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The UMass Boston Friday Report

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News and information about and for the
University Community from the Chancellor's Office

Biology Alums Collaborate on Book about State Birds

Two alumni have co-written a book on the Massachusetts bird population. **Wayne Petersen**, a 1970 biology graduate, and **Richard Veit**, who received a master's in biology in 1984, have collaborated on *Birds of Massachusetts*, published by the Massachusetts Audubon Society. The 500-page hardcover book contains a checklist of the 460 types of birds that have been seen throughout the Commonwealth as well as capsule histories and reports on their current status. *Birds of Massachusetts*, however, is neither an identification manual nor a guide on where to view birds.

Petersen and Veit met in the 1970s because of a mutual interest in bird-watching and have been friends ever since. Today Veit, who holds a Ph.D from the University of California at Irvine, is a zoology professor at the University of Washington in Seattle. Petersen is field ornithologist for the Audubon Society in Lincoln, Massachusetts. He also is New England regional editor of *American Birds* magazine, and lectures and conducts bird-watching tours in such places as Alaska, Canada, Costa Rica, Iceland, Kenya and Trinidad. According to Petersen, the book has been in the making for a decade and represents the most thorough work ever published on the state's bird population. "Of all the states in the country, Massachusetts has the richest and lengthiest record for bird study," Petersen says. "There have been 16 major books written on birds in Massachusetts, and the latest before ours was in 1955."

Veit started writing the original manuscript for the book while working on his master's thesis in the early 1980s. Several years later Petersen picked up the project, and with assistance from the Audubon Society the book was completed earlier this year. Some of the facts to be gleaned from *Birds of Massachusetts*: the cuckoo, a rare bird known to exist in the Aleutian Islands yet spotted on Martha's Vineyard in 1981, and the Reef-Heron, an African species seen in Nantucket in 1983, are in the category of "vagrant" birds, species that mysteriously wander from their homes -- sometimes across continents. Also, among the most common Massachusetts birds are crows, mallard ducks, sparrows, blue jays and Canada geese. The price of *Birds of Massachusetts* is \$39.95 and it can be purchased through the Massachusetts Audubon Society.

Geographer Explores Mount Olympus in the Age of Glaciers

Geography professor **Andrew Genes**, associate dean of the faculty of science, is part of a research team that has received a two-year \$25,000 grant to conduct research on the glacial geology of Greece's Mount Olympus, in Greek mythology the home of the gods. The National Geographic Society grant permitted Genes and two colleagues from Ohio University, **Geoffrey Smith** and **Damian Nance**, to spend last summer on Mount Olympus unearthing fossils that they estimate to be a quarter of a million years old. The grant will enable the group to return to Mount Olympus next summer. The goal of the research is to uncover information about the climate atop the 10,000-foot high mountain during the Ice Age, which began about three million years ago and concluded approximately 10,000 years ago. Among the items that Genes's group has found are fossils of charcoal, which he says was probably

used by prehistoric man as a source of heat.

"All of these materials are helpful in determining the intensity of the climate on Mount Olympus during the glacial period, and will provide a deeper understanding of the history of the region," he says. Genes, who earned a Ph.D. at Syracuse University and has been teaching geography at UMass Boston since 1966, began working on Mount Olympus several years ago, using grants from Earthwatch, a Watertown-based organization that supports research on the environment. He became interested in glacial geology after writing his doctoral dissertation on the mountains of Norway's Stord Island. Genes has another reason for studying Mount Olympus -- his parents were born and raised in Greece.

Professor Clinton M. Jean of Black Studies Dies at Age 57

Funeral services were held yesterday for Clinton M. Jean, 57, an assistant professor of black studies, who died on Sunday, September 12th, at Mount Auburn Hospital of cardiac arrest. Jean, who was raised in Trinidad and lived in Cambridge for the last 11 years, had been a member of the University faculty since 1990. He taught courses on black history and culture, and was a faculty associate at the Trotter Institute.

Chancellor Sherry H. Penney issued the following statement on the occasion of his death: "Clinton Jean was an elegant scholar and talented teacher who gave so much of his mind, heart and soul to this University. His unique perspectives on our diverse cultures and the rapport he established with students were unique and irreplaceable gifts."

Jean's scholarly pursuits covered a range of issues related to the experience of blacks in American society. He was the author of a 1991 book, *Behind the Eurocentric Veils: The Search for African Realities*, published by the University of Massachusetts Press, in which he argued that traditional assumptions about the African people made by white historians have corrupted the truth about African history and contributed to widespread exploitation of blacks. Jean won a scholarship to Columbia University and graduated magna cum laude in 1965. He received a Ph.D. from Brandeis University in 1988. He began his teaching career at Queen's College in New York City in 1969 and became assistant professor of sociology at Brandeis in 1971. Five years later he joined the faculty at Southeastern Massachusetts University. He was a lecturer and visiting professor at Massachusetts Bay Community College and Framingham State College before coming to UMass Boston.

Municipal Financial Stress Subject of October Conference

The McCormack Institute is co-sponsoring a day-long conference on municipal fiscal stress on October 15th at the Federal Reserve Bank of Boston. A host of academics and government finance specialists are scheduled to participate, and a luncheon address will be given by UMass Boston alumnus **Jack Beatty**, senior editor of *The Atlantic* and author of *The Rascal King*, a biography of Boston mayor James Michael Curley. Among those participating in the conference are Senator **Dianne Wilkerson**; **Helen Ladd**, a professor at Duke University; **Harry Spence**, court-appointed receiver for the City of Chelsea; **Frank Keefe**, former state secretary of administration and finance; Representative **Mark Roosevelt**, chairman of the House Committee on Education; **Samuel Tyler**, executive director of the Boston Municipal Research Bureau; and **Frederick Breimyer**, vice president and chief economist at State Street Bank. Admission to the conference is \$25 and includes lunch. Reservations are available through the McCormack Institute (7-5558).