

4-2011

The Living Past: Franco American Identity in a Modern World

University of Maine

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CULTURAL AFFAIRS/DISTINGUISHED LECTURE SERIES

GRANT APPLICATION

I. Applicant/Organization: **Susan Pinette / Franco American Studies**

II. a. Responsible Organization Officer: Susan Pinette

b. Title: Director of Franco American Studies
Associate Professor of Modern Languages

c. Campus Address (include Email and Telephone): 213 Little Hall, spinette@maine.edu, 581-3791

III. Summary of program requiring funding (title; featured artist(s); speaker(s); scheduled date(s):

The Living Past: Franco American Identity in the Modern World will be held on campus from May 20-22, 2011 and will explore the contemporary expression of Franco American culture through roundtable conversations, storytelling, dramatic performances, music, and art. Some of the leading voices of the Franco American experience will share their work and invite participants to explore cultural identity. In addition to scheduled events, there will be numerous opportunities for informal exchanges during our weekend together. It is our goal to build new foundations for the future of Franco American communities.

Confirmed artists:

[Ron Currie, Jr.](#)

[Suzanne Germaine](#)

[Abby Paige](#)

[Michael Parent](#)

[Susan Poulin](#)

[Josée Vachon](#)

The purpose of this conference is to provide a forum for people young and old to explore the relevance of Franco American cultural identity. Our aim is to make this conference affordable as we create a community interested in cultural sharing. The amount we charge will be in direct proportion to the amount of money we receive from this cultural affairs grant.

IV. Budget Proposal Form must be attached.

Funding for current application is contingent upon submission of reports for any previous grant awards, including final budget and attendance figures.

SEND COMPLETED APPLICATION VIA EMAIL TO: erinn.rossignol@maine.edu

For questions regarding the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series, please contact Erinn Rossignol at 1-1591

Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series Fund Budget Proposal Form

Applicant/Organization: Susan Pinette / Franco American Studies
 Responsible Officer: FAS reports to Dean Hecker, CLAS
 Event Title: The Living Past: Franco American Identity in a Modern World
 Event Date: May 20-May 22, 2011

Total Program Budget: \$36,200

Amount Committed by Applicant Organization: \$1,500

Total Amount Requested from Other Funding Sources: \$15,000

Please List Sources & Amounts below:

Centre de la Francophonie
des Amériques \$15,000

Amount Requested from CA/DLS Committee: \$18,000*

Revenues, if any, expected (fees, ticket sales): \$2,500

Budget Breakdown of Expenses and funds to be used: CADLS Other

Honoraria/Services (explain below) \$18,000 \$_____

I have invited Franco American artists from all over New England. I have negotiated with each a set amount.

I have also invited what I am calling "Franco elders." These are activists and artists who will be there to help moderate and move along the discussions.

Travel \$_____ \$_____

Lodging/Meals \$_____ \$12,468.84

Advertising \$_____ \$500

Printing \$_____ \$1,183.13

Supplies and Materials \$_____ \$_____

Other (must specify below) \$_____ \$_____

Total Expenses from CA/DLS funds: \$18,000*

Total Expenses from other funds: \$18,200

(These two totals should equal the "Total Program Budget" listed above)

*These amounts should be identical and should not exceed 50% of the total program/event budget. Please note that CA/DLS funds may not be used for receptions and do not normally fund UM employee wages. If an award is granted based on this proposal, reimbursement of expenses will not exceed the total CA/DLS request and will be limited to the types of expenditures outlined above.

9/08

The Living Past: Franco American Identity in a Modern World

Purpose

The purpose of this conference is to provide a forum for young Franco Americans (18-40) (along with those young at heart) to explore the relevance of Franco American cultural identity to their lives today

Themes

Where does one find Franco American culture in our lives today? How is it relevant? How might we use these traditions to address modern-day questions?

Objectives

- To explore the relevance of Franco American culture to our lives today
- To create a community interested in cultural sharing

Confirmed participants

- Ron Currie, Jr.
- Josée Vachon
- Abby Paige
- Michael Parent
- Susan Poulin

Rationale

With this conference, we are looking to bring together older Franco Americans already active in their communities with young people interested in learning about Franco American culture and history. While individual youth might pursue his/her family's cultural history, oftentimes public cultural heritage work is the realm of older Franco Americans. This conference will provide a public space bring young people together to explore what it means to be Franco American today.

Conference Schedule

Friday evening until Sunday late afternoon, May 20 – May 22, 2011

Conference location

On the University of Maine campus in Orono. Costs will be minimal.

Contact

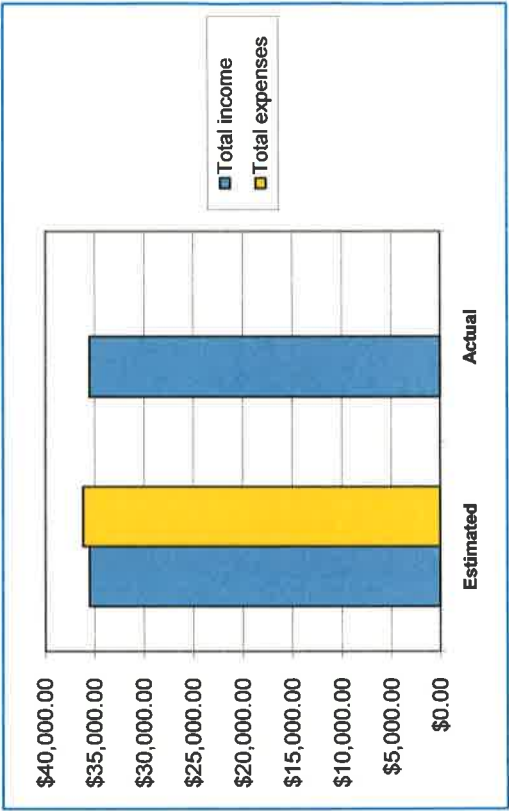
For more information, contact Susan Pinette, spinette@maine.edu or 207-581-3791

Event Budget for [Event Name]

Profit - Loss Summary

	Estimated	Actual
Total income	\$35,500.00	\$35,500.00
Total expenses	\$36,151.97	\$0.00

Total profit (or loss)	(\$651.97)	\$35,500.00
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Conference Agenda

Friday, May 20, 2011 (Soderburg)	
3:00 pm to 4:00 pm	Registration and reception
4:00 pm to 5:00 pm	Welcome and introductory meeting, laying out themes and expectations of the conference
6:00 pm to 7:00 pm	Supper
7:30 pm to 9:00 pm	Susan Poulin , "Pardon My French"
9:00 pm to 10:00 pm	Discussion
Saturday, May 21, 2011 (Innovation Center, Hill Auditorium)	
8:30 am to 9:00 am	Breakfast
9:00 am to 10:30 am	Visual Artists panel
10:30 am to 10:45 am	Break
10:45 am to 12:00 pm	Discussion topic: Silences
12:00 pm to 1:30 pm	Lunch
1:30 pm to 3:00 pm	Ron Currie, Jr. "Loving the Dead"; discussion
3:00 pm to 3:15 pm	Break
3:15 pm to 5:00 pm	Michael Parent ; discussion
7:00 pm to 11:00 pm	Dinner and Music/Dance with Josée Vachon, Robert Sylvain, Suzanne Germaine
Sunday, May 22, 2011 (Wells Conference Center, room 3)	
8:30 am to 9:00 am	Breakfast
9:00 am to 10:30 am	Writers panel ; discussion
10:30 am to 10:45 am	Break
10:45 am to 12:00 pm	Abby Paige , "When we were French"; discussion
12:00 pm to 1:00 pm	Lunch
1:00 pm to 3:00 pm	Closing

Cultural Affairs Committee

and

Distinguished Lecture Series

c/o Erinn Rossignol

201 Alumni Hall

University of Maine

April 21, 2011

To: Susan Pinette

From: Melissa Mayard & Dan Sandweiss, Co-Chairs

On behalf of the Cultural Affairs Committee and Distinguished Lecture Series, it gives us great pleasure to inform you that your proposal, *The Living Past: Franco American Identity in a Mordern World* , has been awarded \$7000.00.

Please contact Erinn Rossignol at 1-1591 to discuss the procedures in place for the submission of financial expenses related to this award at your earliest convenience.

The following acknowledgement is required on ALL promotional material: ***This event was supported in part by a grant from the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series.***

Attached is a form for your use to summarize the benefits derived from this grant. This form should be submitted within 30 days after the conclusion of the event. Timely submission of your summary will be considered as part of any future funding requests.

The Cultural Affairs Committee members congratulate you and wish you much success on this project.

The Living Past: Franco American Identity in a Modern World

Purpose

The purpose of this conference is to provide a forum for young Franco Americans (18-40) (along with those young at heart) to explore the relevance of Franco American cultural identity to their lives today

Themes

Where does one find Franco American culture in our lives today? How is it relevant? How might we use these traditions to address modern-day questions?

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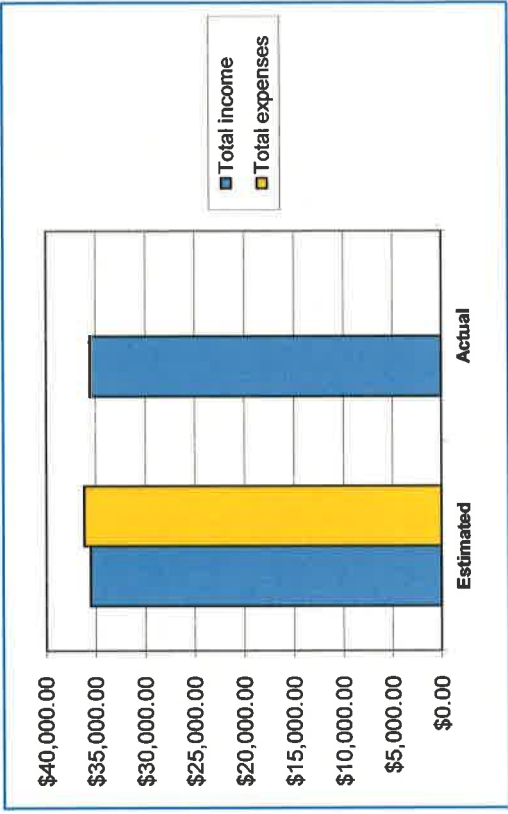
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Event Budget for "The Living Past: Franco Identity in a Modern World"

Expenses

	Estimated	Actual
Total Expenses	\$36,151.97	\$0.00

	Estimated	Actual
Lodging (for 50 people)		
Lodging	\$6,400.00	
Food	\$6,068.84	
Totals	\$12,468.84	\$0.00

	Estimated	Actual
Program (includes honorarium, lodging, travel)		
Susan Poulin	\$1,500.00	
Michael Parent	\$1,500.00	
Abby Paige	\$2,000.00	
Josée Vachon	\$2,500.00	
Suzanne Germain	\$2,500.00	
Peter Archambault	\$2,000.00	
Robert Sylvain	\$1,500.00	
Visual Artists Panel	\$2,000.00	
Young Poets Panel	\$2,000.00	
Ron Currie, Jr.	\$1,500.00	
Totals	\$19,000.00	\$0.00

	Estimated	Actual
Publicity		
Posters (100)	\$386.37	
Brochures (100)	\$296.76	
Design	\$500.00	
Totals	\$1,183.13	\$0.00

	Estimated	Actual
Personnel		
Conference services charge (\$20/attendee)	\$1,000.00	
Totals	\$1,000.00	\$0.00

	Estimated	Actual
Program (invited "elders")		
Gregoire Chabot	\$500.00	
Rhea Côté Robbins	\$500.00	
Jim Bishop	\$500.00	
Alan Cassavant	\$500.00	
Totals	\$2,000.00	\$0.00

	Estimated	Actual
Mailing	\$500.00	
Totals	\$500.00	\$0.00

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Overview of evaluations

We asked all participants to evaluate the event; 27 of 65 responded.

We asked five questions :

1. Can I share your contact information with the group?
2. Do you have any suggestions about logistics (for example, someone suggested a message board for announcements)?
3. For those of you who stayed on campus, how was it? I chose it because I wanted people to be together and close by, and I wanted to keep the costs down. Was it worth it or would you have preferred something more expensive off campus?
4. How about programming? What worked the best for you? What didn't work? What would you have liked to have seen but didn't?
5. What would you like to see for follow-up?

Can I share your contact information with the group?

Everyone said yes. We established a Google group. The community is active (we recently discussed an article published in a Montreal newspaper called, "Le francais se meurt au Vermont")

Do you have any suggestions about logistics?

- *A timer to help regulate and monitor long discussions*
- *A centralized place for information*

Those of you who stayed on campus, how was it? I chose it because I wanted people to be together and close by, and I wanted to keep the costs down. Was it worth it or would you have preferred something more expensive off campus?

Everyone said that staying on campus was fine. They liked being close and together.

How about programming? What worked the best for you? What didn't work? What would you have liked to have seen but didn't?

I absolutely loved the programming. I think you did a fantastic job building the curriculum for the weekend. The trajectory was ideal, starting with Susan Poulin, preparing people for the heavy session with Ron Currie, Jr. and then ending on a really positive and inspiring note with the artists/performances, both on Saturday evening and on Sunday morning. (MR)

Although I was skeptical at first, I came to appreciate the format very much. There was a good blend of performance and discussion, without one overbearing the other. (JM)

The programming was outstanding, I felt you got the very best people and there was a nice mix of conversation, performance, visual arts, and text.(DV)

I really liked the emphasis on the arts and how discussions were based on different art forms -- I think it was a great way of honoring the sort of ineffable undercurrent of issues of heritage and history. I also thought you and others did a really great, respectful job of dealing with the language issue and opening the space for people to speak both languages. I also liked that there weren't concurrent sessions, so the group stayed together. (AP)

What would you like to see for follow-up?

- a. Web site
- b. Another conference
- c. On-line literary journal
- d. summer franco-american camp for young kids
- e. Travelling franco-american meetings ("salon" type gatherings, in different towns/cities, to give Franco artists/students/etc informal opportunities to get to know each other, share ideas and inspirations, etc)

List of Speakers/Performers

Peter Archambault

Peter Archambault, an artist from Madawaska Maine, has chronicled Franco-American experience in his cartoons since 1976. He now lives in Moncton.

Daniel Boucher

Daniel Boucher, a dynamic young musician from Bristol, CT, plays French Canadian fiddle tunes that he has absorbed from family and community in southern New England and Quebec. Also a fine singer and composer of traditional-style songs, Boucher has revitalized French Canadian folk music in his home state by organizing very popular soirées, dance parties, and seasonal celebrations such as his annual Maple Sugar Party. Boucher has performed with New England-based French Canadian music groups such as Chanterelle and the Beaudoin Family, and with singer Josée Vachon. Performances include the the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., Quebec 400 celebrations in Quebec City in 2008; dance parties at Le Foyer in Pawtucket, RI; the Blackstone River Theater also in Pawtucket, RI; French Day at the State Capitol in Hartford; and folk festivals in Lowell, MA and Bangor, ME. Boucher's concerts invite audiences to participate in dancing, call and response singing, or playing the spoons.

Grégoire Chabot

Grégoire Chabot was born in Waterville, Maine. After he received his formal education at Colby College, the University of Maine and the University of Massachusetts/Amherst, he worked for a number of years in theater and broadcasting. He first wrote a series of plays in the late 1970s, including *Un Jacques Cartier Errant*, *Chère Maman*, and *Sans Atout*. These plays along with Chabot's English translations are available in [*Un Jacques Cartier Errant / Jacques Cartier Discovers America*](#), published by the University of Maine Press.

He has also written a series of twenty-six essays about some of the most poignant franco foibles called [*Entre la Manie et la Phobie*](#), as well as a three-act play about a Sentinelle-type event entitled, *Qui perd sa langue*. Most recently, Chabot completed seven of a projected twelve pieces in *Les Sacrés monologues*, which to date have been performed at University of Maine campuses in Fort Kent and Orono.

He is also the director of the Franco-American theater group, *Du monde d'à côté*. He currently lives in South Hampton, NH.

Ron Currie, Jr.

Ron Currie, Jr. was born and raised in Waterville, Maine, where he still lives. His first book, *God is Dead*, won the Young Lions Fiction Award from the New York Public Library and the Addison M. Metcalf Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His debut novel, *Everything Matters!*, will be translated into a dozen languages, and is a July Indie Next Pick and *Amazon Best of June 2009* selection.

His short fiction has appeared in many magazines and anthologies, including *Alaska Quarterly Review*, *The Sun*, *Ninth Letter*, *Swink*, *The Southeast Review*, *Glimmer Train*, *Willow Springs*, *The Cincinnati Review*, *Harpur Palate*, and *New Sudden Fiction* (W.W. Norton, 2007).

Website: <http://www.roncurriejr.net/>

Abby Paige

Abby Paige is a poet, playwright, and performer who was born and raised in South Burlington, Vermont. She began her career as a stand-up and sketch comedian in San Francisco, and in 2003 moved home to Vermont to work on *The Voices Project*, a documentary theater project about the lives of Vermont teens that she co-wrote, co-directed, and co-produced. Abby has appeared in several productions at Montpelier's Lost Nation Theater (*Judevine*, *Tartuffe*), in Jay Craven's TV comedy series, *Windy Acres*, and recently in Craven's radio variety show, *Queen City Radio Hour*. Abby received her BA from Vassar College and her MFA from the Bennington Writing Seminars, and she is a former Fulbright Scholar. She now lives in Ottawa.

Website: <http://abbypaige.com/>

Michael Parent

Michael Parent, a native Mainer of French-Canadian descent, has performed stories and songs in English and French since 1977. He is currently performing three original one-man shows: "One More Thing," "A Beautiful Game" and "The Goofy Show."

From New England to New Zealand, he has been featured at many events including hundreds of schools and libraries, the National Storytelling Festival, and several international festivals.

Michael also leads storytelling, story writing, and performance workshops. He received a National Storytelling Network Circle of Excellence Award in 1999, and was a keynote speaker at the 2001 National Storytelling Conference. He has been called "the storyteller of the underdog."

Website: www.michaelparentstorytelling.com

Susan Poulin

Selected by Portland Magazine as one of the "Ten Most Intriguing People in Maine," writer/performer Susan Poulin has been creating and touring her original theatrical productions since 1992. She was a

featured performer in *The Mirth of Venus* and *The Mirth Canal* at the Institute of Contemporary Art in Boston, and at The Maine Festival, the Minneapolis Fringe Theater Festival and Portland, Maine's Cassandra Project. Her work has been supported by the NH State Council on the Arts, the Maine Arts Commission and the Maine Humanities Council. Susan is also a popular keynote speaker, and has brought her humor and insight to presentations for groups such as Seacoast Women's Week, the American Cancer Society (New England Division), and the Personal Historians National Conference. As her alter-ego Ida, Susan writes the popular Maine humor blog and podcast, "Just Ask Ida," for Down East magazine (downeast.com/blogs/justaskida). She is currently writing her first book, which will be published by Islandport Press in the spring of 2012.

Website: <http://www.poolyle.com>

Josée Vachon

Born in Québec and raised in Maine, Josée Vachon has been singing her Franco-American upbringing for nearly 25 years through traditional and contemporary folksongs from Québec and Acadia as well as her own compositions.

Josée debuted her career in 1980 while a student at University of Maine, where she became aware of her Franco-American identity and discovered her cultural presence on stage. She has 11 solo recordings, plus two more with the female trio Chanterelle, which she co-founded with fiddler Donna Hébert and guitarist Liza Constable. For 11 years she hosted over 500 episodes of "Bonjour!", the most widely seen French-language television program produced in the U.S., which aired on Maine Public Television and various cable stations across the U.S. and Canada.

Awards include the 1999 National Culture through the Arts Award from NYSAFLT, the New York State Association of Foreign Language Teachers, induction into the French-Canadian Hall of Fame Class of 2007; Key to the City of Woonsocket, RI for her contributions to Franco-American culture, and American Traditions Training and Touring Project, NEA Funded to showcase at Southern Arts Conference.

She has performed at Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C., the Women's Singing Traditions of New England Tour of 1994, Musée de la Civilisation, Québec and Festival Été Indien in Ste-Etienne, France. She has performed in Canada, France, Germany and Martinique and has several international television appearances, including Champs-Élysées.

Website: <http://joseevachon.com/>

Cultural Affairs Committee
and
Distinguished Lecture Series
c/o Erinn Rossignol
201 Alumni Hall
University of Maine

April 21, 2011

To: Susan Pinette

From: Melissa Mayard & Dan Sandweiss, Co-Chairs

On behalf of the Cultural Affairs Committee and Distinguished Lecture Series, it gives us great pleasure to inform you that your proposal, The Living Past: Franco American Identity in a Mordern World , has been awarded \$7000.00.

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The following acknowledgement is required on ALL promotional material: ***This event was supported in part by a grant from the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series.***

Attached is a form for your use to summarize the benefits derived from this grant. This form should be submitted within 30 days after the conclusion of the event. Timely submission of your summary will be considered as part of any future funding requests.

The Cultural Affairs Committee members congratulate you and wish you much success on this project.



Report Information from ProQuest

August 28 2011 15:48

Franco-American experience focus of weekend programs

Anonymous. Bangor Daily News [Bangor, Me] 19 May 2011: 6.

Find a copy



Abstract

Franco-American Identity in the Modern World will explore the contemporary expression of Franco-American culture through round-table conversations, storytelling, dramatic performances, music and art.

Full Text

ORONO More than two dozen of the leading voices of the Franco-American experience will share their work and discuss cultural identity at a cultural colloquium Friday through Sunday at the Soderberg Auditorium in Jenness Hall at the University of Maine.

The Living Past: Franco-American Identity in the Modern World will explore the contemporary expression of Franco-American culture through round-table conversations, storytelling, dramatic performances, music and art.

It will address questions concerning the significance of Franco-American culture today, what a Franco-American identity is, how it is experienced and how it is shared.

The gathering has been organized by UMaine's Franco-American programs and funded by the Centre de la Francophonie des Ameriques (Quebec), the Cultural Affairs-Distinguished Lecture fund, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Franco American Studies and the Royal Arcanum.

For information, visit the event website at <https://sites.google.com/site/faculturalidentity>.

Indexing (details)

Subjects	Cultural identity
Title	Franco-American experience focus of weekend programs
Authors	Anonymous
Publication title	Bangor Daily News

First Page	6
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Franco American

May 20-22, 2011 in Orono, Maine

Opening event on May 20, 2011 in Soderburg Hall
on the University of Maine campus in Orono.

Conference schedule

Friday, May 20, 2011

3:00 to 4:00 pm Registration and reception
4:00 to 5:00 pm Welcome and introductory meeting, laying out themes and expectations of the conference
6:00 to 7:00 pm Supper
7:30 to 9:00 pm **Susan Poulin**, "Pardon My French"; discussion

Saturday, May 21, 2011

8:30 to 9:00 am Breakfast
9:00 to 10:30 am Franco American artists panel; discussion
10:30 to 10:45 am Break
10:45 to 12:00 pm Discussion topic: **Silences**
12:00 to 1:30 pm Lunch
1:30 to 3:00 pm **Ron Currie Jr.** "Loving the Dead"; discussion
3:00 to 3:15 pm Break
3:15 to 5:00 pm **Michael Parent**, stories and songs; discussion
7:00 to 11:00 pm Dinner and Music/Dance

Sunday, May 22, 2011

8:30 to 9:00 am Breakfast
9:00 to 10:30 am Franco American writers reading; discussion
10:30 to 10:45 am Break
10:45 to 12:00 pm **Abby Paige**, "When We Were French"; discussion
12:00 to 1:00 pm Lunch
1:00 to 3:00 pm **Closing**

(Schedule subject to change)

He received a National Storytelling Network Circle of Excellence Award in 1999, and was a keynote speaker at the 2001 National Storytelling Conference, and at the 2005 Sharing the Fire Conference. He has been featured at events throughout the U.S., as well as in Canada, France, Austria, New Zealand, Ireland, England, Poland, Brazil, and Costa Rica;

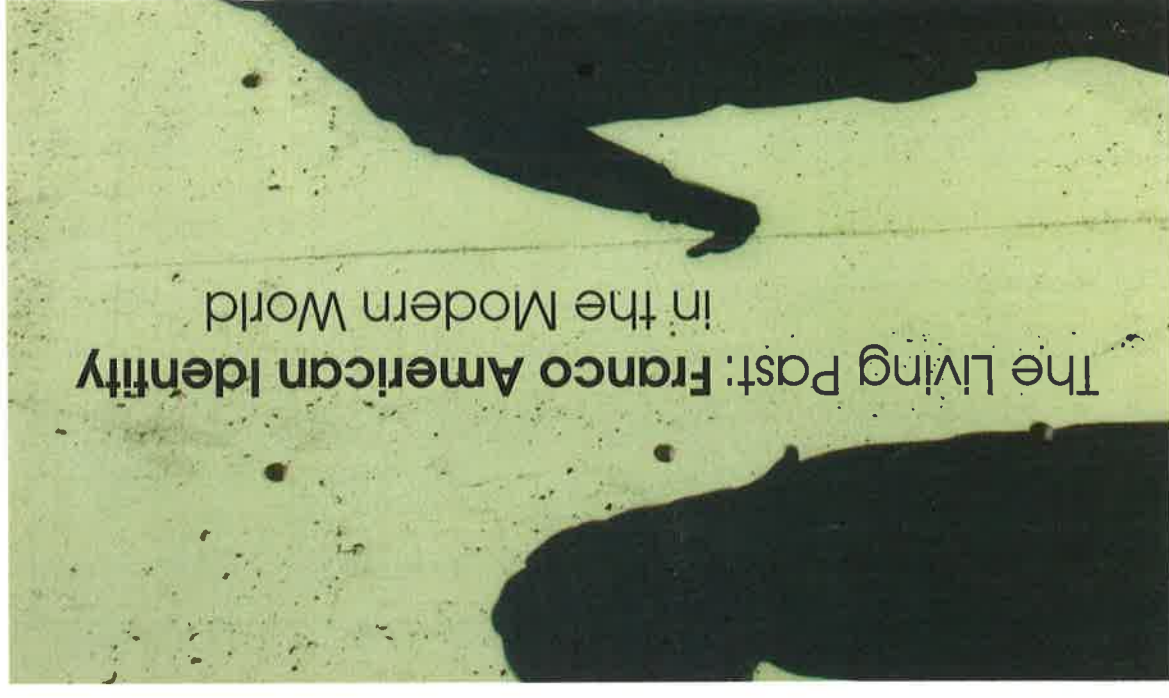
◆ a performance of Abby Paige's "Piecework: When We Were French." Abby Paige is a poet, playwright, and performer who was born and raised in South Burlington, Vermont. "Piecework: When We Were French" is a one-person performance piece that explores the legacy of French-Canadian immigration to New England and how our stories, memories, and secrets make us who we are;

◆ a Saturday evening dance party with Josée Vachon, Va-et-Vient, Adele St. Pierre, and others;

◆ and many other artists, performers, and writers.

Franco American Studies is also offering a three-credit course May 16-19, 2011 plus conference attendance. FAS 329 will prepare students for the ideas and issues that will be highlighted at the conference. The conference will also offer CEUs. Please see the website for more information.

Franco American Studies
207-581-3791
www.umaine.edu/francoamericanstudies



May 20-22, 2011 in Orono, ME
University of Maine

<http://www.umaine.edu/francoamericanstudies/>

The Living Past: Franco American Identity in the Modern World

What is the significance of Franco American culture today? What is a Franco American identity? How is it experienced? How is it shared?

The Living Past: Franco American Identity in the Modern World will explore the contemporary expression of Franco American culture through roundtable conversations, storytelling, dramatic performances, music, and art.

Over two dozen leading and emerging voices of the Franco American experience will share their work and invite participants to explore their cultural identity. In addition to scheduled events, there will be numerous opportunities for informal exchanges during our weekend together. It is our goal to build new foundations for the future of Franco American communities.

This gathering is generously funded by the Centre de la Francophonie des Amériques (Québec), the Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture fund, the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences, Franco American Studies, and the Royal Arcanum.

For further details concerning registration, costs, and a list of participants, please see the website.



◆ The gathering will open Friday evening with a performance of Susan Poulin's "Pardon My French!" Selected by Portland Magazine as one of the "Ten Most Intriguing People in Maine," award-winning writer and performer Susan Poulin has been creating and touring her original theatrical productions since 1992. Working with collaborator Gordon Carlisle, "Pardon My French!" combines monologue, original songs, live musical soundscape and voice-over into a dynamic exploration of the notion of home and the importance of belonging. We will also have:

◆ a reading by Ron Currie Jr., who was born and raised in Waterville, Maine, where he still lives. His first book, *God is Dead*, won the Young Lions Fiction Award from the New York Public Library and the Addison M. Metcalf Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters. His debut novel, *Everything Matters!*, will be translated into a dozen languages, and is a July Indie Next Pick and Amazon Best of June 2009 selection;

◆ a performance by Michael Parent, a Franco American Mainer, who has performed as a storyteller-singer in both English and French since 1977.

(Continued on the back)

May 20-22, 2011 in Orono, ME
University of Maine

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The Living Past: **Franco American Identity** in the Modern World



Opening event on May 20, 2011 in Soderburg Hall on the University of Maine campus in Orono.

What is the significance of Franco American culture today?

What is a Franco American identity? How is it experienced? How is it shared? **The Living Past: Franco American Identity in the Modern World** will explore the contemporary expression of Franco American culture through roundtable conversations, storytelling, dramatic performances, music, and art.

Some of the leading voices of the Franco American experience will share their work and invite participants to explore their cultural identity. In addition to scheduled events, there will be numerous opportunities for informal exchanges during our weekend together. It is our goal to build new foundations for the future of Franco American communities.

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Cultural Affairs/Distinguished Lecture Series Fund Final Report

Applicant/Organization: Susan Pinette / Franco American Studies
Responsible Officer: FAS reports to Dean Hecker, CLAS
Event Title: The Living Past: Franco American Identity in a Modern World
Event Date: May 20-May 22, 2011

- Within **60 days** of the conclusion of a funded event, grantees are to submit a concise summary of one page or less on the event and attendance to the Committee. These reports will be used in consideration of future funding. Please attach copies of promotional material and publicity including reviews.

Evaluation of Event

Our objective was to highlight the vitality of Franco American culture. We seek to become a leading center for both academic and community based research, and to change the educational system in Maine. To obtain these goals, we need to be able to point to a vibrant, living Franco American culture that is worth investing in and embracing. This can only happen if we engage Franco American youth and provide opportunities for them to begin to imagine the potential transformative power of their culture. Yet other than taking Franco American Studies classes at the University of Maine, there is no place for young people to learn about Franco American culture on their own terms. Franco American history is only minimally taught in Maine state curriculum. The textbook used in all high school history classes, *Finding Katadhin*, devotes four pages out of 448 to the study of Francos, and the quality of this token coverage is inadequate. The book's accompanying lesson plan on the Maine Memory Network aims to highlight the significance of Franco Americans and Acadians as workers, surely an essential part of Maine history, but well short of the cultural, religious, and political import of the state's French population. Equally dissatisfying for the youth, public cultural work is the realm of older, retired Franco Americans. It is the Franco American elders who define the official Franco American culture and as a result, the cultural work that takes place in public often attracts only older people (for example, genealogy, church-based activities, or activities only in French). For the state of Maine and for US Universities to see Franco American culture as a viable and important site of investment, we need to offer Franco Americans – both young and old – different venues for exploring and embracing their Franco American heritage.

This is a living past and this event began the important conversation about Franco American identity today. Our event attracted people young and old, from the university and the community. We spent the weekend together exploring what it might mean to be Franco American today. Participants left feeling invigorated and connected.

I would like to thank the CADLS committee for its support. This important event could not have happened without it.

1. **Attendance** (65 attendees)
 - a. 20 University students from Maine, Massachusetts, Vermont, and Maryland
 - b. 9 artists from Connecticut, Pennsylvania, Maine, New Brunswick, New Hampshire, and Vermont
 - c. 12 teachers from Maine and New York
 - d. 12 people from the community from Maine, Connecticut, and Massachusetts
 - e. 3 high school students from Biddeford, Maine with their French teacher and their families
 - f. All participants were there (except the high school students) for the whole weekend (from Friday evening until Sunday afternoon)
2. **Follow-up**
 - a. Participants asked for a virtual community in order to stay in touch. We've created a google group for all attendees.
 - b. They also asked that we work to create an on-line literary and artistic journal. We are organizing a planning meeting this fall, with plans to launch the journal in a year.

Please see attached the publicity, summary of evaluations and list of invited speakers