

Gorham Public Works Receives New Equipment



Gorham Public Works received their new trackless earlier this month, just in time for the winter weather!



The crew is ecstatic and can't wait for its inaugural run.

John T. Gorman Foundation Announces Plans for 2022 Direct Services Grant Program

Portland, ME (January 12, 2022) – Today the John T. Gorman Foundation announced that it will accept applications for its 2022 Direct Services Grant Program from February 1 to March 1. This year, the program will make available a total of \$1.5 million in grants to nonprofits offering essential services and assistance to low-income Maine people – a portion of funding will be directed to programs that specifically meet the needs of older Mainers.

“The prolonged pandemic continues to make it difficult for too many Maine people to access food, shelter, health care, and other essentials. This includes older Mainers who have been disproportionately affected by isolation and barriers to services,” said Foundation Program Associate Lauralee Raymond. “We’re privileged to provide these funds to community organizations throughout

the state so they can reach more Mainers at this time of incredible need.”

The John T. Gorman Foundation’s annual Direct Services Grant Program supports organizations that are addressing the basic needs of vulnerable Mainers, such as food, shelter, clothing, physical and mental health, and transportation. Grants of up to \$25,000 will be awarded.

This year’s application period will open Tuesday, February 1, and close at 5 p.m. on Tuesday, March 1.

Foundation staff will hold a virtual information session at 9 a.m. on Thursday, February 3, to take questions on the program and walk through the application process. To register, email info@jtgfoundation.org.

More information about applying for this year’s program is available at <https://www.jtgfoundation.org/2022dsdp>

Maine Department of Inland Fisheries Wildlife Seeking Nominations

We’re seeking nominations for the Wilmot (Wiggie) Robinson Legendary Maine Guide Award!

Registered Maine Guides are experienced and passionate outdoors men and women, and each year the Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife recognizes a member of the guiding community with the Wilmot (Wiggie) Robinson Legendary Guide Award.

Criteria for this prestigious award is as follows:

Must meet 20-year anniversary as a Registered Maine Guide. Active guide for 10 years.

Passes a criminal background check. Law abiding citizen with no arrests for committing a crime related to: Human injury, gun laws or major hunting or fishing violations for 20 years.

Volunteer community service. Pro-

viding education about safety and survival in the Maine woods. Introducing and educating youth about the importance of the ecosystem found in the State of Maine.

Active on boards or committees that enhance and promote the importance of Maine’s outdoor resources, ie: youth programs, scout leader, conservation education, safety instructor, search and rescue volunteer, active in Fish and Game club(s), guide license examiner, etc.

This award will be presented to the recipient at the annual Maine Professional Guides Association banquet in the spring of 2022.

If you know a deserving Registered Maine Guide, please complete and submit a nomination by January 10, 2022. You can download the nomination packet or submit a nomination online.

New Year, New Goals, New Family Member!

World Heritage Student Exchange Programs, a highly respected, non-profit, public-benefit organization, is seeking local host families for high school boys and girls from Scandinavia, France, Germany, Italy, Thailand, China, South Korea, and the former Soviet Republics. Students are already awaiting word on who their host families will be for the 2022-2023 academic school year. If your goal was to try something new for the new-year, this will fulfill that! Host families provide room, board, and guidance for a teenager(s) living thousands of miles from home. Couples, single parents, and families with or without children in the home are all en-

couraged to apply.

The exchange students arrive from their home country shortly before the 2022-2023 school year begins and each World Heritage student is fully insured, brings his/her own personal spending money and expects to bear his/her share of household responsibilities, as well as being included in normal family activities and lifestyles.

If you are interested in opening your home and sharing your family life with a young person from abroad, please contact us today for more information, call (800) 888-9040, go online at host.world-heritage.org or email info@world-heritage.org

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

“Miracle” Slimming Scams Weigh Down New Year’s Resolutions

Many consumers are looking to lose a few ‘pandemic pounds’ or a little extra holiday weight. Better Business Bureau is ringing in 2022 with tips to help people avoid falling prey to overstated weight loss advertisements and scams. The desire to get in shape or lose weight fast creates a risk of being deceived by products that do not work as advertised, come with a host of unwanted side effects, or cause weight gain instead.

Any time you see miracle claims for weight loss be very skeptical. There is no such thing as a ‘secret ingredient’ or ‘breakthrough formula’ that can result in weight loss virtually overnight.

The Federal Trade Commission (FTC) warns consumers of dozens of false weight loss claims. Many consumers end up purchasing and using products such as body wraps, topical creams, dietary supplements, skin patches, and even earrings promising to “melt,” “flush,” “burn,” or “dissolve” away

unwanted fat.

Promotions advertising “miraculous” weight loss products and promising immediate results should be viewed as potential scams. These products, if delivered as promised, are often ineffective in delivering their promised results, or worse, can have potentially dangerous side effects.

Fraudulent weight loss products are often advertised alongside images of celebrities and fake endorsements. Additionally, deceptive free trial offers are very common, as investigated in the 2018 BBB study, “Subscription Traps and Deceptive Free Trials Scam Millions with Misleading Ads and Fake Celebrity Endorsements.” The study reported that consumers filed nearly 37,000 complaints and BBB ScamTracker reports related to deceptive free trial offers and fake celebrity endorsements since 2015, with an average loss per victim of \$186.

Many consumer complaints described

weight loss programs as difficult to cancel, even if the product doesn’t work as claimed in the ads.

Some consumers say they believed they were making a one-time purchase but then received recurring charges to their credit cards for more of the product. When they contacted customer service, they were informed that they had signed up for a subscription, which was only disclosed in the fine print of the terms and conditions of their original purchase.

In other, similar complaints, consumers described being notified of an additional shipment of the weight loss product that they did not order. When they tried to contact the company to cancel, the company claimed the item had already shipped, and the consumer struggled to receive a refund for the shipped product.

Many consumers also filed complaints after being unable to reach the weight loss goals stated in advertising for the product.

To help avoid weight loss scams, BBB recommends the following:

Always be wary of advertisements and customer endorsements prom-

ising “miracle” results or immediate weight loss. According to the Center for Disease Control and Prevention, evidence suggests gradual loss of 1-2 pounds per week is a healthy goal and is more successful for achieving long-term weight loss. Ask your doctor what an achievable weight loss goal for you would be.

Determine your fitness goals. It’s hard work to lose weight. Find a program you can stick with, preferably one that you enjoy. Does a weight loss plan require special foods? Can you cancel if you move or find that the program doesn’t meet your needs or is more expensive than anticipated?

Avoid products that claim to help lose weight without diet or exercise. Be especially skeptical of claims that you don’t have to give up favorite foods or reduce the amount you consume. Doctors, dieticians and other experts agree that losing weight takes work. Pass up any product that promises miraculous results without any effort.

Check a product’s ingredients with the FDA. Be suspicious of taking special pills, powders or

herbs. Some products have been recalled for containing ingredients with potentially dangerous effects. Check the list of public notifications from the FDA regarding potentially harmful weight loss products. In Canada, check with Health Canada for guidelines.

Be wary of a lack of ingredient list. Some companies have been accused of not advertising certain ingredients that can come with harmful side effects or mix adversely with prescription drugs.

Read all terms and conditions for any weight loss product. Before clicking check out or purchase, make sure the cart only includes the items you wish to purchase, and does not include signing up for a subscription, unless this is an option you want. Be cautious of any contract that takes payment from your credit card until you cancel.

When participating in online forums and chat rooms focused on weight loss and fitness topics, be wary of individuals pushing products they claim will help quickly reach goals.

Research the company with BBB.org before

purchasing. Read reviews about the company to see if there are any complaints alleging that it’s a scam.

Be wary of free trial offers, and before signing up, understand all the terms and conditions. These deals can become “subscription traps” that hook consumers into expensive shipments of products they did not agree to buy.

Report the deceptive ads. Be suspicious of ridiculously positive testimonials on the company website. Testimonials become an easy marketing tool and are easily faked. These are often accompanied with glorious before and after pictures. Call your BBB to report suspicious, confusing or misleading ads to BBB Ad Truth or report a scam with BBB ScamTracker.

Consumers can also report the ad to the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) by calling 877-FTC-Help.

You can also report fake ads to the FBI’s Internet Crime Complaint Center.

Check BBB ScamTracker to research and report scams. To find BBB Business Profiles of businesses or charities, go to BBB.org.

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Health Committee R Questions Mills Admin’s Position on COVID+ Health Care Workers

Press Release by Rep. Joshua Morris

Augusta, ME (January 11, 2022) – Rep. Joshua Morris today questioned the Mills administration’s recent statement that no COVID-positive workers are in Maine health care facilities given last night’s reporting indicating the opposite.

Morris today pointed out the contradiction and asked for an updated expla-

nation from Mills.

“It’s time for the Mills administration to be more transparent about this issue. It’s not good health care policy for my constituents to be receiving conflicting information. They’re understandably concerned about COVID-positive staffers working at health care facilities, and it’s clear that the Mills administration’s explanation of the issue was not accurate. The Legislature should convene hearings on this topic so we can hear the real story from the Mills administration.”

Last Friday, Morris wrote Governor Mills

a letter requesting more information about a December 27 communication with Maine’s health care facilities that made it clear COVID positive staff could work with patients. During subsequent press coverage of Morris’ letter on last Friday evening’s NewsCenter newscast, David Guildford reported the following:

“As of this evening, I spoke with a spokesperson from the Maine CDC who told me they have not received word from any hospital statewide who has declared this crisis level. That’s the threshold for allowing workers who test

positive who are fully boosted to come back to work. they said that’s a last ditch effort that they hope to never see in the state.”

However, that statement directly contradicts last night’s reporting by WGME that St. Mary’s in Lewiston is allowing COVID positive staff to work with patients.

Rep. Morris (R-Turner) represents House District 75 and is the lead Republican on the Legislature’s Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee. He also serves on the Legislature’s Labor and Housing Committee.

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

VA Serves Veterans in 2021

Many people would like to forget 2021. It was a tough year, but a lot of good happened, too, especially at VA. The department is committed to making 2022 even better, and to do that, we're taking a quick look back at what it accomplished and how it served Veterans in 2021.

Keeping Vets healthy

The COVID-19 pandemic entered year two. As the largest integrated health care system in the world, VA administered 8.9 million vaccine doses (including boosters) to more than 4.1 million people; administered 3.6 million COVID-19 tests; and conducted 12.7 million COVID-19 virtual screenings.

But it wasn't just the pandemic. VA conducted over 112 million clinical

encounters, including 6.1 million in-person appointments, while also submitting 2.3 million community care referrals.

How did we do? VA received over 1.9 million survey responses and 450,000+ text responses, and the verdict is clear: a 90.1% trust score in VA health care and an overall 76% trust score means that Veterans overwhelmingly support and use VA.

Delivering the goods

On the non-health benefits side, VA delivered. Dedicated employees (many of whom are Veterans themselves, or are related to Vets) worked through pandemic restrictions to complete 1.4 million compensation and pension claims; the Board of Veterans Appeals held over 27,000 hearings and made nearly 93,000 deci-

sions.

Veterans didn't stop buying homes in 2021, and they didn't let the pandemic stop them from using their hard-earned education benefits. VA guaranteed more than 1.2 million home loans, processed 3.3 million education claims, 73,000 insurance claims, and over 16,000 VR&E packets.

And when it came time for the final honor, VA interred more than 146,000 Veterans and family members.

Digitally

Veterans increasingly know where and how to find VA news and information. In 2021, there were 110 million email opens, and over 105 million visits to www.va.gov; 15 million visitors read daily news and stories and updates published on Vantage

Point, the official VA blog for Veterans, dependents and survivors.

And, the mission to provide even more benefits and care and services never ends. VA is the second largest federal employer of Veterans (behind DoD), and 2021 saw 115,000 new VA employees, among them many Veterans and their dependents.

2021 Highlights

Feb. 8: Denis McDonough sworn in as 11th Secretary of the Department of Veterans Affairs.

Feb. 17: VA administered 1 million COVID-19 vaccination doses.

Feb. 18: VA extended suspension of debt collection from all Veteran benefit overpayments and medical copayments during the pandemic period.

Feb. 23: VA launched a health equity review of

all policies regarding care and services provided to LGBTQ+ Veterans.

March 13: SAVE LIVES Act became law, allowing VA to provide COVID-19 vaccinations to all Veterans, their spouses, and caregivers.

April 14: VA established 120-day task force on inclusion, diversity, equity, and access after ensuring Veteran organizations representing women, minority, and LGBTQ+ Veterans provided input on the 2022-28 VA strategic plan.

April 30: VA improved the management of suicide prevention efforts, ensuring 1,400+ employees and \$300M+ are focused on achieving better outcomes for Veterans and their families.

May 4: VA opened new rapid retraining pro-

gram for thousands of Veterans who lost jobs due to pandemic.

June 4: VA saw trust improve by 24% in five years.

July 26: VA issued vaccine mandate for health care workers, a first for a federal agency.

Sept. 8: VA annual report showed decrease in Veteran suicides.

Sept. 15: VA and DHS hosted COVID-19 vaccine clinic for deported Veterans at the San Ysidro Border Crossing.

Oct. 27: VA extended presumptive period for Persian Gulf War Veterans.

Nov. 23: VA and Indian Health Service broadened scope to serve American Indian and Alaska Native Veterans.

Dec. 27: VA Trust report showed majority of Veterans trust VA

Maine State Park Attendance Increases 8% in 2021, Resetting All-Time Visitation Attendance Record

AUGUSTA - Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Commissioner Amanda Beal and the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) announced an 8% increase in final attendance for Maine State Parks in 2021 compared to the previous all-time attendance record in 2020. In 2021, Maine State Parks welcomed more than 3.3 million visitors, compared to 3 million in 2020. In addition, three of the last four years have reported record-breaking visitation across Maine's 12 State Park campgrounds and 48 State Parks and Historic Sites collectively.

By November 2021, Maine State Parks had al-

ready surpassed the 2020 record. Beginning with a tremendous turnout for annual First Day Hikes and regular visitation for winter park use, including hiking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, record-breaking camping and day-use visitation continued straight through summer and fall.

"It is great to see more people than ever enjoying our trails, campgrounds, beaches, and ponds. Our beautiful State Parks are go-to destinations for Maine residents and visitors as they look to find accessible and welcoming outdoor recreation opportunities," said Commissioner Beal, who greatly enjoys hiking in Maine's State Parks, having first

summitted Bradbury Mountain at age 5. "On pace with increased park visitation are the number of compliments for our State Park staff, which is well-deserved as they have worked diligently over the course of this busy year to ensure an enjoyable experience for visitors!"

"Many of us have realized that the safest, healthiest, and most enjoyable place to be in the pandemic is outside," said BPL Director Andy Cutko. "In 2021 we welcomed back many out-of-staters who didn't visit Maine in 2020, and we saw continued strong visitation from Mainers of all ages. I'm proud to say my family contributed to the camping

numbers for multiple State Parks, and I'm thankful to our staff and volunteer campground hosts for running our operations so smoothly."

In 2021, best practices and key learning from 2020 ensured BPL staff were prepared to protect the health of co-workers and park visitors. Covid-19 sparked park amenity curtailments and temporary closures during the 2020 season. BPL continues to adapt its plans as new health advisories are issued.

C a m p e r Alert: Maine State Park camping reservations open February 1, 2022. State Park camping reservation details are as

follows:

Sebago Lake State Park ONLY - Tuesday, February 1, 2022, 9:00 AM, (*storm date if Maine State Government is closed - Wednesday, February 2, 2022*)

ALL Maine State Park Campgrounds - Friday, February 4, 2022, 9:00 AM, (*storm date if Maine State Government is closed - Monday, February 7, 2022*)

Book camping reservations online @ <https://www.Camp-WithME.com> or reach the camping reservation call center by dial-

ing (800) 332-1501 from a Maine (207) area code; or (207) 624-9950. Seasonal reservation call center hours are 9:00 to 4:00 Monday to Friday, excluding holidays.

Group Campsite and Picnic Shelter Reservations for ALL Parks, Tuesday, February 1, 2022, 9:00 AM - Note that group and shelter reservations are by PHONE ONLY and should be made directly with the individual parks. Find park phone lines, instructions, and fees on BPL's Group Camping webpage and the Group Shelters webpage.

Gorham WEEKLY

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AARP Maine Releases 2022 Legislative Agenda

Portland, ME (January 11, 2022) -- With the 130th second regular legislative session now underway, AARP Maine announces its 2022 legislative agenda which includes a focus on health care, high-speed internet expansion, fair and affordable utility rates, telehealth, and increasing opportunities for older Mainers to age in place.

“On behalf of our more than 200,000 members statewide, AARP Maine looks forward to working with legislative leaders from both sides of the aisle as well as Governor Mills in 2022,” said Noël Bonam, AARP Maine

State Director. “We know that this is a critical time for Maine people and Maine’s economy as we continue to feel the impacts of COVID-19. It is critical that elected leaders work together to address important issues that affect Mainers 50-plus and their families.”

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of staying connected and AARP Maine will continue to support investments in high-speed internet throughout the state. Maine continues to be one of the lowest ranking states when it comes to ensuring residents have access to affordable high-speed internet. We must make it easi-

er for doctors to meet with their patients, students to engage with their teachers, and for families and communities to stay connected.

When it comes to utility costs, as incomes fluctuate, expenditures on utilities become a larger portion of the household budget for those 50 and older. AARP Maine will continue to work to ensure that providers of electricity, gas, landline, wireless, and broadband offer services customers can depend on and that the implementation of any climate change policies and costs are fair and equitable.

Another focus for AARP Maine in 2022 is

the lowering of prescription drug costs which can directly impact older Mainers’ ability to maintain their health and safeguard their ability to live independently. AARP Maine will support efforts to protect Mainers from price gouging. Further work will focus on broadening access to telehealth services, the importance of which COVID-19 has only magnified. AARP supports increased transparency in the prescription drug development and pricing process, particularly in cases of drug manufacturers that benefit from taxpayer-funded research.

Concerning the coronavirus, AARP is advocat-

ing for the federal and state governments to improve the current vaccine infrastructure, enhance transparency and expand the ways that individuals can receive a vaccine. Steps must be taken to reduce disparities in access to the vaccine, including improving outreach.

COVID-19 has disproportionately impacted older Mainers living in long-term care facilities. We will continue to advocate for investments in programs that allow older Mainers to stay at home or in their community as they age, and to ensure high quality care in Maine’s long-term care facilities.

“AARP Maine and all of our member advocates look forward to productively engaging in the 130th legislative session to ensure that Maine continues to be a place where people 50+ want to live, work, retire and thrive,” Bonam said. “Despite the necessity of another virtual legislative session this year, AARP Maine trusts that all Mainers will be given ample opportunity to make their voices heard in Augusta through virtual options.”

For more information about AARP Maine, visit www.aarp.org/me and follow us on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram @aarp-maine

ACS CAN: Vaccine Legislation Jeopardizes the Safety of Mainers with Cancer and other Chronic Illnesses

Press Release from the American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network, Inc

Augusta, ME (January 10, 2022) – On January 11, 2022, the Health and Human Services Committee of the Maine legislature held a public hearing on LD 867 “An Act To Prohibit Mandatory COVID-19 Vaccinations for 5 Years To Allow for Safety Testing and Investi-

gations into Reproductive Harm”. The American Cancer Society Cancer Action Network (ACS CAN) joined other public health groups in opposition of this legislation which would undermine public health. By prohibiting vaccine requirements, this legislation could place the health of cancer patients at greater risk.

Lawmakers head from public health experts,

as well as Dr. Peter Bridgman from Yarmouth, ME, who is an ACS CAN advocate and retired physician currently under treatment for Multiple Myeloma. Bridgman shared his recent COVID diagnosis in light of his cancer treatment.

“Evidence to-date shows that patients with multiple myeloma have been severely impacted by COVID-19: diagnosis has been delayed and sur-

vival has been reduced. Multiple myeloma patients have been more frequently infected with COVID-19 and have higher mortality rates than patients who do not have multiple myeloma and have visited hospitals,” said Dr. Bridgman.

“I recently recovered from a mild COVID-10 infection and credit the vaccine with allowing my body to fight off more serious symptoms. I am sure many cancer patients in the State of Maine are similarly immunosuppressed and have grave concerns about their ability to fight off a COVID-19 infection. It’s imperative that as many people as possible who are in contact with cancer patients have strong immunity to the virus so they cannot pass on an infection to the vulnerable cancer patients,” he continued.

“Thousands of Mainers with chronic illnesses and their families are concerned about the action being sought in LD 867,” said Hilary Schneider,

Maine director of government relations for ACS CAN. “Vaccine requirements help protect immunocompromised patients, including kids, and blocking businesses and organizations as well as cities and towns from enacting these policies jeopardizes the health of patients and silences their voices.”

“As a public health organization dedicated to improving the lives of cancer patients and survivors, the health and safety of the patients we serve is our top priority. We oppose efforts like these that undermine evidence-based, public health policies and endanger those with chronic illnesses,” continued Schneider.

“The continued threat of COVID-19 to Mainers with chronic illnesses and their families is real and abundant. Many patients with chronic illness, including those who have had a cancer diagnosis, also face a greater risk of complications or death

from COVID-19. That’s one reason why it’s critical for as many people to be vaccinated as possible,” continued Schneider.

Dr. Bridgman further urged lawmakers to oppose LD 867.

“For the good of all Mainers, including cancer patients like myself and survivors, I stand with ACS CAN in urging the Legislature to reject any proposal that undermines vaccine requirements,” said Dr. Bridgman. “We urge policymakers who care about the health of Mainers to support proven public health strategies, including vaccine requirements and the right of local elected officials to enact similar protective policies for their constituents.”

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

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In-Person Instruction at Maine's Community Colleges May Be Affected by Covid-19

AUGUSTA, ME (January 13, 2022) – In light of the post-holiday surge of COVID-19 infections in Maine, the presidents of Maine's seven community colleges are deciding locally whether to delay the start of in-person classes for the spring semes-

ter. College presidents have the flexibility to adjust the spring semester based on local circumstances, according to David Daigler, president of the Maine Community College System (MCCS). Delaying in-person instruction is an

effective way to minimize face-to-face contact while infection rates are higher and helps protect the health of students, faculty and staff. "Each president needs to decide, based on their local and regional conditions, whether it's appropriate to

take this step to protect the health of their college community and ensure sufficient staffing to operate smoothly," Daigler said. As of Thursday, Southern Maine Community College (SMCC) is the only community college in the system to delay

in-person instruction, by one week. Instead, SMCC in-person classes will be held remotely for the first week of the spring semester, which begins Tuesday, January 18. The affected classes are currently scheduled to return to in-person instruction on Monday, January 24.

All Maine community college students attending class in-person or going on campus must be vaccinated and boosted under the system's COVID safety protocols. Students who are fully remote and are never inside a campus facility do not need proof of vaccination.

Maine CASA to Hold Online Training on March 8-11, 2022

Interested in advocating for the best interests of a Maine child? The Maine Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program is holding its spring training for volunteer advocates on March 8-11, 2022. This four-day, online training is free and is de-

signed to prepare attendees for certification as volunteer guardians ad litem in the Maine District Courts. Maine CASAs are community volunteers who are appointed to serve as guardians ad litem (GALs) for children who are involved in child protection

cases. The foundation of the CASA's work is learning about the case and then advising the court what the CASA believes is in the child's best interest. CASAs come from a wide variety of professional and personal backgrounds and are guided

throughout the process by CASA program staff. CASAs bring their own unique perspectives to their work as volunteers. If you are willing to advocate for a child's best interests, we encourage you to apply to become a CASA volunteer. Those

interested in the training must complete an application and, if invited to participate, must also complete criminal and child protection services background checks. Are you ready to advocate for a child's best interests? If so, we hope you

can join us for our March 8-11, 2022 online training. For more information about becoming a volunteer, please contact Maine CASA Legal Services Advisor Darren Defoe at 213-2864 or by e-mail at darren.defoe@courts.maine.gov

Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) Urges Caution During Extreme Cold Temperatures

Augusta, ME (January 10, 2022) -- The Maine Emergency Management Agency (MEMA) is urging residents and visitors to use caution during extreme cold temperatures. The National Weather Service in Gray forecasted temperatures below zero this past week with wind chills between 15-30 below zero.

that Maine people are sure that alternate heat sources are in proper working condition, properly installed, and that the user follows the manufacturers guidelines. Keep heaters at least 3 feet away from anything that can catch fire. Never use your oven to heat your home because it can be a fire hazard. For further tips or resources on heating during the winter months, visit this Winter Heating Guide produced by the Governors Energy Office at <https://www.maine.gov/energy/winter-heating-resources>

lowing COVID-19 health and safety guidelines to protect those utilizing their facilities. When exposed to extremely cold temperatures and high winds, the body loses heat faster than it can generate heat, which leads to health emergencies like hypothermia and frostbite. Hypothermia can affect anyone, but the most frequent victims include those who are elderly with inadequate clothing, food, or heat sources; very young in cold bedrooms; outside for too long such as the homeless, lost hikers, and hunters; people with substance use disorders; chronically ill who can't regulate body temperature.

of feeling and color. Its mild form, called frostnip, causes the skin to turn bright red and creates an ache. When severe, the loss of color and numbness of frostbite can become permanent. In the worst cases, amputation is sometimes necessary. Although frostbite can impact anyone, those with

bad circulation have the highest risk. It is also important to not leave children or pets in cars and not leave pets out overnight. The State Emergency Operations Center remains in partial operation while responding to resource needs of the county emergency management agencies related

to COVID-19 as well as any cold weather events.

"With extreme cold temperatures coming to Maine this week, I encourage Maine people to take every precaution to stay warm and to check on friends, family and neighbors to ensure they are safe," said Governor Janet Mills. "For those who are concerned about their ability to stay warm, support is available by calling 2-1-1, with warming centers now opening in communities across the state. Please be safe and stay warm."

Warming Centers are also opening in several Maine counties. Please visit MEMA's website to find a location near you: <https://www.maine.gov/mema/response-recovery/mass-care> You may also dial 211 or visit their website for a list of locations. Please be aware that Warming Centers are fol-

lowing COVID-19 health and safety guidelines to protect those utilizing their facilities. When exposed to extremely cold temperatures and high winds, the body loses heat faster than it can generate heat, which leads to health emergencies like hypothermia and frostbite. Hypothermia can affect anyone, but the most frequent victims include those who are elderly with inadequate clothing, food, or heat sources; very young in cold bedrooms; outside for too long such as the homeless, lost hikers, and hunters; people with substance use disorders; chronically ill who can't regulate body temperature. Frostbite occurs when the skin is exposed to frigid temperatures, causing the tissues to freeze. It most often impacts the nose, ears, cheeks, chin, fingers, and toes, and causes a loss

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

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Arts & Entertainment

National Resources Council of Maine's Climate & Clean Energy Team Raises Funds



Thank You for Another Amazing Virtual Polar Bear Dip & Dash

By Josh Caldwell, Climate & Clean Energy Outreach Coordinator

We did it! Together we raised \$33,872 and crushed our \$30,000 goal! Congratulations to all who made this year's Polar Bear Dip & Dash a great success.

On behalf of the Climate & Clean Energy team, I want to share my deep appreciation to everyone who gave their time and energy. Thank you for

raising funds and building awareness of our work to cut pollution and create a clean energy future for Maine. This fun initiative enables our team to continue fighting for a safe and healthy Maine for generations to come, and we are incredibly grateful for your support.

In 2009, around 14 staff and their family members gathered on East End Beach in Portland and plunged into the icy, cold

Atlantic Ocean. They rallied together with a common goal, to fight climate change. They established a special, new tradition for a new era. As we follow in their footsteps, with our own dips and dashes, we are joined together in community and grounded in our shared mission.

Thank you for helping us find joy and celebration during the darkest days of the year. You are all a bright light! We did it!

Dirigo Reads to Add Schools for 2022-2023 School Year

Bangor, ME – (January 11, 2022) – Dirigo Reads, a program that aims to put a book in the hands of every Maine first grader each month during the school year by 2025, is looking to increase the number of schools that will participate in the program during the next school year. Dirigo Reads co-founders Dan and Karen Cashman of Brewer say that new schools are being solicited and considered for the 2022-2023 school year now.

"We have received countless notes and letters from students, educators, and parents saying how

important the books are that they have received this year through Dirigo Reads," said Karen Cashman. "The foundation of a love for reading is built around first grade. Expanding this program means expanding the opportunity for more Maine kids to realize their love for reading in their own home."

Dirigo Reads' mission is to improve the health and wellbeing of children in Maine through literacy and share a little optimism along the way. This is accomplished by giving first graders in participating schools a brand new book to keep during

every month of the school year. Fifty-one schools spread over 13 counties are currently a part of Dirigo Reads. By the time the school year is finished, first graders in each of these communities will have ten new books to add to – or start – their own home library. Over three school years, Dirigo Reads will have distributed more than 26,000 books to first graders in participating schools.

"The partners involved with Dirigo Reads have made this a reality," said Dan Cashman. "For the books to make their way into the homes of first graders, supportive part-

ners are a necessity. Dirigo Reads partners with a number of businesses who understand the importance of reading."

Dirigo Reads is operationally supported by United Way of Eastern Maine, and the founding Dirigo Star Partner is Machias Savings Bank.

Additional partners of Dirigo Reads include Sutherland Weston, Bangor Savings Bank, Northern Light Health, PCHC, Cross Insurance, Changing Seasons Federal Credit Union, Woodlands Senior Living, Hannaford, Acadia Federal Credit Union, WS Emerson, and The First.

There are about 11,600 first graders enrolled in Maine public schools, more than 300 of which contain first grade classrooms. Currently, Dirigo Reads is providing books to about 14% of this population.

Schools and businesses interested in being a part of Dirigo Reads should visit www.DirigoReads.org and click on "Contact," where a form is available to submit all necessary information.

"Dirigo Reads received a tremendous amount of support in its first couple of years," said Dan Cashman. "But in or-

der for every first grader in Maine to receive a new book every month of the school year, we need to increase the number of partners involved."

Any organizations interested in partnering with Dirigo Reads, or schools with first grade classes that would like to join the program can find more details at www.DirigoReads.org.

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

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Maine CDC and Maine Department of Education Revise COVID-19 Guidance for Schools to Support In-Person Learning During Omicron Surge

Augusta, ME (January 12, 2022) – The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) and the Maine Department of Education (DOE) announced today further revisions to the Maine CDC’s Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) for responding to COVID-19 in schools.

Following discussions with school superintendents, the Maine CDC has revised the SOP to state that schools enforcing a universal masking policy may choose to suspend contact tracing in light of the transmissibility of the Omicron variant and its impact on the effectiveness of contact tracing.

The Maine CDC has determined that, because the Omicron variant is far more contagious than prior variants, has a shorter incubation period, and tends to spread in the early part of an infection, it is contributing to higher levels of community transmission, making community exposures more frequent and, consequently, reducing the effectiveness of contact tracing in schools. While the goal of contact tracing is to provide a timely notification to all individuals who may have been exposed to COVID-19, school superintendents have reported that conducting contact tracing in a timely and thorough manner is becoming increasingly difficult, if not impossible, for school personnel given the fast spread of the Omicron variant.

The revised SOP permits schools with universal masking policies to suspend contact tracing if they are not able to conduct it effectively, in order to rededicate limited and tired staff to focus on other COVID-19 mitigation strategies, like detecting and preventing

infected people from being in schools via pooled testing, to help keep kids in the classroom. Schools that have the resources to contact trace effectively are encouraged to continue doing so.

“Keeping kids safely in the classroom is crucial to their education and minimizes disruption to the lives of their parents, who often have to stay home from work or are put in a child care crunch when their kids can’t be in school,” said Governor Mills. “Of course, the best way to protect the health of students and to keep them in the classroom is to get vaccinated, which will help slow the spread of COVID.”

“The rapid spread of the Omicron variant has further burdened Maine’s schools during an already challenging school year in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic,” said Education Commissioner Pender Makin and Maine CDC Director Nirav D. Shah. “These recommendations allow teachers and school staff to focus their limited resources on educating students in the classroom as safely as possible. Getting vaccinated remains the most important step to protecting our school communities.”

“We are grateful for the ongoing efforts of Maine CDC as they continue to provide schools with the guidance and protocols that will protect the physical and emotional health of staff and students, and preserve the critically important opportunity for in-person learning,” said Maine School Board Association Executive Director Steve Bailey. “As the governance team of their local education systems, including the safety, time and resources of their schools, our school boards have the responsibility to ensure they have

a universal masking policy in place that will both keep students and staff safe and permit school staff to suspend contact tracing for cases of COVID-19 in schools. We stand ready to help them in these efforts.”

“On behalf of school and district leaders across Maine, we welcome today’s guidance, which provides some relief to school staff, especially our nurses, who have continued to exceed safety protocols with extensive and labor intensive contract tracing and notification efforts,” said Maine School Superintendents Association Executive Director Eileen King. “Schools with universal masking policies in place for all indoor school sponsored activities will be able to shift their time and attention to other strategies that ensure the physical and emotional health and safety of staff and students. We thank Dr. Shah and his team for engaging superintendents in discussions about the implementation logistics and implications of Maine’s school prevention and response strategies for COVID-19, and for providing insight and balance to the science that informs community health decisions.”

The change is consistent with those adopted recently by other New England states and builds on other revisions from the Maine CDC that, among other updates, reflect recently updated guidance from the U.S. CDC on quarantine and isolation periods. All of these revisions are designed to support in-person learning, thereby promoting the health and well-being of school students, staff, and their communities.

The change is also specifically targeted to schools that have implemented a universal masking policy. U.S. and Maine

CDCs recommend universal indoor masking by all students, faculty, staff, and visitors in K–12 schools, regardless of vaccination status, across all school-based and school-sponsored activities. Wearing a mask has been proven to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Local school boards are charged with the responsibility of implementing masking requirements for their school systems. Schools that do not have a universal masking policy should continue contact tracing.

Since the fall of 2020, all Maine pre-K-12 schools have been providing in-person instruction to students. Throughout the pandemic, the Mills Administration has promoted safe, in-person learning, dedicating \$329 million in Coronavirus Relief Funding (CRF) to Maine schools to help them educate Maine students. The Administration has also provided 10,859,586 face coverings, gloves, and other types of personal protective equipment to Maine schools and has supported COVID-19 testing in schools, including launching a pooled testing program. The pooled test-

ing guidance has also been streamlined in light of Omicron, and schools have received 242,500 rapid antigen BinaxNOW tests from the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. The Administration has helped organize vaccine clinics for school staff across Maine and supported more than 500 vaccine clinics for schools and students this past fall.

According to Maine’s Vaccination Dashboard, as of January 12, 2022, 51.5 percent of children ages 5 to 19 were fully vaccinated for COVID-19. Data from the U.S. CDC show that Maine ranks fourth best in the nation in the percent of 5- to 17-year-olds fully vaccinated. As of the end of October, 83 percent of school staff were fully vaccinated.

The updated public health guidance for responding to a positive case of COVID-19 in schools can be viewed online.

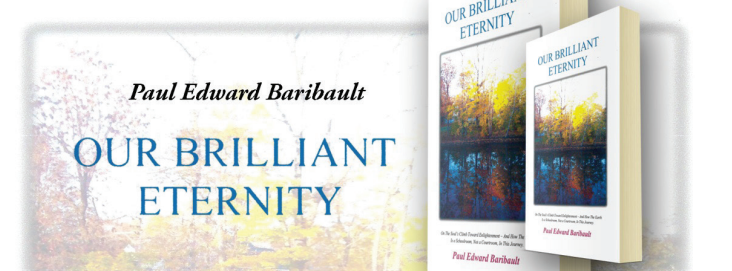
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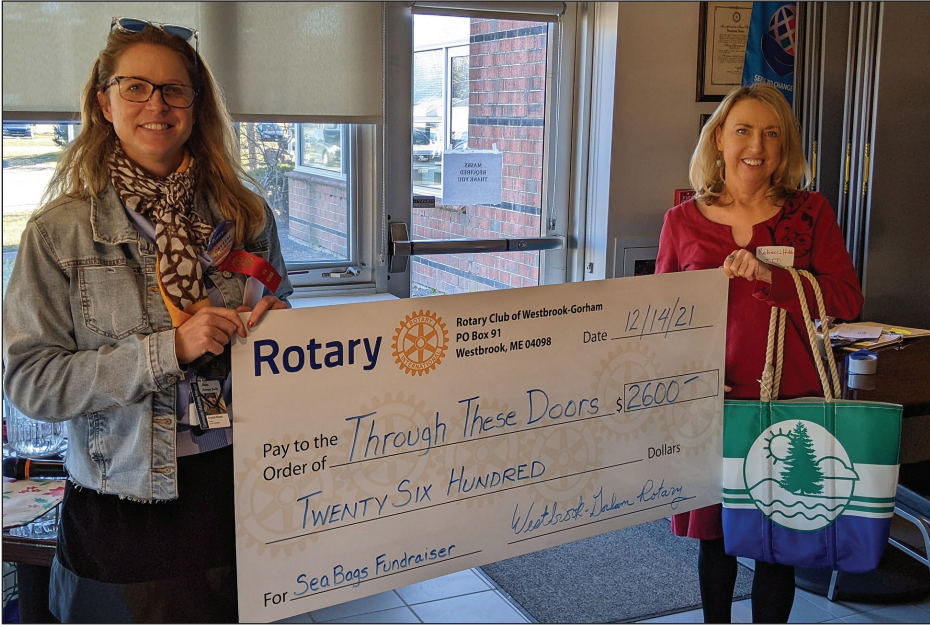
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Rotary Club of Westbrook-Gorham Supports Those in Need



Rotarian Crystal Brown presents the check to Rebecca Hobbs, Executive Director of Through These Doors. Shown in the picture is the Sea Bag sold to raise these funds. We all love this bag!!

When disaster strikes, #RotaryResponds where human needs are great. Our club is proud to support the work of Rotary District 6760 in Tennessee and RI District 6170 in Kentucky with \$250 each as they help their communities recover. Many other clubs in Rotary District 7780 of Southern Maine and Coastal NH have also sent donations. #PeopleOfAction

In mid-December, numerous tornados devastated Kentucky and a total of 15 tornados devastated Middle and Western Tennessee as storms swept through the state. Winds of up to 135 miles per hour ripped up communities

and tore up the lives of those who survived. Small towns have lost homes, entire business districts and neighborhoods, and destroyed livelihoods, with many people in need of basics such as a place to sleep and shelter, non-perishable food, gas cans and storage bins, as well as cleanup equipment.

If you would like to help, go to the Rotary Club of Westbrook-Gorham's Facebook Page and donate directly to District 6760.

The Rotary Club also supports the Westbrook-Gorham community. On Tuesday December 14, 2021, we were proud to present a check for \$2600 to Through These

Doors. TTD Executive Director Rebecca Hobbs accepted the check from Rotary project lead Crystal Brown. This check represents the net proceeds from our recent Sea Bags fundraiser. Thanks to all who purchased or donated. A wonderful result!!

Through These Doors is the domestic violence resource center serving survivors of domestic abuse in Cumberland County, Maine. TTD provides safe and accessible services to all people affected by domestic violence, community education, and prevention and domestic violence intervention services to hold perpetrators accountable.

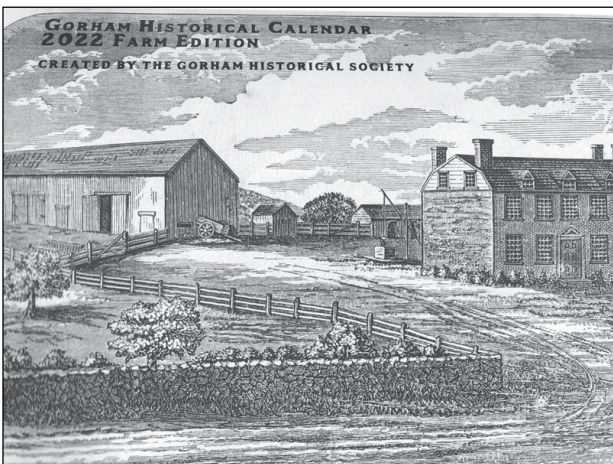
Jim Boyle (D) Wins Maine's HD-27



Jim Boyle of Gorham won the special election for Maine's HD-27. Jim is an environmental advocate & former state senator who is excited to return to the state legislature.

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

Gorham Historical Society's Calendars Ready for Purchase



Gorham Historical Society's calendars are their second farm edition.

Gorham Historical Society calendars are in! Thanks for your patience! You can get them at Baxter Memorial Library or the town clerk's office! They are \$10.

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

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Radon, a Radioactive Gas and the 2nd Leading Cause of Lung Cancer, Detected at High Levels in More Than A Third of Maine Homes

Augusta, ME - (January 13, 2022) – January is National Radon Action Month, an annual observance that focuses on increasing the public’s awareness of the health risk from radon, which is the second leading cause of lung cancer. During January and throughout the year, the American Lung Association is encouraging radon testing for everyone, including homeowners, renters, real estate agents, building managers and school administrators.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas emitted from the ground that is odorless, tasteless and colorless. It can enter a home through cracks in walls, basement floors, foundations and other openings. Radon can be present at high levels inside homes, schools and other buildings. Radon gas is measured in picocuries per liter (pCi/L) of air. The EPA recommends taking action to reduce radon if the result is 4.0 pCi/L or greater aiming to get your radon level to the lowest level possible.

According to the Lung Association’s State of Lung Cancer Report, an estimat-

ed 36.5% of Maine radon test results equal or exceed the EPA action level of 4 pCi/L. Nationally, only 21.8% of homes are at or above the action level, making Connecticut residents at greater risk than those of most other states.

“Radon in homes is more common than you think. In fact, at least 1 in 15 homes in the U.S. have elevated levels of radon and this is something that shouldn’t be taken lightly. Exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States,” said Albert Rizzo, M.D., chief medical officer for the American Lung Association. “The good news is that it is easy to test for radon. Do-it-yourself test kits are simple to use and inexpensive.”

Here are 5 important things to know about radon:

Radon-related lung cancers are responsible for an estimated 21,000 deaths annually in the United States.

Smoking and radon exposure can separately increase the risk of lung cancer. If you smoke, exposure to both tobacco and radon enhances the risk of lung

cancer even further

The only way to detect radon in your home is to test the air. EPA urges anyone with radon levels above 4 picoCuries per liter (pCi/L) take action to fix their homes. Both the EPA and the American Lung Association recommend that mitigation be considered if levels are greater than 2 pCi/L. After high levels are detected, a radon mitigation system should be installed by a radon professional.

Radon testing should always be done when you buy a home and after building a new home. Many states now require radon results (if known) to be disclosed during a real estate transaction. Some states require testing in priority buildings like schools and daycares.

When high levels of radon are detected, professional radon mitigation should be a priority. Do-it-yourself radon mitigation is typically not an effective long-term solution. Some state health departments offer financial assistance or low interest loans for radon mitigation.

Learn more about radon testing and mitigation at www.Lung.org/Radon.

Gorham Kindergarten Parent Information Meetings

Gorham’s Kindergarten Parent Information Meeting for our incoming 2022 Kindergarten students will be held on Tuesday, March 1st at 5:30pm (format TBD - we will be in touch as it gets closer and we determine if this will be in person or virtual). At this meeting, parents will meet school staff, learn about a day-in-the-life of a Kindergarten student, and receive information about the enrollment process. Details about how to pick up enrollment packets and schedule students

for a Kindergarten screening will also be shared.

Please go to your neighborhood school’s form (listed below) and pre-register using the kindergarten registration link. If you are unsure of your neighborhood school, please call any of the elementary schools directly for this information.

Great Falls Elementary School – Tuesday, March 1st, 2022

Parent Information Meeting at 5:30 pm

Great Falls Kindergarten Survey - <https://forms.gle/tynZ877fgWAhFjDQ6>

Narragansett Elementary School – Tuesday, March 1st, 2022

Parent Information Meeting at 5:30 pm

Narragansett Kindergarten Survey - <https://forms.gle/J9PNX9TF-WdTZzvWaA>

Village Elementary School – Tuesday, March 1st, 2022

Parent Information Meeting at 5:30 pm

<https://forms.gle/2TQrNSzVJxqQDW-Wh8>

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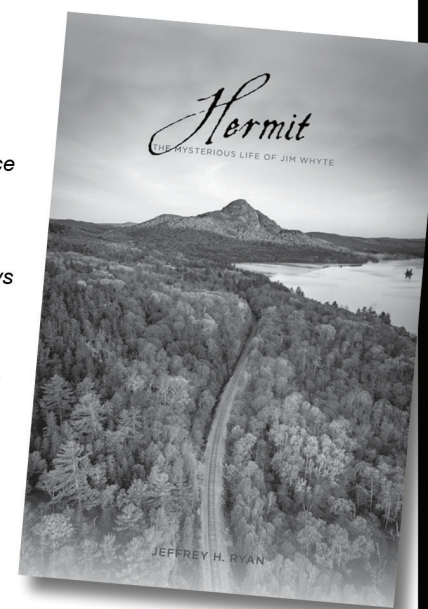
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— Bill Bushnell, *Bushnell on Books*

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— George Smith, *Bangor Daily News*



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Red Cross: National Blood Crisis May Put Patients At Risk

Portland, Maine (January 11, 2022) — The American Red Cross is facing a national blood crisis – its worst blood shortage in more than a decade. Dangerously low blood supply levels are posing a concerning risk to patient care and forcing doctors to make difficult decisions about who receives blood transfusions and who will need to wait until more products become available.

Blood and platelet donations are critically needed to help prevent further delays in vital medical treatments, and donors of all blood types – especially type O – are urged to make an appointment now to give in the weeks ahead.

In recent weeks, the Red Cross had less than a one-day supply of critical blood types and has had to limit blood prod-

uct distributions to hospitals. At times, as much as one-quarter of hospital blood needs are not being met.

Pandemic challenges

The Red Cross continues to confront relentless challenges due to COVID-19, including about a 10% overall decline in the number of people donating blood as well as ongoing blood drive cancellations and staffing limitations. Additionally, the pandemic has contributed to a 62% drop in blood drives at schools and colleges.

“Winter weather across the country and the recent surge of COVID-19 cases are compounding the already-dire situation facing the blood supply,” said Dr. Baia Lasky, medical director for the Red Cross.

“Please, if you are eligible, make an appointment to give blood or platelets in the days and weeks ahead to ensure no patient is forced to wait for critical care.”

Over the next six weeks, about 45% of donation appointments remain unfilled in the Northern New England Red Cross Region. Make an appointment to give blood or platelets by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting RedCrossBlood.org or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

The Red Cross and the NFL are partnering this January, during National Blood Donor Month, to urge individuals to give blood or platelets and help tackle the national blood shortage. Those who come to give blood, platelets or plasma in January will

automatically be entered for a chance to win a getaway to Super Bowl LVI in Los Angeles. As an extra thank-you from the Red Cross, those who come to donate will also be automatically entered to win a home theater package and a \$500 e-gift card. Terms apply; visit RedCrossBlood.org/SuperBowl for more information.

Who donations help

Kala Breder knows all too well how dire not having blood available can be. In July 2020, hours after the birth of her son by emergency Cesarean section, Breder developed a complication and began bleeding uncontrollably. As doctors fought to save her life, they exhausted the entire blood supply at the hospital as well as all available blood within a 45-mile radius. Ultimately,

she was flown to another hospital because there wasn't enough blood locally.

Breder credits the 58 different blood products she received with helping save her life. “Without one of those, I probably wouldn't be here,” she said. “I needed every last unit.”

Volunteers needed

In addition to blood donors, the Red Cross also needs the help of volunteers to support critical blood collections across the country. Blood drive volunteers play an important role by greeting, registering, answering questions and providing information to blood donors throughout the donation process. Blood transportation specialists – another volunteer opportunity – provide a critical link between blood donors and blood recipients by delivering blood to hospitals in communities across the country. To volunteer to support Red Cross blood collections, visit redcross.org/volunteertoday.

Blood drive safety

Each Red Cross blood drive and donation center follows the highest standards of safety and infection control, and additional precautions – including face masks for donors and staff, regardless of vaccination status – have been implemented to help protect the health of all those in attendance. Donors are asked to schedule an appointment prior to arriving at the drive.

Save time during donation

Donors can also save up to 15 minutes at the blood drive by completing a RapidPass®. With RapidPass®, donors complete the pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on

the day of donation, from a mobile device or computer. To complete a RapidPass®, follow the instructions at RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass or use the Red Cross Blood Donor App.

To donate blood, individuals need to bring a blood donor card or driver's license or two other forms of identification that are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also must meet certain height and weight requirements.

Health insights for donors

At a time when health information has never been more important, the Red Cross is screening all blood, platelet and plasma donations from self-identified African American donors for the sickle cell trait. This additional screening will provide Black donors with an additional health insight and help the Red Cross identify compatible blood types more quickly to help patients with sickle cell disease who require trait-negative blood. Blood transfusion is an essential treatment for those with sickle cell disease, and blood donations from individuals of the same race, ethnicity and blood type have a unique ability to help patients fighting sickle cell disease.

Donors can expect to receive sickle cell trait screening results, if applicable, within one to two weeks through the Red Cross Blood Donor App and the online donor portal at RedCrossBlood.org.

Fema Awards More Than \$14.3 Million to Maine for Covid PPE Expenses

BOSTON – The Federal Emergency Management Agency will be granting more than \$14.3 million to the State of Maine to reimburse the costs of purchasing personal protective equipment (PPE) for first responders during the COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 and 2021.

The \$14,338,700 in Public Assistance grants will go to the Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services to reimburse it for purchasing 1,016,960 isolation gowns; 1,695,161 N95 respirators & surgical masks; 526,200 pairs of rubber gloves; 280,000 hooded isolation suits and 542,400 face shields.

The materials were distributed to first responders providing testing services through the Maine Centers for Disease Control and Maine Department of Health and Human Services. They were purchased through a series of contracts:

- \$1,634,375 - Compqsoft Inc.
- \$1,550,400 - Venous Technologies Inc.
- \$2,847,602 - Aramsco, Inc.
- \$2,909,000 - Lifetherreal LLC
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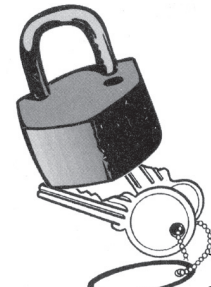
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Calendar

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Jan. 20
GORHAM – 6:30pm
Tentative Recurring CIP Meeting TBD

Jan. 20
GORHAM – 6:30pm
Tentative Board of Appeals Meeting Council Chambers

Jan. 24
GORHAM – 5:30pm
Finance Committee Meeting Town Manager's Office

Office

Feb. 1
GORHAM – 6:30pm
Regular Town Council Meeting Council Chambers

Feb. 7

GORHAM – 7pm
Planning Board Meeting Council Chambers

Feb. 9
GORHAM – 7pm
School Committee Meeting Council Chambers

Feb. 15
GORHAM – 8am
Ordinance Committee Meeting Conference Room A

Feb. 16
GORHAM – 8am
Gorham Economic Development Corporation Meeting Conference Room A

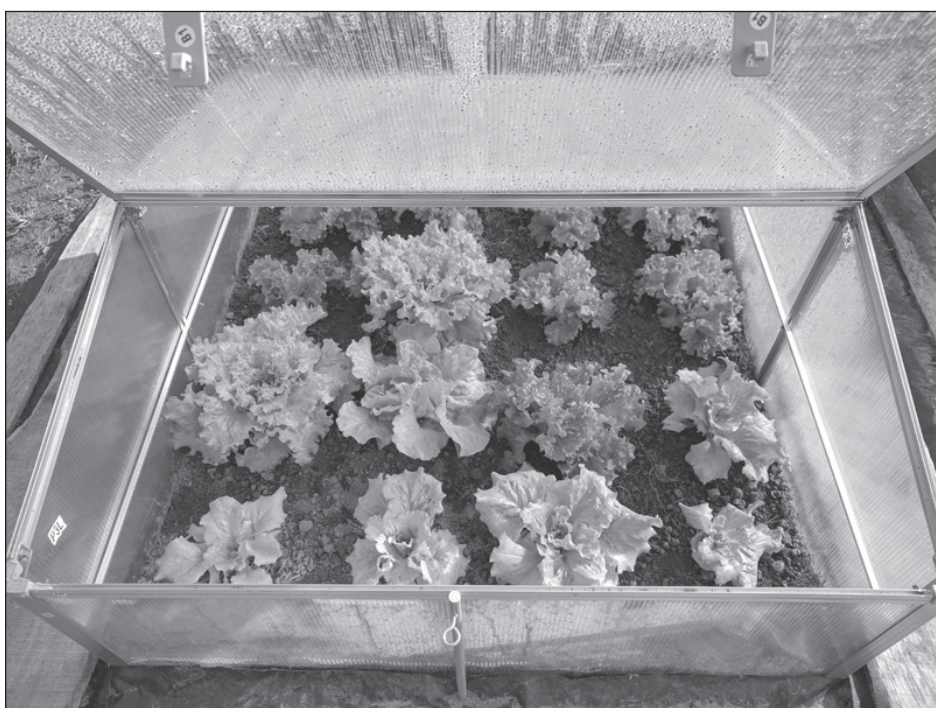
Feb. 17
GORHAM – 6:30pm
Tentative Recurring CIP Meeting TBD

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UMaine, UNH Extensions Offer Webinars



UMaine, UNH Extensions Offer Hydroponics for Home Gardeners Jan. 24

University of Maine Cooperative Extension and University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension will offer a webinar for home gardeners about hydroponic gardening from 6–7:15 p.m. on Jan 24.

“Hydroponics at Home” will explain how to build a working hydroponic system for year-round indoor gardening with a few simple tools and materials. Jonathan Ebba, UNH Extension field specialist, will lead the workshop.

Registration is required; a sliding scale program fee is optional. Register on the event webpage to attend live or receive a link to the recording. This is the fourth in a six-part winter gardening webinar series offered monthly through March for Maine and New Hampshire gardeners. For more information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact Pamela Hargest, 207.781.6099; extension.gardening@maine.edu.

UMaine Extension webinar on winter care of equines Feb. 1

University of Maine



Cooperative Extension is offering an online workshop about best practices for winter care of equines from noon–2 p.m. on Feb. 1.

Workshop topics include winter health issues and options for fresh water, as well as mud management around the farmstead. Donna Coffin, UMaine Extension professor, and Dr. Beth McAvoy, consulting veterinarian and chief financial officer of Foxcroft Large Animal Veterinary Associates in Dover-Foxcroft, will lead the workshop.

The fee is on a sliding scale, up to \$10; registration is required to receive the link. Register on the event webpage. For more information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact Becky Gray, 207.781.6099; extension.agcumberland@maine.edu.

UMaine, UNH Extensions offer ways to extend the growing season Feb. 7

Orono, Maine — University of Maine Cooperative Extension and University of New Hampshire Cooperative Extension will offer a webinar for home gardeners about how to extend the growing season from 6–7:15 p.m. on Feb 7.

“Extending the Gardening Season in New England” includes season-extension strategies ranging from targeted use of mulches and row covers to the use of small high tunnels, with in-depth guidance for how to build and implement these tools in home gardens. Frank Wertheim, UMaine Extension

educator, and Becky Sideman, UNH Extension sustainable horticulture specialist, will lead the workshop.

Registration is required; a sliding scale program fee is optional. Register on the event webpage to attend live or receive a link to the recording. This is the fifth in a six-part winter gardening webinar series offered monthly through March for Maine and New Hampshire gardeners. For more information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact Pamela Hargest, 207.781.6099; extension.gardening@maine.edu.

UMaine Extension offers advanced beekeeping webinars starting Feb. 10

Portland, Maine — University of Maine Cooperative Extension will offer two advanced beekeeping webinars, two sessions each, beginning with “Honey Bee Diseases and Pests” 6–8:30 p.m. Feb. 10 and 17. The \$50 fee includes the required textbook. Registration is required on the event webpage to receive the links.

The next course, “Swarming and Swarm Management,” will be held 6–8:30 p.m. March 3 and 10. The fee is \$35. Registration is required on the event webpage to receive the links.

Both courses will be taught by EAS-certified master beekeeper Erin MacGregor Forbes. For more information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact 207.781.6099; rebecca.gray@maine.edu.

ATTENTION:

THE MEMBERS OF WHITE ROCK GRANGE ARE NOT ONLY FARMERS

WANTED: PEOPLE WANTED WITH NEW IDEAS AND COMMITMENT



The Grange located in Gorham at 33 Wilson Rd. (off rte 237) is inviting you to join us at any meeting the first Friday of the month at 7 PM.

Folks willing to put their generous hearts and open hands to raise all of their neighbors and community is the goal of the Grange since 1876. The Grange is an inclusive nonprofit organization. Local activities include but not be restricted to crafts, music, suppers, display at the Cumberland fair and quilts for veterans. Our agenda and focus is at the local level determined by the members themselves. The historical Grange Hall is the perfect building and location for doing any craft. Handicapped accessible, heat, hot water, and full kitchen.

Dues are \$26 per year.

Facebook /Gorham White Rock Grange #380 Web/ mainestategrange.org The White Rock is called Subordinate grange. Use right column to locate.

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WASHINGTON, D.C. - APRIL 7 - 13, 2022

Trip includes 7 days and 6 nights - 10 meals - Two guided tours of Washington, D.C. memorials. Evening guided tour of Memorials and Monuments. Admission to New Bible Museum. Tram ride through Arlington National Cemetery, admission to George Washington's Mount Vernon Estate and so much more. Price is \$749.00 per person double occupancy with a \$75.00 due upon signing.

NASHVILLE SHOW TRIP - JUNE 11-19, 2022

Trip includes 9 days and 8 nights - 14 meals - Grand Ole Opry Show - Nashville Nightlife Dinner Theater - Guided tours of Nashville and Belle Meade Historic Site & Winery. Admission to the Country Music Hall of Fame.

Admission to the Grand Ole Opry behind the Scenes Tour. Admission to Madame Tussauds Wax Museum. Price is \$1,025. per person double occupancy with a \$75.00 deposit due upon signing.

MACKINAC ISLAND - SEPTEMBER 10 - 18, 2022

Trip includes 9 days and 8 nights - 14 meals - Guided tour of Mackinaw City - Visit to Mackinaw City. Visit to Mackinac Island including a guided Carriage Tour. Boat ride through the Soo Locks and free time and sightseeing in Sault Sainte Marie. Admission to Colonial Michillmackinac. Price is \$899.00 per person double occupancy with a \$75.00 deposit due upon signing.

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Trip includes 1 night lodging - 3 meals (Grand Sunday Brunch) - 2 different entertainment shows, Austrian Sleigh Ride through Jackson Village, Chocolate Tour, shopping and much more. \$100.00 deposit due upon signing. Total price not available at this time.

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

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Flight Canceled? Tips for Handling Travel Delays

Eastern MA, ME, RI & VT -- Flights are continuing to be canceled as airlines struggle with pandemic-related staffing woes. Thousands of flights have been affected, and there is no end in sight to the disruptions. As airlines continue to try to accommodate stranded passengers, the Better Business Bureau® (BBB®) provides guidance to travelers who may be seeking compensation and refunds for cancellations.

When a consumer is flying domestically in the United States, rules regarding flight delays and cancellations are overseen by the US Department of Transportation. In Canada, complaints about flight delays are handled by the Canadian Transportation Agency. In general, there are no U.S. federal laws requiring airlines to provide passengers with compensation for a delayed flight.

In Canada, see the flights and delays cancellations guide. Airlines may have their own policies and may provide better benefits if a flight was canceled or significantly delayed within the airline's scope of control. Consumers may have additional benefits if they purchased the flight with a credit card that offers additional travel protections. Check the cardholder agreement and with the airline. Consumers should keep receipts for extra purchases, like a hotel room, so they can submit them to their airline or credit card company for reimbursement later. Typically, nearly all domestic airlines will try to accommodate passengers on the next available flight, and sometimes on a different carrier.

When flights are canceled by the airline, consumers are always entitled to a full refund. This includes a refund of any



bag fees or extras, such as additional legroom for a seat. If the airline offers a voucher in lieu of a refund, ask about expiration and blackout dates. Airlines may also have additional restrictions on the use of vouchers. Consumers are not obligated to accept vouchers and may insist on a full refund instead. If the trip was canceled by the consumer, however, they may not be entitled to a full refund.

BBB is asking consumers to keep the follow-

ing tips in mind when handling travel disruptions:

Check delays - Travelers can check their latest flight information on their carrier's website or via the airline's telephone reservation system. Many times, delays don't occur until the day of the flight and the airline must update its flight information within 30 minutes of receiving a notice of a status change.

Check carrier and credit card terms - While federal regulations don't require airlines to reim-

burse expenses such as rooms or food in the event a flight is canceled or severely delayed, the carrier and credit card companies may have different policies. Purchase tickets with a credit card that offers trip protection or travelers insurance and check individual airline policies.

Keep documentation - Keep receipts and records for expenses incurred as a result of a significantly delayed or canceled flight. These may be needed later to recover expenses.

Check the carrier's website - Most airlines allow consumers to initiate refunds directly on the carrier's website. Using a website may help a consumer obtain a refund or

rebook a trip much faster than waiting for a consumer service agent in person or on the phone.

Rules are different for foreign flights - Flights that were canceled while in another country will be affected by the laws of that nation. Check with the local country's department of transportation while traveling internationally.

As the Omicron variant spreads, be wary of coronavirus cons. Read BBB's alert about COVID-19 testing scams.

Read BBB's tips to travel safely on your vacation.

For the latest information, BBB recommends consumers visit BBB.org.

Senator Collins Announces \$45 Million for Maine Bridges

Washington, D.C. – U.S. Senator Susan Collins (R-ME) announced today that Maine will receive a total of \$45 million to maintain and reconstruct bridges across the state. This funding was authorized through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act and provided through the U.S. Department of Transportation's Federal Highway Administration (FHWA). Senator Collins, the Ranking Member of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, was part of the core group of 10 Senators who negotiated the text of

the bipartisan infrastructure law. Under the law, Maine will receive \$225 million over five years to fix bridges across the state.

This funding will help to address the backlog of repairs needed for Maine's transportation network. Maine currently has 315 bridges considered to be in poor condition.

"Bridges are essential pieces of our transportation network that connect Mainers to homes, jobs, schools, shopping, and health care; allow manufacturers to ship their goods to market; and link communities togeth-

er. When bridges do not receive the proper maintenance and require closure, Mainers can be forced to endure lengthy detours, particularly in rural areas," said Senator Collins. "As the Ranking Member of the Transportation Appropriations Subcommittee, improving the safety and efficiency of Maine's transportation system is among my top priorities. This funding will help address Maine's substantial backlog of deteriorated bridges, preserve and create jobs, and benefit families and businesses across our state."

FHWA announced today that it is providing over \$27 billion to states and tribal transportation facilities over five years. The program represents the largest investment ever made in fixing bridges. Nationwide, the program is expected to help repair approximately 15,000 bridges.

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