

## Keeping patients safe for eye exams



Cindy H., optical manager of the eyewear center at Optometric Associates on East Avenue in Lewiston, describes the choices for glasses frames to patients. (Tsukroff photo)

By Nathan Tsukroff

LEWISTON - Seeing patients means careful screening and social distancing for medical practices under COVID-19 restrictions.

That's especially true at Optometric Associates on East Avenue in Lewiston.

From the initial screening of all patients and visitors to the practice, through examinations and checkout, doctors and other staff at the practice have created a safe environment for anyone needing help with issues with their eyes.

Optometric Associates is a team of three doctors who treat issues ranging from patients needing glasses to those suf-

fering from glaucoma, problems with the retina (the rear of the eye, where images are formed), dry eye, or needing cataract or LASIK comanagement. Dr. Douglas Henry is now the senior doctor for the practice, having joined Drs. George Bournakel and Pauline Beale at the practice in 1999. Both doctors have since retired.

Dr. Stephen Ebersole joined the practice about 14 years ago, and is now an equal partner at Optometric Associates. Dr. Abigail Heroth just came on board in August after finishing her residency in the Maine VA Health System.

Practice management became a very different job when the COVID-19 virus reached the United States. Like other

businesses in Maine, the practice closed its doors near the end of the March as the state was temporarily shut down at the start of the pandemic.

"During that time I consulted a lot of the guidelines from the (Maine Center for Disease Control) CDC on how to maintain as safe as possible conditions to continue to do eye exams," Dr. Henry said. "Melissa Goggin, our clinical manager, also spent a lot of time tracking down PPE (personal protective equipment) like masks and gloves for the practice"

"Under the pandemic guidelines, "We screen everyone with questions, as well as the temperature check before they

See Exams, page 8

## Moderna vaccine arrives at CMMC



Claire McDonough, pharmacy operations manager, unpacks the delivery box containing the first shipment of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine last week at Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston. The first vaccinations will be for hospital team members who care for inpatients. (Photo courtesy of CMH)

From CMH

LEWISTON - Central Maine Healthcare receive 60 vials – 600 doses – of the Moderna COVID-19 vaccine at Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston last week.

The arrival of the coronavirus vaccine "brought a lot of joy and hope to Central Maine Healthcare team members who have been working tirelessly and heroically through these long months of the pandemic," said Dr. John Alexander, chief medical officer of Central Maine Healthcare.

Since the soft launch with the initial shipment of the Pfizer vaccine two weeks ago, CMH has vaccinated more than 550 team members. The healthcare network expected to finish their initial supply of Pfizer vaccine last week, and the delivery of the Moderna vaccine "will allow us to keep the momentum going without interruption," Alexander said.

CMH expected to start administering the Moderna vaccine immediately at all three of its hospital campuses – Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston, Bridgton Hospital and Rumford Hospital.

All of the vaccine received right now is for healthcare workers. The sequence in which team members are offered the vaccine was determined in line with the considerations of the Advisory Committee on Immu-

See Vaccine, page 11



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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 next step 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

Guest Column

## COVID-19 relief package

From Sen. Nate Libby

Dear Friend,  
Last week, members of Congress reached an agreement on a COVID-19 relief package. This agreement is long overdue. While I'm happy that we finally have some news, I'm frustrated that it took this long to get here. I'm in the process of reviewing exactly what's in the proposal and what it means for Maine. I'll be sure to share more information once I have it.  
In the meantime, I hope you and your family are staying warm and safe. Like many of you, I've been busy preparing for the holidays, although

our celebrations this year will look different than they have in years past. I know this time of year can be difficult for many people, so I hope you'll be able to spend time or connect with the people who matter most to you.  
As always, if you or your family need help with anything, please don't hesitate to reach out to me at [nathan.libby@legislature.maine.gov](mailto:nathan.libby@legislature.maine.gov) or 207-287-1515.

UNEMPLOYMENT BENEFITS

During a briefing on Friday, the Maine Department of Labor shared with us some new information about unemployment benefits. DOL is advising people on unemployment to continue to



Sen. Nate Libby (D-Androscoggin), Maine District 21, the City of Lewiston. (Photo courtesy of Sen. Libby)

order. Under the agreement reached in Washington over the weekend, unemployment benefits will be extended another 11 weeks, with an extra \$300 per week from the federal government.  
Please understand that even once an extension passes, it will take a little while for payments to come through, because DOL will need to update their system and infrastructure.

WINTER STORM RESOURCES

Maine winters are no joke. The frigid weather and impressive snowfall could be fleeting or last far beyond the winter months. If there is one thing Maine people know it's that the key to

surviving Maine winters is to always be prepared for the unexpected.  
Visit <https://bityl.co/4yfl> for a guide to help Mainers respond to and get through the unexpected. If you know of a good resource that I've missed, please don't hesitate to reach out.

LEWISTON BOARDS AND COMMITTEES

There are a number of openings on various boards and committees in the City of Lewiston. These boards and committees are a great way to serve our community, and there are several, so there is bound to be one that matches your expertise and interests. Please consider applying, and do

it soon. Applications are due to the City Clerk's office by 4 p.m. tomorrow, December 23. You can read more from the City at <https://fbook.cc/3Juo> and you can call the City Clerk's office with any questions at 207-513-3124.

Sen. Nate Libby (D-Androscoggin) represents Maine Senate District 21, which comprises the City of Lewiston.

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

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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](https://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](https://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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## Parts & Accessories



# 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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# Virtual “Lighting Up Lewiston”

**From City of Lewiston**

LEWISTON - The City of Lewiston and the Lewiston Lighting Committee have launched the virtual celebration ceremony, “Lighting Up Lewiston.”

The lighting project began as a grassroots effort by local business owners

who were interested in increasing holiday lighting in Lewiston. Through their diligent work, the Lewiston Lighting Committee was established to continue these efforts in partnership with City of Lewiston staff and the Downtown Lewiston Association.

For 2020, donations to purchase and install

globes were made in recognition of an anniversary, in tribute to someone; in memoriam, or for the love of community. Each year going forward, a designated area of Lewiston is envisioned to come alive with new multi-size globes and other lighting, creating an enhanced and growing festive presence.

Thanks to community generosity in 2020, a total of 53 globes were placed in Dufresne Plaza, Lisbon Street, as well as increased lighting added to the Southern Gateway entrance into Lewiston, adding even more warmth and vibrancy to the downtown area.

The virtual ceremony with various announce-

ments and video contributions can be viewed at: <https://ytube.io/3Cno>

A particularly informative aspect of the virtual celebration is a piece from Carmen Dufresne. In 2012, the plaza was named after her father, Chief Justice Armand A. Dufresne, and she provides a very insightful oral history of her

parents’ lives in Lewiston.

To visit the tribute page for this project, which includes the names of those being celebrated and by whom, please visit <https://bitly.co/4yej>

The City of Lewiston thanked Lewiston Public Works crews who were instrumental in installing the globes.

# Adult ed computer training prepares students for jobs

**From Lewiston Public Schools**

LEWISTON - Lewiston Adult Education students have completed the first part of Computer Support Specialist training for technology sector jobs.

The combination of in-person and distance learning lessons in the fall focused on digital literacy, English skills and work readiness. Successful completion of the program results in a level one Com-

puter Specialist microbadge that can be accepted for college credit and is recognized by employers around the state.

“The students were very motivated and showed a great work ethic. All of them work full time, yet were able to participate in and successfully complete this intense program,” English teacher Irina Petranek said.

Student Santo Panzo thanked computer teacher Greg Yates in an email,

writing, “We are more than proud of the opportunity Lewiston Adult Education provided to us,”

At the end of November, Panzo and his classmates participated in mock interviews with staff and community members as another preparation for the workforce. Local partners in the interviews included Carbonite, Bates College and RoundTable Technology. Some of the interviews were remote while others were in person with social distanc-

ing and mask-wearing.

“Lewiston Adult Education is proud to have pioneered in this innovative work. The opportunity to invest in training that results in badges that are recognized for college credit and by local employers is of tremendous benefit to our adult learners,” Lewiston Adult Education Assistant Director Jen Tiner said. “We admire the initiative and persistence that our students demonstrated throughout this pro-

*See Adult ed, page 11*



**Computer Support Specialist student Ester Bassa waits to be called for a mock interview at the Adult Learning Center at the Longley Multipurpose Center in Lewiston at the end of November. (Photo courtesy of Lewiston Public Schools)**



**Computer Support Specialist student Santo Panzo takes a break from mock interviews at the Adult Learning Center at the Longley Multipurpose Center in Lewiston at the end of November. (Photo courtesy of Lewiston Public Schools)**



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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 “verbify” 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 weards language,” as Bill Watterson once wrote in “Calvin and Hobbes.” After all, this is the hap-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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## Exams

Continued from page 1

enter. We also do a lot more cleaning. We're sanitizing the rooms thoroughly – cleaning everything the patient touches when they visit. Even the pens they use to sign in are immediately put in a bin to be sterilized.”

The practice has an optical center where patients can purchase glasses, and "When someone tries on glasses, the frame is kept aside and then they're sterilized before they're put out again," Henry said. Everything a patient touches during a visit is wiped down with sterilizer.

“My staff is seeing about the same number of patients a day as we did before (the COVID-19

restrictions), but they're working a lot harder," he said. Staff members at the practice guide patients on social distancing needs, as well as sterilizing items and rooms throughout the day.

Even in the optical center, which is an open area at the front of the practice, “We’ve maintained social distancing. There’s only so many visitors allowed at a time,” Henry said. And there is “lots of wiping down everything.”

Many of the patients at the practice are older or are in other high-risk groups, he said, so these precautions are important for their safety. "We also have staff that are in high-risk groups, so it is really important for everyone to

follow infection control protocols.” All staff members have their temperature checked every morning when they arrive at work, and they must stay home if they have a temperature above 99 degrees, or if they have any COVID-19 symptoms.

"It's even tougher for our employees that are parents, because now they've got to deal with possible exposures at their children's school or daycare and they now have to follow protocols to minimize exposure at the office." Henry said. "So there are a lot of guidelines to follow, but they're doing a great job!"

Remote schooling means some staff mem-



Abigail Heroth, O.D., works from behind a Plexiglas shield during an eye exam for one of her patients at Optometric Associates on East Avenue in Lewiston. The practice sanitizes surfaces after every patient, and provides other protective barriers wherever possible to ensure the safety of patients and staff during the pandemic. Dr. Heroth joined the practice in August. (Tsukroff photo)



Bobbi Lin, an optometric assistant at Optometric Associates, selects contact lenses for a patient. (Tsukroff photo)

bers with children have not been able to work the same hours as in the past, which adds another layer of complexity to running the practice during the pandemic. Because a staff member might need to stay home, “We don’t always have a full staff,” Henry said. Some parents have had to isolate at home with a child who was exposed to a classmate diagnosed with COVID-19, or split parenting time with their spouse or other family members.

"We've been trying to make work hours more flexible when we can, but we've had to deal with a lot of short-staffing issues, like a lot of other businesses, too, especially in healthcare," he said. "That's another area where staff members have been

working harder, too. They have to cover for each other more, and have really come together as a team.”

The practice was shut down completely for about

seven weeks in the spring at the start of the pandemic, then opened back up “at a trickle,” with only five people at a time visiting the building the first month, Henry said. That was a difficult requirement to meet at times, since patients sometimes needed to bring a family member.

“I’m very proud of my staff, and I’m proud to say that some patients have said this is the first public place they’ve been to since self-quarantining, and that they felt safe,” He said. “Or, they’ve said this the first place they’ve actually felt safe in public, because we’re being so careful.”

Patients arriving at the practice can come to the entrance of the building where they are greet-



Rae Hughes uses a touch-free thermometer to read the temperature of a patient who is being screened before entering the building for an appointment at Optometric Associates on East Avenue in Lewiston. Patients are asked if they have any COVID-19 symptoms, or have been exposed to someone with COVID-19, and can only enter the building if there is no chance of cross-contamination. (Tsukroff photo)



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Tammy Larson, an optometric assistant, checks in a patient from behind a glass barrier beside the waiting room at Optometric Associates on East Avenue in Lewiston. The practice screens patients entering the building, then maintains social distancing in order keep both patients and staff safe during the COVID-19 pandemic. (Tsukroff photo)

ed by a staff member and invited into the vestibule for screening. A touchless thermometer is used to read forehead temperatures, and patients are asked about their personal health and any exposure to someone with COVID-19, before being allowed to enter the practice.

The practice has been here in Lewiston about 65 years, beginning in the mid-1950's under Dr. Sam Alpern. Dr. Bournakel joined as an associate of Dr. Alpern, then brought in Dr. Beale about 46 years ago.

The practice built and moved into its current quarters in the mid-1970s.

Dr. Henry practices with an emphasis on contact lenses, glaucoma, ocular disease, and primary

care. He is a Phi Beta Kappa graduate of the University of Illinois and earned his Ph.D. in Neurobiology at Wayne State University in Detroit, Michigan. As a neuroscientist, he authored 15 research articles and book chapters, and earned several teaching awards.

Dr. Ebersole graduated from the University of Delaware with a bachelor of arts degree in biology, then earned his doctorate of optometry at Ohio State University. He went on to complete a residency program centered on the diagnosis and management of common ocular diseases, such as glaucoma, cataracts, and macular degeneration. He served on the Maine Optometric Associations Board of Directors where he was instrumen-

tal in bringing the InfantSEE® program to Maine. The InfantSEE® program is a public health program developed to provide professional eye care for infants nationwide.

Dr. Heroth earned her doctorate of optometry from the Pennsylvania College of Optometry, graduating with honors in the spring of 2019. She spent the next year in a post-doctoral residency focused on ocular disease and primary care while working in the Togus VA Medical center in both Augusta and Bangor, Maine. She had previously earned a bachelor of arts in Biotechnology and Molecular Biology at Assumption College in Worcester, MA.

In addition to providing traditional treatments

for dry eye - such as eye drops, prescription medicines, and at-home treatments like a Bruder mask, or lid therapies like Hypochlor and Avenova - the practice provides a treatment called Lipiflow. This treatment provides precise thermal pulsation to the meibomian tear glands to enhance tear quality and ocular discomfort. It combines heat with physical massage to liquefy and express the meibomian gland contents in an effort to return the lipid layer of the ocular surface to normal condition.

This type of treatment represents the new approach to treating dry eye disease. Instead of relying on artificial tears from a bottle, the treatment focuses on improving the quality of the person's own



Optometric technician Beth Mills sets up the applicator for the Lipiflow machine that is used to treat dry eye syndrome at Optometric Associates on East Avenue in Lewiston. (Tsukroff photo)

tears. This new technology helps to determine what type of dry eye each patient has, and the results of their tests guide the doctor towards the best therapeutic

approach. "Unfortunately there are no permanent cures for dry eye disease, but there are several effective treatments that can help people," Henry said.



Allissa Sheeper, an optometric assistant, presents a gift bag to a patient during check out from a visit to Optometric Associates on East Avenue in Lewiston. (Tsukroff photo)

# Optometric Associates

Home of Healthier Eyes

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.

Dr. Heroth is happy to provide primary eye care to patients of all ages, as well as comprehensive, state of the art ocular disease treatment and management. Call our office to schedule your appointment today.

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## Dr. Abigail Heroth, O.D. joins Optometric Associates



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)



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



Incognito staff are with the Eggnog/Rum and other beverages cart. (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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# Sister of Mercy betters lives in Lewiston



Sister Anne-Marie Bourque, RSM, a Sister of Mercy, (center) outside the St. Mary's Nutrition Center where she recently donated \$700 of a \$1,000 grant to help the needy during the pandemic. (Photo courtesy of Portland Diocese)

**From Portland Diocese**

LEWISTON - Sister Anne-Marie Bourque, RSM, is a Sister of Mercy currently serving as a chaplain to the residents, patients, and families at St. Mary's d'Youville Pavilion in Lewiston, one of New England's largest nursing homes.

She is well known, highly respected, and an inspiration to many. But she's so humble that when word came that she had received a \$1,000 grant, Sister Anne-Marie thought it had to be a phishing attempt.

"I was skeptical. Me? There is so much deception enabled by hackers on the internet, I was cautious about responding," she said. "After ascertaining that this was legitimate, I began the happy task of daydreaming about how I would spend another's money. Oh, to be a philanthropist on a Sister's budget!"

The grant was from Catholic Extension's "Sisters on the Frontlines" initiative, which gives \$1,000 to direct service Catholic sisters for their use in helping those suffering the adverse effects of the pandemic.

Sister Anne-Marie quickly donated \$700 to St. Mary's Nutrition Center, which operates a food pantry, community gardens, and offers fresh food access points in Lewiston. The center is also delivering food to nearly 300 households per week.

"I attended the food preparation classes and community suppers and interacted with the immigrants involved in these programs. The inclusivity was palpable," she said. "I saw firsthand the value of the outreach to neighbors of great diversity and the reciprocity of giving and receiving that takes place

in such an environment."

To the surprise of nobody who has met Sister Anne-Marie, the remainder of the grant didn't last long in her hands.

"I gave the other \$300 to a d'Youville staff person and their family that needs assistance," she said.

A commitment to serve others and share God's love is ingrained in Sister Anne-Marie, who has served at St. Mary's Health System since 2016, first at St. Mary's Hospital and now at the pavilion. She possesses a special dedication to people in need that has not wavered in the turbulent times of the pandemic.

"Sister Anne-Marie is such a deserving recipient as she has certainly been on the 'frontlines' this year," said Elizabeth Keene, the vice president of mission integration for St. Mary's Health System. "She sees her visits with patients and residents as sacred encounters in which to offer prayer, comfort, and encouragement."

"Have you ever wondered why you are living in this moment in time? I have given this great thought during the pandemic," said Sister Anne-Marie. "Why did God place me here and why now? With a lockdown and no visits other than outdoor or window visits, many residents became sad and lost their zest for life. Telephone calls can't replace a warm hug or the healing touch of a loved one. Some became angry at d'Youville for imposing the lockdown on them. I think they knew it was for the protection of the whole community, but they needed a place to focus their anger and frustration. With different staff each shift and different therapists from day to day, I became the one sure thing for all 175 of them."

She became a safe haven in which residents who were sad, angry, or frustrated could feel heard and supported.

"They knew me and they looked forward to my visits. I became for them a



Sister Anne-Marie Bourque, RSM, a Sister of Mercy, recently received a \$1,000 grant to be used to help the needy during the pandemic. She donated \$700 to the St. Mary's Nutrition Center, and the remainder to a family that needed assistance. (Photo courtesy of Portland Diocese)

sacred receptacle of their trust. I listened and responded as I thought Jesus would - with compassion and love for them," said Sister.

Sadly, many passed away, not directly from COVID-19, but from the heartache of isolation and the stress of their altered environment.

"In December alone, there have been ten deaths," she said. "The sacraments are extremely important to our Catholic residents. My greatest challenge has been getting to as many as possible with Holy Communion and referring to our priest chaplain, Fr. Samy, those needing the Anointing of the Sick."

Another person

might have stepped back during the pandemic, and understandably so, but Sister Anne-Marie never did.

"As a Sister of Mercy, I am attuned to the needs of the poor and the sick," she said. "Chaplaincy fits in nicely with the charism of my religious community. I feel especially drawn to residents who are dying and with their families. It feels a bit like being a midwife as I assist in the transition from one stage of life to another. I am happy to get up each day and come to be with my colleagues, staff and residents, as together, we respond to God's call to be merciful to one another."

In the process, greater truths and realities have been observed in the changing priorities of others. A development that has brought Sister Anne-Marie, herself, a measure of warmth in a difficult time.

"People are reevaluating the important things in life. More money, greater success at work, better social standing, and more goods have been replaced by more family time, a greater awareness of other's needs, humility, and an understanding that when we say we are all in this together, we mean that the common good is good for each," she said. "When you thrive, I thrive. When you succeed, I succeed. We are one human family."

**Adult ed**  
*Continued from page 6*

gram."

The students' next step will be taking the National Retail Federation Customer Service and Sales program in collaboration with RSU 16 Adult Education. It will include English classes with a focus on technical writing and speaking skills.

"This class of students reminds us all of the importance of embracing the new 'global language' - Information Technology. A diverse set of students in age, background and origin, they were eager to master the skills of today's explosion in computer technology," Yates said.

The Computer Support Specialist Program is funded by the Lumina Foundation and developed in partnership with the University of Maine System, the Maine Department of Labor and the Maine Department of Education.

**Vaccine**  
*Continued from page 1*

nization Practices.

Alexander said CMH looked at which roles were at greatest risk of exposure by examining which ones involved direct contact with patients, handling of infectious material, and whether they were in inpatient or outpatient settings. For this first month of vaccine administration, CMH is focusing vaccination efforts toward team members who care for inpatients



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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://bityl.co/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), Cory Booker (D-N.J.), 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 – Planning Board meeting via Zoom.

**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 – Conservation Commission meeting

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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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 NHTSA 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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Book lovers and bookstores: looking for unique and eclectic books? Check out author Casey Bell: [www.authorcaseybell.com](http://www.authorcaseybell.com).

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