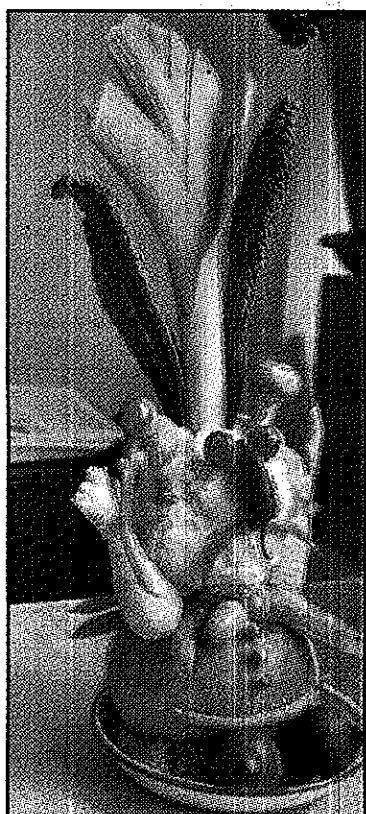


# Heard Around Town



BY AMERICAN STAFF



Last Friday, John Edwards Market's lunch-to-go queen Noele Spurling went home early on her birthday. Patsy Pierce, another in-store creative, concocted a "totally organic Veg-head" as a B-day gift for Noele. "Tell him all your troubles, and then you can oil him up and pop him in the oven until he sizzles," instructed Patsy, who managed to hand-deliver the artful vegetable sculpture to lift the spirits of her co-worker.

Once again, Becky King, Amy Rothe and Cindy Stewart managed to corral lots of folks last Sunday to the Cowgirl Emporium's third annual "Stella's Pie Party" in Hancock. Diana Arney reports that Rooster Brother supplied fine coffee to accompany the smorgasbord of homemade pies contributed by bakeries too numerous to mention and as far afield as Addison, Ellsworth and Bar Harbor. Many area restaurants also contributed their most popular pies, sampled by locals in the know and passers-by. Carl Karush and friends provided music while Hilt's Nursery donated seasonal flowers. Ray's Plumbing and the Hancock Police Department also helped out at the pie extravaganza benefiting the Beth C. Wright Cancer Resource Center.

From Gouldsboro, residents Charles and Carole Pomaski's sons Mark and Tedd were in the foodie limelight last Friday when they participated in Iron Chef Masaharu Morimoto's "Rock & Roll with Morimoto and Friends: A Sushi and Karaoke Soiree" in Manhattan. The Food Network's soiree was part of the New York City Wine and Food Festival Oct 7-10.

Friendly's restaurant invites customers to come in Halloween costumes and compete for a prize from 5-8 p.m. Tuesday, Oct. 19, as part of the business's "Fun-Raising Night." A portion of proceeds will benefit the Make-A-Wish Foundation.

Mother: "This is the worst report card I've ever seen." Son: "Look at the bright side; you know I'm not cheating."

# Updike Society Honors Surry Man

BY JAMES STRAUB  
jstraub@ellsworthamerican.com

**BLUE HILL** — As a graduate theology student at the University of Chicago, James Yerkes had to write a paper for a literature class.

Searching for a topic, he recalled having read one of John Updike's novels years earlier.

"I read one book by Updike; so, I only had to read another one to do a comparison," Yerkes said last week at a presentation in Blue Hill honoring him for his contribution to the body of scholarship focused on Updike.

Blue Hill Library Director Rich Boulet on Oct. 8 presented Yerkes with the 2010 John Updike Society Distinguished Service Award.

"For his many years of service to the community of Updike scholars and readers, the board of The John Updike Society has unanimously voted to honor James Yerkes by making him the first recipient of the Society's Distinguished Service Award," Boulet said at the presentation.

The honor was bestowed on Yerkes for his contributions to Updike scholarship through the website The Centaurian.

Yerkes' connection — professional and personal — to Updike has come a great distance since he first read a book by Updike and later added a second novel to his reading list in order to complete an assignment.

In fact, had he not read the second novel, he likely would not have mentioned Updike again, not in any positive way at least.

Yerkes first read Updike's "Rabbit Run."

"I was religious, even evangelical, in those days," Yerkes said. "I thought the book was pornographic."

That might have been the end of the story, but in graduate school, Yerkes picked up a second novel by Updike, "The Centaur."

"I was enchanted with that book," he said. "I thought it was just marvelous."

Yerkes was on sabbatical leave from his teaching duties at Moravian College in Bethlehem, Pa., in 1995 when he took his first step toward creating the distinguished contribution to Updike scholarship for which he has been honored.

"I was bored with what I was reading," he said. "So, on a lark, I started an [Updike] website. "I knew he basically distrusted the Web. He was suspicious of the Web, particularly of people wanting to provide biographical information."

Yerkes envisioned a website de-

voted to "all things Updike," but he could not have foreseen the warm reception Updike would give the site, or the personal relationship it would spawn.

Just prior to launching the website The Centaurian in November 1996, Yerkes wrote Updike to let him know he "intended to put online a literary site," which he "hoped would be a responsible source especially for students and also helpful for general readers."

Yerkes included a copy of the biographical text he would put online for Updike to review.

"I had no idea whether he'd be agreeable," Yerkes said, "but I thought it would be courteous to let him know.

"He wrote back with a few corrections and he wrote: 'By the way, I have no idea what a Web sight is,'" Yerkes said, spelling out 'sight' as Updike had written it. "That's probably what saved me."

The website, with Yerkes as webmaster, continued until late last year when problems with an Internet provider forced its closure.

For nearly 14 years, The Centaurian served as a clearinghouse for "news, reviews and information pertaining to John Updike and his works."

Yerkes and Updike also developed a strong personal relationship until the author's death in January 2009.

They first met in 1997 when Updike was giving a reading at Lafayette College in nearby Easton, Pa. After that, Updike often sent postcards and letters to Yerkes.

In 1999, "John Updike and Religion: The Sense of the Sacred and the Motions of Grace," a collection of essays edited by Yerkes, was published.

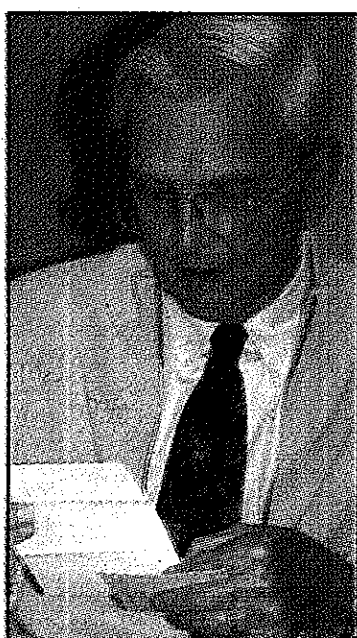
After its publication, Updike responded with a note that read, "I think you got it just right."

Yerkes was pleased of course, but even more pleased with the three-page letter from Updike that arrived just prior sending the manuscript to the publisher.

The letter consisted of a copy of a speech Updike had given in New York City to the Society of American Jesuits. A note from Updike accompanying the speech read, "If you think it's worthy, you are welcome to use it."

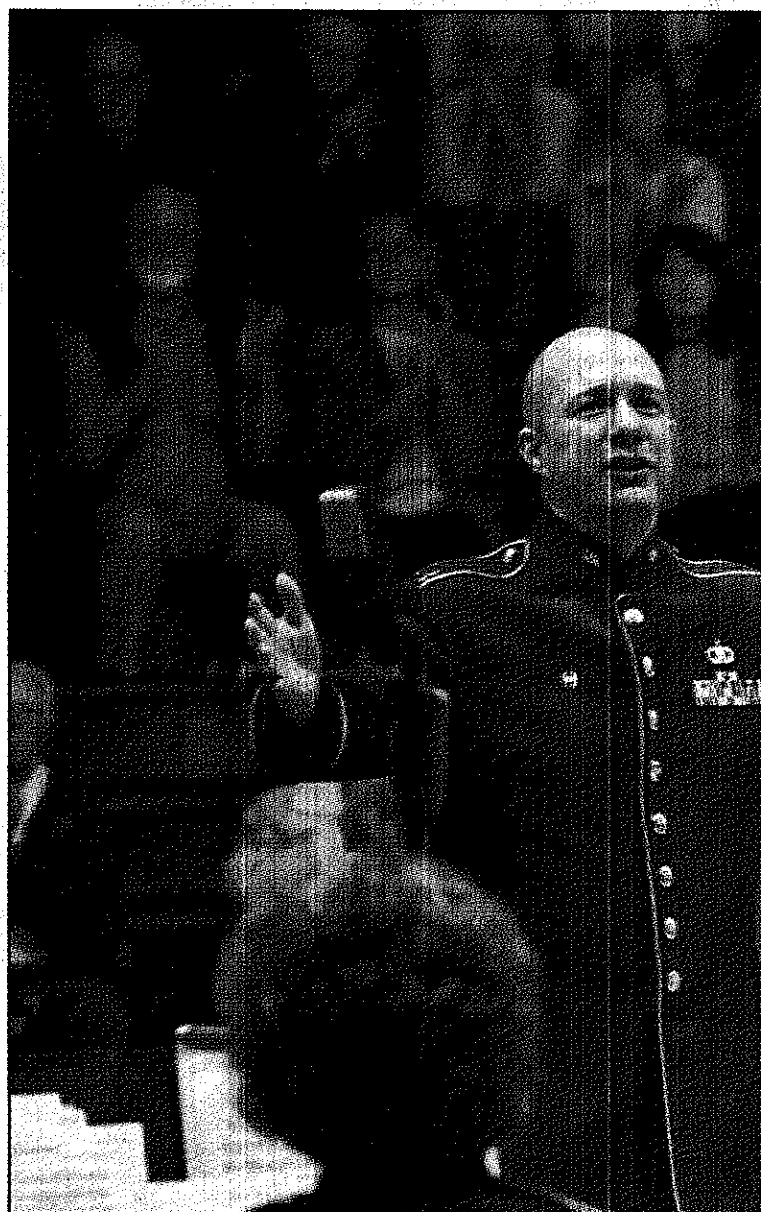
"It became the first piece in the book," Yerkes said. "It was a tremendous thing for him to do and made it very interesting for readers."

news.fenceviewer.com



ELLSWORTH AMERICAN PHOTO BY JAMES STRAUB

**Surry resident James Yerkes reads from one of the numerous letters he received from John Updike during an award presentation at the Blue Hill Library honoring Yerkes for his contribution to Updike scholarship.**



## Enthusiastic Crowd of 900-p



Captain David Alpar (top), commander and conductor of the Air Force Band of Liberty, accepts audience applause after leading his musicians through a number during last Thursday's concert at Ellsworth High School. The performance, presented by Ellsworth American in cooperation with the high school, elicited several standing ovations from the crowd estimated at more than 900. The Ellsworth visit was part of a week-long tour that

## Pumpkin Festival Set at Woodlawn

ELLSWORTH — The Woodlawn Farmers Market will host a Pumpkin Festival from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. on Sunday, Oct. 24. Farmers Market vendors will be offering several pumpkin-themed items. Several vendors will offer pumpkin-themed food items and there will be a large assortment of craft items as well.

There will also be pumpkin carving and pumpkin contests. Prizes will be given for the largest pumpkin, the scariest and the best jack-o-lantern.

All members of the public are encouraged to enter. Judging will begin at 1:15 p.m. Information, contact Woodlawn at 667-8671 or visit [www.woodlawnmuseum.org](http://www.woodlawnmuseum.org).

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JAMES BISSSETT WIGGINS Editor

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