

# THE COLLEGE LETTER

NEWSLETTER OF THE COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS



**Despite thousands of professors living in college towns, academic research on them has been limited. Not anymore, thanks to geographer Blake Gumprecht.**

**C**ollege towns are exceptional American places that have a prominent hold on our imaginations. Even their names have a special ring to them: Athens, Ann Arbor, Berkeley, Iowa City, and Ithaca.

Blake Gumprecht, associate professor of geography, has just published the first book on the subject. In *The American College Town*, Gumprecht examines the distinctive characteristics of these towns—their residential and commercial districts, unconventional political cultures, status as bohemian islands, and emergence as high-tech centers.

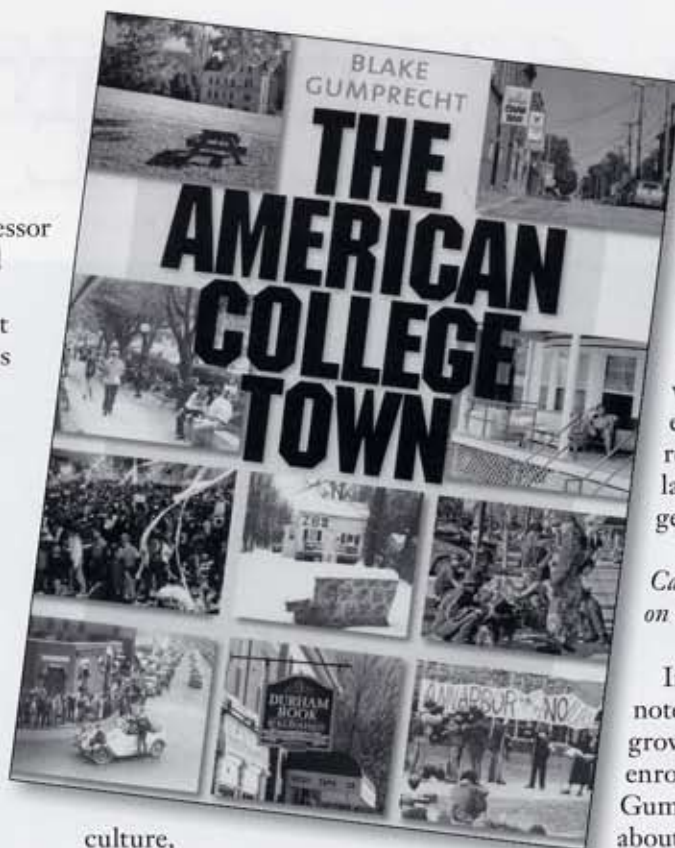
“College towns are worth knowing and worth knowing about. They are an essential component of American geography. They are part of what makes life different in these United States. They reflect the singular nature of American higher education and the indelible characteristics of American culture,” Gumprecht says.

That Gumprecht’s book is the first written on the topic of college towns is, he says, due to the natural human tendency to overlook what is all around us.

“Research on local topics is perceived as parochial and counterproductive to building a national reputation necessary to earn tenure. But I also have found that professors who live in college towns are often oblivious to those characteristics that make them unusual,” says Gumprecht, a former newspaper reporter with a curious streak.

What are some of those unusual characteristics? According to Gumprecht, the American college town is a youthful place that is home to highly educated residents who are likely to hold white-collar jobs. It is affluent compared to neighboring towns, but has high living costs, especially for housing. It is a transient place where residents are more likely to rent, live in apartments, and have roommates. It is cosmopolitan, unconventional, and offers a high quality of life.

The geography of the American college town includes the odd mix of fraternity rows, student neighborhoods, and faculty enclaves. Commercial districts are home to interesting mixes of business—coffee houses, bookstores, pizzerias, bike shops, music stores, copy shops, bars, and ethnic restaurants. College towns, where people with widely differing backgrounds coexist, are more politically liberal and politically engaged than neighboring towns. College sports play prominent roles in their



culture, especially on weekends, and many are hubs for high-tech research. And college towns are also home to the inevitable “town vs. gown” clashes between student renters and homeowners.

In researching the American college town, Gumprecht conducted more than 200 interviews, took 2,000 photographs, and “amassed enough material to fill three filing cabinets and a six-foot-long bookshelf.” He visited numerous U.S. college towns, and several are explored in depth in the book. These include some towns that are not so well known: Norman, Oklahoma; Manhattan, Kansas; Davis, California; Auburn, Alabama; and Newark, Delaware.

Gumprecht’s book, which was featured this fall in the *New York Times*, has been praised by scholars nationwide:

“Thoroughly satisfying! Blake Gumprecht has given us a keenly observed, richly documented, many-sided account of a critically significant part of the American scene, one too long ignored by its scholarly residents. A truly brilliant achievement.”

—Wilbur Zelinsky, author of *The Cultural Geography of the United States*

“*The American College Town* demonstrates Gumprecht’s knack for recognizing a great untold story. ... This book teaches readers how to see the meaning embedded in places we take for granted. Gumprecht’s exhaustive, multi-dimensional research enables him to read landscapes better than any historical geographer writing today.”

—Anne Kelly Knowles, author of *Calvinists Incorporated: Welsh Immigrants on Ohio’s Industrial Frontier*

In the last chapter, Gumprecht notes that many college towns have grown considerably. While the average enrollment in the college towns Gumprecht studied only increased by about 3 percent in two decades, the average population of those towns rose by 25 percent. In fact, says Gumprecht, “A number of noncollege towns around the country have discovered that college towns are worth emulating.”

—LORI WRIGHT

In the last two years, faculty members in the College of Liberal Arts have produced 62 books and monographs, and 13 CDs. Here is a sampling:

*Saladin: The Sultan and His Times, 1138–1193* by Hannes Mohring, translated by **David Bachrach**

*La Traite des Noirs*, by Charles Desnoyer’s and Jules-Edouard Alboize du Pujol. (new edition of this play) edited by **Barbara Cooper**

*A Strange and Formidable Weapon: British Responses to WWI Poison Gas*, by **Marion Girard**

CD: *John Cage: The Number Pieces 5, Two2 for 2 Pianos*, by **Rob Haskins** and Laurel Karlik Sheehan

*Riefenstahl Screened: An Anthology of New Criticism*, edited by Neil Christian Pages, **Mary Rhiel**, and Ingeborg Majer-O’Sickey

*Ramona*, written by Helen Hunt Jackson, edited by **Siobhan Senior**

*Brothers among Nations: The Pursuit of Intercultural Alliances in Early America, 1580–1660*, by **Cynthia Van Zandt**

# STANDING STILL

*Original UNH Production Debuts in February*



In Raina Ames' *The Boy Who Stood Still*, 12-year-old Renfield dreams of becoming a philosopher. A cautious boy, he lives inside his head, thinking while everyone else around him acts. His parents, fearing that he is not like the other children, take dramatic measures to provoke his engagement in a world that exists beyond his own imagination. Will Renfield's parents prevail, and

"fix" their extraordinary child, or will the boy be able to share the magic that can come from simply observing? Curious theatregoers will have to wait until February to find out.

*The Boy Who Stood Still* is a labor of love for theatre and dance professor Ames, who developed the musical with creative partner Charles Pelletier over a period of more than a dozen years. Between MFA programs and across coasts, Ames wrote multiple versions of the script and Pelletier crafted the music and lyrics that both informed and responded to it. The play's 18 roles were cast in October; its winter debut will represent the first time that Ames, who has taught theatre education at the University since 2003, has directed one of her own productions. She says hearing her words embodied by theatre students is exciting—and also a little disconcerting.

"After spending so much time developing characters, you have very concrete ideas about the way they look and sound and move," Ames explains. "The performers really need to inhabit their roles, however, so it has to be a true collaboration between your vision of the characters and theirs." While Ames acknowledges some self-consciousness about directing her own work, she is delighted that the production was included in the theatre department's 2008–2009 season.

The production is billed as a family musical, designed to appeal to children as well as adults. Ames, the author of a 2005 book about high school theatre pedagogy, *The High School Theatre Teacher's Survival Guide*, says there are specific challenges that attend the creation of drama for a young audience.

"Children above any other audience can most readily identify when actors or a story are not truthful," she says. "They also require a fast moving story to maintain their attention." Ames employs a variety of tools to meet these challenges, including energetic scenes and songs, colorful costumes and sets, and broad characters with whom young audience members can identify.

Rehearsals for the musical will commence when students return to campus in January. *The Boy Who Stood Still* will have its world premiere at the Paul Creative Arts Center's Johnson Theatre, February 18–22. In addition to original music and choreography, the production will feature Cirque du Soleil-style dance performances performed by the UNH Aerialists, one of the country's only university-level aerial dance troupes. *The Boy Who Stood Still* is entertainment with something for everyone—don't miss out on Renfield's journey of self-discovery through a fantastical world full of colorful characters and zany situations.

—KRISTIN DUISBERG



## Ticket ordering now available online

In a new development, tickets for all Johnson Theatre performances may be purchased online as well as in person at the third-floor Ticket Office at the Memorial Union Building (MUB). This online option represents a significant advance for the University's theatre program, which can now offer theatregoers the convenience of choosing their seats online and, time permitting, having tickets mailed directly to their homes. "This is a terrific breakthrough for all of our programs," says Nancy Pearson, director of marketing and communications for the Paul Creative Arts Center.

To order tickets online for *The Boy Who Stood Still* or any other upcoming production, visit <http://www.unhmub.com/ticket>. Please note that patrons requiring wheelchair accessible seating or other accommodations should continue to call the MUB Ticket Office at 862-2290 for special assistance.

## SHORT FILM, BIG MESSAGE

When you visit the Smithsonian's new Sant Ocean Hall, be sure to watch the *Secret History of Fish*, a continuously running film informed by Bolster's research. With more than 6 million visitors each year to the museum, this two-minute film will help to educate the general public.

1620

"...Cods so thicke by the shore that we beardedie have been able to row a Boate through them..."

—JOHN MASON

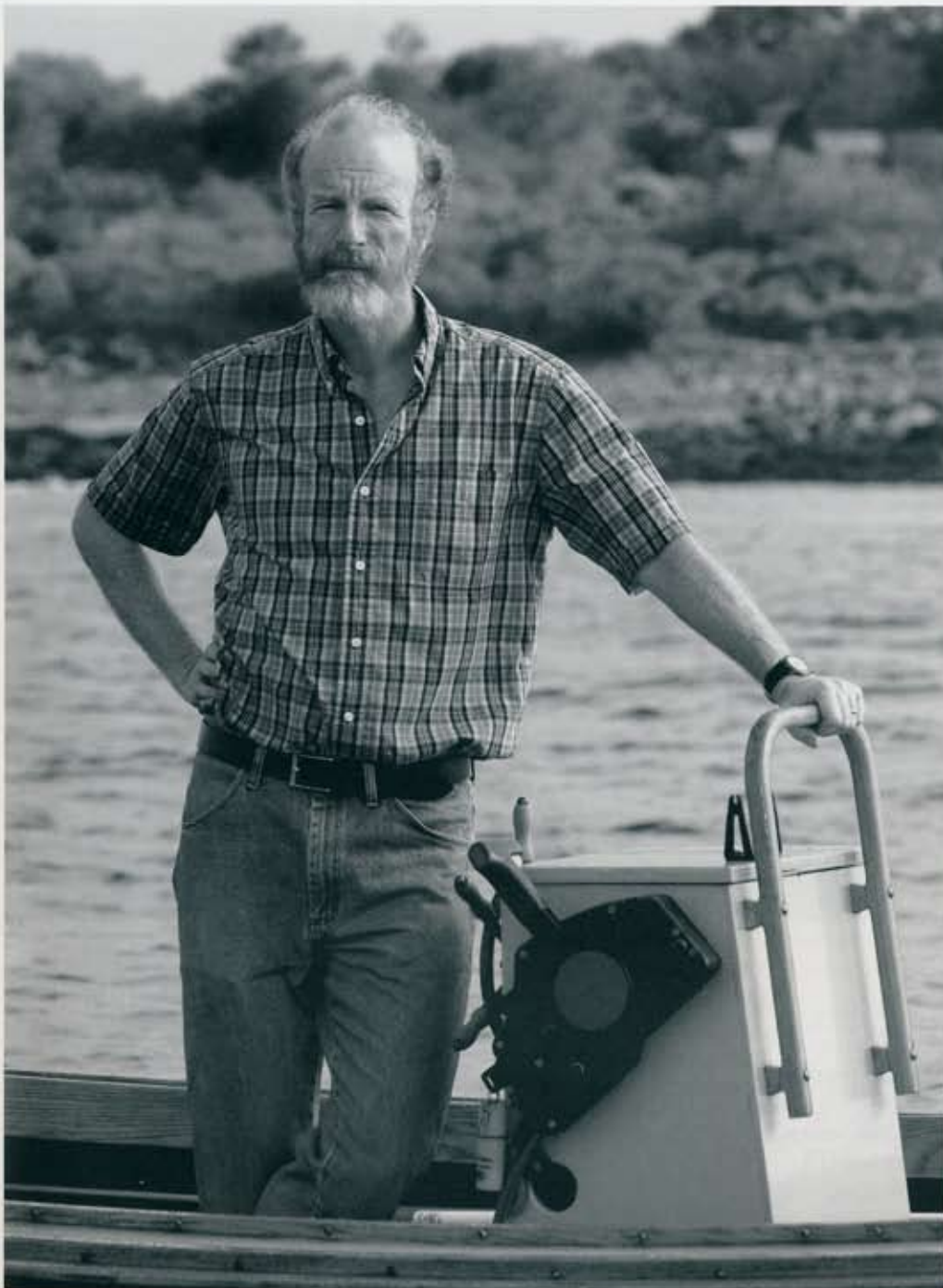
1720

"We hear from the towns on the Cape that the Whale fishery among them has failed much this winter, as it has done for several winters past."

—THE BOSTON NEWS-LETTER

# OCEANS IN CRISIS

*New documentary films bring groundbreaking historical research to the public*



Today, over 90 percent of the fin fish worldwide are gone, according to some marine scientists. UNH history professor Jeff Bolster knows there is a story there, a history worth explaining. "It's alarming. . . . New England once had the most abundant and prolific fishery in American waters. Today, it's a catastrophic mess," says Bolster.

Bolster is part of an interdisciplinary research group at UNH that's unlocking the mysteries of fish declines. Their work will be reaching millions every year through a short documentary film at the Smithsonian's new Sant Ocean Hall and through *American Fisheries: A Cautionary Tale*, a 30-minute documentary written, produced, and directed by Bailey Pryor, a nationally recognized filmmaker. This past summer, *American Fisheries* was featured at the Boston International Film Festival, and Pryor is marketing the film to other venues. Another hour-long documentary is in progress.

"My scholarship is increasingly moving into marine environmental history," says Bolster. "I'd say that this turn for me has been informed in part by my sense that there is a crisis in the oceans right now. Contributing to films that reach a broad public is something I can do as an historian that might illuminate it."

Since 2001, Bolster has worked with the History of Marine Mammals Project (HMAP), an interdisciplinary, international research project. It's funded by the National Science Foundation, N.H. Sea Grant, the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and others. He codirects The HMAP Center at UNH, working specifically on The Gulf of Maine Cod Project (on the Web at <http://fishhistory.org/>). UNH HMAP team members include Andrew

## C. 1796

"Formerly large fish such as salmon, bass and shad came up the river in plenty, but they have forsook it."

—JUDGE BENJAMIN CHADBOURNE, SOUTH BERWICK, MAINE

## 1830's

"This war of extermination cannot last many more years. The eggers themselves will be the first to repent the entire disappearance of the myriads of birds."

—JOHN JAMES AUDUBON

## 1850's

Handliners from Swampscott, Massachusetts petitioned to outlaw long-lines, arguing that without such a ban cod, haddock, and other bottom fish would become "scarce as salmon."

—GEORGE BROWN GOODE COLLECTION

## 2000

Only now has life in the ocean been placed on the timeline of human history. Observations of repeated overharvesting provide necessary perspective for future generations.

—FROM THE FILM, *The Secret History of Fish*

# QUOTE ME!

**This election season, professors in liberal arts were quoted in every major national news outlet from coast to coast.**

From the **New York Times** to the **LA Times** to **USA Today**, from **Bloomberg.com** to the **Wall Street Journal**, from **CBS** to **FOX**—political science professors **Dante Scala** and **Andy Smith** of the UNH Survey Center have provided them with insight and information.

Psychology professor **Jack Mayer's** blog hosted by *Psychology Today* gave readers insight into political personalities (<http://blogs.psychologytoday.com/authors/john-d-mayer-phd>).

On November 5, history professor **Ellen Fitzpatrick** joined three other distinguished historians to help put the election of Barack Obama into perspective on *The NewsHour* on PBS. This election, Fitzpatrick noted, has been an "incredible moment in history, one of the more important moments we have seen ever."

With such a large voter turnout, propelled by so much hope—can the expectations of Obama supporters be met? A sampling of voters interviewed by PBS echoed that concern. Fitzpatrick's response was optimistic: "It may be a terrible moment. It may be a war; it may be a horrible depression. But the public, I think, is chastened. They understand what we're up against, and they're looking for leadership."

Fitzpatrick also emphasized that "great presidents rise to their historical moment."

To read the complete transcript, visit [www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/politics/july-dec08/obamahistory\\_11-05.html](http://www.pbs.org/newshour/bb/politics/july-dec08/obamahistory_11-05.html).

Rosenberg, codirector; Karen Alexander; William Leavenworth; and Stefan Claesson.

In 2005, the team published a ground breaking article, "The History of Ocean Resources: Modeling Cod Biomass Using Historical Records." It made headlines around the world.

In the film, *American Fisheries*, this historical research of the Gulf of Maine cod fishery is vividly portrayed using animation, historical photos, underwater film, and original music. Meshing old catch records with modern modeling tools, Bolster and the HMAP team have charted the cod fishery from 1497 to the present. Now what fishermen from one generation to the next were unable to account for due to "improvements" in fishing methods can be seen with staggering clarity. From hand lines, to long lines, to seine nets, to refrigerator factory boats—these increasingly efficient techniques finally brought the seemingly endlessly abundant cod fisheries to a crisis in the 1990s. Several fisheries were closed, including the famed Georges Banks.

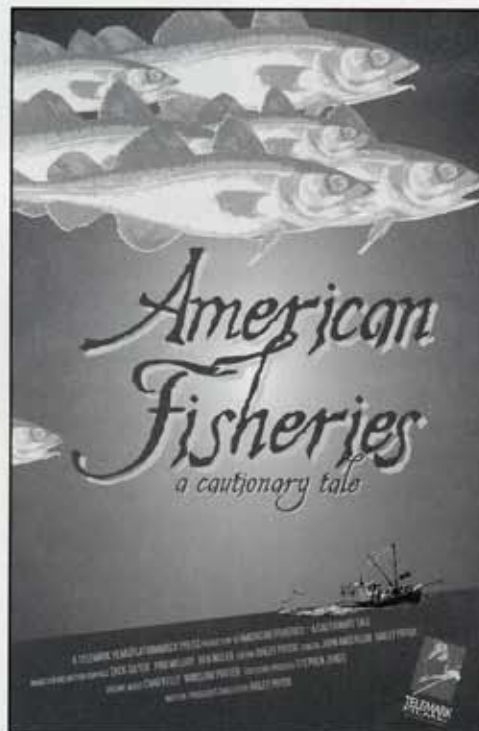
Here are some hard-won findings from the Gulf of Maine Cod Project: "Fishing records from 1861 show the Gulf of Maine harvest of codfish to be 78,000 metric tons. ... In 2000, landings were not quite 4,000 metric tons. The New England Fishery Science Center estimates today (2008) that the entire spawning stock biomass of the Gulf is only 82,000 metric tons. For hand liners on sailboats to land what they did in 1861, the Gulf was an entirely different ecosystem. There is an important story there, a story at the intersection of history and marine science."

The film *American Fisheries* features interviews with key players, weighing

in on the future of the North Atlantic fishery. These include four Gulf of Maine fishermen, notably Dave Goethel, also a member of the New England Fisheries Management Council; scientists from Woods Hole, the Blue Ocean Institute, and UNH. Rosenberg, codirector of the Ocean Process Analysis Lab (OPAL), Leavenworth, research historian at OPAL, and Bolster comprise the UNH interviewees.

As the film concludes, Bolster notes: "There's no single individual to blame. It's a systemic and interlocked problem. It's very complicated. ... Ultimately, this is primarily a political problem."

But there was one message for the consumer—buy fish from sustainably managed fisheries that can help.



# BACK TO THE FUTURE

*New faculty help students understand the past as they look ahead to the future*

No sooner had **Jessica Lepler**, assistant professor of history, begun her first semester at the University, than the nation's financial turmoil began. While many have compared this financial era to the Great Depression, for Lepler, the more striking parallel was with an earlier time in U.S. history—the Panic of 1837, the subject of her upcoming book.

According to Lepler, in the spring of 1837, the credit market ground to a halt after months of “pressure” because, just as Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson put it recently, “illiquid assets clogg(ed) up our financial system.”

After an investment bank connected to the Rothschild banking empire suspended operations in New York, an event that contemporaries called the “heaviest failure which ever occurred in the United States,” economic giants around the world tottered on the edge of financial collapse.

On both sides of the Atlantic, banking houses appealed to national governments for support. For a time, the Bank of England, the world's most important central bank, bailed out three London-based firms trading in American financial instruments. But when newly inaugurated President Martin Van Buren refused to assist the financiers of Wall Street, America's more than 700 banks shut their doors.

By examining the culture of this era, Lepler says we learn that panic is fueled by the words we use to describe it. In 1837, writers, just as they do today, employed terms that embodied their fears: “whirlwind,” “deluge,” “conflagration,” “epidemic,” and “revolution.”

“The language of natural disaster assuages our collective guilt over the choices we have made by turning economic processes into forces beyond our control. The reality is that these financial ‘storms’ are caused by human choices. We buy. We sell. During high times, the world's largest investment banks, individual investors, and regulatory agencies praise themselves for their successes,” Lepler says.

“But, during times of ‘gloom and doom,’ no one accepts blame for financial sins,” she says. “Rather, it is in troubled times when financiers admit, as one *New York Times* reporter noted, ‘the inability

of these sophisticated institutions to assign accurate values to their holdings.”

—LORI WRIGHT

**Eleanor Harrison-Buck**, assistant professor of anthropology, understands the importance of balancing meaningful time in the classroom with responsible work in the field, emphasizing to her students the necessity of public outreach and ethics in archaeology.

An anthropological archaeologist with a specialty in Maya culture, Harrison-Buck teaches *Adventures in Archaeology*, a worldwide survey of archaeology that fulfills a social science general education requirement, and a seminar on Ancient Maya Civilization.

Harrison-Buck's seminar is one of the first courses to be taught in the new anthropology lab, a valuable resource for anthropology students at UNH.

“The lab houses a large collection of cultural material, and it is already a very active lab space,” Harrison-Buck notes. “When I announced to students the availability of volunteer opportunities in the lab, I was amazed at the response. UNH students are so excited about a chance to be involved in active research, and a number of them are working in the lab with collections now.”

For the past 15 years, Harrison-Buck's own research has taken her to field sites in Belize, Central America, most recently to the Sibun River Valley. “I'll be beginning a new field project in the river valley just north of the Sibun,” she says. “It is an area in which very little investigation has taken place, and we're hopeful that we will be able to bring students with us into the field.”

Harrison-Buck has already been approached by students looking for just such an opportunity. “I've been very impressed by the emphasis UNH places on undergraduate research and on the funding available for research opportunities,” Harrison-Buck says. “This level of support is very unusual and something that should not be taken for granted. Research experiences can be life changing; I know this was certainly the case for me.



JESSICA LEPLER



ELEANOR HARRISON-BUCK

## College of Liberal Arts Welcomes New Faculty

**CRISTY BEEMER**  
Assistant Professor of English

**HOLLY CASHMAN**  
Assistant Professor of Spanish

**EUN CHO**  
Assistant Professor of Education

**ELEANOR HARRISON-BUCK**  
Assistant Professor of Anthropology

**KENNETH JOHNSON**  
Assistant Professor of Sociology and Senior Demographer at the Carsey Institute

**JOSH LAUER**  
Assistant Professor of Communication

**EDWARD LEMAY**  
Assistant Professor of Psychology

**MARY LEMCKE**  
Instructor of Geography and State Climatologist for the State of New Hampshire

**JESSICA LEPLER**  
Assistant Professor of History

**ELIZABETH MELLYN**  
Assistant Professor of History

**CHRISTINA ORTMEIER-HOOPER**  
Assistant Professor of English

**THOMAS PAYNE**  
Assistant Professor of English

**DANIELLE PILLET-SHORE**  
Assistant Professor of Communication

**DAVID RIVARD**  
Associate Professor of English

**ANN JOSLIN WILLIAMS**  
Assistant Professor of English

—DONNA EASON

*History Professor  
Honored as  
Presidential Chair*



**J**anet Polasky, PROFESSOR OF HISTORY AND WOMEN'S STUDIES, was awarded a Presidential Chair funded through the President's Excellence Fund to recognize "demonstrated excellence in teaching, scholarship (including the creative arts), and service."

Four professors were honored for outstanding contributions in their fields and to the University community with three Presidential Chairs and a University Professorship.

Polasky said she was "overwhelmed" by the award. "It was especially meaningful," she noted, "because it was awarded by UNH for research *and* teaching." She explained that the intertwining of teaching and research at UNH makes this a unique place to work as a professor: "We teach with the intensity of a small liberal arts college, working closely with our students, but we also benefit from the research support of a major university." When Polasky informed her daughter about the award, she asked if Polasky had found a lucky penny; and in fact, Polasky remembered, she had just picked up a eurocent on the streets of Brussels.

Polasky is the author of three books, including *Revolution in Brussels*, winner of the Belgian Royal Academy prize in Arts and Letters, and *The Democratic Socialism of Emile Vandervelde, Between Reform and Revolution*, winner of the Pierlot Prize in Contemporary History. She was awarded the College's Lindberg Award for Outstanding Scholar-Teacher in 1996.

A fellow of the Koninklijke Vlaamse Academie van België (Flemish Royal Academy of Belgium) in spring 2008, she completed *Routes to the City, Roots in the Country: Reforming Urban Labor in Brussels and London* to be published in 2009 by Cornell University Press. She was awarded a fellowship from the National Endowment for the Humanities for 2009 to complete *Revolutions without Borders: Le Cri Universel of the Eighteenth-Century Atlantic*. This last book grew out of her teaching of Inquiry Freshman Seminars on the eighteenth-century Atlantic Revolution at UNH.

"The recipients of the University Professorship and the Presidential Chairs represent the high level of excellence for which UNH is known and furthers the University's efforts to attract and maintain talented faculty," says Bruce Mallory, UNH provost and executive vice president. "The Presidential Chairs, initiated by President Huddleston in consultation with the Provost and Deans Council, are a new way to recognize faculty members' many contributions and years of service."

COMING THIS SPRING...

THE  
**COLLEGE LETTER**  
**ONLINE**

You are reading the final printed edition of *The College Letter*. This spring, we're moving the *Letter* online. Not only will we conserve natural resources, we'll also bring more to our stories: more depth, more breadth, more interactive features, more photos. The same great stories, richer storytelling.

Visit [www.unh.edu/liberal-arts/thecollegeletter](http://www.unh.edu/liberal-arts/thecollegeletter) to register your e-mail address with us. In future semesters, we'll send you an e-mail as soon as a new edition of *The College Letter* is published online.

**Register today—the best is yet to come.**

IN MEMORIAM

**JOHN J. CARNEY**, professor of education, died July 2007. He was 65. In 1973, he came to UNH and soon assumed coordination of the Graduate Program in Reading. He taught a range of courses in literacy.

**ROLAND "CHUCK" KIMBALL**, professor emeritus of education, died January 2008. He was 86. In 1963, he came to UNH as professor and chair of the education department. He served as acting assistant dean of the Graduate School, interim dean of the College, and associate dean of the Graduate School. He retired in 1988.

**STUART H. PALMER**, former dean of the College of Liberal Arts and professor emeritus of sociology, died August 2008. He was 84. In 1955, he came to UNH as a criminologist; he published 12 books dealing with the analysis of homicides. He was dean of the College from 1982 to 1995. He retired in 1997.

**MARY HELEN RASMUSSEN '52**, professor emerita of music, died January 2008. She was 77. In 1968, she came to UNH to teach string instruments and performance in chamber and orchestral music. She retired in 1997.

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STANDING STILL 3



OCEANS IN CRISIS 4-5



PRESIDENTIAL CHAIR 7

*The College Letter* is published twice a year for the College of Liberal Arts by Editorial and Creative Services. The editor and writer (unless otherwise noted) is Carrie Sherman. Thanks to David Moore for his editorial assistance. The designer is Christine Hodgson. Photography is by Perry Smith.

## *A University Dialogue on Poverty and Opportunity*

# The growing DIVIDE

A \$0.70 breakfast; an \$0.80 lunch?  
Dinner for \$1.63?

In November, the UNH community was invited to experience the world from the perspective of a person who depends on food stamps to eat, the average allocation of which is \$3.13 a day. The exercise was part of *The Growing Divide: A University Dialogue on Poverty and Opportunity*.

For many participants, the UNH \$3.13 Challenge underscored the urgency of addressing the issue of poverty in a state where 62,000 children grow up in low-income households.

"This University Dialogue on poverty and inequality could not be more timely,"

says Cynthia "Mil" Duncan, founding director of the UNH Carsey Institute. "It helps UNH students understand and connect with those who are struggling, and to see why a commitment to the larger 'common good' through good policy and personal engagement can make

a difference." Duncan's involvement in the dialogue is an extraordinary opportunity for students to learn from one of today's foremost authorities on the struggles faced by citizens of the "other America."

Since 2004, the Carsey Institute has focused the attention of national and community leaders on the plight of disproportionately impoverished rural America. Briefs and reports from the Carsey Institute regularly inform news on rural issues in the *New York Times*, *USA Today*, *Wall Street Journal*, and National Public Radio.

Duncan is one of 11 Discovery Authors who contributed an essay to this year's

dialogue packet. Written by faculty members in psychology, nutritional science, occupational therapy, civil engineering, health management and policy, and political science, essay topics ranged from owning your own home, to health and neighborhoods, to the strengths of women living in poverty. The packet was distributed to all first-year students at the beginning of the year. Open forums to discuss the essays are a central element of the dialogue. Other activities this year include a tour of the Strafford County Jail, a poverty simulation, poverty-themed documentary movies and discussions, a food basket drive, and a Discovery Award for Outstanding Research to be granted to two undergraduate students.

You can download and read Duncan's essay, *Poverty and Community: Understanding Culture and Politics in Poor Places*, and other essays by this year's Discovery Authors at <http://www.unh.edu/academic-affairs/discovery/dialogue/>.

To learn more about the UNH Carsey Institute, visit [www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/](http://www.carseyinstitute.unh.edu/).

—KRISTIN DUISBERG