

Summer 2004

MaineArtsMag, Summer 2004

Maine Arts Commission

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The official publication of the Maine Arts Commission

MAINEARTS

COMMISSION

Mag

Summer 2004

Washington
County
artists' work
on display
in Augusta



National Folk
Festival builds
community
pride &
cultural capital
in Bangor

Theater At
Monmouth to
bring Shakespeare
into Maine
communities

Tracking
fellows:
Elizabeth
Edwards

Blaine House Conference on
Maine's Creative Economy is a great
success, wins national award



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.

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MAINEARTS.com

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Special Projects Intern

ON THE COVER

Jonathan Mess created *Spreads*, an installation of works in the Bates Mill for the Blaine House Conference on the Maine's Creative Economy. The work was created in the mill, using materials gathered within the building. An Ohio native, Mess now lives in Buckfield where he teaches sculpture, ceramics and other art courses at Leavitt Area High School. More information about the Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy can be found on pages 12-15.



CONTENTS:

SUMMER 2004



LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

4

MESSAGE FROM JOHN M. ROHMAN, CHAIR

5

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS NEWS

6

MAINE ARTS COMMISSION NEWS

7-10

Strategic planning update

Maine Arts Commission hires new community relations associate

Rebecca Swanson Conrad named Auburn's Citizen of the Year

Intern news

Maine Arts Commission wins Innovation Award

New Commission members welcomed

COMMUNITY NEWS

11-12

Ninth annual Art Honors at MECA

Theater At Monmouth selected for NEA Shakespeare in American Communities

SPECIAL SECTION: BLAINE HOUSE CONFERENCE WRAP-UP

13-17

Excerpts from a poem by Aaron Frederick

Thank you to conference sponsors

A national perspective on the Creative Economy

What's next for Maine's Creative Economy?

Voices from the community

ARTS IN EDUCATION

18

Maine student musicians to study with National Symphony Orchestra

COMMUNITY/TRADITIONAL ARTS

19 - 22

National Folk Festival plants seed for annual Bangor folk arts festival

Don Roy plays Acadian music at the Library of Congress

PUBLIC ART

22-23

Arts in the Capitol: celebrating the work of Maine's student artists

Arts in the Capitol: About Maine series continues with Shining on the Sunrise County

CONTEMPORARY ARTS

24-26

Tracking fellows: Elizabeth Edwards

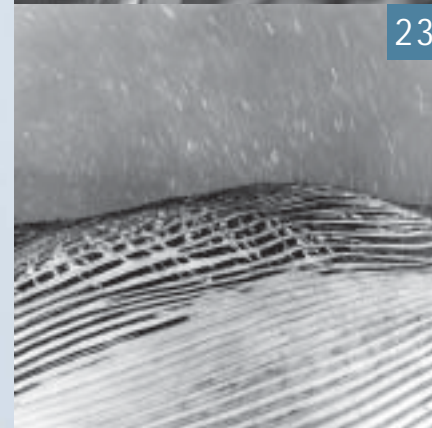
New MaineArtistAccess artists

CALENDARS

27

Maine Arts Commission meetings

Grants calendar for 2004 / 2005





LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

In this issue of *MaineArtsMag* you will find considerable coverage of the Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy. I would like to start off this issue with some thoughts for the practical application of the principles and ideas generated at the conference. More than 2,000 people added to the discussion at the conference, either by attending regional forums leading up to the event or by attending the conference in Lewiston on May 6 and 7. Later this summer, everyone who attended the conference will receive a written report of the proceedings. It will include recommendations from the conference sessions, creative economy resources and more.

One early outcome of the conference came in mid-May, when we learned that Jane's Trust had awarded \$60,000 for Creative Economy projects in Eastport, Lewiston and the Capitol corridor. These funds will help the communities to plan and facilitate select capital improvement projects. The grants are a prime example of how the conference's finding on the potential for downtown revitalization through arts and culture will have positive impacts on Maine communities.

Another positive outcome is the legislature's decision to grant \$100,000 to Maine's Cultural Affairs Council. The funds will come through the New Century Community Program and will support outreach in all cultural fields. The council is exploring the best means to link these resources with creative economic development in model communities.

At the Maine Arts Commission we are using our existing programs to support Maine's Creative Economy. The agency recently approved a \$15,000 Discovery Research grant for the Passamaquoddy region, through the Tides Institute in Eastport. Discovery Research grants build communities through the development and documentation of artistic and cultural networks. This Discovery Research project is the first community-based international arts enterprise to be incorporated in both Maine and Canada. It will strengthen Maine's cultural connections with New Brunswick and assist the revitalization of Eastport as a viable cultural and commercial center.

These three examples demonstrate how the Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy has already had practical impacts on cultural and economic development in the state. These are the kind of outcomes we envisioned as we embarked upon the Creative Economy initiative 18 months ago, and they are the type of outcomes we expect to continue to see in the months and years to come.

As we continue to develop Maine's Creative Economy, we will involve the many partners who have come to the table as a result of the conference. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the steering committee for the Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy, who devoted many hours to the initiative. I would also like to acknowledge Abbe Levin's work coordinating the conference. With the Creative Economy initiative rolling, Abbe has now moved on to other professional challenges. The ongoing Creative Economy work will be streamed into permanent project areas at the Maine Arts Commission and other agencies.

Please join me in welcoming Sara Nics, the Maine Arts Commission's new community relations/public information associate, whom you may read about on page 7.

Please contact us if you would like a copy of the proceedings from the Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy. Let me know if you have questions about the follow-up to the conference or other agency matters. I always look forward to hearing from our readers and responding to your thoughts and questions.

Alden C. Wilson
Director



Opportune time for the Creative Economy in Maine

MESSAGE FROM JOHN M. ROHMAN, CHAIR

During the past year I have had many occasions to think about the Creative Economy and how it impacts our wonderful State of Maine. I can not imagine a more opportune time to bring this concept forward. Just think about the coinciding interests:

- higher educational attainment in the state, as reported by the Compact for Higher Education,
- increased research and development funds for the University of Maine, Jackson Lab and others,
- glowing national comparisons on the safety and livability of our Maine communities and
- real awareness within the business and economic development sectors that attention must be given to our arts and culture in order to revitalize communities.

All of these elements are critical in attracting a knowledgeable Creative Economy workforce to the State of Maine. At the Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy, we had a great opportunity to explore the groundbreaking ideas that Richard Florida put forward in *The Rise of the Creative Class*. We also learned from a very inspiring discussion with Mayor John Barrett III of North Adams, Mass., about the development of that city as a result of the impact of MASS MoCA. Felicia Knight's speech highlighted the continuing importance of art-for-art's sake, which is critical to all of us at the Maine Arts Commission. You can read excerpts from her speech on page 14.

The Maine Arts Commission has been a national leader among the state arts agencies in this movement. This summer, the agency was recognized with the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies' Innovation Award. We should all be very proud to have played such a significant role in the preparation of this conference and in making the state aware of the Creative Economy's potential.

The entire agency, together with a very hard working steering committee, has every right to give themselves a pat on the back. The Governor-appointed steering committee was made up of a very broad range of people with private, public, academic, artistic and business backgrounds, and will go a long way to help establishing relationships among the agency and the business community well into the future.

We knew that a conference bearing the "Blaine House" name would have to be first class. We also knew that a conference on the Creative Economy would have to create an audience for a somewhat new concept. So while we were planning the conference, we took our show on the road to communities in all parts of the state. In total, 950 people attended our community forums and helped to shape the conference and spread the word about the event. We owe a special thanks to the media that helped by asking tough questions over the last six months and adding to the public's Creative Economy dialog.

The Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy was a great success and I am certain the energy from the event will be carried over into many other projects and initiatives across the state.

John M. Rohman, Chair
Maine Arts Commission



JOHN M ROHMAN, Bangor, Chair
REBECCA SWANSON CONRAD, Auburn, Vice Chair

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Aaron J. Frederick, Portland
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Linda Farr Macgregor, Rumford Center
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Stuart Nudelman, Ogunquit
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Stephen Wicks, Orono

NEW NEA GUIDELINES FOR GRANTS FOR ARTS PROJECTS

The National Endowment for the Arts has announced a new grant format for Grants for Arts Projects in fiscal year 2005 that encourages a simpler application process.

"We hope this change will simplify the application process, as well as underscore the importance of artistic field and discipline at the agency."

For the past several years, applicants have applied to funding categories, such as Creativity or Heritage and Preservation. This coming year, applicants will approach funding through the field or discipline of their project, such as dance, theatre or visual arts.

"We hope this change will simplify the application process, as well as underscore the importance of artistic field and discipline at the agency," said A.B. Spellman, deputy chair for guidelines and panel operations of the endowment.

GRANTS FOR ARTS PROJECTS support exemplary projects in dance, design, folk and traditional arts, literature, local arts agencies, media arts, museums, music, musical theater, opera, presenting, theater, visual arts and multidisciplinary art forms. Organizations will apply directly through these fields.

Each discipline offers granting opportunities in the following categories:

Access to Artistic Excellence supports artistic creativity, preserves our diverse cultural heritage and makes the arts more widely available in communities throughout the country.

Challenge America Fast-Track Review Grants enables small and mid-sized organizations to extend the reach of the arts to underserved populations whose opportunities to experience the arts are limited by geography, ethnicity, economics or disability.

Learning in the Arts for Children and Youth advances learning in the arts, consistent with national, state or local arts education standards.

Further information about these categories and grant requirements can be found on the endowment's Web site at <http://www.arts.gov/grants/apply/GAP05/>.

The Maine Arts Commission encourages Maine arts organizations to propose ideas to the endowment. If you would like advice or assistance from the Maine Arts Commission to pursue an idea or application, please contact Kathy Ann Shaw, grants/arts development associate, 207/287-2750 or kathy.shaw@maine.gov.



STRATEGIC PLANNING UPDATE

The Maine Arts Commission is in the midst of strategic planning throughout the summer and fall of this year. The agency updates its plan annually and every three years conducts a thorough assessment and renewal of the five-year plan. This year, Maine Arts Commission members, committee members, staff and planning consultant Dr. Craig Dreeszen are gathering in planning meetings; surveying and meeting with artists, constituent groups and partners; and reviewing the agency's mission, long-range goals and priorities.

The agency creates and maintains a plan so that it is able to adapt to the changing needs of constituents, focus efforts, wisely invest scarce resources and explain its work to the public—all so that the agency can better achieve its mission. Throughout the process, desired outcomes are identified so the agency can evaluate program results.

Here are a few of the issues being considered this year:

- what would Maine be like if arts advocacy was as well organized as the environmental movement, and Maine citizens valued arts and culture as much as our natural environment?
- how can we integrate into our plans the tremendous interest in the state's Creative Economy and position the agency to advance Maine's creative sector?
- how can we increase student access to arts education in the face of tight funding and high-stakes testing?
- what else can be done to encourage Maine artists, tradition bearers and other creative workers?
- should the agency more assertively seek funds from private sources that are not readily accessible to its constituent organizations?

Such planning has shaped the Maine Arts Commission's programs and services and has led to impressive results. A plan to invest in community development through the arts yielded the Discovery Research program, through which 28 communities and regions have so far assessed and documented their arts, culture and heritage resources. This, in turn, stimulated the creation of new local arts agencies in many communities. Discovery Research also led to increased awareness of the abundance of creators, nonprofit arts organizations, cultural facilities and creative businesses in communities across the state. Understanding Maine's cultural resources led to the Governor's call for the Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy and the current interest in Maine's creative sector.

The Maine Arts Commission will approve a renewed strategic plan at its October 2004 meeting.

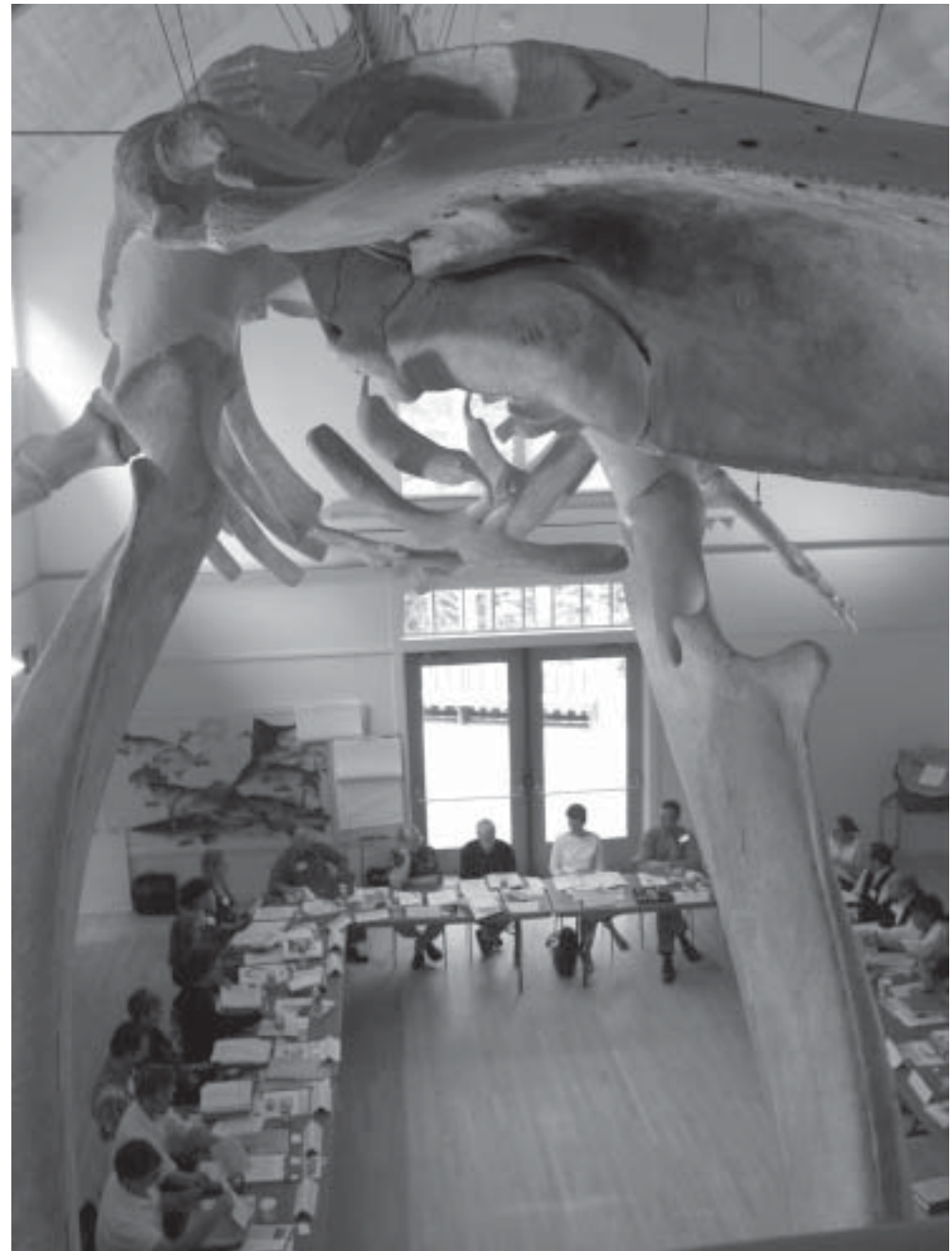


PHOTO BY HANNAH BRAZEE GREGORY.

MAINE ARTS COMMISSION STAFF AND COMMISSION MEMBERS GATHER DURING THE 2004 MAINE ARTS COMMISSION MEETING, WHICH TOOK PLACE AT THE CHEWONKI FOUNDATION IN WISCASSET ON JUNE 18.

SARA NICS CHOSEN AS COMMUNITY RELATIONS / PUBLIC INFORMATION ASSOCIATE

Sara Nics, of Augusta, has been selected as the new community relations/public information associate for the Maine Arts Commission. She holds a combined honors degree in journalism and political science from the University of Kings College. As a journalist, she has worked for *This Morning* and *Cross Country Check-Up*, two national flagship radio programs with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. She has also produced work for Maine Public Radio, the *Halifax Chronicle Herald* and *Northern Sky News*, among others. Sara is currently director of Common Company, a Maine-based contemporary dance organization. She has studied dance at Concordia University in Montreal and elsewhere in Ontario, Quebec and Nova Scotia.



PHOTO BY PAT MICHAUD.

"I am delighted that Sara has chosen to bring her diverse skills to the Maine Arts Commission," said Alden C. Wilson, director. "Sara clearly has a deep commitment to the arts, as well as the communications skills to help us reach out to artists and the broader Maine community." Sara's experience in other outreach and communications work will provide a strong background with which to serve the agency's many program areas and partner organizations. Wilson went on to say, "Sara also brings to the agency a talent for energetically managing various projects simultaneously, which will help her to build strong relationships across Maine's arts community."

This new position was developed at a critical time when Maine is working to build its Creative Economy by attracting young people to stay or settle here. Linking innovators to communities and businesses is essential to this initiative.

"Sara's arrival comes at a time when the commission is seeking to broaden its constituent base by reaching out to creators around the state," added Bryan W. Knicely, assistant director and accessibility coordinator. Sara said, "I'm excited to be in a position where I can help to grow arts in the state, for the sake of the creators and our communities."

You may contact Sara directly at 207/287-6746 or sara.nics@maine.gov.

REBECCA SWANSON CONRAD NAMED AUBURN'S CITIZEN OF THE YEAR

The Maine Arts Commission's Vice Chair, Rebecca Swanson Conrad, received the Auburn Business Association's Citizen of the Year award in May. Once a year, the honor is granted to a citizen of Auburn who has had a significant positive impact on the city.

Gregory Whitney is on the board of the association. He says Conrad was chosen because she has contributed so much time to public service in Lewiston/Auburn.

"She is involved with a lot of different organizations; arts, economic development, children, health," says Whitney. "While doing that she has found the time to open a new business in downtown Auburn. It shows her commitment to the city."

Conrad serves on the L/A Arts board of directors, the Bates College Museum of Art advisory committee, the LA College advisory board and is chair of Androscoggin Homecare and Hospice. She is also a trustee for Central Maine Medical Center's School of Nursing and the Central Maine Community College. She played a crucial role in the development of L/A Excels, which works to better housing, health care, business, culture and future endeavors for the Lewiston/Auburn Community.

Cementing her commitment and faith in Lewiston/Auburn, Conrad recently opened Rÿsen, a home, gardening and antique store in Auburn.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE LEWISTON SUN JOURNAL.

INTERN NEWS

INTERN TO EXPLORE THE SOMALI COMMUNITY IN LEWISTON

Meredith Johnson has joined the Maine Arts Commission staff as a summer intern, from June to August of this year. Meredith is a doctoral student in cultural anthropology at Indiana University. She is working in Lewiston over a 10-week period, gathering information about arts and culture in the city's Somali community.

Meredith has completed course work at both the University of Oklahoma and the University of Chicago. While in Chicago, Johnson worked with the Mexican Fine Arts Center Museum Performing Arts Festival. She has also conducted research among American Indian communities. Meredith says her interest in cultures in diaspora is one of the things that drew her to the Lewiston internship project.

Meredith's internship is being supported in part by the Cultural Resources Diversity Internship Program which is funded by the National Center for Cultural Resources, the National Park Service and the Everett Internship Program.

Emily Laverty also joined the agency's staff as an intern this summer. Emily is a graduate student seeking a master's degree in public administration-community arts management at the University of Illinois. Among other projects, she worked with agency director Alden C. Wilson to begin development of Creative Economy toolkits for Maine's rural communities.

Kelly Colpitt, an art history student at the University of Maine, Orono will intern with Donna McNeil, contemporary art/public art associate, this summer. Kelly will be preparing for the first review of the Individual Artist Fellowship program under its new guidelines.

If you find yourself at the Maine Arts Commission offices this summer, please extend a warm welcome and thank you to the interns. Their energy helps the agency work toward its many goals.



PHOTO BY KEITH LUDDEN.

MEMBERS OF LEWISTON'S SOMALI COMMUNITY GATHERED LAST SUMMER FOR THE OPENING OF THE RED SEA RESTAURANT.

If you find yourself at the Maine Arts Commission offices, please extend a warm welcome and thank you to the interns. Their energy helps the agency work toward the its many goals.

BLAINE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON MAINE'S CREATIVE ECONOMY RECEIVES NATIONAL AWARD

The Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy was awarded the National Assembly of State Arts Agency's Innovation Award in Washington DC, on July 18th. The award was presented at pARTicipate, a joint convention of Americans for the Arts and the National Assembly of State Arts Agencies.

The Innovation Award is presented to one state arts agency or regional arts organization a year to recognize best practices and to inform the broader public of what these agencies can accomplish. The

focus of the award changes every year to respond to key issues in the public arts support field. In 2004, it recognizes a strategy for communicating the public value of public support for the arts.

"I am pleased that the Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy has been nationally recognized for promoting arts as an integral part of the state's future," said Governor John E. Baldacci. "The Creative Economy opens the door to an exciting vision for Maine; creating good paying jobs, entrepreneurship and vibrant communities."



"We are delighted and honored to receive this award," said Alden C. Wilson, director of the Maine Arts Commission. "The Blaine House Conference was a great success that has highlighted the importance of arts in economic development. It is wonderful to have all of our hard work recognized on a national level."

NEW MAINE ARTS COMMISSION MEMBERS NAMED

Three new members join the Maine Arts Commission this year. We welcome Richard A. Abramson, Hugh T. French and Katy Kline to the commission. We would also like to thank our outgoing members, Gail R. Scott and Peggy G. Golden, for their work.

RICHARD A. ABRAMSON, ARUNDEL

Richard is Superintendent of Schools for Union 42/ Maranacook Community School District 10. In this position, he oversees the administration of schools in the Readfield area. Throughout his professional life he has worked as an instructor and education consultant in Maine and elsewhere in the country. In 2001, he was the Maine Department of Education's Distinguished Educator. Richard will help to link the work of the Maine Arts Commission's Arts in Education program with the education community in the state.

HUGH T. FRENCH, EASTPORT

Hugh is the director and co-founder of the Tides Institute and Museum of Art in Eastport. The institute is an innovative cultural center which combines a mixture of cultural resources (museum, research, art production facilities and workshops) with regional renewal. Located on the Maine/New Brunswick border, the institute focuses on the

region's broader Canadian-American relationships, working as much in Canada as in the United States. Prior to his work in Eastport, Hugh was involved for 19 years with the establishment of the Salt Institute for Documentary Studies in Portland, and departed in 2001 as associate director. He holds a master's degree in history from the University of New Brunswick.

KATY KLINE, BRUNSWICK

Katy is the director of the Bowdoin College Museum of Art. Prior to coming to Maine in 1998, she spent 15 years as curator and then director of the List Visual Arts Center at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. She organized the American exhibition at the 1999 Venice Biennale. She has served on exhibition, fellowship and public art juries for many institutions including the National Endowment for the Arts, Massachusetts Cultural Council, American Association of Museums, Mid-Atlantic Arts Foundation and the Skowhegan School of Painting and Sculpture. She serves on the advisory council of the PBS television series *Art*

PHOTO BY HANNAH BRAZEE GREGORY.



21: Art for the 21st Century. She has written numerous articles and exhibition catalogues on modern and contemporary art and design. Katy will bring her understanding of contemporary arts management to her work as a commission member.

(ABOVE) NEW MAINE ARTS COMMISSION MEMBERS ARE WELCOMED DURING THE 2004 MAINE ARTS COMMISSION MEETING.

Ninth annual Art Honors at MECA

More than 400 people attended Maine College of Art's ninth annual Art Honors celebration on May 6. The event celebrated arts excellence, leadership and education, and raised nearly \$80,000 in support of youth programming.

As Maine's premier celebration of excellence in the arts, Art Honors is an opportunity to shine a light on the extraordinary activities and individuals in the arts sector. Achievement as a Visual Artist went to pop-artist Robert Indiana of Vinalhaven. The award was presented by Bret Waller, director emeritus of Indianapolis Museum of Art.

The Maine Community Foundation, which has awarded nearly \$1 million in grants to arts and cultural organizations through endowed and advised funds, was recognized in the category of Leadership in Arts Philanthropy. The honor was presented by Allen Fernald, president and CEO of Down East Enterprises.

Julia's Gallery for Young Artists at the Farnsworth Museum in Rockland received the award for Leadership in Arts Education for their innovative approach of allowing teens to manage all aspects of the gallery, from the creation of art to the curating, framing and hanging. Jamie Wyeth presented the award to Julia's Gallery.

The Bachelor of Fine Art Thesis Index Exhibition for the 2004 graduates was on display for the cocktail reception at the college's Institute of Contemporary Art. The gala also provided a chance to showcase the talents of other Maine College of Art students, who created President Christine Vincent's couture for the evening, as well as a video presentation and the art on the tables.

Proceeds from the gala support the college's work developing the artistic talent of young people. Programs for youth include Scholastic Art Awards, Early College, New England Portfolio Days, Institute for Contemporary Art's Young Arts and Creative Community Partnerships.



PHOTO COURTESY OF THE MAINE COLLEGE OF ART.

(ABOVE) ROBERT INDIANA SIGNS PROGRAMS FOR THE YOUNG WOMEN FROM JULIA'S GALLERY WHO WERE ALSO HONORED AT THE CEREMONY.

Proceeds from the gala support the college's work developing the artistic talent of young people.

Theater At Monmouth

selected for the Shakespeare in American Communities program

Maine's Theater At Monmouth is one of 22 theatre companies across the country selected to be part of the National Endowment for the Arts' Shakespeare in American Communities program. The theater — designated by the Maine Legislature as the Shakespearean Theater of Maine — is a year-round repertory company of professional theater artists from across Maine and the United States.

PHOTO COURTESY OF SIMONS' PHOTOGRAPHIC.

"We're very proud to be included in this program with so many prestigious theaters throughout the country."

As part of the endowment's Shakespeare program, The Theater At Monmouth will mount a full-length production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor*, which will be performed for students across the region. The show will tour with a company of 14 professional actors and technicians and is scheduled to be available in the early part of 2005.

Producing director David Greenham says being selected to take part in the Shakespeare program is a great opportunity for the Theater At Monmouth and for the students who will have the opportunity to see a professional production of a Shakespearean play.

"We're very proud to be included in this program with so many prestigious theaters throughout the country," said Greenham.

The theater's production of *The Merry Wives of Windsor* is set in Brooklyn in the 1950s. The entire show takes place on the sidewalk near Coney Island, in front of storefronts with apartments above. Greenham says Master Ford is somewhat like Ralph Kramden and Page is a "Norton-esque" deli-owner. Falstaff is a local wiseguy with a love of the fast life. The show is interspersed with live doo-wop music.

The 2004 season will mark the Theater At Monmouth's 35th year of performances. Their season includes a spring tour of a play for children, a summer season of five plays in repertory with several special events and a fall production of an operetta or musical.



JERI PITCHER AND JEFFREY THOMAS PERFORMING IN THE THEATER AT MONMOUTH'S 2003 PRODUCTION OF *JULIUS CAESAR*. (PHOTO COURTESY OF SIMONS' PHOTOGRAPHIC.)

For more information on the program visit
www.shakespeareinamericancommunities.org/about/history.html

For tickets call 207/933-9999 or visit <http://www.theateratmonmouth.org>

PHOTO BY ROBERT MITCHELL.



Excerpts from a poem

by Aaron Frederick,
Maine Arts Commission member, presented at the
Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy

...But it seems we're on the frontier on the Maine.
Radio towers above white pines transmitting
Osprey calls from railroad trestle stations,
Reaching out to teeming survivors;
Kids making blue tarp parachutes and jumping off sandpit walls,
And swimming in green gorges.

... Frontier pipe smoking chicken machinist farmer railroad yardsmen
Have given birth, here but then, to sons who now
Open hip breweries or sell insurance, or rasterize .JPEG images on micro-processors.

...And thusly evolves a new sub-society for today,
The Quiet Creatives, weaving baskets,
carrying quarts of potential energy,
Knitting culture and commerce with the spun yarn of risk.
They are We,
The intuitive scientists of manifestation,
Clad in plastic and wool, and
Bringing form from fingers dipped in Uncertainty.
They are We,
Shaping and Reshaping our Experience,
Our Need, our Desire
For carving out a vessel of change;
the rediscovery of priorities based on the core values
of Raw Integrity and Real purpose.
We are deep roots in the vital ocean, granite, and dark soil,
And in backyards full of all the neighborhood kids.
They are We, making it all happen.
Please stick around.

(BELOW) THE BATES MILL
SITE IS A GREAT EXAMPLE
OF CREATIVE ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT AND THE
POTENTIAL FOR
RECLAIMING MAINE'S
EMPTY INDUSTRIAL
BUILDINGS. PHOTO BY
ROBERT DARBY.



*Thank you to the many individuals and
organizations which helped to bring together
the Blaine House Conference on Maine's
Creative Economy*

Androscoggin County Chamber of Commerce
Androscoggin Valley Council of Governments
Bangor Savings Bank
Bates College
Bates Mill Complex
Betterment Fund
Bloom Arts and Events
Brann & Isaacson
CB Richard Ellis – The Boulos Company
City of Auburn
City of Lewiston
Coastal Enterprises, Inc.
Dead River Company
Dreeszen & Associates
Fisher Charitable Foundation
Fleet Bank
Harriman Associates
Headlight
Hilton Garden Inn Auburn Riverwatch
J.S. McCarthy Printers
L.L. Bean
Maine Community Foundation
Maine Humanities Council
Maine Office of Tourism
Maine State Housing Authority
Maine State Library
Moonlighting
National Endowment for the Arts
National Semiconductor
New England Foundation for the Arts
Peoples Bank
Platz Associates
Rinck Advertising
Transformit, Inc.
University of Maine
Verizon

A National Perspective on the Creative Economy

Felicia Knight, director of communications for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA)

Presented at the Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy

I think the NEA perspective is the same as the state or local perspective. And that is that without the arts in our schools and in our communities, our lives are not as fulfilled as they could be – or even as they should be.

When people look for a place to live and work, they look for a community that has much to offer. Obviously, certain things are going to be foremost on people's minds. Can I earn a living here? Can I educate my children here? Can I afford a home here? Hand in hand with those questions is, what is available here beyond work and school that will make my life more satisfying?

At the NEA, we try very hard to invest in the arts in as many communities as possible. I use the term “invest” deliberately because for every dollar that NEA invests in an arts organization, between seven and eight more are generated. All of our grants require at least a 1-to-1 match, but beyond the matching funds come other dollars in the form of donations, ticket sales, money spent in ancillary activities ranging from parking, to dining, to shopping.

While the economic argument is a strong one to make for the arts – we at NEA believe that should not be the primary argument. Communities should embrace the arts for the sake of the art, for what it can do to enhance and enrich our lives. Trying to quantify the value of art is nearly impossible.

Very often people who have no affinity for or experience with the arts are approached by advocates with an argument along the line of, “If you give a child cello lessons, you'll improve his math scores by 30 percent.” Well, that may be true. But what if it isn't? What if by giving a child cello lessons...you teach a child to play the cello? What if by learning to play the cello, that child finds discipline and self-assurance, becomes a more

well-rounded, better-informed, more fully formed human being?

A point that our chairman, Dana Gioia, has made repeatedly is that communities should embrace the arts in their schools and in their towns because their children and their citizens deserve opportunities to find more than one path to excellence. The math scores may not go up. (Mine didn't!) But the child is greatly rewarded. The cash register may not ring, but the community is greatly enhanced. In making the argument for art merely economic, it is reduced to a commodity to be championed by economists.

When people from across a community feel welcomed and involved in the arts, they feel a sense of ownership in the arts that are presented to them.

A couple of weeks ago, we were pleased to announce at NEA the second phase of our Shakespeare in American Communities program: Shakespeare for a New Generation. I am proud to say, Maine's Theatre At Monmouth was chosen as one of 22 theatre companies from around the country that will tour at least ten communities in their regions with a Shakespeare play and a strong educational component for students.

Our program will allow one of the best artistic organizations in the state to perform for students who otherwise may never have the opportunity to see a live, professional production of the world's greatest playwright. The exchanges that will happen between those artists and their audiences will be compelling.

At the same time, artistic and cultural opportunities that take advantage of resources that are native to a community are often the best foundations on which to build creative economies. Later this month, the Downeast Heritage Center will open in Calais. It is the perfect example of economic and cultural development that builds upon the resources and history that are unique to one region.

Likewise, the Maine Acadian Heritage Council is developing – with the help of grants of \$30,000 and \$15,000 from NEA – an Acadian cultural heritage trail with an accompanying audio recording that will encompass the beautiful

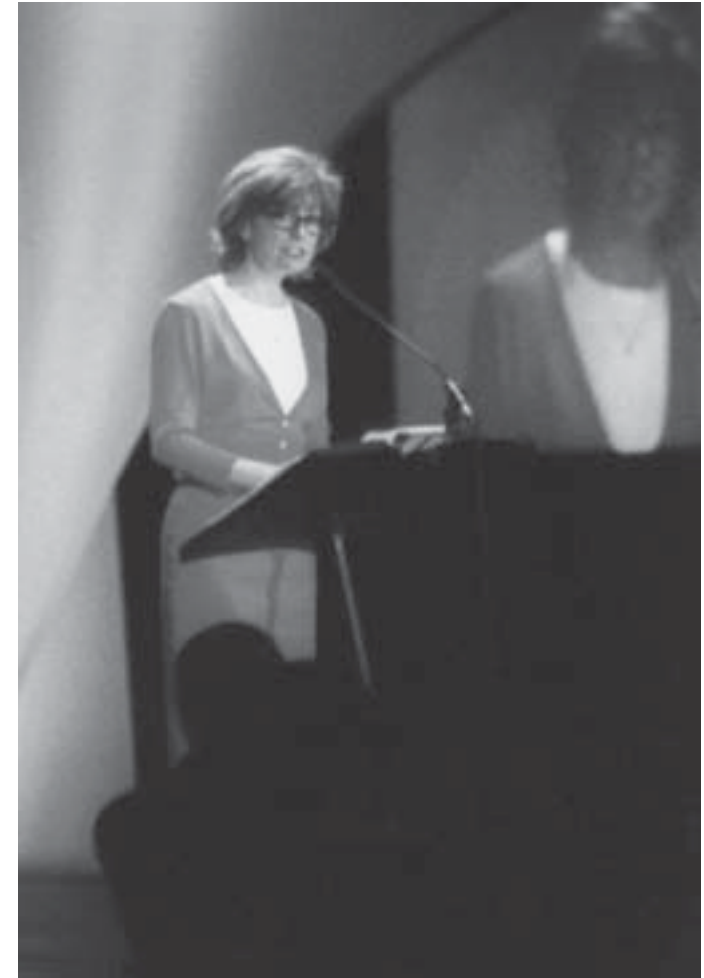


PHOTO BY ROBERT DARBY.

St. John Valley.

No one knows better than people in the arts that there is no guarantee of “if you build it they will come.” But if you offer something that people realize they don't want to live without, you will build a cultural economy where the currency is love and respect for the arts and all they contribute to our humanity.

A final note: you should not take for granted the support that a conference such as this has enjoyed from the Governor and the Congressional Delegation.

Maine is where I grew up. (Maine is still my legal address!) Maine is where I learned a love of the arts. It is a fertile place for art, artists and audiences for all disciplines. I hope to return here full time in the not too distant future, to a place where art is available, welcomed, supported and valued – not because it is lucrative, but because it is necessary and beautiful.

What's next for Maine's Creative Economy?

Some recommendations from the small working group discussions at the Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy

Prepared by Dr. Craig Dreeszen

The participants at the Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy divided into 21 smaller working groups to develop recommendations to advance Maine's creative economic development. Here are some of the common themes that emerged from those discussions.

EDUCATION AND ADVOCACY ARE ESSENTIAL

Advocacy is required to make the Creative Economy better understood among economic development agencies, legislators, state and local business support organizations, institutions of higher education and financial institutions.

ARTS EDUCATION IS THE BASIS OF A CREATIVE ECONOMY

Erosion of K-12 arts education undermines the creative workforce that is fundamental to Maine's successful competition in a global economy. In a Creative Economy, every child needs arts education as much as math and science.

IDENTIFY EXISTING RESOURCES AND MAP MAINE'S CREATIVE ECONOMY

Mapping Maine's creative sector may help make this economic cluster more visible and more valued. Artists and creative entrepreneurs need to join chambers of commerce and approach small business development organizations. The business support infrastructure needs to adapt to the creative cluster.

COMPREHENSIVE PLANNING SHOULD INCORPORATE THE CREATIVE ECONOMY

State and municipal plans should be adapted to incorporate Maine's creative economic resources. Creative businesses need help developing sound business plans.

POLITICAL SUPPORT IS ESSENTIAL

Top state and municipal officials must visibly support creative economic development and all departments must support the vision.

CULTURAL TOURISM MUST MATCH LOCAL CULTURE

Tourism development must be based on local culture to remain authentic and attractive. Local cultural attractions need help to market within and outside their local communities.

MARKET MAINE'S CREATIVE ECONOMY

The products and services of Maine's Creative Economy must be marketed internationally to compete in the global economy. Maine needs information technology infrastructure and training to communicate and market on the Internet.

PRIVATE AND PUBLIC CREATIVE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT FUNDS ARE NEEDED

Many of the recommended initiatives require funding. Maine needs a range of funding options and a Maine Creative Economy Fund.

STATEWIDE LEADERSHIP AND COORDINATION ARE ESSENTIAL

The growing interest in Maine's Creative Economy should be sustained with state-level leadership and partnerships to mobilize the public and private resources necessary to build and sustain the initiative.

PARTNERSHIPS AND NETWORKS ARE NEEDED

Maine will build its Creative Economy through state and local-level partnerships. At the local level, government, business, education, cultural organizations and artists can encourage each other's contributions to cultural, community and economic development. Artists, creative workers and creative businesses seek opportunities to network, to learn from one another's and to employ each other's services.

PUBLIC POLICIES ARE NEEDED TO PROTECT CIVIL RIGHTS

To keep and attract essential creative workers and businesses, Maine requires policies and practices that promote tolerance.

A full report on the working groups' recommendations will be included in the conference proceedings.



GOVERNOR BALDACCI WITH KEYNOTE SPEAKER RICHARD FLORIDA. PHOTO BY ROBERT MITCHELL.



ATTENDEES BROWSE THE CREATIVE ECONOMY SHOWCASE. PHOTO BY ROBERT DARBY.

Voices from the community

Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy

More than 650 people attended the Blaine House Conference on Maine's Creative Economy. Here is what some of them had to say about the event:



"I left feeling very good and inspired about the whole idea of broad recognition that artists, creatives can have such a profound effect on the economy; just the fact that was recognized, that research had been done. My sense was, people want to make our overall quality of life better, not make money from us. I just thought it was great and I was so glad that I invested in going."
Amy Stacey Curtis, installation artist, Gray

ATTENDEES TOURED
THE BATES MILL WITH
PLATZ ASSOCIATES
ARCHITECTS.
PHOTO BY ROBERT
MITCHELL.

"I really liked the use of the space at the Bates Mill and the energy created around it. You could tell a lot of work had gone into it. I kept hearing that you can take an old building and make it new again and it seemed like a great idea. Maine is known for its historic buildings, but that doesn't mean there can not be renewed community life around them."

Dara Kidder, Americorps VISTA worker, Augusta

"We were really glad to be there. I loved to see all the people from all across the state, from large and small organizations. I was excited that the Governor was there and so many people from town planning offices and economic development offices."

Harriet Mosher, Director of Brunswick Area Arts and Cultural Alliance, Brunswick

"I think the energy of the conference is what really excited me. I walked around with a big smile on my face. Every session I went to, people were super-engaged. I heard about the importance of having a strong downtown for a Creative Economy and I'm going to be a part of that in Lewiston."

Dana Eidsness, director of the Lewiston/Auburn Regional Office, Maine International Trade Center, Lewiston



THE SEAN MENCHER COMBO
PERFORMED WITH OTHER
MUSICIANS AT THE MAINE MUSIC
SHOWCASE ON FRIDAY NIGHT.
PHOTO BY ROBERT DARBY.

"I was overwhelmed by the turnout. I thought it was extremely well organized and extremely well promoted, and that showed by the huge number of people that expressed an interest in the topic by showing up. The discussions that I heard, including Richard Florida's presentation, really set a very positive tone regarding not only on where Maine is, but where Maine could go with the Creative Economy."

P. James Dow, Jr., president, Bangor Savings Bank, Bangor

"Folks from my area were very excited. It was great to hear from Mayor John Barrett from North Adams. It just takes great courage to pursue this. We're doing it in our communities, so it was very reinforcing."

Jayne Lello, Centre Theatre board member, Sebec



FRTIZ GROBE AND MIKE MICHLOM, BOTH OF THE ODD COMPANY, PERFORMED AT THE CONFERENCE. PHOTO BY ROBERT MITCHELL.

"Just getting all those people in the same room for a day was really exciting. It was a chance for a guy like me to network, to be in the same room with all these people: presidents and directors. For me that was huge."

Jonathan Mess, artist and arts educator, Buckfield

"My husband and I are both in our 30s and we came here from Boston to make a life for ourselves. It made me feel really good about being in Maine today. I was totally charged by the whole event. I was really impressed by the Governor. It is exciting to feel that if we push to implement these ideas locally, we are going to be supported by the state. It makes me feel like Maine is just leading the way. It makes me want to stay here and continue to invest our efforts here."

Lucia Colombaro, vice president, DEXIMER a technology and innovation company, Bethel

"It changed my thinking in that the Creative Economy is not just artisan-based – everybody can be involved in the Creative Economy. One of the things that stands out is all the work that was done by Transformit [Inc.]. That there are businesses in Maine that do such awe-inspiring work, shows that we can export our creative minds across the world."

Michael Williams, AVP/manager, Androscoggin Bank, Auburn

"The group that went down to the conference, and some others, are going to be meeting again in Piscataquis County, and doing some debriefing; kind of deciding where we go from here. That meeting is going to be at the Centre Theatre in Dover-Foxcroft. We chose the Centre Theatre specifically because it is one of the centerpieces of what we hope is to be a renaissance up here in Piscataquis County."

Mark Scarano, economic development director, Piscataquis County



TRANSFORMIT, INC. USED LARGE LYCRA SCREENS TO TRANSFORM THE BATES MILL FOR THE CONFERENCE. PHOTO BY ROBERT DARBY.

Maine student musicians to study with National Symphony Orchestra

Two young Maine musicians attended the National Symphony Orchestra Summer Music Institute in Washington, D.C. this summer, from July 1 to July 21. Miranda Blanchard and Kallie Ciechowski were chosen from a statewide pool of applicants by the Maine Alliance for Arts Education.

Kallie Ciechowski plays viola and is a sophomore at Portland High School. Miranda Blanchard is a chelist who is a home schooled in Vienna. Both students received full scholarships including private lessons, chamber music coaching, performance opportunities in the Washington, D.C. area, master classes and seminars, all with members of the National Symphony Orchestra. They received additional funding from the Alliance through a Unity Foundation grant.

Cindy Rubinfine, Miranda Blanchard's mother and accompanist, said of Miranda's selection, "She is thrilled and happy and excited. It is precisely the kind of experience that she wants and needs right now, and that we don't have the resources to provide."

First Lady Karen M. Baldacci hosted a tea at the Blaine House on April 29 to honor Maine's finalists for the National Symphony Orchestra Summer Music Institute for 2004.

The First Lady and Richard Abramson, chair of the Maine Alliance for Arts Education presented certificates to the two scholarship winners and the two finalists.

David McIntyre III is one of the finalists. He is an oboist and junior at Nokomis High School in Newport. He studies with Dr. Louis Hall and Bruce Brown.

Kallie studies with Julia Adams, Julianne Eberl and at the Portland Conservatory of Music. Miranda studies with Kathleen Foster. Leslie Harrison, a



MIRANDA BLANCHARD PLAYS *BOUREE* BY W.H. SQUIRE AT THE BLAINE HOUSE.

PHOTO BY SARA NICS.

flutist from Cape Elizabeth and freshman at Ithaca College, was not able to attend.

The First Lady, Alliance executive director, Carol Trimble, and deputy commissioner of the Maine Department of Education, Patrick Phillips all congratulated the finalists on their work. Dr. Dorothy Freeman, president and CAO of the Unity Foundation, which had given \$250 in funding to the alliance for the program, presented an additional unrestricted gift of \$500 to support the

alliance's work.

Following the ceremony, the three young musicians performed for the assembled guests. David McIntyre played *Allegro Moderato* from Trio No. 1 by J. Haydn. Kallie Ciechowski played the *Prelude* from Suite No. 1 by J.S. Bach. Miranda Blanchard completed the program with a *Bouree* by W.H. Squire.

Don Roy plays Acadian music at the Library of Congress

When you listen to the music from Don Roy's fiddle, you can hear galloping horses' hooves and echoes of generations of Acadian fiddlers. The galloping rhythm and respect for the past are part of what identify the French Canadian and Acadian tunes which are played in Maine.

On May 18, Roy played at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. with Acadian singer Florence Martin. Their noontime performance was part of the *Homegrown: Music of America* series which is sponsored by the Library of Congress and the American Folklife Center.

Toe-tappers from across the country heard something familiar in Roy's music. It is related to the same Acadian tradition that finds its southern expression in Cajun music.

While his playing is Acadian at heart, Roy says he has been influenced by a wide range of fiddling.

"I've dabbled in all of them; bluegrass bands, Irish tunes, Cape Breton stuff," says Roy. "But when I go back to the French Canadian stuff — the tunes that I learned as a kid — you can hear reflections of the people I learned the tunes from."

As a boy, Roy spent school vacations and fishing trips with his Uncle Lucien Mathieu, whose father had immigrated to Maine from Canada. As a kid, Roy says, he liked the fiddle because "Uncle Lucien played it." One day when Roy was 15, Lucien let him take a fiddle home with him.

"Weekends we'd get together in the Winslow area, with all my mother's brothers and sisters, and they'd have a party every weekend," says Roy. "They all either sang or played the fiddle."

Roy learns most of his tunes by ear, although he occasionally thumbs through collections of fiddle

*"Music is a reason to get together
and feel good about life."*

tunes. In keeping with Acadian tradition, Roy has been passing along his fiddling heritage to a few private students, as well as a larger workshop at the Center for Cultural Exchange, in Portland. In 2003, he and an apprentice won a Traditional Arts Apprenticeship grant from the Maine Arts Commission.

exemplifies what Franco American fiddling is all about. It is simultaneously precisely controlled and wildly danceable."

Roy currently performs Franco and Celtic tunes with the band Fiddlebox. He says one of the things he likes most about the music is the positive atmosphere it generates.

"Music," he says, "is a reason to get together and feel good about life."

Ethnomusicologist Bau Graves calls Roy the finest Franco fiddler in New England, whose playing, "exactly



PHOTO BY ROBERT DARBY.

(ABOVE) DON ROY PERFORMING AT THE BLAINE HOUSE CONFERENCE ON MAINE'S CREATIVE ECONOMY. PHOTO BY ROBERT DARBY.

National Folk Festival plants seed for annual Bangor folk arts festival

By making the summer folk festival an annual event, the City of Bangor is investing in the arts for the all of the many benefits that brings – economic, educational, cultural and community-building.

The last National Folk Festival to be held in Bangor will be on August 27, 28 and 29 of this year. Folk artists from around the country will perform on the Bangor waterfront for an

audience of tens of thousands.

When the festival was first proposed,

there was some skepticism

as to whether the city could pull it off.

In fact, the festival has done so much good that the City of Bangor announced in March 2004, that it will continue to host a summer arts festival on the Bangor waterfront.

The Bangor community now believes in the power of the festival and in the city's

capacity to hold a world-class event. It was not always that way, says Pauleena MacDougall, director of the Maine Folklife Centre at the University of Maine.

When the festival was first proposed, there was some skepticism as to whether the city could pull it off. After all, Bangor is the smallest city to host the event and there were questions about how locals would respond to a huge crowd descending on the city's waterfront. Also, says MacDougall, local residents were wondering, "If Bangor throws a party, will people come?"

They sure did. In 2002, an estimated 80,000 people came to the festival. For three days, dozens of performing artists made music, danced, told stories and gathered to share their traditions.

Bangor had the largest opening night crowd in festival history that year with 10,000 people turning out. The 2002 initiative was led by a small group of volunteers, the City of Bangor, the Eastern Maine Development Corporation and the Greater Bangor Convention and Visitors Bureau. After the success of the first year, the community support for the event grew. Festival staff and volunteers now number nearly 900.

"After 2002, people said, 'Yeah, we can do this,'" says Heather McCarthy, executive director of the National Folk Festival in Bangor. "Bangor received validation. There was increased community pride."

The 2003 festival was even more successful and McCarthy hopes that this year's event will surpass last year's 100,000 attendee mark. She also hopes

This year's show will be as diverse and exciting as the past two. It will include performances ranging from Sheila Kay Adams's Appalachian songs and ballads, to Blinky and the Roadmasters, who play the Crucian Scratch music of the U.S. Virgin Islands. At the festival's five stages, people from across the United States will perform songs, dances and rituals from a myriad of cultures.

But after the musicians and dancers have gone home, after the lights and tents and stages are packed up and the National Folk Festival leaves Bangor for its next host city, the festival's legacy will continue on. It has brought much good to Bangor over the past two years: free access to diverse performing arts, stronger community spirit, a higher cultural profile for the city and a huge cash influx for the local economy.

(LEFT) PERFORMERS AT THE NATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL PRESENT TRADITIONAL ARTS FROM ACROSS THE COUNTRY AND THE WORLD.

PHOTO COURTESY OF THE NATIONAL FOLK FESTIVAL.



*“Bangor received validation.
There was increased
community pride.”*

that the community support for the festival will continue as Bangor initiates its own event.

“We are going to have festival staff and volunteers and city staff, all of whom will be able to make sure this happens,” says McCarthy.

McCarthy says the benefits of the festival extend beyond the event itself. The festival brought an estimated \$3.7 million into the local economy each year. It also increased Bangor’s cultural profile, both in Maine and beyond. McCarthy also thinks that bringing so many folks into Bangor for the festival may have helped to increase visits to Bangor for shopping and events at other times of the year.

MacDougall, of the Maine Folklife Center, says that the festival has had an even greater impact on the Bangor community. By making quality traditional arts freely available to local residents, participation in other cultural events in the area has increased.

“Bangor’s Greek Orthodox Church decided to have a booth in the ethnic food section of the festival,” says MacDougall. “They danced traditional Greek dances around the outside of the booth. Now, Greek dancing and language are being taught to young people at the church.”

In another example, MacDougall says the Twilight Delight Concert Series on Bangor’s waterfront included folk and ethnic concerts for the first time last year and attracted much larger audiences than it had in previous years.

MacDougall says the folk festival is also an important opportunity for Maine folk artists to show their work on a national stage. In 2003, instrument makers from around the state, including harp-makers from Houlton and fiddle makers from

Gorham, taught festival audiences about their crafts. This summer, Maine boat builders will do the same.

“Ralph Stanley is going to be featured at the festival this year,” says MacDougall. “He is a National Heritage Award winner. Several members of the Boat Builder’s Hall of Fame will also be there to share their years of experience and generations-worth of traditional knowledge.”

Participation in the festival, MacDougall says, will increase the profile of Maine’s folk artists nationally and locally.

By making the summer folk festival an annual event, the City of Bangor is investing in the arts for the all of the many benefits that brings — economic, educational, cultural and community-building.

On the whole, McCarthy says, the festivals have changed the way people think about Bangor.

“People want to see things happen here,” she says. “I think the future will look back and say, ‘We weren’t sure we could do it but we succeeded above everybody’s dreams.’”



PHOTO BY KEITH LUDDEN.

(ABOVE) AUGUSTA RESIDENT
KWABENA OWUSU GAVE A
WORKSHOP IN GHANAIN DRUM-
MAKING AT THE 2003 FESTIVAL.

MAINE YOUTH EXCELLENCE IN ART: Celebrating the work of Maine's student artists

The Maine Youth Excellence in Art Project celebrates the work of student artists from Maine schools by exhibiting student art in several venues in the state Capitol complex.

During the next three years, every school in Maine will be invited to submit one piece of two-dimensional art: print, painting, drawing or photograph. The artwork will be displayed at the State House, the Blaine House, the Maine Cultural Building or the Maine Arts Commission so that it can be enjoyed by Mainers who visit and work in the Capitol.

The project is led by Maine's First Lady, Karen M. Baldacci, in partnership with: President of the Senate, Beverly C. Daggett; Speaker of the House of Representatives, Patrick Colwell; the Maine Arts Commission; the Maine Alliance for Arts Education; and the Maine Art Education Association.

Mrs. Baldacci says it is important to recognize and celebrate excellence in art created by Maine youth.

"We honor our young artists by displaying artwork throughout our state Capitol complex for our Governor, Legislators and Maine citizens to enjoy," says Mrs. Baldacci. "Please join us in recognizing, honoring and sharing the talents of our young Maine artists."

The second installment in the series of exhibits is mounted around the state capitol this summer. It features work from students in eligible towns across Maine: Bucksport, Burnham, Buxton, Calais, Camden, Canaan, Canton, Cape Elizabeth, Caribou, Carmel, Casco, Castine, Caswell, Charleston, Charlotte, Chelsea, Cherryfield, China, Clinton, Colombia Falls, Connor Township, Corinna, Corinth, Cornish, Cornville, Cranberry Isles, Cumberland, Cushing, Cutler, Damariscotta, Danforth, Dayton, Dedham and Deer Isle.

As the project continues, the agency will send reminders to schools in communities that are listed for upcoming exhibits. For more information on the program, please contact Paul Faria, arts in education associate at paul.faria@maine.gov or 207/287-2790.



(RIGHT) "ZEBRA," A STUDENT WORK FROM MOUNTAIN VIEW YOUTH DEVELOPMENT CENTER.

(BELOW) FIRST LADY KAREN M. BALDACCI VIEWS STUDENT ARTWORK SOON AFTER ITS INSTALLATION IN THE BURTON M. CROSS OFFICE BUILDING IN THE STATE CAPITOL COMPLEX .

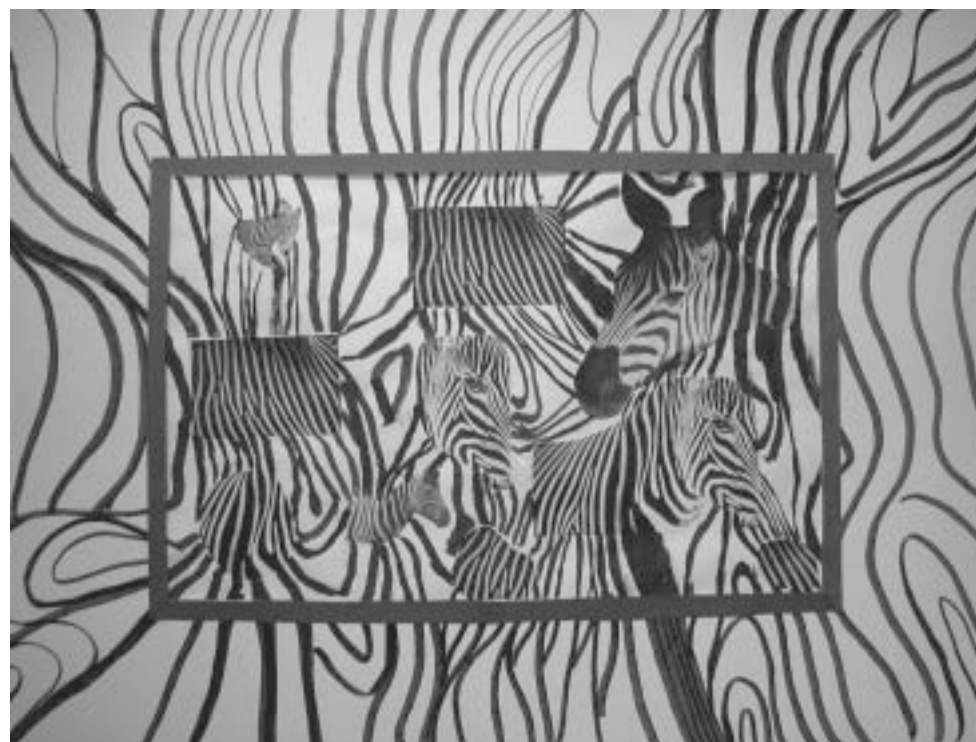


PHOTO BY SARA NICS.

PHOTO BY HANNAH BRAZEE GREGORY.



ARTS IN THE CAPITOL

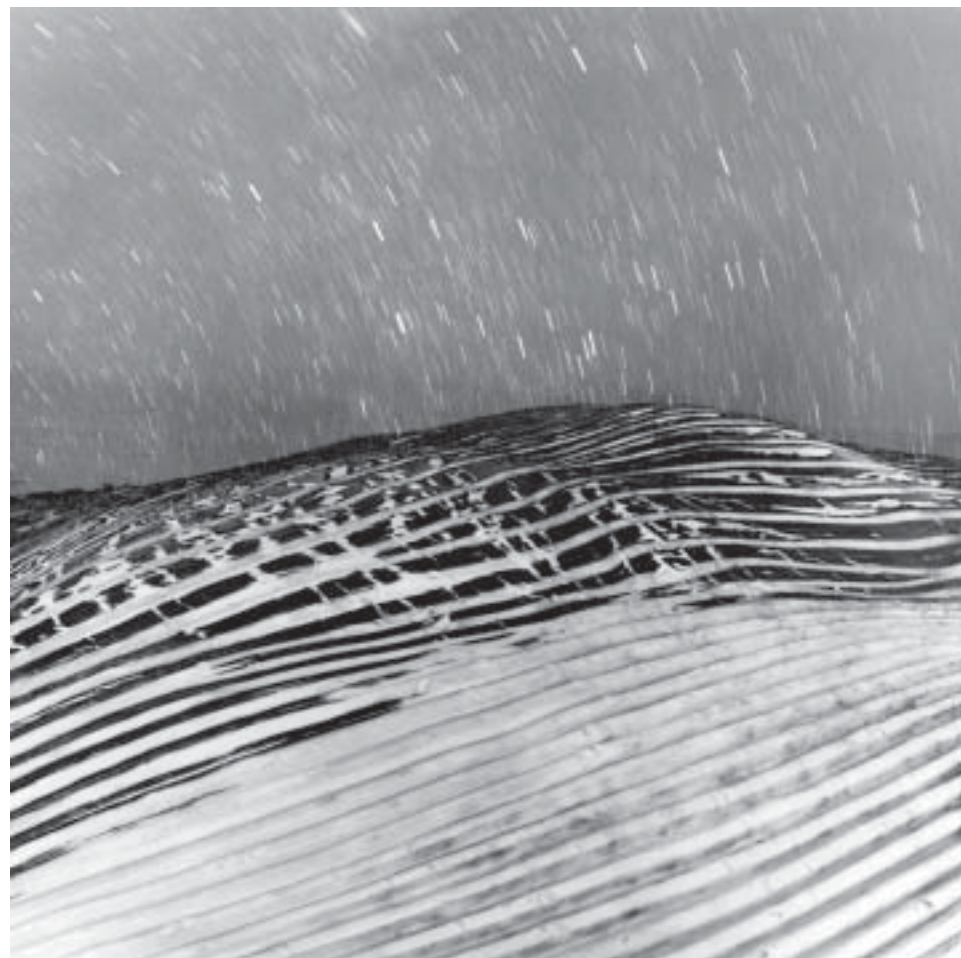
ABOUT MAINE series continues with: Shining on the Sunrise County

The sixth exhibition in the ABOUT MAINE series features 23 artists from Washington County.

The exhibit will be on display around the Capitol through August 20, 2004. A variety of media and styles including still life, figurative, landscape, prints, photography and abstraction characterize this exhibition, demonstrating the lively creativity and diversity of the resident artists of this region.

Exhibiting artists include: Ray Beal, Beals; Jane Diggins Harnedy, Bucks Harbor; Philip Sultz, Dennysville; Charlotte Joy Chase, East Machias; Connie Harter-Bagley, East Machias; Judith Valentine, East Machias; Kris Larsen, East Machias; David Orrell, Eastport; Elizabeth Ostrander, Eastport; Nanette MacNaughton, Eastport; Jaap Helder, Jonesport; Donna Grande, Lubec; Sharon Yates, Lubec; Tim Gaydos, Lubec; Bernie Vinzani, Machias; Greg Henderson, Machias; Robin Rier, Machias; Christine Simoneau Hales, Milbridge; John R. Salko, Perry; Joseph Harutunian, Steuben; Robert Bryson, Steuben; Richard Kapral, Steuben; Leslie Bowman, Trescott.

The purpose of ABOUT MAINE is to exhibit artwork from artists in specific regions across the state. The Arts in the Capitol program provides exhibitions in venues throughout the Capitol complex and highlights the work of contemporary Maine artists. All Arts in the Capitol events are free and open to the public. These works are installed in state employees' offices and require some flexibility on the part of visitors, with respect for those working in the offices.



(TOP)
"WHALEDUST" BY
LESLIE BOWMAN,
TRESCOTT. DIGITAL
PRINT.

(RIGHT)
"CHICKENS"
BY GREG
HENDERSON,
MACHIAS.
OIL.



To see images in the MaineArtsMag in color, please visit:



MAINEARTS.com

Tracking Fellows: Elizabeth Edwards

[THE FOLLOWING IS TAKEN FROM AN
INTERVIEW WITH THE ARTIST]

How has receiving the Maine Arts Commission Fellowship in poetry advanced your work personally and professionally?

It's always personally satisfying to have your work singled out by people in your field. Whether you're a potter or a plumber, having people admire your work is rewarding. Sometimes I say, why are you doing this? But then I start a new poem and ride on its adrenaline for awhile. Winning the Maine Arts Fellowship felt like that. The money was nice but I certainly didn't get into poetry to make money. I'm grateful for the support I've received. The people at the commission have been terrific.

Is your work deeply connected to Maine, to a sense of place?

Well I live in Kittery and am very Seacoast-oriented. The ocean and the Piscataqua River affect me daily. Just to be able to smell the ocean is still amazing to me after 12 years. I remain constantly aware of what a beautiful place Maine is. Aware too, that at any moment, someone will notice and say, "Hey you're from Pittsburgh!" and I'll be forced to leave.

Could you speak to us about inspiration and influences?

Regular people: people at the bars at noon on a Tuesday; the woman making my cheeseburger at Wendy's; the one guy at the drive-through bank who always puts a lollipop in for me in that plastic tube. I wonder about their lives, and if they're happy, and imagine secret identities for them. My six-year-old daughter is also a source of inspiration with "found poems." She said the other day, "How can I see who I am when I'm myself?" There's a poem there and I'll steal it.

Could the literary arts in Maine have a more cohesive voice, a stronger union and presence, if you will?

I really resist the idea of "bringing poetry to the masses." What does that mean? I'm not sure the masses want poetry or frankly care. I think it's important to make sure poetry is available in schools and libraries so if you like that sort of thing, it's there. As far as Maine having a more cohesive literary voice, I don't know. Maybe we could bring together all the Maine poets and create a poetic movement that could be named the "Ya cahn't git they-ah from he-ah" school and make shirts with little lobsters on them, or potatoes.

Do you attend or support writing groups in the state?

Honestly, I don't attend any writing groups but I support the idea. None of my friends are writers or poets. In fact, when the book came out it was a surprise to my friends and very interesting to see how they responded. I know some thought I was a little weird and it made them uncomfortable. But it was neat to experience that.

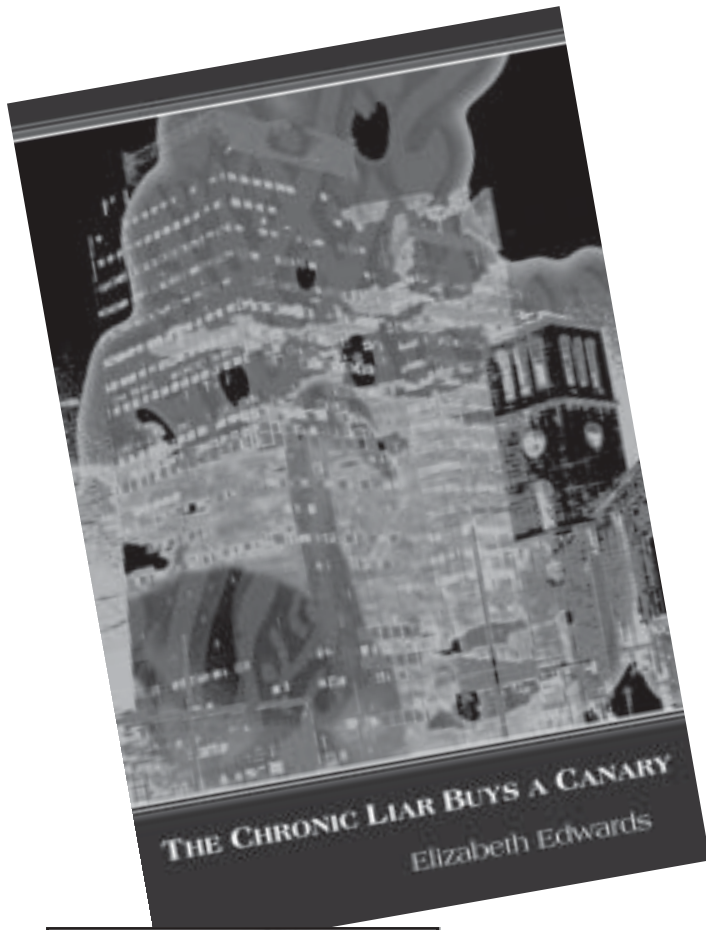
Tell us about the revision process when you are writing poems.

My husband is really my sounding board. I once wrote a poem from the viewpoint of a woodchuck who was starving because his lower teeth had grown up into his head. My husband read it and said, "Is this a joke? This is the worst poem I've ever read." So now when I hand him a new poem he says, "Hope it's not a woodchuck." But mostly I'm my own editor.

What poets or poems do you admire?

I like James Dickey, Stephen Dunn, Gerald Stern, Philip Levine, Mark Doty, Emily Dickinson, Frank O'Hara, Yusef Komunyakaa. Gosh there are so many. One of my favorite poetry books is *Across the Mutual Landscape* by Christopher Gilbert. I like illuminating everyday occurrences and elevating the normal. I also like powerful, risky language. I don't much care for poems that show off the poet's acrobatic verbal skills but have no roots in the real.

I remain constantly aware of what a beautiful place Maine is. Aware too, that at any moment, someone will notice and say, "Hey you're from Pittsburgh!" and I'll be forced to leave.



ELIZABETH EDWARDS IS CURRENTLY WORKING ON A SECOND POETRY COLLECTION, TENTATIVELY ENTITLED *O POSITIVE*.

REWINDING DOROTHY

by Elizabeth Edwards

My daughter begs me to make her sing again.
I walk Judy Garland backward on the screen;
arms awkwardly splayed the way the blind see

with trust first, then fingers
curling through hay and her dog's warm fur
just before she sensed a rainbow above the gray
stage.

Such artifice: the string that swings the lion's tail
a zipper up his shaggy back, the twister—fans
and spinning muslin. And when Buddy Ebsen
almost died

from aluminum dust, they replaced him
with a man who knew my daughter's crying trick:
weeping gets you what you want. By midnight,
she's won

the horse that changes color, six times replayed.
Pay no attention to the man behind the curtain—
gaze into the flames where a hazy parallel life

reveals me sipping lemon ice before Ghiberti's
golden doors
with my art students. A lover cooks white quince
for me
in a basement flat, and every afternoon leaks

pink and saffron. But it wasn't the same horse.
For each shot they trotted in a different dyed mare.
And rewinding, I realize she never wanted home;

having dipped her feet in ruby blaze
as dancing girls twined ribbon in her hair, she knew
where she belonged. Ignore the seams—semblance

is all you need to spin what you're destined to lose
back into being: a daughter just laid down to sleep
reaching up for more kisses. Or blinking dry snow

from your lashes as you wake in paper poppies;
everything ahead, emerald-shimmer so that
there she is again, beginning.

Newly juried members of the MaineArtistAccess:

Nathaniel Aldrich, Composer
Stephani Briggs, Jeweler
Crystal Cawley, Sculptor/bookmaker
Ray Chen, Ceramicist
Diana Cherbuliez, Sculptor
Susan Conley, Poet
Gisèle Couturier, Ceramicist
Lynn Duryea, Sculptor
Figures of Speech, Puppet Theater
Jessica Gandolf, Painter
Nathaniel Highstein, Installation Artist
Richard Kane, Filmmaker
Richard Lethem, Painter
Susan Mills, Photographer
Harold Philbrook, Performer
Evan Roberts, Performer
Nancy Salmon, Dancer
Micah Blue Smaldone, Musician/songwriter
Sonya Tomlinson, Singer/songwriter
Lynn Travis, Painter
John Whalley, Painter
Beth Wiemann, Composer
Richard Wilson, Painter

Every winter the Maine Arts Commission's Contemporary Artist Committee brings together a jury of professional artists from a wide range of disciplines to consider Maine artists for listing in the MaineArtistAccess directory.

The directory is used by individuals and organizations seeking to hire artists for residencies, workshops, commissions, etc. The database is an assurance of expertise for these contractors. The juried artist's portfolio is housed online and at the Maine Arts Commission. Images of the artist's work are available for access by groups seeking to review work in a specific genre. All MaineArtistAccess performing artists become part of the New England Foundation for the Arts touring roster and become eligible for matching fee funding. Additionally, membership in MaineArtistAccess makes artists eligible for the agency's Good Idea Grants.

Artists who do not wish to be adjudicated are encouraged to register on our online database via MaineArts.com, and are eligible for all other opportunities provided by the Maine Arts Commission.



(LEFT)
"TONY C."
JESSICA GANDOLF.
OIL ON PANEL.

(ABOVE)
"MASON'S LINE"
JOHN WHALLEY.
GRAPHITE ON PAPER.

To see these images in color, please visit:



MAINEARTS.com

(BELOW)
"SCREEN" (DETAIL)
GISÈLE COUTURIER. GLAZED
STONEWARE AND STEEL.





MAINE ARTS COMMISSION
building Maine communities through the arts

GRANTS CALENDAR FISCAL YEAR 2005

October 1, 2004	Good Idea Grant
December 17, 2004	Letter of Intent, Governor's Awards for Arts Accessibility
January 3, 2005	Good Idea Grant Governor's Awards for Arts Accessibility
February 7, 2005	MaineArtistAccess
March 4, 2005	Letter of Intent, Discovery Research
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 and Learning
June 6, 2005	Individual Artist Fellowships Letter of Intent, Art Service Organization Partnership Agreement
Ongoing	Organizational Development Special Projects Community Arts and Humanities

COMMITTEE MEETINGS

Arts in Education
September 15, 2004
January 6, 2005
June 17, 2005

Arts Institutions
October 21, 2004
February 10, 2005
June 17, 2005

Art Service Partners
October 13, 2004
January 12, 2005
April 6, 2005

Commission
October 15, 2004
February 11, 2005
June 17, 2005

Community Arts
September 14, 2004
May 17, 2005
June 17, 2005

Executive
December 9, 2004
January 20, 2005
April 14, 2005

Public Art
November 10, 2004
March 10, 2005
June 17, 2005

Contemporary Arts
September 15, 2004
March 24, 2005
June 17, 2005

Community Relations
September 14, 2004
January 11, 2005
March 30, 2005
June 17, 2005

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



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MAINE ARTS COMMISSION AUTOMATED ATTENDANT DIRECTORY LISTING

OFFICE HOURS ARE MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY 8:00 A.M. TO 5:00 P.M.



207/287-2724

- EXT. 1 Information line (upcoming events & meetings)
- EXT. 2 Keith Ludden, Community / Traditional Arts
- EXT. 3 Paul Faria, Arts in Education
- EXT. 4 Kathy Ann Shaw, Grants / Arts Development
- EXT. 5 Sara Nics, Community Relations / Public Information
- EXT. 7 Donna McNeil, Contemporary Arts / Public Art
- EXT. 8 Bryan W. Knicely, Assistant Director / Accessibility Coordinator
- EXT. 9 Alden C. Wilson, Director

For Rebekah Leadbetter, Information Manager, press "0" during working hours or dial direct at 207/287-6571.



207/287-2360

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.



Summer 2004 Contents:

MAINE ARTS COMMISSION NEWS

Maine Arts Commission wins Innovation Award
New Commission members welcomed

COMMUNITY NEWS

Theater At Monmouth selected for NEA Shakespeare in American Communities

SPECIAL SECTION: BLAINE HOUSE CONFERENCE WRAP-UP

A National Perspective on the Creative Economy
What's next for Maine's Creative Economy?

ARTS IN EDUCATION

Maine student musicians to study with National Symphony Orchestra

COMMUNITY/TRADITIONAL ARTS

National Folk Festival plants seed for annual Bangor folk arts festival

PUBLIC ART

Arts in the Capitol: celebrating the work of Maine's student artists

CONTEMPORARY ARTS

Tracking fellows: Elizabeth Edwards

CALENDARS

Maine Arts Commission meetings
Grants calendar for 2004 / 2005