

ALUMNI UPDATES

Patricia O'Donnell, who retired in 2020, will have a novel, *A Symmetry of Husbands*, published late in 2023 by Unsolicited Press. An essay called "Salad Days" will appear in *Breaking Bread*, a collection of essays about food and how it sustains us. Profits from this collection will benefit Blue Angel, a nonprofit combating food insecurity by delivering healthy food from local farmers to those in need. And a short prose piece, "The Season Our Neighbors Died," will appear in the "Field Notes" section of *Cordella Magazine*. Patricia has been teaching a class in Memoir Writing for women at the Maine Correctional Center in Windham."

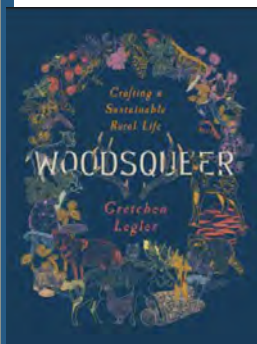
UMF Creative Writing BFA Alumni [Gail Bello](#) and [Meagan Jones](#) launched their own literary magazine *Crow Name* which features weekly blog posts from the editors and publishes themed issues twice a year. For more information about submissions please visit <https://crowname.com/>

[Marcelle Hutchins](#), after 4 years at WBUR 90.9 FM, is in a new full-time producer role at KCRW, Southern California's leading National Public Radio affiliate.

FACULTY UPDATES

[Lewis Robinson's](#) short story "The Diver" was adapted into a short film that was shot in September and will be submitted to the Tribeca Film Festival this month. His essay "The Ten-Year Chili" will be part of an anthology called *Breaking Bread: Essays From New England on Food, Hunger, and Family* due out this spring from Beacon Press.

[Jeffrey Thomson's](#) 10th book, *Museum of Objects Burned by the Souls in Purgatory* will be published in May of 2022. This collection is named after the small gallery of the same name found in the Chiesa del Sacro Cuore del Suffragio in Rome. Many of the poems in the book are devoted to meditations on (or encounters with) religious relics like the fingers of Doubting Thomas or the skull of John the Baptist, but he is also looking at the power that lives inside other objects and works of art, such as an underwater sculpture in Mexico or the skull of a tightropewalker who died of a broken neck (from the Mütter Museum in Philadelphia). These narratives they carry are about the past and the present, those who suffered and were saved, those who were martyred and restored in the next world. Thus, these relics (and the stories they signify) are about meaning-making for all pilgrims in their suffering today.



[Gretchen Legler](#) had two books come out with Trinity University Press in 2022, one, a reprint of her 1995 "nature writing classic" *All The Powerful Invisible Things: A Sportswoman's Notebook*, and the second, a new memoir titled *WOODSQUEER Crafting a Sustainable Rural Life*. The memoir chronicles Gretchen's almost 20 years of living close to the land on a farm in rural Maine. Promotion activity for the book included a hometown book launch sponsored by Farmington's independent bookseller Devaney Doak & Garret, and readings at Portland Public Library's Literary Lunch Series, Print Books in Portland, Elliott Bay Books in Seattle, Porter Square Books in Cambridge, and the Associated Writing Programs annual conference in Philadelphia. She continues to direct the UMF Camus and Community Garden, a venture she hopes gives students opportunities for hands-in-the-dirt education in food, farming and organic gardening, as well as a place to refresh their spirits. Her next adventure (and her next book ?) will be a 500 mile/40 day walking pilgrimage along the Camino de Santiago across Northern Spain.

HERE ARE SOME PICS OF THE FABULOUS FIVE

CW MAJORS who took ENG 401 Senior Sem in FALL 2021.



The gang raising a glass of champagne in the cold in Abbott Park after the senior reading on Dec. 9, 2021: left to right: Brooklyn Miller, Spencer Arnold, Amelia Metcalfe (winner of the Fall BEA Prize for Excellence in Creative Writing), Caneel Cheskin, Terri Potvin and Professor Gretchen Legler.



Brooklyn Miller behind the podium.



Jocelyn Royalty and Terri Potvin congratulating one another.

KAYLA BEGIN

internship with the Farmington Historical Society last fall. She worked with Claudia Bell.





Northeast Independent Booksellers Association

BFA Alum (2017) Konnor Wilson (holding Gretchen Legler's new book *Woodsqueer*) at the Northeast Independent Booksellers Association meeting in Portland, ME, on April 7. She went from UMF to get an MFA in writing for the screen and stage at Northwestern University in Chicago, and now works for Print Bookstore in Portland. The other folks in the pictures are Print owner Emily Ruso (second from right), and bookstore staff Stephanie and Rachael. Konner.

FARMINGTON, ME (March 28, 2022)—University of Maine at Farmington graduating senior, Carrie Close, has a lot to celebrate this spring.



Her book, “What Have I Done?,” is a collection of poems and short stories published by Unsolicited Press. The launch will take place on Thursday, April 7, at 7 p.m., in the Emery Community Arts Center Flex Space. The event is free and open to the public and will feature a reading by Close and will be followed by a signing by the author. A Farmington native, Close went to Farmington schools, attended Mt. Blue High School, and then on to college elsewhere in Maine. However, neither that nor a second college in Colorado met her needs and she returned to Farmington. “After a couple of attempts at college, I just wasn’t sure about the best path for myself going forward, but I followed the lure of Farmington’s Creative Writing program and applied and was accepted into the program, and I am so glad I did,” said Close. For Close, writing provides a way to process and cope with life’s experiences. She enrolled in Farmington’s Creative Writing program in the fall of 2017 and was awarded the Alice James Director’s Chair Fellowship in the fall of 2018. She took some time off from her studies when her grandfather died in 2019, but her focus has always been to understand her journey of self-discovery and tell the stories that would resonate with an adult audience. “Carrie is a gifted student who excelled in our writing workshop classes where students see themselves as writers and take their writing seriously,” said Jeff Thomson, UMF professor of creative writing. “She is a fearless writer of amazing honesty. She captures intimate moments that are fraught with consequence and nuance and pushes them beyond the bounds of the personal into the cultural and poetic.” “Many of the poems and short stories in my book came out of writing workshops I took while at UMF,” said Close. “My professors have all been incredible and provided me with the tools and guidance to become a published author. I have grown so much as a writer.” After graduating, Close plans on applying to MFA programs in creative writing and finishing her novel.

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[HTTPS://WWW.MAINE.EDU/TOGETHER/COMMUNITY-GUIDANCE/EVERYONE/](https://www.maine.edu/together/community-guidance/everyone/)**

EDITOR’S NOTE: Photo Caption: Carrie Close with her eight-month-old daughter, Zarya. She also has a two-year-old son, Zephyr.



More Information on the UMF Creative Writing Program

As the only Bachelor of Fine Arts in Creative Writing program in the state of Maine and one of only three in all of New England, the UMF program invites students to work with faculty, who are practicing writers, in workshop-style classes to discover and develop their writing strengths in the genres of poetry, fiction, and non-fiction. Small classes, an emphasis on individual conferencing, and the development of a writing portfolio allow students to see themselves as artists and refine their writing under the guidance of accomplished and published faculty mentors.

Students can pursue internships to gain real-world writing and publishing experience by working on campus with The Sandy River Review, a student-run literary magazine; Ripple Zine, a feminist magazine; The Farmington Flyer, a university newspaper; or Alice James Books, an award-winning poetry publishing house.