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Main Hall ^{to} Main St.

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Connecting Campus and Community

January 1999

Paxson teacher wins UM recognition

When Paxson School's students and teachers were called to a spur-of-the-moment assembly by the principal on Jan. 15, they had no idea what it was about.

"We were all in the dark," said Margo Voermans, third-grade teacher.

Then, Principal Webb Taylor Harrington announced that, for the first time ever, a teacher from Paxson had been chosen to receive the 1999 Maryfrances Shreeve Award for Teaching Excellence, presented annually by The University of Montana's School of Education. That teacher was Voermans, who has taught at Paxson since 1992.

"I was absolutely floored," Voermans said. "It's just a tremendous honor."

The \$2,000 Maryfrances Shreeve Award was established in 1992 to honor Shreeve, the master elementary teacher, who taught for 37 years in Montana. She died in March 1998.

Voermans will be presented with the award at a gathering of her colleagues — the School of Education's 10th annual Teacher Education Reception — on Feb. 6. The reception also honors several hundred Montana teachers who supervise student teachers and interns from UM.

Voermans was nominated by Teddy Maloof, a counselor at Sentinel High School. Over the years, Maloof had seen a phenomenal number of older students refer to Voermans as one of their favorite and most influential teachers.

"She's one of the most positive educators I've ever met," Maloof said.

Voermans has taught for 31 years, 24 of those in Missoula. Her many accomplishments include proposing and pushing a bill — now Montana law — that helps abused children, and serving on the Montana Education Association board. She also has volunteered for local organizations such as A Carousel for Missoula and Camp Mak-A-Dream.

"Margo is constantly pushing the envelope for improving instructional methodology and student motivation techniques," Paxson's principal said. "She is generous with her time, knowledge, expertise and energy Margo 'walks



Top teacher Margo Voermans

the walk' and I learn from her constantly."

Among the letters in support of Voermans' nomination were several from parents, former students and a student teacher.

"One of Margo's strongest attributes is her ability to reach out to each child individually on a daily basis," wrote Jill Rasmussen, who was Voermans' 15th student teacher — or "co-teacher" as Voermans calls them — last fall. "... She makes it a point, and a priority, to talk to each student on a personal level every day. This small and simple goal of Margo's makes the little people in her class feel larger than life and extremely special."

The example she sets for her students and student teachers has a lasting effect, judging by the number who have kept in touch or re-established contact years after being in Voermans' classroom.

Voermans said that recognition like the Shreeve Award is important validation for teachers.

"It's wonderfully uplifting to have the Shreeve family support and recognition of good teaching," she said. "And then to have been picked for that award is just amazing."

—Patia Stephens

UM Calendar

Tuesday, Feb. 2

Faculty recital—percussionist Robert LedBetter, 7:30 p.m., Music Recital Hall. Tickets \$5/general, \$3/students and senior citizens.

Thursday, Feb. 4

Basketball—Grizzlies vs. Weber State, 7:35 p.m., Sentinel High School gym.

Concert—Wylie & the Wild West, 8 p.m., University Theatre. Tickets \$10/advance, \$11/day of show. Call 243-4051 or (888) MONTANA.

Saturday, Feb. 6

Concert—Missoula Symphony Orchestra and Chorale, with soprano Anne Basinski and bass Stephen Kalm, 7:30 p.m., also 3 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 7, Wilma Theatre. Call 721-3194 for tickets.

Monday, Feb. 8

Basketball—Grizzlies vs. Idaho State, 7:35 p.m., Sentinel High School gym.

Tuesday, Feb. 9

Wilderness Lecture Series—"Spirits of My Homeland," by Reno LoParco, 7:10-9 p.m., Social Science Building Room 352. Free.

Faculty recital—organist Nancy Cooper, 7:30 p.m., Music Recital Hall. Tickets \$5/general, \$3 students and senior citizens.

Thursday, Feb. 11

Basketball—Lady Griz vs. CSU-Northridge, 7:35 p.m., Sentinel High School gym.

Saturday, Feb. 13

Student Chamber recital—7:30 p.m., Music Recital Hall. Free.



Bear Briefs

Tribute Continues—UM's two-week celebration of Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy continues Tuesday, Feb. 2, with a free performance of "Faces of America."

This one-person play discusses multiculturalism from a Generation X point of view, using eight characters to represent different cultural aspects of American society. The play, performed by Fran de Leon, will take place at 7 p.m. in the University Theatre. The issues raised in "Faces of America" are based on true stories.



Fran de Leon in "Faces of America." (Photo by Melinda F. Kelley)

Superior Scholar—Karen Short, a doctoral student in biological sciences at UM, won a \$75,000 scholarship for her studies of fire ecology and the effects of controlled fires on wildlife. She was one of three doctoral students in the nation to earn a Canon National Parks Science Scholars award, a coveted scholarship in conservation and the environmental sciences. Her research focuses on the effects of fire on birds living in ponderosa pine forests of southeastern Arizona.

Giving Back—UM faculty and staff gathered on Dec. 22 in the Treasure State Dining Room to bake 351 dozen Christmas cookies for residents of local youth, group and senior citizen homes. The Great UM Christmas Cookie Cook-off was such a success that another is planned for next year. Also, University Dining Services donated food that would not keep over the long winter break to the Poverello Center. The food service teamed up with Garden City Harvest and Missoula Textiles for the food recovery program. In addition, Volunteer Action

Services and the Bookstore at UM worked with the Salvation Army to sponsor the annual Adopt-A-Family campaign, which brought Christmas to more than 30 local families. Families were adopted by UM departments, with staff and faculty providing food, toys and clothing for those in need.

Midwest Bound—Sheila Stearns, formerly UM's vice president for University Relations and chancellor of Western Montana College of UM, will become the president of Wayne State College in Nebraska July 1. Stearns has been chancellor at WMC since 1993. She earned bachelor's, master's and doctoral degrees at UM.

Meanwhile, Stearns and her husband, Hal, a former Missoula Sentinel High School teacher, are part-time lobbyists for UM during the 1999 Montana Legislature. They share lobbying duties with Bob Frazier, executive assistant to UM President George Dennison.

Football Feast—The Grizzly football season is over, but an upcoming banquet will provide a chance to relive the excitement while honoring the 1998 Big Sky Conference championship team. The Griz football banquet will be held Friday, Feb. 5, at Missoula's DoubleTree Hotel. Social hour begins at 6:30 p.m., and dinner will be served at 7:30 p.m. Entertainment will include a highlight film of UM's 1998 football season, along with a talk by Griz head coach Mick Dennehy. Tickets are \$15 per person and are available from all TIC-IT-E-Z outlets or by calling the UM ticket office at 243-4051 or (888) MONTANA.

Home For The Hula—The Grizzly Hawaiian connection of quarterback Brian Ah Yat and wide receiver Raul Pacheco headed home Jan.

24 to play in the annual Hula Bowl. The long-time teammates played at Iolani High School in Honolulu before becoming Grizzlies. Ah Yat threw for 9,315 career yards and 89 touchdowns during regular season play as a starter for UM. Pacheco finished his Grizzly career with 192 receptions.

Rewarding Partnership—UM was rewarded Jan. 19 for its efforts to reduce air pollution, traffic congestion and parking problems in Missoula. UM received one of three 1998 "Best Practices" awards from the Missoula Transportation Policy Coordinating Council. The award was presented to UM Campus Security Director Ken Willett by council Chair Michael Kennedy. UM was recognized for its partnership with Mountain Line, in which students, faculty and staff can ride the bus free by simply flashing their Griz cards, and efforts to promote car pooling.

Road Rep—More than a thousand Missoula middle and high school students saw the Montana Repertory



A scene from Montana Rep's "It's a Wonderful Life."

Theatre's production of "It's A Wonderful Life" in January. Participating in this year's Montana Rep educational outreach were Corvallis and Lolo middle schools, Missoula's Loyola and Hellgate high schools, Sussex School, Darby, Alberton and Victor high schools, and Kalispell Trinity Lutheran.

The Rep opened its national tour of the play in Los Angeles Jan. 22. The show will play for Missoula audiences Feb. 9-22 in UM's Montana Theatre. Tickets are \$12/general and \$11/students and senior citizens. Call the Box Office at 243-4851 for reservations.



The University of
Montana

Main Hall to Main Street is published by University Relations at The University of Montana. Send questions, comments or suggestions to Rita Munzennder, editor, 317 Brantly Hall, Missoula, 59812, or call 243-4824. Photos are by Todd Goodrich, unless otherwise stated. Contributing writers are Terry Brenner, Cary Shimek and Paia Stephens.