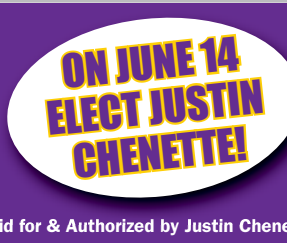




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JOURNAL TRIBUNE SUNDAY

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VOL. 3, NO. 50

SUNDAY, JUNE 5, 2016

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UNE president reflects on tenure, retirement

By ALAN BENNETT
Staff Writer

BIDDEFORD — It's been 10 years since a recruiter called Danielle Ripich to inquire about her interest in the University of New England.

Ten years later, the university has grown its enrollment by more than 6,000 students to more than 10,000, built new residence halls and athletic facilities, and opened a study abroad campus in Tangier, Morocco. Now at the end of the university's 10-year strategic plan, Vision 2017, Ripich says it's time to pack up the books.

"I think sometimes it's good for change," she said. "Change is the future ... I've always sort of believed organizations go through cycles, and I think they've gotten my best thinking and it's time for a change."

Ripich, who has both bachelor's and master's degrees in speech pathology from Cleveland State University, is a former professor in the arts and sciences, and a dean of the College of Health Professions at the University of South Carolina. She said she had been to Maine only once before realizing UNE was her calling.

"I felt that I could see how I could contribute to (UNE)," Ripich said.

"The more I learned about the school, the more I got excited about it"

Part of her motivation as the fifth UNE president was to bring both a pharmacy and dental school to the state, two institutions that, at the time, the university did not have. Under her tenure and the development of the 10-year plan, Ripich said UNE now serves a role the state's flagship university can't serve.

Now, one year from the plan's completion, the university will see its largest-ever class of liberal arts and sciences entering next fall. Online enrollment now comprises about 40 percent of all students, and 97 percent of online master's degree students graduate. The university's medical school has also grown by 40 percent, graduating 175 students for the past three years. Last month, UNE graduated the largest class in its history — more than 1,700 students.

"We're sort of cutting edge ... Maine is a place where people are basically modest, and we haven't gotten around to sort of bragging. We've always kind of done our work. And it's turning out to have been successful. I tell people to shout humility."

Shouting humility is something she's certainly done, giving credit

to many, but hardly to herself, for the university's success. Namely, she credits both the people of Maine and her students.

"I've really been impressed with the work ethic here in Maine," Ripich said, speaking about the university's \$23 million in construction completed during the economic strife of 2008. And her students, Ripich says, are "the kind of students you want to help."

"They inspire me as much as anything," she said.

She also credits the city of Biddeford with the university's success.

"I think the growth and the positive changes that are coming in Biddeford have the ability to have UNE and Biddeford to help each other and become more vital in the engagement that I see. I think it's immeasurably better than a decade ago when I arrived. I feel strongly across the university that there is a lot of support and interest in engagement with the city," Ripich said. "We're happy to be where we are."

But Ripich, now 71, is ready to step back and observe from the sidelines.

"I think I'm ready. This is not really a job; it's more like a role," she said. "I have grandchildren and things that I want to do, and I want



UNE President Danielle Ripich will retire at the end of the 2017 school year.

to sit back and sort of watch the future of UNE. I'm ready to sit in the bleachers a little bit."

She may be stepping down, but Ripich certainly isn't slowing down. When she's not skiing with her family at Sugarloaf, she'll be traveling between Cork, Ireland — where she owns a farm — to write family stories, and to Charleston, South Carolina, to spend time with her five grandchildren there. Ripich also has two grandchildren in Ohio, and plans to spend time with them too.

"I think between the visiting family and digging in the dirt in Ireland, I'm going to be happy."

Ripich will retire at the end of the 2017 school year, in time for Vision 2017 to expire. Her final year will see the installation of the

university's first football program and the introduction of the women's rugby team into the National Rugby League as a varsity sport.

To outsiders, her life may seem like a dream. But Ripich said every positive aspect of it has been because of her will to go with the flow.

"I think that (it is important) in life to be open to things and let your life happen sometimes," Ripich said. "We overly plan and structure and think we're going to control things and, honestly, in life, in my life at least, I've found that there's a lot of serendipitous occurrences and (you) can let it unfold."

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Now a seasoned performer, Catie Curtis can come home again

But she's come a long way since a happy happenstance at a Saco yard sale

By LIZ GOTTHELF
Staff Writer

BIDDEFORD — When Catie Curtis was 15 and living in Saco, she was at a yard sale looking longingly at a guitar she couldn't afford, and the woman who owned it gave it to her after the teenager promised she'd learn how to play it.

Curtis, 51, now has 14 albums under her belt and the singer-songwriter, who has played all over the United States and Canada as well as one European tour, will come back to her home turf Friday for a 7:30 p.m.



performance at City Theater.

Curtis started playing as a teenager, covering songs and performing at local venues. As a student at

Brown University, began writing her own material. After college, she lived in Cambridge and got involved in the folk music scene about the

time when Tracy Chapman and Suzanne Vega were becoming popular. In the early 1990s, she signed her first major label contract with EMI Guardian.

Curtis said she strives to write lyrics that feel poignant and are accessible to a wide audience. She said what works about her songs are that they contain "honest nuggets" about universal experiences described in a fresh way.

These days, Curtis, who is the mother of two middle-school aged children, does her touring in clumps. Instead of taking long periods on the road, she flies to a location for three to six days to perform a few shows and then returns home to Massachusetts.

For Friday's show she will bring along keyboard player Jamie Edwards. Curtis said though she's played at Jonathan's Ogunquit and One Longfellow Square in Portland in recent years, the last time she played in the Saco/Biddeford area was at First Parish Congregational Church in Saco about six or seven years ago.

"I'm really excited," she said. "It's been awhile."

She expects family members, who are local, to be at the show, and is also hoping to have "a bit of a high school reunion" with some old friends.

— Staff Writer Liz Gotthelf can be contacted at 282-1535, ext. 325 or egotthelf@journaltribune.com.

Graduates: Move forward but remember who you are

An open letter to the graduating class(es): First off, congratulations. You're probably hearing this a lot, but as someone who's still waiting to make it to where you are: congratulations. You made it through more or less 12 years of school, past every crisis, every meltdown, every huge test or project or assignment overload that made you want to take a month-long nap and hope everything would be done when you woke up. Every too-late night, every too-early morning, every conflict and contract and forgotten crucial assignment or pencil or calculator — you got past them all.



So I say, and I mean this from the bottom of my heart: congratulations. And with that important expression expressed — I will admit to being very glad it's not me. The very idea still terrifies me. And if anyone reading this is laughing — tell me you don't remember being 16, or 17, or 18, and not sure what's supposed to

happen next. Graduation is one of the few rites of passage secular Western society still holds onto, and funnily enough, no one ever mentions a rite of passage being reversible.

But anyways, back on topic. You're graduating. Moving up, or perhaps just moving on. Being a year away from graduating myself, I'm probably not qualified to address this topic, so instead I'm going to make a request.

Think of who you are right now. All the pieces and choices that make you the human being you are at this point in time. Everything you can think of that makes you "you."

Recognize that idea for an instant, just so you can say you did, and be ready to look back in a few years and be gobsmacked at how it's changed.

Yes, I'm young, and probably don't have nearly the experience to talk about this. But I'm also looking at how I can barely remember what happened to me earlier than five years ago, or how much I've changed, and trying to picture that disconnect increasing exponentially with every major milestone.

To be clear — change is never sudden. I'm hardly expecting anyone to just wake up tomorrow and find themselves a completely different person. But whoever you are at this point in time is worth recognizing all the same.

This is an open letter; something

Sanford, Springvale picture-perfect for selfie contest

By TAMMY WELLS
Senior Staff Writer

SANFORD — Ahhh, selfies — those photos snapped by anyone with a cellphone. They can be fun, and they're popular — popping up on Facebook and other social media pages with great regularity.

Sanford Parks and Recreation Department recreation coordinator Lori Hegarty was thinking about all the park and park-like locations Sanford and Springvale have to offer and had an idea. She figured that people could have fun visiting the 11 areas, take a selfie and perhaps win a Fitbit for their trouble.

"We have all these wonderful parks, and I have seen a picture of someone taking a selfie in a national park," she said.

So Hegarty began looking online to see if other communities had selfie contests, and came across quite a few, including some of the "scavenger hunt" variety. Hegarty said Parks and Recreation director Marcel

Blouin took to the idea, and the selfie contest was born. All pictures must be taken this month — June is National Parks and Recreation month — and emailed to: shelper@sanford-maine.org.

All ages are welcome, and some photos will be highlighted on the Sanford Recreation Facebook page, Hegarty said. All entrants' names will be put into a hat and a winning name or two will be drawn, depending on how many entries are received. The contest ends June 30.

Here's the list of the types of selfies and the locations that must be included:

- A skate park selfie at Springvale playground
- A selfie of the pickleball court at Carpentier Park
- A basketball court selfie at Benton Playground
- A beach selfie at Springvale Rec area — also known as Holdsworth Park
- A selfie at Indian's Last Leap on the Mousam Trail (careful!)
- A Farmer's Market selfie at

- Central Park
- A selfie at the falls at Gateway Park
- A Mainer's baseball selfie at Goodall Park
- A selfie at the new concessions building at Veteran's Park
- A disc golf hole ninth-hole sign selfie at Gowen Park
- A selfie with the Maine Attraction water ski team practicing at Number One Pond.

Questions? Call Sanford Parks and Recreation at 324-9130.

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