets up the plot, and then when the red light goes on, he just wing it. What it creates is 30 minutes of hilarity.

Granted, it will be difficult to top 6 incredible seasons, but if there’s anything that can do that, it’s Curb. So keep your ears and eyes open for the new season of “Curb Your Enthusiasm” to air, probably sometime this fall.
Maine legislature fails to pass gun law
On 10th anniversary of Columbine shootings, what have we learned?

Jacob Cowan
Staff Writer

Some anniversaries can’t be celebrated. Monday, April 20 is one of these days. It marks the tenth anniversary of the Columbine shootings. Last week, April 16, was the two year anniversary of the Virginia Tech massacre. These highly publicized tragedies have spurred change around the country, but how has Maine been affected?

Because of these harrowing events, the city of Portland has taken initiative and declared April, “Gun Violence Prevention Month.” According to the resolution - which passed on March 28 - 30,000 Americans die each year due to gun violence. In Maine, suicide is the second leading cause of death for 15-24 year olds. An average 21 people in Maine die by their own hand. Of those who attempt suicide with a gun, 78-90 percent end in a fatal-rights.

Recently, Portland has been affected by the loss of James Angelo, a security guard at Mercy Hospital who was shot on duty. Hundreds of people march to Monument Square for a candle light vigil in remembrance of Angelo and in hopes that this type of tragedy will never happen again. Although Maine is making improvements in awareness, they recently took a step back.

Last week, the Criminal Justice and Public Safety Committee of the Maine Legislature failed to abolish a ridiculous loophole in the selling of fire arms at gun shows. This loophole allows private armed dealers to sell guns to anyone and everyone without performing an instant background check. Licensed dealers must perform background checks before distributing guns to their customers. It is this same loophole that Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold took advantage of when planning their attacks. Eric Harris and Dylan Klebold sought out private dealers at a Colorado gun show in order to purchase the weapons used during the shootings.

Tom Mauser, father of Daniel Mauser, victim of the Columbine shootings, flew to Maine to plead before the hearing could take place. From gun violence. But not even Mauser has the luxury of preventing another tragedy. He is not an elected official, nor is he a member of Congress, but he is a parent that has lost a child. He is one of the nation’s leading voices in gun control and is actively trying to prevent the Columbine massacre from ever happening again. He wants to end this deadly loophole just as Congress fails to pass gun laws.

Supporters of the loophole believe it’s eradication would be an attack on the Second Amendment. In another instance, closing the loophole would prevent attacks such as Columbine and Virginia Tech tragedy from happening. However, I am not an elected official, nor am I a member of Congress, but I am one of the nation’s leading voices in gun control and is actively trying to prevent the Columbine massacre from ever happening again. I want to end this deadly loophole just as Congress fails to pass gun laws.

In honor of the Columbine shootings, Maine Students Against Handgun Violence will be screening “Bowling for Columbine” in the Brooks Student Center on Monday, April 20 from 6:30 – 9:00 p.m. Michael Moore’s 2002 film still holds uncanny relevance today. Maine’s Justice and Public Safety Committee have decided to play the “that could never happen to us” game. American pride gets the way of making rational life saving decisions. Citizens of the U.S. still own their right to bear arms. But where in the constitution does it say that Americans are permitted to abuse this right to bear arms for the enjoyment of gun lobby does) not much will change in terms of common sense gun policies, she says.

It is a shame that Maine did not take advantage of this opportunity to enact change and remove this loophole. To make a difference and become a part of this positive infl uence in the reformation of gun laws that currently exist in our schools.

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Arts & Entertainment

Showing off their stuff

B.F.A. exhibit displays work of 15 graduating art majors

Danica Koenig
Arts & Entertainment Editor

A question many college grads ask themselves is: four years in college and what do I have to show for it (besides loans)? The graduating studio art majors get a chance to show the public what exactly they have to show for college at the B.F.A. exhibit at USM’s art gallery in Gorham.

There is a wide range of art major concentrations on display, including ceramics, digital art, drawing, painting, printmaking, photography and sculpture.

There was a reception to mark the opening of the exhibit on Friday, April 17th from 6-8 p.m. The artists got a chance to represent their work at the gallery while the public, family and friends had a look at their art.

The range of concentrations makes the exhibit very diverse with many different mediums. There is everything from traditional still-life paintings to digital video productions. Marc McCourt did a very original screen print on a scroll of the transformation between human and robot.

There were a couple of digital art exhibits; Colin Feeney did a work of computer graphics animation and Colby Walker Perrine did a piece of stop motion animation with a pile of wood.

See BFA on page 11

Counter-clockwise from top left: Brystle, Devin Platts, Chatifar Rodrey, Colby Walker Perrine, Craig Carey, Colin Feeney, Brianna Bennett, Sarah Reece, Meredith Kendrick Davis, Monica Castaneda, Tom Placy, Marc McCourt, Nick D’Alfonso III, Andrew Coffin, “Untitled” by Andrew Coffin, Marie Rivard, “The Suit” by Marie Rivard.
The Muppet Christmas Carol (1992)

Sacristie, I know. How could the best Muppet movie ever exist without my favorite? Like the Mona Lisa without her smile, or Bob Hope without his wisecracks. Yet that's what we have in the original Muppet Christmas Carol. It's a Christmas classic in every sense of the word:

First, they started you on "Sesame Street," and you were ready for the musical hippie vibe of "Fraggle Rock." Then, just when you thought you knew it all, you were dropped into the real world of "The Muppet Movie." Now, just when you thought you knew the Muppets, you're hit with the classical "Muppet Show" and subsequent Muppet movies. But I digress...for now...and greet with warm enthusiasm the recent news that Jason Segel (currently starring in "I Love You, Man") has convinced the Walt Disney Corporation - who snatched the Muppets up back in 2004 - to let him script a revival for their foamy, feely careers in an edgy new movie. We're a year or two from knowing whether his plan will work, but it's only a short trip to your local independent video store to enjoy years of classic Muppetdom on VHS or DVD. Avoid buckling under the stress of picking one with this handy guide.

The winner...

"Opportunity knocks once, let's reach out and grab it! Together we'll nab it!" We'll hitchhike, bus, or yellow-cab it.

Totally. The first Muppet Movie is, as Kermit tells his nephew Robin at the start, "more or less" the story of how the Muppets got together. It's all good things do, with Dom DeLuise wandering aimlessly in a rowboat through the swamp bandoing about a trade publication. Kermit decides he wants more out of life, and travels the country in search of other talking animals and a career in Hollywood.

No Muppet movie has this many top-notch songs. And no Muppet Movie will get more dated every second of every day - if canoes from Bob Hope and Milton Berle weren't enough, it's now puzzling why Kermit and his friends don't just start a YouTube channel and twitter like mad.

"It's alright, because the lesson is touching, it's even kind of spooky. Michael Caine takes the lead in a story that's remarkably faithful to Charles Dickens' original tale. Henson will not curse me for this choice, I think - he created these characters and his very own son directs. But I digress...for now...and advance the tight continuity and deep narrative arc of the original films!"

But this is the best Muppet Movie. It's funny, it's touching, it's even kind of spooky. Michael Caine takes the lead in a story that's remarkably faithful to Charles Dickens' original tale. Henson will not curse me for this choice, I think - he created these characters and his very own son directs.

Case closed. "The Muppet Christmas Carol" is a fitting tribute, suitable for both Halloween and Christmas, and good God that Death Muppet is no less cold and creepy than death itself.

Muppetational Edition

David O'Donnell

Muppet vs. muppet vs. muppet vs. more muppets

his inspirational humor, you could argue that Henson was a brutally monolithic power over family entertainment for about three decades. First, they started you on "Sesame Street," just to make sure you could count the cash in your parents' wallets. In a few years, you were ready for the musical hippie vibe of "Fraggle Rock." Then, just when you're starting to learn the value of melancholy and double entendres, WOW! They hit you with the classic "Muppet Show" and subsequent Muppet movies. But I digress...for now...and

The Muppets Take Manhattan (1984)

The alleged inspiration for Segal's comeback effort, "The Muppets Take Manhattan" was the third and final film starring the Muppet Show gang before Jim Henson's untimely death six years later. It also came several years after "The Muppet Show" ended, so it was kind of a revival at the time. Now it's just an overly sentimental retread on the first movie. That said, it does feature: Joan Rivers going insane; Kermit the Frog wearing a fake mustache; Ed Koch; one culturally-insensitive joke by Rowlf the Dog; and the following rejoinder:

Ronnie Crawford: But, Pop, I told you - I want to do something different!

Bernard Crawford: So put some Jell-O down your pants.

Sesame Street presents Follow That Bird! (1985)

The 'Street came first, and gave us Kermit, but it was 15 years in before it got a full-length feature all its own (though Big Bird has a key cameo in The Muppet Movie.) Nevertheless, this is another fine buddy road comedy, with several batches of buddies - Bert and Ernie among them - hitting the road in search of Big Bird, who is kidnapped by an evil, ultraconservative segregationist who believes he should be living with a bunch of giant Dodos.

Speaking of which, his clueless Dodo foster family is one of the funniest bits ever committed to celluloid. Big Bird was miffed enough after being ripped from his friends on Sesame Street, but five minutes with these folks provides him with the pure blind rage needed to ignore everything Gordon and Maria told him about getting into cars with strangers. So he hitchhikes across the country and at one point squats in some guy's barn.

It's alright, because the lesson is touching, it's even kind of spooky. Michael Caine takes the lead in a story that's remarkably faithful to Charles Dickens' original tale. Henson will not curse me for this choice, I think - he created these characters and his very own son directs.

Case closed. "The Muppet Christmas Carol" is a fitting tribute, suitable for both Halloween and Christmas, and good God that Death Muppet is no less cold and creepy than death itself.

All the right energy

Portland's All the Real Girls performed live at the Empire

Tyler Jackson

Peter Donovan and Elijah Ocean of Portland's power-pop outfit All the Real Girls performed an acoustic set downstairs at the Empire last Tuesday night. The seven-song set covered the bulk of their recent debut, "My Friends Are Going to Be Strangers," in a stripped-down and overall quiet manner.

It took a moment for the crowd to focus. A loud rock band had finished upstairs later than expected and people were still shuffling around, finding seats and talking. Their debut is loud and highly produced from start to finish, so the sparse instrumentation of this set required each song to rely on the songwriting alone. Some benefited from the simpler arrangement, while others sounded a bit empty without the volume of the full band.

The opening song, "Guguniqua '74," was one of the most dramatically altered tunes in the set, as tom-heavy drums, bass and
“Rescue Me” Returns
Denis Leary and others are back with the usual sarcastic and obscene humor.

Meghan McCaffrey
Staff Writer

Classical music, as an art form, has traditionally influenced developing musicians. But, it’s easy to believe that young people today are less interested in Classical and more interested in contemporary genres such as alternative rock or pop music, due to the over-exposure of these types of music in the media.

Craig Ouellette, a senior music education student at USM, wants to sway musicians to develop a love for the challenge that classical music provides a musician. He wants listeners to delight in the soft or loud music that lifts and dances in one’s eardrums.

Ouellette has been playing classical music for a long time, but only began to really enjoy and appreciate it his sophomore year of college at USM.

"From watching many of the faculty here in the music department, I became inspired in the classical genre," says Ouellette. "Through their teachings and performances I learned about a deeper meaning of Classical music."

Craig Ouellette started a new venture to include performers of all ages into a new orchestra called the Southern Maine Chamber Orchestra in mid-February of this year.

The SMCO is comprised of 35 members, including USM students and community members, who share a commitment to classical music performance. Not only does Ouellette direct SMCO but he is also an assistant conductor for the Maine Youth Orchestra of Yarmouth, Maine.

"I wanted to start this ensemble so that I could include the community in some of our student activities," says Ouellette. "I also wanted more opportunities to perform and conduct as a young musician, while preparing myself for grad school."

The Southern Maine Chamber Orchestra will have their debut performance at Corbett Hall on USM’s Gorham campus at 7:30 p.m. on Monday May 4. Admission is free and open to the public.

The orchestra will be playing Franz Schubert’s “Unfinished Symphony” and Beethoven’s overture to Beethoven’s only opera, “Fidelio.” The orchestra will also feature two soloists: senior Sophie Flood will perform Mozart’s “Horn Concerto No. 1” and graduate student Maria Wagner will play the Clarinet solo in “Adagio for Clarinet and Strings” by Robert Wagner and Heinrich Baermann.

In the future, Craig Ouellette plans to take on the challenge of performing and conducting Carl Orff’s “Carmina Burana,” a powerhouse concert event that consists of over one hundred singers and a full orchestra.

With more concert dates ahead, the USM community should celebrate this student-run revival of classical music.

Meghan McCaffrey
Staff Writer

For those ignorant to the powerhouse cable show called “Rescue Me,” may your houses be adorned with immense shame.

The show focuses on a crew of New York firefighters that are forced to deal with the trauma of September 11th in both their professional and personal lives.

The crew is held together and lead by Tommy Gavin (Boston comedian Denis Leary in his Emmy and Golden Globe accredited performer) whose extreme self-destruction and manipulation has isolated him from his equally ill-tempered Irish Catholic family and close crew members in the firehouse.

Despite his weak attempts to reconcile, the show has been chronicling his constant and intense downward spiraling since 2004.

Examples of the past seasons’ troubles include: the death of his young son, being visited by the ghosts of people he couldn’t save in fires, cheating on his wife with his cousin’s widow, battling his addiction to alcohol and pills, and many others.

The show has recently begun its fifth season. It’s sometimes hard to jump into a series this late in the game. However, “Rescue Me” is easily watchable, addictive, and hilarious enough to hook anyone. Racist, misogynistic, sarcastic and obscene humor is what makes the show not only popular but wildly successful. “Rescue Me” is violently worshiped by critics and fans for these traits and the constant comedic drama that surrounds all the colorful characters.

I should also call attention to Michael J. Fox making his first television appearance on the show since his diagnosis of Parkinson’s disease (besides his one-episode guest role on Scrubs). He will remain on the show for the rest of the season playing Dwight, a wheelchair-bound cursing maniac who is hooking up with Gavin’s estranged wife. Judging from the first episode, when he and Gavin got into a fist fight and Dwight comments on his sporadic erection troubles, it is going to be a great season.

It is one of the few realistic, tension-filled, male soap operas that has really ever been on television. “Rescue Me” boasts a strong cast of characters, mostly raunchy comedians or Boston-based icons that Leary has been associated with over the years (Lenny Clark, Patriot’s coach Bill Belichick, and many Bruins hockey players).

All star guest appearances are well noted and often turn into considerable lengthy roles (Tatum O’Neal and Susan Sarandon who was a wealthy cougar that stole children on the side).

“Rescue Me” depicts how vital firefighters are to society, how difficult their job is, and the overall inner workings of a male-dominated lady-chasing firehouse. More importantly though, it is by far the most hilarious and touching series I have ever seen.

“Rescue Me” is on every Tuesday at ten o’clock on FX. An encore episode follows in case you missed anything.
Perfect picnic fare

Pre-dawn walks with Caleigh to the top Peacock Hill reveal a sunrise that lingers over the rows of apple trees, naked and gnarled, silhouetted against the inky sky. Deer are back on the move as is evidenced by distinct tracks on the side of the road and barely visible trails through the woods. Wild turkeys will soon begin their mating rituals with calls of gobbles and clucks to the sky. Ambling down the hill, I think I see the hovering mothlike clouds that vapor puffs from our mouths. Robins, sparrows, cardinals, and red-wing blackbirds herald the early day with chirpy tweets and birdsong, in contrast to the deep resonance of tree frogs and the incessant peeping peeper which never just ends butWelcome to Cumberland Self Storage, your one-stop-shop for all your self-storage needs.

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Monday, April 20
Bowling for Columbine!
April 20 marks the tenth anniversary of the Columbine shootings. Join Maine Students Against Handgun Violence as they screen Michael Moore’s “Bowling for Columbine” in remembrance and to increase gun violence prevention awareness. Food and refreshments will be served. 6:30 – 8 p.m./ Brooks Student Center, Gorham

Tuesday, April 21
G.O.T. Balls!
Continue your push for the sexiest, most rock hard, summer body ever with the G.O.T. Balls workout session. This class utilizes physioballs, body weight and dumbbells in order to tighten your physique, build a solid core and improve your overall cardiovascular fitness level. Everyone will know that you got balls after enduring this workout session. 3 – 4 p.m./ Hill Gym, second floor exercise room/ Gorham/ Call Linda at 780-5430 for more info

Wednesday, April 22
Yummy, Earth Day!
Celebrate Earth by eating its delicious gifts prepared by The Local Sprouts Community Supported Kitchen (CSK). Portland’s Public Market House will host CSK’s tasting of local and organic saliva-inducing breads, soups, salads, entrees, side-dishes and desserts. Help CSK’s mission to support local farms and the local economy. Free! 4 – 6 p.m./ Public Market House/ 28 Monument Square, Portland/

Thursday, April 23
African Film Festival!
Immerse yourself in African art and culture during the last five days of the African Film Festival. The festival, which ends Friday, will be showcasing independent films, documentary features, short films, children’s animations, lectures, music and photography all around Portland. The festival benefits Linkachild, a non-profit orphanage in Nigeria that pairs Nigerian children with foster parents. Visit TMAF.org for all information pertaining to the festival.

Friday, April 24
Frigen Laser Beams!
No one really knows what lasers are or how they work, but they sure look pretty. If you enjoy lasers than it is highly recommended that you trip out at USM’s Southworth Planetarium laser show set to the acidic tunes of Pink Floyd’s “The Wall.” Part of Laser Week at the Planetarium, this is the week’s most popular show so reservations are highly encouraged. $5/ 6 p.m./ USM Southworth Planetarium/ 96 Falmouth St., Portland/ 780-4249

Saturday, April 25
Portland in Fashion!
Get ready for the glitz and glam of WMPG’s 5th Annual Fashion Show as the Space Gallery. The fashion show will be a showcase for locally created, all original clothing, jewelry and accessories. DJ Goober will set the mood while 50 plus products from over 20 local designers show off the goods. Support WMPG and get some much needed fashion sense! $10/ 8 p.m./ Space Gallery/ 535 Congress St., Portland/ 828-5600

Sunday, April 26
I Prefer Unicycles!
USM’s Sullivan Gym opens it doors for the annual Great Maine Bike Swap. The Swap is a perfect opportunity for those looking to buy or sell bike parts with other cycling enthusiasts. There will be hundreds of bicycles, test riding course, mini-workshops, exhibits and refreshments. Free with student ID and children under 12/ $3/ 10 a.m. – 2 p.m./ Sullivan Gym, Portland Campus/ bikemaine.org

UNIVERSITY BARTENDING
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The University of Maine dropped a bomb last week that has people all over the state reeling. Effective next year, the school will no longer offer varsity men’s soccer and women’s volleyball at the intercollegiate level. And while some may chalk this up as a tale of the economic times, I happen to think the ramifications of this decision transcend dollars-and-cents cost saving. Sure, the school’s athletic department is trying to grapple with an $800,000 shortfall, but that alone is no excuse for cutting the state’s highest level of soccer. By cutting soccer at UMaine, the state is left with a huge void. I can think of no other sport in the state that can rival soccer in terms of participation, save maybe basketball. And while soccer might not have the same spot in Maine lore that basketball does, its place in Maine’s landscape is undeniable. From Fort Kent to Kittery, people hit the pitch during the fall, many of them hoping to take their skills to the next level. Unlike the regionalized nature of sports like ice hockey and football, soccer has the rare ability to be prominent across the entire state. Just look at the recent rise of indoor sports facilities, which, more than anything else, appeals to Maine’s robust thirst for soccer during all four seasons. UMaine’s latest cut leaves one less option for our state’s best soccer players and it leaves the state without a high-level soccer team to rally around. In total, five Mainers were part of the Black Bears team. Maybe in any other state it’d be okay to axe soccer in lieu of other sports. There’s no doubt that soccer’s spot in the national sports landscape is shaded at best. In other states where football is a staple at every high school, soccer often finds itself on the back burner. But here in Maine soccer is alive and well. Maine should have disregarded the national trends and kept in mind the local implications. Afterall, UMaine – the state’s flagship school – does have the responsibility of keeping the state’s interests in mind. Why not cut men’s swimming and diving? Or, better yet, why not market your sports in a more effective way? Why not try to increase revenues before taking down sports? So far UMaine athletic director Blake James has done nothing by lead a totally inept athletic program, one that’s seen UMaine be totally ineffectual on the field and on the books. This is just another link in a chain of missteps. I’m sure the decision wasn’t easy, but that’s no excuse. Someone should have contextualized the decision and employed their brains before their calcula-tors. Now, while Maine’s not-so-storied swimming and diving team lives to see another day, its soccer program will have to wait for a not-so-probable budget surplus in order to be exhumed. As for volleyball: that’s a no brainer. Volleyball has long been the most regionalized sport in the state with a fractional following compared to any other sport offered at UMaine. On the bright side, USM will have a better chance of landing the next class of stellar soccer players from Maine since they’ll have very few other options. Michael Tardiff is a long-time soccer hater.
Huskies unphased by coaching change

USM tennis wins two, loses two

Ben Slagle
Sports Intern

If the USM men’s tennis team had stumbled this year, it would have been understandable. Long time head coach Phil Cole retired this year, leaving the head coaching position vacant. But the Huskies have been anything but dormant, especially last week. The Huskies picked up a pair of victories and played well in losses to Salem State and Western Connecticut.

New coaches, no problems

Replacing Cole as first-year head coach John Parry and assistant Charles Cianciello. And while new coaches can bring forth periods of poor performance, both Parry and Cianciello have been more than satisfied with their team’s success thus far. Cianciello points to his players’ enthusiasm.

“We’re new young coaches to these guys and I think it has really fired them up. It’s given us a chance to make them work hard and they have risen to the occasion. These are strong kids who have been playing hard for us.”

This positive performance did not go unnoticed by Head coach John Parry either.

“There’s always a lot of unknown about how guys are going to respond to a new coach, but everyone has always been motivated. These kids are thriving in the competitive atmosphere within the team this year.”

The team is led by its captains junior Josh Warren (Hermon) and senior Derek Stevenson (Raymond).

Holding position one and two in singles, they are the top performers on the court. They even combine with partners in doubles to form one of the top-ranked tandems in the conference this year.

Cianciello says that the two have “really been putting out their best effort everyday and it works to fire the rest of the team up.”

If proof of this is needed, look no further than the performance of younger teammates Zach Karen (North Conway, NH) and Terry Classen (Brownfield).

Parry has noticed that Karen has “really been out there motivated to work hard and play hard.” remarking that Karen’s motivation and work ethic has been a “pleasant surprise.”

Freshmen Terry Classen has also emerged as a motivated player. He recently won his way into the #6 position through an inspiring intra-squad match.

Week in review

The Huskies knew they’d have their work cut out for them last week, playing in four matches with one coming against Salem State, the league’s best teams. But, despite new coaches and a young team, the Huskies pulled through the week 2-2, asserting their position in the conference this year.

USM men’s tennis fell to the league’s best teams at Salem State, the University of Maine and the University of New Hampshire.

In the first doubles match. The Huskies picked up a split in the double-header and their fifth win on the season. Hayden went 3-4 in the effort with a pair of singles and a two-run homer. She finished the day with four RBI. Sophomore hurler Sarah Deroche (Portland) went the distance for the Huskies, yielding just two hits in seven innings, while walking just one.

Men’s LAX

Men’s LAX downs Salem State in 2OT

Freshman Dan Thomas (Shrewsbury, MA) scored with 38 seconds remaining in the second overtime period, giving USM a 9-8 victory of Salem State last week. USM, who blew a 7-2 half-time lead, was led by Tim Bryan (Peterborough, NH) who scored a goal and assisted on three others, while Preston Gilbert (Saco) netted two goals and tallied an assist for the Huskies, who won their third straight game.

Men’s Indoor Track

Vigeeant set school records

Freshman Justin Vigeeant (Wells) swept the 100 and 200-meter dashes at the Maine State Champions, while setting a school record in the 200-meter event. He broke his six-week-old school record by six-tenths of a second with a mark of 21.74. Vigeeant’s effort helped his team to a third place finish behind Bowdoin and Bates.

Huskies Highlights

SOFTBALL

Softball splits with UMass Boston

Freshman catcher Jessica Hayden (Madison) had a career game, leading USM to a 10-1 victory over UMass Boston last week. The win earned USM a split in the double-header and their fifth win on the season. Hayden went 3-for-4 in the effort with a pair of singles and a two-run Homer. She finished the day with four RBIs. Sophomore hurler Sarah Deroche (Portland) went the distance for the Huskies, yielding just two hits in seven innings, while walking just one.

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Bluetooth, the wireless communication standard, was named after Harald Bluetooth, a tenth century king who encouraged communication and unity among warring Norse and Danish tribes.

For more random facts go to: mentalfloss.com/amazingfactgenerator
High and mighty
Dumas dominating in her rookie year

Mike Tardiff
Sports Editor

Looking through women’s track results, it’s easy to get the impression that Bethany Dumas is a seasoned veteran. She’s almost always an event winner and her prowess extends beyond a single activity. But if you think she’s a familiar face, you’re wrong. In fact, Dumas is new on the track scene, but she’s making her presence known.

“It’s kind of weird, you know, being the little freshman” she laughs. “A lot people will ask me like, ‘hey how was this meet? And I’m just like: ‘Well, I’ve never actually been.”

Despite her rookie status, Dumas is holding her own at the highest level.

Case in point: this weekend at the Aloha Relays, Dumas was the lone Husky athlete to pick an individual win, which came in the 400-meter hurdles. But that’s not all. She also posted a third place finish in the pole vault and a fourth place performance in the javelin.

Like some sort of Roman Olympian, Dumas’ talent transcends a limited skill set. More than just a sprinter or a thrower, she’s a track and field athlete in the truest sense of the word.

But how does she do it? Hard work, dedication and a willingness to practice all of her events. Her schedule is pretty crazy with practices. Trying to do everything at once is pretty difficult but I do the best I can with training for each specific event,” she explains.

The two-time reigning Little East Conference Rookie Field Athlete of the Week, Dumas has shown incredible diversity, taking event titles in the pole vault, 100-meter and 400-meter hurdles. She’s also had strong showings in the javelin and long jump.

But these seemingly unrelated events actually require a similar set of skills, which Dumas is evidently in the process of mastering.

“These events all have a similar technique, especially when you consider the take-off. The speed will get you the distance, but the take off is what gets you the height.”

Even though she’s shown promise across the competitive gamut, Dumas does, in fact, have a favorite event. And, to no one’s surprise, it’s the event that affords her the best view of the competition that she’ll dominate in the pole vault.

“I just love heights and the sensation of flying. I think it’s my best event,” she says. “The event itself is just so unique.”

And for someone who has already accomplished so much in her rookie season, Dumas still has one goal yet to be fulfilled. She wants to beat her personal best in the pole vault, which she set in high school: 12 feet, seven inches. Her best this year has been 12 feet, one inch.

Dumas isn’t letting the success go to her head either. Instead, she’s got a simple formula for success: “I just go out there and do my best.”

Luckily for USM, her best - at least so far - has been more than good enough, especially for a so-called “rookie.”

Free Press staff writer Sarah Violette also contributed to this article.