Case of mumps confirmed at USM

Krysteana Scribner
Editor-in-chief

On March 2, a student at the University of Southern Maine who visited the University Health Center was diagnosed with mumps. This outbreak is one among many happening across college campuses right now and the first outbreak at USM since 2013.

The university has identified more than 150 other students who were likely in proximity to this student while he was contagious, either in class with him or living with him. Those people were notified. Four of those students were not vaccinated, but so far no students have shown signs of having the illness.

According to the Bangor Daily News, health officials are investigating whether or not the case in Maine may be related to a case in New Hampshire. The virus is spread by person-to-person but people can guard themselves against the disease through vaccinations, hand washing and not sharing utensils or water bottles.

"Staff members are currently contacting individuals who may have been more directly affected, but we think it is important for the entire university community to be informed of the symptoms of mumps and what to do if you have any questions or concerns," said Director of Health Services Lisa Belanger in an email to USM students, faculty and staff on Wednesday evening.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), mumps is no longer very common in the U.S. Over the course of the past few days, however, other colleges such as Harvard, Butler University, New Hampshire College, University of Louisville and Indiana University have come forward with emerging cases of Mumps being spread across campuses.

Each school (with the exception of USM) have had at least two or more cases arise. As of March 2, Harvard has confirmed four additional cases of mumps on campus, bringing their student outbreak to six.

Outbreaks can still occur in high-vaccinated communities, especially those that are populous and people come into contact with others daily. Many cases of mumps have been seen in high density across schools, colleges and camps. However, a high vaccination rate among students can ensure that the outbreak affects a small number of people.

After coming into contact with the virus, it can take 12-25 days before the symptoms appear. A person with the virus is contagious for three days before and five days after symptoms begin, according to the CDC.

Mumps affects the parotid glands, which are the salivary glands below and in front of the ears. It is spread through infected saliva, and a person can experience few to no symptoms. When symptoms do occur, they can happen suddenly and include swollen, painful salivary glands, headache, fever, fatigue and loss of appetite.

"We recommend that you minimize your contact with others for six days after the symptoms begin, and 12 days after symptoms end," Belanger said. "This may require that you do not attend class, work, sports activities or other gatherings."

If you have questions or concerns about the mumps, please feel free to contact the Health & Counseling Services at (207) 780-5411. Alternatively, you may contact the Maine Centers for Disease Control (CDC) at 1-800-821-5821.

Benjamin Sanders visits Portland four days before caucuses

Erica Jones
Free Press Staff

Last Wednesday in Portland, Democratic presidential candidate and Vermont senator Bernie Sanders hosted a rally at the State Theatre. The event was announced Tuesday morning in advance of the Democratic state caucuses on Sunday, March 6th, when registered Democrats in Maine will choose their 2016 candidate.

Despite the rally being short notice, nearly 1,800 people gathered to hear Sanders speak, with many supporters vying for a spot in the venue that many people had to be turned away.

This was Sanders’ first campaign event in Portland. In July of last year, he spoke to 9,000 supporters at Cross Insurance Arena, and since then Mainers have been waiting for a return visit.

A line quickly wrapped around Congress Street on Wednesday morning as people from across the state, and some from across the country, gathered inside the State Theatre, some waiting for hours in the rain, some skipping class or leaving work early for a chance to get a seat at the rally. The rally took place the day after Super Tuesday, where Sanders won four state primaries in Minnesota, Vermont, Oklahoma and Colorado. Hillary Clinton, Sanders’ Democratic candidate competition, took away seven states on Super Tuesday: Texas, Massachusetts, Virginia, Alabama, Arkansas, Georgia and Tennessee. But that doesn’t worry Sanders or his passionate fans.

Sanders spoke for an hour to a packed house on the need for prison reform, a higher minimum wage and a new healthcare system. He condemned corporate money in politics, the US’s rigged economy and Maine’s governor Paul LePage for “beating up on poor people.”

He also jabbed at Clinton for accepting campaign donations from “weirdo billionaires,” eliciting cheers and laughter from the zealous crowd, in reference to the millions of dollars received by Clinton’s campaign from large corporations and Wall Street.

In contrast, Sanders does not have his own Super PAC and funds his campaign with mostly individual donations.

During his speech, Sanders also urged people to go out and caucus this Sunday. The larger the turnout, he said, the better his numbers fared in primaries and caucuses.

“If we have a large turnout here in Maine, we will win the state,” he asserted, earning another round of applause.

The Sanders’ campaign’s momentum is steady, with polls showing the gap closing between him and Clinton, and Mainers at the rally were certainly optimistic about his chances.

“Bernie did a wonderful job of expressing that this election isn’t over until it’s over and you could tell he’s really enthusiastic about the upcoming primaries,” said Ryan R. Gallop, a USM student and Bernie supporter who came to the rally.

See Sanders on page 3
Troubles arise when pet turtles are released

Part two in a four part series detailing invasive species

The pet trade is responsible for releasing many species throughout the United States and on every continent except Antarctica. The red-eared slider turtle (Trachemys scripta elegans) is a popular choice for aquariums and pet pond habitats. However, when released, these turtles can cause significant problems for the local ecosystems.

The IUCN reported that these turtles have been transplanted across the United States and the globe, establishing populations throughout the U.S. and on every continent except Antarctica. According to the IUCN, this species prefers shallow, sluggish waters with soft beds, plenty of sunlight and large areas of vegetation, though as generalists with a fairly broad omnivorous diet, they can survive in a wide range of aquatic habitats.

Their spread is owed widely to the pet trade. Derek Yorks, a wildlife biologist with the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife’s Reptile-Amphibian-Invertebrate Group, explained that red-eared sliders “are very prolific breeders and as a result of this, they can overwhelm their habitat.” Yorks emphasized that they are “not a good pet for people. They are hard to care for. A lot of times people just end up releasing them.”

Turtles often outgrow the aquarium and kind of get big and stinky and hard to care for. A lot of times people just end up releasing them, thinking that they’re doing a good thing for the turtle, and, you know, thinking that there’s nothing wrong with it.” Yorks emphasized that they’re kind of an emerging problem in Maine, but they’ve been around for a while and been popular as pets in the US going back to at least the 1960s, if not earlier. In the last decade or so, some other states in New England have certainly started to see more and more sliders; particularly in ponds and lakes closer to urban areas. It’s this kind of cumulative effect of people releasing these unwanted pets and then they’re suddenly gaining you, two or three, or half a dozen of them in a pond, and they start to reproduce and the numbers grow from there. We don’t know of any ponds in Maine right now where there are big reproducing populations of sliders but in other states, down in Massachusetts, Rhode Island, Connecticut, it’s becoming more and more common. We’re hoping to avoid that kind of a problem here.

According to Yorks, the impacts of red-eared sliders on Maine ecosystems has so far been “probably quite negligible, since, like I said, we don’t know of any sites where there are large populations of sliders. But, in places where they do occur, they are in competition with other turtle species. They’re competing for food resources, basking spaces and nesting sites.” Yorks adds that “if they’re spreading too fast, there’s a risk of overpopulation.” Yorks recommends that people keep their turtles in the wild to watch basking spaces favored by painted turtles (Chrysemys picta picta). Painted turtles are the number one predator of red-eared sliders in the wild. But, in some places, sliders can really easily see that red mark on the side of their head, compared to the painted turtles with the yellow mark. That’s controlling their spread. If you have binoculars, you can easily see that red mark on the side of their head, compared to the painted turtles with the yellow mark. You’re just gonna have to see them, really, either in the water, or sometimes you’d see a female when she is out to lay her eggs.”

Yorks emphasizes that “the biggest thing that people can do [to control red-eared slider populations] is not releasing them into the wild. That goes for anywhere, except for in their native range, of course. That’s controlling their spread.” Yorks adds that “if you’re already there in some places where they are invading, usually when there’s direct concern about impacts on an ecosystem and other species, particularly other turtle species, typically an animal control specialist or wildlife biologist, they do sometimes remove them.”

Map of red-eared slider distribution in the United States. The dots represent collection sites outside of the natural range of this species, with the larger and darker dots representing more frequent collection than the smaller paler dots. The original range is represented by the shaded area. The collection records may not reflect actual population distribution or population densities.
Zika virus now confirmed in Maine and New Hampshire

CDC has confirmed 107 cases in the U.S. all of which are travel related

Zachary Searles
News Editor

At the end of February, Maine saw its first case of the Zika virus: months after the first outbreak in South America. The person who was affected is older than 65 and had travelled to a Zika-affected country, according to the Maine Center for Disease Control.

According to Dr. Siiri Bennett, Maine's state epidemiologist, this one case is not cause for widespread alarm.

"It's important for the public to understand that the Aedes aegypti mosquito that transmits the Zika virus is not found in Maine and that your neighbor who has come home from a trip to South America cannot transmit the virus to you," Bennett said in an interview with Bangor Daily News.

Then, last Tuesday, New Hampshire reported its first case of the Zika virus, a female who had sexual contact with a man that had travelled to a Zika-affected country. According to New Hampshire’s state epidemiologist, Dr. Ben Chan, the women delay any travelling to Zika-affected areas.

So how can you protect yourself against the Zika virus? Well, currently there is no vaccine or cure for the disease, and the countries that are being affected by it the most have yet to develop any kind of concrete plan to combat the virus.

Modern Pest Services, a family-owned pest control company that is headquartered in Brunswick and operates throughout New England, would like to remind people that the mosquito responsible for transmitting the disease does not reside in New England.

"New Englanders are understandably concerned with the news that Zika virus brings, and while the primary carrier the Aedes aegypti mosquito is not currently known to be in New England, there are over 40 different types of mosquitoes in the northeast that carry other harmful diseases like eastern equine encephalitis," Mike Peaslee, technical manager and associate certified entomologist at Modern Pest Services, said in a press release.

Peaslee also pointed to the fact that the Aedes aegypti mosquito thrives in warmer climates, and while New England typically has the cold on their side, due to unusually warm conditions it has now been made easier for warmer climate mosquitoes to spread.

"Taking precautions now to control our environment to create unfavorable conditions for mosquito breeding will help prevent the spread of all mosquito-transmitted diseases, like the Zika virus," Peaslee said.

Peaslee and Modern Pest Services advocate getting rid of every form of standing water as mosquitoes seek out breeding grounds for mosquitoes. These forms of standing water include: buckets, tires and even things as small as bottles and cans. Kiddy pools are another good example of standing water. Peaslee says that you should keep them drained and even flip them over when not in use to prevent them from collecting rainwater.

Modern Pest Services also stated that you should treat every area outside of your home as if it was a mosquito breeding ground, and “cover up exposed skin and wear bug spray to avoid getting bitten—or sick.”

news@usmfreepress.org @USMFreepress

Photo courtesy of Flickr Creative Commons

The Aedes aegypti mosquito, responsible for spreading the disease, is prevalent in warmer climates, such as those in South America and the southern part of the United States.

It’s important for the public to understand that the aedes mosquito that transmits the Zika virus is not found in Maine...

Dr. Siiri Bennett, Maine’s state epidemiologist

The dangers of the Zika virus

Zika is a disease that is primarily spread by the bite of an infected mosquito. The virus is spread by the same mosquito that spreads dengue and yellow fever.

TRAVEL ASSOCIATED CASES:

POSSIBLE LINK BETWEEN THE VIRUS AND MICROCEPHALY

A NEURAL TUBE DEFECT IN WHICH THE BABY'S HEAD IS ABnormally SMALL

FEVER

CONJUNCTIVITIS

RASH

JOINT PAIN

NO VACCINE OR CURE EXISTS TO PREVENT ZIKA VIRUS DISEASE.

SYMPTOMS:

FROM 2 TO 14 DAYS AFTER BITING

ONLY 1 IN 4 PEOPLE WITH ZIKA VIRUS DEVELOP SYMPTOMS

ABOUT 20% WILL SHOW SYMPTOMS

Hannah Lyon / Design Director

Deadline for submission:
Wednesday, March 23, 2016
By 4:00 P.M.

*Speaker must be a graduating student, eligible to participate in commencement and have no more than 9 credit hours to complete at the end of the 2016 spring semester*

For more info go to: Commencement website: usm.maine.edu/commencement
Or contact Helen Gorgas Goulding, Advising 119 Bailey Hall, Gorham
helen.gorgas@usm.maine.edu or 780-4629

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Some animal shelters outside of Maine that accept reptiles no longer accept red-eared sliders.

The red-eared slider turtle originally found its home in Texas and other midwestern states but has recently been invading other areas of the country including Florida and up the East Coast such as Pennsylvania, New York and Connecticut.

Many animal shelters outside of Maine that accept reptiles no longer accept red-eared sliders.

Unfortunately, I don’t think we’re at the end of having to worry about red eared sliders in Maine.

Derek Yorks, Wildlife Biologist

March 11 - 20 | Main Stage, Russell Hall, Gorham Campus

March 11 at 7:30 p.m.
March 12 at 7:30 p.m.
March 13 at 5:00 p.m.
March 14 at 5:00 p.m., all seats $10
March 17 at 7:30 p.m.
March 18 at 7:30 p.m.

Box Office: (207) 780-5151, TTY 780-5646 or visit usm.maine.edu/theatre

From Turtles on page 2

Derek Yorks, Wildlife Biologist

Yorks adds that “another option is finding someone or a turtle rescue organization that is outside of the state of Maine in a state where sliders are not restricted, but they are restricted in Maine. We’re at the end of having to worry about red eared sliders in Maine.”

Unfortunately, I don’t think we’re at the end of having to worry about red eared sliders in Maine.

Derek Yorks, Wildlife Biologist

For more of these turtles are being surrendered than adopted. Many animal shelters outside of Maine that accept reptiles no longer accept red eared sliders as there are so many that need homes and so few people who are willing to adopt them. Always call animal shelters before bringing in an animal for surrender to be sure they accept the species.

If you are a Mainer interested in adopting a red-eared slider in need of a home, Yorks encourages you to contact him at his office. (207) 941-4475. “Basically, through my office we have inquiries. It ranges, sometimes it’s several in a month, sometimes many months go by, but consistently many inquiries every year with people looking what to do with red eared sliders and I don’t have enough people to send them to. Like I said, most of the folks that want to take them on already have done so. So if anyone is interested in taking one and they are willing to apply for a permit and agree that they are gonna keep this turtle and not release it, then it’s definitely a possibility.”

You can fill out an application for a General Wildlife Possession Permit at http://www.maine.gov/ifw/licenses_permits/pdfs/wildlife_possession.pdf. “We’re always looking for folks who are responsible and willing to take on sliders. I always explain to anyone who is thinking about it there’s a reason or two why people don’t always wanna keep these things.

They need pretty big aquariums, and if you don’t keep that aquarium really, really, clean, it doesn’t smell good.”

"Unfortunately, I don’t think we’re at the end of having to worry about red eared sliders in Maine," said Yorks. "Us having them not on the unrestricted list and restricting the trade of that species in Maine is a big help. They’re not coming into Maine through every pet store across the state, so we should start to see numbers dwindle. However, one factor that is other states are not restricting sliders. Right over the border in New Hampshire they are not restricted, but they are restricted in Massachusetts, but they haven’t been for very long, similar to Maine. In New England, this species is also restricted in Vermont and Rhode Island and unrestricted in Connecticut. “Basically it’s kind of a patchwork,” said Yorks, “so there’s a lot of places where you can still go out and buy these things. People transfer them over state lines, often don’t even look to see what the laws and regulations are around it. A lot of people say they move to Maine and they brought their pet slider, they don’t always know it’s restricted, for many years sometimes.”
Bryer Sousa
Free Press Staff

On March 3, 2016, the volun-
teer-led organization and the state
of Maine amalgamate of the group
National Peace Action, Peace Ac-
tion Maine (a local collective with
more than twenty-five “years of
grassroots mobilizing to end war
and occupation and to abolish
nuclear weapons,” according to
their website peaceactionme.org)
presented a live-streaming video
conference featuring Bill McKi-
bben, titled “Creating a Climate of
Peace.” The conference took place
in Talbot Hall on the University of
Southern Maine campus at 7:00
P.M. Free and open to the public,”
“Creating a Climate of Peace”
was co-sponsored by the University
of Southern Maine Department of
Environmental Science and Policy.

The conference members in-
cluded Meaghan LaSala, of Divest
UMaine and the Southern Maine
Workers Center; Iris SanGiovanni,
of Maine Students for Climate
Justice and Protect South Port-
land; Sherri Mitchell, Executive
Director of the Land Peace Action
Foundation and indigenous rights
lawyer; Chloe Maxin, of Divest
“this event helps show the connect-
edness of climate, social unrest,
the economy, and sustainability - it
is all tied in together. The greatest
asset we have to promote stability
in the face of change is the energy,
strength, and ideas of students and
other young people.”

Professor Emeritus Stanley
Scott of the University of South-
ern Maine, who authored Fron-
tiers of Consciousness and was
the president of Peace Action Maine,
introduced a new member of the
Peace Action Maine board, Devon
Grayson-Wallace who gave a brief
introduction to Bill McKibben be-
fore he reached the audience of ap-
proximately sixty-five people by
satellite. Devin went on to say “In
2006, with seven undergraduate
seniors in Middlebury, Vermont,
and no money or other resources except
insight and courage, Bill McKib-
ben became a principal founder of
350.org, the now illustrious inter-
national organization that has coor-
dinated over 15,000 rallies in over
89 countries since 2009, all to raise
consciousness of the imminent
dangers of climate change.”

After a brief moment of techni-
cal difficulty, McKibben discussed
the Paris climate talks, that is, the
recent United Nations conference
setting up this conference. McKi-
bben went on to discuss the way cli-
mate change has caused the worst
drought in Syria in recorded history
that has contributed to the violence
and chaos in the region, how it is
incumbent upon us to end the
fossil fuel age now and how we all
need to participate in civil disobe-
dience to ensure that oil remains
in the ground, because the Kock
brothers, among other billionaires,
will not stop until every drop of oil
is extracted from the ground.

McKibben’s video address was
also followed by a question and
answer session, as well as a panel
discussion which was led off by
Bruce Gagnon of Global Network
Against Weapons and Nuclear
Power in Space.

The question a student asked
about McKibben was put forth
as follows: “You said that there was
some progress made through the
COP21 agreements, however,
as you know, those agreements
 aren’t binding, legally… how can
we enforce these agreements so
that they actually happen?” McKi-
bben responded by saying that “they
are not going to be legally binding,
you need movements to make them
real. Look, the reason there is not
going to be a binding agreement in
Paris, or a binding agreement any-
time soon, is because the rest of
the world looks at our dysfunctional
political system and knows that
that is the obstacle.”

The Paris Climate Action Maine
Board Director Tina Mal-
colmson officially introduced the
panel members who were able to
attend. Meaghan LaSalas spoke
first, having traveled to the Paris
Climate talks as the representa-
tive for the Southern Maine Workers
Center. LaSalas was followed by
third year political science major
Iris SanGiovanni who spoke about
the responsibility of students to
face the crisis of anthropogenic
climate change in relation to world
peace. Finally, Sherri Mitchell and
Lee Chisholm elaborated upon the
ideological underpinnings that kept
change from occurring.

A lively discussion broke out
during the question and answer
session with the panel. A physicist
addressed the need for more tech-
nological discussion, alongside
the political activism.

Following the conclusion of
the conference, McKibben was
reached by email, and posed the
following question: Dexter Morse,
a university Panelyst student
completing his masters in chemistry and resident of Maine,
raised. The first question was con-
cerned with “how do you [Bill]
convince people to work against
their own self-interest to protect
the universal human rights - food,
shelter, equality, etc - for future
generations, when we still do not de-
pend that for our own generation?”

McKibben responded by stating
that, “I think at this point we’re
not acting mostly on behalf of the
future, but on behalf of ourselves
and our generations. And it needs
to be tied in with the broader fight
for justice on all fronts. That’s why
I like the way Bernie messages it.”

Harvard who is also writing a book
on climate change for The Nation;
Lee Chisholm of the Greater Pota-
tomac region of 350.org and
keynote speaker Bill McKibben,
founder of 350.org, environmental
activist, and author of Earth
Warmed: Life, Death, and
an unavoidable, the
obligation, Chloe Maxin was un-
able to attend.

When the Chair of the Depart-
ment of Environmental Science &
Policy at the University of South-
ern Maine Professor Robert M.
Robert Sanford, Chair of Environmental Science & Policy Department
Local & State

Presidental candidates visit Maine

Last week, in the days leading up to the Maine caucuses, presidential hopefuls made stops in the state. Former Governor Sonny Perdue last Wednesday at the State Theater in downtown Portland.

Sanders spoke in front of a crowd of around 1,000 people, where he stated: “If we have a large turnout in Maine, we will win on February 26 and if we win Maine, we move another step forward towards a political revolution in this country.”

One day later, Donald Trump held a rally in Portland, speaking in front of a crowd at the Portland Harborview hotel. Trump rallied with Maine Gov. Paul LePage, who endorsed Trump late last week. The businessman responded to the senator, stating that he was nothing but a “phony” and a “fraud,” to which Trump responded that Romney would never be able to do his “knees” in order to get Trump’s endorsement back in 2012.

MMA student goes missing in Orono

David Breuning, 21, was last seen in Orono on February 26. Investigators are saying that Breuning left a party and was heading to a bar to meet up with friends. According to police, the quickest route would have been to go over a train trestle to police, the quickest route would have been to go over a train trestle from previous year

Kim Jong Un, leader of North Korea, has ordered his military to be prepared to launch nuclear strikes at any time. These threats are all a part of a propaganda attempt to show South Korea and the United States that North Korea is strong at home and abroad.

These threats are also coming after the United Nations placed harsh sanctions on North Korea after the country conducted nuclear tests and long-range rocket launches. North Korea responded by saying that the sanctions were the “most heinous international criminal act.”

The way for defending the sovereignty of our nation and its right to existence under the present extraordinary situation is to bolster up nuclear force both in quality and quantity,” the North Korean Central News Agency said.

North Korea has a history of threatening nuclear acts, but it is rather unclear how advanced the country’s nuclear program is. Many dispute the claims that they could launch nuclear warheads at any moment and question that the state of its arsenal.

Drug lord El Chapo, wants to come to the U.S.

Joaquin Guzman, also known as El Chapo, wants to be extradited to the United States and sooner rather than later, despite the fact that he is being held in a Mexican prison where he has escaped twice before. His defense team has asked to speed up the process that will end with him in the hands of U.S. authorities.

As of now, it is unclear where El Chapo will be held once he gets to the states. He is wanted for various charges in several cities, such as New York and Chicago, but it is predicted that he will cross the border any time within the next two to three months.

The push to get El Chapo to the United States is a drastic turn around the statements made in January when Guzman was recaptured.

Guzman Loera should not be extradited to the United States or any other country,” attorney Juan Pablo Badillo said back in January. “Mexico has just laws just like all Americans have. It is clear order the military to violate those laws. “I will not order a military officer to disobey the law. It is clear that as president I will be bound by laws just like all Americans and I will meet those responsibilities,” Trump stated.

International

North Korea makes nuclear threats

Maine’s lobster fishery continues to be a major engine for our coastal economy,” Patrick Keliher, commissioner for Maine Department of Marine Resources, said. This past year saw a continuation of steady and historic lobster landings throughout the season. The increase in value reflects growing demand for Maine lobster.

“We have a large turnover in Maine, we will win on February 26 and if we win Maine, we move another step forward towards a political revolution in this country.”

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Sex, crime and drugs are set to music in Maine’s premier showing of “Reefer Madness” the musical

Dora Thompson
Arts & Culture Editor

The explosion of a musical Reefer Madness will light up Russell Hall’s stage this spring from March 11th through the 20th. As USM’s main stage spring production, the play is a satirical piece, mocking the 1936 movie of the same name, a black and white cautionary tale about the growing threat of marijuana for teens. It depicted cannabis smokers as murderers and criminals. In the 1970s it was remastered into a musical version is raunchy, ridiculous and will probably leave you with a bit of a contact-high.

Reefer Madness is directed by guest director Cary Libkin, who recently left Penn State after 25 years as their head of musical theater. Libkin and his wife wanted to try something new, and chose to move to Maine. Libkin said the best part of working with USM is, “Everyone’s willing to work together to create something. It’s a great opportunity to work with these kids.”

The original Reefer Madness was an over-the-top warning that was sponsored by a church group and shown in theaters across the South as a scare tactic for concerned parents. The newer rendition is raunchy, ridiculous and will probably leave you with a bit of a contact-high.

The narrator fiercely warning the crowd about “the stuff.”
In this performance, actors had to tackle come very controversial material, as they depict smoking and having sex on stage. Libkin doesn’t want his actors to hold back, and encourages his actors to go head on into the material. “You have to address it directly and be timid about it, if not we might loose some of the satire,” he said.

Junior theater major Taylor Gervais, who plays reefer addict washed up college boy Ralph Wiley, said that because every- one in the cast knew each other so well, those scenes are easy to do. “You know what you have to do, it’s actually a really serious show. It’s about how we shut down things that scare us.”

“Everyone’s willing to work together to create something. It’s a great opportunity to work with these kids.”

Gervais’ class ring. Thier picture-book lives are turned upside down when they get tangled up with the local reefer gang over at the five-and-dime. Luring Jimmy into their dirty opium den, he has his first hit of the deadly substance. From there the play is a wild ride of sex, murder, cannibalism and hallucinations of Jesus. The scenes are held together by senior theater major Cameron Wright, who acts the narrator fiercely warning the crowd about “the stuff.”
In this performance, actors had to tackle come very controversial material, as they depict smoking and having sex on stage. Libkin doesn’t want his actors to hold back, and encourages his actors to go head on into the material. “You have to address it directly and be timid about it, if not we might loose some of the satire,” he said.

Junior theater major Taylor Gervais, who plays reefer addict washed up college boy Ralph Wiley, said that because every- one in the cast knew each other so well, those scenes are easy to do. “You know what you have to do, it’s actually a really serious show. It’s about how we shut down things that scare us.”

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Cary Libkin, Director of Reefer Madness

The explosion of a musical Reefer Madness will light up Russell Hall’s stage this spring from March 11th through the 20th. As USM’s main stage spring production, the play is a satirical piece, mocking the 1936 movie of the same name, a black and white cautionary tale about the growing threat of marijuana for teens. It depicted cannabis smokers as murderers and criminals. In the 1970s it was remastered into a musical version is raunchy, ridiculous and will probably leave you with a bit of a contact-high.

The original Reefer Madness was an over-the-top warning that was sponsored by a church group and shown in theaters across the South as a scare tactic for concerned parents. The newer rendition is raunchy, ridiculous and will probably leave you with a bit of a contact-high.

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Cary Libkin, Director of Reefer Madness
Feminism and socialism: USM talks about how you can have both

Tackling Gloria Steinem’s remarks about women supporting Bernie Sanders because that’s where the boys are

Contributor

Matthew Craig

March 7, 2016

Arts & Culture

Amanda Melanson
Free Press Staff

Last Sunday Empire held their weekly open mic event known as The Couch. From six to eight, musicians are encouraged to play and later on they hold a comedy segment. The Couch provides aspiring artists with a great opportunity to get on stage and test their material in front of an audience primarily consisting of their musical peers. Since Empire may be considered a ‘semi-pro’ venue, the sound system is quite good. Everything is set up professionally, with little effort required from a performer to get what they want to be heard with a good quality sound system.

I particularly enjoyed of his was titled Outer Space, in which he meshes up themes from popular science fiction. He has recorded several albums of his work and also sells merchandise including t-shirts and mugs.

Next, I had a chance to talk to a duo, Ryan and Amanda. They’ve been playing together for only a couple of months and play covers and classic songs. They performed Neutral Milk Hotel’s In the Aeroplane Over The Sea, a go-to piece for nascent singer-songwriters. I was impressed by their ability to perform this song, which, with its complex folky Wild Mountain Thyme, which showcased Amanda’s vocal talent and multi-instrumentalism. Ryan held down the harmony with his guitar. In addition to vocals, Amanda plays the clarinet and saxophone. Ryan plays guitar, bass, drums and sings. They are both students of USM, and study Computer Science.

Open mics in Portland are kind of a big deal. There’s no other place in Maine with this many weekly events. The Couch lacks currently is musical performers. There simply aren’t enough people attending to fill up all of the slots available. I encourage all the non-occupation-al musicians in the Portland community to give it a shot.

Matthew Craig / Contributor

Lost Bear at the invitation of one of the members in attendance. When speaking to Fransen, he reiterated how important it is for feminist groups to “not be divisive” when it came to tackling important issues such as the upcoming Primaries and even more local issues here at home in Maine. The round table discussion centered primarily around history rather than present feminist issues and the contributions each speaker made seemed to build upon those previously spoken in the group.

The group invites anyone looking to attend further meetings to seek them out Wednesday evenings when they meet each week.

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http://www.usmeci.com/free press

Amanda Melanson / Free Press Staff

Wednesday evening, from 7pm to 9pm on March 2, a group discussion was held by USOnM’s Socialist Club to speak on various issues surrounding US presidential primaries, due to take place the first weekend of March - the Republican Primary scheduled for Saturday and the Democratic Primary scheduled for Sunday. Both sides have brought up some very deep seated issues, the group focusing primarily on the feminist issue, and discussions about Democratic Candidates Hillary Clinton and Bernie Sanders. In the Socialists’ Club’s meeting, there was also reading of different passages and mentions of book recommendations at the event.

Arriving at the meeting was reminiscent a classroom lecture, when attendees sat facing the front of the room with their desks, some turned here and there as the discussion at large unfolded throughout the night. At the head was Pete Fransen, the student organization leader of the Socialist Club. Some attendees ducked in later than others but each was met with a steady flow of discussion and thought provoking topics.

“It’s important to have diverse student organizations like this on campus,” Student Senate Representative Matt Raymond said, when asked about his opinion of the group’s meeting. With the diverse issues covered from economic to ethical equalities, that seems to be apparent now more than ever as this group and others like it seek to educate the campus and their group’s members about real issues going on off and on campus.

Each person took a turn speaking their views - termed “stacks” by Fransen - and some were throwing around terms such as “bourgeois feminist” - a person of wealth and upper social class that deems themselves a feminist but is implied to not be that strong of a feminist - when speaking on Hillary Clinton and Gloria Steinem, who apologized for statements she had made some time ago that Hillary deserved the feminist vote more than Bernie Sanders due to the fact that she is a woman and that women were not true feminists if they did not vote for her. While that particular topic was used as the titlewine to generate an audience, Hillary Clinton was not the sole reason to stay in the discussion that evening and not everyone could agree upon whether they felt Hillary had genuine feminist views at the heart of her campaign.

The group delved heavily into discussion about historical feminists and those who stood for equality and there were debates upon different topics therein. When asked about their feelings on the discussion most expressed similar sentiments of excitement, stating that they found the discussions “Really interesting and engaging,” and several newcomers learned more by their attendance than through their own personal experiences.

The meeting itself took place in Payson Smith room 41, after a slight room mix-up caused them to move spaces. Luckily, from there, things ran smoothly as discussions ran from 7 pm to nearly past 9 and continued out the door as group members departed to further the discussion while venturing out top Portland’s Great

Tom Fitzgerald / Community Editor

Amanda Melanson / Free Press Staff

LEFT: Presidential candidate Bernie Sanders in The State Theater last Wednesday morning speaking to a full house. RIGHT: Attendees listen to a talk put on by USM’s Socialism Club.

Fransen in The State Theater last Wednesday morning speaking to a full house. What goes on at local open mic night?

There are many open mic venues in Portland, and one of the more popular ones is Empire. From six to eight, there is a broad range of musical peers there, and they had some interesting things to say. First, I met Dan Knudsen, who seems to be a staple at the free events around Portland, and he has been playing and writing for around ten years or so. Inspired by John Denver, Bruce Springsteen, and John Mellencamp, he writes solo guitar music intended for both children and adults. His music is generally lighthearted. One song I particularly enjoyed of his was titled Outer Space, in which he meshes up themes from popular science fiction. He has recorded several albums of his work and also sells merchandise including t-shirts and mugs.

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Open mics in Portland are kind of a big deal. There’s no other place in Maine with the variety and number of open mic events that Portland boasts. For musicians who don’t choose to make a career of musical performance, open mic opportunities can be integral, as they provide a structured environment in which to play and refine their techniques. As stated above, Empire is a particularly nice place to perform, but what

Matthew Craig / Contributor

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Bringing back rap: Kendrick Lamar has done it again

Bradford Spurr  Free Press Staff

Kendrick Lamar has done it again. He is not the rapper we want, but rather the rapper we deserve. With his short eight track orchestra- tion of unrelenting catchy songs from the To Pimp A Butterfly cutting room floor this peak behind the curtain of the creative process can show us all that an album is so much more than the 10 tracks that get mastered and produced in the end.

There have been numerous sight- ings of these untitled songs across many the late night and awards shows. The really bizarre thing is that for every live performance, Kendrick Lamar insists on presenting or featuring an untitled track along with these seminal rap classics like “Alright” and “How Much Does A Dollar Cost.”

The best track is probably the third, which was premiered one of the last Colbert Report shows and it serves as a eccentric representa- tion of this rapper who has become less of a performer and more of a cultural icon with each passing day. With a synthy, almost steel drum like beat “untitled 03:05:28.2013.” sees Kendrick Lamar work through several mindsets of different races, showing that we all have pieces of what make up who we are; “A peace of mind. That’s what the Asian said, I need a divine intervention, was his religion and I was surprised. Him believing in Buddha, me believ- ing in God. Asked me what I am doing, he said “taking my time,” and later Kendrick Lamar explores

Rocker reviews: My outlook on the Oscar awards

John Rocker  Free Press Staff

Well, I think I did all right when it came to my predictions. Five out of six isn’t too bad. I know the article didn’t mention Best Director, but I did pick Alejandro G. Iñárritu back when I was making my predictions list. I think Best Director is certainly an important category. All are im- portant in their own right. The Acad- emy is giving recognition to people they think deserve it, but it doesn’t necessarily mean that the Academy is the sole barometer. The Academy all comes down to people’s opinions and that’s no different from making any review. Today I’m going to give a recap of what went down at The Oscars.

So, what did I think of the show? Honestly, I never really care for the show aspect of the awards. I just want to get straight to the point. The run time for the show was three and half hours long and, as the night dragged on, I just wanted the awards to be given. I think to save time, there could have been fewer performances from musicians and they could have gotten rid of segments where they are showing clips of the Best Picture nominees. I guess it’s easier to show people this in parts rather than all at once, but at the same time, you could just watch the trailers to get a feel for the movie. If only the awards were just as long as the nominations for the awards (No, seriously, the nomi- nation announcement only lasts ten minutes).

What did I think of Chris Rock as a host? I think for the most part, he was a good host. He had a lot of weight on his shoulders. After the nominations, there was backlash be- cause all the actors that were nomi- nated were white and #OscarsSoW- hite from last year’s Oscars popped up again. Rock addressed this issue several times throughout the night, using humor in most cases, but I be- lieve it was his opening monologue that really drives home the point. It’s simple. To quote Rock, “...It’s not about boycotting anything. It’s just, we want opportunity. We want black actors to get the same oppor- tunities as white actors.” Kevin Hart also brought up a good point when he was presenting: “...I want to ap- plaud all the actors and actresses of color that didn’t get nominated to- night. The reason why I say that is because I want them to understand that tonight should not determine the hard work and effort that you put into your craft.” I think these two statements really cover everything.

As far as the actual awards are concerned, Mad Max: Fury Road won the most awards that night, tak- ing a total of six for technical catego- ries. Leonardo DiCaprio finally won his first Oscar for his performance for The Revenant, which caused a lot of buzz on the Internet. There weren’t any winners that surprised

What caused the eyes and ears of our Oscar team to catch on

Bradford Spurr  Free Press Staff

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What caught your eyes and ears this week? Email arts@usmfreepress.org
Curmudgeon Chronicle

Losing the fear of getting eaten up

Brian Gordon
Free Press Staff

This old grouch may have found a way to be less cranky. I’ve seen my third eye has finally opened and thine name is yoga.

Before you laugh me out of print, allow me to explain myself. I’m getting old, I have a giant unkempt red beard, a beer belly that I skipped work so badly usual beer, and went to yoga for happy hour and I high off it.

Instead of yelling at cars cutting me off while walking home, I didn’t care about the cars. I felt like it was going to be our last. I’d like a couple of these, and I’m definitely unfashionable. I rarely eat kale, I’ve never had quinoa and I don’t drive a Prius. I’m defining myself, not for the people.

But I’ll tell you, sowing around on the floor with a bunch of other pants and chanting “Om” is pretty fun. Stretching out the old limbs and sweating buckets isn’t bad either. I skipped work so badly usual beer, and went to yoga for happy hour and I high off it.

Not only that, but Sanders is a candidate who openly and honestly acknowledges that institutionalized racism is the route of millions of economic and social problems for minority communities, and vows to change that. Sanders will help take apart our huge, money-making prisons that incarcerate one in four black men in the United States. While Clinton has racist statements, bigoted views on gay marriage and questionable opinions in her past, Sanders is the candidate who actually got themselves onto dry land.

Let me take you back to the spring of 2015. It was eight years before the flight. You could see the tug of the tide against a current that seemed to be pulling you out faster than you can swim back in.

No, this isn’t an article on being depressed- though that one could be written too. It isn’t either a poor imitator of F. Scott Fitzgerald’s The Great Gatsby, or maybe it is. Either way, my experience against that overwhelming ocean is far more literal.

Let me take you back to the spring of 2007, when I was really tired of spending my zero dollar wage, 10,000 feet below, an endless series of dips and jolts. I had never experienced a flight so terrifying and had serious doubts regarding getting up in the air after the plane touched down in New York.

We did get back in the air though, all of us. The flight from New York to San Diego wasn’t anything to write home about the precursor to the force of the tide pulling us out seemingly simultaneously with the crashing of the surf.

I’m like a few of them, it became terrifyingly clear that the ocean was not just going to let us skip back to shore. On the contrary, each of us began losing air. By the time the next wave crashed, the undertow had brought us to the point where we needed to push button, from belly button to chest, from chest to shoulder.

There was a moment in all this when I was so worried that we were not going to make it back to shore. Looking at the eye reflecting in the eyes of Corey, Brian and Pat as they struggled in the ocean with me, I knew I was not alone in this concern.

It was only when the survival instincts, combined with the echoes of some distant relative saying “breathe,” and my own “breathe diagonal against the current,” that I was able to start working my way back to the beach. Corey, Pat and Brian went through such moments of clarity and eventually got themselves onto dry land as well.

I remember vividly laying on my towel, exhausted, looking up to the sky. A plane streaked across the vast blue sky, reminding me of an earlier traumatic experience of the trip- turbulence over the Rockies that made me question whether we were going to make it to San Diego at all.

“I said aloud that I never wanted to leave solid ground again. The ocean, the sky, these were no placers for me. We all laughed, and the next morning flew back home in a plane that was no more enjoyable than the one that got us there.

I’ve never forgotten the day on the beach in San Diego like it was last week, as afraid as I was on that trip. I look back on it as one of the most memorable times of my life. Brian, Pat, Corey and I don’t see each other much anymore, but we all share that moment in time when we fought against the ocean together. I guess that is what this column is about.

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Your mama probably told you to turn off the lights before you left each room but she probably didn’t tell you to unplug the toaster, your cell phone charger, your computer’s goals reducing your consumption a little every day. Microwaves are giant energy suckers and it’s crazy because you mostly just use it to tell the time. Unplug that radioactive hunk of plastic when you’re not giving yourself cancer with microwaved popcorn and enjoy the energy savings.

I don’t know if any of you still have one of those big old clunky desktop computers but they’re a giant drain of electricity. After a roommate who owned one moved out of my apartment we saved $20 a month on the electric bill. According to the US Department of Energy (yeah it’s a thing look it up) you can save $100 a year if you put your laptop to sleep and power off your video games when you’re done. Taking the time to think about things and the waste they generate is part of an eco-conscious lifestyle and you don’t need to hug trees to do it. There’s no reason you need to leave your Wi-Fi turn on all night so why not unplug it? Embrace a little thrift and enjoy the savings. You’ll have more money to spend on beer, fried chicken and condoms. What else would a poor college student need?

Brian Gordon is a senior Liberal Studies human being. He enjoys frugality in all its forms.
**Weekly Horoscope**

**Aries**
March 21-April 19

You may be feeling a bit frustrated today if you are thinking only of what you don’t yet have. Face reality, while working to improve it.

**Taurus**
April 20-May 20

Breaking your usual pattern brings sudden insight. What was cloudy becomes very clear.

**Gemini**
May 21-June 20

A small sacrifice now leads to a large gain later. You build your assets bit by bit.

**Cancer**
June 21-July 22

You can take a small step to make your relationship closer to your dreams. Do something practical to make your relationship better.

**Leo**
July 23-August 22

Focus and concentration come more easily to you and your family today. A good time to work on completing unfinished projects.

**Virgo**
August 23-September 22

Family and relationship commitments may be on your mind a lot at work today. Relax; you can still carry out your duties just fine.

**Libra**
October 23-November 21

You feel a bit overextended today as you survey the many activities which seem to be calling for your attention. Make priorities.

**Scorpio**
November 22-December 21

Don’t overdo impulsive speech, but do enjoy exciting topics, stimulating conversations and new or challenging ideas.

**Sagittarius**
December 22-January 20

Today you may feel torn between the “real world” and religious or spiritual perspectives. Keep a balance between principles and practicalities.

**Capricorn**
January 21-February 18

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**Aquarius**
February 19-March 20

Even though you are capable of much versatility, it is not your job to do everything. Keep a balance between principles and practicalities.

**Pisces**
March 21-April 19

You don’t let money complicate your relationship.

**Puzzles**

**The solution to last issue’s crossword**

```
L I P S S O N S
A L M A A R I A H
N O N O
I T R I P D L
M O M A
T O T B A C V A D E R
A Z I M U T H S
A L A M Y N U M B S K U L L
S E V E R A L A T A D
P A L T R Y P E Q U D
I S L E K E B E
H O L T E
C H I S E L E R A M A S
G O L D E N
C T R I E N T E R
D E R V E
G H O S T S T O R Y
E T A T
M A T T H E C L A N
H A V E
S P O O L
S B O
```

**Cryptogram**

Every letter in a cryptogram stands for another letter. Use the hint to crack the code.

**And here is your hint:**

E = U

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Free delivery or carry out
One coupon per pizza
Expires 5/16/16

**Weekly Horoscope**

**Aries**
March 21-April 19

You may be feeling a bit frustrated today if you are thinking only of what you don’t yet have. Face reality, while working to improve it.

**Taurus**
April 20-May 20

Breaking your usual pattern brings sudden insight. What was cloudy becomes very clear.

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Activism through social media at USM

Raquel Miller
Free Press Staff

We live in an era of hashtag activism. The internet has the power to connect individuals from around the world and allows people to connect in a way that doesn’t require their physical presence but their spirit and passion, and in doing so, creates something larger and more magical than expected. When a group of people collectively and actively band together to create change or make their voices heard, the impact can be enormous. It allows ideas to grow and conversation be made until finally, something that began as a hashtag can grow into a global movement.

In 2015, USM’s political science program announced the addition of the social media activism minor, which combines classes from three different programs: communication and media studies, philosophy and political science. This minor was designed to enhance student understanding of social media and activism in its multiple forms.

The new minor has a 15 credit minimum requirement. The minor does require students to take Critical Thinking about Social Issues and Communication and Social Media. After completion of these classes, students have the freedom to choose from 10 different elective classes from all three departments and are encouraged to select courses from each department when completing their minor.

In an era where Twitter and Facebook are thriving, and a picture or tweet can be circulated and shared with a few clicks of a button, there is a lot to be said for social media activism.

In March 2015, Alicia Garza, a founder of the Black Lives Matter movement, visited USM as the Women’s History Month keynote speaker, where she presented “Building a World Where Black Lives Matter.” Garza, while recalling her personal reaction to the news of George Zimmerman’s acquittal in the killing of Trayvon Martin in February 2012, described the story where #BlackLivesMatter became more than just a hashtag: “I tried to make sense of what was happening, and in doing so, you know… I went on Facebook. It’s what we do now, right? We don’t watch the news. We go on Twitter and Facebook, always. What she saw on her own social media was that while some responses were comforting, a large amount were negative; and she was not okay with that. In her own response, she wrote “a love letter to black folks” over Facebook, where she stated the famous words, “black lives matter.” But what she didn’t realize was how her words—black lives matter—would resonate with others.

The #BlackLivesMatter movement is the modern day exemplification of activism and the only one of the ways in which communities of people can ignite movements, awareness, justice, and change.

With the creation of the social media activism minor at USM, students now have the opportunity to further their own ideas and develop them in a academic setting that incorporates areas of thinking from three different departments.

Students who realize the power that social media has in society are students who can visualize the possibility to begin conversations and open up a dialogue about modern day issues, such as the upcoming presidential elections.

With this minor, students are given the tools to create change and raise awareness in modern day society. Activism is no longer limited to a single geographical location, but can begin in a small town with only one person, and expand nationally, or even globally, by connecting passionate individuals.

Students of USM: Samuel Anderson, student athlete

Meaghan Gonsior
Free Press Staff

USM student Samuel Anderson moved from Bristol, Connecticut in order to pursue soccer and because it’s so “peaceful.” He had visited the state previously, and wanted to see more of it. Anderson has always been an athlete. He has played soccer since he was a child and seeks to challenge himself both on and off the field. His dream has always been to play professional soccer, and he hopes to make that dream a reality after graduation from USM.

As a linguistics major, Anderson thrives off of the opportunity to make connections with other people, wanting to be able to “connect with the world around me even if they don’t understand me at first.” One requirement for majoring in linguistics is to study a foreign language. Anderson chose American Sign Language, and explained, “I thought it was different. I don’t know a lot of people who know sign language.”

After his soccer season ended, Anderson decided to give Indoor Track a shot for the first time. So far this season, he’s done well running sprint events—the 400 and 200 meter races—and he helped the Huskies win the 4x400 meter relay in the State of Maine Championships, running the third leg.

Sokkha Va
Free Press Staff

Students in the Luther Bonney computer lab are catching up on schoolwork, e-mailing professors and students or keeping up with social media.

As a linguistics major, Anderson thrives

Meaghan Gonsior
Free Press Staff

Know of any campus events? Email: editor@usmfreepress.org

Monday, March 7
Dinosaurs at Dusk! University of Southern Maine Southworth Planetarium, Portland Campus Starts: 7:00 p.m. / Ends: 8:30 p.m.

Tuesday, March 8
Baked Good and Buzzy University of Southern Maine Robie Basement, Design Room Starts: 10:00 a.m. / Ends: 2:00 p.m.

USM Flow Jam University of Southern Maine Multipurpose Room, Sullivan Recreation Complex Starts: 4:00 p.m. / Ends: 5:00 p.m.

Sexperts Panel University of Southern Maine Lower Brooks on the Gorham Campus Starts: 6:30 p.m. / Ends: 8:30 p.m.

Wednesday, March 9
OML Gallery: Five Centuries of Rare Maps and Globes University of Southern Maine Osher Map Library Starts: 10:00 a.m. / Ends: 4:00 p.m.

Wellness Breakfast University of Southern Maine Woodbury Campus Center, Portland Starts: 10:00 a.m. / Ends: 1:00 p.m.

Walkin’ Wednesday University of Southern Maine Bailey Bus Stop Starts: 2:00 p.m. / Ends: 3:30 p.m.

Speed “Roommating” University of Southern Maine Lower Brooks Starts: 9:00 a.m. / Ends: 10:30 p.m.

Thursday, March 10
Caperonia Club Weekly Class University of Southern Maine Lower Brooks Student Center Starts: 7:00 p.m. / Ends: 8:30 p.m.

Friday, March 11
March Food for Thought Luncheon University of Southern Maine Room 170 Campus Starts: 12:00 p.m. / Ends: 1:00 p.m.

Maine Red Claws Game Portland Expo Center Starts: 7:00 p.m. / Ends: 10:00 p.m.

Saturday, March 12
Refeer Madness University of Southern Maine Russell Hall, Gorham Campus Starts: 7:30 p.m.

Know of any campus events? Email: editor@usmfreepress.org
The University of Southern Maine baseball team began practice a few weeks back. Despite the relatively warm winter weather everyone has been enjoying this year, the team has, as of yet, been unable to get outside and get to work on the field. As a result, the sound of popping gloves and bats-on-balls can be heard echoing throughout USM’s fieldhouse. Along with these familiar sounds are other sounds equally familiar for a program of such sustained success: the talk this preseason is that this team looks poised to make another run at the Division III World Series. This year’s squad is made up of a unique combination of youth and experience that promises to be fun to watch. Seven seniors, led by last year’s National Pitcher of the Year Sam Dexter (senior, Waterford, ME/Messalonske) returns this year after having been named National Player of the Year. He is part of a Huskies’ senior class that is laden with both experience and talent. Senior Sam Dexter (Oakland, ME/Messalonske) returns this year after having been named National Player of the Year. He is part of a Huskies’ senior class that is laden with both experience and talent.

Along with the senior class, several promising freshman will be called upon to contribute this year. 28 of the 37 spots on the roster this year are filled by freshmen and sophomore. This youth throughout the roster provides both challenge and promise. Having so many younger players gives the program an opportunity to build for the future while also competing at the highest level in the present. The Huskies have been named the preseason favorites in the LEC, a testament to the strength of the players returning, as well as the promise of those looking to break out.

Redshirt freshman Dalton Rice (Waterford, ME/Oxford Hills) for the season, USM must find a way to replace the production of last year’s National Pitcher of the Year Andrew Richards, who graduated last spring.

The absence of Leavitt and the graduation of Richards leave vacancies at the top two spots of the Huskies’ rotation coming into the season. Despite these shakeups, coach Flaherty remains confident that players will step up in their stead: “Every year at the beginning of the season we ask ourselves whether or not the team is capable of making it (to the World Series)” Flaherty said. “Last year I would have said no, but this year you can’t say no to the potential. We are capable, if things work out, of doing something special this year.”

The team will get a good gauge of where they are when they leave for Florida next week to play nine games over the course of a ten-day trip. This annual journey south is an opportunity for the team get experience playing outside, against quality competition, before they enter the grind of LEC competition.

When they return, the regular season will be waiting for them. With it comes an opportunity to do something special this year.
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