



# TWIN CITY TIMES

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## Sabattus Recreation Club Running Program Runs 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Jingle Jog



Festive joggers ran in the Sabattus Rec Club Running Program's 7<sup>th</sup> annual Jingle Jog on Dec. 18.

The Sabattus Recreation Club Running Program held its 7th annual Jingle Jog on Saturday, Dec. 18. Regulars and friends dressed in some festive gear and ran with bells and lights to spread some extra Christmas cheer around the Sabattus Village area. Participants enjoyed

some refreshments and mulled cider, and Santa dropped off a few surprises after.

The running group holds free, weekly group runs every Wednesday, year-round. All abilities are welcome to join, from walkers to runners. The

30-45-minute group runs leave from Mixer's Night Club parking lot at 6 p.m. each Wednesday, unless the weather is severe. For more info, email [running@sabattusrec.com](mailto:running@sabattusrec.com), or check the Sabattus Recreation Club Running Program Facebook page.

## Maine Home Values Increased in Past Months

Lower-than-normal inventory combined with high demand for single-family existing Maine homes led to a 10.94 percent decline in sales across the state in October 2021 compared to October 2020. Maine listings released statistics indicating a 10 percent price increase over that same time period. The median sales price (MSP) for existing single-family homes reached \$308,000 in October compared to \$280,000 one year ago. The MSP indicates that half of the homes were sold for more and half sold for less.

"Despite the lower sales volume numbers compared to 2020 for each month from July through October, demand remains extraordinary for Maine's residential real estate," says Aaron Bolster, Broker/Owner of Allied Realty in Skowhegan and 2021 President of the Maine Association of realtors. "Available for-sale inventory is significantly low—56 percent below the pre-COVID levels of October 2019. In October of 2019, the market had a 4.5-month supply of for-sale inventory. In October 2021, we experienced a 1.8-month supply. Buyers are quickly purchasing homes that are new to the market."

Nationally, sales of single-family existing homes dipped 5.8 percent in October 2021 compared to October 2020. According to the National Association of Realtors, last month's national MSP of \$360,800 reflects an increase of 13.5 percent. October sales in the regional Northeast declined 13.8 percent compared to October 2020, while the regional MSP rose 6.4 percent to \$379,100.

"Overall, 2021 continues to be strong for single-family existing home sales," says Bolster. "For January – October 2021, sales are 5.54 percent higher than January – October 2020, and 11.41 percent higher than January–October 2019. The sales years of 2019 and 2020 were record-breakers for Maine. With a strong finish this year, 2021 will be another."

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## Pet Lovers Encouraged by Shelters to Help Foster

Several rescue animals could use a reprieve, a little time out from the shelter, and maybe you have a little extra time or space. Many shelters are at capacity with dogs, cats, or rabbits in need of a home. This is putting a strain on the staff and on the animals. Because of this scenario, area shelters are asking pet lovers for some help.

Fostering a pet may be the ideal stress reliever. If you could use some tail wagging happiness or a purr-fectly content companion, reach out to a local shelter to see how you can help by fostering. The Better Business Bureau (BBB) has some tips when volunteering to help a shelter:

To begin, consider your time. Be

ready to devote 30-60 minutes a day to pet care, walks, etc. Think about the best way to involve the whole family for daily care from feeding, to walking, to playing and keeping an eye on the pet. If you are working from home, can you make a plan to keep your fostered guest entertained while on a conference video or audio call? Secondly, consider your space. Many breeds, larger ones especially, need a lot of room to run and play. Do you have a yard or a nearby park where your new pup can get lots of exercise? Also, consider your family. If you have young children at home, a puppy may be a handful. A grown dog with a calm temperament might be a better choice.

See Shelters, page 11

# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## Nearly 60,000 Mainers Signed Up Through CoverME.gov During First Month of Open Enrollment

**AUGUSTA** — The Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of the Health Insurance Marketplace (OHIM) announced today that 59,880 Mainers selected plans for affordable health coverage in 2022 through CoverME.gov, Maine's new Health Insurance Marketplace, during the first month of open enrollment. These figures, which were included in a release by the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS), for the first time include consumers whose coverage has been automatically renewed for 2022, in addition to consumers who proactively visited CoverME.gov to choose a new plan or renew their existing plan.

The number of people with CoverME.gov plan selections from November 1 through November 27 for the 2022

Open Enrollment Period already exceeds the total of 59,738 plan selections for the 2021 Open Enrollment Period that ended December 15, 2020, when Maine used the federal HealthCare.gov platform.

Mainers have until December 15 to apply and enroll in a plan that takes effect on January 1, 2022. The transition to the State-based Marketplace, CoverME.gov, allowed Maine to extend the Open Enrollment Period, so this year consumers have until January 15, 2022, to enroll in a plan that takes effect on February 1, 2022.

"Four weeks into open enrollment, tens of thousands of Maine people are already signed up for high-quality, affordable health coverage in 2022," said DHHS Commissioner Jeanne Lam-brew. "As open enrollment continues, we urge anyone in need of health

insurance to visit CoverME.gov to check out their options and encourage consumers to come back to complete their applications by December 15 to start the new year with coverage."

CMS reported that nationwide, nearly 4.6 million Americans signed up for 2022 individual health insurance coverage through the federal Marketplace, HealthCare.gov, and state-based Marketplaces including CoverME.gov, from the start of the 2022 open enrollment period on November 1, 2021 through November 27, 2021. In Maine, 13,820 people actively selected a plan during this period, while coverage for 46,060 consumers was automatically renewed.

Plan selections provide a snapshot of activity by new and returning consumers who have selected a plan for 2022. "Plan selections" become "en-

rollments" once consumers have paid their first monthly premium to begin coverage. These numbers are subject to change as consumers may modify or cancel plans after their initial selection. OHIM is reporting plan selections every two weeks during open enrollment. The most recent snapshot, released December 2, is available on the Maine DHHS blog and on CoverME.gov.

This year, additional federal financial assistance makes coverage more affordable than ever. With extra assistance from the American Rescue Plan, nearly 25 percent of consumers in Maine enrolled in a plan in 2021 with a monthly premium of \$10 or less. This assistance will continue to be available in 2022. Even those who were not eligible in the past can likely get assistance to lower monthly premiums and other out-of-pocket costs.

OHIM has launched a comprehensive marketing campaign to raise awareness of Maine consumers' options for coverage through the Marketplace, including social and digital media, ads on buses, bus shelters, diner placemats, TV and radio, and outreach to previously underserved populations including Maine's immigrant communities. This engagement also includes an Outreach and Enrollment Toolkit for community partners, which is now available and translated into nine languages.

Health plans offered on CoverME.gov provide quality, comprehensive private coverage that will protect consumers if they have an accident or major illness, and support preventive screenings and visits. This year, 71 health plans are being offered through CoverME.gov. Free enrollment help is available to help con-

sumers find the plan that meets their needs and budget. For information, visit [coverme.gov/local-help](http://coverme.gov/local-help) or call (866) 636-0355/TTY 711 (for languages other than English, choose option 4).

As in previous years, those who already have a Marketplace plan are automatically re-enrolled in their current plan or the most similar offering from their health insurance carrier. However, consumers are encouraged to visit CoverME.gov to check out new plans and update their family and income information, as new financial assistance is available that may offer more affordable coverage that best meets their needs.

People who apply through CoverME.gov who are eligible for MaineCare will have their application sent to MaineCare for review. Eligible Maine people can enroll in MaineCare at any time of year.

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### Red Cross Provides Support to Veterans and Caregivers

This past Veterans Day, November 11th, 2021, the American Red Cross honored veterans and recognized the special role that caregivers play in their care. Serving more than 8,200 caregivers worldwide, the Military Veteran Caregiver Network (MVCN) offers caregivers peer mentors, peer support groups, an online community as well as mental health, wellness and resiliency workshops. The network seeks to decrease feelings of isolation and increase feelings of connection, hope and well-being.

"Between COVID-19, international conflict and

even the impact to communities and livelihoods from repeated natural disasters, mental health has been a struggle for so many of us in the military community," said Celeste Stimpson, Red Cross Service to the Armed Forces Regional Director. "Our caregivers are serving a vital role on the front lines of this battle, needing more support and resources now than ever."

The MVCN provides caregivers the ability to connect in a confidential environment that's best for them. Their peer mentor program helps meet the specific needs of caregivers one-on-one, while peer support groups connect caregivers facing similar challenges. They offer secure online caregiver only communities to create a

supportive network that is accessible without having to leave home. Here in Maine, veterans and their caregivers report that the compounding effects of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic and the recent withdrawal from Afghanistan have created additional stressors. In recent months, MVCN saw an increase in the use of our Hero Care Resource Directory, which provides access to over 800 resources in every zip code in America specifically designed for veterans, service members, caregivers and their families.

Many Red Cross volunteers are veterans who continue to support their communities after their active-duty service ends. Also, about 6% of Red Cross employees include

transitioning military or veterans—from nurses to logisticians, emergency management experts, project managers and preparedness experts, as well as a number of veterans in leadership roles at local Red Cross chapters across the country. Tens of thousands of Red Cross volunteers also serve in Veterans Administration (VA) and military hospitals across the nation and around the world. These volunteers support such areas as rehabilitation, recreation, administration, and personal services to the men and women who are now cared for each day in these facilities. To learn more about how you can give back in your community this Veterans Day, visit [redcross.org/volunteer](http://redcross.org/volunteer).

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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## Local Artist Gifts Original Painting to Cancer Resource Center of Western Maine



Above, left to right: Diane Madden (CRCofWM executive director) and local artist Peter Herley.

Norway artist and sculptor, Peter Herley, recently gifted one of his original paintings to the Cancer Resource Center of Western Maine, to be hung in their new office space located at 59 Winter Street in Norway. Herley, a member of the West-

ern Maine Art Group, is well-known throughout the country for his vivid, bright, contemporary art pieces.

*The Cancer Resource Center of Western Maine is a 501c3 non-profit organization embracing anyone*

*affected by cancer in a community that offers hope and caring through support, education, and concepts in healthy living. They offer free programs, complementary therapies, weekly virtual classes, travel assistance, support groups and comfort items - because no one should face cancer alone. CRCofWM is located at 59 Winter St, Norway. For more information, visit their website: [www.crcofwm.org](http://www.crcofwm.org); find them on Facebook; or call 890-0329.*

## SeniorsPlus Partnered with Girl Scouts

SeniorsPlus, the designated Area Agency on Aging for Western Maine, is partnered with Lewiston Girl Scout Troop #135 to offer a smart device walk-in clinic on Wednesday, November 17th from 6:30-8:00 p.m. at SeniorsPlus, 8 Falcon Road in Lewiston. The event was free. High school members of the Girl Scout troop worked with participants on concerns regarding cell phones, tablets, and other interactive devices.

Betsy Sawyer-Manter, President and CEO of SeniorsPlus said, "This is an intergenerational event. We are creating a space where people of different ages can connect."

The Scouts addressed a variety of smart device questions including adjusting screen brightness, downloading apps, changing font size, using Zoom or FaceTime, setting alarms, enabling hearing aid mode, turning on voice dial, turning on LED flash for alerts,

and enabling "Find My iPhone."

Girl Scout Troop #135 is based in the Lewiston/Auburn area. According to troop leader Amy Broadbent, "Our scouts enjoy such outreach work. It allows them to use their leadership skills and get a good sense of the needs of our community, while becoming strong, independent women."

No appointment was necessary. SeniorsPlus re-

## Virtual Nonviolent Communication in the Classroom Starts Jan. 11

Registration is open for an online professional development program, Teaching From the Heart: Nonviolent Communication in the Classroom, through the University of Maine Hutchinson Center in Belfast. This three-day professional development program for educators, teachers and those working with preschool-third grade children will be held January 11-13th from 3:30-5:30 p.m. The cost is \$125. More information is available on the Hutchinson Center website.

Instructor Gina Simm has taught in early childhood education for over 30 years. Her background in Montessori education and children's theater launched her into the world of public schools, where she spent most of her career as a first grade teacher (including a year spent teaching English in China). Simm worked closely with Miki Kashtan, a co-founder of Bay Area Nonviolent Communication. Simm's knowledge of Nonviolent Communication has transformed her classroom into a place where systems of the heart create a child-centered environment for moving through conflict. Simm lives in the Pioneer Valley Co-housing Community in Amherst, Massachusetts. More information about her work

is online.

Participants in the Hutchinson Center online course will learn how to manage classrooms and learning environments with a practical, simple curriculum based on Simm's book, "Heart to Heart: Three Systems for Staying Connected (A Manual for Parents and Teachers)." Skills that help maintain the heart-to-heart connections that support children's ability to self-regulate and improve their emotional intelligence are at the core of this course. Participants will also learn how to use children's literature to implement Nonviolent Communication.

The ongoing implications of the COVID-19 pandemic require teachers to think in new ways in order to support their students. The reliable systems taught by Simm will provide participants with training to help children in the classroom and beyond.

Lorrie Heard, a recent participant, says, "I would recommend this course to anyone who wants to build community in their classroom, especially, after all of the disruptions to students' lives and learning this past year. A lot of feelings are coming up and many students lack the skills to talk



Gina Simm, experienced early childhood educator, looks forward to hosting this online course through the University of Maine.

about them and express their truest feelings and needs. They need a program like this that teaches them the language and communication skills to deal with conflict and allow them to feel comfortable and safe in their learning community."

Participants will receive a certificate of completion, and 0.6 CEUs/6 contact hours are available.

For information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact Michelle Patten, [um.fhc.pd@maine.edu](mailto:um.fhc.pd@maine.edu); 207.338.8002. A limited number of need-based scholarships are available for people who live or work in Knox or Waldo counties. For more information about upcoming professional development programs, scholarships or to register, go online. Early registration is recommended as spots are limited.

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# Seniors Not Acting Their Age

## A Mountain Less Traveled



Two climbers ascend Perpendicular Trail on Mansell Mountain

By Ron Chase

For many years the Penobscot Paddle and Chowder Society has held its annual fall supper and outdoor festival on Mount Desert Island over a three-day October weekend. Chowderheads were back again this year. The adventure menu consisted of hiking, biking, sea kayaking, canoe racing, and various other escapades.

While many of us arrived the Friday before the formal festivities commenced to enjoy biking or hiking, the first full day of scheduled events began Saturday morning. Several

members decided on a sea kayak trip to Baker Island, and club president, Helen Hess, led a hike on Mansell and Bernard Mountains in Acadia National Park on the west side of the island.

Since the two peaks, collectively known as Western Mountain, are infrequently hiked, an enthusiastic group of nine Chowderheads signed on. The outing was particularly appealing as participants were able to avoid the crowds found on the more popular park mountains during leaf peeping season. Yet, the quest would still provide a challenging

mountaineering experience in a very scenic area.

There are several routes that lead to the Western Mountain peaks in a hodgepodge of paths known as the West Side Trails. Helen chose to begin our excursion at the south end of Long Pond on a trail of the same name. Her intent was to complete a loop hike over Mansell and Bernard Mountains.

Ours was decidedly a senior group since six of us were retired or otherwise over-the-hill. Recuperating from hip surgery, I was the weak link. Fortunately, considerate companions encouraged my participation.

We began our trek with a short walk along the shore of Long Pond to a left turn onto the most stimulating trail in the network, Perpendicular Trail. While rated difficult, it was not as precipitous as the name implies. We initially progressed steeply up stone steps in a boulder field on the east side of Mansell. Iron rungs and ladder were easily negotiated by our intrepid group. An overlook on the right, a little

short of the Mansell summit provided exceptional views of Beech Mountain, Long Pond, and the islands of eastern Penobscot Bay beyond. After savoring the panorama from the overlook, the wooded summit was a bit of a disappointment.

From the top, we followed the Mansell Mountain Trail for a short distance to Razorback Trail junction on the right. Another right turn led us down to Great Notch prior to beginning a steep ascent negotiating over cliffs on a rough heavily rooted path. The incline moderated as we passed Knight Nubble before descending to Little Notch.

In the notch, it was decision-making time. One alternative was to climb to the summit of Bernard and return to Little Notch for a shorter descent on Sluiceway Trail. Another was to continue over Bernard Mountain and follow the markedly longer Bernard Mountain Trail downward. Both concluded at Mill Field Trailhead. Our undaunted group unanimously chose the extended trek.

According to park literature, Bernard Mountain is the most remote and least traveled peak in Acadia National Park. We selected the summit for a lunch break despite limited views. However, a nearby spur trail led us to a viewpoint that offered partial vistas.

Gradually descending south and then east on the heavily forested Bernard Mountain Trail, loquacious Chowderheads found easy hiking provided an excellent opportunity for spirited conversation. Shared past adventures were popular topics.

The Mill Field Trail-

head provided us with more trail options. After some discussion, we decided to follow a dirt road for a short distance to Gilley Trail which continued to the Gilley Field Trailhead. From there, we proceeded on the pleasant Cold Brook Trail back to our original point of departure.

While one participant's GPS measured the entire loop to be 5.6 miles, park maps calculate the distance to be 4.6 miles. Mansell has an elevation of 949 feet and Bernard is 1,071. The total elevation gain on the trek is 1,236 feet.

We found the excursion to be a great way to enjoy our first full day in the outdoor paradise. Although I slowed the group

considerably, I think they appreciated the opportunity for additional camaraderie. At least that's my rationalization.

After a convivial outdoor supper that evening on a club member's property, we had more island exploits to look forward to during the following two days.

The author of "The Great Mars Hill Bank Robbery" and "Mountains for Mortals - New England," Ron Chase resides in Topsham. His latest book, "The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine" will soon be released by North Country Press. 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).



A hiker enjoys the view from Mansell Mountain Overlook



A group descends ledges on Bernard Mountain

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# Beware of Puppy Scams

Better Business Bureau (BBB) serving Upstate South Carolina warns of ongoing puppy scams with recent complaints regarding "Divine Frenchies Home," located in Spartanburg, SC and Waltham, MA. One consumer reported a total loss of \$4,300 and another lost \$1,350. The website of the supposed French bulldog breeder, [divinefrenchieshome.com](http://divinefrenchieshome.com), contains pictures of puppies claiming to be American Kennel Club registered and boasts positive customer reviews. However, a major red flag can be found in the shipping and delivery information.

Complaints and BBB Scam Tracker details state that the breeder requires a specified amount of money (often \$1,000, \$1,350 or \$1,750) through Zelle, Venmo, Google Pay, Apple

Pay or PayPal to a "Harry Jones." On some occasions, the breeder or shipping/delivery company messages again regarding additional fees for crate, shipping, insurance, etc. After payment is made, no further notifications are received.

Upon further investigation, BBB of the Upstate discovered the website matches another puppy website, [poeticfrenchbulldogshome.com](http://poeticfrenchbulldogshome.com), with a business address in Alexandria, VA. The About Us section matches, and all available puppy photos are identical. These two sites also share the same phone number. Greenfield Bulldogs is another breeder name that appeared in customer reviews.

Also, Google Reviews were posted by Lawson Barry and Matthew Kucinski, who own the

Spartanburg location, stating it's a scam and urging people to stop showing up at this address as it is a private residence and not a business. Another Google Review was posted by Sandra Sousa in Waltham, MA, stating to stop using her address as there are no dogs or business at the address.

BBB has provided several ways to avoid becoming a victim of a pet scam. First, do your research by checking BBB Business Profiles on [BBB.org](http://BBB.org) for complaints and customer reviews before you make the purchase. Next, do not buy a pet without seeing it in person. If that is not possible, request a live video call to view the animal, meet the breeder, and evaluate the facility. In addition, conduct a reverse image search of the



Considering a darling dog as an addition to your home? Remember to do your research and check [BBB.org](http://BBB.org) to ensure you are purchasing your pup from a verified business.

picture of the pet you are considering. If the same picture appears on multiple websites, it is likely a fraud. Further, avoid wiring money, using a cash app, or gift card as payment methods. These payment methods

offer no way to get your money back if you are the victim of fraud. Remember to always get a sense of a fair price for the breed you are considering.

Visit [BBB.org/pet-scams](http://BBB.org/pet-scams) for more red flags

and scam prevention tips. Always look for businesses that follow BBB Accreditation Standards and BBB Standards for Trust. If you encounter suspicious activity, you can report scams to BBB Scam Tracker.

## Senator Collins Co-Sponsors Bill Tackling Critical Doctor Shortage

In order to address the shortage of medical professionals in Maine and across the United States, which has been underscored most recently by the COVID-19 pandemic, U.S. Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) co-sponsored the Rural Physician Workforce Production Act to attract more doctors to rural areas.

"This legislation would extend an important program to address the shortage of primary care

doctors, which has been exacerbated in rural and underserved communities by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic," said Senator Collins. "I urge all of my colleagues to support this important legislation to help train the next generation of physicians and ensure all Americans have access to quality health services."

One of the greatest indicators of where a doctor will practice is the loca-

tion of their residency, but some rural hospitals cannot afford to take on new residents, despite the need for more physicians. The Rural Physician Workforce Production Act addresses the geographic maldistribution of physicians across the U.S. stemming from the current structure of Medicare-funded graduate medical education (GME). The bill lifts the current caps on Medicare reimbursement payments to ru-

ral hospitals that cover the cost of taking on residents, eliminating the serious disadvantage that rural hospitals face when recruiting new medical professionals.

The bill also allows Medicare to reimburse urban hospitals that send residents to train at rural health care facilities during a resident rotation, and it establishes a per resident

payment initiative to ensure rural hospitals have the resources to bring on additional residents.

The Rural Physician Workforce Production Act is supported by the Council of Academic Family Medicine, the American Academy of Family Physicians, the National Rural Health Association, and the American Association

of Colleges of Osteopathic Medicine.

In addition to Senator Collins, the legislation was co-sponsored by Senators Jon Tester (D-MT), John Barrasso (R-WY), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Kevin Cramer (R-ND), Cindy Hyde-Smith (R-MS), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), John Boozman (R-AR), and Shelley Capito (R-WV).

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# Arts & Entertainment

## Shop Small All Year and Support Local Entrepreneurs



SBA Maine District Director (left) with Senator Angus King (right) during a walking tour of Downtown Bath.

The COVID-19 pandemic confirmed the critical role small businesses play in our daily lives. Neighborhood restaurants, entertainment venues, ser-

vice companies, and any business where in-person contact was the norm endured periodic closure and suffered financial hardship, but they have persevered and shown small businesses are the engine of our national economy.

Maine is home to over 150,000 small businesses, with about half of all workers in Maine employed by a small business or owning a small business. These businesses create two out of three net new private-sector jobs in America, helping to spur economic growth in communities across our country and add vibrance and strength to our nation.

During the pandemic, many of us modified our shopping and dining habits. Some ate more takeout than ever before in the name of “supporting small business”

while others developed new hobbies and began baking at home, but with vaccination rates increasing and booster shots becoming available, consumer confidence is on the rise. Communities are returning to more in-person dining and shopping experiences. Diane Sturgeon, SBA Maine District Director, encourages shoppers to shop at small businesses: “Through the holidays, we need to keep that momentum up and continue to support our small businesses as they adjust to changes in the market caused by the pandemic.”

Small Business Saturday is the perfect opportunity to help local businesses. Celebrated each year on the Saturday after Thanksgiving, which was November 27th this year, Small Business Saturday is a way for consumers to make an im-

pact in their community by shopping at independently owned businesses during the holiday season.

Since 2011, the U.S. Small Business Administration has been a formal co-sponsor of Small Business Saturday, which was founded by American Express in 2010. Each year, the SBA encourages independent businesses to leverage Small Business Saturday to help drive more traffic to their businesses, whether it is through their doors or to their e-commerce site during the holiday shopping season.

The SBA office joined Senator Angus King for a walking tour of businesses in downtown Bath that represent the broad array of what small businesses can do. Whether it was the natural food market, the small local bookstore, or the shop

that sells all Maine-made gifts, the message was the same: “We’re still here, we have great products, and we’re ready to meet the demand from our community.” Wherever you live in our state, you can find great entrepreneurs who will help you find the perfect gift for your loved ones, and maybe a treat for yourself while you’re shopping

Last year, thousands of communities in all 50 U.S. states, territories, and Washington, D.C. supported the day and helped small businesses remain resilient through the pandemic.

While the holidays may still look a little different this year, we can each do our part by doing the following:

First, shop small and do your holiday purchasing at a small business. Second, while you are supporting

your local small businesses for Small Business Saturday, dine small, too. Visit your local eateries and independent restaurants. Third, encouraging friends and family to do the same by shopping at a small business in-person or online.

As our economy continues to improve, shopping small is a way to show support for the businesses who have always been here to support the community and have adjusted their businesses to continue to meet our needs, leading the way in bringing our main streets and business centers back to life.

The SBA encourages the community to join them in shopping small not only through this holiday season, but as often as possible. Local shops and restaurants are depending on the community’s continued support.

## Sebago Brewing’s Slick Nick Wicked Winter Ale



Slick Nick Wicked Winter Ale is back! You’ve been so patient all year, and now the wait is over at last.

Sebago’s classic seasonal, Slick Nick, has been rocking us through long

Maine winters since 1998. It features a full body with toasty, malty warmth, and

a touch of hop character. Slick Nick is available at all Sebago Brewing locations in 16oz cans, on draft, and growlers to go. You can also find 4-packs at Hannaford and other stores.

The Sebago Brewing pilot system exists to boldly go where no one has gone before. Replicator Error, created by Cellarperson Erik White, is no

exception. Replicator Error is available at the Tasting Room in Gorham while provisions last.

In addition, Barleywine is now on draft and in 12oz cans at all Sebago Brewing locations. Inspired by Captain Jean-Luc Picard of the Starship Enterprise, the Saison-style beer was made with French Saison yeast, Noble hops, and low IBUs, a.k.a.

not many bittering compounds. And the secret in-

gredient? Four pounds of Earl Grey tea.



Barleywine, another fan favorite, is back on tap and in 12 oz cans. Our brewers aged this limited batch for 11 months in a selection of bourbon barrels. The result is a higher ABV than in past years and a rich chocolate and bourbon flavor that’s perfect for sipping and sitting by a wood stove.

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# UMaine Extension Market Gardener and Farmer Training Begins Jan. 11



Soil health and crop planning, no-till production, vegetable and fruit production, food safety, integrated pest management, tools and equipment, and marketing and farm economics are topics to be covered in this program.

University of Maine Cooperative Extension Maine AgrAbility is offering a nine-month hybrid training program for all beginning farmers of all abilities interested in growing and selling their own farm produce. The program begins online January 11<sup>th</sup> and continues twice monthly through September 6<sup>th</sup>, including farm field days.

“Boots-2-Bushels: Boot Camp for Market Gardeners and Farmers” topics include soil health and crop planning, no-till production, vegetable and fruit production, food safety, integrated pest management, tools and equipment, and marketing and farm economics. Instructors include UMaine Extension, MOFGA and local farmer subject matter experts.

The \$100 fee includes course materials. Registration is open through November 17<sup>th</sup> to veterans, family members, and beginning farmers with disabilities. It is open to all thereafter. Space is limited for this program. Registra-

tion may be completed on the program webpage. For more information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact Anne Devin, 207.505.0722; anne.devin@maine.edu. More details and a course schedule are available on the Boots-2-Bushels webpage.

As a trusted resource for over 100 years, University of Maine Cooperative Extension has supported UMaine’s land and sea grant public education role by conducting community-driven, research-based programs in every Maine county. UMaine Extension helps support, sustain and grow the food-based economy. It is the only entity in the state that touches every aspect of the Maine Food System, where policy, research, production, processing, commerce, nutrition, and food security and safety are integral and interrelated. UMaine Extension also conducts the most successful out-of-school youth educational program in Maine through 4-H.

*The University of Maine, founded in Orono in 1865, is the state’s land grant, sea grant and space grant university, with a regional campus at the University of Maine at Machias. UMaine is located on Marsh Island in the homeland of the Penobscot Nation. UMaine Machias is located in the homeland of the Passamaquoddy Nation. As Maine’s flagship public university, UMaine has a statewide mission of teaching, research and economic development, and community service. UMaine is the state’s only public research university and among the most comprehensive higher education institutions in the Northeast. It attracts students from all 50 states and 81 countries. UMaine currently enrolls 11,989 undergraduate and graduate students, and UMaine Machias enrolls 747 undergraduates. Their students have opportunities to participate in groundbreaking research with world-class scholars. UMaine offers more than 100 degree pro-*

grams through which students can earn master’s, doctoral or professional science master’s degrees, as well as graduate certificates. UMaine Machias

offers 18 degree programs. The university promotes environmental stewardship, with substantial efforts campus-wide to conserve energy, recycle and adhere

to green building standards in new construction. For more information about UMaine and UMaine Machias, visit [umaine.edu](http://umaine.edu) and [machias.edu](http://machias.edu).



UMaine is excited to launch this educational program to the benefit of farmers at all skill levels.

*Paul Edward Baribault*  
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# Updates from the Independence Association



### The Art of Holiday Snacking

There was quite a crowd in the Spindleworks Offsite space during last Friday's opening of the holiday sale season. The art was one good reason, and so were the very creative snacks made by IA parent Christine Boisvert! Almost too amazing to eat ... but that did not stop this reporter from sampling the strawberry Santas and stuffed olive penguins. The sale at The Harlow in Hallowell of work by Kennebec Valley Art Association members continues through Christmas.



### Girl Scouts Join the Meal Train!

Robert Ham grins as he looks forward to the tasty dinner just delivered by members of local Girl Scout Troop 535. Eight girls each prepared one element of the meal at their own homes in an entirely COVID-safe troop activity. DSPs Ray Randall and Aimee Busiere are in the background. Preparing a meal for one of our group homes is a great way to support our over-

stretched DSPs. That way, staff can focus on residents' personal care needs instead of splitting their attention to meal preparation. We are currently scheduling Monday and Thursday dinners for group homes located in Brunswick. To offer a meal once, once a month, or weekly, email [cbyron@iaofmaine.org](mailto:cbyron@iaofmaine.org) and we'll fit you into the schedule.



### Fill a Stocking (or 3) for our Friends!

We're receiving filled holiday stockings for the residents of our group homes. At last count, we had 33 stockings still to go. Could you help? Stuff them with such goodies as personal care supplies (toothpaste, deodorant, a nice smelling soap) and fun things (mini Lego kits, small puzzles, bubbles, those really cool facecloths that come super compressed and expand in water). Email [cbyron@iaofmaine.org](mailto:cbyron@iaofmaine.org) for more info.



### Children's Case Management Says Thanks to Topsham Fair Board!

You know that 50-50 raffle every night during the Topsham Fair? The Fairgrounds Board chose our Children's Case Management program as one recipient of the funds raised! Richard Brown, a director on the Board of Topsham Fairgrounds, met with Christine Walker and Pam Bird to hand them the check. The funds are to support area youth and their families served who are in need of a holiday meal and gifts this year. Thank you, Richard and Sandra Brown for your role in directing this wonderfully generous donation!



### The Weather Outside is Frightful...

But our team is still delighted to do trail maintenance for the Brunswick Topsham Land Trust. This year, they took on the new Neptune Woods trail on Brunswick Landing. That's BTLT Land Steward George Jutras at left together with a whole gang of IA friends getting ready to hit the trail on a cold and snowy day. Thanks to Casey Clougherty for the invite to join in!

**Follow us on Facebook!**  
Don't miss our weekly giveaways!

## A New Medical Dispensary Plays a Different Tune in Maine's Growing Industry

PORTLAND, December 1, 2021 – TheJoint.me is excited to announce the opening of its flagship store this December in Portland, Maine. One of the state's newest options for medical cannabis, the dispensary was co-founded by Steve Peters, a Lewiston, Maine native and pioneer in the movement, alongside fellow cofounders George Irwin and Phyllis Lacca.

Born of the organic idea that music, similar to cannabis, affects mood and wellbeing, TheJoint.me found its roots. Its mission is to grow the best varieties of medical cannabis to elevate and heal the mind, body, and soul. And cultivate the strains to soothe and calm it just the same. As some of the world's greatest innovators have channeled creativity through the power of music and cannabis, so too is the innovation of better health taking shape in new forms. Where the highest-quality medical cannabis and your best life

TheJoint.me is found. TheJoint.me is holding auditions! Love people, weed, and music? The Joint.me would love to meet with you at Portland, Maine's "Greatest Hits" under one roof. The company is currently seeking fun and entertaining people who know weed. Come say "High" and audition for a budtender, back-end fulfillment, or cashier position. Willingness to step up and play any instrument is helpful. TheJoint.me is

playing a brand-new tune that Portland hasn't heard yet! Derived from tissue culture, their products are the greenest and cleanest in Maine! In their tech-heavy store featuring amazing surround sound, you don't just come to work, you're coming to a show!

For more information, email [smoke@the-joint.me](mailto:smoke@the-joint.me). Must be 18 years of age and provide valid ME identification/proof of residence.

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# MaineHealth Innovation announces first recipients of its \$100,000 Bonfire Fund

PORTLAND, Maine – MaineHealth Innovation will be investing \$100,000 through its inaugural Bonfire Fund in two innovations designed to improve the care of patients. The innovations receiving funding are a robotic clot retriever to improve the way neurosurgeons clear blood clots from brains, and the Collapsible Aerosolized Particle Enclosure (CAPE), a portable negative pressure isolation tent that fits over patient beds to help contain infectious particles.

The Bonfire Fund was created by MaineHealth as part of its not-for-profit mission of researching new ways to provide care. The idea is to foster and accelerate innovations by care team members to the point where additional external funding can be secured. Recipients are companies founded by MaineHealth care team members and are chosen by a multi-disciplinary group of reviewers from across MaineHealth and its strategic partners. Innovations are judged on if they provide a novel solution to unmet care needs that can be scaled to benefit the larger community.

“The Bonfire Fund is far more than just a monetary investment in our innovators,” said Susan Ahern, Vice President of Innovation at MaineHealth. “Fund recipients benefit from connections to experts both within MaineHealth and in the larger community that can help them overcome technical or business challenges.”

Both Bonfire Fund recipients previously received \$20,000 seed grants through MaineHealth Innovation’s Ignite Fund, which began in 2020. The Ignite Fund supports earli-

er stage innovations.

The robotic clot retriever is a partnership between MaineHealth neurosurgeons Rob Ecker, M.D., M.B.A., and Jeffrey Florman, M.D., and Mohsen Shahinpoor, Ph.D., a mechanical engineering professor of the University of Maine. Drs. Ecker and Florman were looking for a better tool to help surgeons remove blood clots from the brain and discovered Dr. Shahinpoor’s Ionic Polymer Metal Composites (IPMCs), electric “smart” materials that can function like human muscle. They hope IPMCs will offer surgeons a fuller range of motion to retrieve clots.

“The Bonfire Fund will allow us to further progress our prototyping towards a device that will be a first in human trial,” Dr. Ecker said.

The CAPE innovation was the idea of two emergency medicine chief residents at Maine Medical Center, Liz Hamilton, M.D., and Katie Main, M.D., who were looking for a way to isolate COVID patients as they were waiting to be admitted to a negative-pressure room. As experienced campers, they brought their idea of creating a tent-like structure for hospital beds to attending physician Samir Haydar, D.O., who encouraged them to develop it. MaineHealth Innovation connected the team with Thermoformed Plastics of New England and Baker Company, who made significant improvements to their early prototype made from plastic and PVC pipe. Now, the team plans to use its Bonfire Fund investment to obtain Emergency Use Authorization from the U.S. Food and Drug Administration and plan a clinical trial.

“The Bonfire Fund is going to make all the difference,” Dr. Haydar said. “Our collaborative group has the expertise, but without these seed funds, this project just wouldn’t have been able to move on to the next level of development. MaineHealth’s support and the clinical environment within is ripe for innovations like ours.”

In addition to the \$100,000 in Bonfire Fund investments, MaineHealth also made \$20,000 Ignite Fund investments in four innovations by care team members:

Bethany Sweet, CCLS, a child life specialist at The Barbara Bush Children’s Hospital at Maine Medical Center, is designing a fully-functioning replicated port-a-catheter called “Play Portal” to help pediatric patients prepare for the procedure through play.

Theresa Roelke, APRN-AGPCNP, a nurse practitioner at Maine Medical Center, is developing a 3D educational tool called a “Pocket Nodule-Lung” that providers can use to explain to patients the size and type of lung nodules that may be found during a lung screening.

Will Connolly, R.N., an emergency medicine nurse at Maine Medical Center, is designing a compact, cost-effective suction device called “Rescue Vac” to clear a patient’s airway in situations where more sophisticated suction devices are not easily accessible.

Sunil Malhotra, M.D., a cardiothoracic surgeon and medical director at Maine Medical Center, is developing a graft to better direct blood flow in patients with single ventricle congenital heart disease.

“Innovation is one of

MaineHealth’s six values and an integral part of its mission of caring for our community, educating tomorrow’s caregivers and researching new ways to provide care,” said Doug Sawyer, M.D., Ph.D., MaineHealth Chief Academic Officer and interim Chief Medical Officer. “These funds are one way we help foster a culture of innovation throughout our organization in keeping with our vision of working together so our communities are the healthiest in America.”

MaineHealth plans to continue its Innovation Fund investments with another round of applications in 2022.

*MaineHealth is a not-for-profit integrated health system consisting of nine local hospital systems, a comprehensive behavioral healthcare network, diagnostic services, home health agencies, and more than 1,500 employed and independent physicians working together through the MaineHealth Medical Group. With approximately 22,000 employees, MaineHealth is the largest health system in northern New England and provides preventive care, diagnosis and treatment to 1.1 million residents in Maine and New Hampshire. It includes Franklin Memorial Hospital/Franklin Community Health Network in Farmington, LincolnHealth in Damariscotta and Boothbay Harbor, Maine Behavioral Healthcare in South Portland, MaineHealth Care at Home in Saco, Maine Medical Center in Portland, Memorial Hospital in North Conway, N.H., Mid Coast-Parkview Health in Brunswick, NorDx in Scarborough, Pen Bay Medical Center and Waldo County*

*Hospital in Rockport and Belfast, Southern Maine Health Care in Biddeford and Sanford, Spring Harbor Hospital in Westbrook and Stephens Memorial Hospital/Western Maine Health Care in Norway. MaineHealth Affiliates include Maine General*

*Health in Augusta and Waterville, New England Rehabilitation Hospital in Portland and St. Mary’s Regional Medical Center in Lewiston. It is also a significant stakeholder in the MaineHealth Accountable Care Organization in Portland.*

Send all items for  
Names & Faces  
to the editor.  
Deadline is  
Friday by five pm.

## Shelters

*Continued from page 1*

Further, always consider other pet family members. Are your other pets willing to bring in another member to the pack? Carefully think about temperament and if there are enough places in the home for them to be apart when necessary.

Should you decide the

foster pet is a great fit and should permanently be a part of your family, check out these tips from the ASPCA, a BBB Accredited Charity, on adoption at BBB.org. Beware of possible scams when considering adopting an animal and check out the shelter on BBB.org.

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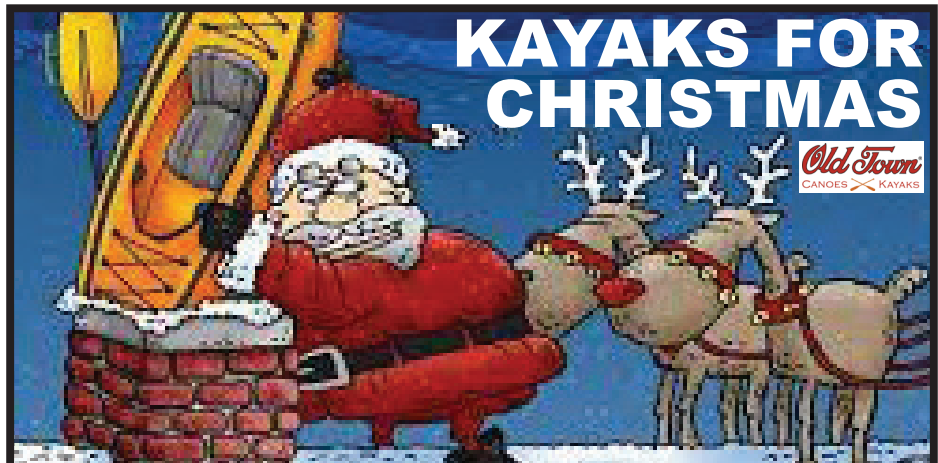
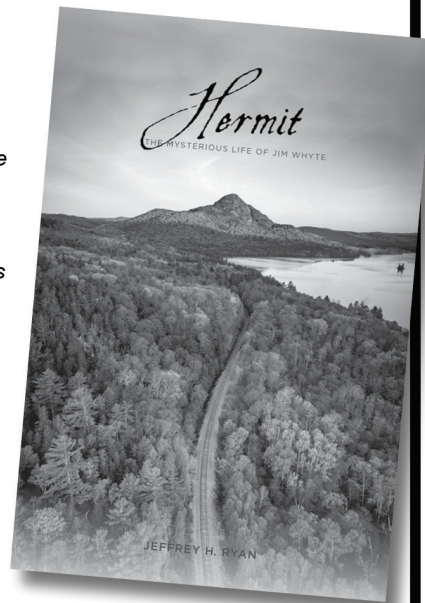
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— George Smith, *Bangor Daily News*

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# ACS Announces 6th Annual Real Men Wear Pink Campaign

In its 6th year in Maine, community and business leaders will unite to fight breast cancer with the American Cancer Society through participation in the Real Men Wear Pink campaign. Throughout October, Real Men Wear Pink participants encouraged community members to take action in the fight against breast cancer.

“In addition to wearing pink and raising awareness about breast cancer in their communities, these men will be fundraising to help the American Cancer Society attack cancer from every angle and save more lives from breast cancer,” said Maitri Chittidi, Sr.

Development Manager for the American Cancer Society. “Funds raised help us save lives from breast cancer through early detection and prevention, innovative breast cancer research, and patient support.”

Each Real Men Wear Pink participant accepted a fundraising challenge and competed to be the top fundraiser among his peers by the end of the campaign.

“As a survivor of both breast cancer and prostate cancer, I am grateful for the American Cancer Society and its resources,” said John Fecteau, co-owner of Portland Safe. “My wife and I stayed at the American Cancer Society’s Bos-

ton Hope Lodge for free when I sought treatment for my cancer a few years ago. I joined Real Men Wear Pink of Maine because it’s an opportunity to give back to an organization that has meant so much to so many families.”

Among the 2021 Real Men Wear Pink candidates are John Spain, Owner of Maine Art Hill, Jim Donnelly, EVP and Chief Commercial Officer of Bangor Savings Bank, Blake Hayes, Host of The Blake Show on Maine’s Coast 93.1, Jonathan Sahrbeck, Cumberland County District Attorney, Peter Steenstra, Head Rowing Coach at Bates College,

Adam Parent, Mainstream Real Estate Company, John Fecteau, Co-Owner of Portland Safe, Tim Forte, Clark Insurance, Rob Marquis, Bath Iron Works, Alex Brown, Fore River Management, Foley’s Fitness Center, Sheriff Kevin Joyce and the Cumberland County Sheriff’s Office, Scarborough Police Department, Brunswick Police Department, Cape Elizabeth Police Department, Augusta Police Department and Westbrook Police Department.

The fundraising campaign officially kicked off October 1st and the competition is always intense in the State of Maine.



Carol Fecteau and John Fecteau of Portland Safe.

According to the American Cancer Society, an estimated 281,500 women and 2,800 men in the United States will be diagnosed with breast cancer, and an estimated 44,100 will die from the disease this year. In Maine, 1,430 women will be diagnosed this year, and 190 will die from the disease. For the first time ever, breast cancer has surpassed lung cancer as the most diagnosed cancer worldwide among women.

“Our community can make a huge impact in the breast cancer cause,” said Chelsea Paradore, Associate Director of Development for the American Cancer Society. “We are grateful to our Real Men Wear Pink participants for lending their voices to this cause and fighting for everyone affected by breast

cancer.” For more information about breast cancer call 1-800-227-2345. To nominate a candidate for Real Men Wear Pink of Maine or learn more about the campaign, please contact [MaineRealMenWearPink@cancer.org](mailto:MaineRealMenWearPink@cancer.org) or 207-888-3930.

*The American Cancer Society is a global grassroots force of nearly 1.5 million volunteers dedicated to saving lives, celebrating lives, and leading the fight for a world without cancer. From breakthrough research to free lodging near treatment, a 24/7/365 live helpline, free rides to treatment, and convening powerful activists to create awareness and impact, the American Cancer Society is attacking cancer from every angle. Visit [cancer.org](http://cancer.org) for more information.*

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# Pilot Program to Combat Opioid Epidemic in Maine

An innovative program expanding low-barrier treatment for opiate use disorder—potentially serving thousands of people across Maine—launches this month at six of the state’s community health centers. This pilot project—training community-based providers to build and maintain medically assisted treatment clinics—will increase access to this critically needed treatment in areas most affected by the opiate crisis, including the hard-hit rural areas of Maine.

Project ECHO, led by Penobscot Community Health Care (PCHC) and the Maine Primary Care Association (MPCA), will train six community health centers (representing nearly 65% of Maine community health center’s total patient population) to build programs modeled after PCHC’s Bridge Clinic in Bangor. Through the

12-month ECHO model, teams from each health center will learn to build, evaluate and improve their own programs.

“Low-barrier treatment for opioid use disorder means that people can access life-saving, evidence-based care more easily and more quickly, at a time when they are most motivated to get that care,” said Noah Nesin, M.D., the Chief Medical Officer at PCHC and an original planner of the Bridge Clinic. “That care is delivered in a manner that addresses the practical realities of their life, including issues like transportation, food, housing, and social supports. This is the way we treat all other chronic diseases in primary care: by working first to engage with people on their terms, doing all that we can to initially stabilize their disease and then to collaborate in

progressing toward a more comprehensive treatment plan.”

The successful launch of the project is the result of more than three years of work by health centers, legislative leaders, and the Mills Administration to develop strategies to address OUD. PCHC providers and operations experts will act as faculty, coaching and supporting the participating health centers as they create their own programs.

Dr. Christopher Pezzullo, Clinical Director at Maine Primary Care Association, said, “This low-barrier model, coupled with the access afforded by community health centers in the most rural of states, has the potential to be a game-changer. As we work to make MAT available to all patients at all stages of their disease, community health centers will provide evidence that

this low-barrier model is the key to addressing disparities in access to care for opiate use disorder.”

What is low-barrier Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT)? MAT is a proven effective method of addressing substance use/opioid use disorder. Low-barrier treatment puts as few hurdles as possible in front of people seeking treatment and recovery. Unlike other modes of treatment, low-barrier means greater access with fewer requirements. Low-barrier MAT connects with people who are not currently able to access treatment as well as provide access to other supports in the community. Community health centers are integral parts of their communities and thus uniquely positioned to support long-term healthcare relationships, especially with people who may not have had

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success with other treatment models.

The six participating health centers in this program include: Bucksport Regional Health Center, Community Clinical Services DFD Russell Medical Centers, Health Access Network, HealthReach Community Health Centers, Hometown Health Center. In addition to the health centers participating in this pilot, 100% of Maine’s community health centers have signed an opioid pledge, committing to continuous action as a network to address this epidemic.

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## New Ventures Maine Executive Director of 43 Years To Retire

AUGUSTA, ME—University of Maine at Augusta (UMA) Vice President of Enrollment Management and Marketing Jonathan Henry announced that New Ventures Maine (NVME) Western Region Manager and Statewide Asset Manager Janet Smith was chosen through an extensive search to succeed Gilda Nardone as she retires after 43 years of service as NVME’s executive director.

“Gilda has lifted up thousands of people across our state and beyond over a lifetime of dedication to her work,” said Henry. “She

has also mentored her staff to take on leadership roles, and Janet is an excellent example of that guidance manifested professionally. Janet has the expertise, experience, and passion to lead New Ventures Maine into the future.”

In her 43 years as executive director, Nardone guided the organization in its establishment as Displaced Homemakers beginning in 1978, as it grew into Maine Centers for Women, Work, and Community in the mid-1990s, and as it became New Ventures Maine in 2015. Throughout her tenure, Nardone has been

an advocate for women pursuing career changes, entrepreneurial opportunities, and financial literacy.

“I’ve worked with so many people who have followed their aspirations and dreams, and they’ve accomplished amazing things,” said Nardone. “I look forward to staying connected and continuing to champion the organization,” she said.

Smith joined New Ventures Maine in 2001 as the Farmington Center Coordinator, and in 2004, she became the Regional Manager for the Western Region, including Franklin, Androscoggin, and

Oxford Counties. She has helped develop and teaches NVME’s comprehensive money-management and career-planning classes, along with teaching other workshops for twenty-plus years. She also designed, developed, and implemented NVME’s Rainy Day Savings Program and has spent seven years leading CASH Maine statewide activities. She earned a Bachelor of Science in Plant Science from the University of Maine and a Master of Science in Adult Education from the University of Southern Maine. Smith is a Gorman Fellow (Cohort

3) and a graduate of Leadership Maine 2014-15, Chi Class, as well as a member of several state and local boards, committees and networks.

“As Gilda leaves New Ventures Maine, we have a tremendous legacy to build upon,” Smith said. “I am passionate about people working toward economic security and I believe education, empowerment, and access to financial assets are critical tools for strengthening families and communities.”

Smith started her new role on Monday, November 1 and Nardone will assist

with the transition through December 31, 2021.

*New Ventures Maine is a statewide education and economic development program administered through UMA/University of Maine System. The mission of NVME is to help Maine people succeed in the changing economy and achieve economic security for themselves and their families. NVME achieves its mission by providing training and individual coaching in planning careers, starting businesses, managing money and building assets, and developing leaders.*

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For questions and detailed information on these trips, please call: Claire - 207-784-0302 or Cindy - 207-345-9569.

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# UMaine's Population Reaches Record High



Students walking along the mall at the University of Maine. Courtesy of the University of Maine.

University of Maine President Joan Ferrini-Mundy announced today that enrollment at UMaine for the fall 2021 semester is 11,989 students. The cohort of undergraduate, graduate and early college learners has increased 2.1% from fall 2020, when it was 11,741 students, according to enrollment census data compiled by the UMaine Office of Institutional Research and Assessment.

Out-of-state undergraduate enrollment at Maine's public research and land grant university has climbed 150% in a little over a decade, helping the University of Maine defy national declines in higher education enrollment and attract new talent for the Maine workforce.

It is the highest Orono-based enrollment of undergraduate, graduate and

early college students in the 153-year history of student enrollment. Programs at the Bangor campus, now a part of the University of Maine at Augusta, contributed to UMaine's student population from 1970 to 1994.

"UMaine students participate in research, innovation and exploratory learning that defines tomorrow," says Ferrini-Mundy. "It is a fantastic time to be a Black Bear with new investments and opportunities coming to our flagship campus. We are pleased more students are choosing the comprehensive, success-focused educational experience we provide at the University of Maine."

Enrollment among undergraduate students at the University of Maine at Machias, UMaine's regional campus, has grown to

505 students, a 1% increase compared to fall 2020. Machias enrollment is not included in the tabulation of UMaine's record-setting numbers.

The growth in enrollment at UMaine comes at a time when national higher education enrollment has fallen 6.5% over the last two years, in part due to the impact of COVID-19. The number of students graduating from Maine high schools is also in the midst of a decades-long decline expected to continue until at least 2037.

First-year enrollment at UMaine this fall has climbed to 2,225 students, an 8% increase over last year's incoming class. The Class of 2025 is the fourth largest incoming class in the history of UMaine. Half of the first-year cohort has a high school grade point

average of 3.5 or higher and the mean GPA for the new class of Black Bears is the highest in more than a decade.

Out-of-state enrollment at Maine's public research and land grant university has climbed to a record high of 4,524 students, a 5% increase from fall 2020. Powered by the 150% increase in out-of-state undergraduate enrollment since fall 2009, students from beyond Maine's borders now comprise 41% of UMaine's degree-seeking undergraduate student population.

"Student success is a strategic priority for us, and we are thrilled that so many students have chosen UMaine," says UMaine's Executive Vice President of Academic Affairs and Provost John Volin. "Recruiting students here at home and attracting more talent to our state are important for Maine's skilled workforce. The vast majority of our students will have the opportunity to work with employers in internship, clinical or research experiences, which often lead to fulfilling careers here in Maine."

*The University of Maine, founded in Orono in 1865, is the state's land grant, sea grant and*

*space grant university, with a regional campus at the University of Maine at Machias. UMaine is located on Marsh Island in the homeland of the Penobscot Nation. UMaine Machias is in the homeland of the Passamaquoddy Nation. As Maine's flagship public university, UMaine has a statewide mission of teaching, research and economic development, and community service. UMaine is the state's only public research university and among the most comprehensive higher education institutions in the Northeast. It attracts students from all 50 states and 81 countries. UMaine currently enrolls 11,989 undergraduate and graduate students, and UMaine*

*Machias enrolls 747 undergraduates. Our students have opportunities to participate in groundbreaking research with world-class scholars. UMaine offers more than 100-degree programs through which students can earn master's, doctoral or professional science master's degrees, as well as graduate certificates. UMaine Machias offers 18-degree programs. The university promotes environmental stewardship, with substantial efforts campus wide to conserve energy, recycle and adhere to green building standards in new construction. For more information about UMaine and UMaine Machias, visit [umaine.edu](http://umaine.edu) and [machias.edu](http://machias.edu).*

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