

Crafting the 2020-21 school year for Gorham under COVID-19



Students are masked and socially distanced as they arrive at Gorham High School the first week of school in the Gorham School District. (Photo courtesy of Superintendent Heather Perry)

By Nathan Tsukroff

GORHAM – Crafting the 2020-21 school year for the Gorham School District began last spring, as schools were shut down under the initial rules brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

There were lots of decisions to be made. Would schools only offer remote learning in the fall, or fully in-person classes, or a combination of the two? How many students would attend in-person, and how would they be kept safe under the social-distancing guidelines?

Superintendent Heather Perry, starting her sixth year in her position, said committees started planning in earnest in mid-May, “once we got settled” after the emergency shut down in March. “We began really thinking about, how do we open school again, because we know we’re going to shut down school for the summer.”

Several committees worked on plans

for this new school year, including the District Leadership Team, which is made up of all the principals, assistant principals and program directors in the district, a medical advisory group, made up of the school physician, district nurses, and four local physicians. The school committee was also involved, and was given documents and other information for members to provide feedback on the decision-making process.

“It was a very fluid and flexible process, with those major committees playing leadership roles,” Perry said.

“We also did some significant surveys with our parents at the end of the school year in June, to try to get feedback from parents around what their thoughts were on what was working well or wasn’t for remote learning.” Parents were also asked for their thoughts and concerns about safety issues with in-person learning. The district had “great participation” with three

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Lewiston schools create new school year with pandemic restrictions

By Nathan Tsukroff

LEWISTON - A commitment by the Lewiston Public Schools in the spring of 2020 to give parents a choice of in-person or remote schooling was “kind of our springboard” to creating the new school year under the restrictions brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“We knew that we were going to have the remote option, and we were going to have to find out which parents wanted which option” for classes starting in the fall of 2020, according to newly-appointed Superintendent Jake Langlais.

Langlais took over as interim superintendent for the schools in July when previous Superintendent Todd Finn resigned for health and personal reasons after just a year in the position. Langlais had been

the Lewiston High School principal since 2017, and was previously principal at the Lewiston Middle School.

“And then when we looked at the physical size of our district, and at least the estimate, at the time, of who wished to be remote, we had as many as the high 70’s and low 80’s percent” of parents who wanted their children to attend school in-person, he said. “So when the (State of Maine) guidelines came out at the end of July, we looked at our projection of students that we thought wanted to come to school, and we took that number and started looking at the social-distancing requirements. And that’s when we knew that if this number stays that big, or gets bigger, we were going to have to cut this group in half somehow.”

At the same time, the school district

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Lewiston High School senior Josh Randall won’t be able to play traditional football against other schools this year, due to restrictions put in place by the Maine Principal’s association during the COVID-19 pandemic. Lewiston football players will have intra-mural scrimmages this fall. (Photo courtesy of Josh Randall)

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- Committed to fight the opioid crisis

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SeniorsPlus online classes for October

From SeniorsPlus
LEWISTON – The Online Education Center classes from SeniorsPlus for October 2020 will take place online or by telephone.

Please register for classes by emailing ed-center@seniorsplus.org or calling 795-4010. For more information, visit seniorsplus.org/education-center or our Facebook page. Classes are free, unless noted.

Zoom 101: Using Video Technology to Stay Connected

Date: Tuesday, October 13

Time: 10:00-11:00AM

Instructor: SeniorsPlus Staff

Location: Zoom

Join us for a 30-minute class to become more familiar on how to use Zoom to participate in SeniorsPlus' online classes, or to simply stay connected with friends and family near and far. You do not need a Zoom account or to download any apps to participate in this class. You do not need a video camera for your computer, although it is helpful. You can participate with computers or hand held devices. Educational material and resources will be provided for continued.

Medicare Made Simple

Date & time: At your convenience

Instructor: SeniorsPlus Staff

Location: Online video

Reach out to receive this pre-recorded Zoom class to learn how to navigate Medicare with this introductory course. Learn about your insurance options with Medicare, when to enroll or change plans, and how state law may affect your choices. This presentation is perfect for people who are new to Medicare or anyone who currently has Medicare and would like to learn more.

Cyber-Senior Mentors - A Tech Resource

Date & time: At your convenience - varies

Instructor: Cyber-Senior

Location: Phone and/or online

Due to COVID-19, Cyber-Senior Mentors are providing technology training in the form of online webinars and telephone support for older adults. If you are interested in group or 1-1 technology support please reach out to us for their information. They have trained volunteers standing by to answer your tech questions and to also help you sign up

for online training sessions.

Infection Control for COVID-19 & the Flu Season

Date: Wednesday, October 14

Time: 1:30-3:00PM

Instructor: Beacon Hospice Staff

Location: Zoom

Come review ways to boost your immune system and avoid illness during the winter months! In this presentation, we will review how we get sick and identify healthy habits to decrease your risk for COVID-19, Pneumonia, Influenza, and the Common Cold. We will also discuss how to communicate your with your physician and caregivers to help diagnosis your illness.

Writing Your Life Story

Date: Wednesdays, October 14- November 18

Time: 9:00-11:00AM

Instructor: Connie Jones, Surprised by Aging

Location: Zoom

Class limited to 8 people

We've all got stories! Wouldn't it be great if we wrote them down – for ourselves and our families and friends? This informal class will get you on the road to writing about your life, from the mundane to the marvelous. You don't have to be a "writer" to take this class, and this will not be a critique of your writing style or grammar. Each week there will be a writing assignment, with topics chosen by the group. At the end, you will have written the first six chapters of your life story. Take a chance on finding out that you've lived a pretty interesting life after all!

Legal Services for the Elderly: An Overview & COVID-19 Update

Date: Thursday, October 22

Time: 10:00-10:45AM

Instructor: Andrew Milne, LSE Staff Attorney

Location: Zoom

Join Andrew on Zoom to learn all about Legal Services for the Elderly, their services, Helpline, and how they are still here for our community through COVID-19. Learn what they can help you with and who to call for areas outside their specialty, such as estate planning. Andrew will also provide a brief update on courts, evictions, and foreclosures during the pandemic. Since the process has been changing rapidly and is confusing the information may help orient you to the change.

Crafting with Corinne

Date: Wednesday, October 28

Time: At your convenience

Instructor: Corinne Saindon

Location: Pre-recorded video/instructions

Cost: \$5.00 for 2 project kit

In this class, you will create a holiday pull treat holder and coordinating card. Class material cost is \$5.00 and is due at material pick-up. All materials provided for each project. Class size is limited to 10.

Tai Chi Skills Session

Date: Friday, October 30

Time: 10:00-11:00AM

Instructor: SeniorsPlus Staff

Location: Zoom

Join SeniorsPlus staff and volunteers for a hour of Tai Chi practice together. Whether you took a Tai Chi program with us years ago or just ended a workshop, we welcome you to join us and look forward to it!

Groups & Exercise

Coffee & Comfort - Bereavement Support Group

Date: Monday, October 5

Time: 3:00-4:30PM

Instructor: Beacon Hospice Staff

Location: Zoom or Telephone

Loss is hard. The great news is, no one needs to feel alone through their bereavement. Coffee & Comfort offers a safe place where one can receive the grief support they are seeking. Due to current public health concerns, the group will meet over Zoom versus in-person. Zoom phone and video-conferencing information will be provided to registrants.

Navigating Grief & Healing || A Six-Week Support Group

Dates: Wednesdays, October 21-November 25

Time: 2:00-4:00PM

Instructor: Beacon Hospice Staff

Location: Zoom or Telephone

If you have experienced the loss of a spouse or life partner, facing the holidays and increased isolation due to the pandemic can be challenging. Please consider connecting with us for this closed widows/widowers group. We will meet once per week for six consecutive weeks. Each meeting will provide a space to share pictures and memories of your loved one as well as explore grieving over the holidays. Making connections while providing support.

Virtual Knitting Group

Dates: Every other Wednesday - October 14 & 28

Time: 5:00-6:00PM

Group Lead: SeniorsPlus Staff

Location: Zoom

Join our knitting group to work on your own project while socializing!

Caregiver Support Groups - NEW SCHEDULE BELOW!

Dates & Times:

Monday, October 12 from 5:30-7:30PM

Thursday, October 29 from 8:30-10:00AM

Location: Zoom or Telephonic

Our caregiver support groups offer a safe place for caregivers, family, and friends to meet and develop a mutual support system. Participation can be an empowering experience. Due to current public health concerns, the group will meet over the phone vs in-person.

Total Strength & Balance

Dates & Times: Mondays 11:15-12:00PM OR 12:15-1:00PM

Wednesdays 11:30-12:15PM

Fridays 11:30-12:10PM OR 12:30-1:10PM

Instructor: Linn Morin, Certified Trainer

Location 1: Facebook

Location 2: Seated classes at Lisbon Falls REC

Participants will gain physical and neuro-muscular strength, as well as balance to improve activities of daily living. Light weights or soup cans, a basic bouncing ball and for some tubes are used in this seated exercise class. Water is recommended during the class. As always be sure to check with your physician prior to any exercise class. These classes are held online until the CDC lifts restrictions. To register or for more information, call Linn at 523-9055.

Healthy Living for ME Workshops

HL4ME has launched multiple virtual programs, including Tai Chi for Health & Balance, Better Health NOW, Better Health Now with Diabetes toolkit, Better Health Now with Chronic Pain toolkit, and our Living Well workshops! Reach out today to learn more.

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

From the Editor A new look for our newspaper

By Nathan Tsukroff,
Managing Editor

Welcome to a new look and feel for our newspaper!

In recent weeks, we have updated captions under photographs to make them easier to read, and changed the fonts for headlines for a more modern look.

We also changed our style to include bylines (who wrote or submitted the article), datelines (in which town do the events in

the article occur), and photo credits for all photographs.

As a weekly publication, we can't really report on breaking news, so we look for stories about our community that give background on recent events and will resonate with our readers.

With more than 40 years of writing and photographing for newspapers in New England, I'm pleased to meet people throughout our community, and tell their stories in photographs and words.

What do YOU find of interest or concern around you? Let us know with a story idea, or a Letter To The Editor.

A printed newspaper may be old-fashioned, but it is just an arms-length away, and won't disappear suddenly if the batteries run out of power . . .

Please contact us with a story idea you would like to see in print. Reach me at either editor@twincitytimes.com or editor@gorhamweekly.com

Gorham grad earns master's in history

GORHAM - Kiara B. Day, Class of 2014, Gorham High School, recently earned a master's degree in Modern European History at the University of Vermont.

Working closely with the Carolyn and Leonard Miller Center for Holocaust Studies, she specialized in the history of the Holocaust.

Day recently joined McGraw Hill Education in New York City as an academic designer for their history department. Like many others today in the work world, Kiara will be working remotely.

Day says that her love of history comes naturally from her father, a history teacher and GHS class of '86 graduate, and her grandfather, Tom, who also taught history and instilled in her the most important historical skill, empathy for others.

She credits all her wonderful Gorham High School History Teachers for further inspiring her academic pursuits.



Kiara B. Day, a 2014 graduate of Gorham High School, recently earned her master's in Modern European History at the University of Vermont. (Photo courtesy of Kiara Day)

Letters to the Editor Gideon has done nothing

As Speaker of the Maine House of Representatives, Sara Gideon is the one person in position to call the full Maine Legislature (aka all Maine's elected representatives) back into Session to revisit Governor Janet Mills's

go-it-alone Covid-19 decisions. Yet, despite calls for such a Session from hurting business owners and others across Maine, Sara Gideon has done nothing in this regard.

Gideon shows a total lack of sympathy, concern,

and respect for the State. She would be just as unsympathetic, unconcerned, and disrespectful as a US Senator.

No thank you.

Eileen Willis Heidrich
Turner

Letters to the Editor Vote for a candidate to strengthen Medicare

This election season, as an older Mainer, I want to urge fellow Maine voters to consider candidates with clear plans to protect and strengthen Medicare, which provides health care for more than 52 million Americans 65+, half of whom live on incomes below \$23,500 per year.

Medicare is a crucial safety net for hardworking Mainers who pay into the program their entire working lives, but this 2020 election could determine whether there are changes to the country's health care

system, including to Medicare. Medicare enrollments in the U.S are expected to grow rapidly in the next decade, so we need to ensure that our elected officials offer plans to ensure that there are no cuts to Medicare and the program is protected for current and future generations.

Particularly in Maine, the oldest state in the country, Medicare supports older Mainers regardless of their incomes or health status. So, many Mainers depend on Medicare coverage, and in light of the

COVID-19 pandemic, protecting access to health care for older folks like me feels especially critical.

So, please, as you consider candidates prior to the 2020 election, urge them to prioritize guaranteeing Medicare coverage in their platforms for the millions of older Americans like me that rely on the program. Before you decide who to vote for, ask candidates to state their plans for protecting Medicare for those of us who need it now and others in the future.

Ruby Parker
Scarborough

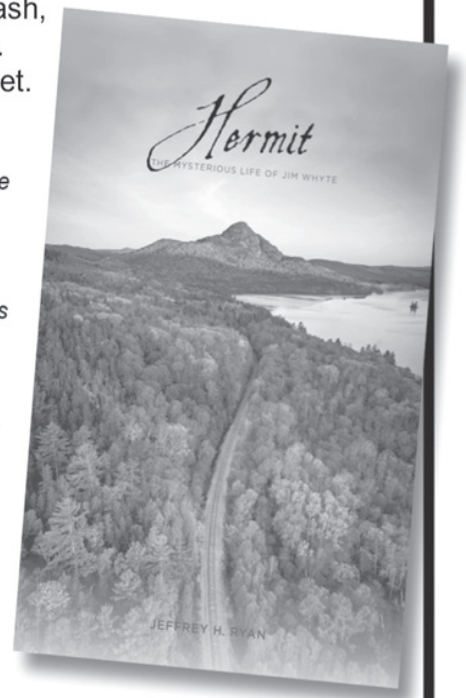
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— George Smith, Bangor Daily News

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What's Going On

WIC Benefits Now Available Through EBT Cards

From Maine CDC

AUGUSTA —The Women, Infants, and Children (WIC) nutrition program has completed the transition from paper food vouchers to an electronic benefit transfer (EBT) card more than a month before a deadline established by the federal government. The new system is called eWIC.

The WIC program, administered by the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC), works to improve the health and nutrition of women, infants, and children during critical times of growth and development. WIC provides healthy foods, nutrition education, breastfeeding support and supplies, and referrals to other services. Participants statewide at nutritional risk receive WIC benefits through local WIC agencies in their communities.

The WIC program

serves more than 16,500 individuals. Pregnant, postpartum, and breastfeeding women, and infants and children up to age 5 are eligible. Participants must meet income guidelines, live in Maine, and be determined by a health professional to be at "nutritional risk."

Through the new eWIC system, benefits for WIC-approved foods are automatically entered onto an EBT card similar to a debit card. This card replaces the current paper-based food instruments and cash-value vouchers that were redeemed at WIC-authorized stores statewide.

Maine rolled out eWIC in phases by county. Penobscot and Piscataquis counties went live on June 22. Aroostook, Hancock, Washington, Kennebec and Somerset WIC participants began receiving cards on July 20. Participants in Androscoggin, Franklin, Ox-

ford, Sagadahoc, Waldo, Lincoln, Knox, Cumberland and York counties started receiving cards on August 31.

Recognizing the value of eWIC, the federal Healthy, Hunger-Free Kids Act of 2010 mandated that each state WIC agency implement an electronic benefit transfer system throughout the state by October 1, 2020. Benefits of conversion to an electronic system include smoother and faster transactions at the register and automatic electronic payments to vendors.

During the implementation period, Maine WIC paused its enrollment of new vendors. This pause has now been lifted. Enrollment information for stores can be found at www.maine.gov/WIC.

For more information about the benefits of WIC, how to enroll as a new participant, or store locations, please go to www.maine.gov/WIC.

Workshop on Internal Bias

From EarthTides

Implicit bias can be defined as the automatic unconscious neurobiological processes that influence stereotyping and prejudice. These processes can shape our perceptions, attitudes, and actions toward others. By understanding internal bias, we can make more appropriate choices in our

lives and within communities to create spaces of respect and civil justice in Maine.

In this free workshop about Exploring Internal Bias in Pagan Practices, cognitive scientist Laura Ligouri of Mindbridge, will talk about our own internal implicit biases and to explore terms related to implicit bias. Laura's presen-

tation will be followed by an open-ended discussion about implicit biases within the landscape of modern Paganism.

Hosted by EarthTides Pagan network, this will be a virtual workshop via Zoom, on Sunday, Sept. 27, from 7-9 p.m.

Register at: <http://bit.ly.ws/9Mxc> for a link to the workshop.

PMA seeks submissions for Untitled, 2020 art show

From PMA

PORTLAND - Leading up to 2020, many people throughout Maine anticipated a transformative and reflective year. But no one could have predicted how much the state, and the world, would soon change in such a brief amount of time.

With the COVID-19 pandemic upending the fabric of our daily lives, and a coalescing movement against systemic racism, 2020 quickly revealed itself to be one of those pivotal moments that will alter the course of history.

At the Portland Museum of Art (PMA), we strive to understand the world through the lens of artworks, and we're deeply curious about the ways in which the events of this year are affecting our artistic communities. When we work together and listen to

one another, we create opportunities for change, but how is that change manifesting itself through the art we are making? This year has impacted us all in powerful and distinct ways, and as we navigate these historically challenging and remarkable times, we ask ourselves: how is art defining the moment?

Untitled, 2020: Art From Maine In A _____ Time seeks to unpack this question by highlighting artworks created in Maine during 2020 and showcasing how artists in the region are responding in the wake of generational events. Submissions for this show will be accepted by PMA through the end of September.

This focused scope—coupled with the realities of a rapid timeline and responsiveness to a moment in time within that moment of time—has led the PMA

to shift its development process for the exhibition.

Untitled, 2020 will feature an open call and juried exhibition, developed in partnership with five community leaders in the arts—Katherine Bradford, Cody Castle-Stack, Jeremy Frey, Séan Alonzo Harris, and Ayumi Horie—each with unique perspectives on how artwork developed in Maine at this moment reflects and interprets the times. The resulting selection of works, all made in Maine in this historic moment, will create opportunities for empathy, togetherness, and impact during a time when we need it most.

The title adapts the format used by artists to designate some works of art as untitled, inviting and enabling participating artists and audiences alike to define this historic moment for themselves. As the ex-

See PMA, page 13

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Rounding the Swan



Kayakers stop for a break in a grassy cove near Swans Island Head. (Photo courtesy of Ron Chase)

By Ron Chase

THE MAINE COAST - When my friend Ken Gordon contacted me about a sea kayak trip Amy

Schrag was organizing circumnavigating Swans Island, I didn't have time for the four day endeavor. Since I'd never paddled around Swans Island,

curiosity compelled me to research the online Maine Coastal Waters Forecast. Stellar conditions were predicted throughout. Although only three days remained before their departure and my schedule definitely wouldn't accommodate the adventure, I requested a little more time to decide.

It's amazing what can be accomplished when sufficiently motivated. Tentative plans were cancelled. Tax consulting deadlines extended. Essential chores postponed. Within twenty-four hours, I'd blocked off the requisite timeframe for the ambitious undertaking and was a bona fide member of a predominantly elderly foursome that included Bob Dawson. Amy is young but the rest of us are over seventy and demonstrably ancient mariners.

I wasn't part of the decision-making but whoever decided to launch from Seal Cove Boat Landing on Mount Desert Island made an excellent choice. Ample parking and a convenient area to load and unload kayaks merits my coveted five star rating. Situated several miles north of Swans Island, a collection of smaller islands are conveniently located about midway.

Our tentative plan was to complete a six mile largely open crossing to a campsite on Pond Island and assess the situation. Paddling conditions were

superb on the traverse. Arriving at Pond midafternoon, skies were clear and seas calm so the consensus was to continue an additional six miles to distant and remote Marshall Island.

Navigating past Sheep Island, we cruised south through a shallow channel between Opeechee and Black Islands. Continuing adjacent the west side of Buckle Island, a senescent respite was required in a grassy cove near Swans Island Head. Persisting around the head and along the scenic western shore of Swans Island, a narrow passage was negotiated to a gravel beach on Hat Island. After riding a feisty tidal flow east of Hat, our weary band persevered south towards Long Point on the northern terminus of Marshall Island hoping the campsite was still available. Luck was on our side arriving just prior to a large crew in a motorboat.

Exceptional conditions greeted us the following morning with sunny skies, light winds, and tranquil seas. Taking advantage of the remarkable weather, the day began with a circumnavigation of rockbound Marshall Island stopping at a secluded beach in Sand Cove. Embarking from prominent Devils Head, another lengthy unprotected traverse was accomplished. Passing Brimstone, Green, and Scrag Islands, Big Baker Island positioned just south of Swans Island was our choice for a lunch spot.

A rising tide negated sometimes treacherous tidal currents traveling northeast along Swans Island to a campsite on West Sister Island. After establishing camp, a unique hike was completed on impressive ledges that envelop the entire island. Our plan was to spend two nights at West Sister as reconnoitering nearby consequential Long Island was on the agenda for the next day. An ominous fog bank engulfed us just before retiring.

Lobster boats could be heard hauling traps in dense fog when we arose in the morning. A worsening forecast called for fog throughout the day with strengthening winds from the southwest. An excursion

around rugged exposed Long Island lost its glitter so alternatives were contemplated. Electing to journey north along the protected east shore of Swans Island to the campsite on Pond Island was our conservative choice. The selection was a wise one as concentrated fog dominated the Long Island area for the duration of the day.

Following a compass bearing in a virtual whiteout proceeding towards Ram Island, a combination of fog and penetrating sunshine created a surreal optical illusion as we approached the tiny atoll just east of Swans Island. The diminutive islet appeared to be a snow-capped mountain range. Persisting along the picturesque northeast shore of Swans Island to North Point, the fog gradually lifted. Sweltering heat and humidity were endured while island hopping northwesterly to our destination.

The campsite on Pond Island was exceptional and a refreshing breeze provided for a comfortable late afternoon. While others explored, a nap was this old man's choice. The ubiquitous fog rolled in at dusk.

Fog lingered through the night saturating tents and gear. Departing in the misty haze, the murky conditions diminished as we rounded the northwestern extremity of Pond. Partial visibility and glassy seas highlighted the six-mile crossing to Seal Cove. Despite the foggy complications, ours had been a memorable voyage in one Maine's most scenic coastal regions.

Ron Chase is a resident of Topsham and the author of "The Great Mars Hill Bank Robbery" and "Mountains for Mortals - New England". Visit his website at www.ronchaseoutdoors.com or he can be reached at ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net.

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A kayaker paddles along the eastern shore of Swans Island with Mount Desert Island in the background. (Photo courtesy of Ron Chase)



Two kayakers paddle along the eastern shore of Swans Island with Mount Desert Island in the background. (Photo courtesy of Ron Chase)

Lewiston

Continued from page 1

was looking at providing additional support for students, and trying to determine how to provide office hours for teachers to be available for students. “And also some planning around social/emotional” needs of the students as they deal with the stress and trauma of dealing with the pandemic, Langlais said.

“And so that led us to say, okay, if we’re splitting our groups, what’s the best way to do this? Is it an alternating – is it a Monday/Tuesday, nothing Wednesday, then a Thursday/Friday?” he said. “The picture started to paint itself, because we landed in a place where our available staff and our parent desire to be in school” pointed to two cohorts, or groups of students, that would attend split sessions at the schools.

The district also looked at students who might have special education needs, and students who would attend the Lewiston Regional Technical Center, which provides “a pretty specialized program” for students from six schools in the area, Langlais said. The requirements of the programs at LRTC generally means students must attend in-person four days a week.

That led the district to create four cohorts, starting with cohort A, which attends classes in-person on Monday and Tuesday each week, with remote learning on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday. Cohort B attends in-person on Thursday and Friday, with remote learning on Monday, Tuesday and Wednesday.

Students who opted for only remote schooling make up Cohort C. These students are being taught mostly by dedicated teachers who are doing just remote classes,” he said. “In most cases, we had enough students who wanted to be remote that we could

take a group of teachers and have them do just remote teaching.” More than 100 students each at the elementary schools, “and a pretty high number (of students) at the middle and high school” have chosen remote schooling.

Cohort D is made up from students in the vocational classes, technical education classes, and some of the district’s “special populations”, Langlais said. This group of students will attend school in-person four days a week, although limits on staffing mean some classes may not be possible this school year.

The district has around 5500 students, and about 1100 staff members.

For the remote sessions, whether hybrid or full-time, students are being provided with computers to connect to the schools for classwork over the internet. The district received Mifi cellular “hot spot” devices from the State of Maine last spring, and provides them to families that need internet access. The Mifi devices connect to the Verizon cellular network to provide wifi internet access, but cannot be used for phone calls.

Students connect remotely over apps that include Zoom and Google Classroom, along with the Seesaw learning app for the younger grades.

Langlais said there are some supply-chain issues, which means some students will have to wait for needed hardware.

Last week was the first day of school for the new year, “and the energy was incredible!” Langlais said. Wednesday was a full remote day, where teachers had the choice of coming to their schools or working from home. Students had remote activities and teacher support sessions on Wednesday.

Splitting the classes into two groups means that 10 or fewer students are in a classroom, wearing face masks and properly

separated under mandated guidelines. Lunches are delivered to students in classrooms by the nutrition program staff, and students are allowed to remove face masks for eating, while remaining at least six feet apart from other students.

The district staff “did a lot of brainstorming” as well as sharing ideas with other school districts to arrive at this final model for the school year, Langlais said. Schools in Maine also built on the knowledge of schools in the southern and western states which opened earlier in the summer.

Teachers who needed to stay out of the buildings due to concerns over the spread of the virus are generally able to work with students remotely, so most of teachers in the district have remained on staff.

The other big impact for Maine schools is the requirement for social separation in sports. The Maine Principals Association just recently set guidelines that do not allow for tackle football games between schools. Students on the Lewiston teams will be able to scrimmage against each other, but not play in the traditional games against other schools. The district is looking at the possibility of 7-on-7 football, “which is more of a flag football” game, Langlais said.

The district is considering an abbreviated



Josh Randall, a senior at Lewiston High School, in front of the stone marker at the entrance to his school. Randall attends school in person two days a week, then works remotely from home the other three days, under a plan put in place by Lewiston Public Schools to provide proper social distancing for students in classrooms, under the guidelines mandated by the COVID-19 pandemic. (Photo courtesy of Josh Randall)

football season this spring, with competition between schools, although that will

depend on the trend in the pandemic infections in the area.

Indoor volleyball is not allowed, and may be moved outdoors.

Local Harvest Ale now at Sebago Brewing

From Sebago Brewing

GORHAM - The annual Local Harvest Ale is now available at Sebago Brewing.

This year the brewers used Centennial hops from The Hop Yard, a seventh-generation family farm down the road from

the brewery in Gorham.

The brewers used the wet hop technique (aka “cryo-whacking”), which involves freezing and smashing the hops.

Head brewer Rusty Packer said, “By crushing the hop cones, we achieve increased surface contact area of hops to beer, which allows us to use all

of the available lupulin oils packed inside the cones. Freezing them with liquid nitrogen makes the cones literally shatter because they are still full of water (hence, wet hop), while preserving the quality of the oils.”

Hop oils oxidize very quickly. Long story short, all the good stuff in a hop

can be found in the oils, and this method unleashes high amounts of high quality oils for the beer. “Also, it looks cool on Instagram.”

Local Harvest Ale is available at all five Sebago Brewing locations, including the Tasting Room on Main Street in Gorham.

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Safe Voices seeks donors for holiday outreach

From Safe Voices

AUBURN - Safe Voices, the domestic violence resource center based in Lewiston, invites businesses and community members to participate in its annual holiday programs Feed-a-Family and Adopt-a-Family.

Individuals, businesses and community organizations are welcome and may choose to support one or both programs.

This annual program serves more than 100 families across Androscoggin, Oxford and Franklin counties.

This year, advocates

anticipate even greater need as survivors continue to struggle with increased risk and instability brought on by COVID-19 and social distancing. For parents and children who are struggling with isolation brought on by abuse, or who have had to flee a dangerous situation at home, donors can

help provide a happy holiday in difficult times.

The Feed-a-Family program matches donors with a family to provide a complete Thanksgiving dinner. Donors purchase the supplies for a traditional dinner of turkey, sides and dessert and deliver them to Safe Voices, who

will then bring them to the family in need.

The Adopt-a-Family program matches donors with families to provide gifts in celebration of the December holidays.

If you would like to participate as a donor, please call or email Becca Tinkham at 207-795-6744

x217 or btinkham@safecoices.org. Donors may also complete a participation form online at www.safecoices.org.

If you, or someone you know, is in a domestic violence situation, please call Safe Voices' 24-hour helpline at 1-800-559-2927.

Come PLAY with us!

From The Public Theatre

LEWISTON - Do you miss theatre as much as we do? The Public Theatre is creating a PLAY Club (like a Book Club but we read plays) and we're inviting you to join.

Every year when we pick our season, we read tons of great plays that never appear on our stage (sometimes for the simple reason that the cast size is too big). We thought it would be fun to share some of these great scripts with you and find out if you like them as much as we do.

Each month we'll choose a play and meet on ZOOM to talk about it. We'll meet three times and discuss three fabulous plays. Executive Artistic Director Christopher Schario will be the moder-

ator and Professor Martin Andrucki of Bates College will provide insights and suggestions for discussion.

PLAY Club members will be responsible for acquiring and reading all scripts prior to each meeting. We recommend you sign up quickly as group size will be limited to ensure great conversations. If demand is high we may consider adding a second group.

The first play we'll discuss in October will be the Pulitzer Prize and 2012 TONY award winning play Clybourne Park.

Inspired by Lorraine Hansberry's groundbreaking 1959 play, A Raisin in the Sun, Clybourne Park is set in two different eras, with conversations happening in the same house fifty years apart. Act One takes

place in 1959, when a white couple unknowingly sells their home to the first black family in the neighborhood (the same neighborhood mentioned in A Raisin in the Sun) and their neighbors want them to stop the sale. In Act Two, it's 2009, and the same property is being bought by a young white couple, and the now predominantly African-American neighborhood battles to hold its ground in the face of gentrification. Excruciatingly funny, thought-provoking and squirm-inducing, there's a reason this play won the Pulitzer Prize!

Both Clybourne Park and A Raisin in the Sun are easily available for purchase online. It is not necessary to read A Raisin in the Sun, but we suggest it. We will provide a synopsis

See Play, page 13

DOG OPERA AUDITIONS

Talented Pooches Wanted

From Penobscot Theater Co.

BANGOR - Calling all canines!

Penobscot Theatre Company seeks talented pooches to cast in its upcoming series of Dog Operas, and auditions must be submitted by the end of September.

The Barker of Seville, Tosca the Ball, and Dog Giovanni are three, short "pupperas" created for dogs. Beginning in March, as a part of Digitus Theatrum, Penobscot Theatre Company's 47th Season, Dog Operas are the perfect offering for all theatre lovers and their loyal companions.

Dog Operas are a Penobscot Theatre Company commissioned project, helmed by Christie Robinson, Larrance Fingerhut, Kat Johnson and Brad LaBree. All operas will be created as short films and will be streamed to households, worldwide!

The ideal canine-imate is well behaved, knows basic commands (sit, stay, paw, etc.), works well with other species (humans) and possesses impressive talents (heart-stoppingly adorable counts). Households with multiple talented dogs are encouraged to apply.

If your pooch/es are ready for the spotlight: submit a 3-5 minute audition

video in .mp4 format no later than Wednesday, September 30th to casting@penobscottheatre.org. Include your name, city of residence, email and phone number along with your dog's name and special skills (bonus if these are captured on camera!).

Filming will begin in October in Bangor. If your dog is selected, a member of the Dog Opera team will contact you directly to schedule a specific film date. Dogs will be filmed one at a time on a closed set with COVID precautions in place. Companions and their pups must be willing to travel to Bangor.

Canine stars who cannot travel to Bangor may still submit an audition tape. Submissions "from away" may be featured in one or more of the Operas.

Questions can be directed to Rachael Bechtel, artistic administrator at rachael@penobscottheatre.org.

Penobscot Theatre Company is America's Northeastern-most professional, year-round theatre company. It is a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization producing a wide variety of plays and musicals each season and owns the historic Bangor Opera House. For a complete list of show times, pricing and more information about the season visit www.penobscottheatre.org

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\$45 Million to Rehabilitate and Replace Seven Bridges in Maine

From Sen. Susan Collins

WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Senator Susan Collins, the Chairman of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, announced last week that Maine will receive a total of \$45 million through the federal BUILD grant program to fund two transportation projects replacing or rehabilitating six bridges in rural Maine, and one connecting Waterville and Winslow.

U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine Chao called Senator Collins last week to notify her that these projects, for which Senator Collins

strongly advocated, would receive federal funding.

“Improving Maine’s infrastructure is one of my top priorities as Chairman of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee. I am delighted to announce this \$45 million investment to replace and rehabilitate deteriorated bridges that will benefit residents in rural Maine,” said Senator Collins.

“If these bridges were allowed to continue to deteriorate, they would become subject to eventual closure, resulting in substantial detours and economic harm. These projects will strengthen our transportation network,

helping Mainers reach their homes and jobs more quickly and supporting our economy. These structures represent vital connections necessary to support and sustain Maine’s local economies.”

The two Maine transportation projects that will receive funding include the Bridging the Economy of Rural Maine Project. MaineDOT will receive \$20 million to replace five at-risk bridges in poor condition and rehabilitate another compromised bridge. The bridges are located in Litchfield/West Gardiner, Stonington, Greenbush, Southport, Milo, and Bridgewater. All of the

bridges were built more than 80 years ago, with the oldest constructed in 1923. The substantial impact of forced closures due to substandard bridge conditions would be devastating to our rural communities, Collins said.

The other project is the Ticonic Bridge Project. MaineDOT will receive \$25 million to replace the 111-year-old Ticonic Bridge connecting Waterville and Winslow with a modern bridge featuring wider lanes, shoulders, sidewalks, and bike lanes. The bridge, which spans the Kennebec River, currently accommodates more than 16,000 vehicles daily.

The project will eliminate the possibility of an eight-mile detour and related congestion should the current bridge fail, and will create long-lasting positive impacts on the communities and industries in the area.

As Chairman of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator Collins has championed robust funding for the BUILD program and an emphasis on replacing deteriorating bridges in rural America. Since 2009, when Senator Collins became a member of the Appropriations Committee, she has secured more than \$721 million in competi-

tive grants for the State of Maine. In November 2019, Senator Collins announced \$44.6 million to replace a bridge in Woolwich and build the Town of Lubec’s “Safe Harbor” project. In September 2019, Senator Collins hosted Secretary Chao in Yarmouth, where they announced more than \$61 million to replace eight Maine bridges.

This year, the Department of Transportation received 656 eligible BUILD applications requesting more than \$9.18 billion in funding. Maine projects have received funding through the highly competitive BUILD program every funding round

Maine FOP endorses Senator Collins

From FOE

ALFRED, ME —The Maine Fraternal Order of Police announced last week that their members have voted unanimously to endorse U.S. Senator Susan Collins for re-election to the U.S. Senate.

“On behalf of the 500 members of the Maine Fraternal Order of Police, we are proud to endorse our Senator, Susan Collins,” said Matt Nadeau, President for the Maine Lodge of the Fraternal Order of

Police. “Susan has always been our ally in the Senate and Maine is a safer place thanks to her work. She supports common sense policies, and she has worked tirelessly to ensure that our law enforcement officers have the resources we need to do our jobs and keep our communities safe. Susan has always had our backs, and we are proud to stand with her.”

“It is truly an honor to receive the support of the brave men and women who make up the ‘thin blue

line’ that keeps our families and communities safe,” said Senator Collins. “As our country confronts the COVID-19 pandemic and listens to calls for needed social change, Maine’s police officers have responded with courage and compassion and continue to serve our state with valor, dignity, and integrity. I am so grateful for their devotion to duty and to doing what is right. I will always fight to support them in the United States Senate.”

Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine Endorses Susan Collins

From U.S. Sen. Collins

AUGUSTA - The Sportsman’s Alliance of Maine’s Institute for Legislative Action last week announced that Senator Susan Collins has received its highest grade and that it is endorsing her reelection.

David Trahan, Executive Director of the organization, made the announcement Thursday morning on WVOM’s George Hale and Ric Tyler Show: “Our board

was incredibly impressed with her terrific conservation record, her reasonable position on firearms and the Second Amendment.”

“It’s truly an honor to receive the endorsement from Maine’s largest sportsman’s organization,” said Senator Susan Collins. “In recent times, it has become all too common for people to draw a line in the sand on important policy issues. SAM, on the other hand, always comes to the

table, resulting in stronger laws and protections for their membership and the people of Maine.”

Sara Gideon, who is running against Collins in the upcoming senate election, received an “F” for her support of policies in Augusta that Trahan said “don’t fit in with our Maine culture, particularly given that Maine is the safest place, safest state in the nation as it relates to violent crime.”

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2019 national survey on drug use and health

From SAMHSA

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Last week, the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration released the 2019 National Survey on Drug Use and Health (NSDUH). The annual survey is the nation's primary resource for data on mental health and substance use among Americans.

As the NSDUH demonstrates, substance misuse and mental illness continue to be major problems for Americans. These issues demand continued attention and focus across all American communities. The data also reflect impressive progress on the nation's opioid crisis.

Opioid use disorder decreased significantly from 2.1 million in 2018 to 1.6 million. Efforts to increase access to Medication-Assisted Treatment and psychosocial/community recovery supports have had a positive effect.

Pain reliever misuse decreased significantly from 2018 for those 12-17 years of age and continues trending downward for 18-25 year olds.

Heroin initiation decreased significantly with a 57 percent decline from 2018.

Substance misuse and mental illness continue to affect the lives of millions of Americans. Data reveal that:

Past-month marijuana use and past-year daily or almost daily marijuana use significantly increased in adults aged 26 and older.

Past-year marijuana use disorder significantly increased in adolescents.

An upward trend in methamphetamine use and significant increase over 2016-17 in adults 26 and older.

Prescription stimulant misuse is trending downward in those 18-25 year olds.

Mental illness appears to be a great source of concern with serious mental illness significantly increasing in adults aged 18 and older, 18-25, and 26-49 between 2018 and 2019. Major depressive episode significantly increased in all age groups under 50 between 2018 and 2019.

Also troubling are the data on mental illness and America's young people. Major depressive episodes with severe impairment significantly increased in adolescents and young adults between 2018 and 2019. Suicidal thoughts and behaviors significantly increased in young adults and adults aged 26-49 between 2009 and 2019.

Co-occurring sub-

stance use and mental disorders are common and the data tell us that one condition can impact greatly the effects of the other. Individuals with serious mental illness (SMI) or any mental illness are more likely to misuse substances; the reverse is also true with individuals misusing substances being more likely to experience mental health issues.

Polysubstance use occurs frequently and underscores the need for screening and addressing all substance issues that a person may have because treating one substance problem will not treat other co-occurring substance problems.

"This year's National Survey on Drug Use and Health has some very encouraging news: The number of Americans with opioid use disorder dropped substantially, and fewer young adults are abusing heroin and other substances," said Health and Human Services Secretary Alex Azar. "Increases in marijuana and methamphetamine use and in serious mental illness are very concerning, and we expect that these challenges will be exacerbated by this year's

pandemic."

"The NSDUH data provide a foundation that helps to focus resources to address the important areas of mental health and substance use issues in our nation," said Dr. Elinore McCance-Katz, the Assistant Secretary for Mental Health and Substance Use. "I am especially pleased to see that our opioid abuse prevention efforts appear to be working, and we will continue to deliver those important messages."

SAMHSA has been working to expand access to treatment for serious mental illness and serious emotional disturbance. SAMHSA has been focusing its efforts on the co-occurrence of mental and substance use disorders. Through efforts such as the Technology Transfer Centers - which span substance abuse prevention, addiction, and mental health - and the Clinical Support System for SMI, SAMHSA has mounted an extensive effort to ensure the training of professionals on co-occurring disorders. The agency will continue to provide needed training and technical assistance on these issues to America's communities.



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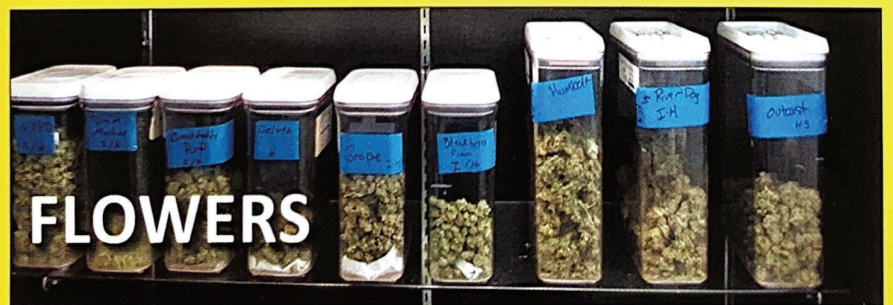
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Maine's fall foliage season creeping in

From Maine DACF

AUGUSTA – Last week marked the official start of reporting 2020 fall foliage conditions in Maine.

Maine's leaf-bearing trees will show off their brilliant colors of yellow, orange, and red in the upcoming weeks. The Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry's (DACF) 2020 Fall Foliage Report for Wednesday, September 16, 2020, reports spotty color change (10 percent) in the forest.

Typically, northern Maine (zones 6 and 7) reaches peak conditions the last week of September into the first week of October. The rest of the state's progression of color will start occurring from north to south in mid-October. Coastal Maine typically reaches peak conditions mid-to-late October.

"Despite the drought conditions throughout Maine, we anticipate a brilliant fall foliage season," notes Gale Ross, Maine's fall foliage spokesperson. "As with every autumn, the weather determines Maine's extended foliage outlook. Please keep your fingers crossed for warm days, followed by chilly nights, which will set us up for that perfect panoramic display of fall colors during the foliage season."

Aaron Bergdahl, Forest Pathologist with

DACF's Maine Forest Service, reports that overall, Maine's abundant, healthy, resilient and diverse forests assure us of an excellent display of colors."

During these unusual times, please be safe while exploring Maine this fall. For travel and visitor information as it relates to COVID-19, go to visitmaine.com/travel-with-care.

Many of Maine's annual fall events that residents and visitors alike have grown to love have been canceled or have become virtual this year, but there are still ways to enjoy autumn in Maine safely. Celebrate the changing season with apple picking at a local orchard. In addition to picking your own apples, some orchards like Ricker Hill in Turner provide even more fun with hard cider for the adults and fresh apple cider donuts. Or, bring the whole family to find your way through an elaborate corn maze, like this year's design at Treworgy Orchards in Levant that honors Maine's bicentennial. If you're looking to get out and about this weekend, check out Freeport's Makers on Main that will take place every Saturday until Indigenous Peoples' Day (October 10), featuring artwork, crafts, and treats.

As Maine foliage transitions from north to south throughout the season, the optimal place to

spot the changing leaves should first lead you to Aroostook County. Enjoy social distancing in the fresh air and roam the historical landmarks and river views of St. John Valley by bike. For an incredibly scenic drive, pack up the car for the Fish River Scenic Byway (Route 11) from Portage to Fort Kent. Expect to stumble upon meadows, forested stretches for foliage sightings, Maine's highest peak, and picturesque Eagle Lake. Keep your eye out for an array of wildlife from eagles to moose.

Autumn enthusiasts can visit the state's official foliage website at www.maine-foliage.com to sign up to receive weekly reports by email and are encouraged to share foliage images from regions throughout the state as the progression of color begins. Be sure to tag your images with @mainefoliage on Instagram and use #MaineFoliage. Our Facebook page will also include safe ways to enjoy fall this year. For more information about visiting Maine safely this fall, visit maine.gov/covid19.

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

Online SAT Prep Matters course

From U. of Maine

BELFAST - Preparation for the Scholastic Aptitude Test (SAT) will be the focus of an upcoming online class through the Hutchinson Center this fall.

The online course, Prep Matters, is designed for rising high school juniors and seniors who plan to take the SAT this fall. The course will be offered on Saturdays and Sundays, from 11 a.m.-noon. The cost is \$240 per session. The session runs Oct. 3-25. More information is available on the Hutchinson Center website at: <http://bitly.ws/9N3L>

The redesigned SAT has a total score made up of two parts — verbal skills and math. The average SAT score for students in Maine is 1031 total (College Board report, graduating class of 2018 all Maine schools). According to the

College Board, to attain at least a C in a non-remedial college math class, a student must score 530 out of 800 on the math section of the SAT. However, only about 40% of high school students can do so.

Course instructor Dr. Mary Smyth says that students need to understand the concepts, not just cram at the last minute to pass a test. For 15 years, Smyth has tutored students for the ACTs, AP Calculus, SATs and SAT subject tests. Under her tutelage, and through their own hard work, most of Smyth's students have improved their SAT scores by 100-200 points.

Smyth has been teaching algebra through calculus at Watershed School in Camden for over a decade and has coached SAT prep for 15 years. She is a retired pediatrician and is a local expert on college admission testing.

According to a parent of one of Smyth's students, "Mary is the ultimate SAT coach — intelligent, patient, funny and, most importantly, she knows the SAT inside and out. Thanks to Mary's coaching, my daughter's score dramatically improved from the PSAT to the SAT and she now understands concepts that were confusing to her before. I highly recommend Mary Smyth to anyone looking to improve their SAT score."

A limited number of scholarships are available. More information about upcoming UMaine professional development programs, registration and need-based scholarship applications are online at: <http://bitly.ws/9N3L>

For more information or to request an accommodation contact the Early College Program, um.earlycollege@maine.edu; 207.581.8024.

\$6.6 Million to Support Affordable Housing

From U.S. Sen. Susan Collins

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Susan Collins, the Chairman of the Housing Appropriations Subcommittee, announced that the State of Maine has received a total of \$6,678,216 in the third

installment of funding to support affordable housing, assistance to businesses and bolster COVID-19 prevention and response efforts throughout the state. This funding, awarded by the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD), was allocated through a section of the

CARES Act that Senator Collins co-authored directing \$48.5 billion to support housing and transportation programs.

"The COVID-19 pandemic is taking an unprecedented toll on communities. Maine's state agencies and local govern-

See Housing, page 12

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Sierra Club endorses Gideon in senate race

From Sarah Gideon for Maine

FREEPORT - At the beginning of September, the Sierra Club announced its endorsement of Sara Gideon in her campaign for the U.S. Senate, citing her long record of fighting climate change and working to protect Maine's natural resources.

"Here in Maine, we feel the impact of climate change on our environment and our economy, as its impacts threaten our woods and waters and our traditional industries like lobstering and logging," said U.S. Senate candidate Sara Gideon. "Mainers deserve a senator who will protect our environment and take bold and immediate action on climate change. In the State House, we worked to protect our natural resources, invest in renewable energy, and reduce carbon emissions. I'm ready to bring that kind of leadership to Washington and I'm proud to have Sierra Club's endorsement."

"Sierra Club is proud to endorse Speaker Gideon

in the race for U.S. Senate," said Sue Levene, Executive Committee Chair of the Maine chapter of the Sierra Club. "As Speaker of the House, Sara Gideon has been a capable and strong advocate for Maine. We are confident that Gideon will be a tireless environmental advocate standing up for the rights of Mainers to access clean air, clean water, and a livable climate."

As Speaker of the House, Sara passed some of the most aggressive goals in the history of the state for reducing carbon emissions and passed landmark legislation improving water quality protections for Maine's tribes.

As Maine's Senator, Sara will prioritize rejoining the Paris Climate Agreement, moving toward a completely clean and renewable energy system, repairing and upgrading infrastructure, reducing carbon emissions and pollution, ensuring that every Mainer breathes clean air and drinks clean water, and investing in the clean energy economy to fight climate change and create

good-paying jobs for Mainers.

Sara has been endorsed by numerous organizations and labor unions that have flipped from previously supporting Senator Collins, including the Maine State Council of Machinists, National Committee to Preserve Social Security and Medicare, the Massachusetts and Northern New England Laborers District Council, the Painters and Allied Trades International Union District Council 35, the Human Rights Campaign, the League of Conservation Voters, Planned Parenthood, Everytown for Gun Safety, NARAL, and the Natural Resources Defense Council Action Fund.

Sara has also been endorsed by over 75 elected officials from across Maine including Governor Mills and Rep. Chellie Pingree (ME-01), as well as the Maine AFL-CIO, Maine State Building and Construction Trades Council, Maine State Association of Letter Carriers, End Citizens United and Social Security Works.

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

Outdoor fall sale in Gray Oct. 10

GRAY - The First Congregational Church of Gray will conduct an Outdoor Fall Sale Saturday, Oct. 10, from 10 a.m.-2 p.m., with a rain date of Monday, Oct 12, on the lawn of the Parish House, 5 Brown

St., Gray (behind McDonald's).

Crafts, Rada Cutlery, Baked Goods including Baked Beans, Hot Dogs, and Biscuits TO GO and second hand items will be on sale.

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Housing

Continued from page 10

ments are working hard to provide seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income families with safe and affordable homes that promote their health, independence, and overall wellbeing," said Senator Collins. "As the Chairman of the Housing Appropriations Subcommittee, I worked hard to secure these vital resources to help Maine continue to provide critical assistance during this difficult time."

Auburn received \$137,932; Bangor received \$283,175; Biddeford received \$126,650; Lewiston received \$193,379; Portland received \$634,669; Cumberland County received \$976,929; State of

Maine received \$4,325,482 As the Chairman of the Housing Appropriations Subcommittee, Senator Collins helped to secure more than \$16.5 million in the first installment and more than \$4.3 million in the second installment of CARES Act funding to support affordable housing efforts throughout Maine.

The funding was awarded through HUD's Community Development Block Grant (CDBG) program. The CDBG program provides grants to states and local units of government to support housing and expand economic opportunities, principally for low- and moderate-income persons. These grants can also be used in coordination with local health authorities to respond to COVID-19.

Common Ground Country Fair online Sept 25-27

From MOFGA

The Common Ground Country Fair, the premier educational event of the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA), will be held online September 25, 26 and 27, 2020. This year, due to COVID-19, it has become especially apparent how important local farms, nonprofit organizations and other businesses are to Maine's communities.

Additionally, for many businesses, the Common Ground Country Fair supplies an important source of revenue. Recognizing that it is not possible to host a typical in-person fair in 2020, MOFGA created an online marketplace

to offer a space for vendors and fairgoers to connect.

"We're really excited about this opportunity. It's not the same as seeing all of our friends in person, but, especially because it is going to go into the holidays, we are looking forward to the potential to reach new audiences," said Amy Grant from Good Karma Farm in Belfast, Maine.

MOFGA's Online Marketplace and Fair Directory will offer a one-stop shopping experience, providing access to vendors and organizations who would typically participate in MOFGA's in-person fair. The Online Marketplace and Fair Directory will run from Sept. 25 to Jan. 8, 2021, and will feature a

wide range of Maine businesses and organizations. April Boucher, MOFGA's fair director, said, "While we can't gather together in person this year, we're committed to supporting local businesses and organizations focused on sustainability."

Nearly 200 businesses and organizations will participate in the Online Marketplace and Fair Directory, including farmers, food producers, crafters, artisans, energy and shelter businesses and more. All of the participating vendors and exhibitors have been reviewed by the fair's volunteer coordinators and MOFGA's staff to ensure that they meet the fair's current guidelines — which

support local, organic and sustainable sourcing and practices. The fair's popular Youth Enterprise Zone, which annually provides an opportunity for 13- to 21-year-old entrepreneurs to sell products and services in alignment with the fair's values, will continue to be featured this year. A wide variety of nonprofit organizations focused on topics related to the environment, agriculture, low-impact forestry and more will also take part.

The Online Marketplace and Fair Directory will be available at fair.mofga.org beginning on Sept. 25 and running through Jan. 8, 2021. A sneak peek of some vendors and products is available now.

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

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Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

Friday, Sept. 25
9 a.m.-4 p.m.
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; (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 Sevigny, OFM Cap., parochial vicar at Prince of Peace Parish, will preside at the service. To attend, register at 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).

Sunday, Oct. 4

6 p.m.
Basilica of Sts. Peter and Paul, Lewiston
Organ concert at the basilica, limited to 50 in-person and live-streamed. To register, call 207-240-9419 or email: Scott.Vaillancourt@PortlandDiocese.org

Wednesday, Oct. 28
7-8:30 p.m.
The PLAY Club reading of Cybourne Park. Email info@thepublictheatre.org or call 782-3200 today to reserve your spot in the Zoom session with PLAY CLUB!

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; (207) 338-8002.

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Thursday, Nov. 19
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; (207) 338-8002.

Play
Continued from page 7

sis of Raisin in the Sun to those who sign up for the Club.

At the end of the October meeting we will suggest four plays for the remaining two sessions. Those in attendance at the October meeting will vote on which two plays we will read for January and March.

Wed, Oct 28, 7pm - 8:30 PLAY: Clybourne Park by Bruce Norris

Wed, Jan 27, 7pm - 8:30 TBA

Wed, March 24, 7pm - 8:30 TBA

Email info@thepublictheatre.org or call 782-3200 today to reserve your spot in PLAY CLUB!

PMA
Continued from page 4

hibition opening approaches, the PMA will welcome members, visitors, and community members to share their thoughts on what 2020 means to them, and include these responses in some of the exhibition

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Untitled, 2020: Art From Maine In A _____ Time is a tribute to Helen E. and William E. Thon, who have enhanced the PMA's regional contemporary program and enriched the cultural life and experience of the people of Maine for two decades. Since 2000, the Thon's have supported recurring contemporary series at the PMA that have featured Maine artists, enhanced the PMA's ability to flourish, and enriched the cultural life and experience of the people of Maine. As their support enters a third decade, the museum continues to reflect their vision, the growth of our region, the diversification of our communities, and a new inclusive mission.

Any artist living and working in Maine in 2020 is invited to submit their work for consideration via Submittable at: <http://bitly.ws/9IAH>. There is no fee for submissions. All applications submitted will be considered final and treat-

ed as such. Applicants will not be permitted to add to or edit an application once it has been submitted. All incomplete or duplicate applications will be immediately disqualified. Submissions close 11:59 p.m. on Wednesday, Sept. 30, and notification of jury results will be made by Nov. 16.

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Colonial Williamsburg, free time on the Virginia Beach Boardwalk, dinner cruise with entertainment on the Spirit of Norfolk, admission to Nauticus and Battleship Wisconsin, Virginia Beach Aquarium and Marine Science Center. A \$75.00 deposit is due when signing up. Price is \$775.00 pp double occupancy. For questions and detailed information on these trips, please call: Claire - 207-784-0302 or Cindy- 207-345-9569.

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Teachers point a student toward his classroom on the first week of school at Gorham Middle School. (Photo courtesy of Superintendent Heather Perry)

Gorham

Continued from page 1

full-scale surveys among parents, staff and community members, she said.

“It was an iterative process,” where the district presented ideas and thoughts to staff and parents for their feedback, Perry said. “And that went on for several months.”

The Maine Department of Education created three scenarios for schools to re-open in the fall – “Red” for only remote learning, “Green” for all in-person classes, and “Yellow” for a hybrid mix of the two.

“Our focus all along was preparing for the Yellow opening, because we knew that was the hardest one to plan for, and the hardest one to make happen,” Perry said.

The color designations for schools differ from the color designations the State of Maine created for counties. The state color designations provide citizens with an understanding of the level of COVID-19 spread and infections in a county. For example, York county is currently designated as a yellow county due to a recent upsurge in infections, while Cumberland county remains green. Gorham sits in western Cumberland county, on the border with York county.

Perry said she shared plans and documents with other superintendents in the Cumberland County Superintendents Association, which met three times a week after schools were shut down in the spring. By June, meetings were just weekly, as the districts continued to share ideas,

thoughts and questions as schools looked to re-open. A representative from the MDOE usually joined the meetings, and “often times, it was the commissioner of education herself (Pender Makin) who joined our meetings.”

While the different needs for each school district, such as in facilities and transportation, meant each district had to craft a unique plan, the superintendents worked together to ensure continuity among the schools. This was especially important for the Career and Technical Education program, where students attend classes in Westbrook, Perry said. Gorham chose Friday as a day for only remote learning, to coordinate with Westbrook.

The Gorham School District has about 2780 stu-

ed kids to still be able to get in a social situation, where they could interact with their peers outside of their (classroom) group, safely.” Meal areas are sanitized between each serving, and “there are a lot safety protocols that are being put into place.”

Having students leave the classrooms for lunch also gives teachers time to themselves. Personal breaks are “an important aspect of being a good, high-quality functioning teacher,” Perry said. The district will continue to look at how students are served lunch, and make changes as needed.

The decision to alternate attendance days means that students are not away from the school building for more than five days, Perry said. This creates “a rhythm of learning that

As with other schools in Cumberland county, football and indoor volleyball have changed for this fall. Gorham will have “more of an intra-mural approach” with students practicing and building skills only at their own school. An outdoor volleyball court is being created for student practice, and the football program is looking at possible flag-football games.

Other fall athletic events will take place between schools, under the Maine Principal Association guidelines.

The Gorham School District includes Gorham High School, Gorham Middle School, Great Falls Elementary, Narragansett Elementary and Village Elementary.

Before coming to Gorham, Perry was the superintendent for nine years



Students have face coverings and are socially distanced in their classroom as they return to Gorham Middle School for the new school year. (Photo courtesy of Superintendent Heather Perry)

dents, and just over 10%, or about 290 chose full remote learning.

Because of the size of the classrooms and the need to keep students properly distanced for their safety under pandemic guidelines, Gorham schools were not able to allow all students on campus at one time. Students were placed into two cohorts, or groups, with the A group students in school each week on Monday and Wednesday and the B group attending weekly on Tuesday and Thursday. Both groups do remote learning on Fridays.

At Great Falls Elementary School, with a student population of about 580, around 280-290 students are in school at one time under this plan. This means students have enough room to remain six feet apart when they remove their face masks at lunchtimes, Perry said. For “580 kids, we can’t do it. There’s not enough real estate!”

For the Gorham schools, students are using the cafeteria and other areas in the school for meals, Perry said. This was important because “we want-

made sense for us.”

Another reason for keeping students and staff out of school buildings on Fridays is to provide about 72 hours to allow for the expiration of any virus that remains on surfaces after the daily sanitations. This means the schools have a fresh start each week, Perry said.

The medical needs and concerns of teachers and other staff members were reviewed and accommodated over the summer, with minimal changes in staffing for the district for this school year, she said. “At this point in time, we really are very, very lucky. I think we’ve only got a very small handful of staff who are on medical leave of one variety or another because of COVID. And the rest we’ve been able to figure out a way to accommodate” them so they can continue their work for the district.

Staff members have been assigned various roles to help with the remote learning, some working with students completely remotely, and others alternating between classroom teaching and remote teaching.

at Maine Regional School Unit 3, centered in Unity. She is originally from the Machias area, where she was a teacher and school principal.

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