



*A Member of the University of Maine System*

Center on Aging  
Camden Hall  
25 Texas Avenue  
Bangor, Maine 04401-4324  
(207) 262-7920  
[www.mainecenteronaging.org](http://www.mainecenteronaging.org)



The Silverwire is going electronic! This will be the final printing of the Silverwire Newsletter. The Center will continue to provide the Silverwire via the web at [www.mainecenteronaging.org](http://www.mainecenteronaging.org) and by e-mail. To sign-up for the Center on Aging's e-mail list please send an e-mail to [info@mainecenteronaging.org](mailto:info@mainecenteronaging.org)



Center on Aging staff and students gather for a photo opportunity at the September Open House Event

## CENTER ON AGING OPEN HOUSE PICTURES



Senior College Executive Director, Trish Kontur (left) talks with past Senior College Executive Director Judy Hanscom



# Silverwire

Vol. 5, No. 3 Winter 2008

NEWSLETTER OF THE UMAINE CENTER ON AGING

## Fall Conference Draws International Attendance

The Center on Aging's fall prescription drug conference was a remarkable success. The conference entitled: *Improving Patient Safety Through Informed Medication Prescribing and Disposal Practices* was held October 31- November 1, 2007 at the Holiday Inn by the Bay in Portland, Maine. This meeting represented the 5<sup>th</sup> Annual Maine Benzodiazepine Study Group Conference and 4<sup>th</sup> Annual Unused Drug Return Conference, the only such conference of its kind in the nation. Attendance figures exceeded all expectations this year with over 160 individuals making the trek to Maine from across the US, Canada, and beyond.

Among the notable speakers present: Trish Riley, Director of the Governor's Office of Health Policy and Finance delivered a formal Proclamation signed by Governor John E. Baldacci proclaiming October 31, 2007 Proper Drug Disposal Day. The White House Office of National Drug Control Policy (ONDCP) participated in the conference for the second consecutive year. Dr.

Bertha Madras, Deputy Director for Demand Reduction, addressed the entire conference assembly during a morning session. Also, James R. Hunter, Senior Program Manager, Federal Drug Administration (FDA) presented "Drug disposal and minimizing risks from prescription drugs: safety for unintended populations."

CoA Director, Dr. Lenard Kaye, presented an overview of the Maine Safe Medicine Disposal Program to conference attendees as part of a featured panel on programs funded by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency's Aging Initiative. Also joining the panel was the EPA-funded St. Louis-based RxMEDS program. The panel discussion was moderated by Kathy Sykes, Senior Advisor at the EPA's Aging Initiative and included officials from the U.S. Postal Service, and Maine Drug Enforcement Agency Director Roy McKinney.

Seven members of the Maine Safe Medicine Disposal Community Advisory Board (CAB) were also in attendance to enhance their future efforts in educating the community about drug disposal issues.

Conference presentations, handouts, and other materials are available at: [www.mainebenzo.org/2007conference.htm](http://www.mainebenzo.org/2007conference.htm).

## Center Finalizing Adult Protective Services Research

The UMaine Center on Aging is finalizing its work on a Quality Assurance project for the Office of Elder Service's Adult Protective Services (APS) Unit, a part of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. The APS Unit provides or arranges for services to protect incapacitated and dependent adults in danger of abuse, neglect, and exploitation. Each case that is handled by the unit has a corresponding case record that is used by APS staff to record case activity, document client progress, and manage case-related activities.

*Continued on page 7...*

### HIGHLIGHTS OF THIS ISSUE

Senior College Welcomes New Director.....	3
RSVP Knows How to Party.....	4
Spotlight on Productive Aging.....	5
Speech-Language Pathology and Older Adults.....	6
Important Upcoming Events.....	7
Silverwire Online.....	8

## Silverwire

Vol. 5., No. 3

Winter 2008

Lenard W. Kaye, Director

Jennifer Crittenden, Editor

*Silverwire*, is published three times a year.

The Center on Aging is an interdisciplinary research center reporting to the Vice President for Research and associated with the University of Maine's School of Social Work and the College of Business, Public Policy, and Health. Our mission is to promote and facilitate activities on aging in the areas of education, research and evaluation, and community service, in order to maximize the quality of life of older citizens and their families in Maine and beyond.

Center on Aging

Camden Hall

25 Texas Avenue

Bangor, Maine 04401-4324

Tel: (207) 262-7920

Fax: (207) 262-7921

E-mail: [info@mainecenteronaging.org](mailto:info@mainecenteronaging.org)

[www.mainecenteronaging.org](http://www.mainecenteronaging.org)

©2008 University of Maine

### Center on Aging Board of Advisors

Mary Cathcart	Alvin S. McNeilly
Edwin N. Clift	Noelle Merrill
Arthur Comstock	Leonard E. Minsky
Roberta E. Downey	Janis Petzel
Madeleine Freeman	Clifford Rosen
Judy Hanscom	Elizabeth Schneider
Catherine Lebowitz	Don Sharland
John Mahon	John I. Simpson
Emily Ann Cain	Robert Strong

### Center on Aging Staff

Melissa Adle, Graduate Research Assistant  
Louise Bonawitz, Health & Wellness Consultant  
Paula Burnett, RSVP Director  
Sandra Butler, Resident Scholar  
Jason Charland, Program Associate  
Jennifer Crittenden, Research Associate  
Erica Cyr, Field Intern  
Kate DeHaven, Graduate Research Assistant  
Jennifer Frey, Work Study Student  
Marjie Harris, GPPP Coordinator  
Daniel Hoyt, Field Intern  
Matthew Janicki, Research Professor  
Lenard W. Kaye, Director  
Nancy Kelly, GPPP Co-Director  
Patrica Kontur, PVSC Executive Director  
Chevelle Marshall, RSVP Coordinator  
Anna Mortensen, Graduate Research Assistant  
Kate Norman, Field Intern  
Mary Peters, Administrative Assistant  
Lauren E. Storck, Online Education Consultant  
Winston Turner, Research Analyst

## From the Director

Let anyone should think that the powerful demographic forces moving us rapidly down the road toward an increasingly aging society have weakened, recently published highlights of the U.S. Administration on Aging's *Profile of Older Americans: 2007\** serve once again to set the record straight. Consider the following:

- The older population (65+) numbered 37.3 million in 2006, an increase of 3.4 million or 10.0% since 1996.
- The number of Americans aged 45-64 – who will reach 65 over the next two decades – increased by 39% during this decade.
- About one in every eight, or 12.4 percent, of the population is an older American.
- Persons reaching age 65 have an average life expectancy of an additional 18.7 years (20.0 years for females and 17.1 years for males).
- Older women outnumber older men at 21.6 million older women to 15.7 million older men.
- About 450,000 grandparents aged 65 or more had the primary responsibility for their grandchildren who lived with them.
- The population 65 and over will increase from 35 million in 2000 to 40 million in 2010 (a 15% increase) and then to 55 million in 2020 (a 36% increase for that decade).
- The 85+ population is projected to increase from 4.2 million in 2000 to 6.1 million in 2010 (a 40% increase) and then to 7.3 million in 2020 (a 44% increase for that decade).
- Members of minority groups are projected to increase from 5.7 million in 2000 (16.4% of the elderly population) to 8.1 million in 2010 (20.1% of the elderly) and then to 12.9 million in 2020 (23.6% of the elderly).



Lenard W. Kaye

Additional data in the *Profile of Older Americans: 2007* underscore progress made nationally in decreasing the proportion of older Americans living in poverty and the continued growth in the number of family members providing some kind of personal care for an older relative. At the same time we are reminded that Maine remains one of the oldest states in the nation with 14.6% of its citizens 65 years and older compared to 12.4% for the nation as a whole. Maine remains the oldest state in New England. Furthermore, Maine's elders are less well off compared to older adults nationally (10.3% of older adults live in poverty in Maine compared to 9.9% nationally). And, Maine's elders remain less well off than elders living in any other New England state. Having access to these facts and figures and many others can only help those who work for and with older adults take positions more confidently and argue all the more convincingly for much needed services and supports for older Mainers. I encourage everyone to remain abreast of the newest data available describing the status of the older adult population. If you have difficulty obtaining what you need please don't hesitate to call us at the Center.

\**A Profile of Older Americans: 2007*. The report will be made available online at: [www.agingstats.gov](http://www.agingstats.gov) during the first quarter of calendar year 2008.

## LEGAL SUMMIT FOR GRANDFAMILIES AND PROFESSIONALS

In cooperation with the Maine Kids-Kin Program the University of Maine RAPP Task Force is planning a Legal Summit for caregivers, legal professionals, social service professionals, policy makers, and advocates. The day-long event will take place in Fall 2008 and will feature keynote speaker Gerard Wallace, JD, an expert on legal issues facing grandparents raising grandchildren. The summit will assist relative caregivers and professionals navigate the complex legal processes that surround relative caregiving. For more information about the Legal Summit or any other RAPP events, please contact Melissa Adle at [melissa.adle@umit.maine.edu](mailto:melissa.adle@umit.maine.edu).

Keep your eyes on the Center on Aging website for more information about upcoming events!

## TIME TO RENEW YOUR MAINE GERONTOLOGICAL SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP!

Its that time of year! The Maine Gerontological Society (MGS) is now collecting registration renewals from current members and new member registrations. Membership in the MGS provides you with conference discounts, access to the MGS listserv, opportunities to present at MGS professional conferences and workshops, opportunities for networking, access to *Hot Topics*, a monthly informational page on resources related to aging and caregiving; and much more.

Not yet a member? Simply complete a membership application available online at: <http://www.umaine.edu/mainecenteronaging/MGS2> or e-mail Sharon Berz at: [sberz@arostookaging.org](mailto:sberz@arostookaging.org)

APS continued from front...

As mandated by department policy, case records are periodically reviewed by case worker supervisors and administrators as a measure of quality assurance. The Center on Aging is working with APS to examine the case review process and make recommendations for its refinement and improvement. Review of policy and procedures, surveys and interviews of APS staff, and best practice research are the main project activities.

All levels of APS staff have participated in the project to gain balanced insight and perspective on implementation of current case review policies and procedures and suggested modifications to improve these processes. A Project Steering Committee has been guiding the Center's work and is comprised of caseworkers, supervisors, and administrators from throughout the state. Key informants are being interviewed to enhance survey findings and further shape project recommendations.

The project will conclude in March with a final written project report.

### MARK YOUR CALENDAR!

### LOOKING BEYOND THE BEHAVIOR: SERIOUS MENTAL ILLNESS IN OLDER ADULTS

### CLINICAL COLLOQUIUM

APRIL 29, 2008

The annual Geriatric Practicum Partnership colloquium will be held on Tuesday, April 29 at the Buchanan House on the University of Maine campus. This year's conference is entitled "Looking Beyond the Behavior: Serious Mental Illness in Older Adults" and will feature Erlene Rosowsky, PsyD as the keynote speaker. Dr. Rosowsky is a national expert in the field of geriatric mental health with her particular focus being on older adults with personality disorders and other diagnoses presenting with behavioral issues for providers. The purpose of the conference is to bring providers from many settings together to discuss improving the quality of life for this population of older adults within a system that may be less than ideal for their needs. Treatment issues will be addressed from clinical and system perspectives. Further details will be available online at [www.mainecenteronaging.org](http://www.mainecenteronaging.org) and in brochure form later this winter.

## THE ROLE OF SPEECH-LANGUAGE PATHOLOGY IN TREATING OLDER ADULTS

BY ANNA MORTENSEN

Dementia is one of the most rapidly increasing medical diagnoses in older adults. There are currently 4.5 million Americans affected by Alzheimer's disease, a number expected to jump to approximately 16 million by the year 2050- nearly quadrupling the rate of the disease. More than half of older adults in nursing homes and other long term care facilities are affected by some form of dementia.

A variety of treatment interventions have been shown to be effective in treating the communicative effects of dementia. These methods range from direct intervention techniques (e.g. spaced retrieval training, reminiscence therapy, Montessori-based activities, and memory wallets) to indirect treatments which focus on environmental modifications and caregiver training. One of the primary medical professions responsible for implementing these treatment techniques is Speech-Language Pathology (SLP). Not surprisingly, adults with dementia-associated communication problems are the fastest growing clinical population within the SLP field.

Despite the rapidly rising demand for services and the variety of therapeutic options available to augment the communication abilities of older adults with dementia, there appears to be a significant gap in the provision of speech-language pathology services to the older adult population. The American Speech and Hearing Association reports that although more than 20 percent of older adults have communication impairments; older adults constitute only 10 percent of clinicians' caseloads. A major factor that could be creating this gap is the lack of preparedness or confidence of SLPs to assist in the communication needs of older adults.

Evidence of this concern was confirmed by a survey which found that nearly half of Speech-Language Pathologist respondents do not agree that individuals with dementia would benefit from therapeutic intervention (Hopper, 2003), although numerous research studies directly contradict this belief. Further studies have found that Speech-Language Pathologist's clinical experiences with older adults did little to affect their attitudes toward the elderly beyond graduate school. However, SLP students who had more academic course work in gerontology, and personal exposure to older adults, increased their knowledge of and improved their attitudes toward aging on all levels.

The numerous vacancies in SLP healthcare positions means that more pressure is placed on the academic programs training Speech-Language Pathology professionals. Educational programs carry the responsibility of adequately preparing new Speech-Language Pathologists to successfully manage all necessary aspects of their profession. Such programs need to take steps to ensure they are sufficiently preparing SLP students with the knowledge and skills necessary to meet the needs of an aging population.

Although the need of increasing gerontology education in the SLP profession has been recognized in the literature, it has been limited. Overall, the studies which have been done indicate that as the SLP profession continues to grow and develop, educational programs can play a key role in improving services for older adults by implementing more gerontology-related coursework into curricular requirements, as well as ensuring that more students are exposed to clinical experiences specific to the older adult population.

References available upon request from: [ann.mortensen@umit.maine.edu](mailto:ann.mortensen@umit.maine.edu).

# Partnerships and Programs.....

## SENIOR COLLEGE WELCOMES NEW DIRECTOR AND MEMBERS

The fall semester at PVSC brought record numbers of enrollment for the already successful program. In addition,



Trish Kontur, Senior College Executive Director

in early October, the College and its Board members welcomed aboard Patricia Kontur as the new Executive Director. Trish brings with her a wealth of experience.

Her bio is online at the Center on Aging website: [www.mainecenteronaging.org/staff/](http://www.mainecenteronaging.org/staff/)

PVSC is a wonderful resource for seniors in our area. The Senior College experience contributes to healthy aging by offering classes that present a wholesome mental challenge, open up new networks of friends, and provide opportunities to get out and about in a safe and diverse environment. The only admission requirement for Senior College is at

least 50 years of life experience! There are no exams, no grades, and no credits. Senior College is intended to meet the interests and needs of area seniors. The annual membership period runs July 1st to June 30th. Single memberships are \$25/year; couples membership is \$40/year. Course fees of \$30 per class include books and learning materials.

Six weeks of morning and afternoon classes are offered on Fridays to almost 300 current members and 200 others who are eager to experience the wonderful offerings developed by our volunteer curriculum committee and taught by volunteer instructors who love to teach!

If you would like to know more about PVSC or to volunteer for one of the PVSC's committees, please leave a message on the PVSC answering machine (207-262-7927) or e-mail [seniorcollege@mainecenteronaging.org](mailto:seniorcollege@mainecenteronaging.org). Volunteers are needed to carry out the important work of the college. We look forward to welcoming you to the Penobscot Valley Senior College!

## GPPP PROGRAM HOSTS SUCCESSFUL SITE VISIT AND PREPARES FOR BIG FUNDRAISER

The GPPP hosted Linda Weiss and Jarmin Yeh, researchers from the Social Work Leadership Institute and the New York Academy of Medicine, in September as part of a qualitative research project being done with 10 funded Practicum Partnership Program (PPP) sites and 3 unfunded schools. Linda and Jarmin met with former and current students, faculty and staff, as well as consortium members to gather information on our program. Thank you to all our consortium members, faculty, and past and present students who made the trip to Orono for the focus groups.

The Geriatric Practicum Partnership Program is in its third year and the final year of the grant from the John A Hartford Foundation through the Social Work Leadership Institute at the New York Academy of Medicine. As such, locating funds to sustain the program is a priority. A number of foundations and other sources are being pursued including an upcoming major fundraiser. The fundraiser planning process is moving along nicely thanks to the efforts of our diligent volunteer, Alison Myer. We're currently looking for dynamic individuals who would like to assist in organizing an exciting fundraising event. Please contact Marjie Harris at (207) 581-3750 or [marjie.harris@umit.maine.edu](mailto:marjie.harris@umit.maine.edu) if you would like to assist in planning.

### Need Continuing Education Units? Complete the Center on Aging's Online Elder Abuse Module!

The course is free of charge and open to all professionals. CEUs are



provided for the following professionals: Social Workers, Nurses, Physicians, and Physician Assistants. General documentation is provided by the University of Maine for all other professionals.

Visit: [www.mainecenteronaging.org/elderabusemodule](http://www.mainecenteronaging.org/elderabusemodule) to learn more or to take the module

## RSVP KNOWS HOW TO THROW A PARTY!

Great food, great music and great guests – these ingredients set the stage for a fabulous celebration of senior volunteerism. Annually, the UM Center on Aging RSVP holds a Volunteer Recognition Luncheon to celebrate the varied and numerous efforts of over 500 active volunteers age 55 and older who make a difference in their communities on a daily basis. Many partnering agencies in our four county service area often comment that the continuation of their programs would not be possible were it not for the service generously supplied by volunteers.

October 18<sup>th</sup> was the party date for RSVP volunteers, their site supervisors, Center on Aging staff and other community members at Jeff's Catering and Convention Center in Brewer. Since RSVP represents one of



Ric Tyler Emcees during the RSVP Recognition Event

several Corporation for National and Community Service (CNCS) programs, we were fortunate to have Eileen Smart of CNCS attend this event. Ric Tyler, in his usual comedic style, kept the program moving along and entertaining

for all. On a more serious note, Rick Mooers of Maine's Adult Protective Services and TRIAD



Carol Mower having fun at the registration table for the RSVP recognition event

was the keynote speaker. He presented on elder abuse and other concerns involving senior safety, such as fraud. The all-RSVP-volunteer singing group, Dot and The Has Beens from Millinocket performed, and Ron Coates, Banjo-Man from Dover-Foxcroft kept the crowd entertained. Door prizes were drawn with several of the prizes representing senior health, particularly building strong bones which RSVP supports with its own Bone Builders program (osteoporosis prevention program).

The best part of the celebration each year consists of honoring those volunteers who have served their communities for 5, 10, 15, 20, 25 and 30 years as RSVP members. Eighty-one members received years of service awards this year. One member, Muriel Nelson, age 94, of Dexter was presented with the 30 years of service award ribbon/pin, a corsage and crystal jewelry box for her participation as a meal site volunteer in her hometown.

The party ended with cheers and hugs of folks who love coming together to celebrate the fellowship of serving others. Come party with us next fall! Call 262-7926 if you or someone you know is interested in becoming a member of RSVP to be a part of a team of *Senior volunteers responding to Community Needs*.



Muriel Nelson receives her 30 years of service pin corsage and pin from Eileen Smart (left) and Paula Burnett (right)

## RELATIVES AS PARENTS PROJECT CONTINUES INNOVATIVE SERVICE TO FAMILIES

Six million children nationwide are being raised by their grandparents or other relatives. The Center on Aging *Relatives As Parents Project (RAPP)*, funded by the Brookdale Foundation, provides services to grandfamilies, grandparents raising grandchildren and other relatives caring for relatives' children, throughout Maine and beyond.

The CoA RAPP recently hosted Melinda Perez-Porter, Director of the Brookdale Foundation RAPP Programs, during a site visit to learn more about the services provided by the Center on Aging. Melinda received a welcome from the RAPP

[Continued on page 5...](#)

Task Force and visited our newest support group site in Lincoln.

Her stay concluded with a computer demonstration of a successful method of conducting online programs for caregivers piloted by the Center on Aging. This use of technology allows grandparents and other relatives throughout rural Maine and across the country to access education and support through the internet from their home, work, or public-use computer. The next e-seminar for caregivers is planned for late spring. Look for more information on the CoA website.

To help caregivers learn more about MaineCare and TANF benefits for which they and/or their children are eligible, the CoA RAPP project developed and added to the Center on Aging website: *Applying for MaineCare/ Applying for TANF: Ten Tips for Relative Caregivers*

Visit the *Parenting Relatives* page under *Services and Consultation* on the CoA website for more information.

## OUR NEIGHBORHOOD, OUR HOMES COPC PROJECT UPDATE

The University of Maine-Bangor Community Outreach Partnership Center (COPC) was formally established in 2006 at the Margaret Chase Smith Policy Center through a grant which will run through February of 2009. The Center on Aging has primary responsibility for leading the Needs Assessment and Community Planning component of the Affordable Housing initiative for this project. For the past year, Center on Aging staff have held regular monthly meetings of the Our Neighborhood Our Homes Coalition consisting of community members, leaders, business owners, and other professionals.

Over the past summer, Center on Aging staff and these group members worked together to create a housing assessment survey tool distributed to Bangor residents. In total, 2,979 surveys were mailed and 424 were returned, yielding a response rate of approximately 20% (with vacant addresses accounted for). To our knowledge, this survey represented one of the first of its kind in the Bangor area, and was extremely successful in gathering information on a variety of topics of concern. COPC group members and Center on Aging staff are currently working together to further analyze various aspects of the data collected, and will spend the next few months discussing how the results of the survey can most effectively influence positive affordable housing changes in the Bangor area. A formal report of survey results should be available to the public within the next few months.

## SPOTLIGHT ON PRODUCTIVE AGING: ERV MORRISON OF ERV'S BARBER SHOP, ORONO, MAINE

Story and photograph by GPPP student Kristin Robinson-White

At 71, Ervin, "Erv" Morrison is still cutting hair with no plans for retiring any time soon. Born and raised in Orono, Erv opened his first barber shop in his hometown some 47 years ago and is still going strong—putting in some 60 hours a week in this well known and beloved establishment. "I love my job, and I love being active and with people and look forward to getting here each morning. I'm also something of a perfectionist and take pride when I see someone whose hair I've cut." Now in his third location along Mill Street, the friendly place is decorated with photos and memorabilia from his days as a varsity football left half back and he continues to attract students and local customers alike who enjoy a shared enthusiasm for sports and life. "I really enjoy the college kids. They haven't changed at all. I feel great. Some fifty years later they still accept me at this age." No wonder, as he still goes to all the local games and is kept active with his work and as well as the activities of his seven grandchildren!



Erv Morrison poses in front of the window of his downtown barber shop