



Lucy Ciampa, left, helped create a McLucy's Diner theme for her family's "trunk" and gave out candy with the help of Myka Bush at the Summit Community Church's "Trunk or Treat" event on the grounds of the Gorham Middle School on Halloween. Bush is the daughter of Travis Bush, the lead pastor of the church. (Tsukroff photo)

"Trunk or Treat" a Halloween success

By Nathan Tsukroff

GORHAM - A socially-distanced drive-through Halloween candy giveaway was a huge success for Summit Community Church on the grounds of the Gorham Middle School last weekend.

Nearly 100 cars had wound their way through the staff parking lot just outside the school on Weeks Road in the first half of the two-hour "Trunk or Treat" event, with children collecting candy handed to them at the end of sticks, chutes and tubes.

Travis Bush, the lead pastor of the church, said he and wife, Kristin, "Were just sitting around thinking what we are we going to do" for trick-or-treating on Halloween. "Going doing door-to-door didn't seem

an option this year."

Bush said the church has conducted a "Trunk or Treat" event each year at its location on Gorham Road in Scarborough, but this year "we wanted to come in to the community and offer this to families who are wondering the same thing - what does Halloween look like this year?"

Church members chose themes and wore costumes as part of the event.

Guests stayed in their cars and drove slowly past each themed car as church members handed out candy and treats.

"We actually issued a challenge to each of our "trunks" to come up with the most creative to get the candy from the "trunks" to the (passing) cars," Bush said.

One theme had a candy in a bucket hauled out on a long pole with a clothesline, while other themes placed candy into a tube that was upended to slide the candy into the waiting hands of the children in the car. In other themes, church members used arm extenders with hand-operated pinchers to grab candy and place it into passing hands while staying properly distanced.

Everyone in the themed "trunks" wore face masks and was careful to maintain mandated social distancing.

Guests at the event were decked out in a myriad of costumes and makeup, although only a few actually stepped out of the cars to collect candy.

See more photos, page 9

'We are Free - UnmaskME' protest in Augusta Oct. 24



1st District Congressional Candidate Dr. Jay Allen speaks to about 40 protesters at a "We are Free - UnmaskME" protest in next to the Blaine House in August on Oct. 24. The Mainers Against Mask Mandates were protesting the requirement from the State of Maine to wear facemasks as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. (Geraghty photo)

By Gail Geraghty

AUGUSTA - Around 40 people gathered on Saturday, Oct. 24, next to the Blaine House in Augusta to protest Gov. Janet Mills' statewide mask-mandate, led by members of the Facebook group Mainers Against Mask Mandates (MAMM).

Several Republican politicians made speeches, including 1st District Congressional Candidate Dr. Jay Allen, who was the subject of a rap song sung in his honor by emcee Chris

"Chritah" Blais of Northwoods Outlaws.

"This is not an anti-mask rally, it is an anti-mask mandate rally," Allen said. "We don't mind people wearing masks if they feel that makes them more protected. But we are against people on high telling us what we need to do."

Allen said Maine does not have the COVID-19 numbers to justify a statewide mask mandate, pointing out that 12 of the state's 16 counties have a low transmission risk and that

See UnmaskME, page 16

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Guest Column

Discussing Your Mental Health Issues With Your Friends

By Stan Popovich

Do you have a difficult time explaining your mental health issues to your family and friends?

If so, here are six suggestions on how to discuss your mental health issues with your friends and relatives.

1. Talk to a counselor: The most important thing that you need to do is to talk to a counselor about your mental health problems. Seeking professional help will go a long way in overcoming your current issues. In addition, a counselor will be able to give you additional advice on how to deal with your friends and family members.

2. Don't argue with others: It is important that you do not get into arguments with those who are giving you a hard time. Your number one priority is getting your life back on track. Your health is more

important than what other people may think.

3. Watch who you hang out with: It is important to surround yourself with positive people. Try to keep your distance from those people who are giving you a difficult time. Remember that your goal is to remain positive and hopeful. Do not let the negative people in your life bring you down.

4. You are not alone: It can be very frustrating to deal with your mental health issues when your friends and relatives are on your case. Remember, you are not alone. There are millions of people around the world who struggle with their fears, anxieties, and depression. The key is to find those people who can relate to you.

5. Stand your ground: It is important to stand your ground when dealing with family members and friends who are

giving you a hard time. Explain your situation and your feelings to the people in your life, however don't let them hassle you. Your number one priority is to get better and not to please everyone that you know.

6. Join a support group: There are many mental health support groups in your area that can help you. Many hospitals, churches, and counselors in your area will be able to provide you with a list of groups. These mental health organizations will be supportive of your situation and they can give you additional advice regarding your problems.

Stan Popovich is the author of the popular managing fear book, "A Layman's Guide To Managing Fear". For more information about Stan's book and to get some free mental health advice, visit: managingfear.com

Home Country

October colors are Orange and Black

By Slim Randles

I think there must be autumnal reasons for Halloween being hued in orange and black. It's a fun time, a magic evening if you're a kid, and if you're a grandpa-type guy, like me, who gets to hand out the goodies.

But the colors of this sweet evening celebration are orange and black, and so is October. In another week or so, our deciduous trees will stand like skeletons against the gray

skies of winter, but now we have the orange and black of fall.

It happens right about sunset each day. The sky turns that eternal burnt-umber orange and the remaining leaves and the baring branches of our trees fill the evening with a holy filigree of contrast.

Oh, it's not something we need to do anything about. There's no need for picture taking or anything. But it's just something that we can step

outside for ... look toward the west through the lacy pattern of black branches and for a moment, just a short moment, say to ourselves, "Isn't that pretty?"

If the paint store could sell me something that looked even close to that for the walls of the little cabin I have, I'd buy a gallon. Maybe two.

Perfect Christmas gift for youngsters "A Cowboy's Guide to Growing Up Right" by Slim Randles. Have a look at www.lpdpress.com.

Vienote on Dean's List

From Seton Hall U.

SOUTH ORANGE, NJ – Allie Veinote of Auburn was named to

the Seton Hall University spring 2020 Dean's list.

After the close of every semester, undergraduate students com-

pleting all courses with a GPA of 3.4, with no grades lower than "C", qualify for the Dean's List.

Guest column

Moose Mission Impossible Continues



Moose hunters load moose remains for transport to the butcher. (Ron Chase photo)

By Ron Chase

Moose hunt permit holders Brent Elwell and Carl Dubois were up well before dawn on opening day of the 2020 moose hunt. Four of us were located at remote Priestly Camp on the St. John River in far northern Maine. Committed to hunting by canoe, they departed for Shields Branch and Big Black River, an area thoroughly scouted the previous day. An hour after they left, gunshots were heard near the campsite.

After allowing Brent and Carl two hours advance travel time to reach a small pond connected to Big Black River, my companion, preferring the hunting pseudonym, Jimmy Olsen, Cub Reporter, and I, designated trip lackey followed. I paddled a solo canoe to assist with

retrieval of the moose and journalist Jimmy provided kayak support. Since the hunters were using a small motor on their tandem canoe while we paddled our crafts on the 3.5 mile passage down Shields Branch and Big Black River to the hunting site, our arrival was about three hours after their hunt began. Fresh moose meat was the expectation.

Moose tracks dominated the muddy entrance to the tiny pond situated about a half mile downriver from the confluence with Shields Branch. Our hunting companions couldn't be seen and no gunshots had been heard, so we waited in silence next to their canoe. Another hour passed before Brent quietly joined us to report no sightings had occurred. Moose scat was prevalent in the narrow herd path leading to their camouflage shelter ideal-

ly positioned on a grassy knoll overlooking the entire marshy basin. Given an abundance of signs, it seemed inexplicable that periodic cow calls hadn't motivated a fervent bull moose in rut.

Brent speculated the moose weren't moving as a result of unseasonably warm weather. A decision was made to vacate the site for the day. Cub Reporter and I left first, while Carl and Brent followed hunting from their canoe. Ironically, Jimmy spotted a moose during the return on Shields Branch. The canoes were concealed in a wooded area next to the Shields Branch launch in anticipation of a return the following day.

During the fifteen mile drive from Shields Branch to Priestly Camp, a hunting party was encountered who had downed a large bull. Both of the other groups at Priestly Camp had also been successful. Moose were obviously plentiful. Optimism prevailed despite the first day failure.

Since several moose had been observed near the campsite, our implacable nimrods decided to search the 2.5 mile camp road the first thing the following morning before returning to the pond adjacent Big Black. Departing shortly before sunrise, Brent soon returned to report a

large bull moose had been dropped. Located about two hundred yards off the road in an area previously logged; a combination of new growth, toppled trees, and thick brush complicated removal. The exceptionally warm weather necessitated immediate refrigeration.

My mission, should I accept it, was to clear a path for a sled to transport moose remains requiring refrigeration, while Brent and Carl cleaned and quartered it. A sense of urgency was paramount. Brent left hauling his homemade ice box, while I gulped down

my coffee and quickly followed.

Crawling over prostrate dead trees and thrashing through thick brush to reach the hunters and their prize, my task seemed daunting. Returning to the road, it was apparent that expeditiously clearing a direct route was impossible so I plotted a longer more circuitous course of less resistance. Using a small battery operated chainsaw, a bow saw, and lots of physical effort, a ragged path gradually unfolded. The chainsaw battery died as Cub Reporter arrived. We finished what I dubbed

Lackey Lane with hand-saws just in time for Brent and Carl to haul the first sled load to the ice box.

Multiple laborious trips later, the refrigerator was loaded and the hunters were off on a long journey to register the moose. Arrangements were also made to have it professionally butchered and packaged. An estimated 800 pound animal, about 450 pounds were recovered for delivery to the butcher. A beautiful sunny day with my canoe still stashed on Shields Branch, I spent the afternoon paddling the scenic meandering tributary. No moose sightings during my excursion, but they were undoubtedly watching.

In the aftermath, Cub Reporter Jimmy Olsen dispatched his story to Perry White editor-in-chief of the Daily Planet. My reward for blazing Lackey Lane arrived a few days ago. I'm researching recipes. Two seem particularly appealing, Newfoundland Moose Stew and Moose Bourguignon. Moose burgers are a certainty.

Author of "The Great Mars Hill Bank Robbery" and "Mountains for Mortals – New England," Ron Chase lives in Topsham. Visit his website at www.ronchaseoutdoors.com or email ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net.



Moose hunters haul a loaded sled through Lackey Lane on a moose hunt in northern Maine. (Ron Chase photo)

Newsmakers, Names & Faces



Philip Chamberlain, left, owner of Elevate Physical Therapy in Portland, welcomes new partner Jonathan Cowie to the practice. (Photo courtesy of Philip Chamberlain)

EPA enforces lead paint rules

From US EPA

BOSTON – Over the past year, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) New England regional office promoted compliance with lead-safe work practices, and lead paint disclosure to tenants and homebuyers.

This was done to protect children from harmful exposure to lead that continues to be found in paint in older housing and buildings.

“During Children’s Health Month, it is especially appropriate that we emphasize that protecting children by reducing lead exposure is vitally important and is a high priority for EPA,” said EPA New England Regional Administrator Dennis Deziel. “Throughout New England there are many older residences and properties where lead paint may still be found. Chipped lead paint and lead dust created during renovations is a significant health hazard for children.”

Lead paint was banned in 1978. However, because New England has so many older buildings and houses, lead paint can still be found in buildings constructed before 1978. EPA New England continues to prioritize resources to educate companies and individuals about federal lead paint rules de-

signed to protect children and the public at large from exposure to lead. The Toxic Substances Control Act (TSCA) and the Residential Lead-Based Paint Hazard Reduction Act contain several provisions related to lead paint. The federal Renovation, Repair and Painting (RRP) Rule regulates lead paint renovation work done by hired individuals or companies working in pre-1978 residential or other child-occupied buildings.

The Federal Disclosure Rule requires sellers and landlords to inform buyers and tenants about the hazards of lead-based paint before the buyers and tenants become obligated under a contract to purchase or rent housing built prior to 1978. Buyers and tenants must receive an EPA-approved information pamphlet that informs them about the risks of lead-based paint and how to identify and control lead-based paint hazards. They also must receive disclosure of any known information about the presence of lead-based paint or lead-based paint hazards in the home or building.

Several Maine companies were subject to EPA enforcement to ensure their compliance with the federal

lead RRP Rule or Disclosure Rules during the year-long period ending in October 2020. Assessed penalties averaged several thousand dollars, were as high as \$26,000, and totaled nearly \$70,000. Included were Excel Pro Painters, Inc., South Portland, Maine; Dave Johnson Building and Remodeling, Inc., Windham, Maine; and LandMarx Construction LLC dba Oceanside Exteriors, Portland, Maine.

Infants and children are especially vulnerable to lead paint exposure, which can cause lifelong impacts including developmental impairment, learning disabilities, impaired hearing, reduced attention span, hyperactivity and behavioral problems. Lead exposures to pregnant woman can impact their unborn children’s health too. Because New England has a lot of older housing stock, lead paint is still frequently present in buildings that were built before 1978, when lead paint was banned.

Although lead paint has been identified as the primary source of childhood lead poisoning, there are other potential sources of lead, including drinking water, soil, air, and consumer products.

Cowie joins Elevate PT

From Elevate PT

PORTLAND - Philip Chamberlain, PT, Owner of Elevate Physical Therapy, 331 Veranda St., Portland, recently welcomed Jonathan Cowie, DPT, into partnership at the clinic.

Cowie “has worked tirelessly over the last 12 months from opening day and through the

COVID-19 pandemic to bring our brand of high quality, low cost physical therapy centered on faster recovery with lasting results” to Gorham and the neighboring communities, Chamberlain said.

“Jonathan has been extremely resourceful and shown a deep commitment to his patients during this unprecedented period. I am

so pleased he’s stepping into partnership,” Chamberlain said.

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What's Going On

Adult Learner Scholarship Fund seeks applications

From Maine CF

ELLSWORTH & PORTLAND – The Maine Community Foundation (MaineCF) seeks applications to its Adult Learner Scholarship Fund which supports non-traditional students who want to change their lives for the better through education and training.

MaineCF offers two types of Adult Learner scholarships. A degree-seeking scholarship supports two- and four-year degree programs and certificate courses that fit into the regular calendar year. The application deadline for this scholarship is November 15, 2020.

The second scholarship supports credential/

certificate programs that last less than a full semester. These short-term scholarships have a rolling deadline of the first of each month.

Eligible applicants must meet one of the following criteria to be eligible: be over the age of 25; work full-time; have dependents other than a spouse; or be financially independent, not have received a standard high school diploma, or delayed enrollment in college after high school for a reason other than a gap year activity.

Complete guidelines and application forms are available at www.maine.cf.org. If you have questions, contact MaineCF Scholarship Manager Liz Fickett at lfickett@mainecf.org.

The Maine Community Foundation has worked with donors and educators since 1983 to provide and expand Maine students' access to educational opportunities. The community foundation manages more than 650 scholarship funds.

Headquartered in Ellsworth, with additional personnel in Portland, Dover-Foxcroft, and Mars Hill, the Maine Community Foundation works with donors and other partners to provide strong investments, personalized service, local expertise, and strategic giving to improve the quality of life for all Maine people. To learn more about the foundation, visit www.maine.cf.org.

Rollout of new SSN verification service

From SSA

The Social Security Administration has begun the initial rollout of its new electronic Consent Based Social Security Number (SSN) Verification (eCBSV) service.

The agency is rolling out the service to selected participants through 2020, and plans on expanding the number of users in 2021.

"Our new electronic SSN verification service helps reduce synthetic identity fraud by comparing agency records with data provided electronically by approved participants," said Andrew Saul, Commissioner of Social Security. "This is an important online service that helps us provide participants and their customers fast, secure, and more effi-

cient SSN verifications."

Social Security created eCBSV, a fee-based electronic SSN verification service, to allow select financial institutions and service providers, called "permitted entities" and including subsidiaries, affiliates, agents, subcontractors, or assignees of a financial institution, to verify if a person's SSN, name, and date of birth combination matches Social Security records. Social Security needs the person's written consent and will accept an electronic signature in order to disclose the SSN verification to the permitted entity. eCBSV returns a match verification of "Yes" or "No." eCBSV does not verify a person's identity.

Social Security is committed to rolling out

eCBSV to all selected permitted entities. The participants approved for the initial rollout are Capital One Services, LLC; Computer Information Development, LLC; Discover Financial Services; Early Warning Services, LLC; Experian Information Solutions, Inc.; ID Analytics, LLC; SentiLink Corp.; Synchrony Financial; and Zions Bancorporation.

Each of the service providers selected can serve up to 20 permitted entities, and with the financial institutions, there is the potential of 124 permitted entities participating in the initial rollout.

This announcement does not affect the existing Consent Based SSN Verification service.

For more information, visit: <http://bitly.ws/asws>.

Court of Appeals upholds rejection of public funds for religious schools

From Maine DOE

PORTLAND - On October 29, 2020, the Maine Department of Education received word of the Court of Appeals for the First Circuit's decision in favor of Commissioner Pender Makin in *Carson v. Makin*.

This decision of the Court of Appeals affirms the earlier decision of the United States District Court for the District of Maine that Maine is not required to pay tuition for students to attend religious schools.

Maine's Constitution requires the local provision of public education; however, the expansive landscape and small communities of Maine are not conducive to the operation of a school within every school administrative unit. For this reason, Maine has a long-established "tuition" program through which the children within a community that cannot or does not operate a public school are permitted to access a pub-

lic education through the payment of state and local funds to a nearby public or approved private school. Public dollars cannot be used for sectarian (religious) schools; however, a family is not prevented from accessing, at their own cost, a religious education.

"As the Commissioner of Education, I am charged with the responsibility of ensuring that public funds allocated for education in Maine are spent within the legal and intended use of those funds," stated Commissioner Pender Makin when learning of the decision. "I am pleased that the court has recognized the lawfulness of our fiscal stewardship."

The case was argued before the Court of Appeals by Assistant Attorney General Sarah Forster on January 8, 2020. Assistant Attorney General Forster and Deputy Attorney General Christopher Taub have represented the Commissioner throughout the legal

proceedings in this matter.

"I am pleased that the First Circuit correctly found that Maine has created a narrowly tailored "tuition" program that responds to our unique need to ensure that a public education is available in school administrative units that do not operate public schools," said Attorney General Aaron M. Frey regarding the court's decision. "The Court recognized that because the only purpose of Maine's program is to replicate the education that a student would receive at a public school, Maine is not discriminating based on the religious status of any private school. Rather, Maine is simply declining to pay for religious instruction that would be unavailable in a public school. In this way, Maine's program is unlike the "no-aid" clause in the Montana Constitution at issue in the Supreme Court's recent *Espinoza* decision, or any prior school choice program that has been subject to review."

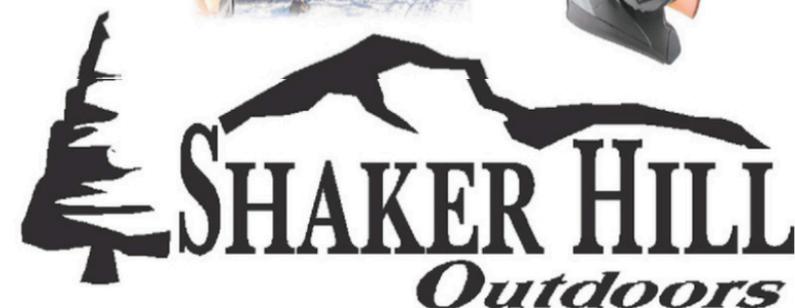
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\$6M Challenge Grant in support of art center



An artists' rendering shows the planned Paul J. Schupf Art Center, a collaborative project between Waterville Creates! and Colby College. (Image courtesy of Waterville Creates)

From Waterville Creates

WATERVILLE - The Harold Alfond Foundation is providing a \$6 million challenge grant in support of the Paul J. Schupf Art Center, a collaborative project between Waterville Creates! and Colby College.

For every dollar contributed to Waterville Creates' community capital campaign, both past and future, the Harold Alfond Foundation will provide \$3 in matching funds. When the community capital campaign crosses the \$1 million mark, the Foundation will commit another \$3 million toward the total project cost of \$18 million.

Waterville Creates! has already raised \$680,000 in gifts and pledges from a diverse group of businesses, foundations, and individuals, and needs the community's support to raise the remaining \$320,000 that will unlock \$6 million in support from the Harold Alfond Foundation.

"The Harold Alfond Foundation is proud to support Waterville Creates! and

its partnership with Colby College to develop the Paul J. Schupf Art Center," says Chairman Greg Powell. "The community has already stepped up in a major way to support the capital campaign, and we hope that this challenge grant will provide extra incentive for businesses and individuals alike to contribute to this incredible project, which we believe will be a cornerstone of Waterville's downtown revitalization."

This grant is part of the Foundation's more than \$500 million investment in Maine people and institutions to help grow the state's workforce and economy and support quality health care and builds on a long-standing commitment from the Foundation to help the people of Maine thrive from birth through career. Learn more at <https://www.haroldalfondfoundation.org/>.

"The Harold Alfond Foundation's investment in Waterville Creates! has enabled us to strengthen the long-standing, beloved arts organizations that have been a core part of Water-

ville's identity for decades by developing a new model for collaboration. The Paul J. Schupf Art Center will be the physical embodiment of that collaboration. By bringing Waterville's arts organizations together under one roof in the heart of downtown, the Paul J. Schupf Art Center will showcase our diverse arts programming and create new opportunities for collaboration and creative expression," said Shannon Haines, President and CEO of Waterville Creates!

"There has never been a building like the Paul J. Schupf Art Center in Waterville. This project will have a major economic impact on the entire region and will ensure that our community will have access to outstanding arts opportunities for generations to come. Thanks to the Harold Alfond Foundation's commitment to excellence in the arts both on Main Street and at Colby College, Waterville is poised to become a premier arts destination," said James LaLiberty, Board Chair at Waterville Creates!

What's Going On

Creative Christmas Fairs Scheduled

From Portland Diocese

PORTLAND --- During the pandemic, several Maine parishes are planning to offer unique and creative Christmas fairs while following state and diocesan guidelines and protocols. These include outdoor bazaars, virtual fairs, and tree festivals.

As fairs are confirmed, they will be added to the special Christmas fairs page on the diocesan website: <http://bitly.ws/amTE>

Here is a list of Christmas fairs already scheduled (listed chronologically).

St. Anthony of Padua Parish, Westbrook

St. Anthony of Padua Parish in Westbrook will conduct an outdoor Christmas fair on Saturday, Nov. 7, 8 a.m.-3 p.m. at St. Hyacinth Church on 268 Brown Street. The fair will feature baked goods and other food, books, knitted items, jewelry, a white elephant table, and a money raffle.

Parish of the Ascension of the Lord, Kittery

The Parish of the Ascension of the Lord's three Christmas fairs will be hosted online this year. The St. Raphael fair will be Nov. 8-14, the St. Christopher Holiday Faire will be Nov. 15-21, and the Our

Lady of the Angels fair will be Nov. 22-28. The fairs will feature items for sale, silent auction items, and raffles for special prizes. Visit www.pal-me.org to find links to the virtual fairs.

All Saints Parish, Brunswick

The Midcoast Tree Festival will be Nov/ 20-22 and Nov/ 27-29 at the St. John's Community Center on 43 Pleasant Street in Brunswick. The festival will feature themed, lighted artificial Christmas decorated by local organization and businesses. At the end of the show, they will be raffled off, with proceeds benefiting All Saints Parish and St. John's Catholic School, Spectrum Generations' Meals on Wheels, and the Southern Midcoast Maine Chamber.

Immaculate Heart of Mary Parish, Auburn

This year's Christmas by the Lake Fair at St. Philip Church, located on 2365 Turner Road in Auburn, will feature beautifully decorated Christmas wreaths and baskets, made with fresh greens. They will be for sale outside the church on Saturday, Nov. 21, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, Windham

Our Lady of Perpetual Help Parish, located on 919 Roosevelt Trail in Windham, will host a European-style Christmas bazaar on Friday, Dec. 4, 4-8 p.m. and Saturday, Dec. 5, 11 a.m.-3 p.m. and 5-8 p.m. The outdoor bazaar will feature Bavarian and Italian food to take out, Christmas trees and beautifully decorated Christmas wreaths, baked goods and pie booths, designer gift baskets, s'mores kits and a fire pit for toasting, a Christmas shoppe, and raffle items.

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Arts & Entertainment

Scammers targeting Instagram influencers

From BBB Boston

Scammers are taking advantage of would-be Instagram influencers by tricking them into buying over-priced products that allegedly support a charity. Instead of gaining followers and helping a good cause, the influencers end up losing money.

The scam starts when you receive a direct message in Instagram that appears to come from a charity or from a business claiming to have partnered with a charity. The representative wants to know if you would be interested in becoming a “model” or “brand ambassador” for their new campaign. This promotion is allegedly supporting a nonprofit – recent reports to BBB.org/ScamTracker mention everything from environmental conservation to women’s rights to LGBTQ youth.

It sounds like a great

gig! The “representative” sends you a discount code to purchase the products they want you to model. The prices in the online store are high, but, according to the representative, the sales go to support the charity.

Unfortunately, there’s a catch. Victims report purchasing items – often t-shirts – that never arrive. In some cases, the charity never even existed. In others, the charity is real, but scammers used their name without their knowledge, and the nonprofit never received money from the sales.

To spot an influencer scam, start by asking questions. Targets of this con told BBB.org/ScamTracker that when they asked for details about the charity and how the donations are used, the scammer got evasive and stopped responding. Don’t hesitate to push back if something seems off.

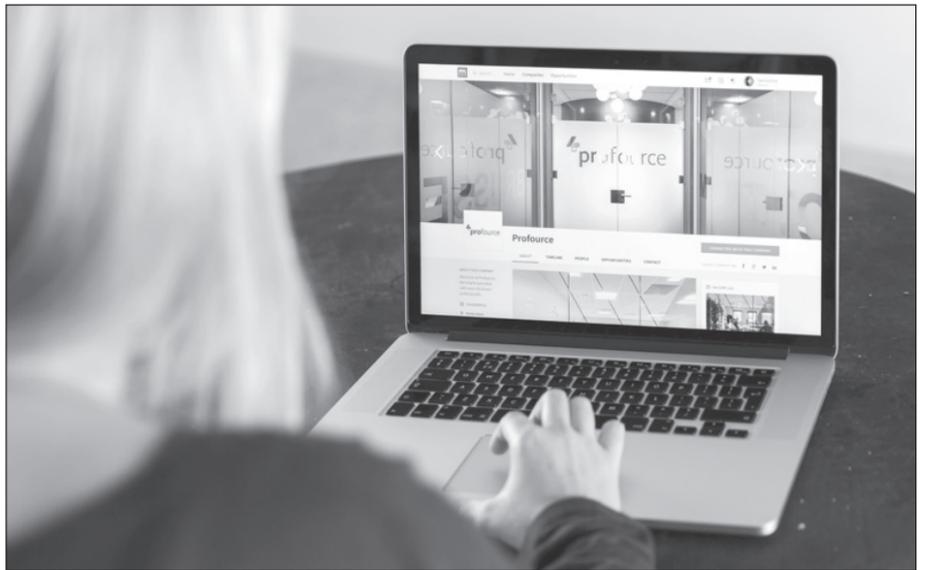
If an offer looks suspicious, do a search. If something is a scam, victims are likely to have posted about it online. Also, the charity’s website and/or social media should mention the partnership – if it’s real.

Know the signs of fake social media accounts: Make sure the business or charity contacting you is real. This article has detailed information about how to spot a phony Instagram account: <http://bitly.ws/asCU>

Report scam accounts and messages to Facebook and Instagram: Alert administrators to fake profiles, compromised accounts, and spam messages by reporting them on Facebook and Instagram.

Learn how to spot a job scam: This social media ambassador con uses many of the same techniques as a job scam. Read more about them at BBB.org/EmploymentScam.

Virtual meeting skills series Nov. 17



From UMaine Extension

ORONO - During the COVID-19 pandemic, many people are participating in and facilitating more virtual meetings. To support this shift in format, University of Maine Cooperative Extension has co-sponsored a new two-session series about building virtual facilitation skills from 10:30 a.m.–

noon Nov. 17 and Dec. 1.

The workshop, hosted by University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension, will feature key facilitation concepts and how to apply them when working with groups virtually. Participants will also learn and practice specific virtual techniques for brainstorming, prioritizing, action planning and decision making. UMaine Ex-

tension, UNH Extension and Maine Sea Grant are co-sponsoring the workshop.

The fee to attend is \$30 and registration is required by Nov. 10.

Register online with UNH Extension. For more information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact Kristen Grant, 207.646.1555, ext. 115; kn-grant@maine.edu.

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Supporting Veteran Caregivers, America’s Hidden Heroes

By Sen. Susan M. Collins

Supporting our veterans and those who serve today is among our greatest obligations. That obligation includes supporting America’s “hidden heroes” – the 5.5 million family caregivers who provide essential daily care to loved ones who bear the wounds of their service protecting our nation and our freedom.

The effects of military service often do not end with a tour of duty. For many veterans and their families, the journey sometimes extends for a lifetime. For some veterans with both visible and invisible scars, the transition home is not easy. Recovery, too, can take decades. Along the way, mothers, fathers, wives, husbands, and other

family members and friends step in to serve.

Military family caregivers provide roughly \$14 billion a year in voluntary, uncompensated care. They often sacrifice their own physical and emotional well being to do so. They may have to miss work, turn down promotions, or even leave the workforce, creating enormous financial strain for families.

Addressing the challenges facing these devoted family caregivers has been one of my highest priorities. In 2017, I chaired a hearing that focused on military caregivers at which former Senator Elizabeth Dole testified. When the VA MIS-SION Act was enacted in 2018, it included provisions I championed requiring a

phased expansion of the VA Caregiver Support Program to include veterans of all generations, rather than only post 9/11 veterans.

Veterans, regardless of when they served, should be eligible for caregiver assistance. For years, the VA Caregiver Support Program has made resources such as a stipend, counseling, and training available to loved ones who have taken on a caregiver role for a veteran with service-connected injuries or illnesses. This important resource can improve quality of life and can result in faster and improved rehabilitation and recovery for a veteran. However, only post-9/11 veteran caregivers have historically been eligible to receive these benefits.

Now, due to the legislation I coauthored, the VA has officially launched the first phase of expansion of the Caregiver Support Program to include pre-9/11 veterans and their caregivers. This first phase of the VA Caregiver Support Program expansion allows the VA to provide a stipend and resources to thousands of caregivers of veterans from World War II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War.

The expansion rolls out in two phases. Effective this Oct. 1, the first phase included eligible veterans who incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty on or before May 7, 1975.

Effective Oct. 1, 2022, the second phase will include eligible veterans who

incurred or aggravated a serious injury in the line of duty between May 7, 1975, and Sept. 11, 2001. The VA has also expanded and expedited the hiring of key staff to ensure veterans and caregivers receive timely, accurate assessments and eligibility determinations, as well as an improved customer experience.

The progress we have made in supporting military caregivers would not be possible without the untiring efforts of former Senator Elizabeth Dole, whose husband, former Senator Robert Dole, was severely wounded during World War II. Since its founding in 2012, the Elizabeth Dole Foundation has done much to raise awareness of the need to support these

selfless caregivers, and in 2014 commissioned the largest-ever study on the vital role military caregivers play and the sacrifices they make.

I was honored to receive the first Congressional Caregiver Champion Award from the Elizabeth Dole Foundation. It was particularly moving to be presented with that award by Maine’s Dole Foundation Caregiver Fellow, Marjorie Pennington, whose husband, Matthew, was grievously wounded in Iraq. Her words describe the dedication of our family caregivers: “He fought for our freedom, and I will always fight for him.” The patriots caring for a wounded warrior are among America’s hidden heroes and they need our support.

Maine Updates COVID-19 School Health Advisory

From State of Maine

AUGUSTA -- The Mills Administration today released an update to its color-coded Health Advisory System that 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.

Somerset and Washington counties are now categorized as yellow, joining Waldo County, which was designated yellow last week. All other counties remain green.

Updated information has been added to this paragraph: In Somerset County, both the positivity rate and the rate of new cases per 10,000 people have risen over the previous 14-day period. In Washington County, the site of the Second Baptist Church outbreak, the new two-week case rate per 10,000 is four times higher than it was last week. Waldo County continues to have Maine’s highest county positivity rate at 3.0% and highest new case rate of 17.4 per 10,000 over the last two weeks. No outbreaks have been identified in Waldo or Washington county schools at this time.

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.

These designations are made out of an abundance of caution and for the consideration of school administrative units in their decisions to deliver instruction.

It is essential that school districts 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 symp-

toms 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. Masks are recommended for children ages two to four, when developmentally appropriate. 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. The same applies to staff with medical or other 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. An exception for wearing a mask or face shield applies only to an individual participating in voluntary school sports during vigorous physical exercise. Nothing in the mask/face covering requirements should be interpreted as preventing a school from

making accommodations on an individualized basis as required by state or federal disabilities laws.

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 re-

quired 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 members and students must use home isolation until they meet criteria for returning to school.

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“Trunk or Treat” a Halloween success



Marla Grovo of Standish holds onto Zoe Theriault of Buxton as they collect candy from a tray at the end of a long pole at one of the “trunks” of the Summit Community Church “Trunk or Treat” event on the grounds of the Gorham Middle School on Halloween. (Tsukroff photo)



Kat Powers, left, and Shelly Rinfret, dressed as a nurse, both wear angel wings as they pass out candy to a youngster at the Essential Workers are Angels “trunk” at the Summit Community Church “Trunk or Treat” event last Saturday in the parking lot of the Gorham Middle School. (Tsukroff photo)



Eli Tibbetts of Westbrook takes candy from the end of a chute at one of the “trunks” at the Summit Community Church “Trunk or Treat” event at Gorham Middle School on Halloween. (Tsukroff photo)



Dan Gerrish helps Ben Knight, in the booth to the right, distribute candy from a Dunkin Donuts themed “trunk” at the Summit Community Church “Trunk or Treat” event at Gorham Middle School last weekend. (Tsukroff photo)



Eva Ciampa wears a giraffe costume at her family’s jungle-themed “trunk” as she gets ready to hand out candy to the next car at the “Trunk or Treat” event conducted by the Summit Community Church on Halloween at the Gorham Middle School. (Tsukroff photo)

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Program to Benefit Veterans in Need this Holiday Season



From OSJL

NORTH KINGSTOWN, RI - Ocean State Job Lot (OSJL), a privately-held, family-operated discount retail chain with 143 stores in New England, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania, is pleased to announce the return of its annual 'Buy, Give, Get' program to benefit veterans in need.

Beginning last week, any customer who buys a warm winter coat at OSJL for \$40 (retail value: \$80-\$120) and gives it back to the store as a donation to veterans in need, will get a \$40 Crazy Deal Gift Card to be used for a future purchase online or at any Ocean State Job Lot store.

During its last 'Buy, Give, Get' program in 2019, the Ocean State Job Lot Charitable Foundation

donated more than 30,000 winter jackets to veterans. This year, approximately 40,000 winter coats will be available for purchase to distribute to those in need through OSJL's partner organizations.

"What started out as a 600-coat test just a few years ago has blossomed into one of the largest programs of its kind serving veterans in need across the region," said David Sarlitto, Executive Director, Ocean State Job Lot Charitable Foundation. "Last year, our customers helped us to donate warm winter coats to approximately 35,000 veterans, and we hope to exceed that this year."

The coats will be distributed at the conclusion of the program to veterans' organizations in partnership with a multi-state network

of more than 50 veteran support agencies, organizations, assistance programs and action groups serving New England, New York, New Jersey and Pennsylvania.

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Million in Grants for America's Ports

From US DOT

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Department of Transportation Secretary Elaine L. Chao recently announced the award of more than \$220 million in discretionary grant funding to improve port facilities in 16 states and territories through the Maritime Administration's (MARAD) Port Infrastructure Development Program.

"This \$220 million in federal grants will improve America's ports with nearly half the projects are located in Opportunity Zones, which were established to revitalize economically distressed communities," said U.S. Secretary of Transportation Elaine L. Chao.

U.S. maritime ports are critical links in the U.S. domestic and international trade supply chain and this funding will assist in the improvement of port facilities at or near coastal sea-

ports. The Port Infrastructure Development Program aims to support efforts by ports and industry stakeholders to improve facility and freight infrastructure to ensure our nation's freight transportation needs, present and future, are met. The program provides planning, operational and capital financing, and project management assistance to improve their capacity and efficiency.

Of the 18 projects that were awarded grants, eight are located in Opportunity Zones, which were created to revitalize economically distressed communities using private investments.

"This critical investment demonstrates the Trump Administration's commitment to supporting our nation's ports and maritime industry," said Maritime Administrator Mark H. Buzby. "These grants will help our nation's economy and ensure that Amer-

ica's ports can continue to operate effectively in the competitive global marketplace."

Ports provide countless jobs for Americans and are key to a nation that heavily relies on its maritime services. By providing the funding to support the improvement of this critical infrastructure component, MARAD and the Department of Transportation are ensuring these services will succeed during the nation's ongoing economic recovery.

In Portland, Maine, the Linking Intermodal Needs and Rural Freight Knowledge - LINK Project was awarded \$4,098,360. This grant will fund the modernization of gates and scales, improvements to existing warehouses, and rail improvements at a bulk transfer facility to improve the intermodal efficiency of the port. The project is in an opportunity zone.

Me2/Southern Maine rehearsing at MAMM

From MAMM

PORTLAND - The Maine Academy of Modern Music is thrilled to be offering rehearsal space to Me2/Southern Maine beginning this Fall.

Me2/("me, too") is the world's only classical music organization created for individuals with mental illnesses and the people who support them. Me2/ serves as a model organization where people with and without mental illnesses work together in an environment where acceptance is an expectation, patience is encouraged, and supporting each other is a priority.

More about them can be found at: <https://me2orchestra.org/>

"We are thrilled to bring Me2/s mission to the greater Portland area. It is challenging to launch something new during a pandemic, but we all need something to boost our mental health right now. We hope that musicians of all ages and ability levels who are living with mental illnesses -- as well as the people who support them -- will join us to make great music, support each other, and help erase the stigma surrounding our diagnoses" says Jessica Stuart, co-founder of Me2/Southern Maine.

"Thanks to MAMM we have a great location to rehearse and launch our new ensemble. Me2/ and MAMM share some great synergy in our goals of bringing music to a diverse community," Stuart said.

Rehearsals will be held on the second floor at MAMM's Presumpscot St location on Saturday evenings at 5 p.m. and the group will observe all of MAMM's Safety Protocols.

For more information or to join the group, please email info@me2orchestra.org or call (802) 238-8369.

For more information about MAMM visit www.maineacademyofmodernmusic.org

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— Bill Bushnell, *Bushnell on Books*

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— George Smith, *Bangor Daily News*

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\$40 Million in Relief Awarded to Maine Farmers

From U.S. Sen. Collins

BANGOR - U.S. Senator Susan Collins announced that Maine farmers have been awarded a total of \$40,588,764 to date to help offset the financial harm they have experienced due to COVID-19.

The funding is provided through the Coronavirus Food Assistance Program (CFAP), created through the CARES Act, which will provide up to \$16 billion in direct payments to deliver relief to America's farmers.

"The supply chain disruptions and restaurant closures caused by the COVID-19 pandemic have

placed increasing financial pressure on Maine's rural farming communities, from newly founded farms to operations that have been passed down from generation to generation," said Senator Collins. "These direct payments, which I worked to include in the CARES Act, will help provide some relief. During this difficult time, I will continue to advocate for Maine farmers."

In addition to facilitating the Farmers to Families Food Box program, CFAP is providing vital financial assistance to producers of agricultural commodities who have

suffered a five-percent-or-greater price decline due to COVID-19 and face significant additional marketing costs as a result of lower demand, surplus production, and disruptions to shipping patterns and the orderly marketing of commodities.

The USDA is accepting applications until December 11th. More information about CFAP can be found on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) resource page: Farmers.gov/cfap.

Dairy farmers have been awarded \$11,725,845.

Livestock farmers have been awarded

\$1,864,125.

Non-Specialty crop farmers have been awarded \$715,233.

Specialty crop farmers have been awarded \$15,044,095.

Eggs/Broilers have been awarded \$12,021.

Sales Commodities have been awarded \$11,227,445.

CFAP payments are available for eligible producers of specialty crop commodities categorized as either sales commodities or flat-rate crops. Specifically:

Sales commodities have payment calculations that use a sales-based ap-

proach, where producers of eligible commodities are paid based on five payment gradations associated with their 2019 sales. Eligible fruits, vegetables, horticulture, tree nuts, honey, and maple sap are categorized as sales-based commodities.

Flat-rate crops either do not meet the five-percent-or-greater national price decline trigger noted above or do not have data available to calculate a price change, but will have CFAP 2 payments calculated based on eligible acres of the crop planted in 2020.

Following a push by Maine's Congressional Del-

egation and Governor Janet Mills, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) announced in August that maple syrup producers are now eligible for CFAP's direct financial relief.

In July, Senator Collins visited Van Buren, where 760 food boxes through the Farmers to Families Food Box Program were distributed to members of the community. The food boxes, which contained products from Maine farmers, were purchased through a \$2.14 million contract recently awarded to Maine Farmers Exchange (MFX) to participate in the program.

Medicare Proposes Coverage Expansion of Glucose Monitors

From U.S. Sen. Collins

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senator Susan Collins (R-ME), the founder and co-chair of the Senate Diabetes Caucus, applauded the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services' (CMS) proposed rule change that would expand Medicare Part B coverage and payment for continuous glucose monitors (CGMs).

The proposed changes to Medicare Durable Medical Equipment, Prosthetics, Orthotic Devices and Supplies (DMEPOS) coverage and payment policies would classify all CGMs (not just limited to therapeutic CGMs) as durable medical equipment (DME) and estab-

lish payment amounts for these items and related supplies and accessories. If finalized, the proposal would build on Medicare's decision in 2017 to provide coverage for certain CGMs following advocacy by Senators Collins and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH).

"As the Chairman of the Aging Committee, I have heard from numerous seniors who, when transitioning from employer-provided insurance to Medicare, were shocked to learn that the technologies they have relied upon for years to manage their diabetes are no longer covered," said Senator Collins. "Following a push Senator Shaheen and I led, Medicare provided coverage for cer-

tain continuous glucose monitors in 2017, which transformed the lives of the millions of Americans who rely on these devices to successfully manage diabetes. This proposed rule builds on that successful policy by providing better coverage for CGMs to help keep patients healthy and provide relief from high out-of-pocket costs."

According to CMS, "With one in every three Medicare beneficiaries having diabetes, this proposal would give Medicare beneficiaries and their physicians a wider range of technology and devices to choose from in managing diabetes. This proposal will improve access to these

medical technologies and empower patients to make the best healthcare decisions for themselves."

As co-chairs of the Senate Diabetes Caucus, Senators Collins and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) have worked together to increase awareness of the threats posed by diabetes, invest in research, and improve access to treatment options. In response to the Senators' bipartisan effort, CMS first approved the use of continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) in January 2017 and allowed Medicare beneficiaries to use smartphone apps in conjunction with continuous glucose monitors (CGMs) in June 2018. In order for

Medicare coverage to continue to keep pace with innovation, Senators Collins and Shaheen introduced legislation last November that would create a special task force at the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) to examine and address barriers that seniors face in accessing the latest diabetes management technologies.

Last year, the Senators introduced a bill to roll back more than a decade of insulin prices hikes, and they have consistently pressed to hold insulin manufacturers, insurers, and PBMs accountable for the skyrocketing cost of life-saving insulin.

Additionally, Sen-

ators Collins and Shaheen introduced a bill to expand access to diabetes self-management training and they led the bipartisan push in the Senate to ensure continued support for the Special Diabetes Program.

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From Bangor Region CC

BANGOR - Governor Janet Mills last week extended the State of Civil Emergency for thirty days through Nov. 27. The Governor's decision to extend the emergency is in line with nearly every other state in the nation which have ongoing emergency declarations, according to the

Mills extends civil emergency

National Governors Association. For example, the State of Vermont extended its State of Emergency earlier this month.

"Rising case counts show that this virus is still very much among us and we must take every precaution to slow its spread," said Governor Mills. "If we protect ourselves and protect one another by

washing our hands frequently, maintaining six feet distance between ourselves and others, and wearing a face covering whenever possible, we can limit the spread of this dangerous virus, ensure our businesses survive these colder months, and keep our schools open as we enter winter."

A State of Civil Emer-

gency allows Maine to draw down critical Federal resources and to deploy all available tools to respond to and contain COVID-19. This is Governor Mills' eighth extension of the State of Civil Emergency. Under Maine law, Proclamations of Civil Emergencies may be issued in thirty day increments.

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Standards For Certifying Safe Policing

From USDOJ

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The Department of Justice announced last week Standards for Certification that will be used by credentialing bodies so they can begin certifying thousands of law enforcement agencies over the next three months.

The Standards of Certification are a result of President Trump's June Executive Order 13929, Safe Policing for Safe Communities.

"The fundamental responsibility of government is to keep its citizens safe and today's action to certify thousands of law en-

forcement agencies around the country will further enable us to do just that," said Attorney General William P. Barr. "President Trump's Executive Order on Safe Policing for Safe Communities affirms this administration's commitment to protecting the American people. Furthermore, everyone loses when trust erodes between the community and law enforcement. That is why the Department of Justice has worked tirelessly to implement the President's Executive Order in order to improve accountability, build trust, and ensure the safety of the public as well as members of law enforce-

ment who risk their lives every day."

Executive Order 13929 requires that all state, local, and university law enforcement agencies be certified by independent credentialing agencies. The President's Order requires agencies to meet two standards in order to be successfully credentialed: 1) that the agency's use of force policies prohibit chokeholds, except in situations where the use of deadly force is allowed by law; and 2) that the agency's use of force policies adhere to all applicable federal, state, and local laws.

Over the next 90 days, at least 3,000 law enforce-

ment agencies will be certified by independent credentialing agencies. These agencies will conduct independent reviews of law enforcement policies and procedures, which, in turn, will ensure accountability, enhance citizen confidence and trust in law enforcement, and help correct internal issues before they result in injury to the public or to law enforcement officers.

The Department's certification standards encourage an independent assessment of law enforcement policies and procedures, such as: 1) training protocols on use of force; 2) training protocols on

de-escalation; 3) the scope of an officer's duty and obligation to intervene in order to prevent excessive force by another officer; 4) when and how an officer should provide appropriate medical care; 5) officers identifying themselves as law enforcement and giving verbal warning of their intent to use deadly force; and 6) shooting at or from a moving vehicle. Additionally, law enforcement agencies are encouraged to implement early intervention systems to promote officer wellness and to identify officers who may be at risk of violating use of force policies, policies and procedures to help them re-

cruit and promote the best and brightest, and community engagement plans to address each community's specific needs.

Since the Executive Order was announced in June, the major stakeholders in law enforcement have been kept apprised of the implementation process, have reviewed the Safe Principles document, and many have endorsed their adoption. These principles provide for more accountability, transparency, and community engagement and will foster community trust, all critical elements in keeping both the public and law enforcement officers safe.

Rapid Antigen Tests for COVID-19

From Maine DHHS

AUGUSTA— The Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) announced today its strategy to distribute an allocation of rapid COVID-19 antigen tests to ensure access for all Maine residents, especially those at greater risk of exposure to the virus.

The federal government is distributing the Abbott BinaxNOW COVID-19 point-of-care antigen tests to all 50 states and the District of Columbia. DHHS expects Maine to receive approximately 400,000 BinaxNOW tests periodically through December and has begun receiving shipments. The tests can detect coronavirus infection from a nasal swab sample in approximately fifteen minutes.

"Maine has already built a robust and successful testing strategy that helps us lead the nation in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic," said DHHS Commissioner Jeanne Lambrew. "The addition of the BinaxNOW rapid antigen tests will provide a new layer of protection for Maine people as we remain vigilant against this virus."

DHHS is partnering with Walgreens to distribute the bulk of the tests, approximately 300,000, to 65 pharmacy locations from Kittery to Madawaska. This testing will be available to the public as a drive-through service in November.

"Walgreens is honored to be recognized by the state of Maine to further increase access to COVID-19 testing and in the coming weeks we look forward to serving as a BinaxNOW COVID-19 testing location in select Maine pharmacies," said Rick

Gates, senior vice president of pharmacy, Walgreens. "Pharmacists' role as part of the health care system and patients' care teams has never been more critical or clear. Walgreens has a long history of stepping up to support our customers and communities in times of need, and we're pleased to be working in collaboration with Maine health officials on this effort."

Following a request for quotes process, DHHS issued a preliminary award to Walgreens and is now finalizing an agreement.

The remaining 100,000 BinaxNOW tests will be distributed through a process that prioritizes access for Maine people who are symptomatic or at elevated risk of exposure to and illness from COVID-19, such as critical infrastructure staff including health care workers, law enforcement and public safety personnel, first responders, and school staff. Qualified organizations that follow DHHS guidance for use of the BinaxNOW tests may now apply for an allocation. Since demand may exceed the available supply, DHHS will prioritize facilities that will use them for high-risk populations, in high-risk settings, or where access to COVID-19 testing is otherwise limited. In line with this strategy, Maine DHHS has allocated a portion of BinaxNOW tests to the Maine Department of Corrections, which has deployed them at its facilities as part of its COVID-19 response.

The tests will be distributed to Maine organizations that are not already receiving BinaxNOW tests from the federal government. In addition to the 400,000 tests allocated to Maine DHHS, the U.S.

Department of Health and Human Services has also distributed tests directly to congregate care settings such as nursing and assisted living facilities in the state.

The BinaxNOW test has been authorized by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration for testing symptomatic individuals for COVID-19 within the first 7 days of symptoms. It may also be used in limited circumstances to test critical infrastructure staff who are identified to be a close contact of an individual confirmed to have COVID-19.

Even without accounting for the BinaxNOW tests, Maine's testing capacity leads the nation. This capacity – which is at 528 percent of Maine's testing target according to the Harvard Global Health Institute – is the result of a deal Governor Mills reached with Maine-based IDEXX Laboratories five months ago. That agreement, as well as partnerships with Maine health care organizations and exceptional work by the State's Health and Environmental Testing Laboratory, allowed Maine to become one of the first states in the nation to eliminate its testing prioritization system and issue a standing order allowing anyone in Maine who thinks they need a test to get one.

Maine has also established more than two dozen "swab and send" testing locations that offer molecular testing at no charge. The swab and send sites complement the roughly 40 current testing sites already available to the public. For a list of all sites providing tests to people without symptoms and without requiring a provider referral, visit the Keep Maine Healthy website

Fun and wisdom from Senior College

From LA Sr. College

LEWISTON - You don't Have to be a Scientist to Know that Humor and Laughter Make You Feel Good.

USM/LA Senior College is excited to offer another on-line Food For Thought - one that will help get you laughing! We all need to find some fun and wisdom in this uncertain time. So get ready to enjoy this presentation on November 18, at 1:PM.

Everyone who knows Elcha Buckman knows that she can be funny, but since graduate school in 1975 she has taken her humor to a serious level. She holds a BS, MS, and PhD from Boston University and is Board Certified in child, adolescent, and family psychiatry. While her degrees are impressive, she admits these aren't required to be humorous and laugh. For over 50 years as a parent, friend, and therapist, Elcha has observed, listened, studied, researched, lectured, published, and practiced humor to help people find their happiness, gain the ability to laugh out loud and improve health.



Elcha Buckman will present a talk on Health and Humor on Nov. 18, as part of the USM/LA Senior College Food For Thought series. (Photo courtesy of LA Senior College)

In addition to loving humor, Elcha's hobbies are her friends, children, grandchildren, mini-Schnauzer, needlework, music, swimming, and exploring.

Her presentation about Health and Humor

is free and open to the public.

You may sign up by emailing senior college: laseniorcollege@gmail.com by noon Nov. 17. Be sure to mention the presentation you wish to see and your name.




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Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

MONDAY, NOV. 9
 AUBURN – Special City Council meeting
5:30 p.m.
 LEWISTON – Planning Board meeting, City Hall Council Chambers.
Time TBA
 GORHAM – Conservation Commission meeting via ZOOM.
 AUBURN – Special City Council meeting

TUESDAY, NOV. 10
 AUBURN – Planning Board meeting

6 p.m.
 LEWISTON – City Council workshop, via ZOOM.
6:30 p.m.
 GORHAM – Town Council meeting via ZOOM.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 11
 GORHAM – Veteran’s Day Holiday observed. Town offices closed.
6:30-8:30 p.m.
 AUBURN – Parks and Rec Advisory Board

meeting, Auburn Hall, Room 204

MONDAY, NOV. 16
 AUBURN – City Council workshop and meeting.

5:30-6:30 p.m.
 LEWISTON – Finance Committee meeting, City Hall admin conference room.

TUESDAY, NOV. 17
 AUBURN – Auburn Public Library Board of Trustees meeting; Auburn Sewer District Trustees meeting; Conservation Commission meeting.

8 a.m.
 GORHAM – Ordinance Committee Meeting via ZOOM.

6 p.m.
 LEWISTON – City Council meeting, via ZOOM.

TUESDAY, NOV. 17
6:30 p.m.
 GORHAM – (tentative) Town Council workshop via ZOOM.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 18
8 a.m.
 GORHAM – Gorham Economic Development Corporation meeting via ZOOM.

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.

6:30 p.m.
 GORHAM – Zoning Board of Appeals meeting via ZOOM.

MONDAY, NOV. 23
5:30 p.m.
 LEWISTON – Planning Board meeting, City Hall Council Chambers.

WEDNESDAY, NOV. 25 AND THURSDAY, NOV. 26
 Thanksgiving holiday observed.
 Town offices closed.

TUESDAY, DEC. 1
6:30 p.m.
 GORHAM – Town Council meeting via ZOOM.

MONDAY, DEC. 7
5:30-8:30 p.m.
 AUBURN – City Council Workshop and Meeting, Auburn Hall, Council Chambers.

7 p.m.
 GORHAM – Planning Board Meeting via ZOOM.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 9
7 p.m.
 GORHAM – School Committee meeting via ZOOM.

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TUESDAY, DEC. 15
8 a.m.
 GORHAM – Ordinance Committee meeting via ZOOM.

WEDNESDAY, DEC. 16
8 a.m.
 GORHAM – Gorham Economic Development Corporation meeting via ZOOM.

THURSDAY, DEC. 17
6:30 p.m.
 GORHAM – Zoning Board of Appeals meeting via ZOOM.

FRIDAY, DEC. 25
 Christmas holiday observed.
 Town offices closed.

THURSDAY, DEC. 31
2-5 p.m.
 GORHAM – New Year Gorham event. Details to be determined.

FRIDAY, JAN. 1, 2021
 New Year’s Day holiday observed.
 Town offices closed.

Maine electric cooperative receives \$9.5 million loan

From USDA

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Secretary of Agriculture Sonny Perdue last week announced that the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) is investing an additional \$3.1 billion to build or improve rural electric infrastructure in 25 states.

He highlighted a record level of funding for fiscal year (FY) 2020 to upgrade infrastructure.

In Maine, the Eastern Maine Electric Cooperative will receive an Electric Loan in the amount of \$9.5 million.

“Working and accessible rural electric infrastructure is a cornerstone to prosperity in America’s heartland,” Secretary Perdue said. “This critical funding reflects President Trump’s commitment to increasing prosperity across all of rural America and

ensures this major infrastructure network remains reliable for the millions of Americans who depend on it every day.”

USDA Rural Development State Director Timothy P. Hobbs said, “During October National Cooperatives Month, I am pleased to announce this Trump Administration investment in critical rural Maine infrastructure. Services like these are at the heart of USDA Rural Development’s mission to build thriving rural Maine communities.”

The Electric Loan in the amount of \$9.5 million will be used by Eastern Maine Electric Cooperative to connect 412 consumers, and build and improve 61 miles of line. This loan includes over \$1 million in smart grid technologies.

Eastern Maine Electric Co-operative is headquartered in Calais and

serves an average of 12,637 members over 1,756 miles of line in Aroostook, Penobscot and Washington counties in eastern Maine.

USDA is investing in 53 projects through the Electric Loan Program. This funding will benefit 1.4 million rural residents and businesses in Alabama, Arkansas, California, Colorado, Florida, Georgia, Iowa, Kentucky, Louisiana, Maine, Minnesota, Missouri, North Carolina, North Dakota, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, Oklahoma, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, South Dakota, Tennessee, Texas, Virginia and Wisconsin.

The department invested \$6.3 billion in the Electric Loan Program in FY 2020, up from \$5.8 billion in 2019 – also a record. USDA made loans to 119 utilities in 34 states across the country during FY 2020, which ended on Sep-

tember 30. Those figures build upon the \$3.7 billion invested in 2018.

Helping improve rural electric infrastructure is a significant part of the Trump administration’s “all-of-the-above” energy strategy. USDA’s Electric Program helps finance wind, solar and natural gas plants, as well as improvements to produce clean energy from coal-fired plants. Local utilities also use the loans to invest in infrastructure to deliver affordable power to thousands of residential, commercial and agricultural consumers.

Twenty-one of the loans that USDA awarded in FY 2020, representing almost 10 percent of total loan volume by dollar, will help expand smart grid technologies. Smart grid can be a catalyst for broadband and other telecommunications services in unserved and underserved

rural areas. These loans will finance nearly 23,000 new line-miles of smart grid fiber when buildout is complete.

Rural electric cooperatives and utilities are increasing their internal communications capabilities to improve the reliability and efficiency of the electric grid. This added communications capacity helps cooperatives and their partners expand broadband coverage as they leverage these USDA smart grid investments.

In addition, this year, USDA has made it easier for rural electric utilities and cooperatives to use Electric Program loans for vegetation management

programs to prevent and control wildfires.

During FY 2020, USDA also approved nearly \$104 million in loans for 11 energy efficiency programs under the Rural Energy Savings Program and \$11.7 million in High Energy Cost Grants to rural communities and villages in Alaska to lower the cost of energy consumption and upgrade aging generation systems.

Some Electric Program loans are specifically targeted to support the administration’s actions to spur economic development in areas where poverty rates have been stubbornly high for decades.

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Several of the nearly 40 protesters from the group Mainers Against Mask Mandates who traveled to Augusta on Oct. 24 to picket near the Blaine House against the mandate that Mainers must wear a mask during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Geraghty photo)

UnmaskME

Continued from page 1

no counties, not even York or Cumberland, are considered high risk by the Maine

Centers For Disease Control.

His remarks came just days before the Maine CDC began reporting a spike in new cases, which has led

Mills to consider holding off on reopening bars Nov. 4 as planned.

Independent Senate candidate Max Linn, who made headlines when he cut up a mask during a debate, made a surprise visit to speak at the protest. “There’s never been a better time to be an American patriot,” he told the crowd. Linn said Washington politics won’t change until the people choose “citizen legislators” like him to replace those now in power.

It was the appeals of ordinary citizens who spoke that appeared to carry the most weight with the crowd. Rebecca Rochelle said she simply cannot wear a mask. The one time she did, she



Demonstrators applaud a speech by 1st District Congressional Candidate Dr. Jay Allen as he tells them “This is not an anti-mask rally, it is an anti-mask mandate rally,” during a protest against the Maine requirement to wear masks during the COVID-19 pandemic. The demonstration took place near the Blaine House in Augusta on Oct. 24. (Geraghty photo)

passed out, yet little concern was shown. “I’ve been called killer, uncaring, rude, entitled . . . I’m all for laws, but I also expect people to treat each other with respect,

and to care for my health.” The protest drew a response from Mills’ office later in the day which urged Maine people to continue to wear face coverings, not

only to reduce the risk of COVID-19 transmission but “as a sign of respect for our fellow Maine citizens” and “to keep our economy up and running.”

Tips for Workers Impacted by COVID-19

By CouponChief

The coronavirus crisis has caused the unemployment rate in the U.S. to reach Depression-era levels. According to the Bureau of Labor Statistics, at the beginning of May, it stood at 14.7 percent. Some analysts predict this figure may balloon up to 20 percent over the coming months, especially as the country grapples with the impact of stay-at-home measures put in place to flatten the pandemic curve.

Since late March, the total number of jobless claims has reached more than 40 million Americans. Initially, the service industry, including travel and restaurant businesses, was the hardest hit. Now, even major startups like Uber, Lyft, and Airbnb have had to let go of staff.

If you’re one of the millions who’ve been laid off, use these resources and money-saving tips to help you through this time.

What Should I Do If I’ve Been Laid Off?

Losing your job is rough, but losing it during a pandemic is even tougher. There are a few steps to take that can immediately help you through this difficult time. Many people are in the same boat as you, so you’re not going through this alone. Be prepared for long wait times when making calls or filing claims, but staying the course and remaining patient will benefit you in the long run.

Apply for unemployment benefits: You can usually file an unemployment claim online. Some workers who don’t qualify for unemployment under normal circumstances (like gig workers and those who are self-employed) now qualify under the Coronavirus Rescue Act, which Congress passed on March 27, 2020.

Contact your bank and lenders: Financial advisors suggest taking a proactive approach, reach-

ing out to your banks and any lending agencies you work with to ask for help — be sure to state that you are financially impacted by COVID-19. Many financial institutions are deferring payments on loans and credit card payments for those who have been affected by the pandemic.

Talk to your landlord: If you’re concerned you won’t be able to pay your rent on time, get in touch with your landlord as soon as possible. Be upfront about the financial issues you’re experiencing due to COVID-19. Let your landlord know you’re struggling to pay rent and ask for assistance. Many states already have preventative measures in place to ensure tenants can’t be evicted, but it’s in your best interest to keep the lines of communication open.

Employment Resources for Laid-Off Workers

The Department of Labor has compiled a comprehensive list of resources offered by the federal government for people who’ve been impacted by COVID-19. State department websites have assembled information specific to their region that can help, so be sure to visit your local state department’s website for frequently updated information.

CareerOneStop is a one-stop-shop for all you need to know about coronavirus unemployment insurance claims through the Department of Labor.

The 211 network provides help if you need assistance with food, housing, or childcare during the pandemic.

Online recruiters like Indeed and Glassdoor have created lists of useful resources to accompany their job postings. Some bigger companies have been actively growing their workforce at this time. Amazon, Apple, Chipotle, and the Home Depot are just some of the companies that have

posted jobs.

For freelancers who have been impacted by Covid-19, the Freelancers Union has resources to help, as well as a relief fund.

How Does the Coronavirus Aid Bill Help Unemployed Workers?

The \$2.2 trillion coronavirus rescue package, passed by Congress on March 27, 2020, boosts weekly unemployment benefits. It adds \$600 of federal unemployment compensation on top of individual state unemployment benefits per week. You can receive this amount even if you’ve exhausted your state benefits. For the first time, freelancers, gig economy workers, and self-employed workers are also covered by unemployment insurance. The package also increases the unemployment relief period by 13 weeks.

The coronavirus aid bill provides a relief payment of \$1,200 to individuals that make \$75,000 or less annually and \$2,400 to every married couple making \$150,000 or less annually. Families and individuals with at least one dependent minor under 17 years-old receive an additional \$500 per child. The earning limit is based on your adjusted gross wage. You won’t be eligible for a stimulus check if you make \$99,000 per year or more as an individual, or over \$198,000 as a married couple.

Money-Saving Tips to Help Weather the Storm

Aside from staying up to date on what federal and state government resources are at your disposal, you should take a close look at how you’re spending your money. More than ever, this is the time to evaluate needs versus wants. Use the tips below to make the money you’ve got last longer.

Reevaluate Your

Budget

Even if you already have a budget, being laid off is an excellent reason to revisit it. Sit down with your bank and credit card statements to figure out exactly where you’re spending too much money. One of the first things you can do to save money is to spend less on essential items by using coupons from the [Coupon Chief website](#).

Cut Out Any Non-Essential Spending

You may have to look carefully at your entertainment, luxury, and discretionary spending. Hopefully, your gym hasn’t been charging you during the shutdown, but if you do have a gym membership, it’s advisable to cancel it and opt for home workouts instead.

Another quick way to save money is to stop subscription services and pare down your cable or streaming packages.

Divert Savings and Defer Loan Payments

Most financial advisors would tell you to save as much money as you can, but if you’re unemployed during a crisis, you may need every last dollar for living expenses. Put a pause on contributions you make to retirement funds, brokerage accounts, 529 plans, and other savings until you’re more financially stable. If you can, make a plan with your creditors and find out if they have any relief options available. If you owe money on a student loan, the coronavirus aid bill helps you defer payments. The U.S. Department of Education’s [Federal Student Aid website](#) offers information for student loan borrowers who’ve been impacted by COVID-19.

Evaluate Your Car Insurance Policies

Since many of us are now working from home, many auto insurers are temporarily cutting premiums — this could result in significant savings. If

you haven’t been offered a discount yet, contact your insurance provider to see if one is forthcoming. You may also be able to discuss a cheaper policy with your insurance company because you’re not driving as much to commute to work. If they’re not willing to do that, perhaps it’s time to change your auto insurer.

Consider Refinancing Your Home to Reduce Payments

Mortgage rates are currently at their lowest levels and saving hundreds of dollars a month on your house payment could go a long way to improving your financial situation. Refinancing your home loan with a lower mortgage rate could reduce your monthly payments and the interest you’ll pay over the life of the loan. Before you refinance, work with a broker or use a refinance calculator to make sure the drop in interest rate is enough to offset any closing costs.

Simplify Your Credit Cards

Credit card issuers such as American Express and Capital One are letting customers skip payments without interest in response to the coronavirus pandemic. At the same time, other financial institutions have agreed to waive some of their fees. These companies may also offer hardship programs or other debt management options. Talk to your credit card institutions to see if you can drop down to a lower annual fee. It may mean you lose out on benefits like loyalty programs and reward points, but if it helps decrease your overall costs, it could be worth the loss.

Transfer Your Credit Card Balance

Another good way to save money is to look for a credit card with an introductory zero percent annual percentage rate (APR) on balance transfers. The offer may initially sound appealing, but be aware that transfers are rarely

free — you’ll need to do the math and shop for the best balance transfer credit card to see if it works out for you.

Make Sure You Still Have Health Insurance

Now is not the time to go without health insurance. According to a Kaiser Family Foundation report published in early May, nearly 27 million Americans could potentially lose their employer-based health insurance during the coronavirus pandemic. If you’re among the millions who have lost their employer-provided health insurance, you may have one or more options for coverage you can still afford. This will depend on your household income, age, where you live, and where you worked before you were laid off.

You could choose to continue your employer-provided coverage for a short time by paying the full premium (called COBRA continuation). You may become eligible for Medicaid or subsidized coverage through the Affordable Care Act (ACA) marketplaces. Research to make sure you’re not left without coverage during this health crisis.

Don’t Touch Your 401(k)

Although the coronavirus aid bill makes it possible to make withdrawals from your 401(k) without penalties, experts advise against this and suggest it be done only as a very last resort. It may seem like a good move to dip into your retirement savings to cover bills, loan payments, and day-to-day expenses, but make sure you’ve exhausted every other avenue before you go down this road. If you do draw from your 401(k), you could lose the compounding interest of any potential earnings of your hard-earned retirement nest egg.

For more money-saving tips, go to: www.couponchief.com/blog/