

Fall 2002

Silverwire

University of Maine Center on Aging

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Silverwire

Vol. 1, No. 1 Fall 2002

NEWSLETTER OF THE UMAINE CENTER ON AGING

Center on Aging Experiencing a Full First Year

In November 2001, the University of Maine Board of Trustees voted to establish the UMaine Center on Aging (UMCoA), the first interdisciplinary program within the University of Maine System devoted exclusively to aging-related education and training, research and evaluation, and community service. The Center is proud to be part of the School of Social Work and the College of Business, Public Policy, and Health at the University of Maine.

In the months since its founding, the Center has initiated a wide range of exciting community programs, educational initiatives, and research projects. The staff and students at UMCoA are continuing to plan and implement a variety of programs that will surely enhance the lives of Maine's older citizens and their families, the communities in which they live, and the workforce that serves them.

One of the most important of these is the Maine Primary Partners in Caregiving Project, which is funded by a major grant from the U.S. Administration on Aging. It has enabled us to partner with Area Agencies on Aging and health-care providers in a five-county region to offer early intervention services, education, and training for rural family caregivers of older adults. Other initiatives include the Professional Excellence in Geriatrics (PEGS) continuing-education series, the GOLD marketing seminars, Senior College, May Festival, a John Hartford Foundation-supported project to enrich the School of Social Work curriculum with important content in geriatric and gerontological practice, and a comprehensive, informative new web site. These are some of the first-year initiatives that are described in the following pages.

Unquestionably, our mission is bold and far-reaching. It will require the full commitment of the staff, associates, and students affiliated with UMCoA and the determination of the academic and community partners who are collaborating with us in this pioneering effort. But our

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Welcome



I am very pleased to welcome the new Center on Aging to the Orono campus. Its arrival could not be more timely. Maine's population is growing older. We will need leaders at all levels of our public and private sectors who are ready for the challenges and opportunities represented by the changing demography of our state.



The time to prepare is now, and through the Center on Aging—led by nationally prominent scholar Lenard Kaye—the University of Maine can be a leader in helping the state meet the challenges ahead.

—Peter Hoff, President, University of Maine

Although established only recently, UMaine's Center on Aging has already achieved much success on campus and across the state, in large part because of its important and unique role. The Center provides cutting-edge, multi-disciplinary research and education programs on aging-related issues to numerous health, education, governmental, and business agencies who strive to address all aspects of the quality of life of older citizens. With Professor Kaye's vision, energy, and leadership, I expect the Center to continue expanding as an important resource for Maine's growing senior community.



—Robert Kennedy, Vice President for Academic Affairs and Provost

Welcome COA, cont.

The aging US population will present a challenge to the United States over the coming decades. The needs of an aging population will require an increased focus on our nation's health care system, including issues related to care of the elderly, but also the cost and structure of the business of health care. The units of the College of Business, Public Policy, and Health at the University of Maine are committed to research and service activities that will help to improve the lives of an aging population in our state and our nation.

—Daniel E. Innis, Dean, College of Business, Public Policy, and Health



The School of Social Work is pleased to welcome the Center on Aging to the University of Maine. As issues related to aging become more salient, the Center can provide significant leadership by conducting informed policy analysis on issues confronting older adults, by preparing future professionals in gerontology, and by answering important research questions about aging. Already the Center has collaborated with our faculty and students on innovative projects that will improve the lives of older persons and enhance the educational preparation of social work students. We look forward to many more years of partnership with the Center on Aging.

—Gail Werrbach, Director and Associate Professor, School of Social Work



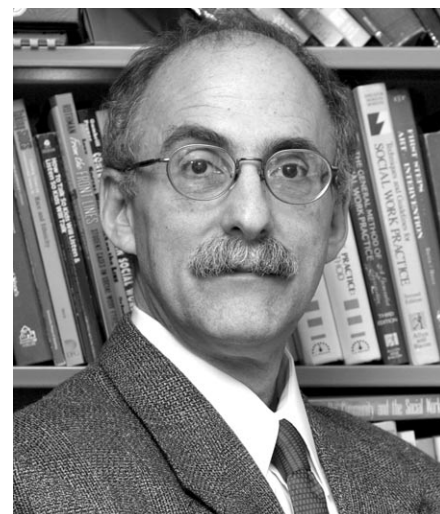
From the Director

WELCOME TO THE BOARD, VOLUNTEERS, ASSOCIATES, STAFF, STUDENTS

As director of the new Center on Aging at the University of Maine, I welcome you to this inaugural issue of *Silverwire*, our three-times-yearly newsletter. I hope you will find much to interest you among its pages, in this and future issues. We welcome your comments, questions, and any other feedback.

In the space of just under a year, the new UMaine Center on Aging has shown impressive accomplishments in its mission of creating partnerships and building alliances to enhance the quality of life of older adults and their families, both in Maine and beyond. Some of its achievements are highlighted in this inaugural issue of *Silverwire*. Much of what we have been able to do would not have been possible without the support of a diverse group of talented people, who have contributed to the Center on Aging in myriad ways—by agreeing to serve as members of our founding Advisory Board, by joining our impressive roster of Faculty Associates, by serving on various volunteer committees, and by serving on our staff and student rosters in various capacities.

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Lenard W. Kaye

Silverwire

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Lenard W. Kaye, Director
Elizabeth Johns, Editor
Daryne Sandford, Asst. Editor

Silverwire is published three times a year, in the Fall, Winter, and Spring.

The Center on Aging is located within the School of Social Work in the University of Maine's College of Business, Public Policy, and Health. Our mission is to promote and facilitate activities on aging in the

areas of education, research and evaluation, and community service, in order to maximize the quality of life of older citizens and their families in Maine and beyond.

Center on Aging
UNIVERSITY OF MAINE
5770 Social Work Building
Orono, Maine 04469-5770
Tel.: (207) 581-3444
Fax: (207) 581-4490
E-mail:
info@mainecenteronaging.org
www.mainecenteronaging.org

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POLICY EXPERTS, CANDIDATES TO SHARE IDEAS WITH PUBLIC

Symposium to Share International Perspectives on Health Policy

What is the best approach to the increasing crisis in the U.S. health-care system—the rising costs of medical care, insurance, and prescription drugs, nursing shortages, and the like? On October 24, experts with an international perspective will explore the sources of the U.S. health-care crisis and suggest policy options that might help resolve it.

The featured speaker for the symposium is Dr. Theodore R. Marmor of Yale University, an authority on health-care policy in the United States and Canada. The author or editor of several books, including *Aging, Social Security, and Affordability* (1998), *Understanding Health Care Reform* (1994), and the classic *The Politics of Medicare* (2nd ed., 2000), Professor Marmor regularly testifies before Congress about medical care reform, social security, and welfare issues.

Speakers offering Canadian and Maine perspectives will be Professor Gary M. Kenyon, Professor of Gerontology at Saint Thomas University, Fredericton, N.B., and Trish Riley, executive director and president of the National Academy for State Health Care Policy (NASHCP) in Portland, Maine. Kenyon is familiar with the impact of the Canadian health-care system upon older adults in Canada. Riley has authored or co-authored many articles on Medicaid, managed care, and state health reform.

Following these expert presentations will be responses from U.S. Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) and Democratic Senate candidate Chellie Pingree, or their representatives. The symposium will end with a period for audience questions, and with concluding remarks from Professor Robert H. Babcock, editor of the journal *Canadian-American Public Policy*.

Co-sponsors of the Symposium are the UMaine Center on Aging, the Eastern Agency on Aging, Eastern Maine Healthcare and Medical Center, and the UMaine Canadian-American Center.

REPORT ON RESEARCH

The Center on Aging is currently engaged in four significant research initiatives involving partnerships with community agencies and groups statewide. These include:

MAINE PRIMARY PARTNERS IN CAREGIVING (MPPC)

Funded with a three-year, \$600,000 grant from the U.S. Administration on Aging, this collaboration between the UMaine Center on Aging and the Eastern Agency on Aging forges an innovative partnership among health professionals at Norumbega Medical and Horizons Health Services in Maine, as well as Rosscare of Eastern Maine Health-care, Senior Spectrum (the Augusta-based Area Agency on Aging), the Aroostook Area Agency on Aging, and the Indian Township Tribal Health Center. The project partners expect to show that early identification of family caregivers—with primary care practices as the initial point of contact, and followed by a combination of information, support, and training—can ameliorate the multiple risks of family caregiving. We hope to create an ongoing community partnership that continues to offer early intervention services to family care providers at the conclusion of the grant.

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NEW CONTINUING EDUCATION SERIES FOCUSES ON OLDER ADULTS

In April 2002 the first eight-session, continuing-education series called PEGS (for Professional Excellence in Geriatrics Series) was held in Bangor and Belfast, Maine. Professionals in the field of aging—social workers, therapists, physicians, nurses, and others—heard leading practitioners in their fields discuss best-practice approaches to Alzheimer’s care, the use of assistive technology, osteoporosis treatment, end-of-life care, and other topics.

The positive reception for the initial series confirmed the need for continuing-education programs in central Maine with a focus on older adults. Planning has begun for PEGS 2003, with CoA staffer Muffy Eastman again chairing the organizing committee. Additional information about the 2003 series will appear in the next issue of *Silverwire* and on

the Center on Aging website: www.mainecenteronaging.org.

MAY FESTIVAL CELEBRATES THE GENERATIONS

May 1-4, 2002, marked the first annual May Festival, held in and around downtown Bangor and attracting hundreds of older adults and their families. Conceived as an imaginative way to introduce the new Center on Aging to the community and state, as well as a way to share information useful to older adults and their families, May

Festival was subtitled “A Celebration of Generations,” for its mix of fun and educational activities suitable for various age groups.

Maine Governor Angus King and U.S. Senators Susan Collins and Olympia Snowe sent greetings in advance, Bangor Mayor Michael R. Crowley addressed the closing reception, and Congressman John Baldacci visited the information roundtable for the new Penobscot Valley Senior College. In between, several hundred Bangor-area residents, young and old alike,



Clockwise from top left:

The hard-working May Festival Organizing Committee was ably led by co-chairs Stan Freeman and Cynthia Cavanaugh, shown here in front of May Festival headquarters in downtown Bangor.

“Cast off the bow, Bert!” Maine humorist Clyde Folsom tells the traditional Maine story, “The Bangor Packet,” for the May Festival luncheon crowd.

Senior Spectacular, hosted by the Eastern Agency on Aging, featured an eclectic mix of community organizations and agencies offering services of interest to older adults.



came and celebrated. The success of this first-time event guarantees that it will become a tradition. Planning is already underway for May Festival 2003.

NEW ORGANIZATIONAL LEADERSHIP SERIES GETS UNDERWAY IN 2002

In May 2002 the Center on Aging offered the first in a projected annual series of leadership seminars for administrators in agencies serving Maine's elderly. Called the GOLD Seminars (for Geriatric Organ-

izational Leadership Development), these seminars emphasize the most current tools and strategies for achieving organizational excellence.

The first program in the series, "Marketing for Success: Insuring Long-Term Geriatric Program Survival," was offered on May 17 (in Portland), May 21 (Hallowell), and May 31 (Presque Isle). Presenting was Susan R. Kaye, M.S.W., M.B.A. Local co-sponsors were the Southern Area Agency on Aging in Portland, the University of New England Geriatric/Gerontology

Education Center in Biddeford, Senior Spectrum in Augusta, and the Aroostook Area Agency on Aging in Presque Isle. The program introduced participants to marketing strategies that can help human service organizations succeed in today's challenging environment.

MASTER ATHLETES TELL THEIR STORIES

In August 2002 the Center on Aging hosted a presentation by older athletes at the USA Track and Field National Masters Outdoors Championships, held at the University of Maine. The Masters event promotes continuing participation in sports among athletes ranging in age from 30 to well into their 80s.

The Center on Aging program brought several senior athletes to speak about their commitment to sport. Many, but not all, have been competing throughout their lives.

Several athletes said the ability to challenge themselves has helped them remain active.

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Athletes ranging in age from 30 to over 80 participated in the USA Track and Field National Masters Championships, held at the University of Maine in August 2002. Several senior athletes attended a reception hosted by the Center on Aging, and spoke about the continuing importance of athletics in their lives.



First Year

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mission is the right one, given that Maine, one of the oldest states in the nation, has a high (and still expanding) proportion of older adults, many of whom grapple with some of the most demanding challenges that face us in later life.

Much more is being planned in the way of services, education, and research for the state of Maine. We will work hard to move our programs quickly from the drawing board to the campus classrooms and meetings rooms and into a variety of public and community venues throughout the state. Partnering with other organizations and individuals is what makes it possible for us to work to insure that Maine proudly embraces its older citizens and has the professional expertise and programmatic infrastructure to respond to the opportunities and challenges of an aging America.

REPORT ON RESEARCH

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MAINE PARENTING RELATIVES MENTAL HEALTH AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE PROJECT

This statewide planning and service project, funded by Generations United, will focus on mental-health disorders and substance abuse in Maine's rural families, and particularly the impact of such conditions on older adults who have assumed later-life parenting responsibilities. The project entails multiple components, including the creation of family support groups; development of a statewide network of agencies and groups that can promote expanded services for custodial grandparents and their families; and the organization of a statewide task force to document the needs of parenting relatives and to present policy recommendations related to the challenges created by mental-health and substance-abuse disorders.

STRATEGY TO RAISE NATIONAL AWARENESS ABOUT OSTEOPOROSIS

In collaboration with the Maine Center for Osteoporosis Research and Education, the UMaine Center on Aging has been awarded a \$139,000 research grant from the U.S. Administration on Aging to develop a national action plan to raise awareness about osteoporosis in post-menopausal women. A local advisory committee and two national steering committees, which include highly respected authorities in the fields of osteoporosis research and education, women's health, and aging, will guide the direction and output of the project. The project will use focus groups to generate ideas about preferences in delivering an educational message to various target groups, including minorities, women with visual and hearing impairments or with limited English-language ability, working women,

and rural and urban post-menopausal women around the country.

BUCKSPORT OLDER ADULT HOUSING ASSESSMENT

Made possible by support from the Bingham Group, this community study of the housing and service needs of older adults living in Bucksport, Maine, is being carried out in partnership with the Town of Bucksport and its Health Advisory Committee. The results of the study will contribute to the town's long-range review of housing options for older adults.

CoA in the Community

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NEW SUPPORT GROUP CREATED FOR THOSE TOUCHED BY ALZHEIMER'S DISEASE

A new Alzheimer's support group will begin meeting in Orono in September 2002, co-led by Muffy Eastman, APRN, and Marjie Harris, MSW, LCSW. Eastman is a registered nurse with considerable Alzheimer's experience. Harris, an adjunct faculty member in the UMaine School of Social Work, is experienced in conducting support groups.

The group will meet the third Wednesday of each month, starting September 18. Meetings will be held from 12:00 noon to 1:00 p.m. at the Newman Center, 83 College Avenue, in Orono. Anyone involved in caring for someone with Alzheimer's is welcome to attend. For further information, call the Center on Aging.

WELCOME TO THE BOARD, VOLUNTEERS, ASSOCIATES, STAFF, STUDENTS

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Important institutional support has come to us from within the University of Maine, including most notably from the College of Business, Public Policy, and Health, and from the School of Social Work, where we have our institutional home. From outside the university, the Bingham Group, Generations United, the John A. Hartford Foundation, and the U.S. Administration on Aging have shown their confidence in the Center on Aging and affirmed the importance of our mission by providing generous financial support to several of our first-year initiatives. Additional financial support has come from generous individuals wishing to help advance the work of the Center.

Just as America is “graying,” we know that Maine is an aging state. Currently, nearly 15 percent of our population is 65 or older, and that figure is expected to grow to 20 percent in the near future. But I am optimistic about the future of aging, and its implications for Maine and our country, and I am particularly pleased to be directing the Center on Aging at a time when so much stimulating change is in the air, and there is such excitement about this field.

Meet Us on the Web!

The UMaine Center on Aging is proud of its new web site, developed this year with the assistance of our talented webmaster, Brian Rahill of Rainstorm Consulting. Regularly updated, the site contains extensive information about our ongoing collaborative programs and research initiatives, as well as our staff, board members, and faculty associates. There are also links to other groups and organizations whose mission is to serve older adults in Maine and throughout the nation. Come visit us soon! Our web address is:

www.mainecenteronaging.org

I/ we want to make a gift in support of the UMaine Center on Aging and its programs in service to Maine’s older adults, their families, and their communities.

Enclosed please find a check for \$ _____ Please charge my account for \$ _____

Card number: _____ Visa MasterCard American Express

Cardholder’s signature: _____ Expiration date: _____

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(please print)

Please send information about:

- Making a gift of securities, other appreciated assets, or a bequest to the Center on Aging
- Making a gift that will provide a lifetime income for another person or myself
- Establishing a scholarship or endowment to provide annual support

Return to: Center on Aging, University of Maine, 5770 Social Work Bldg., Orono, ME 04469-5770



A Member of the University of Maine System

Center on Aging
5770 Social Work Building
Orono, Maine 04469-5770
(207) 581-3444
www.mainecenteronaging.org

5-2-11339

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Learning for the Fun of It



Sponsored by the UMaine Center on Aging and affiliated with the statewide Maine Senior College Network, the new Penobscot Valley Senior College (PVSC) begins its first semester of courses in October 2002. Designed for individuals age 50 and older, PVSC emphasizes learning for the fun of it. In place of exams, papers, and grades, the college offers opportunities for learning and enjoyment.

Penobscot Valley Senior College is entirely led by volunteers, and fees are minimal. Stanley N. Marshall, Jr. chairs the steering committee, which includes nearly two dozen area residents. The first set of course offerings includes *The Life and Works of Rachel Carson*, *Professional Theater—Behind the Scenes*, *A Primer on Personal Money Management*, *Food for Fun and Fitness*, and others. Classes are led by volunteers who are experts in their fields. A second series of courses will be offered in Spring 2003.

The college warmly welcomes new members, as well as ideas for future courses. For further information, call the Senior College at (207) 581-1947.

CoA Developing Partnership with Dirigo Pines

Dirigo Pines is the new retirement complex opening soon in Orono. Sponsored by Eastern Maine Healthcare, Dirigo Pines will offer its residents a variety of housing choices, including cottages, apartments, and assisted-living options. Located close to many community amenities and health-care resources, and affiliated with the University of Maine, Dirigo Pines will also partner with the UMaine Center on Aging to offer educational and recreational programs for retirees in the state and field training opportunities for professional students preparing for careers in service to older adults. The Center on Aging welcomes Dirigo Pines to our community and looks forward to a long and productive partnership.