

# Unity

Summer 2006

*The Magazine of Unity College*

**Archery Club  
Goes Global**

**Promoting  
Environmental  
Learning**

**Studying the  
Asian Shore Crab**

## *Message from the President*



I want to thank everyone here at Unity and throughout the greater Unity family who made this a very productive and wonderful year for me. I have greatly enjoyed my time here at the College. I believe that we have had a very productive year. Several new policies and programs have been implemented, new partnerships and collaborations have been developed, several new faculty are slated to arrive in the fall, a strategic plan to guide us into the future has been approved by the Board, a much revamped college marketing and student recruitment system is in place, and building and refurbishing projects are under way. Yet in the swirl of change what remains, what continues to sustain Unity as it always has and always will, is Unity's people. My affection for the hard working, bright and creative student body, board members, alumni, staff and faculty is genuine and deep. This is clearly a campus on the move, one engaged in important work that continues making a name for Unity College locally, regionally, nationally and even internationally. Most of all Unity College is a place about, for, and committed to the growth of people. We take serious our invitation to people to come and grow with us in this lovely corner of Maine.

To continue our advances, our momentum and our movement ever forward, we are indeed fortunate to have a major environmental scholar and teacher, Mitchell Thomashow, join us as our new president. Mitch has been the catalyst behind all of the environmental programs for three decades at Antioch New England Graduate School in Keene, New Hampshire. A published author of several acclaimed books, a frequent contributor to journals like *Orion*, a consultant to numerous organizations and agencies, a widely sought-after lecturer and a serious student of educational processes, Mitch brings energy, excitement and vision to his new duties as Unity's president. In the several months that I have gotten to know him and his environmental-educator wife, Cindy, I have been most impressed with the Thomashows and their sincerity, warmth and fundamental decency. Unity College now has the person at the helm to lead this amazing place into the future. I know you will join me in welcoming Mitch and Cindy to Unity!

As for me I return to my post at the University of Southern Maine forever changed by my year at Unity and ever more a friend of this fine College and community. Thanks!

Mark B. Lapping  
Interim President



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#### Cover Photo

Champion archer Amanda Hadaswick '07 qualified and competed in the International Bowhunting Organization 2006 World Championship in August. She also won the Connecticut State Archery Shoot and Maine State Championship during the Spring 2006 Semester. See archery story for details.

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# Message from the Editor

## What is Unity?

Unity College is blessed with a great many talented individuals who are committed to advancing its strong ideals on a daily basis. These ideals include educating the next generation of environmental leaders, operating a model sustainable community, and challenging dedicated, adventurous and earthy students in active ways that promote personal and professional growth. The friendly atmosphere promotes active learning and growth through the generous nature of all who serve and believe in walking down a collaborative path. It is also blessed with supporters across the United States and beyond, highly engaged Trustees, along with talented educators and staff. The hands-on approach to learning pursued at the College is progressive and helps a wide range of students jump-start their environmental careers with regular field work. Students also make the most of opportunities to learn in an outdoor setting, often seen when educators like Professor Dave Potter take students to study at Unity Pond, or Associate Professor Emma Creaser leads students on a field trip to the coast.

The commitment to service at every level is exemplary. So often one sees professionals like Interim Provost and Associate Professor Mick Womersley leading a student activity at odd hours, Saturday and Sunday included, in Womersley's case as advisor to Unity Search and Rescue. Ideas and initiatives are truly valued, such as when Associate Director of Admissions Joe Saltalamachia ('95) founded the annual Fishing for Scholarships tournament, now in its fourth year.



There are few boundaries or impediments to service present, with staff and faculty volunteering for the annual Fishing for Scholarships Tournament and many other events all year long. Faculty and staff are included in significant decision-making and beyond-the-call-of-duty service is second nature by choice. The strong, progressive mission of the College frames its efforts, initiatives and culture.

Now in its second year, *Unity, the Magazine of Unity College*, is an opportunity for the College to showcase its noteworthy achievements, friendly asides, mission and internal culture. Though the magazine, just as the College itself, is responsive to changing needs and goals, its primary audiences are those external to the College. The target audiences for this magazine can be but are not limited to individuals who know little about the College, members of the media, the curious,

potential donors, potential students, parents and donors.

For a small college, Unity has its fair share of high quality publications geared to serving different audiences. The Department of Admissions publishes a newsletter that addresses issues of particular interest to potential students. The Office of Career Services is responsible for a series of informative web pages on the Unity College web site at [www.unity.edu](http://www.unity.edu), and this department does a great job of keeping current students, students who are interested in pursuing internships, potential employers and others informed about this important aspect the College. The list continues and covers every department, individual faculty members, and student groups.

A new feature of this magazine is a section for Letters to the Editor. We welcome your letters and story ideas. Simply contact me by phone, e-mail or by letter. Just as Unity College serves the world, so too does this magazine seek to serve and connect with all individuals who share its values.

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# Letters to the Editor

## Hunter Ethics is a Concern

Let me begin by stating that I thoroughly enjoy reading about the College and its community. I would, however, like to express some strong feelings I have with regard to a recent article. The article in question is from the Winter 2006 Volume 20, number 1. It's written by Mark Tardif and is titled *Angela Ebert Combines Love of Hunting, Adventure with Studies at Unity College*.

Angela sounds like an excellent student and representative of the Unity College community. Her commitment to this country (as a member of the armed forces) is also to be commended and is certainly appreciated by me personally. I'm glad she received a scholarship from the Safari Club and I hope she puts it to good use.

It's very interesting to note that sometimes the folks who grow up with the close connections to the land and rich hunting "traditions" lack some of the most important fundamentals of hunter safety and/or in this case, hunter ethics. I'm sure that many of the Unity College communities' hunters felt the same level of disbelief as I did when reading the account of one of Angela's "favorite and most entertaining hunting stories..."

The use of a firearm which has not been properly and thoroughly sighted in (with the ammunition being used) is a serious mistake with regard to the ethical taking of a whitetail deer or any other animal for that matter. The chance of wounding an animal increases enormously under these

circumstances. If what the story conveys is true, Angela had no idea where the projectile (deer slug or buckshot if legal) was going to hit. She was very fortunate she did not wound and lose "her first buck."

In addition, the fact that Angela's mother brought down a doe from her porch in her house gown may be legal, and sounds interesting and maybe quirky, however, it's not something that I believe the overall hunting community as a whole should condone and it's certainly not something to be published by the College in its magazine. When publishing stories which convey hunting techniques, attitudes, or actions, I would highly recommend that you as editors and/or writers need to have these articles reviewed by experienced hunters (from the Unity College community) prior to publishing. I would gladly volunteer to do this for you in the future if you'd like.

Overall, this article stands as a good case for mandatory Hunter Safety/Ethics education for ALL hunters, especially those with rich hunting traditions passed down through many generations. It's never too late to learn about ethical sportsmanship. Instead of Remington sending her a "letter, hat, and jacket," they should have sent her an invitation to a hunter safety/ethics course.

Robert J. Maietta '81  
Stonington, CT

# Why

## Environmental



By Mick Womersley

Being British and being relatively savvy with computers and other technology, I'm a regular consumer of the news products put out by the BBC. I get the "Beeb" on my TV at home via satellite, I get it on my computer at work and at home, and I use their streaming video clips and web-based news service in class on a regular basis.

Americans who watch the BBC know that from the Horn of Africa south to Botswana and west to Mali, famine is rampant and millions will die this year. They also know that the drought that is causing this famine is part of a major climate anomaly, now considered statistically significant, and linked to greenhouse warming. They know that the Greenland ice sheet is melting, as is the West Antarctic ice sheet, and that this melting is considered a climate tipping point by most climate scientists. They know that forty meters of sea level rise is possible as a result. While all this is happening, classes about the linked issues of climate and energy are required in American colleges and universities.

# Education at the College Level?

The great majority of American graduates leave school ignorant of these issues. In a few years time, when the enormity of what we've done is finally upon us, our children will ask what we personally did to prevent it.

I asked my grandfather, when I was a wide-eyed kid, what he did in the First and Second World Wars. He said he did the best that he could. And like him, I have tried my best. One day at least I will be able to answer that I not only did my best, but I did the thing that was most important: *I tried to stop it.*

Every Unity College student leaves with a basic education in climate change and energy issues. It is an education, as former President David Glenn-Lewin always said at graduation, free from dogma and compulsion. It is a civilized education, designed so that students will know enough to do their part in protecting the civilized world from climate change and the civic stresses that climate change will bring. Making sure this education happens is the single most important thing I can be doing in the year 2006 AD.

I have to say I've given up trying to prevent climate change itself. We left it too long, took too many chances. Most scientists now realize that the time when high-level policy such as the Kyoto Accord could affect greenhouse emissions sufficiently is probably past us now. What I do now in my classes is to explain what will happen as carefully as I can, and then make my students think about what it's going to take to maintain the rule of law, to maintain food and water supplies, and to prevent conflict in the world that is to come. We're moving from a period in which scientists tried to make us stop climate change, to one in which aid agencies, western military services, rescue services and agricultural specialists will have to respond to climate change.

We can begin to see what this new world looks like in New Orleans, in the tsunami response area, in the continent of Africa, and by extension, in Palestine, Iraq and Afghanistan. Just as the combination of fascism with the Great Depression created conditions for the Second World War, the combination

of climate change with international terrorism, energy competition, and the failure of states will lead to terrible, possibly global strife. The era of the climate refugee is upon us. It will only get worse.

Somehow, out of the depths of the

Great Depression in Britain and America, arose a generation that was able to put an end to the war, to the strife and to the concentration camps. The job was messy and uncivilized at times. But at the end, there were civilized trials, civilized relocation efforts, Germany got the Marshall Plan and Japan democracy despite those who wanted to punish them.

In general, American and British college and university graduates were the young leaders who tidied up the terrible human cost left by the death throes of the Third Reich and her Axis. It was, more than anything, an exercise in human decency.

My job, as an environmental professor, is to train the new generation who will tidy up the human mess left by climate change. It is, more than anything, about human decency.

*Mick Womersley, Ph.D., is Interim Provost and Associate Professor of Human Ecology. He has degrees in biology, conservation, and environmental policy. He is co-chair of the college's sustainability effort.*

*"The great majority of American graduates leave school ignorant of these issues. In a few years time, when the enormity of what we've done is finally upon us, our children will ask what we personally did to prevent it."*



# UNITY ARCHERY CLUB ON TARGET AT I.B.O. WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP — SPIRIT, SUCCESS AND AN OPEN-DOOR POLICY POINT TO A BRIGHT FUTURE

By Mark Tardif

On a raw and drizzly spring evening in March that would depress an otter, a group of energetic male and female archers from Unity College gathered to test themselves at the Maine State Indoor Archery Championships at Central Maine Archery in Auburn, Maine. Testing themselves like this is something they have been doing as a club for three years, improving at an astonishing rate. They now consistently perform in official competitions at a startlingly high level, with several members winning titles and cracking national rankings.

## **Share and Share Alike — Both Genders Need Apply**

Some on campus see the team as arguably Unity's best opportunity to achieve athletic prominence on a national level, though many teams, clubs and individuals alike, achieve much every year.

Suffice to say that Unity athletics are both competitive and participatory, and both of these aspects of its culture are represented on the Archery Club, which in three years has grown.

With female team members practicing alongside males and willing competitions too, the archery club is more than just a place for students who share the same passions. It is the embodiment of the team oriented, supportive and friendly

environment present at Unity College.

At every competition the team emphasis is on progress, support and fun. Winning is usually great fun anyway, but possibly even more so with such a tight-knit group celebrating together.

During the competition in Auburn members shared advice, cheered good shots and urged that bad shots be forgotten. It is a team that wins, overcomes adversity, and trains together. The team is among that most rare commodity at the collegiate level, a truly open-minded group tied together by their love for hunting and adventure sports, with an open door policy for Unity students just picking up a bow for the first time.

The result of the tournament in Auburn was another great showing for the club with multiple members among the top finishers in the competition, which attracted both collegiate and amateur archers from across New England.

## **Eyes on the Prize, Earning Respect and Recognition**

Only weeks before the Maine Championships in Auburn, the club achieved something unprecedented in its history, qualifying twelve archers to participate in the International Bowhunting Organization (I.B.O.) 2006 World Championship that took place August 3-6 at Snowshoe Mountain in Snowshoe, West Virginia.

The qualifier was held at the I.B.O. event in February at The Big E — The Eastern State Exposition in Springfield, Massachusetts.

The twelve qualified and traveled to the I.B.O. World Championship with their advisor and co-founder of the club, Associate Director of Admissions Joe Saltalamachia.

Competitive archery among colleges is more commonly associated with universities in Virginia and Texas than chilly Maine. Some feel that Unity can crack into the southern lock on collegiate archery. The I.B.O. includes both amateurs and professionals.

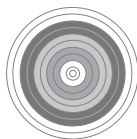
"By any measure competing in the world championship is an outstanding achievement for the club," said Michael Chickering '07, outgoing club President and a Wildlife Conservation major from Keene, New Hampshire. "To compete against professionals from across the United States and achieve this level of success says good things about the progress of the sport in the Northeast at the collegiate level."

"Unity has put the collegiate archery world on notice that we can compete at the very highest level nationally," Chickering added. He earned his spot to compete at the I.B.O. World Championship with a 7th place finish in the Hunter Class at The Big E.



**Archery Club members at a competition in Auburn, Maine during the Spring Semester are left to right front:** Brian Morway '09, a Conservation Law major from Charlestown, New Hampshire; Clayton Kern '08, an Environmental Biology major from Manchester, Pennsylvania; Erica Huber '09, a Wildlife Care and Education major from Plymouth, Maine; and Josh Johnson '09, a Landscape Horticulture major from Worcester, Massachusetts. Left to right back are Mike Leslie-

Dodge '09, a Conservation Law Enforcement major from Worcester, Massachusetts; Amanda Hardaswick '07, a Conservation Law Enforcement / Wildlife Conservation major from Oxford, Connecticut; Mike Chickering '07, a Wildlife Conservation major from Keene, New Hampshire; Julias Koenig '08, an Environmental Writing major from Vassalboro, Maine; and Joe Saltalamachia, Club Advisor and Associate Director of Admissions.



## **The club's jaw dropping success was borne of humble beginnings through personal initiative**

Saltalamachia and Roger Duval, Director of Facilities and Public Safety, co-founded the club when Duval offered to set up a range in the sprawling maintenance building on campus. Duval helped get the club off the ground by recruiting students with Saltalamachia. Both men shared their enthusiasm for archery with students who had never competed at the sport before, though a few students had. Now, three years after those first steps, Duval and Saltalamachia can look back on a club that has become the largest on campus, boasting 103 members as of May, making it one of the nation's largest interscholastic archery clubs. They expect the club to grow even more this year.

In the spring of 2006 due to scheduling conflicts, Duval stepped down from his role as a club advisor, though he remains in touch with participants and has an open-door policy for any archer to seek his input.

Experience at such a competitive level creates better future performances and speaks well for the future of the Club. So does beginning the 2006-2007 academic year with so much enthusiasm.

## **Passion Has Its Price**

"It has grown by leaps and bounds," said Saltalamachia of the club. "We had the mentality that if we built it, they would come." How right he and Duval were, though having a strong recruiter in Admissions didn't hurt either.

Their initial guess was informed by an intimate knowledge of Unity's curriculum and culture, which attracts many students with extensive bow hunting – if not competitive – experience. Some recruits had never tried the sport, while others looked downrange with experienced eyes.

One student who brought outstanding credentials with him to the College was Lisbon Falls native Justin Blouin '09, a Fisheries major. Having served as class President at Lisbon High School and goaltender for the school's hockey team, Blouin had the earmarks of someone who would become a leader. He hasn't disappointed, maturing rapidly as a student and collegiate archer, earning a spot at the I.B.O. World Championship with an 11th place finish in the Hunter Class at The Big E.

Blouin's experience with archery began at age 5 when he followed in the footsteps of his father, Jeff, who was the Maine state bowhunting champion in 1994.

Though he gave the sport up for a time, he had always wanted to return to competitive archery and jumped at the opportunity when he learned of the club at Unity.

Amanda Hardaswick '07, a Conservation Law Enforcement and Wildlife Conservation major from Oxford, Connecticut is the

incoming club President. She earned her way to a spot at the I.B.O. World Championship with a 2nd place finish in the Female Hunter Class at The Big E. During the Spring Semester of 2006, she also won the Connecticut State Archery Shoot, Women's Bow Hunter Class and the State of Maine Championship at the Somerset County Women's Bow Hunter 3D Shoot.

During the summer months team members scattered to jobs and internships, but none put down their bow. Chickering spent the summer working as a Field Biologist on a loon data gathering project with a biodiversity research institute located in Gorham, Maine. The job placed him in a highly isolated spot Southwest of Rangeley, Maine, perfect for bow practice at a makeshift range he constructed near his cabin.

Chickering prepared for the I.B.O. Championship also by finding and introducing himself to local archers, who invited him to a practice get together held each week. Birds of a feather flock together.

Hardaswick spent the summer working with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Department National Wildlife Refuge in Sudbury, Massachusetts. She had barely unpacked before setting up a range in her backyard.

Such dedication transcends mere participation; it speaks to a passion for both the sport and its connection to the outdoors.

## **A Crowded Range Does Not Dampen Enthusiasm – Practicing in Shifts**

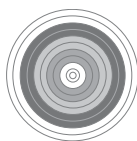
Each day from the beginning of the school year through commencement, there are club members practicing at Unity's archery range. On busy days the club must attend practice in shifts, a crowded situation that points to the need for a larger facility.

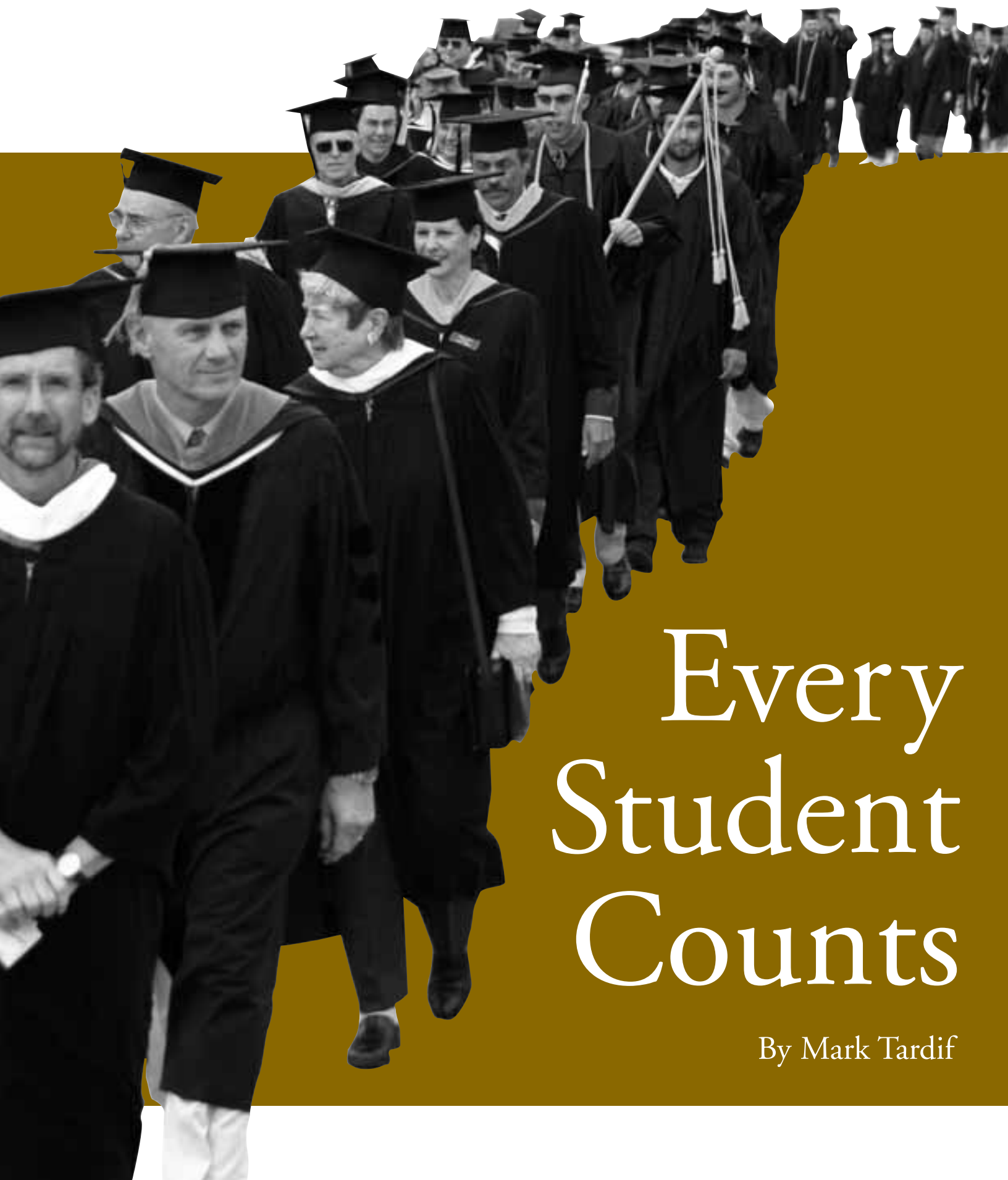
Saltalamachia is hopeful that one day a new range will become a reality, though he is tight-lipped about when or how. "We're doing well and making the most of this facility, obviously that's the case," said Saltalamachia. "No matter whether an improvement to our practice facility comes sooner than later, the team will continue to progress and make the most of every opportunity."

He acknowledges that the facility is bursting at the seams, though he sees the glass half full always.

"That we need to practice in shifts because our team is so large is ok, it's a sign of the strength of this sport at Unity," Saltalamachia said.

Will that mean a new range will be coming to Unity sometime soon? "Who knows," said Saltalamachia. "Good things come to those who are committed and do for the love of it, no matter what the circumstances or surroundings. We're pure in our love for this sport and that won't ever change. A new range would be nice though."





# Every Student Counts

By Mark Tardif

# Student Retention in Focus as MELMAC Grant Unfolds, Next Steps Ready

In February of 2005, Unity College received a grant of \$225,000 from the MELMAC Education Foundation located in Augusta, Maine. The grant money is to help the College improve its already strong efforts in student retention, the percentage of students who attend and continue on to earn their degree.

Higher education in general is concerned with student attrition, though approaches can be vastly different at different institutions. Unity's approach is decidedly student centered and collaborative, a team approach to addressing the diverse issues at play when students are at risk for leaving.

Back in the fall of 2004, Associate Professor John Zavodny, Special Assistant for Strategic Projects Alisa Gray, Professors Pat Clark, Jim Horan and Dave Potter, and Dean for Student Affairs Gary Zane attended a MELMAC Conference at the Samoset Resort in Rockport, Maine. The conference was a requirement for all who wished to apply for a grant to help develop a comprehensive, sustainable system for student retention.

"It was a best practices conference with presentations by representatives from colleges and universities across the United States," Gray explained. "The idea was for us to sit in on sessions with institutions that had successful practices in place and think of how we could apply them to Unity College."

The first year of the MELMAC Grant included implementation of several initiatives and training, much of it spearheaded by Zavodny and Gray. It was Gray who wrote the grant application with input from Zavodny, former President David Glenn-Lewin and additional faculty members.



“One of our initial successes was the implementation of a leadership course during the Spring 2006 Semester taught by Associate Professor Tim Peabody,” explained Gray. To participate in the course students had to be nominated based on their leadership potential.

“We had over 100 first-year students who were nominated for this course,” Gray said. “Forty were selected and it ended up being one of the largest courses of the semester.” Students in the course also journeyed to New Orleans where they learned about leadership through community service working with the Common Ground Collective, a grass roots community group centered in the devastated 9th ward. Gray says a student satisfaction survey of the course was given at the end and a large percentage of students said that it exceeded their expectations.

In addition, a pilot student success course started in the Spring 2006 Semester went well, Gray says. “The course is for first-year students on academic probation,” Gray said. This course helps this group of at risk students develop both study and basic academic skills that will help them to improve their overall performance.

Gray and Zavodny say that involving and developing student leaders is a key aspect of what the retention system being created with the MELMAC Grant is trying to accomplish. Students at risk often respond well to peer-based help.

“The programs being piloted this fall are part of institutional level initiatives,” explained Gray. “They can pertain to all students.

One of our larger initiatives under this umbrella is supplemental instruction. We are using supplemental instruction with our identified at risk courses – Biology One, an intro to computers course, and some of the basic math courses.”

“Statistically we have analyzed which courses are considered most challenging by the greatest number of students,” Gray said. “We identified at risk courses as those with the greatest number of D’s, F’s and W’s (withdrawals).”

Gray says that helping students through the most challenging courses means more than just helping them achieve a good course grade. “The theory is if they tend to not do well in one or two courses then they have the potential to get discouraged and think that college is not for them,” Gray said.

Supplemental instruction first involves training Sophomores, Juniors or Seniors who have done well in the course identified posing a particular challenge to be a peer tutor, Gray said. The peer tutors go on to lead supplemental instruction for the course, so that as the challenging course proceeds, students taking that course regularly meet with peer tutors to receive help beyond what takes place in the classroom.

During the 2005-2006 academic year, Greg Perkins, an Education Specialist in the Learning Resource Center, and Assistant Professor Doug Van Horn attended a conference at the University of Missouri at Kansas City, where they learned how to train peer instructors. Gray says that the University of Missouri is considered



*Alisa Gray*

## Supplemental Instruction Leaders Ready to Help

By Mark Tardif

When the Fall 2006 Semester begins, Third-Year students Laura Carver and Samantha Chisholm will serve as supplemental instructors as part of the MELMAC Grant initiative. This is the first year that trained students will serve as supplemental instruction leaders.

"I will be attending the Biology One lectures and taking notes along with the other students," explained Chisholm, a Conservation Law Enforcement major from Londonderry, New Hampshire. "As I have already taken that class, I have a better advantage at pointing out what is important to know, and find ways to relay it back to students."

Carver will be facilitating group meetings about topics from the Biology class and helping them help themselves to better understand the material. "I will also be sharing with them my knowledge about how to prepare for exams," said Carver, a Wildlife and Environmental Writing major from North Grosvenordale, Connecticut. "This is my chance to help students learn how to study before they regret not doing so; it's like getting a chance to go back and do things differently by helping others by offering the lessons that I learned."

When Carver began her studies at Unity, she thought she would like to go into research. After exploring different options she found an affinity for the elements of her present major. Since she benefited in so many ways from exploration,

she is looking forward to giving back to the College and gaining new skills.

"I feel this position will help me learn techniques for teaching and helping people to learn," Carver said. "This opportunity will help me as much as it helps the students who come to those sessions."

"Overall, I hope to connect to the students on a personal level, to see where they have questions and show them that groups of students studying together tend to find the answers," Chisholm explained. "Since this is a situation where I am a student helping other students, those that need help will not hesitate to ask."

She feels the new program of supplemental instruction is a great idea.

"I know many people who have struggled," Chisholm said. "For the College to notice and address this problem is a good step."

Carver praised the program's approach since it is student centered.

"I think students helping students is a great idea," Carver said. "For some students asking a teacher a question is too intimidating. Asking a fellow student, however, may be easier, especially for First-Year. Also, for the students such as myself who are getting the opportunity to teach others, this will be a great learning experience."

a national leader in supplemental instruction. She adds that Unity is receiving many of its peer instructor training materials from the University of Missouri as well. Perkins and Van Horn have trained the first group of peer tutors, who will be running study groups beginning with the Fall 2006 Semester.

"The way it is working for the Fall (2006) Semester is there are 5 or 6 sections of Biology (depending on final enrollment numbers), so for half of those classes we will add a supplemental instruction section," Gray said. "This will be available for Biology One, which is a first-year course." Biology One is a course that Gray says was identified as particularly challenging. The peer tutors in the supplemental instruction sections will also provide feedback to instructors, who in turn will be communicating with the Student Support Team, to flag students who appear to have academic, social or specific issues that should be addressed.

The objective, says Gray, is to create a system where all of the different aspects of another initiative, the Student Support Team, at the College that can help a student, from the Learning Resource Center to Student Affairs counseling services, are on the same page and comparing notes from the very beginning of each student's time at the College. A key lesson learned at the University of Missouri and other national leaders in student retention is that broad-based collaboration is key to improving student retention numbers.

Each student is more than a set of academic needs and aspirations. What happens on the faculty side is in fact closely

related to what happens in student affairs. For this reason a team-oriented approach to addressing all student needs, even interceding before problems start by identifying courses that are statistical stumbling blocks and planning for supplemental instruction, is the goal of the grant.

Whereas in years past students who isolated themselves in their residence hall would be considered the province of Residence Life, which trains Residence Assistants to address and refer behavioral problems for specific professional assistance, that process will be linked to a great whole. The overall student retention system being created by the MELMAC Grant is providing pathways to convey social information to the academic side of the coin and vice versa.

This comprehensive approach recognizes that not every student who leaves the College does so for strictly academic reasons, says Gray. She added that sometimes students leave for purely social reasons disguised as academic ones, or there are social issues such as homesickness and isolation that actually create academic problems.

An interesting statistical aside will come at the end of the Fall 2006 Semester, when the overall grades for the Biology One courses that offered supplemental instruction by peer tutors and those that did not are compared. Gray says this kind of feedback along the way as the grant unfolds over a six year period will provide enormously valuable information. Such information may help Unity adjust its student retention efforts to be even more effective, Gray adds.

# ON PROMOTING **ENVIRONMENTAL LEARNING**

By Dr. Mitchell Thomashow



*Dr. Mitchell Thomashow and his wife Cindy at commencement on May 13.*

On a balmy, lazy summer day, I check my e-mail before departing for my ritual morning swim in Dublin Lake. There is a message from a search firm asking me if I know anyone who might be interested in the Unity College presidency. Later that week I have a phone conversation with Steve Leo of AT Kearney. I am surprised to learn that my name emerged as a possible candidate and he is wondering about my availability. I decline interest, pleading my love of place and bioregion. Later that day I check out the Unity College website. I am intrigued by what I see—an environmental college with diverse constituencies. For the

remainder of the week, during each of my morning swims, my imagination wanders and I entertain fantasies about Unity. However, my conservative, place-based nature prevails. The idea of Unity slowly fades into the mist of a humid summer.

A month later the search firm calls again, flattering and honoring me with their persistence. Once again I politely decline. Cindy (my visionary wife) prompts me to think again. “You might learn something about yourself,” she suggests. I let the prospect of Unity reenter my awareness. Little do I know that Cindy’s nudge will transform my life.

Once I decide to apply for the Unity presidency I do so with full intensity. I write an unconventional letter to the search committee. I describe my values, my fidelity to place, my life work as a practitioner and theorist of environmental learning, and my desire to give full voice to the people I work with. I take a chance and reveal my aspirations and vulnerabilities, while at the same time declaring my uncertainty about making a move, explaining that I will study Unity as carefully as they will study me. Indeed, after the search process is complete I confide to Bob Pollis (Chair of the Board of Trustees) that I am sure the Search Committee knows me better than I know myself!

I am sure now, although I still have so much to learn, that there is a deep convergence between Unity’s aspirations as a school that teaches “environmental studies for the real world” and my own interest in promoting a place-based, grassroots, activist, experiential, service oriented, intellectually challenging, skill driven approach to environmental learning. In the years to come, and starting from day one, as the college and I grow together, the full measure of that convergence will flourish. I assess life decisions based on how my choices will help me learn and grow. I am sure that Unity College with all of its constituencies, in tandem with the surrounding bioregion has much to teach me.

By way of further introduction, I’d like to briefly describe some of my initial goals



for the college. I intend to implement these in a fully collaborative manner, respectful of the college's history, culture, and landscape. But I will also consider my assessment of the future of environmental studies as well as my experiences as a teacher, leader, writer, scholar, and practitioner. Consider this an emerging vision, ideas that we will work on together, formulated around our most urgent and delightful reason for being together—the necessity of promoting environmental learning.

As an educational community, an environmental college exists for the purpose of giving full moral, personal, and professional voice to its students, staff, and faculty. My philosophy of leadership is that you strive to blend generosity and discipline in order to allow people to flourish, that you encourage innovation, creativity, enthusiasm, and clarity. The Kaballah, the mystical text of Judaism, suggests that there are sparks scattered throughout the landscape of the

universe. I hope to help people find those sparks in a Unity education and to then find them within themselves. Nothing is more fulfilling than watching a student find his or her full voice.

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*“My philosophy of leadership is that you strive to blend generosity and discipline in order to allow people to flourish, that you encourage innovation, creativity, enthusiasm, and clarity.”*

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As a president my work is to pursue the resources that will further enhance those voices. I hope to gather and articulate the core strengths of Unity, wrap those strengths in a compelling vision, and ultimately galvanize interest and investment. Together we craft an eloquent vision lending full voice to our aspirations,

displaying why a Unity education is meaningful, resilient, creative, and transformational. Such qualities enhance both the lives of our students and the quality of life in our region. We must call attention to our good works so that our friends, supporters, and potential donors will know that their investment will make an incredible difference. Together we make the world a better place.

There are three central and coordinated approaches for cultivating resources—an emphasis on sustainability, a focus on partnerships, and the enhancement of our educational offerings.

Sustainability is crucial to the future of environmental studies and should be at the top of the agenda for an environmental college. How we live, how we choose to use energy, what we eat, what we value, how we recycle our wastes, how we design our work, study, and play spaces—these considerations

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*“Unity has an opportunity to be an exemplary sustainable college, demonstrating that ecological design can be both conservation oriented and frugal, that dwelling in life-sustaining spaces enhances learning and productivity. I look forward to engaging the entire Unity community and the whole bioregion in thinking about a sustainable landscape that is appropriate to this region, respectful of its natural resources base, and also a model for other colleges and institutions.”*

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are the basis of an enduring, lifelong environmental education and career. Unity has an opportunity to be an exemplary sustainable college, demonstrating that ecological design can be both conservation oriented and frugal, that dwelling in life-sustaining spaces enhances learning and productivity. I look forward to engaging the entire Unity community and the whole bioregion in thinking about a sustainable landscape that is appropriate to this region, respectful of its natural resources base, and also a model for other colleges and institutions.

A small environmental college broadens its capacity by establishing mutually beneficial partnerships. There are hundreds of outstanding learning environments that would love to host Unity students. Whether this takes the form of joint degree programs (as recently established with Husson University) or special field ecology study trips (with institutions like the Teton Science School), or urban/rural exchanges (like the recent efforts in New Orleans) or apprenticeships in meaningful work environments, there is much we can do to build a national network of affiliations. This will promote opportunity, choice, career options, and diversity.

Unity’s academic programs, with just a little tweaking, can be diversified and



consolidated. As an environmental college, we should reflect the full spectrum of learning and career possibilities. Building on our perceived strengths in areas such as conservation and marine law, environmental science and policy, wildlife care, and outdoor education, we also have the skill, talent, and knowledge to expand our offerings in a variety of areas, including conservation biology and field ecology, the environmental arts and humanities, environmental education and exhibit design, human ecology, sustainability

studies, and environmental homeland security. Over time, I hope we consider more summer residencies, either as special courses, or perhaps as the seeds of unique Masters programs. Our challenge will be to hold true to our experiential philosophy while simultaneously building academic proficiency.

Perhaps the most important reason for my interest in Unity College is that it is universally described to me as a place with heart. This neatly confirms my personal observations. Is it presumptuous to suggest that the mark of a Unity education is that it promotes character and virtue? I hope not! Such language should be essential to our mission. I strongly believe that environmental learning and all that goes with it—observing nature, working the land (hunting, fishing, or gardening), wilderness outings, sustainability practice, as well as reflective and experiential study and scholarship—these activities promote virtue. A Unity graduate should embody generosity, reciprocity, integrity, hopefulness, earnestness, clarity, imagination, persistence, curiosity, and humility. In the weeks to come I intend to write more about Unity College and the development of virtue (watch my website blog!) and I encourage all members of the Unity website to join me in that effort.

As seriously as we commit ourselves to



promoting environmental learning, the Unity experience should be filled with wonder, awareness, and fun. In the days to come, along with all of the obvious tasks of a college president, including fundraising, governance, finances, relationship building, and general problem solving, Cindy and I expect to spend considerable time getting involved in the life of the campus and community. Whether its accompanying students on a hunting trip, or taking part in the winter bird count, playing in the community “wonderball” games, sharing meals with students in the cafeteria, joining with the Unity Barn Raisers, finding the networks of local musicians, attending the MOFGA fair, hosting various planning charettes on campus—I can make a list as long as this essay—I am thirsty for such engagement.

Now I’m looking out the living room windows of our small New Hampshire cottage. It’s a cool, rainy, May morning. There’s an easterly breeze, indicative of back-door precipitation, coming in from the Gulf of Maine. The air smells like Maine. I think about ending one chapter of my life and beginning another. I discover continuity in my love of observing nature and my delight in learning as much as I can about the place where I live. I savour the prospect of joining a new community of friends and colleagues who share similar aspirations, in the hope, urgency, and necessity of promoting environmental learning. That will be the foundation of my leadership.

Dr. Mitchell Thomashow  
Dublin, New Hampshire  
Mount Monadnock  
May, 2006

*(Editor’s Note: Dr. Mitchell Thomashow assumed duties as President of Unity College in July.)*

# Thomashow Well Received on College Lecture Circuit, **Enjoys Reputation as Profound Thinker and Consensus Builder**

By Mark Tardif

When Dr. Mitchell Thomashow is inaugurated as President of Unity College during the Fall Semester, he will likely be greeted and wished well by an array of environmental professionals who have known him for many years. Though he spent three decades building a well-respected environmental program at Antioch New England Graduate School in Keene, New Hampshire, Thomashow traveled widely. In fact, coalition building and embracing diversity of thought has been a consistent characteristic of his approach.

Thomashow's travels helped him not only to gain a deep understanding of environmentalism as a large, multi-faceted, ever changing movement, but led him to develop an impressive catalog of professional contacts. These contacts have not only served him well in various ways while building the Environmental Studies program at Antioch, they helped to form and spread his impressive reputation among diverse groups.

Whether delivering a lecture or writing about global warming, Thomashow thoroughly prepares himself for the task at hand.

During the extensive interview process, Thomashow made it a point to get to know as much as possible about the College. In so doing he said he felt both honored to be considered for the Presidency and impressed with the qualities he identified.

On the day his hiring as President was announced in January, Thomashow drafted a list of Unity's most visible qualities that he wished to mention to the media. "I am deeply impressed with the extraordinary care, dedication and support that the faculty and staff provide to the students," he wrote. "This is an essential quality of the Unity experience as reflected by all the students I have met."

He also spoke of the "uniquely interesting portfolio of courses, reflecting a wide range of environmental subjects and approaches."

Unity's approach to learning was another topic he raised.

"Unity is committed to an applied, experiential approach to learning, what I would like to describe as 'environmental studies for the real world,'" he wrote.

Other topics he mentioned in the written list included Unity's warm

community that values individual relationships, the fact that it is "a college that aspires to reflect the values inherent in its name," and that it is "well poised to develop excellent partnerships and affiliations with a range of local, regional, and national institutions."

At every turn, Thomashow tries to find common ground and clarity of expression.

In his writings and public speaking Thomashow seeks to engage his audience, connecting them to the familiar and leading them to consider the less-than-familiar. His goal is to serve the subject at hand and stress shared concerns. This is made clear by the depth that he brings to his presentations but also through his well-crafted, professional and charismatic style. Rare is the individual capable of engaging Ph.D's, college students, and work-a-day individuals in a single audience. Thomashow is just such a gifted communicator.

One member of the Unity College community who met Thomashow likened him to a "rock star," a characterization that would no doubt put a smile on his face. An amateur musician, he plans to perform with Maine-based Country and Western



*Dr. Mitchell Thomashow was the featured speaker during Earth Week in April at St. Joseph's College in Standish, Maine. His lecture focused on rapid climate change.*

recording artists The Dave Wooley Band during Unity College Founders' Day festivities on Thursday, September 7.

Though it might not be appropriate to liken the President of a college to a "rock star," the fact remains that Thomashow possesses the kind of charisma often associated with former President Bill Clinton or former Speaker of the House Newt Gingrich. That these two charismatic politicians would be referenced in a description of Thomashow is entirely appropriate since he has met and discussed environmental issues with one of them. It is not necessarily the one people assume.

finding solutions to complex environmental problems will produce positive change. This inclusive approach does not mean Thomashow pulls punches or sugar coats issues he feels strongly about, it means he seeks to always engage people of many different perspectives and ideologies.

No matter the occasion or location, Thomashow appears comfortable. Such was the case in April when he appeared as a featured speaker during Earth Week festivities at St. Joseph's College in Standish, Maine. That a Jewish environmental educator would be the featured speaker during Earth Week at a Catholic college

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*"In his writings and public speaking Thomashow seeks to engage his audience, connecting them to the familiar and leading them to consider the less-than-familiar. His goal is to serve the subject at hand and stress shared concerns. This is made clear by the depth that he brings to his presentations but also through his well-crafted, professional and charismatic style."*

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That Thomashow has met Republican Newt Gingrich, cultivating a dialogue about global warming with this likely Presidential hopeful, is in-keeping with his fundamental view that environmentalism is a concern of all humans and, by extension, living beings on earth.

The consistent message that Thomashow conveys to his audiences is that no person, group or country has full possession of environmentalism; it is a dynamic movement that includes many movements, perspectives, and priorities.

In Thomashow's writings, environmentalism crosses all boundaries and therefore should embrace all political parties, because only efforts to include many in debates and

might raise eyebrows, except for the fact that Thomashow embraces and draws from a wide range of theological perspectives in his writings and lectures.

During the question-and-answer session after his lecture Thomashow was asked if he would be teaching at Unity College.

"Not initially because I need to focus on my role as President," Thomashow replied.

"If it doesn't work out over there, you could come and teach here," the student said, prompting applause from the audience.

This was just one presentation during Earth Week at St. Joseph's College, but the result was two hundred people drawn to his prescience and message.

# A Hostile Takeover of the Maine Coast by Asian Shore Crabs?

## Grants Give Aimee Phillippi and Two Unity Students the Chance to Find Out



Green Crab

Often the global economy leaves clues to the importance of paying close attention to the ecosystem. One such clue to this reality is being seen currently along the Maine coast as the Asian Shore Crab (*Hemigrapsus sanguineus*) continues to flourish and spread. Unlike the crab that is commonly found on Maine's coast, the Green Crab (*Carcinus maenas*), the Asian Shore Crab is robust, strong and more aggressive. Scientists worry that over time as the Asian Shore Crab spreads its reach along the Maine coast, their growing numbers will adversely affect the Green Crab in a variety of ways, from pushing them into deeper waters to actually eating them.

The Asian Shore Crab was likely introduced to the east coast of the United

States when water used to stabilize a container vessel was pumped out, releasing Asian Crab larvae that had been sucked in to the ship with water used for ballast half a world away off the coast of Japan, explained Adjunct Instructor Aimee Phillippi, who holds a PhD. in Marine Biology. Since its first appearance in New Jersey in the mid 1980's, the invading crab has been spreading rapidly north and south.

The problem of animals, plants, viruses or other non-native biological tourists becoming unwelcome immigrants due to global trade is not a new one, Phillippi says. She points out that not every new species is a nuisance or poses a danger to native species, it all depends on the circumstances. In some instances the introduction of the wrong type of animal or organism can be devastating, but even in those instances, over time ecosystems tend to adapt.

Phillippi says that some of the species considered "native" were at one time themselves newly introduced to North America. Though time always serves as the ultimate judge of whether a species such as the Asian Shore Crab is harmful, Phillippi notes that scientific study over time is the best way to understand the effects of a newly introduced animal and strategize

ways to intervene if necessary.

During the Spring Semester Phillippi was notified that she had won two grants to monitor the abundance and distribution of the invasive Asian Shore Crab in Acadia National Park on the Schoodic Peninsula adjacent to Maine's tourist mecca Bar Harbor. The grants were awarded by the Maine Sea Grant and Acadia Partners for Science and Learning.

Shortly after commencement, Phillippi set up residence for the summer on the Schoodic Peninsula. She was joined by Alyssa Marvel '09 of Trappe, Maryland, an Adventure Education Leadership major, and Meg Anderson '09 of Fenton, Missouri, a Wildlife Care and Education major.

"We think 'invasive' is inherently bad, it's not," Phillippi said. "Other organisms will adapt to the Asian Crab, it's just that we don't know the extent of their effect."

She and her two assistants spent the summer establishing a baseline to be used in the future by scientists, taking locations along the Schoodic Peninsula and charting factors relating to the Green Crab populations, including where they are in the tidal zones.

In years to come when Phillippi returns to the same places, the initial information



compared against new information will show whether the Asian Crab population has spread, and their effect on the Green Crabs.

They are also monitoring Green Crab movements, Phillippi says. The Asian Crab has the potential to affect a bigger sweep of Maine's coastal environment than simply elbowing Green Crabs into deeper waters.

"The Asian Crab has bigger claws than the Green Crabs, and so they can eat bigger shellfish," Phillippi said. She adds that they can also be more aggressive, handle a wider range of temperatures and stressful conditions that might otherwise kill Green Crabs.

"I do think invasive species can be a big deal over time," Phillippi said. "We also need to keep everything in perspective as we gather information about the Asian Crab. I personally don't think this crab is going to have any serious impact on the commercial bivalve populations, but we need data to convince others."

The Green Crab was itself introduced to the United States in the early 1800's. "Native" is all relative to one's perspective, it would appear.

As for the experience gained by Marvel and Anderson, Phillippi sees their summer on the Schoodic Peninsula as steps along a path to educational achievement.

"Participating in hands-on research like this provides undergraduates an opportunity to take what they learn from their courses and stretch their skills and knowledge further, hopefully making greater connections," Phillippi said.

The grant provided a stipend and housing for the two Unity students, who are living at the Schoodic Education and Research Center (a former United States Naval base that has been turned over to Acadia National Park) on the peninsula.



*Alyssa Marvel (left) and Meg Anderson gather information.*

# Pursuing Environmental Leadership at the Grassroots Level,

## **Reynolds and Trunzo Lead by Example with Grease Burning Pickup Truck**

Not long after the ink on his Environmental Policy and Ecology degrees was dry, Jason Reynolds '06, of Skowhegan, Maine, put his Unity College education and environmental values to the test in a bold way. Teaming up with Environmental Writing major Sara Trunzo '08, of Kinnelon, New Jersey, the duo purchased a 1990 Dodge Ram diesel pickup truck that had been modified by a California-based environmental organization to burn waste kitchen grease.

In late May, Reynolds picked the truck up in New Jersey and drove it to New Orleans, where Trunzo had been serving as both a hurricane Katrina relief volunteer with Common Ground Collective in the devastated 9th Ward and as a Teaching Assistant to the Unity IDEaL class taught by Associate Professor John Zavodny and Anna McGalliard, Director of Health Services. The IDEaL class was learning about leadership in a hands-on way by helping the Common Ground Collective, a grassroots relief organization that guts flood damaged homes and serves the needs of the community. Reynolds and Trunzo got some



*Sara Trunzo and Jason Reynolds with their grease burning Dodge Ram pickup truck.*

odd looks from bemused restaurant managers when they asked if it would be o.k. for them to suck up waste grease. They were happy to oblige, since typically restaurants pay to have their discarded grease hauled away.

The inquiries were most welcome because part of their reason for purchasing the truck was to use it as a grass roots

educational tool. "We're getting the message of alternative fuels out one busboy at a time," Trunzo said. They arrived in Unity, Maine, just after 5 a.m. on Tuesday, May 30, spending just \$10 on diesel fuel for the entire trip from New Jersey to New Orleans and back to Unity. "The \$10 we spent on regular diesel was to heat up the vegetable oil," said Reynolds.



The day of their arrival Reynolds and Trunzo were interviewed by a reporter from WABI-TV Channel 5 of Bangor, Maine. Two days later they were LIVE radio call-in guests on The Voice of Maine 103.9 FM in Bangor, Maine. On Friday, June 2, they were interviewed by Portland Press Herald environmental reporter John Richardson. The next day their story ran as an Associate Press item in a variety of newspapers across New England, including the Portland Press Herald, Boston Globe, Portsmouth Herald, Times Argus of Vermont, Sun Journal of Lewiston, and Bangor Daily News.

As the initial media buzz faded, Trunzo and Reynolds were busy making plans to

visit community groups, schools and organizations to convey the message that there are alternatives to reliance on expensive imported fossil fuel. On Friday, June 7, Reynolds and Trunzo drove their pickup truck to the Wiscasset Middle School of Wiscasset, Maine, where they were among the presenters at the school's annual Celebration of Learning Day. For them to participate was in keeping with a belief that the way to bring about positive environmental change is to take every opportunity to educate at the grass-roots level, whether speaking to a bus boy beside a grease trap or offering a presentation to middle school students, it all counts.

On July 29 and 30, Reynolds and Trunzo participated as presenters at the Owls Head Transportation Museum fair on alternative energy entitled Atmosfair. "We wanted to have a grass roots example of alternative energy use," said Ethan Yankura, an Owl's Head employee who invited the dynamic duo. They were in good company. Other presenters included the University of Maine solar power car team and a variety of Maine car dealers promoting hybrid technology.

"It works for us," said Trunzo, referring to the truck. "It can be a resource for the community, but I really like it because I'm cheap."

## How the System Works - And Work It Does!

By Sara Trunzo '08

At the Exhibition Fair of 1898, Rudolph Diesel introduced an engine designed to run on peanut oil. About this time large oil reserves were being discovered and, as some versions of history go, the petroleum industry bought and patented the engine with the intent of bolstering the consumption of their new found and seemingly endless resource. The idea of using vegetable oil to fuel internal combustion engines is by no means a new one. I consider it an old rusty idea that just needed a little, well, grease.

Actually what is needed are tanks, tubes, radiator lines, pumps, and filters. Here's how our system works:

- We pump waste vegetable oil (hence force referred to as veggie fuel) into an 80 gallon aluminum tank that has been installed in the bed of our 1990 Dodge Ram pickup. At this stage, we use window screen to filter out large particulate matter: crumbs, chicken legs, etc.
- This crude veggie fuel is pumped through a 30 micron Racor paper filter and into a 20 gallon aluminum tank. Aluminum is used because when steel and veggie fuel are in contact, the metal polymerizes, or gets all slimy.
- Before the fuel reaches the injectors, it is run through another Racor paper filter, this time one that filters down to 10 microns, as to avoid fouling up the injectors with impurities in the already-used veggie fuel.
- Then it's off to the engine! Under the hood there is a solenoid that we control with a switch inside the cab. A solenoid is basically a valve with several ports that

determines if we use fuel from the stock tank (regular diesel) or veggie fuel. The selected fuel is injected into the cylinders and ignites.

- Every step of this process is heated by radiator fluid. In both tanks, there are coils of radiator line which heats the tanks. The filtration systems are wrapped with radiator lines. Even the fuel lines going to and from the engine are run within radiator hoses, so they are surrounded by the radiator fluid. Using the radiator to heat the veggie system is vital in order to get the fuel to the correct consistency to enter the engine; this process takes about 15 minutes.

Using a waste product to meet transportation needs is not only a positive alternative to petroleum for reasons like reduced pollution, but it creates a closed system in which fuel needs are met locally. Personally, understanding my system has increased my consciousness of how this vehicle works and has given me the confidence to wrench on it, if need be. And because a veggie system is basically plumbing, one does not need to be a mechanic to own it and work on it.

However, this type of vehicle is not for everyone. It requires extra effort to find and filter fuel, awareness of your vehicle, and willingness to get greasy once in a while (and to smell funny all of the time). Infrastructure to make this technology available to more people is necessary to make waste vegetable oil a viable fuel. Although, veggie fuel is certainly not the solution in global sense, it works for me (and my co-owner) now. But who knows, it could just be a phase.

# Up Close and Personal with Former Maine Governor Angus King and Other Luminaries, **Learning Leadership from High Profile Figures**

Students in the Leadership class taught during the Spring 2006 Semester by Assistant Professor Tim Peabody made the most of opportunities to learn from leaders like Angus King, former two-term Governor of Maine (1995-2003). Leaders like King and Commissioner of the Maine Department of Conservation Patrick McGowan (2003-Present) were regular visitors to the class, which is part of The Unity IDEaL Institute for Developing Leaders at Unity College.

Both King and McGowan are personal friends with Peabody, an established Maine State Game Warden and Unity College alumnus who rose through the ranks to become Colonel. Peabody retired to teach at his alma mater.

It was King who offered Peabody the job of Chief of the Maine Warden Service, which has the rank of Colonel. The circumstance surrounding the job offer by King pointed to an important lesson of leadership: *Look beyond what is directly in front of you to see what might be.*

By King's own humorous account, Peabody showed up to meet with King in a "dazed" condition, muddled, unsure why the Governor wanted to see him first thing in the morning.



*Commissioner of the Maine Department of Conservation Patrick McGowan and Unity students*

When King made the offer Peabody probably looked like a deer in headlights. King knew enough to look beyond Peabody's appearance and exhaustion, understanding the context and viewing it as confirmation that Peabody was the right person for the job. Here was a man, muddled, exhausted, who for the entire evening had been pursuing precisely the

kinds of pro-active, hands-on activities, going after poachers, that King wanted his Colonel of the Maine Warden Service to value.

Peabody got a second wind with the aid of strong coffee, accepted King's offer, and by King's account went on to serve with outstanding distinction.

Joining King was his former Chief of Staff Kay Rand, who shared her own



experiences juggling many duties in service to the Governor.

A core principle that both King and Rand honored was that all initiatives great and small were communicated effectively.

"Intelligence allows you to make things simple," Rand said. "Keeping things simple is a quality of good leaders."

So is creativity. King's staff kept legislators and other interested parties well informed. Even so, occasionally misunderstandings and miscommunications took place.

King mentioned that on one occasion, he misrepresented the substance of a Department of Transportation initiative. A legislator who got wind of King's erroneous comments gave word that he was on his way to see the Governor, and he was spitting mad.

Realizing his error and seeking to diffuse the situation with a bit of humor, when the

legislator arrived King rushed to him without word, knelt on one knee, and kissed his wedding ring.

Lesson number two: *Good leaders unite many to achieve shared goals and are honest, admitting their mistakes.*

During his visit to the class Commissioner McGowan offered students an overview of the structure of the Maine Department of Conservation, its responsibilities, recent triumphs and challenges. He impressed upon students the need to consider multiple sides of issues when serving in an environmental leadership capacity, finding common ground between conservation and development.

"Maine is the most heavily forested state in the United States, there's not even a close second," McGowan told students. Despite these resources, during the second day of

the (Governor of Maine John) Baldacci administration in 2003, the largest paper company in the world declared bankruptcy.

"It has been a tough, tough go for the wood products industry (in Maine)," McGowan said. Echoing a theme stressed by King and Rand, McGowan pointed to the need for leaders to find creative solutions.

He said that his department has made progress in resurrecting the wood products industry in Maine by linking it to magazines like Cosmopolitan that for a variety of reasons, prefer to purchase paper that has been certified. The certification process is involved and begins at wood harvesting sites. It is a good example of how leaders try to find creative solutions by looking at problems as opportunities to create new markets.



Former Governor of Maine Angus King (center, front in tie) is joined by his former Chief of Staff Kay Rand (front in business suit), Assistant Professor Tim Peabody (front, far right) and Unity students.

# A Grade with Your Dessert?

## à la Carte Contract Grading Gains Popularity



Though not new to the field of education or to Unity College, the educational approach commonly called contract grading, which is often described in terms of choosing a grade based on a menu of options, counts Associate Professor John Zavodny as among its most ardent supporters.

Zavodny is up front in noting that contract grading is neither new nor ideally suited to all courses, the hard sciences and mathematics chief among them, and he does not pursue this approach in all of his classes. Some types of classes though, especially those with research writing requirements, can be ideally suited to this approach, he says.

Traditional grading features a syllabus where all students are required to do all the work listed. The contract grading approach involves a professor setting up a tiered system of goals at the beginning of the semester. Students see the assignments they must complete to earn an A, B or C, with Zavodny allowing no lower than the goal of

earning a C. The higher the grade earned, the more work.

Zavodny says that some students seize upon an A at the outset, entering into a contract to earn that grade, but due to various factors during the semester opt to renegotiate for a different grade.

This system recognizes that students have diverse academic goals that shift due to a variety of circumstances, says Zavodny. Rather than requiring that each student write the same number of research papers, for instance, students who contract for a B will be expected to write fewer papers than those who contract for an A. This is in essence the way contract grading works, order the right amount of work and enjoy.

Far from being an easy way to address every course, Zavodny says the approach can, with the right kind of course such as environmental philosophy or moral reasoning, allow the student to get more by doing a better job of attaining the specific aspects of the contract than just following a syllabus and cramming for written exams.

The basic idea is that all work that students complete as part of their contract for a particular grade is done with great attention to details and reaches a high standard. A person who contracts to earn a B won't complete as many assignments as a person who has contracted to earn an A, however both students will be held to the same high standard for the work they are required to complete.

There is an element of personality also

required to carry off a contract grading class.

"I think students experience a little bit of disorientation the first time they take one of my classes because I guess I don't carry myself like a lot of professors do," Zavodny says. "I don't approach the classroom like a lot of people do. Most students come from an educational tradition that's more instructor centered and less student centered."

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*"Zavodny says that some students seize upon an A at the outset, entering into a contract to earn that grade, but due to various factors during the semester opt to renegotiate for a different grade."*

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What Zavodny aims for is a more natural, organic and consequence-based approach to education. What on the surface may appear to be a possible easy way through course material, is in practice a system that teaches the importance of personal responsibility, leading students to grasp the concept that education isn't a passive process, it is something that occurs when a student considers himself or herself an active participant in the educational experience. Some students arrive feeling that they are to receive an education, taking this literally as if it is the responsibility of the professor to somehow make them learn. The reality is that learning happens when the student, curriculum and professors



converge as active, hands-on partners to construct the educational experience.

"I give students a lot of responsibility," Zavodny says of the courses he grades using the contract approach. He expects students to take ownership of their own education.

"I tell students that I expect them to contribute (to the course) in the ways they are uniquely qualified to contribute," Zavodny says. He expects students to do a good deal of legwork for themselves, such as looking up where the final exam is scheduled to be, instead of constantly relying on the professor to provide details that they, as adults, ought to be able to handle for themselves.

With shared responsibility comes

flexibility, the kind common to the real world after commencement.

"If I require them to complete a particular project to get their grade in, I take the deadline very seriously," Zavodny said. "If I don't need to see a particular paper on a particular day and it doesn't impact my life and their learning to pass it in a few days late, I don't have a problem with that."

As the specifics of contract grading unfold it begins to seem more challenging than traditional approaches, at least from the standpoint of the expectations placed upon students. Zavodny hands his students a roadmap, he doesn't offer them a hand to guide them to the destination. Doing so will never give students the map reading

(cognitive) skills they will need to reach their goals in life after commencement, Zavodny says.

"I'm trying to teach these adults to become independent thinkers and agents in their own lives," Zavodny says. "The consequences I create are as real and natural as I can make them. I am trying to connect them with the consequences of their actions, so I don't create arbitrary punishments and rewards, which by and large grades are."

Zavodny points out that in real world situations, in jobs at every level, when people are required to give presentations they are on the hook. They are responsible to their employer or professional community.



*John Zavodny teaches a class in the woods near campus.*

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*“I loved (Zavodny’s contract grading course) because I am a person always worried about my grades,” said Isabel Streichhahn-Demers ’08, an Environmental Humanities major from Munich, Germany. “I knew what I needed to do in order to earn a particular grade and what was required.”*

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Therefore, when students in one of Zavodny’s contracting grading classes are required to give a presentation, they are held to a standard that speaks to the responsibility they have not only to complete the work, but offer something of value to their community.

Students sharing in the responsibility for enhancing the quality of the courses they take is also a part of contract grading, and it is a shocking concept to grasp for some.

This means that if a student is required to conduct research on a subject and offer a five-minute presentation to the class or community, the work that he or she does in preparation will be directly tied to the learning experience of all students who are part of that community, or class, says Zavodny.

“The classic example is when students write and perform a play (for one of the classes he teaches) on a significant environmental issue, if they get up and don’t know their lines, or if they were responsible

for writing and what they have contributed are second rate lines, or created unbelievable characters, they will suffer the consequences of public humiliation,” Zavodny said. Their grade will also reflect their sub-standard effort, no matter what they contracted to achieve.

Many students who have taken one of Zavodny’s contract grading courses speak positively about the experience.

“I loved (Zavodny’s contract grading course) because I am a person always worried about my grades,” said Isabel Streichhahn-Demers ’08, an Environmental Humanities major from Munich, Germany. “I knew what I needed to do in order to earn a particular grade and what was required.”

Streichhahn-Demers praised the experience she had taking Zavodny’s Animal Rights and Environmental Ethics class. Her main project was a series of shorter essays that led to a longer, final essay. “They (the essays) were all arguments and taught me how to

argue correctly, so it was incredibly helpful and I did learn more than I thought I would,” Streichhahn-Demers said.

Lindsey Cook ’06, a Sustainable Landscape Horticulture major from Braintree, Massachusetts, thought that Zavodny’s contract grading approach for a course that examined Eastern thought for the Western mind was particularly apt.

“Most of the philosophy is based on balance, therefore I could be successful with my contract,” Cook said. “It seemed reliable, calm, and effective. John is accurate when he says that most students aren’t shooting for A’s particularly, so basically the student has more options with the amount of work to produce quality work (depending on the contract).”

“There are no tricks, you just do what you contracted for and if you do more, it is even better for your learning experience,” Streichhahn-Demers said.





## *New & Noteworthy*

### **Safari Club International Foundation Sables Create Scholarship at Unity College**

Last June The Safari Club International Foundation (SCIF) Sables announced the creation of a scholarship to benefit Unity College Junior and Senior year students studying in the wildlife sciences. Entitled the **SCIF Joe Leta Hunting Heritage Scholarship** at Unity College, the scholarship is recognition of Unity's hunting heritage and hands-on approach to environmental leadership that includes respect for the shooting sports. Joe Leta of Evergreen, Colorado, was an enthusiastic promoter of many sportsmen's organizations, including Safari Club International, Safari Club International Foundation and SCIF Sables. Upon his passing, the Leta family agreed to establish, through the SCIF Sables, a scholarship which would financially aid Junior and Senior year college students studying the wildlife sciences. The search for a college ended on May 2, 2005, when Sables President, Cheri Eby, Sables Education Chair, Elaine Vogeler and Joe Leta's daughter, Lisa Stanley, visited Unity College. They felt Unity College to be the perfect place to grow the scholarship given its mission and the fact that it confers more degrees in environmental studies than any other four-year institution in the country. It is hoped that the Joe Leta Hunting Heritage Scholarship will bring graduates into positions that will help to protect that heritage. The SCIF Sables are committed to growing the scholarship's endowment funds. Over the course of the past two years, Safari Club International Foundation Sables has donated more than \$30,000 to this fund.



### **Dr. Paul Wade Named Trustee**

The Unity College Board of Trustees has elected Dr. Paul R. Wade of Manchester, Maine to the board, announced during the Spring Semester by Unity College Interim President Mark Lapping. Wade will serve a four-year term as a Trustee. A veterinarian with over thirty years of experience, Wade is the founder, President and Veterinarian at The Cat Hospital of Manchester, Maine. Founded in 1994, The Cat Hospital is 100% focused on the care of felines including high quality feline medicine and surgery. In addition to his extensive skills in the areas of veterinary healthcare and operations management, Wade brings strategic planning, organizational development, new product, ideas development and entrepreneurship skills to his new post as a Trustee. Throughout his career Wade has been involved in a variety of civic activities, including serving as the current President of the Maine Conservation School. He is also a Trustee for the Veterinary Scholarship Trust of New England; President, Maine Chapter of Safari Club International, which he also founded in Maine and served as Past President; Past President, Littleton Rotary Club; Life Member, Sportsman's Alliance

of Maine; Life Member, National Rifle Association; Life Member, Professional Maine Guides Association; Past President of the Maine Veterinary Medical Association and Past President of The New England Veterinary Medical Association.



### **Mashantucket Pequot Tribe Receive President's Environmental Recognition Award**

On May 2, Bruce Kirchner (left in photo), a Tribal Elder and Foxwoods Casino Senior Vice President of Administration, participated with Interim President Mark Lapping in the planting of a sugar maple tree on campus. The tree planting was recognition for the active role that The Mashantucket Pequot Tribe has played in protecting, conserving and enhancing the Tribe's natural resources and related ecosystems. Lapping noted that the Tribe stands as a model for land stewardship.

## *New & Noteworthy*

### **So Long Mark...**

Outgoing Interim President Mark Lapping flashed a resigned grin while waiting to be interviewed by Bangor-based WVII-TV (ABC) Channel 7 news reporter Steve O'Brien. Microphone at the ready, Lapping is interviewed moments later about the innovative partnership between Unity College and Husson University. Lapping was known for his hands-on, engaged and friendly leadership style. Whether answering questions for a television news story or running a meeting, Lapping was always accessible, open to new ideas, dedicated to addressing issues affecting students, faculty and staff at every level and led by example. It would be hard to imagine a more well-liked Interim President than Dr. Lapping. "We were very fortunate to have engaged Dr. Lapping as Interim President of Unity College," said Robert Pollis, Chairman of the Board of Trustees. "Dr. Lapping provided the leadership and vision to successfully develop a new strategic plan for the College and to address matters such as college governance and creating partnerships. Mark has been visible in the community promoting Unity College and cultivating long term strategic relationships. The work that Mark has undertaken will make the transition to our new President a seamless process. I am personally very fortunate to have worked with such a talented and capable person."



*"We were very fortunate to have engaged Dr. Lapping as Interim President of Unity College," said Robert Pollis, Chairman of the Board of Trustees.*

# 2005-2006 Annual Report

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# 1,000 WORDS



*Rebecca Clough '09, an Adventure Education Leadership major from Rochester, New Hampshire, sits on a pile of rubble in New Orleans in March. Clough and other Unity students spent an Alternative Spring Break working as volunteers aiding The Common Ground Collective grass-roots community organization in the devastated 9th Ward.*



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*Callie Davis '06, of Polson, Montana, posed for a photo beside an apple tree adjacent to Quimby Library after commencement exercises on Saturday, May 13. She earned a bachelor's degree in Wildlife with a minor in Zoology.*