

MICHAEL CIANCHETTE
AND CYNTHIA DILL



HE SAID, SHE SAID

Real Mainers, north and south, blow their horns

Cynthia: Percival Baxter was a Republican, Mike. What do you suppose he would rather hear atop Mount Katahdin, the pop of a champagne bottle or the wail of a fire horn?

Mike: We know Gov. Baxter wanted the park kept in a forever wild state, and we know he didn't want the federales showing up. So if I were guessing, I'd say he would be more concerned about television crews and champagne than a horn 20 miles away.

Cynthia: Parks and recreation politics are all over the map. Gov. Paul LePage claims a national park or monument is a threat to workers who rely on the state's natural resources; meanwhile the head of Baxter State Park says people who rely on our natural resources for work are a threat to the park.

Can anyone seriously claim state government is a better steward of resources than the "federales" when Maine is on the hook for \$16 million to a company that left a shuttered mill in Millinocket, and state tax dollars are being wasted up the street prosecuting a guy for spilling champagne on the rocks and having a couple sponsors?

Republicans believe corporations are people and should enjoy unlimited "speech" in elections. Why shouldn't they enjoy the great outdoors, too?

Mike: Cynthia, I don't think I can keep up with your ultramarathon train of thought. If losing taxpayer funds to bad investments disqualifies a level of government from running a park, then wouldn't the Quimby National Park you support be disqualified by President Barack Obama's administration's \$535 million Solyndra folly? Or can government simultaneously run parks and make bad decisions?

As for corporate sponsors, I have no issues with organizations supporting causes of their choosing, like Bangor Savings Bank supporting MPBN. But MPBN sponsors do not get to veto news coverage they don't like, nor should business donors have special rules in Baxter. "Equality before the law" and all that.

Cynthia: You aren't the first guy who can't keep up with me, Mike, and hopefully not the last.

Look, Maine has lots of problems, and one of them is that people harshly judge others by where they're from — except if that's rural Maine. Anyone north of Augusta can sneer with impunity that I am "from away" and live in Cape Elizabeth and therefore know nothing about Maine values, but geography-judging from south to north is blasphemy.

Well I'm feeling fast and feisty, and putting the shoe on the other foot: It's really dumb that Gov. LePage and the Maine delegation (except Chellie Pingree) are basing their decision on whether to

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GEORGE DANBY | BDN

Blue Sky ahead for UMaine?

Campus continues to struggle with enrollment goals

BY CHRISTOPHER BURNS
BDN STAFF

When former University of Maine President Paul Ferguson announced his five-year strategic plan for the university system's flagship campus in 2012, it came with the promise of "blue skies ahead."

The plan — known as the Blue Sky Project — was the result of more than five months of planning that brought together more than 450 people from within and outside the university "to provide much needed direction for the next decade," as Ferguson said in his inaugural address in 2011.

But while Blue Sky was described in its planning document as "some big thinking and some bold planning," in many cases it recycled old ideas from prior strategic plans, including growing out-of-state and graduate student enrollment, supporting Native-American and Franco-American studies, and aligning academic work and research to meet the state's economic needs.

Blue Sky differentiates itself from the other plans with a stronger emphasis on creating a fiscally sustainable operating model, especially through growing enrollment, but also through boosting student retention and graduation rates and growing the university's research operations as a way to attract funding and royalty revenue from intellectual property development.

But so far, UMaine isn't necessarily meeting all Blue Sky objectives in the enrollment arena — another similarity Blue Sky shares with past UMaine strategic plans.

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Growth spurt

Blue Sky starts to lay out an enrollment management strategy at UMaine in order to "realistically increase the

student body up to 15,000 students by 2017." (UMaine's current enrollment is closer to 11,000.)

The enrollment-boosting objective is nothing new to Blue Sky; it has been an integral part of past University of Maine strategic plans. The 2000-2005 strategic plan set the goal of increasing UMaine's "market share" of out-of-state students at both the graduate and undergraduate level" by 5 percent a year.

In 2000, there were 1,722 out-of-state students enrolled at UMaine, and by 2005 this population grew to 1,761 — a 2.3 percent increase over the course of the five-year plan.

The subsequent 2006-2011 strategic plan reiterated this call to "compete nationally for students" but did not set a specific enrollment goal.

Over the last five years, in-state enrollment has fallen at UMaine and across the University of Maine System. In 2010, *See UMaine, Page D3*

Mount Katahdin has a special place on the AT

BY JIM HASKELL
SPECIAL TO THE BDN

Having been born and raised near Bangor, I grew up practically in the shadow of mile-high Mount Katahdin. I first climbed up to Baxter Peak in 1972, when I was 12, and I have stood on that iconic spot seven times. I have hiked the entire Appalachian Trail, and I have climbed nearly all of the 4,000-foot mountains in New England. But Katahdin will always be my special, breathtaking place.

Therefore, recent news stories about how Appalachian Trail thru-hikers could be overusing and abusing Baxter State Park and

Mount Katahdin certainly have-captured my attention. The issue involving hiker Scott Jurek has added an air of controversy to the imminent release of the movie "A Walk in the Woods," which is expected to increase the number of hikers on the trail.

All of Baxter State Park must be treated with loving care and respect, or the wilderness experience that former Maine Gov. Percival Baxter envisioned for all will be lost. This is especially true of the fragile terrain above the tree line on Katahdin. Based on all I have read and seen about the champagne celebration on the

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GABOR DEGRE | BDN

Hikers gather at the summit of Mount Katahdin in Baxter State Park on a recent summer day.