

## Inside: Our Medical Marijuana Community - Pages 7-11



Manager Jaimee Lilley in front of the Crystal Spring Healing Alternatives medical marijuana dispensary on Main Street in Lewiston. Using cannabis extracts helped Lilley to overcome a major problem with achalasia, a tightening of muscles in her esophagus that prevented food and water from entering her stomach. (Tsukroff photo)

## LiteracyTech wins Top Gun LA pitch-off for entrepreneurs



Kathryn Lariviere (left) and business partner Michele DeBloise of LiteracyTech Inc. are congratulated by Scott Benson, director of economic development for the LA Metro Chamber of Commerce, and chamber President and CEO Shanna Cox, at a Top Gun LA pitch-off last week at the Poland Springs Resort in Poland. (Tsukroff photo)

By Nathan Tsukroff

ton as middle school teachers.

POLAND – Michelle DeBloise of LiteracyTech Inc. gave the winning pitch to beat three other companies competing for the Top Gun LA title at the LA Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce breakfast meeting last Thursday at Poland Springs Resort in Poland.

LiteracyTech is getting ready for the commercial release of ReMo, a web-based application for K-12 students and teachers that DeBloise described as “much like a CRM, contact-record manager.” The application is designed to document a student’s reading experiences and comprehension, and should help educators track the performances of their classes more comprehensively.

DeBloise is building the company with Kathryn Lariviere, and they live and work in Auburn and Lewis-

The Top Gun program was started by the Maine Center for Entrepreneurs of Portland in 2009 to mentor entrepreneurs and guide them in finding tools and resources to grow their businesses. The LA Metro Chamber created its local Top Gun program four years ago. MCE is “really the lynchpin for the whole program,” Scott Benson, the director of economic development for LA Metro Chamber, said. He led the local “cohort” or group for the chamber this year.

Also competing for the Top Gun LA title were Carolyn Delany of Journey Enterprises, Sophia Bailey of Caribbean Life Grocery, and Laci Barnett of Dogaholick.

The pitches were made in person under a large tent set up in the field

See Top Gun, page 6

## Marijuana extracts “can change your life”

A local medical-marijuana dispensary made the difference for a local resident with achalasia, constriction of the esophagus

By Nathan Tsukroff

LEWISTON - Medical marijuana extracts – cannabinoids – “can change your life”, said Jaimee Lilley, the manager of the Crystal Spring Healing Alternatives dispensary on Main Street in Lewiston.

As a 16-year-old, Jaimee Lilley had trouble swallowing food and water. Dealing with the pain and surrounding issues led to lost classes in school, and even the loss of jobs.

She was diagnosed with achalasia, a tightening of the muscles in her esophagus, where her throat connects to her stomach. Treatment includes using a device to force the muscles to expand, surgery, or injection with botulinum toxin to relax the muscles.

Multiple surgeries and procedures provided only temporary relief, and she was prescribed several different drugs to try to relieve the symptoms and pain. “When I was first diagnosed, I was going in and out of surgeries all the time,” with five to 15 procedures a year, she said.

Growing up, she was adamantly anti-cannabis. “If I knew that you talked to Joe Blow, and Joe Blow smoked, I wouldn’t associate with you.”

Finally, in college, “I figured, the surgeries aren’t helping, the tests aren’t helping, the painkillers aren’t doing anything but make me feel worse, so what’s the worst that’s going to happen? So I tried smoking pot (marijuana).” And her world changed.

With the effects of the marijuana, she “still wasn’t able to eat perfectly, but I could tell the pain was a lot better.” She didn’t understand why she saw improvement, but knew the marijuana was helping. She qualified for a medical marijuana card and started purchasing cannabis extracts, cannabinoids, at dispensaries near her home in the Lewiston-Auburn area.

This led her to the Crystal Spring Healing Alternatives store at its former location in Auburn, where she met co-owner Sam Scalia. “He was the first person to stop and take time to explain to me why this is helping, and how it’s helping, and if I did X, Y, and Z, it could be even better,” Lilley said. “And it has been seven

See Crystal Spring, page 16

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- Committed to helping the homeless and at risk teenagers
- Supports training of at risk youth to enter the job market
- Committed to fight the opioid crisis



News

makers, Names & Faces

Second-quarter Geiger Star Winners

Senators call for condemnation of Genocide

**From Geiger**

Geiger, the nation's largest privately held promotional products distributor, recently presented its quarterly Geiger Star Awards. These awards are given to associates, who have been nominated by fellow associates, in recognition of their efforts to work the values of The Geiger Way. These associates, by practicing the principles of Continuous Improvement, embrace fresh and innovative ways to add value to customers and positively contribute to the company's business. This quarter awards were presented to four individuals and four teams.

Alain Laverdure is a Systems Specialist II in the Information Technology Department. He has shown great flexibility and willingness to help others during a time in which the Lewiston staff are mostly working at home or perhaps part time in the office. He has assisted in a security role by helping the I.T. team respond to the technical threats that are present in security pro-

tection. When other teams were short staffed, Alain also provided assistance to help continue delivering excellent technical support to both Sales Partners and Associates.

Alicia Doyle is the Talent Acquisition Specialist at the Lewiston Corporate Office. When the COVID-19 crisis suddenly impacted Geiger's business, she had to take down job postings she had already been working on and interviewing for, rescind offers, and communicate these difficult situations with grace and professionalism. However, as usual Alicia has always stepped up to the plate and also offered to help in other areas as well.

During the challenging times of COVID-19, Nancy Lavoie has worked diligently for more than three months, long after the end of the business day, several times until midnight, and throughout the weekends to create time-sensitive communication drafts and complicated reports for the Executive Team at Geiger. This critical information provided the basis for much of the

decision making that needed to happen, including the company's application for the Paycheck Protection Program. She developed complex and comprehensive reporting that could be easily sorted in numerous ways to meet the various needs of those using the reports.

Billy Lovitt, of Geiger BTC in the U.K., has been juggling many plates for weeks, which has resulted in happy customers receiving their goods on time. The U.K. sales team sells a good deal of PPE which very rarely arrives on time to the Warehouse. Large deliveries have had to be sorted and made, and the distribution methods used had to be changed by the hour in order to keep customers satisfied. Billy has had to learn many new skills that will help him in his future and that helped manage the sales team

*See Geiger, page 12*

**From the office of U.S. Senator Collins**

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Susan Collins joined a bipartisan group of eight colleagues recently on the third anniversary of the brutal campaign of ethnic cleansing conducted by the Burmese military against the Rohingya Muslim minority—in urging U.S. Secretary of State Michael Pompeo to take additional action to support the Rohingya community, to hold accountable those responsible for the atrocities, and to refer to these crimes by their proper term: genocide.

“Since August 25, 2017, close to 800,000 Rohingya have fled violence in Burma by escaping into neighboring Bangladesh. Most of them are living in refugee camps in horrific conditions, joining hun-

dreds of thousands of other Rohingya forced to flee from Burma due to decades of government-sanctioned violence,” the Senators wrote. “Throughout this time, the systemic campaign of violence against the Rohingya has been well-documented by the State Department and many others. The Burmese military has murdered thousands of Rohingya, committed widespread rape and sexual violence, destroyed hundreds of villages, thrown children and babies into fires, and used mass graves to attempt to conceal their reprehensible crimes.

“We urge you and President Trump to speak out forcefully and publicly about these atrocities, acknowledging the gravity of the crimes with a determination of crimes against humanity and genocide,” the

Senators continued. “The Rohingya people continue to face real and imminent risk, and the United States should act today to demonstrate global leadership and stand boldly against these genocidal tactics that have no place in civilized society.”

In addition to Senator Collins, the letter was signed by Senators Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Marco Rubio (R-FL), Edward Markey (D-MA), Todd Young (R-IN), Dick Durbin (D-IL), Elizabeth Warren (D-MA), Ben Cardin (D-MD), and Ron Wyden (D-OR).

Send all items for What's Going On to the Editor. Deadline is Friday by five.

Local

students start college at James Madison University

**From James Madison Univ.**

HARRISONBURG, VA - James Madison University is excited to welcome the class of 2024 to campus this month. The incoming freshman class represents an accomplished, diverse group of individu-

als who hail from 36 states, the District of Columbia and 10 countries around the world.

These area students are part of the class:

Kacy Grijalva of Gray will major in health sciences.

Amelia Danehy of Saco will major in dance.

Amber Currie of Monmouth will major in psychology.

Shaelyn Hanscom of Norway will major in kinesiology.

Established in 1908, James Madison University is a community of 22,000 students and 4,000 faculty and staff, nestled in the beautiful Shenandoah Valley. JMU offers 124 degree programs at the bachelor's, master's and doctoral levels, keeps classes small with a 16:1 student-to-faculty ratio and has the highest six-year graduation rate among its peer institutions at 84%. JMU is quickly gaining a national reputation, and ranks as the most

recommended university in the nation by students. As the No. 2 Best Public Regional University in the South, students enjoy unusually engaged relationships with world-class faculty, access to top-notch NCAA Division 1 athletics and state-of-the-art amenities. Once students graduate they join an esteemed network of around 140,000 Dukes across the globe, giving of their time, talent and treasure to the university.

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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces



## Anchour continues company growth

### From Anchour

LEWISTON - With nearly 400% growth this past year, Lewiston-based Anchour is the fifth fastest-growing company in Maine, and one of twelve companies in the state to make Inc. magazine's recent Inc. 5000 list. And the company is not slowing down, with two new hires this month, more expected to be added by early 2021, and a new office opening this winter.

A challenging feat for any company during a pandemic and national recession, Anchour remains committed to meeting their clients' needs. Founded in 2013 by CEO and Maine native Stephen Gilbert, Anchour works with local and national businesses across a wide variety of industries. The 22-person agency aims to help brands build lasting relationships with customers through strategy and creative design, with a focus on digital marketing and technology. Clients include Baxter Brewing, Dirigo FCU, Lord Jones, Agren Appliance, and nationally-based Outer Aisle

and Venture Solar, both of which also ranked on this year's Inc. 5000.

Since the start of the COVID-19 pandemic, Anchour has been focused on helping clients adapt to changing consumer behaviors by transforming their digital marketing and web presence.

"Anchour has been with us every step of the way, through our recent rebrand and helping progress our strategy post COVID," says Baxter Brewing President, Jenn Lever. "They were quick to pivot to support our online orders, launch new products during the pandemic, and communicate important info to our fans and partners. We've been able to generate revenue and keep our team's health and morale in focus during this time of uncertainty."

While the team is currently working remotely, Anchour is nearing completion on a new office just steps away from their current home on Lisbon Street in downtown Lewiston. The new space, which will be double the square footage of their current of-

fice, is set for a soft opening this winter. "The way people work has already changed," says Gilbert, "but that doesn't completely replace the need for a physical space where our team and clients can come together safely and continue to collaborate creatively."

As a complement to the office expansion and commitment to downtown Lewiston, Anchour also welcomed sister-company Anchour Studio to the block this year. Anchour Studio is a fully equipped analog/digital recording studio with an independent record of successes. The close proximity of the businesses allows Anchour to continue expanding their commercial-quality production capabilities.

"This has been a very trying time, but we have also uncovered great opportunities to grow and help businesses continue to grow," says Gilbert. "We are looking to keep the momentum going despite all odds."

For more information, contact Stephen Gilbert at [stephen@anchour.com](mailto:stephen@anchour.com).

## New Pastor for Riverside Drive Baptist Church



Rodney Taylor (top right), pastor of Riverside Drive Baptist Church, Auburn, with his wife, Rachel, and their four daughters in front of the church. Taylor was named pastor of the church in July, 2020. (Photo courtesy of Rachel Taylor)

### From Riverside Drive Baptist Church

AUBURN - Rodney Taylor was named pastor of Riverside Drive Baptist Church, Auburn, in July, 2020.

He is a 2008 graduate of Pensacola Christian College with a bachelor's degree in Pastoral Ministry. He received his Masters of Divinity from Pensacola Theological Seminary.

Married in 2009, Taylor and his wife, Rachel, have four daughters, all elementary-school age. Rachel has a degree in elementary education and will be home-schooling their daughters this year, due to the pandemic, she said.

Riverside Drive Baptist has about 25 members, and has been active about 60 years. The church had been seeking a pastor for the past two years, and found Taylor on a referral from his college.

Taylor was previously pastor of a church in Northumberland, PA.

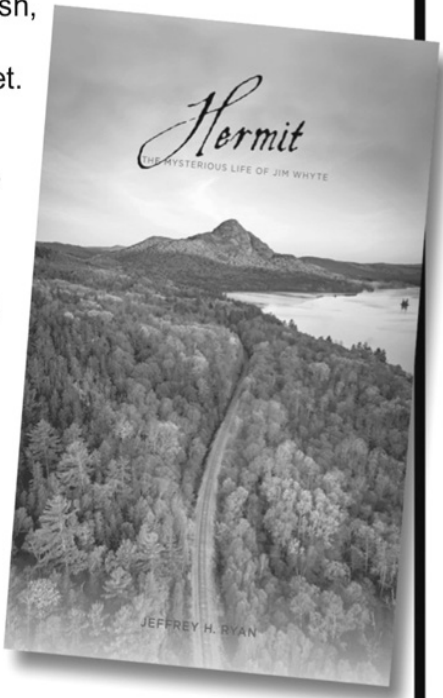
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— George Smith, Bangor Daily News

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**Laurie A. Steele**  
Publisher/CEO  
[Laurie@TwinCityTimes.com](mailto:Laurie@TwinCityTimes.com)

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**Nathan Tsukroff**  
Managing Editor  
[Editor@TwinCityTimes.com](mailto:Editor@TwinCityTimes.com)

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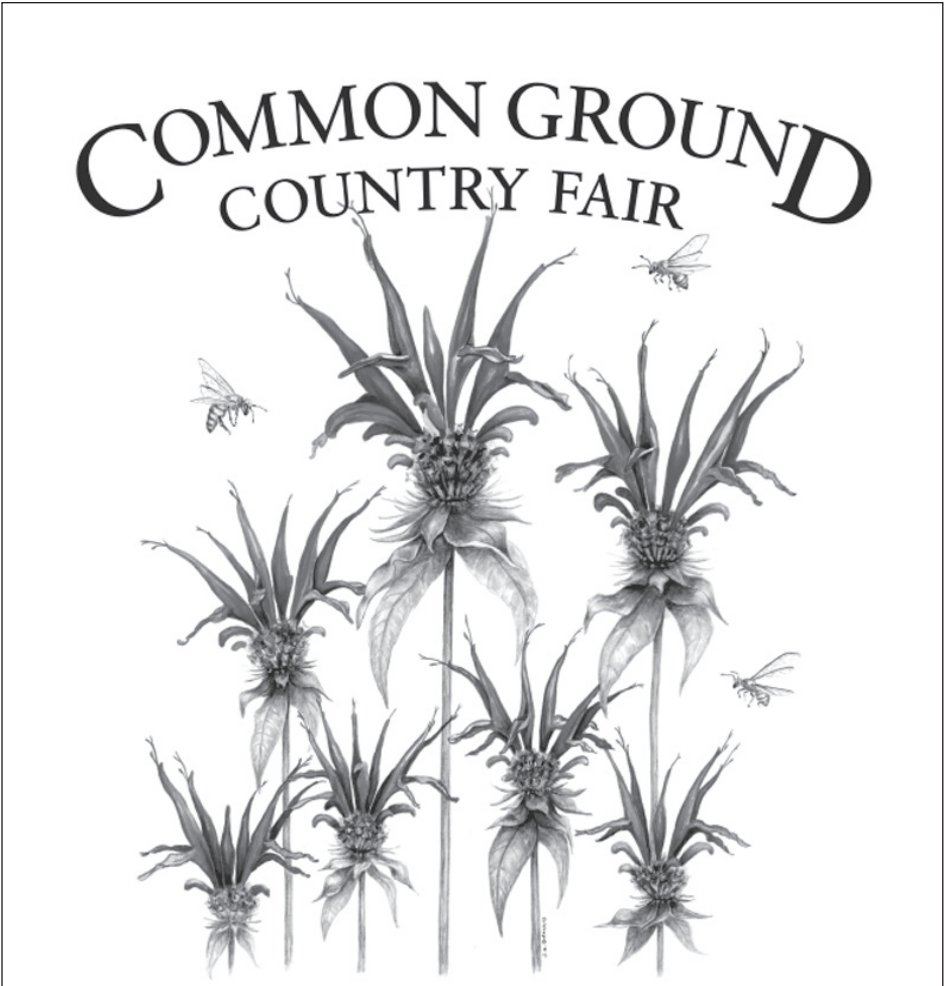
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# What's Going On



The 2020 Common Ground Country Fair artwork features bee balm and bees. (Courtesy of MOFGA)

## Common Ground Country Fair an online event Sept. 25-27

### From MOFGA

UNITY, ME - The Common Ground Country Fair, the premier educational event of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA), will take place online Sept. 25-27, 2020.

April Boucher, MOFGA's Fair Director, said, "While we can't gather together in person this year, many aspects of the Fair will be available online, including iconic and educational content that folks look forward to year after year."

Additional information about the fair is available in the fall issue of The Maine Organic Farmer & Gardener newspaper. An online marketplace of fair vendors will be available from Sept. 25, 2020, through Jan. 8, 2021, and offer shoppers the opportunity to support local businesses that would typically participate at the Fair, including farmers, crafters, nonprofit educational organizations and more.

The schedule of live presentations includes three full days of content related to gardening, farming and sustainable living. The schedule is available at: fair.mofga.org and video will be streamed there and on MOFGA's Facebook and YouTube pages.

In addition to keynote

addresses each day at 11 a.m., there is a great mix of educational and entertaining content lined up. Learn how to plant garlic, make a sweet annie crown, bake bread, ferment vegetables and so much more! Plus, the ever-popular sheep dog demonstrations will take place each day.

This year's keynote speakers highlight a mix of national perspectives on farming and gardening in diverse communities.

Friday's keynote speaker, Leah Penniman, is a Black Kreyol farmer/peyzan, author, and food justice activist from Soul Fire Farm in Grafton, New York, and is the author of "Farming While Black: Soul Fire Farm's Practical Guide to Liberation on the Land".

Saturday's speaker is Barbara Damrosch, farmer and co-owner of Four Season Farm in Harborside, Maine, author of "The Garden Primer" and "Theme Gardens" and co-author of "The Four Season Farm Gardener's Cookbook". She has also served as MOFGA's Board president.

Sunday's speaker, Winona LaDuke, is a rural development economist and author working on issues of Indigenous economics, food, and energy policy. LaDuke lives and works on the White Earth Reservation in northern Minnesota and is executive director of

Honor the Earth.

Members of the MOFGA community are developing additional content that will be available via an online library on the fair website. All are encouraged to grow and submit items for the online exhibition hall, submit photos for the online garden parade, share poetry and Fair stories and more.

Sarah Alexander, Executive Director of MOFGA, said, "We're hoping that the online Fair will still provide a sense of community and engagement related to everyone's favorite activities from the Fair."

Two unique Fair Boxes have been created and are currently being sold via MOFGA's online store at: store.mofga.org to celebrate the spirit of Common Ground at home. The Marketplace Sampler Box features a variety of products from marketplace vendors. The Common Ground Country Store Sampler Box features MOFGA and Common Ground Country Fair merchandise from past and present.

"The special edition fair marketplace boxes help support both our local vendors and MOFGA's work. All proceeds from both boxes will help fund our year-round educational programming for farmers, gardeners, homesteaders, and eaters," Alexander said.



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# York County sees increase in COVID-19 cases

## From Maine Dept. of Education

AUGUSTA - The Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) last week re-categorized York County from green to yellow as a result of increases in the number of cases per capita. This is a positivity rate three times above the state average (1.8% compared to 0.6%), and includes the five new outbreaks opened up in York County in the last two weeks. A number of new cases in York County are not readily traced to known outbreaks, suggesting increasing community transmission. The Health Advisory System classifies counties' relative risk of COVID-19 transmission by color, and is provided to assist schools as they continue with their plans to deliver instruction and support students safely this fall. This change in classification is made out of an abundance of caution and for the consideration of school administrative

units in York County in their decisions to deliver instruction. Maine DHHS and Maine CDC reassessed both York and Penobscot counties one week early due to recent, concerning trends. Penobscot County remains green, based on this assessment. All York County school districts have already planned to start the school year under a locally-developed hybrid model to ensure they are able to meet the six required health and safety measures for safely returning to in-person instruction. Under the "yellow" designation, which indicates an increased (moderate) level of community risk, schools may consider additional precautions, such as limiting numbers of people in school buildings at the same time, suspending extracurricular or co-curricular activities including competitions between schools, limiting interaction through cohorting, or other measures based on the unique needs of each school community. It is essential that school districts in York

County, and across the State of Maine, continue to implement plans that adhere to the six requirements for returning to in-person instruction, regardless of their county's red, yellow, or green designation: **Symptom Screening at Home Before Coming to School** (for all Staff and Students) - Students (parents/caregivers) and staff members must conduct self-checks for symptoms prior to boarding buses or entering school buildings each day. Schools should provide information to families in their primary language to support them in conducting this check. Any person showing symptoms must report their symptoms and not be present at school. Schools must provide clear and accessible directions to parents/caregivers and students for reporting symptoms and absences. **Physical Distancing and Facilities** - Adults must maintain 6 feet of distance from others to the extent possible. Maintaining 3 feet of distance is acceptable between and among students when combined with the other measures outlined in this list of safety requirements. 6 feet of physical distancing is required for students while eating breakfast and lunch,

as students will be unable to wear masks at that time. A "medical isolation space" (separate from the nurse's office) must be designated for students/staff who exhibit COVID-19 symptoms during the school day. Adequate ventilation is required for classrooms, with schools having flexibility in implementation such as using properly working ventilation systems or outdoor air exchange using fans in open windows or doors. Groups in any one area, room, or classroom must not exceed the Governor's gathering size limits. **Masks/Face Coverings** - Adults, including educators and staff, are required to wear a mask/face covering. Students age five and above are required to wear a mask/face covering that covers their nose and mouth. (Updated 7/31/20) Masks are recommended for children ages two to four, when developmentally appropriate. (Updated 7/31/20). Masks/face coverings must be worn by all students on the bus. Face shields may be an alternative for those students with documented medical or behavioral challenges who are unable to wear masks/face coverings. (Updated 8/12/20). The same applies to staff with medical or oth-

er health reasons for being unable to wear face coverings. Face shields worn in place of a face covering must extend below the chin and back to the ears. **Hand Hygiene** - All students and staff in a school must receive training in proper hand hygiene. All students and staff must wash hands or use sanitizing gel upon entering the school, before and after eating, before and after donning or removing a face mask, after using the restroom, before and after use of playgrounds and shared equipment, and before and after riding school transportation. **Personal Protective Equipment** - Additional safety precautions are required for school nurses and/or any staff supporting students in close proximity, when distance is not possible, or when student require physical assistance. These precautions must at a minimum include eye protection (e.g., face shield or goggles) and a mask/face covering. Classrooms and/or areas that have been used by an individual diagnosed with Covid-19 must be closed off until thorough cleaning and sanitization takes place. Return to School after Illness - Sick staff mem-

bers and students must use home isolation until they meet criteria for returning to school. The Health Advisory System categorizations are defined as follows: **RED:** Categorization as "red" suggests that the county has a high risk of COVID-19 spread and that in-person instruction is not advisable. **YELLOW:** Categorization as "yellow" suggests that the county has an elevated risk of COVID-19 spread and that schools may consider additional precautions and/or hybrid instructional models as a way to reduce the number of people in schools and classrooms at any one time. **GREEN:** Categorization as "green" suggests that the county has a relatively low risk of COVID-19 spread and that schools may consider in-person instruction, as long as they are able to implement the required health and safety measures. Schools in a "green" county may need to use hybrid instruction models if there is insufficient capacity or other factors (facilities, staffing, geography/transportation, etc.) that may prevent full implementation of the health and safety requirements.



## NFIB FedPAC endorses Crafts for 2<sup>nd</sup> district seat in Congress

**From Dale Crafts for Congress** LISBON - The National Federation of Independent Business (NFIB) political action committee, FedPAC, last week endorsed Dale Crafts for election to the United States House of Representatives to represent Maine's 2nd Congressional District. NFIB FedPAC is funded by NFIB member donations above membership dues. Decisions made by NFIB FedPAC are managed by a member-driven grassroots evaluation pro-

cess. Small business owners are influential in their communities and NFIB members in Maine are expected to work hard to elect Dale Crafts to Congress. NFIB is the nation's leading small business advocacy organization. "During Crafts' eight years as a legislator, he earned a 100% NFIB voting record, voting with small businesses on 25 key vote issues," said David Clough, NFIB's Maine State Director. "His unique background as a small business owner combined with his impressive legislative record make him a solid

small business candidate. We are confident that he will continue to champion issues in Congress that are important to the family paychecks and community vitality our members provide. We are proud to endorse Dale Crafts today on behalf of small businesses in Maine's 2nd Congressional District." Crafts is an NFIB member and former member of the Maine House of Representatives. Since 1984, he has founded and currently operates several companies across multiple industries. During his final term in the state legisla-

ture, Crafts earned a 100% NFIB voting record. He was also awarded multiple NFIB Guardian of Small Business awards during his tenure. "Crafts has a long background of small business achievements and legislative achievements," said NFIB National Political Director Sharon Sussin. "He has a deep understanding of what it takes to operate a small business and what small business owners need in order for their businesses to succeed. We know he will be a strong ally for small businesses in Congress."

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## Music Education provides a note of hope for many amid COVID 19

**From MMEA** As schools head back into session in the midst of a global pandemic, people face a never-ending torrent of restrictions and requirements to keep all safe while still providing and getting quality education. A

well-rounded and comprehensive education consists of many necessary components to keep students engaged and learning, this includes a robust music education programming - a fact that educators alike are well aware of. "The skills we learn in

music lead to experiences that are creative, aesthetic, and uplifting," said Sandy Barry, Maine Music Educators Association (MMEA) President and Middle School Band Director at Mahoney Middle School in South Portland. "A music classroom embodies the

best of 21st century skills, including problem solving, critical thinking, collaboration and interdependent learning." Yet, in the minds of musicians (and music educators) around the world, there is the heartbreaking



# Top Gun

Continued from page 1

beside the historic chapel on the grounds of the Poland Springs Resort. This was the first in-person breakfast for chamber members since March, due to restrictions caused by the COVID-19 pandemic. The chamber conducted its monthly breakfast meetings virtually via Zoom sessions over the summer.

Chamber members were seated four to a table under a 40-by-80-foot tent, and food was served individually to avoid chances of cross-contamination. Other chamber members joined Thursday's event virtually, with video and audio provided by HPA Production Services from Turner.

Journey Enterprises launched Journey Magazine in 2019 with a focus on making recovery from addiction visible. Journey shares stories of local community support and resources, and articles to help those in or seeking recovery.

Caribbean Life Grocery and Gift Store is a direct-sales retail store that emphasizes authentic Caribbean products and gift items. Bailey said her company is looking to expand into online sales, and plans to work with a technology company to create a system to accept orders to be delivered locally and across the country.

Dog-a-holick has big plans for the future, Laci Barnett told chamber members. The company plans to add an indoor dog park, a self-serve dog wash, dog-training and events, and a beverage garden with food trucks, to its existing dog-grooming salon business.

Besides the local Top Gun group, there are cohorts for any type of company in Portland, Bangor, and Waterville. This year, there are also two special cohorts meeting in Brun-

wick, one just for aquaculture companies and the other just for craft beverage businesses.

Top Gun is an intense four-month program that generally starts in February and ends in May, Benson said. It involves weekly learning sessions that have traditionally been in person. Each week, an expert presenter speaks about a business related-topic, then works hands-on with the businesses to guide them on that topic. This year, they have had to pivot to virtual learning sessions, due to the pandemic.

Each business works on a five-minute pitch during their weekly meetings, Benson said. This pitch helps the businesses with presentations to other businesses, with requests for financing, with adding employees, and with creating business relationships with potential vendors and clients. "They've got to be able to speak in a very cogent way and tell their story and what their potential is as a company."

"We were about halfway through our program this year when COVID hit, so we had to move online to a Zoom program for the rest of the year," Benson said. The Top Gun program was extended in hopes of having in-person events similar to the chamber breakfast last week. However, the in-person events never happened, he said.

The local Top Gun programs end each year with a pitch to the local group, then the winner from each cohort advances to a state-wide showcase. This year, that event will take place on Sept. 23 in Portland as a virtual event. The winner of that showcase is awarded a \$25,000 grand prize, furnished by the Maine Technology Institute, a non-profit organization funded in part by the Maine Department of Economic and Community Development.

This is the fourth year for the LA Top Gun LA



LA Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Shanna Cox (right), along with other chamber members, listens to a pitch from Sophia Bailey of Caribbean Life Grocery during the Top Gun LA pitch-off for entrepreneurs at the chamber breakfast last week at Poland Springs Resort in Poland. (Tsukroff photo)



Kathryn Lariviere (left) listens to business partner Michele DeBloise, of LiteracyTech Inc., make her pitch to members of the LA Metro Chamber of Commerce members, including President and CEO Shanna Cox (right). LiteracyTech, created an online literacy-tracking app, and emerged the winner of the annual Top Gun LA pitch-off competition for entrepreneurs. (Tsukroff photo)



Kathryn Lariviere, left, and business partner Michele DeBloise, of LiteracyTech Inc., talk to WIGY radio host Mark Turcotte at the LA Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce breakfast last Thursday at Poland Springs Resort in Poland. LiteracyTech, the creator of an online literacy-tracking app, emerged the winner of the annual Top Gun LA "pitch-off", and will go on to the statewide Top Gun competition on Sept. 23 in Portland. The Top Gun programs guide entrepreneurs in building their new businesses. (Tsukroff photo)



Carolyn Delany of Journey Enterprises gives her pitch to the audience at the LA Metropolitan Chamber breakfast last week at Poland Springs Resort in Poland. (Tsukroff photo)

cohort, and a win DeBloise and Lariviere means LiteracyTech Inc. "would be our first-ever statewide winner," Benson said.

According to its website, MTI was founded and funded in 1999 by the

Maine State Legislature, and "MTI offers grants, loans, equity investments, and services to support Maine's innovation economy." It is governed by a Board of Directors appointed by Maine's Governor.



Laci Barnett of Dog-a-holick, a dog-grooming salon, pitches her concept for expanding her business with a indoor dog park, a self-serve dog wash, dog-training and events, and a beverage garden with food trucks, to the LA Metro Chamber at its monthly meeting last week at Poland Springs Resort in Poland. (Tsukroff photo)

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# Our Medical Marijuana Community

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## Auburn medical marijuana store owner shares her good fortune



Tanya Rollins, owner of Green Cures LLC, a medical marijuana retail store in a free-standing building in the Auburn Mall parking lot, behind the counter of the sales area for glass products at her store. Rollins donates 25% of her sales of glass products to help needy families in the area with food and diaper donations. (Steele photo)

By Nathan Tsukroff  
Photographs by Laurie Steele

AUBURN - Tanya Rollins believes in “paying forward” her good fortune. The owner of a successful medical marijuana dispensary located on the grounds of the Auburn Mall, Rollins sets aside 25% of her profits from glass sales to use for a food support program for needy families in the Lewiston-Auburn area. Rollins is not just a sales person for medical marijuana, but is also a patient. She uses cannabinoid extracts to help her deal with the post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) she suffers as the result of being taken from her mother as a young child and placed in “a lot of bad foster homes.” She opened Green Cures LLC at the end of

2019 in the former Fleet Bank building, which stood empty in the mall parking lot since the branch closed in 2002. She had previously sold medical marijuana under her authority as a medical caregiver. Saving her money over the years. Rollins said she opened the dispensary to help others, after finding medical marijuana to be so helpful with treating her PTSD. It took three to four months to move into the building after she took it over in August of 2019, “with the renovations and everything like that”, she said. “We put a lot into this building. It was very old!” The store is managed by Derek Richardson, who supervises a team of ten employees. “And I have opened a food pantry for other people that don’t have enough

money to eat. We have helped 57 families, so far, with food and medicine and diapers, in the past four months,” she said. The food pantry was housed in the medical marijuana building initially, and is now being moved to its own location at 782 Minot Avenue, Auburn, after Rollins paid more than \$4,000 out-of-pocket for rent. Right now, it’s called Green Cures Relief program, but Rollins is looking to change the name to GC Community Relief. She accepts donations of food and diapers to help with her program. “I use all my own money for this. I don’t really get a lot of donations, but it’s something I really believe in,” Rollins said. “I’m here to help people. I’m not here to get rich and collect millions. I want to pay it forward. It’s just one of the things I like to do.” Anxiety, PTSD, insomnia, and depression are the main problems that patients tell her are treated with medical marijuana, Rollins said. PTSD is perhaps one of the biggest mental health issues treated by marijuana, she said. “And people come to me for physical health, as well. There is one patient that I have that is going through chemo right now, and she buys marijuana so that she can eat,” Rollins said. Medical marijuana helps reduce the nausea many patients experience during chemotherapy, and also stimulates their appetite. On a personal level, See Green Cures, page 10

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# “Really Gratifying” helping people at 420 Pharma

A new medical marijuana retail store in Mechanic Falls



Ben Klar uses grow lights on timers and pumped-in CO2 to grow sturdy marijuana plants that are used in medical marijuana products for sale at his father’s store, 420 Pharma, on Pleasant Street in Mechanic Falls. (Steele photo)

By Laurie Steele

MECHANIC FALLS - “It’s really gratifying” when his new medical marijuana retail store can help people to a better quality of life, Robert Klar, owner of 420 Pharma on Pleasant Street in Mechanic Falls,

said. The store provides a combination of products to fit the needs of individual customers. “Most people come in previously miserable with issues surrounding sleep, eating, pain or digestion. We’ve even helped people with addiction,” he said. 420 Pharma has a no-cost medical card program and the card can be obtained within minutes. Their nurse practitioner they work with will text the card to the patient’s phone to be used right away in the store. The patient is reim-

bursed for the nurse’s fee with a store credit at 420 Pharma.

Klar’s son, Ben, works with him in the store, and is cultivating a strain called “Chernobyl” at their grow facility. The Klars have gone to great lengths to provide as natural an atmosphere as possible for their plants.

Carbon dioxide (CO2) is pumped into the room where plants are grown. It’s like oxygen for the plants, Klar said. High levels of CO2 can produce stronger marijuana plants with higher yields.

Grow lights on timers match the rhythm of the rising and setting of the sun, and temperature and humidity are kept at ideal levels.

420 Pharma offers a full range of products, including CBD, THC, edibles, salves, CBD dog treats and glass products. They are fully stocked with a wide selection of strains of high-quality flower that they grow themselves.

*See 420 next page*



Robert Klar and his son, Ben, in front of 420 Pharma, a medical marijuana retail store on Pleasant Street in Mechanic Falls. The building was a model house for Klar’s previous business selling modular homes. (Steele photo)

## 420 Pharma Medical Marijuana Store



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One of the plants grown at 420 Pharma, a new medical marijuana retail store on Pleasant Street in Mechanic Falls. (Steele photo)



Ben Klar shows fan leaves from a marijuana plant at the grow facility of 420 Pharma on Pleasant Street in Mechanic Falls. The fan leaves are essential in helping the plants grow, but are removed from the finished, harvested product. (Steele photo)



Robert Klar and his son, Ben, opened their medical marijuana retail store, 420 Pharma, about two months ago on the site of their previous model home business on Pleasant Street in Mechanic Falls. (Steele photo)

## 420

Continued from previous page

The father and son team started 420 Pharma seven weeks ago, but are no strangers to the industry. Eight years ago they started a grow facility on a thirty-acre spread at Old Depot Farm in Minot. They provided wholesale products to dispensaries before deciding to open their own store.

Future plans are to construct a 28-by-60-foot grow room next to their store that will utilize solar and geothermal heating for energy efficiency. They are also looking a providing delivery services to the Lewiston and Auburn area.

Klar previously ran a modular home business on the same property as 420 Pharma. He created the medical marijuana store inside the model home he used for that previous business.

Send all items for Arts & Entertainment to Editor@TwinCityTimes.com. Deadline is Friday by five.



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Tanya Rollins checks daily sales with store manager Derek Richardson at Green Cures LLC, a medical marijuana retail store next to the Auburn Mall. (Steele photo)

## Green Cures

Continued from page 7

“Medical marijuana has definitely benefited me by allowing me to quit the drugs the doctors were giving me” to treat her PTSD, she said. “There was a point when I was on six or seven different medications, and they were all just trying to out-weight the other one. And, eventually I just stopped it all and started smoking, and I never went back on pills again.”

Thanks to the medical properties in marijuana, “I’ve been able to clean my head up and get out of a domestic violence situation I was in. Four years ago I was living in a shelter with my kids,” she said. Prescription drugs interfered with her relationship with

her children, while marijuana has allowed her to get close to them again.

She has two children of her own, one in elementary school and one in middle school, and shares two young children with her current boyfriend.

“My whole life has been turned around since I left my ex. It wasn’t a very great relationship. It was very toxic. And once I was able to actually see that,” she finally removed herself and her children from the relationship. At that point, “My whole life turned around. I invested my time and my money into a business, and now I can successfully look for a house.”

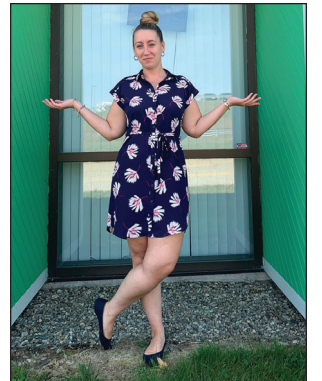
Rollins believes the implementation of medical marijuana sales has been hindered by the big

pharmaceutical companies, who don’t have a stake in marijuana sales. She sees a change in medical marijuana sales from individual companies like hers to chain stores like Walgreens or Walmart. And she believes recreational marijuana sales may be squashed by the federal government, which recently cracked down on such sales in California. Recreational marijuana sales are set to start in Maine in October.

She will be concentrating on her food program in the future, and would like to build a domestic violence shelter and veteran’s homes. “So if I can make enough money off this business to do that, and to retire, then I’ll be done. I really just want volunteer, I just want to help people.”



Tanya Rollins, owner of Green Cures LLC, a medical marijuana retail store in a free-standing building in the Auburn Mall parking lot, behind the counter of the sales area for glass products at her store. Rollins donates 25% of her sales of glass products to help needy families in the area with food and diaper donations. (Steele photo)



Tanya Rollins in front of her medical marijuana retail store, Green Cures LLC, in the former Fleet Bank building in the parking lot of the Auburn Mall. The store opened at the end of last year, and sells a variety of marijuana products. (Steele photo)

Right now, “My main focus is just to give back, to be honest. I’ve had a really hard time in my life. There were times when I’ve had to look my kids in the eyes and tell them they could only have a can of green beans for dinner. And I would never go back to that.”

“I can’t sit here and fathom all the other people that are going through that

right now, so it’s hard for me to make a lot of money and not give back.” She was in and out of shelters with her kids for seven or eight years, and was a victim of child abuse and sexual assaults while in foster care as a child, she said.

There are not enough shelters in the area for women trying to escape domestic violence, Rollins said. There are three shel-

ters, and “they’re always full. Women are dying . . .” One of her patients was recently killed by a partner, and more shelters are needed.

Rollins said she is especially concerned about the welfare of women, children and veterans. “I connect with veterans on another level. I understand how hard it is for people with PTSD.”

# GREEN CURES

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## Daily Specials

## Veteran Deals

## We Deliver!



# The Healing Community MEDco sells a special lemon-aid

By Laurie Steele

LEWISTON - The Healing Community MEDco is perhaps best known for their special lemon-aid, made from a mixture of just five natural ingredients, including real juice and fruit puree, agave, nectar and THC, a cannabinoid extract.

The lemon-aid is in such high demand that it's sold not only at MEDco's two Lewiston locations, but in dispensaries across the state. It's made in the kitchen of their downtown Lewiston location on Lisbon Street.

"We have sold literally tens of thousands of bottles of lemon-aid," co-owner and operating manager Alex McMahan said.

THC, also the first letters of the company name, is shorthand for tetrahydrocannabinol, which is extracted from various varieties of marijuana plants. It acts much like the cannabinoid chemicals made naturally by the human body. It affects areas of the brain associated with thinking, memory, pleasure, coordination, and time perception.

MacMahan has a



Joe Johnson and Alex McMahan, two of the owners of The Healing Community MEDco, a medical marijuana facility, in front of their store on Lisbon Street in Lewiston. (Steele photo)

strong background in hospitality management and founded MEDco in 2018 with Keith Gosselin and Joe Couture, master growers of various strains of marijuana plants, and Joe Johnson, the executive chef for the operation. Johnson was a chef for Bill Murray as well as an executive chef at Google.

Two new partners, Rob Laverdiere and Joe McMahan, joined the company earlier this year.

The Healing Community MEDco is a medical cannabis facility with a second site on Main Street in Lewiston that opened last year.

For MEDco, it's not just about the sales of lemon-aid," but rather, "It's all about the community" according to Alex McMahan. "It's not just about us. It's

the cannabis industry as a whole. We are all about giving back."

For instance, another medical marijuana facility, Hallowell 4twenty, helped to establish the Windy Warrior - Adrenaline Therapy Project to help veterans deal with post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) through skydiving. Other dispensaries in the area now support this program, including Cure, Sinsemilla, and The Healing Community MEDco.

MEDco started a community outreach program of its own through the network of businesses that belong to the LA Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce. The Healing Community Food Challenge provides groceries for needy families on a weekly basis. Businesses pledge to

support one or more families as part of the challenge. "People have been so good to us," McMahan said. "The city of Lewiston has been great to work with. They have treated us like any other business. We have been doing a lot with the LA Metro Chamber, as well."

MEDco now has over thirty employees, and McMahan said he wants employees to reap the benefits of the growing business, along with the owners.

A third location on Water Street in Gardiner is slated to open in 2021.

The dispensary sells craft cannabis flower and medicated wholefoods, candies, baked goods, tinctures, beverages, syrups, artisanal extracts, salves, and other cannabidiol (CBD) products. CBD is actually derived from the hemp plant, a cousin of the marijuana plant, and does not cause hallucinations like THC. Cannabidiol has been effective in treating epileptic seizures and neuropathic pain.

MEDco's craft cannabis is grown in their state-certified warehouses.

Edible cannabis products are created in MED-

co's state-certified kitchen at its facility on Lisbon Street. It is the only open-air kitchen in the state.



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## Geiger

Continued from page 2

while meeting customers' expectations.

When it came down to sending Geiger associates home to work, DeeDee King and Bev MacNeill had to work together to figure out how to complete a very important process from home; payroll. It tends to be a paper-based process because of the many transactions that happen through having forms completed and because of the need for audits, checks, and balances that are in place. This was something that had never been done remotely and they had to figure out a way to do it completely electronically. DeeDee & Bev were successful in figuring this out, so that their associates continued to get

paid without interruption! It has not seemed realistic in the past to make this process totally paperless. However, when everyone was required to work at home, it became necessary to think outside the box and figure out ways to make it work! By working together as a team, they most definitely demonstrated the Geiger Way values of "Process Improvement" and "Customer Satisfaction"!

Since COVID-19 hit Maine, the following associates on Geiger's Distribution and Decorations Center team, Lee Jones, Sandy Russell, Tricia Bell, Sheri Ridgeway, Kathy Hooks, Chris Knowlton, Keith Mosher and Jim Mathieu, have all worked tirelessly to keep up with all incoming orders and requests in the limited hours they

were allowed to work. As a reduced staff of over 50% due to Social Distancing requirements, customer demands were met seamlessly! Since March, everyone did whatever they needed to do to satisfy customers without complaint, getting them what they needed when they needed it. Their efforts and willingness to do whatever was necessary is priceless. The results of having to do much more work with significantly less has made this team very creative in gaining multiple efficiencies that will carry forward when some sort of normalcy returns.

The PPE Task Force Team, consisting of Tara Villanueva, Robin Miller, Jennifer Haupt and Amme Nielsen was the perfect example of doing all one can to pivot and contribute val-

ue. When the entire industry was met with the challenge of selling Personal Protective Equipment, the information that was coming to the team from the supply chain was confusing, inconsistent, and disorganized. Rather than accept this or leave for someone else to do, they created a task force to gather and share pertinent information for all to use. The result was a streamlined sheet of over 700 entries of data, that listed all relevant products and important ordering info. This task force/team definitely demonstrated the Geiger Way values in "Process Improvement" and "Leadership"!

The Switchboard Move Team, including Maria Hoffman, Bryon Newcomb, Lil Morin and Trish Whitlock, worked together to accomplish something that the company wasn't sure would work; that is, operating the Switchboard remotely. When all the Geiger workers went home to work in March, Lil and Maria stayed at the office as long as possible to keep the switchboard operating. With continued concerns about the COVID-19 pandemic and the Governor's "Stay at Home order" in April, this team of associates worked long and hard, to resolve all of the challenges involved in making this happen, and they did it!

Geiger is the largest family owned and managed promotional merchandise distributor worldwide.

## MMEA

Continued from page 5

truth that singing and playing wind instruments while near other people is now considered a risk in transmitting COVID-19. While many mourn the absence of live concerts and impromptu choir practice in the halls, or even just singing at the top of their lungs in the car with our friends, music educators are busy trying to orchestrate a very different but essential music education program this school year.

"Preserving access to music education for all of our students during this difficult time is crucial. As we reimagine music education

along with our students, it is important to focus on all that we can do in the music classroom, even though group singing and wind playing looks different right now," said Ben Potvin, MMEA Past President and Grades 3-5 Classroom Music, Band, and Chorus at Mast Landing School in Freeport (RSU5). "Maine's music educators are up to the challenge of fostering connections with our students and maintaining safe, high-quality music instruction."

With hard work and a deep commitment to ensuring quality music instruction continued, Maine's music teachers took on the challenges posed by COVID-19. "I am in awe of the creative and innovative ways in which our music, and all our visual and performing arts educators, have re-imagined their craft," said Commissioner of Education, Pender Makin. "Music is one of the core expectations for our schools exactly because it nurtures this kind of flexible problem solving and creativity, skills that are vital for our classrooms and for the 21st century."

Even when schools had no choice but to deliver remote education in the spring, music educators still found a way to encourage and engage students from home and students blossomed with the opportunity to get more of what they wanted.

"Because I had more time and flexibility in my schedule when we were distance learning, I was able to focus on my own musical goals and develop a more consistent practice routine," said Delia Harms, a Junior from Massabesic HS in Waterboro who plays the bassoon in the school band, the Portland Youth Wind Ensemble, and the Symphony Orchestra. "I had time to really dig into more challenging music, but also to focus on returning to the basics and developing fundamental skills. Though it was different, every moment that I was able to connect with others about music, through recordings or on zoom, it brought back some of that excitement and connection that music has always created. It has been inspiring to see the resilience and commitment of my musical community that has allowed them to persevere through these difficult circumstances to continue making music."

For many, the chance

to continue having a creative space to practice and learn music through education programming provides solace during an uncertain time.

"Access to music education is incredibly important for a number of reasons, especially now, but the first one that comes to mind is to create a support system for kids" said Colette (Coco) Carrillo, a Junior from Waterville High School who is an active member of the school choral program." So many people I know see their school's music programs as a creative outlet and a safe place that they don't have anywhere else in the school. It offers them an activity that can not only relieve their stress but can also build so many skills for their futures. Whether it's in person or online, kids in music programs do those activities for a reason. They want to share their passion with friends, learn new material, and improve their skills. Getting rid of those programs or lowering the standard will harm their academic minds as well as their artistic minds."

Finding a new way to learn during the pandemic has been a challenge for everyone, and the reinvention of how music teachers educate students and how they prioritize what they need to do has provided a valuable lesson in and of itself.

"When schools began to shut down, the music department was arguably hit the hardest, as playing/singing together does not lend itself to virtual mediums very well due to the fact that digital latency prevents synchronization," said Tyler Lucca, a Junior from Yarmouth High School who plays the trombone in the school's honors level Wind Ensemble and Jazz Band, and sings in the honors level Chamber Choir. "This made making music with my peers nearly impossible, at least in the traditional way, and it showed me how important these classes that we took for granted truly are."

Music education is essential to a robust educational experience and while it may look very different this year, and possibly for years to come, it is more than just another education standard to meet or a lesson plan to fit into the schedule. It's an emotional state, it's a way to cope, and for many it's a vital part of what makes them who they are.

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**Tuesday, Sept. 22**  
9:30-10 a.m.  
Virtual Preschool Discovery Time, Baxter Memorial Library, Gorham.  
Join Ms. Heidi on Facebook as she uses stories, music, and movement to enhance early literacy skills and foster a love of reading. (3-5 yrs).

**Thursday Sept. 24**  
9:30-9:50 a.m.  
Virtual Toddler Discovery Time, Baxter Memorial Library, Gorham.  
Sing along with Ms. Dani on Facebook as she uses songs, rhymes, and books to enhance early literacy skills and foster a love of reading. Each week will feature a new book but use the same songs and fingerplays so the kiddos will be able to learn the words and actions to each month's song choices. (ages 18-36 months).

**Thursday, Sept. 24**  
4 p.m.  
Library Kung Fu hosted by Auburn Public Library via Zoom.  
A one-hour online workshop to introduce young library patrons, ages 7 to 14, to the fun, excitement, and challenge of Chinese martial arts practice. Call the library to register at 333-6640 ext.3 or register online at [www.auburn-publiclibrary.org](http://www.auburn-publiclibrary.org) for a link to the Zoom meeting.

**Friday, Sept. 25**  
9 a.m.-4 p.m.  
Restorative practices certificate program offered by UMaine Hutchinson

# Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

Center and Restorative Justice Center. Six-session course from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact Michelle Patten, [um.fhc.pd@maine.edu](mailto:um.fhc.pd@maine.edu); (207) 338-8002.

**Friday, Sept. 25**  
6 p.m.  
LEWISTON - A healing prayer service will take place at 6 p.m. at Holy Cross Church, 1080 Lisbon Street, Lewiston. Fr. Michael Seigny, OFM Cap., parochial vicar at Prince of Peace Parish, will preside at the service. To attend, register at [www.princeofpeace.me](http://www.princeofpeace.me) or by calling the parish at (207) 777-1200. Social distancing and crowd restriction protocols will be followed at the service.

**Saturday Sept. 26**  
10 a.m.-noon  
StoryWalk Ribbon Cutting, Gorham.  
Join us for the ribbon cutting ceremony of the Maine Birthday Book StoryWalk on September 26 at 10 a.m. This event celebrates the Maine Bicentennial and is a collaboration between Baxter Memorial Library, Gorham Parks and Recreation, Gorham Schools, and Shaw Brothers Construction. There will be a book sale and signing from 10 a.m.

to noon with the author of The Maine Birthday Book, Tonya Shevenell. Join us as we walk, read, and follow the StoryWalk signs at beautiful Cherry Hill Farm Trail in Gorham, Maine. This is an outdoor only event. Please maintain social distancing between family groups. Masks are recommended when social distancing is difficult to maintain. Rain date will be Sept 27 at 10 a.m..

**Tuesday Sept. 29**  
9:30-10 a.m.  
Virtual Preschool Discovery Time, Baxter Memorial Library, Gorham.  
Join Ms. Heidi on Facebook as she uses stories, music, and movement to enhance early literacy skills and foster a love of reading. (3-5 yrs).

**Wednesday Sept. 30**  
9:30-9:50 a.m.  
Babies en Plein Air, Baxter Memorial Library, Gorham.  
Bring your baby and a blanket to join us for an interactive, socially distanced, outdoor lap-sit program. To ensure the comfort and safety of all participants, we ask that caregivers wear masks and leave older siblings at home or with a friend during this community baby program. Program will be canceled

in the event of inclement weather. (birth-18 months).

**Thursday, Oct. 29**  
Restorative practices certificate program offered by UMaine Hutchinson Center and Restorative Justice Center. Six-session course from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. For information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact Michelle Patten, [um.fhc.pd@maine.edu](mailto:um.fhc.pd@maine.edu); (207) 338-8002.

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## Letters to the Editor:

### A stupid photograph

The photo of the three Gorham policemen, was literally stupid and misleading. Could you recognize any of the 3, on patrol. Masks have their place but

not in photos like this one, also, they are not 6 feet distance. Such a disservice to Sgt Meslin. It would be great to see Sgt Meslin, without the

mask, so that we could congratulate him if we encountered him on patrol. Try to do better next time, please.  
David Thompson

### Child Rescue Coalition

My name is Michelle, and I am a Momma to two sweet babies. I have always been aware that sexual abuse, incest, pedophilia, child pornography, and sex trafficking happens. But recently I have become aware that it is so much bigger, and worse than I could have ever imagined. My eyes are now wide open, and I am absolutely heart broken and terrified. Not just for my own children, but for every child out there. These horrific acts happen to any and every child. They happen to children we know, children in our towns. Children everywhere. These predators are our neighbors, friends, fam-

ily, and we don't even know it. 90% of children who are sexually abused KNOW their abuser(s). I keep asking myself "Can I really trust this person with my children?" and, "Do I really know this person?". I'm scared. I'm scared to go to the store, or even take my kids to the beach or a playground. I carry pepper spray with me and am constantly looking over my shoulder. The sexual exploitation of children is very real, and I feel very strongly that everyone should want to spread awareness and be a voice for these children, because they don't have one. I have created a logo and am having T shirts made to help

spread awareness for the sexual exploitation of our children, and making donations to the Child Rescue Coalition. I want to help in any way I can. I don't really know how, and doing this I even feel isn't enough. But it's something. Help me be a voice for these children. We are all they have, and they DESERVE our attention. The link to our Facebook page is: <https://m.facebook.com/handsoffourchildrenME/> If you would like to order a shirt, please message me or email me at: [michellefcormier@gmail.com](mailto:michellefcormier@gmail.com)  
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**Saturday, September 19th**

**9am-1pm**

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**Budtender Daniel Glaskin resets products on the shelves of the dispensary at Crystal Spring Healing Alternatives on Main Street in Lewiston. The dispensary sells products made with cannabis extracts to holders of medical-marijuana cards. (Tsukroff photo)**

## Crystal Spring

*Continued from page 1*

years since I've had any surgeries, or any tests, or any procedure. I don't even see my GI (gastro-intestinal) team any more!"

"It's remarkable! Granted, my health started changing before I came here, but I actually give all my gratitude to Sam here, because if it wasn't for him explaining why it's helping . . . I would not be where I am right now," she said.

Cannabis extracts have been proven extremely helpful with cancer patients to combat nausea and encourage eating. Cannabinoids are also shown to be effective for treatment of anxiety, depression, and PTSD, with minimal side effects that can experienced when using pharmaceuticals.

Lilley has a culinary degree from college and was hired as a chef for Crystal Spring to prepare the "edibles" – food with cannabis extracts mixed in. She worked her way up to become the manager of the current dispensary that opened about a year ago as Crystal Spring moved to Lewiston. Crystal Spring uses distilled extracts in its edibles to control the levels of cannabinoids in the finished product, then has the edibles tested by an outside lab to ensure consistency.

The dispensary has a grow facility in Lisbon and is working on renovations to open a storefront there later this year.

Crystal Spring is owned by Scalia along with his father, Mike, and a friend, Gary Caron.

Patients who wish to

obtain a card to purchase medical marijuana extracts are vetted by a nurse practitioner to determine their level of need, Lilley said. Maine law has changed over the years, and patients no longer need to prove they have qualifying conditions, she said.

The most well-known cannabinoids are cannabidiol (CBD) and tetrahydrocannabinol (THC). The extracts bring about therapeutic and healing effects when absorbed into our bodies to interact with the human endocannabinoid system, which regulates immune functions, mood, pain response, inflammation, anxiety and sleep.

There are about 144 different cannabinoids that are extracted from cannabis plants, with different plants providing different levels of the extract. Hemp

provides large quantities of CBD but almost no THC, the cannabinoid which generally causes the hallucinatory effect experienced by marijuana smokers.

Cannabinoids are metabolized in the liver when eaten, injected, or applied to the skin in creams or a dermal patch. This provides a long-term effect that make take from about 20 to 90 minutes to be felt,

products.

"A lot of people have a preconceived idea of what cannabis is, or what dispensaries are all about, when in reality, sometimes it's the exact opposite of what people are thinking," she said. "We're not just here for a good time. We're not just here to make a quick buck. We're here to help people."

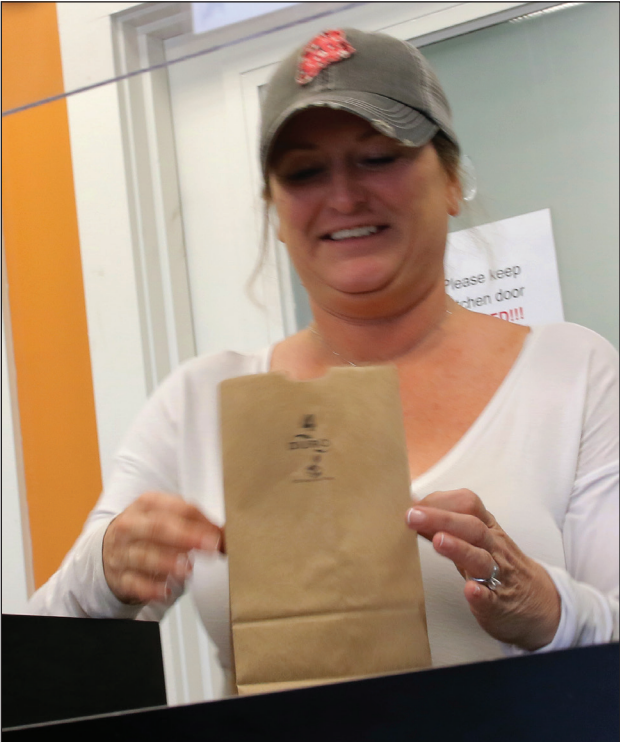
Crystal Spring is building a commercial

kitchen at part of its storefront in Lisbon, to replace the cramped kitchen in Lewiston. The dispensary also has a lab that makes distillates from cannabis plants. The new kitchen will have more storage and will allow Crystal Spring to accommodate large special orders and to "pop out a lot more edibles than we have been doing," Lilley said.

Besides the owners, the current chef, and Lilley, the dispensary employs four "budtenders" who sell products to patients, interacting with them to learn about issues that can be addressed with various products sold by the dispensary, Lilley said. "We get that similar aspect that bartenders do . . . that hair stylists do, with that whole connection process. And it helps to form a relationship with our customers," to guide them toward helpful products.

The dispensary installed tall Plexiglas shields at the counter to provide proper a safety barrier between budtenders and patients during the COVID-19 pandemic.

There are no plans for expansion in the foreseeable future, beyond the new storefront in Lisbon, she said.



**Lucille "Lucy" Robinson, a budtender at Crystal Spring Healing Alternatives on Main Street in Lewiston, prepares a bag of product for a waiting customer. (Tsukroff photo)**

but can last for upwards of six hours. Smoking or vaporizing brings almost immediate results as the chemicals are absorbed through lung tissue, but the effects are short-lived, Lilley explained.

Many of the cancer patients that Lilley sees in the dispensary combine smoking with edibles for a combination of immediate and long-term relief from the pain and nausea of their treatment, she said.

Recreational sales of cannabis extracts will be allowed in Maine starting in October, but Crystal Spring plans to remain a medical dispensary. Creating edibles with consistent levels of extracts is important for their patients, and a medical dispensary is better qualified to provide that consistency, Lilley said.

Recreational marijuana products will be taxed at a higher rate than medical marijuana, Lilley said. Currently, sales of edibles are taxed at the 8% food sales tax rate and other extracts at the 5.5% sales tax rate. Recreational marijuana sales will see a 10% sales tax, plus excise taxes of \$355 per pound of flower, \$94 per pound of trim, \$1.50 per seedling and \$0.35 per seed. The excise and sales tax are specifically exempted for medical facilities and registered primary caregivers.

Lilley said she expects to see higher prices overall for recreational



**Budtender Lucille "Lucy" Robinson dispenses edibles to a patient at Crystal Spring Healing Alternatives on Main Street in Lewiston from behind a Plexiglas barrier, installed as a safety shield during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Tsukroff photo)**



**Chef Owen Boisine prepares "edibles", food that contains cannabinoid extracts, in the small kitchen behind the dispensary at Crystal Spring Alternative Healing on Main Street in Lewiston. A new commercial kitchen is being built at Crystal Spring's grow facility in Lisbon. (Tsukroff photo)**

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