

Spring 2005

MAINEARTS *Mag* COMMISSION

The official publication of the Maine Arts Commission

"building Maine communities through the arts"

First Lady
Karen Baldacci:
wishing & working
for greater literacy
in Maine

Author! Author!
The Bucksport
Scribes



Open door on
Haystack
Mountain School
of Crafts

Peter Kent:
becoming a
[public] artist

The 2005 Arts in Education Issue



MAINE ARTS COMMISSION

building Maine communities through the arts

MISSION: The Maine Arts Commission shall encourage and stimulate public interest and participation in the cultural heritage and programs of our state; shall expand the state's cultural resources; and shall encourage and assist freedom of artistic expression for the well being of the arts, to meet the legitimate needs and aspirations of persons in all parts of the state.

GENERAL OFFICE NUMBERS

 207/287-2724
Direct Auto Attendant

207/287-2725 – Fax

 207/287-2360
TTY
Nextalk.net

MAILING ADDRESS

Maine Arts Commission
193 State Street
25 State House Station
Augusta, ME 04333-0025

CREDITS

MAINE ARTS COMMISSION
Publisher

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MAINEARTS.com

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ADMINISTRATIVE STAFF

ALDEN C. WILSON
Director
alden.wilson@maine.gov
207/287-2720

BRYAN W. KNICELY
Assistant Director &
Accessibility Coordinator
bryan.knicely@maine.gov
207/287-2714
NexTalk.net User Id: bryanknicely

REBEKAH LEADBETTER
Office Manager
rebekah.leadbetter@maine.gov
207/287-6571

PROGRAM STAFF

PAUL FARIA
Arts in Education Associate
paul.faria@maine.gov
207/287-2790

KEITH LUDDEN
Community Arts & Traditional Arts Associate
keith.ludden@maine.gov
207/287-2713

DONNA McNEIL
Contemporary Arts & Public Art Associate
donna.mcneil@maine.gov
207/287-2726

SARA NICS
Community Relations /
Public Information Associate
sara.nics@maine.gov
207/287-6746

KATHY ANN SHAW
Grants / Arts Development Associate
kathy.shaw@maine.gov
207/287-2750

LISA VEILLEUX
Technology / Website Associate
lisa.veilleux@maine.gov
207/287-7050

OTHER CONTACTS

HANNAH BRAZEE GREGORY
Publications Coordinator
hannah@shoestringgroup.com
207/582-1345

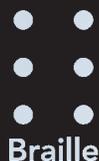
PETER WHITNEY
Whitney Art Works
Exhibition Coordinator
207/780-0700

ON THE COVER

Jeweler Alan Revere (with torch) demonstrating in the metals studio, summer 2004, at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts. See story, page 12.
Photo by Charles Gailis.



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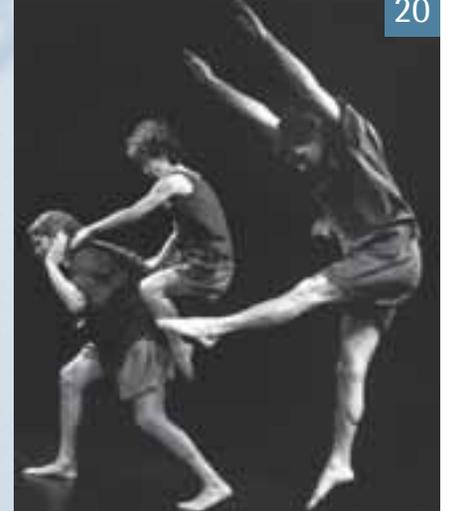
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LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

During this legislative season, the Maine Arts Commission is working with our partners in the Maine Cultural Affairs Council on an ambitious and first-of-its-kind comprehensive legislative agenda to help develop Maine's cultural resources and creative economy.

The focal point for this agenda is LD 756, *An Act to Authorize a General Fund Bond Issue to Revitalize Downtown Areas, Support Cultural Tourism and Expand Maine's Creative Economy*, sponsored by Senate President Betheda G. Edmonds of Freeport and co-sponsored by several other bi-partisan legislators. The bill seeks legislative endorsement, and ultimate citizen referendum approval, of a landmark \$25 million bond issue for renovation, restoration and/or new construction of Maine's cultural facilities – libraries, theatres, museums and more. The intent is to introduce a bond in each of the next succeeding four legislative sessions for a total renovation fund of \$100 million.

The member agencies of the Cultural Affairs Council (Maine Arts Commission, Maine State Library, Maine State Archives, Maine Historic Preservation Commission, Maine State Museum, Maine Historical Society and Maine Humanities Council) have conducted a statewide survey of the bricks and mortar needs of Maine's cultural facilities. With 38 percent return on the survey, we have identified more than \$330 million in capital needs from the state's cultural facilities. Governor John E. Baldacci has included \$5 million for this cultural renovation fund in his \$197 bond package, which was presented to the Legislature in February.

At the same time, interest has been generated in sustaining Maine's New Century Community program. That program was the core of expanded funding for the Maine Arts Commission, which supports the agency's grants and outreach programs. During budget reductions of the past three years, support for the New Century Community program has been all but eliminated.

Two strategies for revitalizing this program are now under legislative consideration. The first, sponsored by Senator Margaret Rotundo of Lewiston, is to provide the program with operational funds by dedicating a portion of the new meals and lodging tax to the Cultural Affairs Council. The second strategy is led by Representatives Jeff Kaelin of Winterport and Christopher Rector of Thomaston, who have introduced bills to provided funding for the council through a surcharge on deed recording.

This is the first time that Maine's cultural resources have had a comprehensive legislative program and it is also the first time that both the Executive Department and the Legislature have provided major coordinated support for cultural affairs. We owe a big thank you to Governor Baldacci and our legislative sponsors for their commitment to supporting and developing Maine's cultural resources as building blocks for the creative economy.

However, much work remains to be done to achieve success with these endeavors in a difficult budget year. To that end, the Maine Arts Commission will be increasing its commitment to public education and will be holding several sessions over the next few months. In the spring, the agency will also hold a series of day-long workshops around the state to educate people about the programs and services that the agency offers (please read more about this on page nine). Also, the National Assembly of State Arts Agency's legislative council, Thomas Birch, will be at the Maine Arts Commission annual meeting on June 17 to discuss advocacy.

Finally, I want to recognize the creation, or perhaps the recreation, of a statewide cultural advocacy organization. The Maine Community Cultural Alliance, active in the early 1990s, is in the process of being reformed as a 501(c)(4) nonprofit organization, dedicated to legislative action. This is the first time Maine will have a major advocacy organization representing all cultural disciplines. It will be a major step forward in the sophistication of Maine's cultural advocates and a welcome one for effective advocacy.

Please look for further development as legislation progresses this year. You will be receiving alerts from various sources and updates on the progress of Maine's legislative cultural agenda.

As always, please call me or e-mail with your questions and comments.

Alden C. Wilson
Director

Maine's creative economy council

MESSAGE FROM JOHN M. ROHMAN, CHAIR

Déjà vu. Remember all the community visits that occurred prior to the successful Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy in May 2004? Well, many of those same communities will be hosting the newest round of visits that are part of Governor Baldacci's ongoing creative economy initiative.

The Governor has embraced the vision that was conveyed at the May 2004 conference and has, by Executive Order, established a permanent Maine Creative Economy Council. The full executive order can be found at the Governor's website, www.maine.gov/governor/baldacci/news/executive-orders.

All of the new council's agenda items relate to the work that we are involved in at the Maine Arts Commission. Some of the most important tasks set out for the council are creative economy asset mapping, public education and cultural tourism development.

Mapping Maine's creative economy assets is similar to creating a cultural directory for creative and cultural resources in the state. The asset mapping initiative is a direct result of the hard work the Maine Arts Commission has done, through its Discovery Research program, to promote cultural asset mapping during the past 10 years.

This edition of the *MaineArtsMag* is focused on arts in education, which has always been a strong emphasis within the agency. Not only does the Maine Arts Commission support Maine students in K-12 programs, but also through grants and partnerships with institutions of higher education such as the Maine College of Art, the University of Maine System and the extremely successful programs at the Haystack Mountain School of Crafts (which you can learn more about on page 12), Roundtop Center for the Arts and more. We are very fortunate in Maine that this list of quality programs could fill this entire page and more.

Cultural tourism development is certainly not the least of the tasks set before the Creative Economy Council. The arts and culture are being woven into the Maine Tourism Program in a more vital manner. Next to lobsters and lighthouses, we see Portland Museum of Art and the Farnsworth Art Museum, not to mention the American Folk Festival in Bangor and the Bates Dance Festival in Lewiston

I believe what we are experiencing with the creative economy is a sea change in our thinking. As a state, we are recognizing all of our resources and putting them next to each other to advance the opportunities in the State of Maine. Clearly, the attractions that bring tourists into our state all year are now also being used to entice business interests and innovative workers.

Maine's beautiful seasons (yes all of them), our historic towns and cities, our cultural facilities, our skiing, biking and kayaking, all plug into the tourism appeal. Combine that with safe communities, excellent school systems and a way of life that other states only wish for, and we have a great story to tell for economic development. Arts and the Maine Arts Commission will continue to play a significant role as Maine works to realize its substantial creative economic potential.

As I mentioned in the beginning of this article, communities will again be hosting meetings on this topic. This time with a greater understanding of the concept and with an expectation of answers to questions posed last year. Notices about these meeting will be available on the Maine Arts Commission's website, at www.MaineArts.com/mainescreativeeconomy/conference/index.shtml, and also through the creative economy listserve, which you can sign up for at www.MaineArts.com/login/index.shtml.

Yes, the tasks put before the council are significant, but based on what we have accomplished so far we are confident is achievable. Thank you for your strong support in the recent past and for the support that I know will be forthcoming.

John M. Rohman
Chair



JOHN M. ROHMAN, Bangor, Chair
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REMINDER: ARTISTS IN MAINE COMMUNITIES GRANT DEADLINE APPROACHING

The application deadline for the Artists in Maine Communities program is April 15, 2005. The program is designed to assist arts organizations, schools and other community groups to develop collaborative projects that employ Maine artists to benefit Maine communities, schools and/or families. The new deadline allows organizations and artists who are planning summer projects to take full advantage of funds.

The Artists in Maine Communities program is funded, in part, by a Challenge America grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA). Projects sought this year will highlight goals of the NEA and the Maine Arts Commission by providing opportunities for people to experience and participate in a wide range of cultural activities that employ artists and strengthen Maine communities.



Last year, one of the projects funded by the program was *The State of Fiber 2004: Exhibits and Events Celebrating Maine Fiber*. That project involved 115 events, including 58 exhibits, around Maine that showcased fiberarts and artists. Christine Macchi, director of Maine Fiberarts said, "Beyond financial awards, which have been crucial to our organization, the Maine

Arts Commission has lent guidance, feedback, opportunities and encouragement."

For further information contact:

Kathy Ann Shaw
Grants/Arts Development Associate
207/287-2750 or kathy.shaw@maine.gov

 207/287-2360 - TTY

(IMAGE AT LEFT) UNTITLED WORK BY FELTMAKER EMILY FREEMAN-LUDWIG OF NEWCASTLE. THE WORK IS MEANT TO BE SEEN IN THE WILDS OF NATURE, BUT WAS ON VIEW AT THE FARNSWORTH ART MUSEUM THIS WINTER AS PART OF *UN/COVERINGS: CONTEMPORARY MAINE FIBER ART*. THE EXHIBIT IS ONE OF 58 COORDINATED BY MAINE FIBERARTS WITH FUNDING, IN PART, FROM THE MAINE ARTS COMMISSION'S ARTISTS IN MAINE COMMUNITIES PROGRAM. PHOTO BY DAVID COBEY.

*Guidelines can be found at
www.mainearts.com/organizations/community/artists.shtml.*

GRANTS CALENDAR FISCAL YEAR 2005

April 1, 2005	Good Idea Grant
April 8, 2005	Discovery Research
April 15, 2005	Artists in Maine Communities
May 6, 2005	Traditional Arts Apprenticeships
May 13, 2005	Partners in Arts & Learning
June 6, 2005	Individual Artist Fellowships
	Letter of Intent, Art Service Partnership agreement
Ongoing	Community Arts & Humanities

For an up-to-date calendar and grant deadline information, please visit:



MAINEARTS.com

COMMITTEE & COMMISSION MEETINGS

Arts Accessibility
June 17, 2005

Arts in Education
June 17, 2005

Arts Development
June 17, 2005

Arts Service Partners
April 6, 2005

Community Arts & Traditional Arts
May 17, 2005
June 17, 2005

Community Relations / Public Information
March 30, 2005
June 17, 2005

Executive Committee
April 14, 2005

Maine Arts Commission
June 17, 2005

Public Art
June 17, 2005

FIRST LADY KAREN BALDACCI: WISHING & WORKING FOR GREATER LITERACY IN MAINE

Jack Baldacci is at a stage in life when reading is not cool, says his mom, First Lady Karen Baldacci.

“He doesn’t read as much as I’d like him to read,” says Mrs. Baldacci. “Although last year when he read *Redwall*, he read the whole series, as well as *Deltora Quest*, which is another series. So he goes through phases of when it’s cool and a subject he’s interested in, he’ll read. Then he’ll go through periods of time when he doesn’t.”

Mrs. Baldacci says she hopes 13-year-old Jack will learn to love reading for enjoyment and pleasure, as she does. Already Mrs. Baldacci’s reading (she is a fan of Tess Gerritsen and John Grisham) and the many literacy projects she is involved with may be leading Jack to become an above-average reader. According to research released by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) last summer, Jack already reads more literature than the average adult in the United States.

In *Reading At Risk: A Survey of Literary Reading in America*, the NEA reported that less than half the adults in this country read literature. The NEA researchers defined literary reading as reading any novel, short story, play or poetry during leisure time (not for school or work). Out of a survey of 17,000 individuals from a wide range of socio-economic groups, only 46.7 percent read any literature in the previous year – a significant drop from the 56.9 percent of literary readers in a similar 1982 study.

As an educator and parent, Karen Baldacci says she is committed to life-long learning and life-long reading. She is involved in a host of Maine programs to promote literacy in all age groups.

The Raising Readers program gives books to children from birth to age five at their regular medical visits. Once children enter kindergarten, the Read With ME program provides each student with three books by Maine authors. Their parents get tips on reading with their children and a proposed reading list, along with other resources.

Mrs. Baldacci is also involved in a program to reach out to middle school-aged children. Maine Reads’ Community Literacy Project began as a pilot program in Augusta last year and is now offering grants to start similar programs across the state. The program surveys students in grades six, seven and eight about what they like to read and then selects books for the students to read together.

“At the end we had a challenge with the children,” says Mrs. Baldacci. “They formed teams of four to six kids. They dressed in costume. They drew pictures. Then we had some quick rounds and they had to answer questions. We try to challenge them with their knowledge [of the books].”

For adult readers, Governor Baldacci and Mrs. Baldacci both participate in a similar program called A Capital Read. Last year more than 450 people participated in 20 discussions and other events related to Bill Bryson’s *A Walk in the Woods*. This year, the Baldaccis are inviting Augusta residents to join them in reading Linda Greenlaw’s *The Lobster Chronicles*.

“Reading allows you to grow, to question yourself, to find yourself. My great wish for Jack is that he can become a reader,” says Mrs. Baldacci. Judging by her literacy work around the state, it seems Mrs. Baldacci has the same wish for all Maine people.

For more information on literacy programs around the state, please visit www.mainereads.org, www.capitalread.org or www.raisingreaders.net.



“Reading allows you to grow, to question yourself, to find yourself. . . My great wish for Jack is that he can become a reader,” says Mrs. Baldacci.

Marcia Lovell leaves legacy of early childhood arts education in Maine

MARCIA LOVELL, MS
1962 - 2004

Marcia Lovell was a devoted and tireless advocate for the importance of quality arts education and the use of all the arts disciplines with preschool-age children.

Lovell earned her masters degree in early childhood leadership from Wheelock College, in Boston. She worked at the Department of Health and Human Services' office of Child Care and Head Start where she was a program specialist with more than 20 years experience in the field of child care and early education.

She was instrumental in the creation of the Early stARTS program, a unique joint effort in arts education in early childhood between the Maine Arts Commission, the Maine Department of Human Services and the Office of Child Care and Head Start, administered by Maine Roads to Quality at the Muskie School of Public Policy. Lovell served on the Early stARTS committee since the inception of the program.

Lovell's family has requested that any remembrance donations be made to the Early stARTS program, in care of the Maine Arts Commission. For more information, or to make a donation, please contact Bryan W. Knicely, assistant director & accessibility coordinator at 207/287-2714 or bryan.knicely@maine.gov. You may also mail your donation payable to "Treasurer, State of Maine," with a note in the memo field "Marcia Lovell Fund." Send to the Maine Arts Commission, 193 State Street, 25 SHS, Augusta, ME 04333-0025.

BETTER ART EDUCATION IN MAINE: ASSESSING PARTNERS IN ARTS & LEARNING



program at the University of Southern Maine. She is also co-director of the Maine Art Educators Association.

"Students have benefited from Partners in Arts & Learning through increased learning opportunities in the arts," says Wilson. "Teachers and school administrators have a much better picture of arts resources in their communities once they have completed the Partners in Arts & Learning arts assessment survey. Partners in Arts & Learning provides more opportunities for

teachers to include arts education in their programming/curricula. I think the concept is sound but schools may lose momentum because of the participation schedule. I wish [the program] could be available on a yearly or every-other-year basis rather than the three-year rotation."

Maine Arts Commission staff and an evaluation consultant are interviewing a wide range of people who have been involved in the program – teachers, visiting artists and more. They are also reviewing a sample of the reports provided by school districts that participated in the program.

Look for results of the assessment in an upcoming issue of *MaineArtsMag*.

This spring the Maine Arts Commission is evaluating its Partners in Arts & Learning grant program. The grants support learning in and through the arts in K-12 schools across Maine. Since its beginning in 1999, the Partners in Arts & Learning program has granted more than a million dollars to schools across Maine. Partners in Arts & Learning is a planning assistance and matching grant program that is available to all public school systems in Maine. It encourages schools to work together to provide students with more arts education during their school careers. The program also supports professional development in arts education for teachers through cooperative planning among schools within a district.

Evaluating the program will help the Maine Arts Commission learn who uses the program and how, as well as the effectiveness of the program and how it might be improved. In particular, the assessment will look into the program's value in helping meet arts in education goals based on Maine Learning Results.

One of the early responses to the assessment is from Dr. Trudy Wilson, coordinator of the art education

Since its beginning in 1999, the Partners in Arts & Learning program has granted more than a million dollars to schools across Maine.

The Maine Arts Commission is coming to you!



Through April and May of 2005, the agency will be holding a series of workshops around the state. Contemporary artists, traditional artists, administrators, educators, cultural entrepreneurs and community members are all invited.

There will be workshops on:

-  public art
-  arts accessibility
-  building a strong portfolio
-  getting involved in arts education
-  Maine's creative economy initiative
-  cultural surveys and cultural planning
-  agency support for arts organizations
-  how to work with regional and national arts funders
-  public relations and marketing for artists and creative businesses
-  and much more...

The Maine Arts Commission staff will be available to answer questions and hear your suggestions for how the agency can serve you better.

The open houses will run from noon to 5 p.m.
The schedule for the open houses is:

Tuesday April 12

Maine Arts Commission, Augusta

Wednesday, May 4

Center for Maine Contemporary Art, Rockport

Tuesday, May 10

Whitney Artworks, Portland

Wednesday, May 11

Berwick Academy, Berwick

Wednesday, May 18

Norway Library and Norway Co-op, Norway

Tuesday, May 24

Musée Culturel du Mont-Carmel, Lille

Wednesday, May 25

Maine Center for the Arts, Orono

Thursday, May 26

Eastport Arts Center, Eastport

All open houses will be held in accessible venues.

For more information, details and directions, please visit MaineArts.com

or call 207/287-2724,

 207/287-2360 - TTY

MAINEARTS.com UPDATE

GIVEN THE EVER-EXPANDING WORLD OF TECHNOLOGY, it is no surprise that MaineArts.com is increasingly the first point of contact for information about the Maine Arts Commission. Agency staff and constituents add news, listings, opportunities and events to the site every day.

The Maine Arts Commission takes pride in the technology tools that the agency offers to Maine's artists, arts organizations, educators, cultural entrepreneurs and communities.

Some of the agency's recent web enhancements include information about arts accessibility and the creative economy; an interactive opportunities section and additional exposure for Individual Artist Fellows and Traditional Arts Apprenticeship awardees; new categories in the frequently asked questions section and much more.

The agency has listserves in various information areas: artist opportunities, arts in education, arts institutions, community and traditional arts, agency news and the creative economy. All of the listserves have been streamlined to eliminate duplicate information and excessive messages.

TIME FOR SPRING CLEANING

Please make sure the agency has your up-to-date contact information. In an ongoing effort to better serve constituents, most of the Maine Arts Commission's communications are now done through e-mail, listserves and the internet. Electronic communications allow the agency to share important information in a timely way.

Your up-to-date e-mail address is essential to making this communication system work well, so the agency is undertaking its annual purge of out-dated e-mail addresses. If you already have a MaineArts.com account, please login to your account and update your contact information.

Still wish to get communications the traditional postal method? Please contact the Maine Arts Commission office today at 207/287-2724 or 207/287-2360 TTY, to update your contact information.

To learn more about the listserves or sign up for electronic communications, go to www.MaineArts.com and select the "login now" icon.

Future enhancements to MaineArts.com, most of which are already underway, include increasing the speed of the online interactive features; interactive bulletin boards for each agency program; a technology resource section; site search capabilities; restructuring of program and grant information; redesign of the Public Art and Percent for Art section; housing images with directory listings; expanding artists' resources; e-granting and additional services.

Have you visited MaineArts.com lately? Why not log on today and see what the Maine Arts Commission can do for you.

Please let agency staff know if there are services or information you would like to appear on MaineArts.com. Not finding what you are looking for? Contact Lisa Veilleux, technology/website associate, lisa.veilleux@maine.gov, 207/287-7050,  207/287-2360 – TTY.

2005 Cultural Economic Impact Survey

Attention New England-based Cultural Nonprofit Organizations!



Research shows that nonprofit cultural organizations account for over 78,000 jobs and \$5.4 billion in annual revenue in the region. Impressive stuff, but these figures are only the tip of the iceberg.

Please help the New England Foundation for the Arts and the Maine Arts Commission make these numbers more exact, and consequently, more potent in cultural advocacy efforts to policy-makers and funders. You can help by responding to 2005 nonprofit cultural economic impact survey.

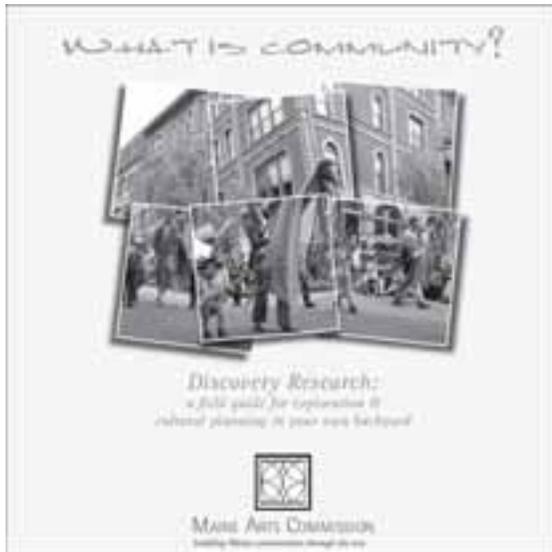
To respond to the survey, please visit www.newenglandarts.org and click on the "annual survey" link.

This survey is being conducted through the New England Cultural Database, a regional data warehouse that tracks economic and descriptive information about creative sector businesses and organizations. The database provides cultural organizations, funders, artists, legislators and the public with a wealth of information to support analysis, advocacy and policy development for the creative sector of New England.

By responding, your organization will be accurately represented in powerful economic impact statistics that are published for cultural policy and funding advocacy. Also, the more New England Foundation for the Arts and the Maine Arts Commission know about you, the better the agencies can structure funding and service programs to support you. As a token of thanks for your survey response, you will gain immediate access to a comprehensive, online media contact tool that will help you reach newspaper, television, periodical and radio outlets across New England.

If you have questions or need a printed copy of the survey, please contact the foundation at 617/951-0010 or e-mail survey@nefa.org.

What is Community? booklet published



The Maine Arts Commission has a new publication to help Maine communities with cultural planning and inventorying. *What is Community?* (formerly *Sensing Place*) will give people tools to help them learn about their communities, work to develop a wider arts audience in their area and connect cultural development with local resources.

The booklet includes information about the agency's Discovery Research program, which support cultural planning and research in Maine communities. *What is Community?* also includes suggestions and guidelines for how to create a local cultural inventory.

To order this publication, or view it on-line, please visit www.MaineArts.com/news/publications.

What is Community? is also available in:

large print

 Large Print

and Braille

 Braille

NEXT STEPS FOR MAINE'S CREATIVE ECONOMY

During Governor John Baldacci's State-of-the-State address this past January, the Governor talked about the creative economy as part of the state's economic development plan, saying, "as a state we must continue to embrace arts, culture and technology as an economic engine." On January 25, Governor Baldacci signed an Executive Order establishing a 21-member Creative Economy Council to be chaired by Maine Arts Commission chair, John Rohman.

In doing so, Governor Baldacci fuels the incredible momentum generated by the 2004 Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy. The creative economy movement launched by this gathering has captured the imagination and entrepreneurial impulses of people and communities across Maine. Witness the Midcoast Magnet fora that have drawn together hundreds of passionate people to talk about bringing creative businesses to Maine's Midcoast, or this winter's opening of the Center Theater in Dover-Foxcroft, which brought out more than 70 people despite a mid-winter snowstorm. Something inspired is afoot in communities all across the state. And while regional groups move forward in developing local agendas, many have asked "what's next at the state level?"

First, the Governor has established a Creative Economy Council to increase visibility and influence at the highest level. The council is addressing priorities ranging from mapping the creative economy in Maine to enhancing the role of arts and culture in tourism.

In the Executive Order, Governor Baldacci also established a Creative Economy Steering Committee, which includes representatives from various state government agencies, including the Maine Arts Commission, Department of Economic and Community Development, State Planning Office and more. These agencies will look for existing programs and policies that can be expanded or redirected to support creative economic development, with strong emphasis on encouraging greater entrepreneurship.

The Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center at the University of Maine will also be researching promising creative economy clusters and developing a planning toolkit for local communities and regions.

The Maine Arts Commission continues to play a central role. The agency's creative economy website and listserv are a clearinghouse of ideas, people and community activity.

To sign up for the listserv, to see a list of the Creative Economy Council members and for more resources and links, please visit www.MaineArts.com/mainescreativeeconomy/conference/index.shtml.

First, the Governor has established a Creative Economy Council to increase visibility and influence at the highest level. The council is addressing priorities ranging from mapping the Creative Economy in Maine to enhancing the role of arts and culture in tourism.

Open door on Haystack Mountain School of Crafts

BY STEPHEN COLE

To say that Haystack Mountain School of Crafts is a 55-year-old research and studio program teaching fine craftsmanship, carrying out research, publishing monographs, sponsoring lectures and engaging the community is a formal way to describe an informal place. But it is an informal place with a strong undercurrent of excellence, passion and devotion.

For people interested in building new creative institutions in Maine, a look at Haystack can be daunting – it is both established and accomplished. So it may be instructive to remember that this renowned school began in Waldo County in 1950 with the dream of one patron and some zealous Maine artisans. Ten years later, threatened by the construction of Route 3, Haystack survived an uprooting and landed on Deer Isle to begin again.

The hives of activity on Haystack's campus are the craft studios. In the high season of summer, the studios never close and have an aura of intense energy and concentration. The 90 souls in residence seem intent on wringing craft out of every precious hour in a two- or three-week stint. The artisans are an engaged mix of beginning, emerging and established artisans. Haystack's faculty varies year to year, so its workshops do too. They encompass woodworking, weaving, surface design, quilts, papermaking, printmaking, painting, metals, mixed media, jewelry, glass, foundry, fiberart, drawing, ceramics, blacksmithing, basketry and artists' books. In the afterglow of the studios stand the rest of the community – student and faculty cabins, lecture hall, dining room, library and offices.

The cost of working and living at Haystack for three weeks ranges from about \$1,300 to \$3,000 – fees that are comparable to those at other national crafts



(LEFT) THE STRIKING HAYSTACK CAMPUS AND ITS ARCHITECT, EDWARD LARABEE BARNES, WON THE AMERICAN INSTITUTE OF ARCHITECTURE'S 25 YEAR AWARD FOR BUILDINGS THAT ENDURE.

PHOTO BY CHARLES GAILIS.

schools such as Penland in North Carolina's western mountains. With a scholarship endowment of a million dollars, Haystack helps subsidize the cost of study for nearly a quarter of its students and seems especially committed to making the craft experience accessible. Each autumn, it hosts Open Door and the New England Workshops. The first is open to Maine dwellers only. The second expands its reach to those from New England. For a fair price, these part-week sessions allow avocational artisans time and space to get lost in something and shirk their other lives for a moment.

Experiencing another life is the theme of Haystack's collaborations with Maine secondary schools: Student Craft Institute, Studio Based Learning and the related Haystack Mentors Program.

The Craft Institute gathers high school students from across Maine for a weekend of craft – its intensity, challenge and visceral pleasure. Haystack students also learn an important lesson for Maine's growing creative economy: that craft, too, is a legitimate profession, like law or nursing. A *Maine Times* article once summed up the effort perfectly: "World famous Haystack teaches kids that art is reputable."

Haystack students also learn an important lesson for Maine's growing creative economy: that craft, too, is a legitimate profession ...

Studio Based Learning draws the circle tighter. Haystack invites 80 students from nearby schools in Blue Hill and Deer Isle-Stonington to study and work as artisans for four days. Academic and vocational learners can attend – craft blurs that distinction – and see a notable, but perhaps distant, neighbor

from inside. Haystack Mentors continues the relationship between professional artisans and area students throughout the year and brings it from the Haystack campus into those schools. These are the many things Haystack Mountain School of Crafts does and is. To understand the school's relationship to the creative economy, I visited with Stuart Kestenbaum,

Haystack's executive director, at the school's winter office just outside Deer Isle village.

Once off Route 1, the trip to Deer Isle is a long one and in the off-season the town feels isolated – the remaining people and institutions stand out. The economy is peeled back to its

natural resource vitals: roadside signs advertise fresh crabmeat or salt cod and woodlots are being cut, the trees milled on site into boards.

As a part of the community and economy, Haystack is not invisible. Year-round the school contributes five jobs to the local economy and that number swells to 25 in the summer season, making Haystack a small-to-medium size business. A good portion of the school's million dollar annual budget is spent and revolves in Hancock County, with at least a hundred thousand dollars going to building and renovation projects.

Striking architecture can give an institution a special resonance, as happened with Haystack. On 40 acres of coastal spruce and fir, New York architect Edward Larrabee Barnes designed a cluster of about 20 simple, angular, shingled buildings. Connected by walkways and decks – as in an old-time sporting camp – they cling like lichen to granite outcrops above

the Atlantic. Once seen, the setting, complex and views are never forgotten. Because of this, Haystack and Barnes won the American Institute of Architecture's 25 Year Award for buildings that endure.

Kestenbaum estimates there are 50 working artists and artisans inhabiting the part of Hancock County that surround the striking Haystack campus. Some came expressly to study at Haystack and were smitten by the community and landscape. Others were drawn to the place and then discovered the school. The role of Haystack and artisans in the economy plays out



(ABOVE) LISA THARP DISCUSSING A PROJECT WITH HER HAYSTACK INSTRUCTOR, JERRY BLEEM, WHO ALSO TEACHES AT THE SCHOOL OF THE ART INSTITUTE OF CHICAGO.

PHOTO BY CHARLES GAILIS.

Year-round the school contributes five jobs to the local economy. That number swells to 25 in the summer season, making Haystack a small-to-medium size business. A good portion of the school's million dollar annual budget is spent and revolves in Hancock County . . .

Story continues on page 26.

Reversing the trend: films bring grads home

BY LORIE COSTIGAN

Benjamin Fowlie and Stephanie Shershow are swimming strongly against the tide.

The two college graduates grew up in the Midcoast and advanced their educations well beyond the area's borders. Shershow tested her Syracuse University music industry degree in New York City; Fowlie set his sights on showing others' films in Massachusetts and touring with his band Constants after leaving Emerson College.

But they were not settled in their more urban roles and yearned for a return to the Maine Coast and people who inspired them. They are now doing what lawmakers and analysts say young

Mainers do not do often enough: returning home to find work.

Not only are they finding work, Fowlie and Shershow are making work for others. As the co-directors of the Camden International Film Festival, scheduled this year for the last weekend in September, the young 20-somethings hope to bring cultural events to the Midcoast and fill hotel rooms and restaurants along the way.

Doing so has not been in response to the lure of government support, such as a bill currently proposed

in the Maine Legislature that would pay \$15,000 of a student's loan if they return to Maine after graduating college. Instead, Shershow and Fowlie are lured by the history of a small place, the beauty of the coast and, most strongly, the ability to do business where everyone knows each other's names.

Call it the *Cheers* outlook on business growth, but that is part of what is driving the creation of a creative economy, one that relies on the arts and sciences to make new businesses and cultural opportunity.

"There are so many people to talk to and there are no setbacks," Fowlie said. "I was tired of having to sell yourself or your

personality as a blank face in Boston or New York City, which is why both of us are here now."

Fowlie's interest in film stemmed from a childhood in Camden and watching writer Stephen King film *Thinner* on local streets.

"The lighting crew took us in and we were on set a lot," Fowlie says, laughing, "Come to think of it we were probably more like little PAs [personal assistants]. I'd pack a sandwich, get on my bike and be gone for the day. It was the best summer ever."

Then Fowlie saw the movie, which was a bit of a flop by Hollywood standards. "It didn't matter," Fowlie says. "I was hooked."

Fowlie ended up pursuing a degree at Emerson, moving away from Hollywood-style filmmaking to the documentary genre.

"Everyone wanted to be the next Quentin Tarrantino, and I did not," he says.

He attended the Nantucket Film Festival one summer and suspected such an event could play well in Maine. He set to work and soon had the support of Documentary Education Research. He tried at first to work from Boston but soon learned that an equal number of connections were to be had back home.

Fowlie stayed in touch with his hometown by reading online news reports. Through the internet he learned of Governor John Baldacci's support of the arts and the creative economy following the Governor's inauguration and appearance at the Center for Maine Contemporary Art in Rockport. Then came news reports of the Pine Tree Zones and the Midcoast Magnet, a group trying to broaden the reach of the creative economy concept.

"I put all of that news to work in my proposal to DER and it really helped," Fowlie says. "It was hard to believe that all of this stuff was happening so close to home."

That cemented his decision to return home and make the film festival work in Maine. Shershow, a graduate of Belfast Area



Benjamin Fowlie and Stephanie Shershow grew up in the Midcoast and are now doing what lawmakers and analysts say young Mainers do not do often enough: returning home to find work. Not only are they finding work, Fowlie and Shershow are making work for others as the co-directors of the Camden International Film Festival.

High School, had also tired of the big city scene and was ready to, as she says, return to the place of her artistic beginnings as a poet and music writer and share it with others.

Thus far, selling prospective filmmakers on the merits of Camden as a venue has not been difficult.

“You mention Maine and there is general interest,” Fowlie said. “Mention Camden and they are really interested. People just seem to know this area and either have been here or know someone who lives here now.”

Connect-the-local-dots networking has worked well for Fowlie and Shershow – the head of the Maine Film Office, Lea Girardin, lives in Lincolnville.

“We drove to Augusta and were so nervous and excited and then we learned we were neighbors,” Shershow says of the co-directors’ first meeting.

Fowlie also has built on the list of filmmakers in the Midcoast, like Rob Draper in Camden and Tom Sadowski in Lincolnville, to gain connections to other filmmakers. Drawing on a sense of place and the people who live here has helped piece together the festival over two years of planning. The festival is now set to draw international filmmakers and may even be the screening ground for new films.

The documentaries featured in the festival’s inaugural year will focus on social injustices. In addition to films, discussions will be hosted by some of the top names in international film and academia.

Story continues on page 27.



(ABOVE) STEPHANIE SHERSHOW AND BENJAMIN FOWLIE HAVE RETURNED TO MAINE TO START THE CAMDEN INTERNATIONAL FILM FESTIVAL. THEY ARE SHOWN HERE TALKING WITH SUPPORTERS AT A KICKOFF PARTY IN JANUARY AT SONNY G.'S IN CAMDEN. PHOTO BY DANIEL O'CONNELL, COURTESY OF VILLAGE SOUP TIMES.

Peter Kent: becoming a [public] artist

Woolwich artist Peter Kent has worked on three Percent for Art projects: the Falmouth High School, the Edgcomb Elementary School and the Sabbattus Elementary School. This winter he took some time out of writing a letter of intent for another Percent for Art project to talk with Maine Arts Commission staff about how the Percent for Art program has affected his work and how to encourage other artists to get involved.

How did you start working on Percent for Art projects?

I moved to Maine eight or nine years ago. I came up here to build an addition on a 1850s farm house I inherited from my grandmother. I thought I was going to come up here for three or five months to do that project and head back to Philadelphia. It ended up taking me two years. In that time I met Andreas von Huene [who has worked on several Percent for Art projects]. It was really his encouragement that got me to send slides in.

How has involvement in public art affected your work?

It was really, for me, the beginning of thinking in terms of something that embraced a larger vision. I never went to art school. I still have trouble getting my mouth around the word “artist.”

Before I started doing Percent for Art projects, I had spent many years doing high-end additions on historical houses, making furniture and working on architectural detail. The [Percent for Art] projects allow me to tackle an entire space and create something that is specifically unique to that space – the light in that space, the materials of the

floor, the height of the ceiling.

What was the first Percent for Art site you worked on?

The Falmouth [High School] project. I worked with Joe Hemes, a lighting designer and architect. We decided together to grapple with the space. He did the lighting and I echoed with something at ground level – sculptural seating. I feel that we got the project because we really transformed the space. We didn’t just put objects in the room.



(ABOVE) PETER KENT'S FIRST PERCENT FOR ART PROJECT WAS *HOLLOW SEATING* (ROCK MAPLE, FOUND STONES AND METAL) FOR THE FALMOUTH HIGH SCHOOL, SHOWN HERE, WHICH HE WORKED ON WITH LIGHTING DESIGNER AND ARCHITECT JOE HEMES.

“I often encourage artists I meet to participate – it can really help develop you as an artist . . . It allows me to express and leave something of myself somewhere – and frankly to get credit for it.”

What is the difference in addressing a public space?

I had to think about the people that were going to, on a daily basis, be around these things. It wasn't as simple as furniture. I felt I had to dig a little deeper to find something human – a sense of line, a sense of shape.

I think that part of what this whole public art process opened up for me is a spiritual aspect of myself that has always been there. It is more than just a day job. It allows me to express and leave something of myself somewhere – and frankly to get credit for it.

How do you feel about the Percent for Art selection process?

I really like to write. I enjoy the letter of intent because I have to define myself and what I do. I'm writing a letter of intent today and was looking back over ones I'd sent four and five years ago. They've really evolved into a spiritual statement. I have to find an answer for why I make the choices I do when I create.

It's never easy to not get a project you spend time on. I really felt the Department of Conservation was the best presentation I could have made. I didn't get the job. I still felt, after the first blow [of not having my proposal selected], that it was the best presentation for that space. I do feel that the work I put into [developing proposals for] the projects, whether I get them or not, does add to my unique expression.

Has the program made it easier for you to make a living as an artist in Maine?

There was a point at which I might have left Maine, except for the Falmouth project – except that I felt I had a foothold in something that was important to me in a way that I hadn't fully explored yet. It definitely kept me here. The Philadelphia [public art] program is not as accessible. In California, artists feel like their programs are out of their grasp. There's something about the Maine program that feels more accessible and more possible.

It still amazes me that there is a program out there that funds my own investigation into new ideas in a way that I can hardly believe is true. I feel like I'm being recognized and allowed to come up with the best that I can come up with. I don't think I'll get rich doing this, but that isn't my goal.

What would you say to artists who are considering responding to a call for artists for the first time?

I often encourage artists I meet to participate – it can really help develop you as an artist. I would encourage artists to think bigger than their medium. If you can't make it, then dictate its production via somebody else. People should think of themselves as artists – as a portal for ideas – not as experts in a certain medium.

How do you see your work evolving in the future?

There is a genetic inheritance in the project I am working on now from that first project. In my own works, I am trying to be a portal for any idea. It allows me to think really big and draw in more people. I'm used to working in teams. I can think and design and detail much faster than I can build. There still a lot of “doing” on my part but I can sidestep a lot of the labor that someone else can do better and love doing. I think a lot of artists begin working that way when they want to reach further. They give up needing to do it all. That has not been easy for me.

[The Percent for Art program] has shaped my direction. Without it I wouldn't be doing what I'm doing now. Each time I have a project that is accepted, I'm in a bit of wonder that people want these things that I love doing and they're willing to pay for them. I'm even beginning, at times, to call myself an artist.



(ABOVE) *CIRCLE SEATING* BY PETER KENT, FROM THE EDGECOMB ELEMENTARY SCHOOL ROCK MAPLE AND METAL.

To view these images in color, please visit



What a little arts education can do – business, community & vaudeville

In the heart of Buckfield, on the top of a hill, sits an old white building.

From the outside it looks like a church or an old grange hall but for the past eight years Buckfield's Oddfellow Hall has been home to the Oddfellow Theatre Company, where owner Mike Miclon is keeping the vaudeville tradition alive and well.

Since its opening in May of 1998, empty seats have been scarce at the various shows the company presents each month.

"I love the audience," says Miclon. "By creating an environment that they can feel comfortable in, and use their imagination, I feel like I can steal them back from television."

Miclon says he had difficulty in his early school years. Things changed during Miclon's freshman year in high school . . . Miclon enrolled in his school's drama class. Drama quickly became his favorite class – he would show up early for the class and leave late.

When you go to see a show at the Oddfellow Theatre, says Miclon, leave all expectations at home. Miclon writes, directs and performs in many of the theatre's shows. He carefully crafts each show to be conceptual and thought-provoking while remaining something a whole family can enjoy.

The youngest in a family of five, Miclon is a natural entertainer. Growing up in Buckfield, he spent a lot of time performing skits and plays in his backyard to cure his small town boredom. Taking on the role of class clown, Miclon says he had difficulty in his early school years. His parents would often get letters and calls home about his poor grades. With no creative outlet or support, Miclon turned to using drugs and alcohol when he was 12 years old.

Things changed during Miclon's freshman year in high school when he met a patient and attentive English teacher. He says that through his teacher's unwavering support, he was able to understand and embrace his natural performance talents.

At the teacher's recommendation, Miclon enrolled in his school's drama class. Miclon says the theatre class, taught by



local vaudeville performer Denise Reehl, changed his life forever. Drama quickly became his favorite class – he would show up early for the class and leave late.

Miclon says he owes a lot to Denise Reehl and her husband Benny, who died this February. At the end of Miclon's junior year, the Reehls asked him to become an apprentice with their traveling Leather and Lather variety show. They agreed that Miclon would help set up the show every night and, in exchange, the Reehls would train him in the art of vaudeville. He was an apprentice for the next five years. Miclon says he spent most of his free time learning his craft.

The hard work paid off during Miclon's senior year in high school, when Benny Reehl's recommendation landed him a chance to study under world-renowned vaudeville performer Tony Montanaro. Miclon worked hard for the next year and was able to save enough money to attend an 11-week workshop at Montanaro's Celebration Barn Theatre in South Paris.

During those 11 weeks Miclon worked with students from around the world, learning to apply his previous knowledge and, more importantly, write and produce his own acts. Miclon says those 11 weeks were his most creative; he still uses many of those skits today. After completing the workshop, Miclon says he had the skills to take his show on the road.

For the next several years Miclon traveled around the country performing in various cities and networking with other artists. He also worked at the Celebration Barn Theatre and took workshops in his free time to promote internal growth and confidence.

"While all of this was rewarding," Miclon says, "I still had a strong desire to give something back to my community. [People in Buckfield] were there from the beginning and helped me get to the point that I am at today."

In October 1996, Miclon found a letter in his mailbox that made it possible for him to do just that. The letter was from the town of Buckfield and invited Miclon to a meeting about plans for the old Oddfellow Hall. Excited about a possible opportunity to open his own theatre, Miclon presented the idea at the meeting where it was received with approval and support. An article about his proposal was on the front page of the local paper the next day. Miclon says the community members thought a theatre in Buckfield was a good idea.

(LEFT) MIKE MICLON IS A VAUDEVILLE PERFORMER AND CULTURAL BUSINESS OWNER. HE OWNS THE ODDFELLOW THEATRE IN BUCKFIELD.

Miclon bought the building that year. After 17 months of heavy renovation – most of which he completed by himself – the Oddfellow Theatre opened its doors in May of 1998. Since then, Miclon says, the theatre has had great support from people in the Buckfield community and all across Maine.

Putting his own spin on vaudeville elements like juggling, slapstick and theatre, Miclon has been able to create interactive performances that break the fourth wall – with no separation between the stage and the audience. Through the theatre's intimate setting Miclon says he creates a "shared experience" that gives the community a common meeting place to interact with each other.

"By the audience taking a chance [and participating in the performances], I can create an experience that shows them art is... something that everyone can enjoy," he says.

In the more than 300 shows produced since the theatre's opening, Miclon has tried to keep a consistent positive theme that promotes creativity and imagination. Miclon also invites other Maine performing artists to the Oddfellow Theatre, giving them a chance to reach a new audience.

While keeping busy with the Oddfellow Theatre, Miclon has also expanded his talents into business and education. Most recently he has been working with Timberland on their European marketing meetings. By incorporating his vaudeville talents and his performance skills, Miclon says he has been able to present the company's dry marketing information in a more engaging way.

Miclon and his touring group, The Odd Company, have also been presenting their "tunnel vision" show to schools around the country. They perform for the students and then hold a question and answer panel, both of which address the detrimental effects of drugs abuse. The show also discusses how focus and determination will help students succeed and achieve their goals.

In the end, Miclon's successful arts business and performing career can be traced back to his performance instinct, which was tapped during those freshman English and drama classes. "[In that drama class] I was able to find myself and realize my true calling," says Miclon. A calling that has reaped rich rewards for Miclon, the students he now teaches and the town of Buckfield.

For more information about the Oddfellow Theatre and future plans Miclon has in store, check out www.oddfellow.com.

Author! Author!

The Bucksport Scribes

...Don't pick your nose! Keep your hands to yourself! Your face will freeze that way! Don't put that in your mouth!...

Over the past three years, a group of high school students from Bucksport have published one play and have submitted another. The first play, aptly titled *Oh, Grow Up!*, gathered together all the little bits of wisdom and experience learned as part of growing up. The play, originally called *Get in, Sit down, Shut up, and Hang On—Or—Never put Anything Sharper Than Your Elbow in Your Ear—Or—What It's Like To Be Us*, also won a few awards at the Maine Drama Festival along the way.

The plays are the product of a motivated group of student-writers from Bucksport High School and their drama coach, Catherine Russell. The group, called Bucksport Scribes, began when Phil Tardif, head of the school's English department, and Susan Flagg, the school librarian, invited some student-writers to read their work in an informal setting. When Russell began working as the school's drama coach, she proposed to have the students write their own play. She says the first reaction from some students was a deer-in-the-headlights response. "The kids didn't know me," says Russell. "Some of the kids were dumbstruck that anybody would ask them what they thought."

In 2001, the group began to meet to workshop and brainstorm ideas, "My feeling was that if I just got them talking about...what's bugging them [we could start writing]," says Russell. "Then after the first couple of sessions it really started spilling out."

Cole Lundquist, now 19 and a freshman at the University of Southern Maine, was one of the core group of six or seven student-writers. "We got to the point where we started to talk about what we had to deal with on a daily basis – the lunch lady, the cafeteria, the teachers – all the lies children are told by adults," says Lundquist. "I mean, *Sesame Street* being sponsored by numbers and letters? C'mon!"

Meeting once a week, the group began writing in October 2001 and had a finished play by the following January. *Oh, Grow Up!* is built around a series of three scenes Russell calls



the "triptych," with "connective tissue" of related scenes and monologues in between.

The scribes took the play to the Maine Drama Festival in 2002. Lundquist remembers the entire theatre coming to its feet at the end of the performance. *Oh Grow Up!* won second place in its division. In total, it won seven awards, including best ensemble cast, best overall concept and design, and all-festival cast awards for four students.

"Maine likes to pride itself on the creative economy and these kids had their hands right in the midst of what the creative economy is all about," says Russell. "These [writing jobs] are real jobs. People have to write this stuff. Somebody had to write Shakespeare in Love. Somebody had to write Meet the Parents."

In their second year, the group created a series of short sketches and incorporated some of that material in a second play, *Dr. Bogtrotter's Secrets for the Comedically Challenged*. Russell says that *Bogtrotter* was the scribes' first attempt to build a story arc and break away from scene-based comedy. It was a success at school, so the students took *Bogtrotter* to the Maine Drama Festival in 2004.

By this time, now-16-year-old Ian Grady had joined the group. He says writing the second play was informal and playful. The group was allowed to hang out in the school library, sometimes lounging upside down on the chairs to get the creative ideas flowing.

“It wasn’t just us sitting in a stiff chair in an overly warm room trying to think of funny things. It was just sitting around, hanging out and the funny things happened – usually when we weren’t trying to think of them,” says Grady.

What Grady remembers most about *Bogtrotter* was that, because they had written it, the play really belonged to the students.

“It made a huge difference in not only the way we performed it, but the way we felt about performing it,” says Grady. “It was much harder to be detached. It’s impossible to ‘phone something in’ when it’s yours.”

Bogtrotter underwent some major changes as it was developed. Part of that process was a staged reading at the Bangor Public Library. Based on the audience response at that performance, the team reworked portions of the script.

“We used to tell them, ‘Don’t change what the author put on the page,’” says

(ABOVE LEFT) SLEEP TIGHT, DON’T LET THE BEDBUGS BITE! DURING THIS SCENE IN *OH, GROW UP!* THE SCRIBES SUGGEST THAT PARENTS SHOULD THINK TWICE BEFORE FILLING YOUNG IMAGINATIONS WITH HARMLESS LITTLE STORIES. “LITTLE BOY” (ACTOR/SCRIBE LARRY SAWYER, IN BED) GETS A LAST MINUTE BEDTIME VISIT FROM “BEDBUG WALTER” (JOE CYR, LOWER) AND “BEDBUG HERBIE” (KATE TARDIF, UPPER)

(ABOVE RIGHT) NEWSFLASH: ALPHABET RUNS AMOK! IN *OH, GROW UP!* “EMCEE” (CHRIS PYE), FAR LEFT, TRIES IN VAIN TO CONTROL THE DISORDERLY AND MISBEHAVING ALPHABET THAT THREATENS TO TAKE OVER THE SHOW, BUT NOT BEFORE THE SEEMINGLY BENIGN ABCS PRESENT ALL MANNER OF PROBLEMATIC AND CHALLENGING WORDS AND PHRASES. (LEFT TO RIGHT: JARRETT MELENDEZ, WILL HUNT, STATIA NESIN, COLE LUNDQUIST, JOE CYR AND KEN LOZIER)



Russell, “Now we have to change what the author put on the page, because it isn’t working...but we’re the authors.”

The scripts are not the only thing that changed – the scribes did too. Before joining the group, Lundquist, who graduated in 2004, planned to join the Army and fly helicopters. He is now in his first year of the musical theatre program at the University of Southern Maine.

There was also a lot of growing up for Travis Ford, who was technical director for *Oh, Grow Up!* Russell says Ford went from knowing very little about set design to, with very little guidance, designing a classic morphing black box set. Ford completed five major set design projects in the three years he spent at Bucksport High School and, now 19, is studying theatrical design at Boston University.

“They learned things I couldn’t have conceived they would learn.” says Russell. “I was shocked that [the group] survived and flourished for three years, that work produced for the third year was as strong as it was.”

Many of the students have graduated and moved on but the plays live on. *Oh, Grow Up!* has been published by Contemporary Drama Service and in *At Play: An Anthology of Maine Drama*, which was partially funded by a Maine Arts Commission and Maine Humanities Council Community Arts and Humanities grant. *Bogtrotter* has been submitted to Bakers Plays for consideration for publication.

Russell, who was paid to direct and produce a musical and a one-act play each year at the school, left Bucksport High School at the end of the 2003-2004 school year. She did the work with the Bucksport Scribes without pay and says the secondary education system is missing a link to the creative economy by not supporting more arts and creative education.

“Maine likes to pride itself on the creative economy and these kids had their hands right in the midst of what the creative economy is all about,” says Russell. “These [writing jobs] are real jobs. People have to write this stuff. Somebody had to write *Shakespeare in Love*. Somebody had to write *Meet the Parents*.”

Tracking Fellows: Gwyneth Jones

Gwyneth Jones, a 1997 recipient of a Maine Arts Commission Individual Artist Fellowship award for choreography, has been living, dancing and choreographing in Maine for more than 20 years. As part of the trio, Berg, Jones and Sarvis, she has unfailingly delivered intelligent, witty and sensitive work. The three are equal partners in their creative process, “a jumble” Jones calls it, each delivering a theme, a prop, a situational turn which they use to build movement. Throughout their long friendship, they have continually entertained each other and their audiences.

Born in Queens and raised in Ithaca, life in upstate New York brought a wealth of advantages for Jones, including the privilege of taking dance classes at Cornell University, where her father worked. At noon she would leave high school to study with renowned dancers such as Renee Wadleigh and Mel Wong. A chance viewing of

a Merce Cunningham production resonated deeply with Jones, defining her life’s work. To this day Jones remains an admirer of Cunningham for his ability to, as she says, “progress through time, to change and yet to continue to make sense, refusing to remain stuck in a mainstream aesthetic or adhering to old ways of representing, for example, the way men and women relate to each other.”

Jones’ decision to attend SUNY Purchase, which had a strong dance program, was unsatisfying. The school’s curricula philosophy seemed to close in on her. Dogged by old dance issues of body type and

an emphasis on a kind of contorted perfection, the school’s ideology held no opportunity for her to make art. Jones chose modern dance precisely because it was not based on the imitation of old forms. Stultified at SUNY, Jones decided to leave school and begin auditioning.

At this time, around 1979, the chance came for Jones to join Ram Island Dance Company in Portland, then thriving under grants sought by the executive director, the patronage of Millie Monks and artistic direction of Sam Costa (ironically Jones had met Sam Costa at Cornell when, as a football player, he was asked to be part of a modern dance performance).

Having befriended Paul Sarvis in New York, Jones eventually persuaded him to move to Maine. In 1980, while teaching a beginning modern class for Ram Island, Jones met Gretchen Berg, and the two began a

rich 24-year personal and professional relationship.

In 1984, Jones had an opportunity to dance with Dan Wagoner and moved back to New York for five years, returning to Maine during the ‘down’ times. When Jones decided she had her fill of New York, she returned to Maine permanently and Berg, Jones and Sarvis were officially formed. Twenty years later they are still active, inventive and superbly entertaining.

When asked why she lives in Maine, Jones replies with a spontaneous “I love it here!” Why? Unspoiled





landscape and the advantages of a city like Portland, which has a pleasing blend of urban and rural offerings. Jones also cites Portland's "diverse nature and tolerance." Six years ago, Jones and Berg decided to adopt an African American child and felt that, although attracted to places like Deer Isle and Dover Foxcroft for their overwhelming natural beauty, it was Portland that would embrace and nurture their child.

One of Jones's favorite memories of working in Maine is a project that she, Berg and Sarvis worked on with two native Mainers - painter Alan Bray and musician Chris Moore. In 1996, the five artists rented a cabin on a pond near Bray's home in Dover-Foxcroft and used the Sangerville grange hall to construct and rehearse *Glacial Drift*, based on the seasons in Maine. Bray would be painting the scenery and Moore would make music by breaking sticks and composing on the grange's old piano. One day Bray handed Jones his daughter's old snowshoes and so began *winter*.

Gretchen Berg, Gwyneth Jones and Paul Sarvis have sustained their creative life here in Maine by securing dance and theatre teaching posts at Bowdoin College. Working with students, Jones says, gives her an opportunity to get away from her own body, to use movement that she admires but that does not always fit her.

Teaching separately, when Berg, Jones and Sarvis watch their students perform they are surprised by how uniquely resolved and individually defined

When asked why she lives in Maine, Jones replies with a spontaneous "I love it here!" Why? Unspoiled landscape and the advantages of a city like Portland, which has a pleasing blend of urban and rural offerings. Jones also cites Portland's "diverse nature and tolerance."

each class performance is. Thus, the teaching becomes another vehicle to inform their collaborative work. "I learn something every time that I make or see another dance," says Jones.

Without the affiliation with Bowdoin, says

Jones, it would be very difficult to produce work.

"Performances always lose money. The costs of renting theatre and rehearsal space, costumes, lighting, scenery, publicity, insurance and hiring technical expertise make it impossible to self-produce. It is virtually superhuman for a dancer to reserve any energy for the fundraising and promotional aspects of a company."

When asked about the state of dance in Maine, Jones replies that "it's a natural and national ebb and flow... the appreciation and support of dance feels cyclical and we are at a momentary dip that will find its rise in time. [Maine Arts Commission] fellowships are wonderful because they make you reflect on your work. But what artists need are large, unobstructed, warm spaces in which to rehearse and perform."

A comment well taken as the Maine Arts Commission strives to increase support and recognition for the performing arts in Maine.

(LEFT) GWYNETH JONES PERFORMS AS PART OF BERG, JONES AND SARVIS. FROM RIGHT TO LEFT, THE PERFORMERS ARE GRETCHEN BERG, GWYNETH JONES AND PAUL SARVIS. PHOTO BY MATT JONES.

Following the little bird with Oscar Mokeme

Nwa nunu fee ne'enu; eso'm gi!

Nwa nunu fee n'ani; eso'm gi!

Nwa nunu fee n'mili; eso'm gi!

Little bird, if you should fly upwards, I will follow you!

Little bird, if you should fly downwards, I will follow you!

Little bird, if you should fly into the river, I will follow you!



(ABOVE) OSCAR MOKEME IS PASSING ON TRADITIONAL MUSIC, DANCE AND HEALING PRACTICES FROM THE IGBO CULTURE OF NIGERIA WITH SUPPORT FROM THE MAINE ARTS COMMISSION'S TRADITIONAL ARTS APPRENTICESHIP PROGRAM.

Seated opposite each other across a drum, Oscar Mokeme and his nine-year-old son Obi begin singing, *Nwa Nunu*, or Little Bird. The little bird in the traditional Igbo song is a metaphor for following one's life passion wherever it leads, says Mokeme.

Descended from the Igbo people of Nigeria, Mokeme is part of a tradition of healing that stretches back for generations. It is a healing tradition that Mokeme says helps people develop their vision and provides guidance during transition. Mokeme learned the arts from his grandfather and he is the first generation from his family to bring them to the United States. Thanks in part to a Traditional Arts Apprenticeship grant from the Maine Arts Commission, Mokeme is working with his son Obi to make sure that his family's traditions live on in this country.

"When I look at [my sons'] lives," says Mokeme, "I see they don't have those things my ancestors put in me and I find that I'm obligated to teach them this tradition."

When Mokeme moved to Boston to study business administration, he says he found that he had very different priorities from the Americans he met.

"There seems to be a doctrine for material desire in the Western world – what you have and what you see," says Mokeme. "But the things that are important for me are the things you don't see – being true to who you are, being humble to yourself and to God. Things that are invisible – that is where the strength is."

Mokeme is passing these values on to Obi through traditional song and healing practices.

“It’s what my ancestors did,” says Obi. “My grandfathers and my family’s done it for many generations. It’s part of my blood and it’s part of me.”

Mokeme moved to Maine after finishing his schooling in Boston because he found a strong cultural life in Portland. He started a small gallery to bring American and African cultures together. Mokeme now operates the Museum of African Culture, at 121 Spring Street, in Portland. The museum is filled with hand-carved masks used in healing ceremonies. Each mask has a different personality, says Mokeme. They serve as metaphors or represent historical events.

Some of the masks have clear eyes, explains Mokeme, and those masks speak of a clear mind. Colors and symbols can serve as metaphors as well. A black mask speaks of mystery, while green speaks of prosperity. A star on the forehead of the mask might mean self-knowledge. Mokeme says, “When you see a mask with horns, you know this mask comes to tell us about strength, to have courage. We must be brave.”

Mokeme says the masks have an ancient wisdom that sees farther than science. He believes it is his duty to bring that wisdom back into people’s lives.

“Science – they want validity, things you can duplicate, things that you can measure, but the truth is that nothing is measurable,” he says. “The creative process is something that’s not tangible, you cannot touch it, you cannot feel it – you are inspired. It’s almost like a spiritual essence.”

But those differences have not stopped Mokeme from offering some assistance to science. He has used some of his skills in hospitals and psychiatric wards – helping the patient confront problems like substance abuse.

“What I do is change how they see their world,” says Mokeme. “The condition they find themselves in does not make them; it’s simply a condition. When you remove the condition from you, the condition becomes separate from yourself and you can do ritual to that

There seems to be a doctrine for material desire in the Western world – what you have and what you see. But the things that are important for me are the things you don’t see – being true to who you are, being humble to yourself and to God. Things that are invisible – that is where the strength is.

– OSCAR MOKEME.
TRADITIONAL ARTS MASTER

condition to have it dissipate.”

Mokeme takes no payment for his work as a healer. Instead, he counsels the recipients of his healing to go help someone else. That, he says, is his payment.

Part of Mokeme’s healing art includes dance and movement, which he uses as a means of asserting and affirming a prayer, much the same way Christian culture might use a resounding ‘Amen.’ Dance is also a means of balancing energy and finding strength. In dance, Mokeme says, “you are aligning yourself with the forces of the universe. In allowing and inviting them you will be matched with people who will help you.”

Watching Mokeme sit across the drum and sing with his son in Portland’s Museum of African Culture – and listening to him speak of the philosophy developed in an ancient culture – it is not hard to imagine that Mokeme has succeeded in following the little bird of his passion.



(LEFT) THIS EKOI SPIRIT MASK FROM CAMEROON CELEBRATES THE SACRED AND MYSTERIOUS NATURE OF WOMANHOOD. THE MASK’S TWO FACES DEAL WITH FEMININE DUALITY AND BALANCE. THIS MASK IS ON DISPLAY WITH MANY OTHERS AT THE MUSEUM OF AFRICAN CULTURE IN PORTLAND.

HAYSTACK

Story continued from page 13.

during our conversation. A FedEx truck rolls up with a giant ventilator fan ordered by Haystack. We break our talk and help with the task of unloading, learning that the other delivery on the truck is a bundle of steel rods bound for a local blacksmith.

It is not Haystack “by the numbers” as an economic engine that particularly interests Kestenbaum. Rather, it is the fit between artisans and the Deer Isle peninsula that engages him. He believes that the appeal of rural Maine for artisans and artists is not just the stunning landscape, but the culture. Artisans have developed a strong affinity with the locals and admiration for their resourcefulness and authenticity. After all, blacksmiths, ceramists and weavers – like clammers and carpenters – have had to hone their “figuring out” and “making due” skills in this skinny, seasonal economy. As Kestenbaum points out, craft is also about using local materials and responding to a place. Artisans aspire to do what the locals do naturally, merging a way of working and a way of living.

What appears to bring Haystack’s director the greatest satisfaction is the relationship that has developed between the school and the Deer Isle community, which has grown beyond the common tension between long-term residents and people “from away.” The relationship manifests itself in the Studio Based Learning and Haystack Mentors programs and in Kestenbaum’s simple declaration that, “a cultural institution should really provide the same level of excellence in its own town as it does for its program participants.”

That reciprocity has played out at the Deer Isle-Stonington Elementary School, where the Liz Lerman Dance Exchange and residents collaborated on an interpretive dance about local life. More recently, a mosaic mural of ceramic tiles and poems has come to grace the school – made by third graders, eighth graders, poet Christine Hemp and artist Eddie Dominguez. Reporting on Haystack Mountain School of Craft’s 50th anniversary, a long-time local journalist wrote, “Over the years, the school’s image and role have changed significantly. There were some rocky times, but now, the school and community have reached a relationship of mutual respect and positive interaction.” This is not just economic development, but heart-felt community development.

Across Maine’s arts landscape, Haystack plays another role. It is a seasonal center where working artisans and artists meet up, network and exchange ideas.



JEWELER ALAN REVERE (WITH TORCH) DEMONSTRATING IN THE METALS STUDIO, SUMMER 2004. PHOTO BY CHARLES GAILIS.

The arts and craft life is, on balance, a solitary one but Haystack and other arts institutions in Maine are the crossroads for creative and social renewal. They are also the places where some of the creative economy’s research and development happens. Just as in university labs, Haystack’s studios are where artisans test ideas, try things out and make new work. It behooves us to think of them in this light and hear Claudia Brahm, textile designer and partner in Brahm/Mount Textiles, who says, “Haystack is where I return to home base, open the door and let the sunshine in. I relearn how to be open to learning and seeing from an entirely creative perspective.”

ABOUT THE AUTHOR:

Maine Arts Commission member Stephen Cole is director of sustainable communities at Coastal Enterprises, Inc., a Wiscasset-based community development corporation. This work was supported by a grant from the Mainstream Fund of the Maine Community Foundation. Look for another creative economy case study in the next edition of *MaineArtsMag*.

CAMDEN FILM FEST

Story continued from page 15.

David Bradbury will arrive from Australia to speak about his 30 years of filmmaking, which has brought two Academy Award nominations along the way. Stephanie Black will speak about Life and Debt, a film depicting the International Monetary Fund's control over Jamaica.

Other filmmakers in line for the festival include John Michalczyk, Charles Mayer, Howard Zinn and Frederick Wiseman.

Fowlie chose documentaries because he sees no end to how the genre can expand and adapt. He admits it is enjoying a revival because of the work of Michael Moore but confesses his true love of documentary comes from its ability to take on so many forms and faces.

"Documentaries allow people to ask questions and answer them honestly, in their own way," Fowlie says, a hint of his journalism degree shining through.

Answering questions is just what Camden filmmaker Walter Ungerer wanted to do after the terrorist attacks of September 11, 2001. Ungerer asked the questions to students in Vermont just two days after the attacks and filmed the responses.

"The result is so human and right on point," Fowlie says. "He has captured something that a lot of Maine people can feel in touch with. It was our country but a world many people had no idea about."

With social injustices highlighted for 2005, Shershow says she would like to see music documentaries take the festival's fore in 2006.

For his part, Fowlie says he is building on the success of conferences like Pop!Tech, which has drawn technologically minded people from all corners of the globe to Camden for the past five years, and the Camden Conference, a foreign affairs conference in February for the past 18 years that has recently sold out for its 2005 topic. Shershow draws on the international festival in Belfast.

"People want to be in Nantucket for three or four days," Fowlie says. "Why not Camden?"

Growing a new attraction in the Midcoast is as much at the core of Fowlie's vision as founder of the Camden International Film Festival as his love of filmmaking.

"I worry about Camden's economic situation from the loss of MBNA," Fowlie said. "Our focus here has to be creating a creative economy."

There is more to draw people to Maine than the lobster and blueberries that can be exported and the coastline, Shershow says.

"Collectively there is a culture here and we can be more of a part of it," she says.

The Finance Authority of Maine suggests in a 2003 report that the state loses three out of four of its best and brightest students. They leave after graduation and never return home. Statistics like that are what drove House Majority Leader Glenn Cummings (D-Portland) to propose a \$50 million bond that would act as college tuition debt forgiveness to Maine students returning home to set up shop.

"My belief is that talent and creativity create prosperity," Cummings was reported by the *Portland Press Herald* as saying in January.

Fowlie and Shershow are working different angles than tuition kickbacks. They are utilizing local connections, seeking sponsors and working other jobs to make their dreams of living and working at home come true. Part of that networking came in the shape of a kickoff party in January at Sonny G.'s in Camden. The restaurant was packed to the gills and the excitement in the air was contagious, according to some in attendance.

Shershow says the party was yet another step in the right direction for the future of the festival.

"It was very positive," she says. "There was a huge round of applause at the end of our little speeches...a few funny moments too. At the end as people left I had many look me in the eye to say 'we will support you'."

"We feel very confident that it was a good start," she says. "A lot of people that were worried about it being 'too artsy fartsy' were very impressed by the crowd. It really could not have gone better for our first event."

If Shershow and Fowlie continue to build on the initial momentum, Camden may well become the venue for yet another gathering of international-caliber creativity.

To learn more about the Camden International Film Festival, visit www.camdenfilmfest.org.

This article was original printed in Village Soup Times. Learn more at www.villagesoup.com.

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building Maine communities through the arts

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Maine Arts Commission Mission

The Maine Arts Commission shall encourage and stimulate public interest and participation in the cultural heritage and programs of our state; shall expand the state's cultural resources; and shall encourage and assist freedom of artistic expression for the well being of the arts, to meet the legitimate needs and aspirations of persons in all parts of the state.



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