

Sea Bags selected as Legacy Business

PORTLAND, ME (September 1, 2023) –The SBA was founded by President Dwight D. Eisenhower in 1953 when he signed the landmark “Small Business Act,” which established the agency and made it a policy to support and protect the interests of small businesses. As part of the Small Business Administration’s celebration of the 70th anniversary as a Federal Agency, the agency selected one “Legacy Business” from each state. In Maine, Sea Bags, a manufacturer and retailer based in Portland was selected to receive this recognition.

“Here in Maine we are especially aware of the importance of small businesses to our communities and our economy,” said SBA Maine District Director Diane Sturgeon.



SBA Maine District Director Diane Sturgeon (left) and Sea Bags CEO Don Oakes (right) at Sea Bags in Portland

“Having the opportunity to recognize a business like Sea Bags that has grown so much while staying true to its values and maintaining an ethos that a rising tide raises all boats is a great honor.”

Sea Bags manufactures totes and other accessories from reclaimed sail material in its Portland facility, which are sold across its 50 company stores across the country, in addition to sales accounts with other retailers. Since its incorporation by founder Beth Greenlaw in 2005, Sea Bags has grown to support over 200 employees and has diverted millions of pounds of sail material from the waste stream. The company was selected by the SBA as a Legacy Business because of its continued commitment to sustainability at all levels, providing quality jobs with benefits, support of other small businesses, and support of community initiatives. CEO Don Oakes met with the SBA at the Sea Bags store on Portland’s Commercial Street on August 31st to accept the recognition.

Statement from U.S. Small Business Administrator Isabella Casillas Guzman:

“America’s small businesses are giants in our economy — creating jobs and making the products and services that define our everyday lives. For 70 years, the U.S. Small Business Administration has helped entrepreneurs gain the know-how and the funding to start and grow. And we’ve stepped in when disasters disrupt the market to make sure that not only small businesses recover, but that the communities they serve do too. The results are undeniable: In the seven decades since its founding, the SBA has financed billions, fueled some of our most iconic brands and innovative industries, and helped millions of hopeful entrepreneurs realize their American Dreams of business ownership. We have ensured competition and innovation through entrepreneurship to fuel the world’s strongest and largest economy.

“As we enter our eighth decade, SBA is building on a record 12.2 million small businesses application boom fostered by President Biden’s Investing in America agenda and a strong commitment to equity that continues to expand access to entrepreneurship in underserved communities. By growing our economy from the middle out and the bottom up, leveling the playing field, and creating equitable access to opportunities, we are building a lasting foundation for economic growth and our nation’s global competitiveness.”

Gorham students take to the woods and waters

WISCASSET, ME (September 1, 2023) – With grant-funded support from Governor Mill’s Outdoor Learning Initiative, high school students from sixteen Maine towns recently returned from extensive expeditions into Maine’s forests and along the rugged coastline. These journeys, spanning three weeks, centered on ecology, sustainability, and introducing students to the unique career and study opportunities found in Maine’s forestry and marine sectors.

“We were delighted to offer these unique, no-cost programs and share our passion for ecology and the natural world with these local students,” said Nancy Kennedy, the acting president of Chewonki, a non-profit environmental education center based in Wiscasset. “I am so pleased that Chewonki played a role in ensuring these young people in Maine have access to the spectacular marine and forest resources that make this state so special.”

The programs, designed for high school-aged students, offered either a three-week kayak expedition up the coast of Maine, or a three-week backpacking trip along the Maine Appalachian trail.

According to Eli Hanschka, one of the trip leaders, the hands-on programming had a profound impact on the students who attended. “On the coastal ecology trip, we saw each participant engage wholeheartedly and passionately with the ecosystems we traveled through,” said Hanschka. “Students documented and shared naturalist observations, sought answers to questions of geology, oceanography, and species interaction, and gratefully ate food directly from the sea, all increasing their intimate connection to these environments. One participant, Chelsie, would often wake up early and we’d find her sitting in a meadow or exploring the intertidal zone, finding and describing all the species of plants and

animals around her. Our group also developed a culture of picking up any trash we could find, no matter how difficult. They turned around their kayaks to grab a bottle that had floated by or used a boat hook they found to fish out lobster buoys wedged deep in the cracks of rocks. These inspired attitudes of curiosity and stewardship for the natural world will carry far beyond the shorelines we traveled and deep into the places and people that each participant will interact with through their lives.”

The students were challenged with a true off-the-grid experience, learning essential camping and survival skills, navigation, species identification, and taking turns leading the group each day to build teamwork and leadership.

“It was just so remarkable to see a group of Maine kids explore and learn about these ecosystems in their home state,” said Hanschka. “The participants, coming from all over Maine, each brought a unique perspective to place and community along with an openness to learn from each other. This, combined with a deep wonder and appreciation for these wild places, allowed them to form a strong family centered around generosity, caring for each other, passion for living fully engaged, and interdependence with nature as one of its members. They supported one another through challenging times on the sea, brought enthusiasm for every learning opportunity, and inspired everyone they touched to live with passion, curiosity, and love.”

“These students have not only forged a deep connection with the backcountry environment of Maine but are also taking home hands-on experience, and a new view of the diverse job and recreational opportunities that this region offers,” explains Kennedy. “We couldn’t be more proud.”

Both programs underscore Chewonki’s

commitment to fostering environmental awareness, knowledge, and stewardship among the youth. By providing these experiences, Chewonki aims to inspire the next generation of environmental leaders, scientists, and advocates.

At the behest of Governor Mills, the Maine Outdoor Learning Initiative was developed by the Maine Department of Education using Federal funding, and was designed to give middle and high school students the opportunity to participate in marine and coastal ecology learning programs, including marine research and exploration, boat building, sailing, career exploration with marine businesses, island immersion programs, and more.

The Chewonki summer programs included students from Arrowsic, Bangor, Bar Harbor, Belfast, Brunswick, Dexter, Dresden, Fort Fairfield, Freeport, Greenbush, Gorham, Phippsburg, Portland, Unity, So. Portland, and Topsham.

For more details on Chewonki and its upcoming programs, visit www.chewonki.org or contact: Cullen McGough, VP of Marketing and Communications cmcgough@chewonki.org or (207) 882-7323.

About Chewonki: Chewonki is a leading environmental education center located in Wiscasset, Maine, dedicated to promoting understanding, appreciation, and stewardship of the natural world. Through a blend of hands-on experiences, outdoor adventures, and in-depth study, Chewonki inspires transformative growth and a deep connection to the environment.

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

Fall into Color floral exhibit opening September 13

FRYEBURG, ME (August 18, 2023) — The Pace Galleries of Art, on the campus of Fryeburg Academy, presents the exhibition and opening reception for Fall Into Color, Floral Exhibit on Wednesday,

September 13th from 4:00-7:00 pm at the Leura Hill Eastman Performing Arts Center. Admission is free.

This is the Pace Galleries' first annual Floral Art Show to celebrate the growers and floral farms

of Western Maine. It is intended to highlight the farmers as artists in their own right and to celebrate their craft as artwork, deserving of recognition in a formal gallery space. Participating farms include: Moonset Farm,

Weston's Farm, Meadow Ridge Farm, Good Buddy Farm, Stonehill Lavender Farm, Veritas Flora, Sunshine Daydream Farm, and the Fryeburg Academy OLRC Program.

Exhibitors will

choose a piece of existing artwork from the permanent collection of the Pace Galleries of Art and create a floral display inspired by it. Both pieces will be presented together in the gallery for visitors to enjoy.

The exhibition will be open to the public on September 13th, 14th, and 15th from 4:00-7:00 pm. The Pace Galleries of Art is located on the campus of Fryeburg Academy at 18 Bradley Street in Fryeburg, Maine.

\$3B to drive resilience to climate change, extreme weather events

CAMBRIDGE, MA (September 1, 2023) — Today, Homeland Security Secretary Alejandro N. Mayorkas, FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell, and Senior Advisor to the President and White House Infrastructure Coordinator Mitch Landrieu announced project selections for nearly \$3 billion in climate resilience funding as part of President Biden's Investing in America agenda. The selections, through two competitive grant programs, will help communities across the nation enhance resilience to climate change and extreme weather events.

Today's selections include \$1.8 billion for critical resilience projects funded by the Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities (BRIC) national competition and \$642 million for Flood Mitigation Assistance (FMA) community-scale flood mitigation projects. These selections

build on \$160 million in BRIC and FMA selections that FEMA announced in May for efforts to support mitigation projects, project scoping, and adoption of hazard-resistant building codes. Combined, the funds awarded this grant cycle of the BRIC and FMA programs total nearly \$3 billion including management costs.

"We are extremely pleased to announce that projects in Connecticut, Maine and Massachusetts have been selected for this innovative federal funding," said FEMA Region I Regional Administrator Lori Ehrlich. "Under President Biden's Administration and through Administrator Criswell's leadership, FEMA has made climate change a top priority and we continue to make progress to ensure communities become more resilient with critical mitigation projects like these."



FEMA

"From Hawaii to Maine, communities across the country are experiencing more frequent and intense severe weather events, resulting in devastating impacts to their homes, businesses, and families. Though FEMA will always help communities respond and recover to these disasters, it is also paramount to build resilience before disasters strike," said FEMA Administrator Deanne Criswell. "Thanks to President Biden's Investing in America agenda, we can further our mission to help our state, local, territorial, and tribal partners build a more resilient nation."

The top five primary hazard sources of the

projects selected in the national competition for each program include flooding, infrastructure failure, fire, drought and dam or levee break hazards.

Building Resilient Infrastructure and Communities

Connecticut, Maine and Massachusetts received BRIC selections for a total of \$132.62 million. In addition, Maine received a selection for the first time.

This includes critical mitigation projects and activities — three of which use nature-based solutions to reduce natural hazard risks for states, local communities, tribes and territo-

ries. Nature-based solutions are sustainable planning, design, environmental management and engineering practices that weave natural features or processes into the built environment to promote adaptation and resilience.

One project selection is the Saco, Maine Water Resource Recovery Project. The project aims to make improvements to the city's wastewater treatment plant, including the addition of a berm and the construction of structures at an elevation 3 feet above the 100-year flood elevation or base flood elevation (BFE). The project would reduce risk to the city and an estimated 12,206 residential users served by the wastewater treatment plant.

This new wastewater treatment project will reduce combined sewer overflow discharge, incorporate drainage improvements throughout the site, reclaim

green space for community use, and mitigate cascading impacts of climate change in accordance with York County's Hazard Mitigation Plan.

Learn more about the selected projects on the BRIC webpage on FEMA.gov.

Additional information about the funding

President Biden has continued to provide additional funding to FEMA's annual resilience grant programs, increasing them from \$700 million to \$1.16 billion during his first year in office to nearly tripling it in the 2022 funding cycle, \$900 million of which came from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law. The increased amount allows FEMA to diversify its geographic scope in funding selections and get more federal funds to communities needing it the most to become safer from the effects of climate change.

\$300K to tobacco prevention, treatment grants

FALMOUTH, ME (August 25, 2023) — Maine Cancer Foundation recently awarded six grants, totaling \$302,466 to Maine organizations in support of projects that address tobacco use in Maine.

Smoking is the world's leading preventable cause of death and tobacco is known to cause 11 different cancers, including lung cancer at the forefront. Unfortunately, Maine's lung cancer rates are

consistently higher than the national average, and lung cancer is the leading cause of cancer death in our state. In Maine, more than 180,000 adults and over 4,000 high school students smoke cigarettes.

In order to reduce this burden, it is imperative to help prevent youth from ever starting to use tobacco, offer assistance for Mainers who would like to quit, and affect policies that lessen tobacco

use statewide. These efforts will ultimately decrease the burden of lung and tobacco-related cancers in Maine and greatly benefit our residents.

With these goals in mind, MCF recently awarded six grants, totaling \$302,466 over two years for projects that reduce the use of tobacco in Maine. Grantees include:

Aroostook County Action Program (Presque Isle): Prevention Through

Youth Engagement, \$80,000

Augusta Teen Center (Augusta): Roads To Success-Tobacco, \$80,000

Healthy Androscoggin (Lewiston): Secondhand and Thirdhand Smoke and Pets, \$41,000

Mount Desert Island Hospital (Bar Harbor): Establishing a Tobacco Treatment and Prevention Program, \$12,966

New Mainers Public Health Initiative (Lewis-

ton): Combustible Cigarettes and Hookah Smoking Intervention Project in Lewiston Auburn, \$80,000

Region 8 Mid-Coast School of Technology (Rockland): Restorative Approach to Teen Smoking and Vaping, \$8,500

"Unfortunately, tobacco use is still a major contributor to Maine's high lung cancer rates," said Katelyn Michaud, MCF's Director of Programming. "Through our

grant partnerships with these six organizations, we know essential work will happen to reduce the burden of tobacco and improve the health of our state."

MCF is on track to award approximately \$2 million in grants to organizations across the state of Maine in 2023. All funded programs support cancer prevention, early detection, and improved outcomes statewide.



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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

Remembering Rosalie Elizabeth Preble Barden of Gorham Sept. 23

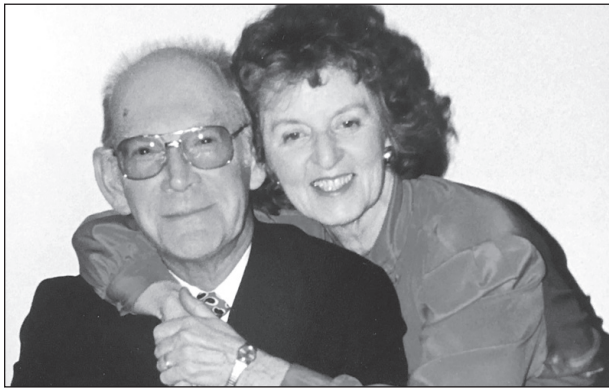
It is with profound sadness but uplifting memories that the family of Rosalie Preble Barden of Gorham announces her passing on 29 July, 2023, at age 96. Rosalie lived an active life, cherished her family, loved people and animals, and she always felt blessed.

Rosalie was born in Bath, Maine, on September 22, 1926 to Clarence Appleton Preble and Grace Gertrude Shea Preble. She attended Day's Ferry school then Morse High School in Bath. She left high school during World War II to attend the Quoddy trade school to learn drafting. Returning to the Bath Iron Works she worked in the Hull Drawing Room as an Apprentice Draftsman at age 16. During this time, she took flying lessons. After the War, she finished high school and then attended Stephen's College in Columbia, Missouri. Later she transferred to Gorham State Teachers College in Gorham and received her BA in Biology.

She married Richard Thomas Barden on September 4, 1949, at the First

Parish Congregational church in Gorham. They were married 70 years. Richard passed in 2019, shortly after this remarkable anniversary. When first married they opened and operated the Standish Pharmacy and Restaurant. Rosalie became a member of the Dawn of Hope Chapter of Eastern Star and Secretary of Maine Vacation Dog Club training obedience and showing American Cocker Spaniels while they lived there.

When Richard's father needed to retire, Dick returned to Gorham to operate Barden Drug Company. Gray Road was the first home for their three children Michael, Terrilynn and Gregory. In 1959 they moved to Deep Cover Shores on Sebago Lake in Raymond, Maine. When the Bardens moved back to Gorham a few years later they kept the cottage on the lake. Dick eventually purchased the pharmacy from his father and opened Gorham Pharmacy with his former competitor, then partner, Bill Rickards. Dick's mother deeded her



childhood home in Kingfield to him, which was used as a skiing vacation camp. While their children grew, their activities kept the whole family busy. They also hosted a high school exchange student, Patricia Palma from Ecuador, who became a member of the family to this day.

Rosalie, being multi-talented, created the architectural design for the home they built on Flaggy Meadow Road. She also initiated an art program and taught art in the Gorham Public Schools. One summer she presented art workshops on the cruise ship the S.S. Rotterdam. She was Vice President of Maine Women in the Arts, a member of the Art

Guild of the Kennebunks, the Maine Art Gallery in Wiscasset, and Associate Member of the American Society of Marine Artists. She created art in several media, from oil to sculpture in wood and bronze, but eventually she focused on watercolor as her preferred medium. She won numerous awards and sold over 600 watercolor paintings. After receiving her self-designed Master's Degree in Education, she became an Associate Professor at USM and Associate Professor at St. Joseph's College.

Rosalie was an active member of the First Parish Congregational UCC Church in Gorham since 1949. She served on

several committees, most importantly the Building Committee for the large extension that was added to the church. She was a deacon for seven years and she enjoyed attending Bible classes there. Rosalie and Dick both sang in the church choir and often sang duets during the morning service. While they were members, the First Parish Choir released a Christmas CD "What Sweeter Music" and traveled together to North Carolina and throughout Europe in Choir Festivals. Rosalie sang in the choir for 60 years.

Dick and Rosalie loved to travel and visited 21 countries, 8 large islands and a good part of the United States. Rosalie's favorite personal trip was to Jerusalem and Israel. She was a member of several clubs but felt the most worthy activity was being a volunteer for 10 years in Hospice which at that time worked out of two churches before there was a central facility. Interesting fact is that Rosalie was a distant niece of Commo-

dore Edward Preble whose flagship at Tripoli during the First Barbary War of 1803 was "Old Ironsides", the U.S.S. Constitution.

Rosalie enjoyed people, art, music, dancing, water and snow skiing, cooking, reading, cartoons, sports, and was an avid Celtics fan. She was beloved and respected by all who knew her.

Rosalie was predeceased by her parents, her older sister Grace Louise, a nephew Daniel Sawyer, and her loving husband of 70 years, Richard T. Barden. She is survived by her three children, Michael Barden, Terrilynn Barden Dubreuil, Gregory Barden, her half-sister Grace Ellen Preble Sawyer and her husband Gerald Sawyer, her half-brother Clarence A. Preble ("Chip") and wife Judy Hill, along with ten grandchildren, 15 great-grandchildren, 2 great-great-grandchildren, five nephews and four nieces.

Rosalie's memorial will be Sept. 23, 1pm at the Gorham First Parish Church.

Wreaths Across America Recognizes Kevin Haley

COLUMBIA FALLS and PORTLAND, ME (August 4, 2023) — On Saturday, July 29, as part of its 10th Annual Stem to Stone event, national nonprofit Wreaths Across America (WAA) recognized Ofc. Kevin Haley of Portland, Maine, as the second recipient of the organization's Chief Janine Roberts' Leadership Award. This award is given to a law enforcement/first responder member who exemplifies unwavering service to their community and dedication to WAA's year-round mission to Remember, Honor, Teach.

Officer Haley was presented the Leadership Award by Janine Roberts, Chief of Police Westbrook, Maine, (retired) and Law Enforcement Liaison for WAA, for whom the award was created in 2020.

"We want to honor those who choose to serve their community in more ways than one," said Rob-

erts. "Kevin serves as a police officer but also lives the mission to Remember, Honor, Teach every day through his dedication to his community. His list of admirable attributes is extensive, and anyone who knows him has been impacted by his compassion and authenticity. He has been a friend and colleague for more than 20 years, and it is truly an honor to recognize him for his continued service."

Ofc. Haley serves as a member of the WAA Board of Directors. He has been a police officer with the City of Portland for the last 27 years and an athletic coach (now retired) for the Cheverus High School Swimming & Diving Team for the past 32 years. Since his initial WAA involvement in 2008, he has taken numerous students and members of the law enforcement and first responder community to Arlington National Cemetery to volunteer to lay wreaths. He is also a

Gold Star Brother; William 'Billy' Patrick Haley, E-9 MSGT, is laid to rest at Arlington.

"Thank you is just not enough," said Ofc. Haley. "Wreaths Across America has brought people together to remember that we owe our freedom to veterans and currently serving military members. I am honored to share the mission with my family and our community."

This year, National Wreaths Across America Day will be held on Saturday, December 16, 2023. It is a free event, open to all people. You can click here to find a local participating cemetery near you to support. For more information or to find a participating cemetery near you, please visit www.wreathscrossamerica.org.



Ofc. Haley and Retired Chief, Janine Roberts.

Gorham WEEKLY

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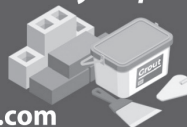
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Seniors Not Acting Their Age

Two Bush or Bust



Ellen Nelson kayaks Muscle Ridge Channel

By Ron Chase
Two Bush Island is the most distant island in the Muscle Ridge archipelago. Located about four miles from Spruce Head, it's home to historic Two Bush Island Light.

Situated near the heavily trafficked southwestern entrance to Penobscot Bay, the lighthouse was built in 1897. Typical of Maine lighthouses, it has a rich history of hazardous ocean rescues and keepers surviving harsh winter storms. The lighthouse was automated in

1964 and keepers were discontinued. In a seemingly unlikely occurrence, the keeper's house was leveled by the Green Berets during a demolition exercise in 1970.

Only visible by boat or from the air, the lighthouse continues to be an important navigation aid. The 42-foot light tower now stands alone on the rugged otherwise barren atoll and is owned by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service. The two bushes for which it was named have long since vanished.

Each summer, I try to organize a Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society sea kayak trip to Muscle Ridge. About 15 years ago, I had the good fortune to visit Two Bush during one of those trips. Subsequently, the remote island has been an elusive destination. Fog, rough seas, and hazardous landings have prevented a return.

Recently, I endeavored to organize a Muscle Ridge kayak trip with Two Bush the primary objective. A small hand-carry landing adjacent to Spruce

Head Island Bridge is the closest launch site for a paddle to the distant atoll. Access and egress at the landing can be a muddy misadventure at low tide so planning around that eventuality is important. Fortunately, I identified a favorable forecast on a day when low tide was 11:30 A.M. Departing mid-morning and returning mid-afternoon would work perfectly.

Three paddling friends agreed to join me. The weather forecast was superb calling for light winds, partly sunny skies, and warm temperatures. However, the Maine Coastal Waters forecast was mixed. Advantageous two-foot seas were predicted but patchy fog was anticipated in the morning. Since visibility was expected to be over a mile, we decided to assess the situation when we arrived.

Conditions were clear when we met in Spruce Head. However, fog was observed in the distance. Equipped with maps, compasses, and a GPS, we felt adequately prepared to kayak around Spruce Head Island and traverse across Muscle Ridge Channel to the nearest island in the archipelago, Graffam Island. Whether circumstances would permit continuing to Two Bush was uncertain.

Our paddle along the north side of Spruce Head Island was uneventful. At the eastern end, we could see Graffam Island partially enveloped in fog. After collectively confirming the correct compass bearing for Graffam, we embarked on the busy 1.5 mile crossing. Relative tranquility was experienced during our traverse. By the time we arrived at Graffam, the fog had dissipated to haze.

Turning the southern terminus of Graffam, Crow Island was visible a long mile southeast. Situated to the east of Crow, there was no sign of Two Bush or the lighthouse.

Cruising along the southern periphery of the archipelago, we proceed-



Kayakers approach Two Bush Island



Paddlers enjoy a rare visit to Two Bush Light

ed to the northern perimeter of Crow. Rounding the rugged shoreline, first the lighthouse then the entire island could be seen through the haze. Reaching Two Bush seemed likely. Landing was still uncertain.

A welcome calm was experienced during our crossing to the island. Landing on the western end was too hazardous. However a rocky beach was found on the extreme eastern terminus where we successfully disembarked. A hike in tall grass to the lighthouse ensued.

The weathered old lighthouse was a delight to visit. The prominent location provided outstanding views of the surrounding area.

After completing our exploration of Two Bush Island, we paddled north to a sandy beach on Bar Island. A shaded location at the head of the beach was an ideal lunch spot.

From Bar, we navigated around the northern end of Graffam Island and entered Muscle Ridge Channel. Once past tiny

Hurricane Island, distinct Target Rock was detected amid the cliffs on Spruce Head Island. That was our bearing as we negotiated through strong tidal currents and completed the traverse. The incoming tide had covered most of the mud when we returned to Spruce Head Landing concluding one of the most remarkable voyages on the Maine coast.

Read about eight more exciting sea kayak escapades in my book *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine*.

Ron Chase resides in Topsham. His latest book, *"Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine"* is available at www.northcountrypress.com/maine-al-fresco or in bookstores and through online retailers. His previous books are *"The Great Mars Hill Bank Robbery"* and *"Mountains for Mortals – New England."* Visit his website at www.ronchase-outdoors.com or he can be reached at ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net

Midcoast Symphony Orchestra holds auditions

TOPSHAM, ME (September 1, 2023)—The Midcoast Symphony Orchestra (MSO) seeks experienced classical musicians to audition for the upcoming 2023/24 season. Musicians interested in joining the MSO for its season starting in September should call 207-315-1712 or email info@midcoast-symphony.org to set up an audition. For more information on the orchestra go to MidcoastSymphony.org.

The Midcoast Symphony Orchestra performs four concerts each season at both the Orion Performing Arts Center, Topsham, and the Franco Center in Lewiston.

The Midcoast Symphony Orchestra is a community orchestra founded in 1990. Started as a chamber orchestra, there are now more than 80 members who performs a full range of orchestral literature from the classical to modern periods. A community-based organi-

zation, the orchestra draws players and audiences from south of Portland to Rockland along the coast, and inland from Augusta to the Lewiston-Auburn area. Its members all volunteer their time to practice and perform with the Midcoast Symphony. Under the guidance of Music Director Rohan Smith, the orchestra continues to attract ever more professional-caliber musicians and award-winning guest artists.

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‘Helping To Calm Strong Emotions’ returns in the fall

BELFAST, ME (September 1, 2023) — Registration is open for an online professional development program, “Helping to Calm Strong Emotions with Resonant Language.” This four-day workshop, part of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension’s professional development program, will be held from 4-5:30 p.m. every Wednesday from Sept. 13 to Oct. 4. Participants will

learn practical strategies for helping calm strong emotions in themselves and others. Verbal and somatic strategies will also be demonstrated to deescalate strong emotions during conflict, explore brain activity when trauma is activated and show the practical power of resonant language. These techniques can be easily learned and readily employed to dispel tension during customer service interactions, reduce



workplace friction, mitigate conflict between students and minimize stress with family and friends. This program is designed to benefit people who work with youth, including childcare providers, ed techs, educa-

tors, guidance counselors, school administrators, social workers, teachers; frontline workers; people who work in service industries; municipal workers; and parents and guardians. Program facilitator Peggy Smith, who holds a

master’s degree in literacy and language arts from the University of Pennsylvania, is a certified trainer with the International Center for Nonviolent Communication with over four decades of teaching experience. A co-founder of the Maine Nonviolent Communication Network, Smith is at the forefront of bringing empathic thinking and communicating to midcoast Maine. A stable internet con-

nection and the ability to participate in these synchronous sessions as they are happening is required. Participants will receive a certificate of completion, and 0.6 CEUs/6 contact hours are available, upon request. The program cost is \$175 per person. For more information or to request a reasonable accommodation, visit the program website or contact Kimberly Lai, um.fhc.pd@maine.edu; 207.338.8002.

“Protecting our Waterways” panel discussion

RAYMOND, ME (September 1, 2023) -- On Thursday September 14 at 6:30, a panel discussion will look at protecting our waterways. Sebago and Lakes Region waterways are among the cleanest in the State of Maine and New England. PWD water quality is rated “excel-

lent”, Sebago Lake is the drinking water for the City of Portland and has the unique distinction of a legal exemption from the filtration requirement of the Safe Drinking Water Act. Given the growth of the region, how can we protect the water quality now and into the future? What role

do government agencies, municipalities, commercial and residential property owners and users of our waterways play to protect water quality? A panel of waterway experts will discuss water biology, ecology, property owner responsibility and governance as it relates to maintaining the

health of our waterways here in the Lakes Region. Panelists: Nathan Whalen, Water Resources Specialist, Portland Water District Wendy Garland, Division Director for Environmental Assessment in our Water Bureau, ME Dept of Environmental

Protection Jess Fay/Tim Nangle, ME House and Senate Representatives Alex Sirois Code Enforcement Officer and Chris Henson, Asst Code Enforcement Officer, Town of Raymond Lauren Pickford, Planning and Land Use

Manager, Lakes Environmental Association Refreshments will be served. This is a community event hosted by Hawthorne House in Raymond. There is no fee for attending; however, donations to the restoration fund for Hawthorne House are appreciated.

REALTOR Foundation Awards Grants Totaling \$80,000

AUGUSTA, ME (August 4, 2023) – The Maine Association of REALTORS® Foundation, the charitable arm of Maine Association of REALTORS®, has awarded \$80,000 through its 2023 Competitive Grant Program to eleven organizations to address a variety of housing needs across Maine. The grants funded from the REALTOR® Affordable Housing Fund (RAHF) offer non-profit organizations assistance in helping Maine’s most vulnerable households with providing meaningful housing solutions.

Hancock County individuals and families at risk of homelessness before they enter the shelter system. 2. Community Care will use their funds to provide security deposits, first months’ rent, and rental assistance to 20 youths experiencing homelessness. 3. Rural Community Action Ministry will use their funds to support their homeless prevention activities including providing financial counseling and housing repairs/modifications for 75-100 people. 4. Habitat for Humanity of Greater Bangor will use their funds to support building a new home in Penobscot County. 5. Through These Doors will use their funds to support some of their operating costs (electric, water, storm water, natural gas, telephone, fire,

cleaning) for a shelter expansion for survivors of domestic violence. The following organizations each received a \$5,000 grant: 6. CHiP, Inc. will use their funds to provide heating assistance to income-eligible households 7. A House for ME will use their funds to support the offset of rent and utilities expenses for 3 residents. 8. Safe Voices will use their funds to cover a portion of housing navigator expenses and also provide utility and security deposit assistance for 30-40 families. 9. Habitat for Humanity 7 Rivers Maine will use their funds to support their Home Repair Program, which includes purchasing materials and covering job site costs for 4-6 families. 10. Mission at the

Eastward will use their funds to support their purchase of building supplies to make home repairs for very low-income families. 11. New Beginnings will use their funds to support providing rent assistance and covering management staff costs associated with helping homeless youth navigate/transition from homelessness to stable housing. According to Ashlee Simpson Black, 2023 Chair of the Maine Association of REALTORS® Foundation, 2022 Realtor® of the Year, and Broker at The Simpson Team at Realty of Maine in Bangor, “I am so proud of how the REALTORS® in Maine give back to the communities that we live in, work in, and that have made us who we are. Affordable housing has always been a concern, but in recent years it has

become increasingly apparent that those of us that can do something, must do something to fix the crisis. We at the Maine Association of REALTORS® Foundation are honored to distribute these Grants this year to 11 Non-Profit Organizations that do just that; each one uniquely addresses the housing crisis in their community to help the people of Maine have safe shelter. Thank you all for what you do!” The REALTORS® Affordable Housing Fund (RAHF) was established in 1989 and derives its revenue from interest earnings paid by financial institutions on real estate trust accounts administered by REALTOR® offices across Maine. Since 1991, the Foundation has awarded more than \$1.4 million in Competitive Program grants to address afford-

able housing needs. For more information about this program, please contact foundation@mainerealtors.com

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Arts & Entertainment

Gorham's John Tiedje's one-man show in photography



GORHAM, ME (September 1, 2023)—After living and photographing scenes in Maine for over 23 years, John Tiedje is having a one-man show at the Stier Gallery in the Thomas Memorial Library in Cape Elizabeth during

the month of September. Details: Thomas Memorial Library, 6 Scott Dyer Rd, Cape Elizabeth, ME 04107, (207) 799-1720

The show will feature of local scenes: snow scenes, coastal, old barns, landscapes and more. John

has exhibited in local, state and national shows. He has won Photographer's Forum, Best of Photography, Award of Excellence. He is a member of the Photographers Society of America and the Maine Union of Visual Artists.

Clothes Galore at Gorham's Mission of Hope Clothes Closet

GORHAM, ME (April 29, 2023) -- The FREE Clothes Closet at Cressey Road Church (Mission of Hope Clothes Closet) is open to all who need Fellowship, Friendship and Clothes. We are located at 81 Cressey Road, Gorham, and we are open on the FIRST and THIRD Saturday of each month from 9 o'clock AM to 12 Noon.

We focus on clothes and accessories (gloves, scarves, hats, etc.) and

welcome your donations during our operating hours. Clean clothes in good shape help the most, as they go right out to help people locally or in nearby communities. An attempt is made to have season appropriate clothes available to you. After we have displayed them for a time, they are donated to serve the people in need in Ukraine.

In addition to helping folks find clothes, we want to spend time with you!

There are tables to sit, talk and to share a cup of coffee and usually a goodie with volunteers or others. Come see us! You might make a new friend. All are Welcome!

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

Vivid Motion Dance holds auditions for burlesque show

PORTLAND, ME (September 1, 2023) -- Local non-profit dance company, Vivid Motion, will hold auditions for its annual winter burlesque show:

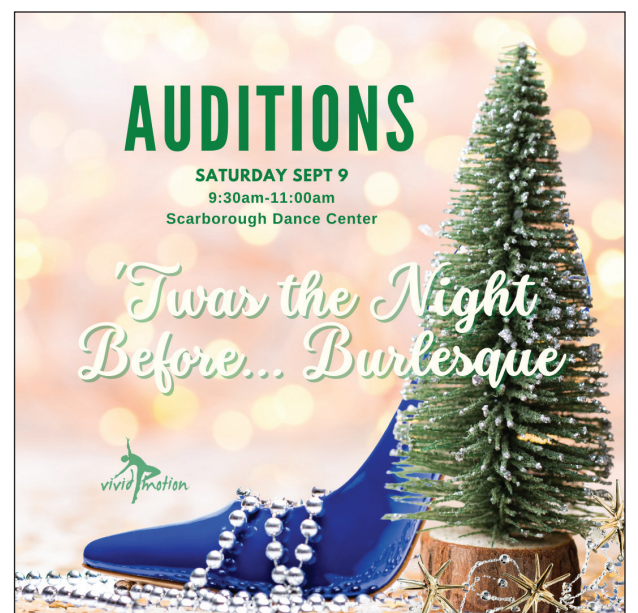
What: "Twas The Night Before...Burlesque"

When: Sat 9/9 - 9:30-11am (ages 18+ and not in high school)

Where: Scarborough Dance Center, 26 Oak Hill Terrace, Scarborough ME

Join us for this year's hot-hot-HOTTEST winter burlesque show, co-directed by Brigitte Paulus and MJ Emerson. In true innovative and quirky Vivid Motion Dance style, we've taken the classic holiday poem "Twas the Night Before Christmas" and turned it into a sizzling and sensual dance performance, complete with a live band onstage. Dancers of all styles, levels, sizes, genders, races, and ethnicities who are at least 18 and not in high school are encouraged to audition!

Auditions are held in



a class format: a warm up followed by several combinations at center. Please wear clothes you can move in and have your hair out of your face. Pre-registration is necessary and is now open at vividmotion.org/auditions. Registration closes at 9:00am on Saturday, September 9th.

Rehearsals will be Saturdays & Sundays, September 16 - December 7 from 9:30am-2:30pm

at Scarborough Dance Center. (NO rehearsals Thanksgiving weekend.) Time spent in rehearsals is dependent on casting. Performances: Dec 8-10 & Dec 13-16, 2023 at The Hill Arts (formerly St Lawrence Arts) at 7:30pm.

More information, including a complete list of roles (descriptions of pieces and dance levels) and registration is available at vividmotion.org

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Rotundo Bill Signed, Supports Muslim Participation in Economy

AUGUSTA, ME (August 4, 2023) — On Tuesday, July 25, Gov. Janet Mills held a signing ceremony for a bill — now law — from Sen. Peggy Rotundo, D-Lewiston that allows credit unions to offer loans to members of the Muslim community. These loans are consistent with Islamic customs in that they do not require borrowers to pay interest in the traditional sense.

“My city of Lewiston is fortunate to have a sizable population of hard-working taxpayers who will benefit from this change,” said Sen. Rotundo. “This law will make it easier for these community members, who are eager to live the American dream, to obtain mortgages and lines of credit, clearing the way for home- and business ownership, while not requiring them to violate their religious beliefs to do so.”

“Credit unions were created to help the underserved meet their financial needs. Thanks to the leadership of Senator Rotundo, Governor Mills, and the entire Maine legislature, we’re proud to see these efforts continue,” said Rob Caverly, Vice President of Advocacy and Outreach for the Maine Credit Union League. “The Bureau of Financial Institutions’

willingness to innovate with credit union leaders like Jen Hogan means we are now one step closer to offering interest-free loan products to Muslim communities in Maine.”

“This is a project I’ve been working on for more than five years, and I’m grateful to Senator Rotundo and Governor Mills for their shared commitment to the Muslim community,” said Jen Hogan, President and CEO of Community Credit Union. “Community Credit Union prides itself on finding ways to provide financial wellbeing and financial equity for everyone and this change in law will enable us to implement a new program that provides our Muslim community the opportunity to realize the American dream of home ownership without sacrificing their personal beliefs. I look forward to the day when we can say that we have closed on the first interest-free mortgage in Maine.”

LD 1277, “An Act to Amend the Laws Regarding Property Investment by Credit Unions,” amends the laws regarding property investment by credit unions in order to facilitate lending that complies with Islamic law. This law prohibits riba, which can be defined as



Left to right: Rob Caverly, Maine Credit Union League (MCUL) Vice President of Advocacy & Outreach; Ellen Parent, MCUL Director of Compliance; Gov. Janet Mills; Nicholas Tammaro of the MCUL; Krista Simonis, MCUL Director Governmental Affairs; Sen. Peggy Rotundo; John Barr, Deputy Superintendent at the Maine Bureau of Financial Institutions; Jen Hogan, President & CEO of Community Credit Union; Gordon Laurendeau, Attorney at the Maine Bureau of Financial Institutions; Betsy Sibley, Chief Marketing Officer of Community Credit Union; and Lloyd LaFountain, Superintendent at the Maine Bureau of Financial Institutions.

interest paid on all loans of money or interest received from a deposit account. According to the website Investopedia, “Islam aims to promote charity and helping others through kindness [and to] remove sentiments of selfishness and self-centeredness, which can create social antipathy, distrust,

and resentment. [M]aking riba illegal ... creates opportunities and contexts in which people are encouraged to act charitably—loaning money without interest.”

While Islamic law prohibits the paying of interest, it does not prohibit paying a fee for service. The new law authorizes

credit unions to invest in property that they do not occupy for a limited time, allowing them to offer loan products to the Muslim community that respect Muslim beliefs. This change would essentially provide parity for credit unions with banks, which are already allowed to offer these products.

There are three models in which this lending can be offered. The installment loan model allows a financial institution to purchase the property, then turn around right away and sell it to the new owner for a price higher than the amount for which it was purchased in order to recoup what would have been charged in interest. The resulting installment loan would have a zero percent interest rate. The lease-to-own model allows the financial institution to purchase the property and lease it to the individual in a lease-to-own agreement. After the full amount of the property purchase has been paid through the lease agreement, the individual would own the property. Finally, the co-ownership model allows the financial institution and the borrower to be co-owners in the property. The two parties buy the property and the ownership of the property is determined by each party’s investment. The borrower makes monthly payments, gradually purchasing all of the financial institution’s ownership stake to become the sole owner of the property.

The new law will go into effect on October 5, 2023, 90 days after the Legislature adjourned on July 26.

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Discovery Time returns to Gorham's BML



GORHAM, ME (September 1, 2023) -- Family Discovery Time—Tuesdays at 10am—Our Family Discovery Time is a theme-based story time, with a letter of the week, music and movements, a craft or science project, and a take-home sheet for caregivers and children.

Geared for ages 2-5, however everyone is welcome!

Baby Discovery Time—Wednesdays at 9:30am—Join us in the youth services program room as we lead families in

a fun baby story time! Enjoy books, babies, rhymes, and songs together.

Geared for ages birth-18mos.

Toddler Discovery Time—Thursdays at 10am—

Join us every week in the youth service program room. We will read books, sing songs, do some fun activities, and move our bodies!

Geared for ages 18mos-3years.



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Openings with Gorham Town Council

GORHAM, ME (September 1, 2023) -- The Town Council Ap-

pointments Committee is seeking citizen volunteers to fill a vacancy on the

Planning Board and Gorham Economic Development Corporation.

If you are interested in applying to serve on the Planning Board or

GEDC, go to the Town's website to fill out an application. For more informa-

tion, you may also contact the Town Clerk's office at 222-1670.

Summit Natural Gas named in 2023 Best Places to Work

YARMOUTH, ME (August 28, 2023) -- Summit Natural Gas of Maine (Summit) is honored to be named one of the 2023 Best Places to Work in Maine in the large company category. The Maine State Council of the Society for Human Re-

source Management, Best Companies Group, and BridgeTower Media annually recognizes and honors Maine's best places of employment in small, medium, and large company categories. It is the fifth year Summit has received this honor.

"At Summit, people are at the heart of what we do," said Kurt Adams, President & CEO for Summit. "Being named one of the Best Places to Work in Maine for the fifth year in a row is a testament to our company culture and our

team members who work hard every day to deliver for our customers and the communities we serve."

Best Companies Group determined the rankings using a two-part process. The first consisted of evaluating each nominat-

ed company's workplace policies, practices, and demographics, worth approximately 25 percent of the total evaluation. The second part consisted of an employee survey measuring the employee experience, which comprised 75 percent of the

total. The combined scores determined the top companies and the final rankings.

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Autumn Equinox celebration benefits Maine Audubon

PORTLAND, ME (September 1, 2023) -- Join us, Thursday, September 21st from 4:00 - 7:00 pm for an Autumn Equinox celebration to benefit the Maine Audubon!

Portside Real Estate Group is delighted to present the 6th Annual Autumn Equinox at Maine Audubon featuring live music, delicious bites from local food trucks, and local beer and wine amid Maine Audubon's rolling meadows and beautiful sanctuary.

As summer official-

ly comes to an end, please join us in celebrating the Autumn Equinox and the beginning of a new season. Can you imagine a more desirable place to gather than at the Maine Audubon?

Your Autumn Equinox at Maine Audubon ticket purchase is an important part of community fundraising to support Maine Audubon. Each ticket will include one drink voucher, yummy bites (yes, including food trucks!), live music, and lawn games!

This is a fami-

ly-friendly event!

Parking is limited at Maine Audubon, we suggest reserving your parking spot ahead of time by purchasing a VIP Parking pass. One parking pass will cover one vehicle, let's be green and carpool!

There will be satellite parking available nearby (Location to be announced soon!) with a shuttle that will bring you right to the event!

Tickets are non-refundable and considered a donations to the Maine Audubon.

What do you think?

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

Agree with us or another columnist? Disagree?

Write to us and let us know!

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

United Way of Southern Maine invests in community

P O R T L A N D AND KENNEBUNK, ME (August 11, 2023) -- United Way of Southern Maine (UWSM) announced it will invest \$6,139,743 into our community this year.

Investments include Community Impact Grants of 3,519,977 to programs and innovative initiatives across Southern Maine. These grants reflect United Way's priorities to advance equity and ensure alignment with our community's shared vision to give kids a strong start, empower neighbors to thrive – not just survive, and help us all live longer, better.

“Our investments support programs and also fuel relationships, creating impact on individual lives and influencing conditions for community level change,” said Liz Cotter Schlax, President and CEO of United Way of Southern Maine. “These investments are one important component in United Way’s work to tackle persistent issues, including lack of affordable child care, food insecurity, housing instability, and mental health challenges,

that hold people back from achieving financial stability and leading healthy lives.”

Included in the Community Impact Grants are member-directed investments through United Way’s giving circles, Brick & Beam Society and Women United, and United-Way led programming such as 211 Maine, CASH Greater Portland, Biddeford Ready!, and the Greater Portland Workforce Initiative.

“The challenges our community faces are interconnected and incredibly complex,” said Camelia Babson-Haley, Executive Director, Youth and Family Outreach. “We can’t answer them alone. We need to pull in all the resources available in this robust community. And United Way helps connect us.”

In addition to Community Impact Grants, UWSM will invest an additional \$800,000 into the community through donor-directed contributions and \$1,819,766 in United Way’s efforts to mobilize and coordinate the people, ideas, and resources need-

ed to quickly respond to emerging needs and tackle persistent community issues. United Way’s work includes public policy, community and volunteer engagement, evaluation and measurement, and programmatic leadership for Thrive2027.

“With my busy days, it is hard to stay on top of advocacy and policy efforts in the child care sector,” said Babson-Haley. “But with United Way’s advocacy team, I can just reach out to ask them what I need to be paying attention to or to get help on a letter. It is a huge value to me.”

This year, United Way offered new Capacity Building and Multi-Year Funding opportunities to support emerging, less established non-profit partners. They also revised financial review requirements to be more equitable for applicants from smaller organizations and created a new review and recommendation process to accommodate the increased number of applications.

“The challenge before us is the disparities in education, health, and

economic opportunity continue to increase, but the resources available to confront those challenges have not kept pace with expanding needs,” said Todd Cesca, Partner, Charter Oak Capital Management, and Board Chair, United Way of Southern Maine, “It is times like now that our community needs us more than ever to be united in our purpose.”

United Way relies on community members and subject-matter expert volunteers to make funding decisions and ensure grants are distributed to solutions that fill any gaps in services and have the greatest impact.

Through community input, nonprofit partnerships, and strategic funding, United Way is continuing to foster a stronger,

healthier Southern Maine region for us all. This strategic approach helps our community’s dollars go further to close gaps in early childhood development, create pathways to educational and employment opportunities, and increase access to mental health care and addiction prevention and intervention services so more people thrive.

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Local Boys Scouts attend Jamboree



Scouts from Maine visited the U.S. Capitol and received a tour before taking part in the National Jamboree



Left to Right: Tyler MacVane, Alex Durocher, William Barry, Sean Barry, Daniel Harriman, Patrick Sarto, and JJ Sarto

WASHINGTON D.C. (August 11, 2023) -- The Boy Scouts of America Jamboree attracted over 13,000 scouts from around the world and over 5,000 visitors to the 10-day event in July including Scouts from Maine.

Over the course of the Jamboree, which takes place every four years, the BSA gathers together. Scouts and Scouters explored all kinds of adventures—stadium shows, pioneer village, Mount Jack hikes, adventure sports and more—in the heart of one of nature’s greatest playgrounds. With 10,000 acres at the Bechtel Summit Reserve in West Virginia to explore, and directly across from the New River Gorge National Park, there was no shortage of opportunities to build Scouting memories.

The 45 Scouts and leaders from Pine Tree Council (which covers southern and western parts of Maine) took a bus to the event which was held at the Summit making stops in Washington, D.C. Contingent Leader, Joan Dollarhite wrote on July 17 at Camp Snyder outside Washington, D.C., “Tents are pitched, pizza ordered and eaten. We had a great ride and are looking forward to sight-seeing tomorrow.” The Scouts earned the money for the trip through many fundraisers such as selling popcorn outside the Lowes in Brunswick, selling meat sticks, bottle drives, etc.

Sagan Guerrette of Saco is a senior at Thornton Academy and attended the National Jamboree as a member of the Jamboree staff. The 17-year old’s

favorite experience, when not working at the “Operation Arrow” program area, was the zip line but he also enjoyed the whitewater rafting. “It was pretty cool.”

From soaring high above the ground on a zip line to conquering high ropes courses and scaling rock walls, there was no shortage of adventures at the Jamboree. Local Scouts took on the challenge of the climbing wall, navigated their way through orienteering courses, tried new things like branding or welding, and braved the rapids during an exhilarating whitewater rafting trip. There were also demonstrations from the U.S. Coast Guard and motivational speeches given by Scott Pelley, correspondent for 60 Minutes and former news anchor and managing editor of CBS News who talked about bravery; and Lt. General and Eagle Scout, John Evans, who spoke to Scouts about the importance of leadership. Maine’s Scouts not only found their adrenaline rush but also took part in programs designed to foster personal growth and build self-confidence. They also found opportunities to overcome mental and emotional obstacles as well and engage in team-building exercises that required communication, problem-solving, and collaboration. These experiences not only enhance outdoor skills but also cultivate character and resilience. The Jamboree helped to develop leadership skills.

They also took part in a massive good deed. Scouts at the National Jamboree assembled 5,000

“Flood Bucket” cleaning kits consisting of 15 items ranging from rubber gloves and scrub brushes to scouring pads and towels packed tightly into a 5-gallon bucket. These kits serve as essential “first aid” resources that provide flood victims with the practical and emotional support necessary to begin restoration of their homes and personal belongings. The completed kits, valued at \$375,000, are being packed tightly into a five-gallon bucket and will be wrapped and transported to a warehouse and then distributed as needed to flooded areas throughout West Virginia as “first aid” resources for flood victims.

Susan Shoberg of Windham served as the Scoutmaster for the female Scouts from Pine Tree Council who attended the Jamboree. “I enjoyed watching the youth be able to explore on their own and find adventure every day,” Shoberg said. She enjoyed the zip line and meeting guest speakers such as Scott Pelley; Elaine Ho, director of diversity at NASA; and Scott Mann, founder of Operation Pineapple Express. Shoberg is the volunteer District Commissioner for the Abnaki District which delivers Scouting in Androscoggin and Oxford Counties.

Anthony Fortin of Augusta attends Cony High School and is a member of Troop 603. “I earned Radio, Sustainability, and Family Life Merit Badges; did some patch trading; soared across a zip line; had fun at the Camp bashes (parties); attended Catholic Mass with a thousand other Scouts; played the kazoo and the bugle; and met

many new people from all over the country,” Anthony said.

Will Barry is an Eagle Scout from Saco Troop 310 and said that the highlight for him was “Definitely meeting people from all across the U.S., and even some from other countries! I made many new friends, and had a lot of fun experiences with them along the way.”

12-year old Alexander Durocher of Dayton is a Second Class scout in Troop 310 enjoyed trying new things. “I tried fly fishing for the first time and almost completed the merit badge. I just have to catch a fish. I also tried out welding,” Durocher said. “I like earning the Jamboree NOVA award -it was such an accomplishment. I wanted to try rock climbing and to visit the military exhibits more.”

Michael Fortin, Committee Chair for Troop 603, also attended. “It was fulfilling to see all of the Scouts have this amazing experience,” Michael Fortin said. “Many of the Scouts on this adventure did not know the leaders and conversely, we did not know most of them. Spending time together provided the leaders with the opportunity to get to know them and witness these young people on their Scouting journey. The heat, humidity, and hilly terrain were challenging for us older adults to navigate, but we endured it all to ensure our Scouts were safe and had an absolutely awesome time. We saw many examples of Scouts who unselfishly embraced the Oath and Law and demonstrated what it truly means to be a Scout.”



Susan Shoberg, Scoutmaster for the female Scouts who attended the Jamboree from Pine Tree Council, meeting guest speaker Scott Pelley of CBS News and 60 Minutes. Shoberg, who lives in Windham, is the volunteer District Commissioner serving Scouting in Androscoggin and Oxford Counties.



Troop 310



There was plenty of adventure at the National Jamboree ranging from rock climbing to white water rafting to zip lining. Here Will Barry of Saco prepares for Mountain Biking.



Anthony Fortin of Troop 603 and Connor Poirier of Troop 631, both of Augusta, gave the thumbs up as they began cooking breakfast for the contingent at the sub-camp campsite at the Summit Reserve.

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State Session addresses AARP Maine's priorities

PORTLAND, ME (August 11, 2023) – AARP’s purpose is to empower people to choose how they live as they age. Many policy changes enacted this legislative session will help Maine residents do just that.

Fighting for Mainers 50-Plus and Their Families: AARP advocates for what is important to our 200,000 Maine members and Mainers aged 50 and over. Strengthened by a team of dedicated volunteers, AARP Maine gives older Mainers a voice at the state and federal levels. Volunteer advocates play a critical role in these efforts which AARP acknowledges through our annual Legislative Honor Roll. “Like many organizations, AARP Maine had a packed agenda this session, and our team of staff and volunteers kept up the momentum throughout,” said Noël Bonam, AARP Maine State Director. “We also want to especially thank our lawmakers, and our Tuesdays at the State House volunteers for their hard work in Augusta. Our volunteers spent many hours connecting with their elected officials, testifying, and joining committee hearings — all to help make Maine an even better place to live for everyone.”

At the start of 2023, AARP Maine announced its intention to

address legislation establishing a Paid Family and Medical Leave program for Maine, advocating for fair and affordable utility rates, ensuring Mainers’ financial well-being and addressing the lack of affordable housing.

AARP Maine appreciates the bipartisan efforts that resulted in the passage of many key priorities during the 2023 Legislative Session, including the below highlights:

Establishing a Paid Family and Medical Leave Program in Maine: In a historic win for Maine’s family caregivers, on July 11, 2023 Governor Mills signed state budget legislation into law which includes language to establish a Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) program in Maine. This is welcome news for Maine’s 166,000 family caregivers, many of whom work full- or part-time jobs while providing care. AARP Maine advocated for PFML to help alleviate family caregivers’ financial, health and emotional stress and help retain participation in the state’s labor force. The new law allows working Mainers to take 12 weeks of paid time off to:

Care for their own health;

Bond with the covered individual’s child during the first 12 months after the child’s birth,

adoption, or placement for foster care;

Care for a family member with a serious health condition;

Care for a covered military member/military exigency; or

Take safe leave (most often used in cases of domestic violence).

Most workers in Maine are eligible for the PFML program which is funded by workers and employers contributing 1% of the workers total payroll, and this is split between the employee and employer. Maine is the 13th state in the nation to pass Paid Family and Medical Leave legislation.

Advocating for Fair and Affordable Utility Rates: AARP Maine continues to fight to keep utility rates fair and reasonable in the state with the country’s oldest population. Maine already has electricity rates that are higher than the national average, and they have increased even further in the last twelve months. Rising utility costs, coupled with higher housing, food and medicine expenses, force many vulnerable, older adults to make tough choices. However, electricity costs are a particular concern and have increased faster than the rate of inflation.

One of the most important conversations in

Augusta this session was on utility rates related to Net Energy Billing. The Net Energy Billing Program was instituted by Maine law and dictates the price paid for community solar, a price that is much higher than the actual value of the power. AARP Maine was actively involved in efforts to reform (or even end) the current version of the Net Energy Billing program for large-scale solar developers and participated in many important conversations that helped drive home the importance of reforming this flawed program. Eventually the legislature passed moderate reform (LD 1986) to the Net Energy Billing program. AARP Maine will continue to push for improvements that benefit Maine’s vulnerable consumers, particularly older adults who live on low and fixed incomes.

Fighting for Mainers’ Financial Security: AARP worked with our Maine volunteers and legislative leaders to pass LD 1082, “An Act to Advance the Maine Retirement Savings Program.” The Maine Retirement Investment Trust (MERIT) will allow every employee, regardless of the size of their employer’s company, to start saving for retirement. This bill set December 2024 as the goal for giving all Maine work-

ers access to a retirement savings plan which they can take with them from job to job. MERIT will make it easier for businesses to offer employees a way to save for retirement directly from their paycheck, helping them to secure their future financial well-being. AARP Maine is looking forward to supporting the Board and staff of MERIT in the implementation of the program in the upcoming months.

Addressing Affordable Housing: Maine is in an affordable housing crisis. The type and location of a home can affect almost every aspect of a person’s life. Knowing this, AARP Maine fought against bills that sought to limit Mainers’ access to Accessory Dwelling Units (ADUs). As small houses or apartments that exist on the same property lot as a single-family residence, ADUs play a major role in serving a national housing need. In the last legislative session, policymakers worked to pass a law that enabled residential property owners to become part of the solution to our housing crisis by allowing ADUs or duplexes on their single-family property. However, several bills sought to undo this innovative approach. AARP Maine advocated against these bills, and they were not passed.

Further, AARP Maine advocated for funding to bolster affordable housing in the state. This included advocating for the \$70 million in the state budget to build more affordable housing in Maine for workers and their families through the Rural Affordable Rental Housing Program and the Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program.

Along with the above, AARP Maine:

Defeated legislation that sought to limit Mainers’ access to voting by imposing voter ID restrictions that would be especially harmful to those residing in long-term care facilities. This ensured continued access to ballot drop boxes and improved access to voting;

Worked to pass legislation that protects homeowners from unfair agreements to exclusively list residential real estate for sale; and Fought for funding to support critical programs such as Maine Legal Services for the Elderly.

In addition to advocacy work, AARP is committed to providing valuable information and resources through a wide variety of free educational, interactive, and engaging events. Learn more about AARP in Maine at www.aarp.org/me and follow us @aarpmaine.

Venture Solar brings better solar to Maine

BIDDEFORD, ME (August 11, 2023) — Venture Solar, a leading provider of solar panel systems, is proud to announce its expansion to Vacationland.

The company has opened its newest location in Biddeford, where they are leasing a spacious 10,000-square-foot industrial facility located at 19 Pomerleau St. from MEC Realty, Inc. Here, they plan to create 60 new jobs

in the next six months and bring the best-performing solar panel system in the industry to the residents of Maine.

As a well-established solar energy company based in Connecticut, Venture Solar has been at the forefront of the renewable energy movement, with seven offices already operating on the east coast. Now fully operational in Biddeford, Venture So-

lar has expanded its reach and impact in the state of Maine, where the company saw a lack of quality solar options. As energy costs continue to rise at an alarming rate, Venture is ready to provide clean and sustainable energy solutions to the homes and businesses across the state.

“We’ve identified Maine as a market where homeowners are underserved with solar,” said

Co-Founder Alex Giles. “There’s immense demand for solar, and there aren’t enough companies to deliver a quality experience, which has led to long lead times for Maine homeowners.”

Boasting a dedicated team of over 400 professionals, the company is committed to the advancement of renewable energy technologies, offering high-efficiency solar panel systems optimized for maximum energy generation, alongside state-of-the-art in-home monitoring controls.

“We’re excited to be

here and offer customers more options,” said Alex Yackery, Co-Founder. “Beyond just being a quality solar provider, we are also providing unique financing options and offerings beyond solar, including EV charging, home batteries, and more.”

Maine has been actively promoting solar panel adoption through various incentives and initiatives, making it an attractive market for Venture Solar. Residents and businesses in the state can take advantage of generous solar tax credits, net metering policies, and other financial

incentives that significantly reduce the upfront costs of installing solar systems. Venture Solar is dedicated to assisting its customers in accessing these benefits, making the transition to clean energy even more accessible and affordable.

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



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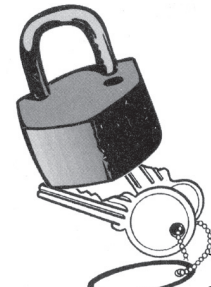
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Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

Sept 8
LEWISTON -- Opening Minds through Art (OMA) art show Friday, September 8, 2023 from 1-3 p.m. SeniorsPlus, 8 Falcon Road, Lewiston, ME. The public is invited to an art opening in the Lewiston headquarters featuring OMA artists and their art. Free. Contact SeniorsPlus at 207-795-4010, edcenter@seniorsplus.org.

Sept 8
LEWISTON -- 10:00am at the Lewiston Public Library: BABY'S 1ST MASTERPIECE -- MESS-FREE PAINTING
Help your baby create a mess-free masterpiece. Free. No registration required. Recommended for caregivers and their children ages 3 months-12 months. 513-3133; www.LPLonline.org

Sept 9, Oct 7, Nov 4, Dec 2, Jan 6, Feb 3, Mar 2, Apr 6, May 4
WESTBROOK -- Prides Corner Community Church, 235 Pride St. Bean Supper \$10 per person: Two kinds of baked beans, mac and cheese, ham, coleslaw, bread and brownie. Eat in at 5:00PM or Take Out from 4:30-5:30PM. Call 207-415-9260 to reserve your individual meal today.

Sept 13 and 2nd and 4th Wednesday each month
LEWISTON -- MAKE ART WITH ART-

VAN 2nd and 4th Wednesday each month, 3:30PM starting September 13th

ArtVan will be providing hands-on creative art program in the Children's Department of the Lewiston Public Library for children ages 5-14 (ages 5-8 must be accompanied by an adult) for self-expression, personal growth, and fun. Free. All art supplies will be provided. 513-3133; www.LPLonline.org

Sept 14
AUBURN -- Job-InME is hosting a Career Fair that is Free to job Seekers at the Hiton Garden Riverwatch on Sept 14, 2023 from 3-6 PM. Some of the best companies in Maine will be there looking to hire!

Sept 29
NEWRY -- 2023 Aging Well Living Well Expo: A daylong event featuring lectures, workshops, music, raffles, and more. Friday, September 29, 8 a.m.-3:30 p.m. at Grand Summit Hotel and Conference Center at Sunday River, Newry \$35 per person includes breakfast and lunch. Seats are limited. Register by calling 1-800-427-1241. Visit www.seniorsplus.org/AWLW for more information.

Oct 21
WESTBROOK -- Annual Holiday Craft Fair and Silent Auction

Where: Prides Corner Community Church, 235 Pride St. Westbrook, ME 04038

When: October 21, from 9AM to 3PM
Handmade crafts, baked goods and very popular silent auction items featuring sports memorabilia, game tickets, themed gift baskets, fabulous items and gift certificates! SILENT AUCTION ENDS AT 2PM.

Oct 28, 29
LEWISTON, TOPSHAM -- "Soulful Expressions" Saturday, Oct. 28, 2023, 7:00 p.m. - Franco Center, Lewiston; Sunday, Oct. 29, 2023, 2:30 p.m. - Orion Performing Arts Center, Topsham

Jan 20, 21
LEWISTON, TOPSHAM -- "Song & Dance Music from Around the World" Saturday, Jan. 20, 2024, 7:00 p.m. - Franco Center, Lewiston; Sunday, Jan. 21, 2024, 2:30 p.m. - Orion Performing Arts Center, Topsham

Mar 23, 24
LEWISTON, TOPSHAM -- "A New Artistic Mélange" - Emily Isaacson, Guest Conductor Saturday, Mar. 23, 2024, 7:00 p.m. - Franco Center, Lewiston; Sunday, Mar. 24, 2024, 2:30 p.m. - Orion Performing Arts Center, Topsham

urday, Mar. 23, 2024, 7:00 p.m. - Franco Center, Lewiston; Sunday, Mar. 24, 2024, 2:30 p.m. - Orion Performing Arts Center, Topsham

May 18, 19
LEWISTON, TOPSHAM -- "Cityscape, Seascape, Soundscape" Saturday, May 18, 2024, 7:00 p.m. - Franco Center, Lewiston ; Sunday, May 19, 2024, 2:30 p.m. - Orion Performing Arts Center, Topsham

Every 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Monday
LEWISTON -- PROGRAMS FOR HOMESCHOOL FAMILIES, held the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Monday 11:15am-12:30pm starting March 6th, 2023 at the Lewiston Public Library Children's Department

Homeschool families, are you looking for opportunities to have fun and socialize with other homeschool families? LPL will be offering activities for homeschool families in the Children's Department the first three Mondays of each month from 11:15am-12:30pm. The activities will be a Homeschool Video Game Social on March 6th, a Homeschool Lego Club and Curriculum Swap on March 13th, and a Homeschool Storytime and Craft on March 20th.

This program is free and recommended for homeschool families with children of all ages. No

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registration is required. Contact info. 513-3133, LPLKids@lewistonmaine.gov

Second and fourth Thursdays
LEWISTON -- YOUTH TRADING CARD GAME CLUB held from 4 PM to 5 PM at the Lewiston Public Library. Join the Youth Trading Card Game Club to play, learn, trade, and compete with your peers! Games include Pokémon, Magic: the Gathering, and more. All skill levels are welcome. Library staff and volunteers will be available to teach new players and coach developing ones. Free. For kids & teens ages 8-18. 513-3133; www.LPLonline.org

Wednesdays
LEWISTON -- Knitting Group, Dates: Wednesdays, Time: 4:30-7:30 p.m., Facilitator: SeniorsPlus Staff, Location: Education Center, 8 Falcon Road, Lewiston

Join our knitting group to work on your own project, learn from others, and socialize. Classes are free, unless noted. SeniorsPlus is fully accessible. Hearing assistive equipment is available upon request. For more information or to register, call us at 207-795-4010 or visit seniorsplus.org.

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GORHAM LITTLE LEAGUE

Field Funding Campaign

The Gorham Youth Baseball & Softball Association is making a large capital investment to provide updates and add fields to accommodate practice and game schedules:

- Develop 2 fields at White Rock
- Purchase seasonal fence for Shaw Park
- Repair dugouts and fencing, build storage centers
- Add infield mix and relevel current fields
- Acquire tarps and field maintenance equipment
- Add scoreboards

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Grants for Gorham educator apprenticeship program

GORHAM, ME (August 25, 2023) – Maine Labor Commissioner Laura Fortman and Education Deputy Commissioner Dan Chuhta visited Gorham in mid-August to welcome the third cohort of educator apprentices, and announce new grant funding to help

schools recruit, train, and retain educational professionals through pilot educator pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship programs. The expansion of registered apprenticeship programs is part of a larger effort by the Mills Administration to connect

employers with a skilled workforce, and workers with career pathway opportunities. The Gorham program, supported by the Maine Department of Labor and the Harold Alfond Center for the Advancement of Maine's Workforce using

Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan funds, partners closely with Southern Maine Community College and the University of Southern Maine to provide classroom training to current education technicians from multiple schools in Cumberland and York counties.

These apprentices work in the classrooms during the school day while they advance on their career pathway to become certified Education Technicians II. They then have a clear pathway to continue their education and earn further educational degrees and be-

come certified teachers. Registered apprenticeship is a proven training approach that connects workers to high-quality career pathways while earning wages, and meets employers' talent needs by developing their current and future workforce.

Garden tool maintenance workshop at Tidewater Farm



Photo courtesy University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

FALMOUTH, ME (September 1, 2023) — University of Maine Cooperative Extension will host a Garden Tool Maintenance Workshop 5–6 p.m. on Tuesday, Sept. 12,

at the UMaine Gardens at Tidewater Farm, 200 Pre-sumpscot Point Road. Proper tool care is an important step for enhancing the longevity and safety of garden tools. In this

workshop, UMaine Extension staff will demonstrate best practices for maintaining garden tools during and at the end of the growing season. Participants will gain hands-on experience with cleaning and sharpening tools of their own and learn how to store them during the winter months. Space is limited. Registration is required, and can be done online. The program fee is offered on a sliding scale of \$5–\$15. For more information or to request a reasonable accommodation, visit the Tidewater Farm Events webpage or contact Pamela Hargest, pamela.hargest@maine.edu; 207.949.4524.

Gorham absentee ballot application requests available

GORHAM, ME (September 1, 2023) -- Absentee ballot application requests are available for the November 7, 2023

Annual Municipal and State Referendum election. You can go to the Town's website to request an absentee ballot and one

will be sent to you when we receive them in October. You may also call the Town Clerk's Office to request a ballot.

TRIAD invites community to support Gorham seniors

GORHAM, ME (September 1, 2023) – Gorham, Windham, Westbrook TRIAD is a partnership between law enforcement, elder service providers, and seniors in the community. The mis-

sion of TRIAD is to work together through education, awareness and activities dedicated to the safety and security of seniors. Meetings are the 2nd Wednesday of each month at 11 a.m. at the Gorham

Police Station at 270 Main St. (Rt 25). Please come and share your ideas for programs that might interest you. The first fall meeting is Sept. 13th. FMI or to get involved, call 887-9222.

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