

## Gorham winter sports suspended While Cumberland County is designated 'yellow'



Coach Laughn Berthiaume stands in an empty basketball court at Gorham High School after girls basketball and other winter sports were suspended when Cumberland County was designated 'yellow' under COVID-19 guidelines two weeks ago by the State of Maine. The girls plan for a 12-game season starting in mid-January, if allowed. (Kiely Callahan photo)

By Nathan Tsukroff

GORHAM – Wait and see.

That's all that high school sports teams like the girls varsity basketball team at Gorham High School can do, now that Cumberland County has been designated "yellow" due to increased COVID-19 infections.

The State of Maine moved Cumberland County from green to yellow a couple of weeks ago, as infections increased in the area following family gatherings over Thanksgiving.

That decision was due to be revisited today, with the hopes that the county could return to green and allow winter sports at local schools to resume.

For now, in-person practices have been suspended as all after-school activities were cancelled at school districts throughout the county.

The team had been set for practice after school when word came that all sports would be suspended, girls basketball head coach Laughn Berthiaume said. "We had to definitely kind of change on the fly!"

"There's no in-person activity. When a county's designated yellow, you can do things virtually, but we can't do any in-person thing," he said. "So I can't get them in the gym. I can connect with them on Zoom, I can send some things to them (via email), set up some team things that I can do remotely."

Even under the green designation a couple of weeks ago, Maine's COVID-19 guidelines meant teams at Gorham High School could only "hold skills and drills. But at that point we couldn't even have live defense. We couldn't compete against each other, but we could be in the same area and work on skills and drills together," Berthiaume said.

Players are required to wear masks at all times during the winter, even on the basketball court, since they are indoors. In the fall season, "When kids got out on the field, they could take their mask off. It's no longer like that," he said. "So if we can get back to playing, they have to have their masks on the whole time."

If Cumberland County returns to a green designation, competition will be allowed between schools, although with a modified schedule. "Right now, the plan is to have a 12-game schedule. The schedule is a little different in terms of who you're playing, because we're trying to stay regional," Berthiaume said. "And so you're playing the schools closer to you. In southern Maine, it doesn't really change who you play that much, but it does in some other areas."

Berthiaume said the changes in the

See Sports, page 11

## Blasting near exit 45 of I-95

From MTA

PORTLAND – Blasting beside exit 45 of the Maine Turnpike in Portland began this week.

On Monday, construction crews began blasting ledge along the mainline, southbound, in the vicinity of the MTA maintenance facility (Crosby Farm) located at mile 45.5.

Currently, one blast per day is expected to occur between the hours of 10 a.m. and 1 p.m.

In order to conduct the blast, traffic will need to be stopped in both directions. Motorists should anticipate stops of up to six minutes during this time. Blasting is anticipated to occur for approximately three weeks.

This work is part of the Portland Area Widening project that is currently underway, and is scheduled to be complete by the Fall of 2021.

## \$3 million grant to MMSA

From MMSA

AUGUSTA - The Maine Mathematics and Science Alliance (MMSA) and BSCS Science Learning recently received a \$3 million federal grant to benefit educators and students across the country.

The National Science Foundation's Discovery Research K-12 grant program awarded the grant to the Place-Based Learning for Elementary Science at Scale (PeBLES2) project over the next 4 years.

PeBLES2 - a collaborative project between MMSA and BSCS - will support elementary educators in incorporating locally or culturally relevant place-based phenomena into their science teaching.

The plan is to work with educators to design and study locally adaptable teaching units for grades 3-5. Educators will be able to use "base" units, intentionally designed for local adaptation, to create relevant learning experiences for their students.

Supported through on-going learning experiences, teachers will be able to confidently "adapt-their-own adventure" and teach units based right in their local community.

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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## Guest Column

### Saying goodbye to the year of the grawlix

By Grammar Guy

If I told you that a grawlix infestation is inevitable, you'd probably respond with something to the effect of, "What the \$#! are you talking about?"

I think I speak for all of us when I say I'm ready to kick the flaming, heaping pile of garbage called 2020 to the curb. Between a once-in-a-century global pandemic, murder hornets and everything else in between, I've strung together quite the creative list of profane words when cursing 2020's series of unfortunate events. The polite way to express these words on a page is through the graphical bleeping of swear words called a "grawlix."

You've probably seen this in the comics section of the newspaper. Picture Cathy, with her eyes so close together that they touch. She hasn't had her coffee yet, and "Ack!" just won't suffice. You see, she has just attempted to dye

her hair, and it turned out the same green shade as a pickle. Instead of "Ack!" in this situation, Cathy lays down a "%#@!\$" or maybe even a "\$@&\*!" Those are examples of grawlixes (or grawlices...both are correct plural forms of grawlix).

When you employ a grawlix into your comic strip, text message or email, you're replacing actual curse words with keyboard characters that convey the words without having to spell them out. It allows the reader to fill in the blank with their own profanity-laced Mad Libs interjection.

I have responded to most of 2020 with a series of grawlixes. For instance, when I learned that we've had more than 26 hurricanes, so the hurricane-naming people move to the Greek alphabet to start naming hurricanes, I said, "You've got to be &#@\$ kidding me!" The 2020 Summer Olympics in Tokyo were postponed until 2021, which cause my

synchronized swimming team to collectively cry, "%&\$@#!. Now we have to change our flights."

The year 2020 has been so monumentally full of bad news, I barely remember the Australian bushfires that burned 47 million acres, killed at least 34 people, displaced thousands more and killed, harmed or displaced 3 billion animals. Oh, %#@#&. I mean, the fires did start in late 2019, so it's easy to forget that we rang in the new year with this terrible event.

So, based on the one-after-another calamities that have bombarded us this year, I'm ready to declare 2020 "the year of the grawlix" while we bid it good %#@#&\$ riddance. Here's hoping 2021 brings much happier happenings.

*Curtis Honeycutt is a syndicated humor columnist. He is the author of Good Grammar is the Life of the Party: Tips for a Wildly Successful Life. Find more at curtishoneycutt.com.*

## UMaine workshop for farmers

From UMaine

ORONO - In response to an unpredictable 2020 growing season, University of Maine Cooperative Extension is offering a three-part series for farmers considering transitions in their business models from 9:30-11:30 a.m. on Jan. 12, Jan. 19, and Jan 26.

"Making Money Moves: A Decision-Mak-

ing Workshop for Farmers" is a discussion-based series designed to help farmers with five or more years of experience running their own farm operation think through those business decisions. Workshop participants will identify strengths and opportunities for improvement, clarify planning and decision-making processes to maximize the return on investment, and work

toward identified farm goals. UMaine Extension experts will lead the workshop.

The \$30 fee per farm includes up to two participants; registration is required by Jan. 5. Register on the program webpage to receive the link. For more information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact Jason Lilley, 207.781.6099; jason.lilley@maine.edu.

## DHHS Launches Text Notifications

From Maine DHHS

AUGUSTA—The Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) announced today the launch of a new text messaging service to alert Maine people who test positive for COVID-19.

The text messages will provide steps to take to protect their health and limit the spread of the virus, as part of a comprehensive plan to adapt Maine's response to the pandemic.

Beginning today, people who test positive for COVID-19 and voluntarily provide their telephone number to their testing site will receive a text message from the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) indicating that they should isolate for 10 days at home and inform close contacts of potential exposure to the virus. Recipients will also be directed to further information on the Maine CDC website. The message from Maine CDC will come from the number 22300.

As previously announced, Maine CDC will continue to call people at greater risk of contracting or spreading COVID-19, such as older Mainers, health care workers, and people in congregate settings, and investigate their cases and notify their close contacts. All other people who test positive will receive the text message and a call from the DHHS Call Center.

"This text message notification allows Maine CDC to connect with people directly affected by COVID-19 in an additional way, helping them to take steps to avoid spreading the disease to others and support them in staying in isolation," said DHHS Commissioner Jeanne Lambrew. "As we enter the holiday season, it's more important than ever that Maine people remain vigilant against this virus to stay safe and healthy into the new year."

"This new tool will get information as rapidly as possible to people who test positive for COVID-19," said Dr. Nirav D. Shah, Director of the Maine CDC. "It should also allow their loved ones and other close contacts to begin quarantine as quickly as possible, which can help limit further spread of the virus."

The extra outreach comes as Maine CDC continues to process a significant backlog of test results, as announced earlier this month. Maine CDC is receiving a high volume of positive test results from the State lab and other labs, leading to delays in the process of assigning positive results to case investigators.

In recent days, the reported case count has increased significantly as 3,500 positive test results from December 10 to present are reviewed to determine if they are new cases. Not all positive tests become a new case, as some are from people who test positive more than once and others are out-of-state residents whose results are reported to their state of residence.

Today, Maine CDC announced that it is expanding its COVID-19 data dashboard to better reflect these changes. Newly added to the dashboard will be visualizations of the molecular test positivity rate and more granular, daily data on the number of test results received,

including daily positive tests. Combined with the existing data on new cases assigned for investigation, this expanded testing data more precisely captures the spread of COVID-19 in Maine as Maine CDC continues to process the backlog. The expanded dashboard is expected to launch later today.

For example, today Maine CDC reported an increase of 748 new cases of COVID-19. While this represents an all-time high, it includes cases with positive test results dating back to December 8 which Maine CDC has now been able to review and assess case status. The expanded data dashboard shows 561 positive test results reported today and a positivity rate of 4.28%, with both metrics gradually decreasing in recent days. Considered collectively, Maine's metrics remain concerning but suggest that COVID-19 spread is beginning to ease in the state.

Maine CDC currently has 135 people conducting case investigation and contract tracing and the DHHS Call Center has a total of 45 workers trained to help as contact tracers or case notifiers as needed for the short-term as Maine CDC brings on new people.

It remains vital that Maine people take steps to limit the spread of COVID-19, including avoiding gatherings, maintaining physical distance, wearing a face covering, staying home if you are sick, and speaking to your health care provider if you experience symptoms consistent with COVID-19, such as shortness of breath, fever, and cough.

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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## Free classes for mill workers

From Maine CCS

AUGUSTA - Workers who lost their jobs at a Jay paper mill after an April explosion can get free training and classes at two local community colleges, officials last week.

Mill owner Pixelle Specialty Solutions announced the creation of a \$1 million education fund for the workers last week. Officials at Pixelle and the Maine Community College System (CCS) said the workers can use those funds at two area colleges: Central Maine Community College in Auburn, and Kennebec Valley Community College in Fairfield/Hinckley.

"This educational opportunity that Pixelle Specialty Solutions has set up for its displaced workers is amazing. It's a powerful new model that will give these

hard-working Mainers the ability to access retraining at no cost to them," said Dan Belyea, chief workforce development officer at MCCS.

The 177 displaced workers must select one of three pathways to pursue, and enroll no later than July 5, 2021. The options are:

Associate degree (2-year programs) in over 40 areas of study

Certificate (1-year programs) in over 20 areas of study

Short-term workforce training (1-week to 1-month programs) in specific fields related to healthcare, information technology, or technical trades

The former Pixelle workers decide which college to attend, and the cost of tuition, fees and materials will be covered by the Pixelle education fund. Pixelle sent information about the pro-

gram to the affected workers last week.

"This is an incredible \$1 million gift to the people affected and the entire region. We're eager to welcome these students and get them the training they need for their next step," MCCS President David Daigler said.

"We partnered with Maine's community colleges because we want these workers to have easy access to a broad range of high-quality retraining options. For some, that will be short-term training for a very specific job, for others it might be pursuing a two-year degree that launches them in an entirely new career direction," said Eric Hanson, Pixelle mill manager in Jay. "Our community benefits, the workers get the training they choose and our local businesses know the local pool of skilled workers is growing."

Jay Town Manager Shiloh LaFreniere said the initiative is also a big boost for local businesses.

"Other companies within our region are struggling to find well-qualified employees," LaFreniere said. "Offering free, local education and training is a game-changer for these workers and our community. It's going to open up so many opportunities for them and for local business owners actively looking for skilled workers."

MCCS is also working with the Maine Department of Labor and its Rapid Response Team to provide ongoing assistance to the dislocated workers. The Rapid Response Team has been working one-on-one with laid off workers, providing them with information and helping them identify next steps.

## Webinar on new vegetable varieties

From UMaine

ORONO - University of Maine Cooperative Extension and University of New Hampshire Extension will host an online panel discussion about new vegetable varieties available for Northern New England gardens from 6-7 p.m. on Jan. 13.

"Exciting New Vegetable Varieties for Home Gardeners" will feature Mark Hutton, UMaine Extension associate professor and state vegetable specialist; Becky Sideman, UNH Extension professor and sustainable horticulture state specialist; Heron Breen, area coordinator in charge of trials programs for Fedco Seeds; and Lauren Giroux, director of product selection and trialing at Johnny's Selected



Seeds.

Registration is required; a \$5 donation is optional.

Register on the event webpage at <https://bit.ly.co/4yrC> to attend live or receive a link to the recording.

This session is the first in a six-part winter gardening webinar series to be offered every other Wednesday through March.

For more information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact Pamela Hargest, 207.781.6099; [pamela.hargest@maine.edu](mailto:pamela.hargest@maine.edu).

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# Holiday stress with COVID-19

**From FEMA**

WASHINGTON, D.C. - Since March, life has changed for everyone in unimaginable ways.

Some people are feeling deepened anxiety, loneliness, and uncertainty about the future due to the impacts of COVID-19, all of which take a heavy toll on daily life.

This time of year brings increased stress as traditional celebrations will look different due to health and safety measures. With the holidays and year end fatigue, this may be an especially difficult time.

The CDC has suggestions that may ease the

stress in the weeks to come.

Celebrate in small, same household groups with masks and proper ventilation.

If you can't see them in person, stay connected with family and friends through zoom and phone calls.

Know that you are not alone as COVID-19 has affected the world, as well as your community.

Go outside for a walk and fresh air, if able.

Disasters can especially leave children feeling frightened, confused, and insecure. Whether a child has personally experienced the pandemic, has seen the event on television, or

has heard it discussed by adults, it is important for parents and teachers to be informed and ready to help if reactions to stress begin to occur. According to the National Institute of Mental Health, symptoms of depression may include:

Difficulty concentrating, remembering details, and making decisions; fatigue and decreased energy; feelings of guilt, worthlessness, and/or helplessness, pessimism and hopelessness; insomnia, early-morning wakefulness, or excessive sleeping; irritability and restlessness; and a loss of interest in activities that were once enjoyed.

New Englanders ex-

periencing stress due to the pandemic may call their State's call center for support. 2-1-1 is the special abbreviated telephone number reserved as an easy-to-remember three-digit telephone number meant to provide information and referrals to health, human, and social service organizations.

In addition to guiding callers to crisis counselors, dialing 2-1-1 also provides individuals and families in need with information on where to find social services such as supplemental food and nutrition programs, shelter and housing options, services for veterans, healthcare, and vaccination information.

The call centers are also designed to assist those who do not speak English, those with limited reading skills, and those who are new to their communities. The United Way operates or funds 70 percent of 2-1-1 centers.

The National Disaster Distress Helpline, funded by The Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA), also provides crisis counseling and support to people experiencing emotional distress related to natural or human-caused disasters. Support is available to all residents of the U.S./territories experiencing stress or mental health concerns

related to any natural or human-caused disaster through the National Disaster Distress Helpline (call or text 1-800-985-5990; for Spanish, press "2"). The helpline is available 24 hours a day, seven days week, 365-day-a-year.

Callers can connect with DDH hotline counselors in 100+ additional languages via third-party interpretation services. People who are Deaf or hard of hearing can use the text option, or for TTY, use their preferred Relay service or dial 7-1-1 and then 1-800-985-5990.

For more information, please visit: [disasterdistress.samhsa.gov](http://disasterdistress.samhsa.gov)

## Letter to the Editor

# Americans experiencing social isolation

Over the last few years we have seen a growing number of Americans experiencing social isolation and loneliness. New studies show that social isolation and loneliness can be as harmful to your health as smoking. In Maine, over 135,000 people 50 and older live alone

and are at a higher risk of experiencing social isolation. In addition, many Mainers currently do not have access to high-speed internet and are left with little or no connection to family and friends. The COVID-19 pandemic has shed an even brighter light on the challenges many

Mainers are facing as they lack personal connections to family, friends, and neighbors.

At AARP Maine, we want you to know you are not alone. We have gathered helpful resources that are available to Mainers who may experience loneliness this winter, as well as

a resource guide for caregivers. Resources include AARP Friendly Voice calls, technology trainings, volunteer opportunities, and more. For caregivers, our guide provides a starting point to help you find the support you need throughout your caregiving journey, including

government and nonprofit resources both in-person and online. Both guides are available at [www.aarp.org/me](http://www.aarp.org/me).

We are all in this together! If you have a friend or neighbor who lives alone, consider checking in on them by phone or text, or leave a friendly note at

their door. Visit our website for more health and long-term care resources, news and updates, and events. If you have any questions, email us at [aarpme@aarp.org](mailto:aarpme@aarp.org) or call us at (866)-554-5380.

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# Christmas Kitten Commercial turns 40

From BSB

BANGOR - If you grew up in Maine, the iconic Bangor Savings Bank commercial featuring two playful kittens is a beloved part of your holiday memories.

Waylon and Willie scurry under the Christmas tree, swat their paws at ornaments, tear open gift-wrapping

paper, and lap up the milk they spilt – all while a musical medley plays that has become embedded in our collective consciousness.

While every advertisement has a shelf life, the Christmas Kittens are truly the exception, standing the test of time with an annual airing every holiday season since its debut in 1980. For many, the

Christmas season didn't begin until this 60-second image ad – meant to evoke an emotion rather than sell a product – had hit the airwaves. Forty years later, it's still going strong with some fans asking as early as August: When will the kittens ad begin playing?

To mark the commercial's 40th anniversary, Bangor Savings

Bank released a video that talks about the history of the ad, and is making a major donation to local animal shelters.

The video at [www.bangor.com/kittens](http://www.bangor.com/kittens) peeks behind the curtain of one of the most iconic TV ads the region has ever seen.

Featured in the video are Phil Cormier, a TV commercial editor who worked on the ad;

The Nite Show's Danny Cashman, who parodied the commercial; and comments about the ad from Bangor Savings Bank employees.

The ad includes trivia, such as the names of the kittens (Waylon and Willie), that it took four times as long to shoot the commercial because Waylon and Willie kept falling asleep, and that the

“meow” at the commercial's end didn't come from a cat – but from a studio employee

Bangor Savings Bank is donating \$10,000 to animal shelters in Maine and New Hampshire. The shelters will be chosen by an online vote that runs until midnight, Dec. 31. Voters can submit their choice at the video website at [www.bangor.com/kittens](http://www.bangor.com/kittens)

## VA distributes Moderna vaccine

From VA Maine

AUGUSTA - VA Maine Healthcare System began COVID-19 vaccination with the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine last week following the U.S. Food and Drug Administration's Emergency Use Authorization for this vaccine.

“VA Maine is eager to offer the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine to health care personnel and community living center residents,” said Medical Center Director, Tracye B. Davis. “Receiving the vaccine is like having hope delivered. As vaccine supplies increase, our ultimate goal is to offer COVID-19

vaccination to all veterans and employees who want to be vaccinated.”

VA Maine Healthcare System is one of 113 VA Medical Centers across the country to receive the first limited supply of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine. Sites were identified based on need for the vaccine according to CDC's 1A prioritization and capacity to store the vaccine at -20°C.

The Moderna COVID-19 vaccine was 94 percent effective in clinical trials in preventing COVID-19 disease. The vaccine is administered in two doses, 28 days apart. The side effects appear

See **Moderna**, page 12

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# Arts & Entertainment

## Ice Fishing Tips from Maine DIFW

**From Maine DIFW**

AUGUSTA - Anglers across the state are eager to hear "FLAG!" for the first time in months!

Now more than ever people are looking for more ways to spend time outside. With over 6,000 lakes and ponds in Maine there is opportunity for everyone, and the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife encourages experienced anglers to bring someone ice fishing for the first time this year.

Remember to always use extreme caution when venturing onto Maine's waterways. Accessing lakes and ponds should be avoided unless you can be certain of ice conditions by checking ice thickness.

Before stepping out, use a chisel or auger to test ice thickness in several places. Remember that ice seldom freezes uniform-

ly. Conditions are always changing and can vary from one location to the next. Ice that forms over flowing water and currents, especially near streams, bridges and culverts, can be particularly dangerous.

Before you head out for a day of ice fishing, ALWAYS tell someone where you are going and when you will return.

Maine DIFW biologists put together a list of waters they recommend trying in the early season as well as tips and reminders in the online Fishing Report at <https://bit.ly.co/4yt1>. The report lists several small bodies of water that typically freeze first, but it is up to the angler to test for ice safety.

**Ice fishing tips from Maine's fisheries biologists -**

If targeting salmon and brook trout, don't miss the early season for these species as the best fishing

generally occurs within the first two weeks of ice-in. Tip two is the same as last year, learn to jig! - *Fisheries Resource Supervisor Jim Pellerin*

The number one tip when it comes to ice fishing for brook trout is STAY SHALLOW. Your best brook trout water is going to be in less than five feet of water. Brook trout like shallow, near-shore habitat in the winter. Another tip when it comes to brook trout through the ice is keep your bait small. Small minnows or pieces of nightcrawler work just fine. You can certainly bait-up with a big shiner, but just know that many brookies will keep picking at that bait without getting hooked. A small bait works best for brook trout. - *Fisheries Resource Supervisor Jason Seiders*

When targeting rainbow trout I highly recommend fishing with

worms. When fishing for salmon, use live shiners or smelts and set your trap just under the ice (1-2 feet under the ice). - *Fisheries Resource Supervisor Gregory Burr*

Pack more than one (non-lead) depth sounder just in case you misplace one. Before you head to the ice, go over your tip-ups and respool old, weak fishing line so you don't lose the fish of a lifetime. - *From Fisheries Resource Supervisor Kevin Dunham*

Before fishing a new water look online for a depth map. If you're fishing for brook trout, target shallower water and set traps or jig near the shoreline or structure. - *Acting Fisheries Resource Supervisor Liz Thorndike*

You don't have to fish deep for brook trout. Stick to the shoreline where it's safest. Worms are low maintenance and always a good bet for bait. Hope-

fully, Ole Man Winter will make an appearance soon and we can look forward to some terrific salmon, trout, and togue fishing in the north country. - *Fisheries Resource Supervisor Tim Obrey*

Try catching your own bait. The past couple of years has seen minor shortages in the availability of live bait, particularly smelt. If you are fortunate to live near a water with smelt and it is open to ice fishing, consider spending some extra time to catch your own. - *Fisheries Resource Supervisor Frank Frost*

Send all items for Newsmakers, Names and Faces to the Editor. Deadline is Friday by five.

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Guest Column

# Home Country

By Slim Randles

Saw this ad t'other day in my outdoors magazine, Campin' 'n Fishin'.

Oh, hi there, Alphonse Wilson doin' the talkin' don't you see. Call me Windy. Sneaked in here again when Slim weren't lookin'.

But I gotta tell ya not to believe ever dang thing

you read. Yessir, they had this little-bitty sleeping bag made out of space materials, I guess so you can stay warm on Mars or somethin' and it weighed just about nothin' and a half.

Just how stupid do they think we are, anyhow? I mean, you gotta surround yourself with good stuff to sleep right or you're just flippity squidglin' around

all night. Like a inch bug or somethin' ... well, somethin' that's cold and has an agrellation of sleeplessness.

You give me a good ol' cowboy bedroll every day! Yessir. Now if you ain't up to slump on what a bedroll is, I'll just clue you in. You take a great big ol' tarp and inside it you put your blankets and

a piller and such. How many a-them blankets do you use? Wellsir, how cold is it going to plunge down to tonight? You see, it's adjustable and you can thicken it if it's cold or skinny it down if it's a warm night.

Now what a good smart cowboy will do is build hisself a bedroll so thick he can go dog mushin' on the Idiot Road race

up in Alaska. Yessir! Then, he can take out half the blankets if it ain't gonna be cold enough to hang meat tonight. You see?

'Course now, a real cowboy bedroll ain't easy to haul around. You ain't goin' far with it on your back. Nossir. But that's why them early cowboys invented pack mules and pickup trucks.

There's a rule of thumb tacks here, and you're getting it straight from the horse's mouth ... if you can carry it, It ... Ain't ... A ... Bedroll.

And you can tell 'em I said so.

Brought to you by "A Cowboy's Guide to Packing the Backyard Horse," by Slim Randles. Available at [www.amazon.com](http://www.amazon.com).

Guest Column

## Verbing around the Christmas tree

By The Grammar Guy

We're due a season of merriment. After all, we've all lived through the first eleven months of 2020, so, pass the egg nog, and let's break some grammar rules!

There's something about the holiday season that makes us want to "verbyfy" nouns. Take Volvo's 2020 holiday ad campaign, in which we are encouraged to "Holiday safely." The word "holiday" itself is a word created by combining "holy" and "day." I can't begin to explain to you how much advertising phrases like "holiday safely" are the linguistic equivalent of nails on a chalkboard to me, but this is not a new phenomenon.

Let's look at the popular holiday song "It's the Most Wonderful Time of the Year." Songwriting duo Eddie Pola and George Wyle (Wyle also penned the "Gilligan's Island"

theme) wrote the song for Andy Williams' Christmas album in 1963. Interestingly enough, Columbia Records opted to release a different song from the album as the single in 1963, when they chose Williams' rendition of "White Christmas" (it reached number one). To date, it's an iconic holiday classic that exudes the idealistic optimism of the season.

I love this song, but the writers played fast and loose with some nouns that found themselves playing the roles of verbs. For instance, "with the kids jingle belling" rhymes well with the next line "and everyone telling you 'be of good cheer,'" but that doesn't make "jingle belling" a verb. Later in the song, Pola and Wyle employed the same tactic when they wrote "There'll be much mistletoeing and hearts will be glowing when loved ones are near." I appreciate the rhyme, but

I always thought "mistletoeing" is what happened when my great uncle clipped his overgrown toenails at the kitchen table.

You know what? Since it's the holiday season, as Andy Williams reminds us in yet another yuletide tune, I'm going to look deeply into my heart, wish it to grow three sizes, and give this lyrical limbo technique a pass this year. If it takes a bit of verbal gymnastics in order to put a smile on our long faces this season, then I'm all for it. In general (and still in Volvo's case), "verbing nouns weirds language," as Bill Watterson once wrote in "Calvin and Hobbes." After all, this is the happiest season of all.

Curtis Honeycutt is a syndicated humor columnist. He is the author of "Good Grammar is the Life of the Party: Tips for a Wildly Successful Life". Find more at [curtishoneycutt.com](http://curtishoneycutt.com).

# L-A Senior College Food For Thought

From L-A Senior College

LEWISTON - U.S. relations with China are more strained now than in the past 40 years.

What do we and the world want from China, the largest country and second largest economy, and what should we expect? Can we prevent conflict and cooperate on important issues with China? How could this be done and what would it look like? Or are we, as a prominent historian has theorized, "Destined for War?" This will affect all of us.

So let's have a conversation.

The Lewiston-Auburn Senior College will present a FREE Zoom session at noon on Friday, Jan. 15, 2021, with Susan Thornton, who recently joined Yale Law School's Paul Tsai China Center as a Senior Fellow following a distin-

guished 28-year career at the Department of State.

Thornton was Acting Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian and Pacific Affairs during the first 18 months of the Trump administration and led East Asia policy-making amid crises with North Korea, escalating trade tensions with China, and a generally deteriorating environment in the United States for international economic and diplomatic engagement.

She was the architect of the diplomatic pressure campaign on the North Korean regime, structured the administration's initial approach to China, and developed the administration's trademark Indo-Pacific Strategy.

Thornton received her M.A. in International Relations and Soviet Studies from Johns Hopkins School of Advanced International Studies in

1991 and earned an M.S. in National Strategy and Resource Management at the National Defense University's Eisenhower School in 2010. Thornton graduated with a B.A. from Bowdoin College in Economics and Russian in 1985, and taught in international secondary schools in Brussels, London, and Chile. She speaks Russian, Mandarin Chinese and French, is a member of numerous professional associations and is on the Board of Trustees for the Eurasia Foundation.

Thornton is married with three grown children and likes to spend as much time as possible outdoors, especially on her farm in Lisbon, Maine.

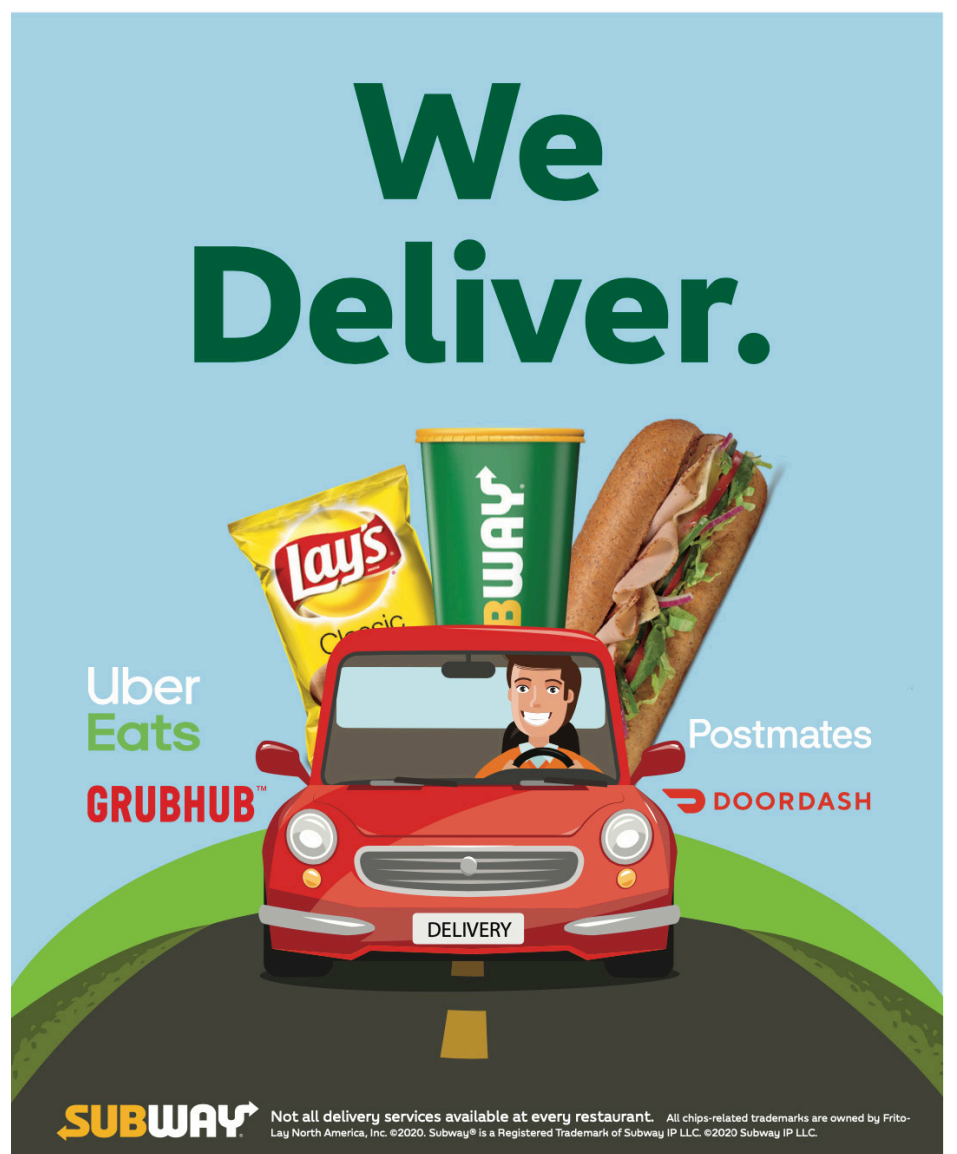
To attend, email at [laseniorcollege@gmail.com](mailto:laseniorcollege@gmail.com) by noon on Jan. 14, to receive an email with the link on the morning of the event. Simply click the link to attend.



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### Seniors Not Acting Their Age

# The Other Bigelow



A hiker crosses a narrow stream near Little Bigelow Mountain Lean-to. (Ron Chase photo)

By Ron Chase

Situated in western Maine's Carrabassett Valley, the Bigelow Mountain Range is one of the state's premier mountaineering venues. Paralleling the south shore of consequential Flagstaff Lake, Bi-

gelow has six significant peaks. The Appalachian Trail traverses much of the range seductively lending itself to some excellent backpacking options.

Bigelow Mountain has the distinction of possessing three of the Appalachian Mountain Club

designated one hundred highest peaks in New England; South Horn at 3,805 feet and two four thousand footers, Avery and West Peaks. As a result, it's a must climb for peak baggers in pursuit of four thousand footers or the one hundred highest.

Often forgotten is the eastern most prominence in the range, Little Bigelow. Like many hikers, I was initially attracted to the highest summits on Bigelow. After more than a decade exploring them,

I "discovered" Little Bigelow in January 1990. A solo trek breaking trail with snowshoes led to an alpine setting with glorious views of the surrounding area. During the subsequent thirty years, I've returned four times with friends, just infrequently enough so I'm always pleasantly surprised with the exceptionally scenic mountain ridge.

The most effective way for me to find hiking companions is to post a Penobscot Paddle and Chowder Society email message announcing a trip. Shortly after declaring my intention to climb Little Bigelow in early December, frequent outdoor accomplices, Suzanne and Gary Cole, enthusiastically agreed to join me. Since a number of years had passed since any of us had hiked the 3,040 foot peak with about 2,000 feet of elevation gain, the outing would be comparable to climbing a new mountain. Given my aging memory, anything occurring more than a year ago is brand new.

The sun was shining and the temperature around freezing when we met at the trailhead on East Flagstaff Road about 18 miles north of North New Portland. Well-marked and in good condition, the entire 6.2 mile roundtrip hike is on the Appalachian Trail.

Initially, the path

rose gradually in a predominantly conifer forest. Shortly after the gradient steepened, we arrived at a spur trail on the right leading to a sturdy lean-to that appeared recently built. The present location of the lean-to is a puzzle to me. I'm almost certain the shelter was formerly situated on the left side of the trail when I passed on snowshoes three decades ago. Possibly contradicting that distant recollection, my Bigelow Preserve map dated 1993 places it at the current site. This may constitute a record shattering thirty year senior moment. I won't be contacting the fine folks at Guinness World Records anytime soon.

A nearby mountain freshet forms a series of pools called the Tubs. It's difficult for this cold water sissy to imagine jumping into them in any season. Several days of backpacking with temperatures in the nineties might engender sufficient motivation to stand in a shallow section timidly splashing water on me and calling it a bath.

Departing from the shelter, the route narrowed twisting precipitously to an extensive overlook with an impressive view of the southeastern terminus of Flagstaff Lake. A careful analysis identified the Mount Katahdin Massif in the distance. Periodic ex-

See Seniors, next page

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**Seniors**

*Continued from previous page*  
 ceptional vistas followed for the remainder of the climb on Little Bigelow Ridge.

Encountering a continuum of hard packed snow and ice after leaving the overlook, everyone donned micro spikes. Only invented about a decade ago, how we survived without them in the past is perplexing; an abundance of slipping and falling was the norm.

A trail maintenance aficionado, Gary carries a small saw to remedy obstacles confronted while hiking. At one location, he effected removal of a four inch diameter tree that had fallen across the trail. Suzanne and I supervised. I provided about two cents worth of actual assistance pulling the cumbersome obstruction off the passageway after Gary completed the cut.

Following what seemed a long half mile from the first overlook, we arrived at a barren cone that afforded phenomenal views of the remainder of the Bigelow Range. Enjoying sunny skies and light winds, the majestic location that may be the East Peak of Little Bigelow provided an ideal site for lunch and a long break. Mesmerized by the wondrous environment, we inadvertently departed

without proceeding a little farther west to the actual high point.

On the return trip, I speculated that the lean-to used to be in a different location.

My friends' silence seems to validate the "senior moment" theory.

*Author of "The Great Mars Hill Bank Robbery" and "Mountains for Mortals – New England," Ron Chase lives in Topsham. His latest book, "The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine" is scheduled to be released by North Country Press in 2021. Visit his website at [www.ronchase-outdoors.com](http://www.ronchase-outdoors.com) or he can be reached at [ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net](mailto:ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net).*



Hikers enjoy phenomenal views from Little Bigelow Mountain Ridge. (Ron Chase photo)



Hikers are silhouetted against the sky as they prepare to descend from East Peak on Little Bigelow Mountain. (Ron Chase photo)



Optometric Associates is proud to announce the addition of Dr. Abigail Heroth, O.D. to our optometric staff. Dr. Heroth is a graduate of the Pennsylvania College of Optometry, where she graduated with honors. She then completed a postdoctoral residency at the Togus VA Medical Centers located in Augusta and Bangor, Maine, where she focused on the study of ocular disease and primary eyecare.

Dr. Heroth is originally from Johnstown, New York. She attended Assumption College in Worcester, Massachusetts where she graduated Summa Cum Laude, earning her Bachelor of Arts degree in Biotechnology and Molecular Biology in 2015.

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Dr. Abigail Heroth, O.D.

Out and About

# Door to door holiday celebration

By Rachel Morin

The Tenants of Schooner Estates Senior Living Community in Auburn were treated to a traveling Door to Door Holiday Celebration this past week.

Schooner Estates, as always, hits a problem head on and comes up with a solution. The worldwide Pandemic was no different. Schooner found a way, safe and practical.

(Something had to replace the large Christmas Party gatherings for all tenants in the Tenants' Harbor Room in past years!)

The traveling Door to Door Holiday Celebration took off like a flash. All hands were on deck at Schooner to send wave after wave of deliciously prepared holiday appetizers, food, delicacies and drinks to the apartment door of every tenant in his or her home.

Staff, decked out in holiday attire, pushed lighted carts laden with jumbo shrimp, cocktail sauce, savory sauced meatballs, scallops wrapped in maple bacon, lobster salad, Brioche bread, specialty chicken salad sliders, prosciutto and gruyere grilled triangled finger sandwiches, along with eggnog mixed with holiday cheer and a wide assortment of desserts and petit fours, to every apartment door at Schooner Estates.

All the Center for Disease Control protocols and guidelines for Covid-19 virus and recommendations were in place.

Tenants wearing masks were ready at their open doors to greet the staff, also wearing masks and gloves, who requested the tenant point to a selection they wanted.

The server placed the item on a holiday plate, with holiday napkin, and handed it to the tenant who brought it into his/her apartment.

After the assortment of different foods were served came the dessert menu, and then the drinks selections. This procedure was done, time after time, on all floors, in all buildings. Elevators were busy and everything was done in record time.

With the transmission of the COVID-19 virus so prevalent across the U.S. and in Maine, the Staff took extra caution to minimize the time spent at each apartment door and not linger for conversation.

Every apartment was tuned in to Schooner's own channel 1390 for a beautiful screen filled with a roaring fire in the fireplace. Traditional Christmas music could be heard throughout the buildings. Jolly old Saint Nicholas himself made the rounds to every apartment to drop off the annual Christmas gifts.

The Door to Door Holiday Celebration was well received by all. The evening ended merrily. Tenants could be overheard on the telephones with their families giving them a happy play by play of what was happening.

Who knows, this may very well be the new Christmas Tradition!



Santa Claus! A present for me? Santa is played by our Resident Services Director Mark Prevost. (Morin photo)



Skip Estes and Molly Elliot, Schooner staff, play Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus. (Morin photo)



Jackie Taylor and Sally Plummer, Schooner staff, are first in line with scallops wrapped in maple bacon. (Morin photo)



Incognito staff are with the Eggnog/Rum and other beverages cart. (Morin photo)



Elana and Sarah from the Diet Kitchen are serving cranberry meatballs. (Morin photo)



An assortment of Christmas dessert shooters and petit fours. (Morin photo)



Nancy Hurd, a tenant at Schooner Estates, selects the scallops for her choice from staff members Jackie Taylor and Sally Plummer. (Morin photo)



A roaring fire in the fireplace on the Schooner TV channel is on for atmosphere and traditional Christmas music is heard throughout the buildings. (Morin photo)

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**Sports**

*Continued from page 1*

schedules for Maine schools this year under pandemic guidelines mean that a school such as Bangor High School may not travel as far for games. “Bangor might be playing some of the smaller schools around them, instead of traveling down to southern Maine to compete against schools of the same size.”

There are currently 16 teams in Class AA, including Gorham, Oxford Hills, Portland, South Portland, Bangor, Scarborough, Windham, Cheverus (Portland), Noble (North Berwick), Massabesic, Sanford, Lewiston, Bonny Eagle (Standish), Edward Little (Auburn), Deering (Portland), and Thornton Academy (Saco).

Gorham was one of the top three schools in the Class A and Class AA over the pasts 10 years, he said. The school joined Class AA for the 2015-16 season.

“We’ve been in three of the five state championships and won two of them,” Berthiaume said. Oxford Hills High School has won the last two championships, “but it’s been an extremely competitive league.”

Games are scheduled from Jan. 15 to Feb. 12 this season.

Berthiaume said his players were able to get into the gym for practices several times before the yellow designation. “They were very excited to be in there, enjoying each other’s company and enjoying playing again.”

“I think being in the gym a few times and then having it taken away,” has been tough on the players, he said. “The goal for me as the coach and for our program is to try to keep the kids connected and to try to do a few things with them to let them know that, hey, we’re not just dropping” the season.

Gorham will be restart its winter sports programs “as soon as we’re allowed to,” Berthiaume said.

Over the Christmas and New Years break, Berthiaume said his primary goal was to make sure the players “are all right, and that their spirits are okay. I think that’s first and foremost.” He planned to connect with his players during the holiday break to “make sure everything’s fine.”

If the season suspension continues as classes resume, Berthiaume plans to conduct Zoom meetings and email items to players for them to practice and work-out at home. While they can’t actually use the ball, he will have them work on game strategy and personal skills.

This is the fourteenth season for Berthiaume as head coach at Gorham, after two years as an assistant coach.

**Grant**

*Continued from page 1*

“MMSA has been a national leader in place-based STEM (Science, Technology, Education and Mathematics) education for many years and now this exciting project provides the opportunity to truly push the boundaries of what is possible,” MMSA Executive Director Dr. Ruth Kermish-Allen said. “Providing teachers with structure and supports while taking a place-based approach, makes meaningful science learning accessible to all students no matter where they live.”

**Letter to the Editor**

**Secular Power Changing America**

Here’s a dramatic example of the growing power of Americans who say their religion is “none”:

Last spring, progressives in the Washington state legislature, backed by Planned Parenthood, mandated that all public schools must teach sensible, practical sex education. The goal: to prevent teen pregnancy, reduce sexual disease, save girls from “date rape,” caution grade-schoolers about predators, foster respect between sexes, and the like. Democratic Gov. Jay Inslee signed it into law.

Conservative churches and Republicans erupted in outrage. Congregations signed petitions to repeal the new law – forcing a referendum in the Nov. 3 election. But the hidebound opponents lost 58-42. Thus Washington became the first state to have sex education approved by public vote.

Danny Westneat of the Seattle Times wrote that the church defeat occurred “because of Washington state’s most profound political development in recent

years – the religion gap.”

He explained: “We talk all the time about the gender gap in voting, the education gap and the urban-rural divide. But in our state, an even bigger influence on local politics is religion. Or rather, lack of religion.”

In surveys of state voters released for the 2020 election, the group answering ‘none’ to the question of ‘what is your religion?’ easily forms the largest religious group in this state. The ‘nones’ made up 34 percent of the state electorate this year.... That’s far higher than evangelical and born-again Christians at 19 percent, or Catholics at 14 percent.... Also, 45 percent of Washington voters answered ‘never’ when asked how often they go to church.

Westneat said this godless cohort is a powerhouse in Washington politics. “Now, in this state, the ‘nones’ rule local politics. The ‘nones’ tend to be strongly pro-science and against anything that smacks of morality-politicking.” He warned politi-

cians: “Either appeal to the ‘nones’ or forget it.”

Washington, Oregon and the “Left Coast” have evolved away from religion faster than some parts of America, such as Dixie’s Bible Belt – yet they seem to indicate where the whole nation is heading.

**A big X**

Sociologists are amazed by the rapid collapse of faith in Western democracies.

Until the postwar years, Christianity dominated all cultures, while unbelievers were a fringe of outcasts. But a remarkable reversal happened. On charts, it promises to form a large X as Christianity sinks and the churchless rise.

Western Europe was first to experience the change, followed by Canada, Australia, Japan and elsewhere. America lagged behind – until secularism snowballed. Researcher Ronald Inglehart of the University of Michigan says America now is losing religion faster than any other nation.

Gallup says American

churches lost 20 percent of their members in the past two decades. Barna says two-thirds of teens raised in church drop out in their twenties. Southern Baptists lost two million since 2005. Once-prestigious “mainline” Protestantism is fading to a shadow.

Meanwhile, churchless Americans began soaring in the 1990s and climbed past one-fourth of the population. They tend to hold compassionate social views, making them the biggest faith group in the Democratic Party base. Researcher Ryan Burge of Eastern Illinois University credits them with tipping the 2020 election to Democrats.

Most of these “nones” are young, and the young vote at lower rates than seniors. But if they continue rising as a progressive political force, America will be a better place.

**James Haught, syndicated by PeaceVoice, is editor emeritus of West Virginia’s largest newspaper, The Charleston Gazette-Mail and author of 12 books.**

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# 4-H virtual passport club

From UMaine

ORONO - University of Maine Cooperative Extension 4-H is offering a new virtual cultural exchange club for youth ages 12-18.

The club will meet virtually Jan. 19, from 4-5 p.m., with additional meetings 9:30-10:30 a.m. Jan. 30, Feb. 13 and Feb. 27; and 4-5 p.m. Feb. 2 and Feb. 16.

"4-H Virtual Passport Around the World" is a UMaine Extension 4-H special interest club designed to introduce young people from different cultural backgrounds to their peers around the world through brief presentations, hands-on activities and discussions.

Countries included in the exchange are Georgia, Poland, Kosovo, Ukraine, Bangladesh and Indonesia. An Extension 4-H volunteer who also is a volunteer with Greenheart Exchange, a nonprofit international educational exchange organization, will lead the club.

The club is free to join. Some materials are required from participants for each session.

Register and find more information on the program webpage at <https://bit.ly/4yqq>

To request a reasonable accommodation or discuss financial assistance for required materials, contact Sara Conant, 207.781.6099 or email: [sara.conant@maine.edu](mailto:sara.conant@maine.edu).

# Act curbs plastic marine debris

From U.S. Sen. King

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senators Susan Collins (R-Maine) and Angus King (I-Maine) are applauding the signing into law of their Save Our Seas 2.0 Act.

The bipartisan bill, introduced in June, seeks to tackle the problem of plastic waste on a global scale by spurring innovation and finding uses for the plastic waste that already exists to keep it from entering the oceans. The legislation builds on the initial progress made by the Save Our Seas Act, which was signed into law in October 2018.

"Countless jobs in Maine and in coastal communities across our country rely on the health of the ocean. The Maine lobster, aquaculture, and tourism

industries are among the many critical sectors of our economy that are dependent on Maine's pristine waters," said Senator Collins. "I am pleased to see this legislation become law, which will help to accelerate the removal of plastic waste and prevent future marine debris, protecting this vital resource for generations to come."

"Maine's waters and Maine's well-being are inextricably linked — meaning any threat to our oceans is also a threat to the livelihood of Maine people," said Senator King. "By enacting this bipartisan legislation into law, we are building on our vital work to protect our oceans and allow future generations can access its widespread economic potential and its unparalleled

beauty."


Roughly eight million metric tons of mismanaged plastic waste from land enters the oceans each year. Ninety percent of this plastic enters the oceans from ten rivers, eight of which are in Asia. The plastic breaks down into tiny pieces that can enter the marine food chain and harm fish and wildlife and wash ashore on even the most isolated stretches of coastline. Plastic has been found in areas as remote as the Mariana Trench, the deepest known point in the ocean.

The Save Our Seas 2.0 Act is also cosponsored by Senators Dan Sullivan (R-Alaska), Sheldon Whitehouse (D-R.I.), Bob Menendez (D-N.J.), Lisa Murkowski (R-Alaska), Rob

Portman (R-Ohio), Chris Murphy (D-Conn.), Tom Carper (D-Del.), Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.), Chris Coons (D-Del.), Richard Blumenthal (D-Conn.), Chris Van Hollen (D-Md.), Jeff Merkley (D-Ore.), Ben Cardin (D-Md.), Mazie Hirono (D-Hawaii), David Perdue (R-Ga.), Brian Schatz (D-Hawaii), and Ted Cruz (R-Texas).

Earlier this year, Senator Collins was honored with the Congressional Champion of 2019 Award from ConservAmerica for her leadership in conservation and clean energy initiatives.

To honor his lifelong environmental stewardship and advocacy, Senator King received the inaugural "Hero" Award last month from the National Park Foundation.





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## Moderna

Continued from page 5

similar to those of other vaccines and are short-lived.

Thirty-seven medical centers began offering the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine to health care personnel and Veterans Dec 14. Fifteen additional VA facilities will receive an allocation of Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine the week of December 21.

Even after receiving COVID-19 vaccination, employees and Veterans should continue wearing face coverings, practicing physical distancing and washing hands often.

As vaccines become available for more groups of Veterans, VA care teams will reach out to eligible Veterans to schedule vaccinations. There is no need to preregister or come to a facility to sign up.

Veterans can get up-to-date information on the VA's VA COVID-19 vaccine webpage, which launched on Dec. 11, and sign up to receive regular updates on the vaccine on the VA's Stay Informed page.

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**THURSDAY  
DEC. 31**

**1 p.m.**  
GORHAM – Baxter Memorial Library closes at 1 p.m..

**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 and libraries closed.

**MONDAY  
Jan. 4, 2021**

**7 p.m.**  
GORHAM – Planning Board meeting. Zoom webinar: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89862268351>

# Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

**TUESDAY  
Jan. 5, 2021**

**6:30 p.m.**  
GORHAM – Regular Town Council meeting. Zoom webinar: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89476198041>

**7 p.m.**  
LEWISTON – City Council meeting, via Zoom from City Council chambers.

**MONDAY  
Jan. 11, 2021**

**5:30 p.m.**  
LEWISTON – Plan-

ning Board meeting via Zoom.

**7-9 p.m.**  
GORHAM – Conservation Commission meeting

**TUESDAY  
Jan. 19, 2021**

**7 p.m.**  
LEWISTON – City Council meeting, via Zoom from City Council chambers.

**THURSDAY  
Jan. 21, 2021**

**6:30 p.m.**

GORHAM – Board of Appeals meeting. Zoom webinar: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/83618869640>

**Monday  
Jan. 25, 2021**

**5:30 p.m.**  
LEWISTON – Planning Board meeting via Zoom.

**5:30 p.m.**  
GORHAM – Finance Committee meeting. Zoom webinar: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/89288915185>

**TUESDAY  
Jan. 26, 2021**

**5:30 p.m.**  
AUBURN – Agriculture Committee meeting at Auburn Senior Community Center in Pettengill Park.

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FOR SHOWTIMES

### What do you think?

We strongly encourage Letters to the Editor, Op/Eds, columns or any other submissions from our readers.

Agree with us or another columnist?  
Disagree? Write to us and let us know!

Email all submissions, including name, address and phone number, to the editor.

## Agreement eliminates lobster tariffs

From U.S. Sen. Collins

WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Senator Susan Collins (R-Maine) welcomed the finalization of an agreement to eliminate tariffs on live and frozen American lobster, which will help to substantially boost sales of Maine lobster to European markets.

The deal was solidified following President Trump signing a proclamation. Senator Collins strongly advocated for this agreement and raised the concerns of Maine's lobster industry directly to the White House and U.S. Trade Representative Robert Lighthizer.

Several years ago, the European Union was a top destination for American lobster, accounting for approximately 15 to 20 percent of annual lobster exports. In 2017, the Comprehensive Economic and Trade Agreement (CETA) was implemented

between Canada and the European Union, reducing tariffs to zero on live Canadian lobsters and eliminating tariffs over a period of several years on frozen and processed Canadian lobsters. This put American lobster exporters at a serious disadvantage because, unlike Canadians, American exporters were facing tariffs of between 8 and 30 percent to sell into the European Union.

The agreement will reduce tariffs on live and frozen U.S. lobsters to 0%, retroactive to August 1st. The agreement is expected to last for five years, with the European Union taking steps to make it permanent.

"The finalization of this trade agreement, just in time for Christmas, is excellent news for Maine's lobster industry, which has experienced a number of challenges in recent years ranging from

the pandemic to the trade war," said Senator Collins. "This agreement to reopen this lucrative market will once again place U.S. lobster on a level playing field with Canadian lobster. I will continue to work closely with Maine's hardworking lobstermen and women, processors, and dealers to help ensure the needs of this vital fishery are addressed."

"This is a step in the right direction for US lobster businesses," said Annie Tselikis, Executive Director Maine Lobster Dealers' Association. "We are grateful for the attention and support from Sen. Collins and the entire Maine delegation as they have played a critical role as a facilitator between the industry and the Office of the US Trade Representative."

In April 2018, Senator Collins urged U.S. Department of Agriculture Secretary Sonny Perdue

to help expand foreign markets for American lobster in response to the economic harm caused by CETA.

In July 2018, Senator Collins pressed U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Robert Lighthizer to continue fighting for the Maine lobster industry, citing CETA and China's retaliatory tariffs.

In June 2018, the Maine Delegation hosted a meeting between top USTR officials, members of the Maine Lobster Dealers' Association, and local lobstermen to discuss the impact of federal trade policies on the state's most productive and profitable fishery.

In November 2019, Senators Collins, and Angus King and Representative Chellie Pingree called on USTR Lighthizer to prioritize a trade deal with the European Union that would reduce or eliminate E.U. tariffs on Maine lobster.

## New Odometer Disclosure Rule

From NHTSA

WASHINGTON – The U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway Traffic Safety Administration is reminding consumers that, starting Jan. 1, odometer disclosures will be required for every transfer of ownership for the first 20 years, beginning with Model Year 2011 vehicles.

Model Year 2010 and older vehicles will continue to be subject to the previous 10-year disclosure requirements and thus are exempt from extended Federal odometer disclosure requirements.

The U.S. fleet of vehicles is, on average, older than ever, and NHT-

SA finalized this rule late last year to address an increase in odometer fraud involving older vehicles.

Model Year 2011 or newer vehicles will only be exempt from the odometer rules after 20 years. To comply with Federal law, anyone transferring ownership of a Model Year 2011 or newer vehicle will be required to provide an odometer disclosure to the new owner.

Model Year 2010 and older vehicles will continue to be exempt from federal odometer disclosure requirements. Sellers of Model Year 2011 vehicles must continue to disclose odometer readings until 2031.

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## BOOKS

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Book lovers and bookstores: looking for unique and eclectic books? Check out author Casey Bell: www.authorcaseybell.com.

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

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Little Bavaria". A \$75.00 deposit is due when signing up. Price is \$859.00 pp double occupancy. VIRGINIA BEACH, COLONIAL WILLIAMSBURG & HISTORIC NORFOLK - SEPTEMBER 14 - 19, 2020. Trip includes 5 nights lodging, 8 meals, 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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