



# TWIN CITY TIMES

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FREE • Vol. XXV, No. 32

Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1999

Thursday, December 14, 2023 • FREE

## Patient from mass casualty event discharged from CMMC



LEWISTON, ME -- Doctors, nurses and other healthcare professionals lined the hallway leading to the exit of Central Maine Medical Center (CMMC)

today in an emotional sendoff to one of the two remaining patients from the Oct. 25 mass casualty event in Lewiston.

Following complicated surgery and weeks of recovery, the patient was cleared to return home, exactly six weeks since the incident occurred.

Central Maine Healthcare team members wished the patient well and applauded as he and his family members made their way past them. The swell of emotion was apparent, as what was intended to be a quiet moment quickly became joyful for all.

“What a sight it was to see this brave patient leaving our hospital,” said Steve Littleton, president and CEO, Central Maine Healthcare. “He has been with us for six weeks, and in that time our doctors, nurses and other team members have formed a powerful bond with him. We wish him and his wonderful family all the best as he continues his recovery at home.”

“This is a big day for not just this patient, but for all of us here at CMMC,” said John Alexander, MD, chief medical officer, Central Maine Healthcare (CMH). “The tragedy of Oct. 25 took an

emotional toll on our community, so to see another one of these patients heading home is an enormous morale boost for our team members who have cared for them and all that hold him in their thoughts.”

There is now one remaining patient at CMMC from the Oct. 25 mass casualty event. That patient is in stable condition.

On the evening of the tragedy, CMMC assembled a team of more than a dozen surgeons with expertise in orthopedics, cardiovascular, thoracic, colorectal, plastic, urologic and general surgery. They were aided by more than 100 other physicians, nurses, nurse practitioners, physician assistants and other healthcare professionals, all of whom received training in mass casualty incidents.

The doctors, nurses and team members of CMMC extend our deepest condolences to everyone affected by this tragic event. As part of our ongoing responsibility to continue serving as the regional trauma center for central Maine, we have established the CMMC Compassionate Care Fund for Trauma Response and Support. To donate, please visit [cmhc.org/cmmc/ways-to-give](http://cmhc.org/cmmc/ways-to-give)

## Just Us entertainers to perform in family Christmas show

LEWISTON, ME—The “Just Us” Entertainers are reuniting to bring a special holiday reunion concert to the Franco Center at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 17. This concert is a fundraiser for the Franco Center. Nel Meservier, spokesperson and keyboard player for the group, said, “The Just Us Entertainers will perform traditional and nontraditional Christmas songs. We like to have fun and we like the audience to have fun.”

Just Us, organized in 1999, was the first musical group to perform at the Franco Center in the summer of 2000. The Franco Center had taken over ownership of the former St. Mary’s Church building in June 2000. The Just Us group has performed hundreds of concerts in the Lewiston-Auburn, Portland and Augusta areas. Several of their concerts were fundraisers for various veterans organizations.

The group has included 20 mem-

bers, over the years, from musical families representing three generations. This reunion concert will feature Doris Surette, Melissa St. Pierre, Jackie Asselin, Nel Meservier, Rose Fredricks, Norm LaPlante, Sue Caron, Lorraine Giasson, and Debbie Robitaille.

Ticket prices include fees: Advance \$20 and Door \$25.

Doors, concessions, and cash bar open at 1 p.m. Tickets can be purchased in person between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays, at [www.franco-center.org](http://www.franco-center.org), and 207-689-2000.

Season Underwriter is Maple Way Dental Care; Media Sponsors are Sun Journal, Turner Publishing, Uncle Andy’s, Bennett Radio Group. Show sponsor is Ouellette & Associates.

The Franco Center is at 46 Cedar St., Lewiston. It is handicap accessible on the Lincoln St. Alley side of the building. Parking is in the mill lot across the street.



The Just Us Entertainers will reunite for a Christmas concert at 2 p.m. Sunday, Dec. 17 at the Franco Center. Tickets can be purchased at 207-689-2000 or [www.franco-center.org/shows](http://www.franco-center.org/shows). From left: Doris Surette, Melissa St. Pierre, Jackie Asselin, Nel Meservier, Rose Fredricks, Norm LaPlante, Sue Caron, Lorraine Giasson, Debbie Robitaille. The Franco Center is at 46 Cedar St. In Lewiston. Submitted photo.

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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## Give a gift, get a gift in December with Red Cross

**PORTLAND, ME** — As people make travel plans to celebrate with family and friends this year, the American Red Cross asks donors to set aside time to give blood or platelets for patients waiting for care over the holidays.

From a record number of people expected to travel to seasonal illnesses and the potential for hazardous winter weather, it can be difficult for the Red Cross to collect enough blood for patients during the winter months. When donors come to give the gift of a blood or platelet donation in December, the Red Cross will say thank you with several exciting opportunities:

Thanks to Prime Video and their new film Can-

dy Cane Lane, featuring an all-star cast, including Eddie Murphy and Tracee Ellis Ross, and directed by Reginald Hudlin, those who come to give blood, platelets or AB Elite plasma Dec. 1-31, 2023, will automatically be entered for a chance to win a \$1,000 Amazon.com Gift Card and a 65-inch Omni QLED Series Amazon Fire TV. Details available at [RedCrossBlood.org/Amazon](http://RedCrossBlood.org/Amazon).

Those who come to give blood, platelets or AB Elite plasma Dec. 1-17, 2023, will receive a \$10 Amazon.com Gift Card by email. Details available at [RedCrossBlood.org/Amazon](http://RedCrossBlood.org/Amazon).

Those who come to give blood, platelets or

AB Elite plasma Dec. 18, 2023-Jan. 5, 2024, will receive an exclusive Red Cross long-sleeved T-shirt, while supplies last.

Making and keeping appointments throughout the month can help safeguard the national blood supply into the new year. Schedule an appointment by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visiting [RedCrossBlood.org](http://RedCrossBlood.org) or calling 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

Upcoming blood donation opportunities Dec. 6-31

### Androscoggin

Auburn  
12/30/2023: 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., East Auburn Baptist Church, 560 Park Ave

### Cumberland

Bridgton  
12/21/2023: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., Masonic Hall, 166 Harrison Road, Route 117 Brunswick

12/22/2023: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., United Masonic Lodge #8, 65 Baribeau Dr  
12/27/2023: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Elks Lodge, 179 Park Row

Cape Elizabeth  
12/28/2023: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Saint Bartholomew Church, 8 Two Lights Rd Casco

12/27/2023: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., Casco Village Church, 941 Meadow Road Falmouth

12/28/2023: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., The Episcopal Church of St. Mary, 43 Foreside Rd Freeport

12/21/2023: 9 a.m. -

2 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn Freeport, 5 Park Street Gorham

12/14/2023: 1 p.m. - 6 p.m., Cressey Road Christian Church, 81 Cressey Road

North Yarmouth  
12/15/2023: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Wescustogo Hall and Community Center, 120 Memorial Hwy

Portland  
12/20/2023: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., Portland Elks Lodge, 1945 Congress St. Scarborough

12/29/2023: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Public Safety Building, 275 US-1

12/29/2023: 2 p.m. - 7 p.m., Public Safety Building, 275 US-1

South Portland  
12/21/2023: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Portland Sheraton

at Sable Oaks, 200 Sable Oaks Drive

12/27/2023: 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., American Legion Post #35, 413 Broadway

Standish  
12/18/2023: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Gardenside Condo Association, 12 Gardenside Drive

Westbrook  
12/22/2023: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Westbrook Community Center, 426 Bridge Street

Windham  
12/20/2023: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., North Windham Veterans Center, 35 Veterans Memorial Drive

Yarmouth  
12/29/2023: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., American Legion Post 91, 196 Main St

## Helping children with special needs enjoy the holidays

Submitted by the Episcopal Center for Children

**CHEVY CHASE, DC** - The holidays are upon us, and while there's loads of merry-making and fun to be had – the changes and sensations of the season can add stress to the lives of children with special needs and their families. The Episcopal Center for Children (ECC), a non-profit organization serving children with special needs ages 5-14 in the greater Washington, DC area, offers the following tips to help.

“Children with special needs enjoy the holidays but they are especially sensitive to the changes in routines that the holidays bring,” said Stephanie Nash, LICSW, president and CEO of ECC. “Making a plan, thinking about your child’s needs, and adjusting your expectations can help you create a positive holiday experience for the entire family.”

**Tip #1** – Make a plan for the holidays and share it with your family. Create a schedule for your family’s holiday activities and post it for your child to see. You may find it helpful to use pictures to help a young child. Talk about the schedule with your child, so he or she can anticipate what will happen.

**Tip #2** – Remind your family about holiday plans. Review the schedule with others in your home, so they understand what is going on and how they can best support your child with special needs (and everyone else in the family), so everyone can have a fun holiday.

**Tip #3** – For holiday gatherings, give your child a job and a plan. Ask your child to help collect coats, give out treats, or greet arrivals. Rehearse the plan. Give your child a schedule or plan for a festive occasion so he or she knows what to anticipate and

when things will happen.

**Tip #4** – Maintain routines as much as possible. There may be special activities for the holidays, but try to keep your child’s schedule as close to “normal” as possible. Routines are key for helping children coping with special needs, and it’s especially important for children to stick to regular medication and sleep schedules as much as possible.

**Tip #5** - If your child is sensitive to unfamiliar smells, help manage them. Cinnamon is a common holiday fragrance. One way to help a child experience this smell minimally (and gauge reaction to it), is to add cinnamon to play compound before an event. Ask guests visiting your home to not wear heavy perfumes if your child is sensitive to them and think about other smells like evergreens.

**Tip #6** – Eat healthy foods and consider how new or special foods im-

part your child. During the holidays there are all sorts of fun foods and treats to enjoy. Some children are more affected than others by dietary changes. Pay attention to your child’s moods and how diet and situational changes may be impacting him or her. If you are at an event, bring along food that is familiar to your child if you think it may be needed.

**Tip #7** – Take breaks when needed. Sometimes children need a break from the hubbub of holiday activities and busyness. Fill a bag or backpack with a few favorite toys, games or activities. If you see your child is getting stressed, get out the bag and find a quiet spot to play.

**Tip #8** – Do not allow presents to be a hindrance to enjoyment. Toy packaging today can frustrate children and parents alike. Children who have trouble with fine motor skills may find unwrapping some gifts frustrating.

You can adjust packages to their comfort level by loosening ribbons and paper, or pre-cutting fasteners. Ask others who give your child gifts to be aware of his or her needs when it comes to wrapping presents. Some children find it disorienting to unwrap things that are new and unfamiliar to them. If that is the case for your child, wrap a few favorite toys for your child to unwrap.

**Tip #9** – Get your child into the spirit of the season through gift giving. Gift giving provides an opportunity to practice social skills. Help your child make a gift for someone else, and practice how to give the gift to that person. Let your child experience the joy of giving.

**Tip #10** – Give your child the gift of your attention. Holidays can be busy for grown-ups and children. Make sure you spend a few minutes of quality time with your child every day. Give your full

attention. Practice active listening, where you listen to what your child is saying and then repeat it back to them to demonstrate that you are listening. Focus on offering connection and support.

*About the Episcopal Center for Children*

*The Episcopal Center for Children (ECC) is a nondenominational, non-profit organization that has been dedicated to serving the needs of children and their families for the past 125 years. In June 2019, the ECC suspended operation for its K-8 therapeutic school for children with emotional challenges from the greater Washington, D.C. Metropolitan area. The Board of Directors continues to be committed to its longstanding mission of serving children in determining plans for the ECC’s future. ECC currently offers an After School Enrichment Program and is working toward reopening its therapeutic school.*



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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## Androscoggin's Jillian Netherland recognized as Finest Under 40

LEWISTON, ME - Androscoggin Home Healthcare + Hospice proudly announces that Jillian Netherland, Community Engagement Officer, has been honored with the prestigious 2023 Finest Under 40 award for Mission-Based Organizations by Uplift LA.

Uplift LA's Finest Under 40 recognition program highlights individuals committed to improving our communities. Jillian's exceptional dedication to Androscoggin Home Healthcare + Hospice's mission has earned her this esteemed award, recognizing her leadership,

passion, and positive impact on the community.

A graduate of the Rochester Institute of Technology (RIT), School of Communications, Jillian holds a Master of Science Degree in Communications and Media Technologies, with a focus on marketing management and health communications. Her career has been marked by significant contributions to health philanthropy, including roles with the American Cancer Society, Planned Parenthood of Pennsylvania, and the Leukemia & Lymphoma Society. Jillian's expertise extends to grant writing and



foundation management, showcased through her role as Founder and Editor in Chief of EleGrant Writing & Nonprofit Marketing Services. In addition to her professional achievements, Jillian is a devoted mother to two young girls and a freelance contributor for regional magazines and publications, including LA Metro Magazine.

Androscoggin Home Healthcare + Hospice congratulates Jillian Netherland on this well-deserved recognition and is proud to have her as a valuable member of the team, making a positive impact on the community.

## CMMC nurse is recipient of DAISY Award



LEWISTON, ME -- Avery Gagnon, RN, who works in the Cardiopulmonary Department at Central Maine Medical Center (CMMC), has received the DAISY award.

The DAISY award is an international recognition program that rewards and celebrates the extraordinary, compassionate, skillful care nurses give every day.

The DAISY Award honorees personify Central Maine Healthcare's (CMH) remarkable patient experience.

At CMH, an extraordi-

nary nurse:

Provides compassionate, high-quality nursing care.

Fosters a patient and family-centered experience.

Creates a culture that empowers and supports all team members.

Displays professional excellence and is a role model for the nursing profession.

Is passionate about the work they do for the community they serve.

Avery was nominated by Nicole Boutaugh, MD, who said, "Avery has

demonstrated, on multiple occasions, an innate ability to establish phenomenal patient rapport. Her skill, kindness, knowledge and sincere appreciation for each patient as an individual are inherent in each interaction I have observed. This fosters an environment of transparent communication that builds trust."

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

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## Take precautions against tick bites this winter

AUGUSTA, ME - The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) encourages Maine residents and visitors to remain vigilant against tick bites this winter, as the number of Lyme disease cases continues to rise and ticks remain

active above freezing temperatures.

The Maine CDC has reported a record number of Lyme disease cases so far in 2023, with 2,706 cases as of December 7, 2023. The Maine CDC has also reported a record five cases of Powassan in 2023.

As a reminder, deer ticks can be active any time the temperature is above freezing, so the risk of tick bites stretches through the winter. To help limit exposure to ticks and tick bites,

See Tick, page 14

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Gorham Weekly • 28 State Street • Gorham, ME 04038

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# Maine State Chamber celebrates leadership at annual dinner

**PORTLAND, ME** - On Tuesday, November 28, 2023, the Maine State Chamber of Commerce hosted its annual dinner and awards ceremony at the Holiday Inn By the Bay in Portland. The Maine State Chamber paid tribute posthumously to Carl, Kenneth, Ival "Bud," and Alton "Chuck" Cianchette, founders of the construction and construction services company Cianbro, for their business leadership and contributions to Maine's economy, their dedication to Maine and

the betterment of Maine people, and their commitment to public service and their communities.

The Maine State Chamber also presented the "Alton 'Chuck' Cianchette Business Hall of Fame" award to Maine Celtics President Dajuan Eubanks for his business and community leadership, and the "Dana F. Connors Chamber Professional of the Year" award to Robin Mullins for her leadership as president of the Sebago Lakes Region Chamber of Commerce.

"The Maine State Chamber of Commerce was honored to celebrate such extraordinary Maine leaders at this year's annual dinner meeting," said Maine State Chamber President and CEO Patrick Woodcock. "Dajuan Eubanks, Robin Mullins, and the lives and legacies of the late Cianchette brothers - Ken, Bud, Chuck, and Carl - are role models for all of us, especially when it comes to integrating public service and a commitment to Maine and Maine communities with a

strong work ethic, respect for others, and business leadership - an ethos that is shared by businesses and individuals across our state."

Over 450 people attended the event, including state legislators, government leaders, and more than 25 members of the Cianchette family. U.S. Senators Susan Collins and Angus King and Governor Janet Mills shared video messages paying tribute to the evening's honorees.

The Cianchette family presented a video of the

four founding brothers of Cianbro, "In Their Words." The Maine State Chamber also debuted the latest edition of OneVoice Maine magazine, which pays tribute to the lives and legacies of the Cianchette brothers.

In honor of those impacted by the October 25 mass shooting in Lewiston, Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Shanna Cox led a moment of silence and announced the establishment of the LA Metro Chamber's Small Business Relief Fund. The

fund is a collaboration with BlueTriton Brands, owner of the Poland Spring brand, which has committed \$500,000 to match corporate and community donations to help address the urgent need for immediate support for area businesses experiencing unprecedented losses in the wake of the mass shooting in Lewiston in October.

The Maine State Chamber also hosted a silent auction at the event to benefit the LA Metro Chamber's Small Business Relief Fund.

# Maine Authors for Lewiston announces more events

**OCEAN PARK, ME** -- Maine Authors for Lewiston, a group of more than 80 Maine authors, have joined together to support the victims of the recent tragedy in Lewiston. The group is holding a series of 10 book sales and signings around the state, all free and open to the public, so that people can purchase books and meet the authors. All of the participating authors have agreed to donate all, or most, of their proceeds from these events to help the healing and recovery efforts in Lewiston. All are volunteering because they care.

Forty-five Maine authors are scheduled to appear over the three

events. There will be fiction writers, children's book authors, non-fiction writers, and poets among the participants. This is a wonderful opportunity for Maine book-lovers to support local authors, but, most importantly, to help our fellow Mainers as they begin to heal and recover.

Events are scheduled this week as follows:

Camden Public Library - Thursday, December 14, 2023, 6:00 p.m. - 7:30 p.m.

Lewiston Public Library - Saturday, December 16, 2023, 9:30 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.

The libraries have generously donated space to the cause as they, too,

support those impacted by the senseless tragedy. The Maine writing community is a small, but vibrant, part of Maine culture. Some writers have been personally impacted by the events in Lewiston, others simply care deeply about Maine and their fellow Mainers. Most do much of their writing in and about Maine. All want to help.

Maine Authors for Lewiston was conceived and is being organized by David Florig, a member of the Maine Writers and Publishers Alliance, author of The Stones of Ailsa Craig, and the past-president of the Pine Tree Curling Club in Portland.

## Maine Authors for Lewiston

@ Lewiston Public Library

200 Lisbon St.

on Saturday, December 16th

9:30am-12:30pm

with:

Peggy DeBlois

Mike Bove Robert Klose

Katie Coppens

Gerry Boyle Robert Spencer

Annaliese Jakimides

Tom Wells Diane Williams

Lisa Jahn-Clough

Robin Clifford Wood

Jason Trask Stephanie Cotsirilos

M. Daniel Smith

David Florig Ed Rice

Irene Drago Rosa Lane

Sarah Carlson

Maureen Milliken

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Mark Griffin Douglas Rooks

...and others!

A portion of every sale will go to charities benefiting the victims and their families of the Lewiston shooting. Please help us help them!

# Safety steps to avoid a home fire over the holidays

**PORTLAND, ME** -- The holidays are a wonderful time to get everyone together. Unfortunately, they can also mean a greater risk of a fire in someone's home. This holiday season, the American Red

Cross of Northern New England encourages everyone to follow simple steps to prevent home fires from holiday decorations.

"December is the peak time for home fires involving candles and

holiday decorations," said Red Cross Regional Disaster Officer John Montes. "Help protect your family by using battery-operated candles and practicing your two-minute escape plan with everyone in your household."

**HOLIDAY DECORATING SAFETY TIPS** Follow these safety tips and visit [redcross.org/fire](http://redcross.org/fire) for more information. You can also download the free Red Cross Emergency app by searching "American Red Cross" in app stores.

If you must use candles, keep them away from anything that could burn, and place them out of reach of pets and children. Never leave burning candles unattended.

Check all holiday light cords to ensure they aren't frayed or broken. Don't string too many strands of lights together — no more than three per extension cord.

Ensure outside deco-  
*See Safety, next page*

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# Seniors Not Acting Their Age

## A Unique Hike over Morse Mountain to Seawall Beach



Hikers approach Sprague River Salt Marsh



An overlook near the summit of Morse Mountain offers an expansive view of Sprague River Salt Marsh



Seawall Beach is a magical place

A hike over Morse Mountain to Seawall Beach in Phippsburg is one of the most unique treks in mid-coast Maine. If the outing is extended with a walk on the beach, the journey approximates five miles and travels through multiple ecosystems.

The area has an interesting history. Daniel Morse settled there in the late 1700s. The Morse family farmed and logged Morse Mountain for about a century. Subsequently, attempts were made to mine and develop the property but they failed. In 1976, the St. John family obtained the land with the intent of conserving it. More recently, approximately 600 acres was acquired by Bates-Morse Mountain Conservation Area. Seawall Beach and the sand dunes are owned by Small Point Association.

Bates College manages the conservation area and maintains a public parking lot on Morse Mountain Road a short distance from Route 216. Public access is limited and visitors should familiarize themselves with the rules. That information is available online and at a kiosk in the parking area. Only foot traffic is permitted and pets are prohibited.

Longtime friends, Diane and John Stokinger, joined my wife, Nancy, and me for a hike to the beach on a glorious sunny warm late-October day. While Nancy and I are veterans of several Morse Mountain adventures, it was a new and thoroughly enjoyable experience for our companions.

We began our excursion walking down the gated Morse Mountain Road in a mixed conifer and hardwood forest. Shortly after passing the gate, we descended to a causeway that crosses scenic Sprague River Salt Marsh, an exceptional location for bird watching. Hikers

should check the predicted tides in advance of planning their Morse Mountain escapade as high tides in the marsh sometimes flood the causeway. We confirmed high tide had occurred a few hours prior to beginning the hike. Nancy and our late friend, Audrey Ingersoll, suffered through an unpleasant learning experience with a high tide at the causeway a couple of decades ago. When they returned from the beach shortly before dark, the road was impassable due to flooding. Nancy was unaware of the potential problem and Audrey forgot to check the tides. They were forced to complete a strenuous bushwhack around the marsh in order to escape before dark.

The road steepens after leaving the marsh and we began our ascent of Morse Mountain. This is not a difficult climb as the mountaintop is only 180 feet above sea level.

Where the road temporarily levels off, we passed some distinctive granite rock formations. Fragile lichens and mosses inhabit the rocks and climbing is prohibited. Following some additional elevation gain, we arrived at a fork in the road. A left turn leads to the beach while going right continues to the summit. We proceeded uphill past private property on the left to the top. A narrow path connects with a precipitous overlook that affords an expansive view of Sprague River Salt Marsh. We lingered along the edge of the escarpment to embrace the spectacular panoramic vista.

Returning to the junction, we began a gradual descent to the beach. This sector of the trail travels through a pitch pine forest. Although past peak, the foliage was still colorful. The trail briefly re-connects with the marsh

prior to entering forested dunes. A brochure available at the parking area kiosk indicates the dune woodland is the largest area of stable parabolic dunes in Maine.

Shortly after, we arrived at Seawall Beach. A cluster of signs provide a wealth of information about the beach and its inhabitants. No camping is allowed.

We turned left and trudged on hard-packed sand towards Morse River Salt Marsh. The river separates Seawall Beach from Morse Point and Popham Beach. This is a magical location. A collection of tiny rockbound islands are just offshore. We could see lofty Sequin Island in the distance; the lighthouse visible atop the high island. Massive boulders line the shoreline. We were enveloped in rugged beauty.

Retracing our steps to the trailhead, prominent Cape Small could be seen

beyond the western end of the beach. Sprague River Salt Marsh begins meandering inland immediately east of the headland.

We met several trekkers during our return to the parking area. Not surprising as this is an exceptional day hike.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* narrates numerous hiking exploits around the state.

*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](http://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](http://www.ronchase-outdoors.com) or he can be reached at [ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net](mailto:ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net)*

### Safety

*Continued from previous page* rations are for outdoor use and fasten lights securely to your home or trees. If using hooks or nails outside, make sure they are insulated to avoid an electrocution or fire hazard.

If buying an artificial tree, look for a fire-resistant label. When putting it

up, keep it away from fireplaces, radiators and other sources of heat. Never use electric lights on metallic trees.

If getting a live tree, make sure it's fresh and keep it watered. To test if the tree is fresh, bend the needles up and down to make sure no needles fall off.

Don't light the fireplace if hanging stockings or other decorations on the mantel.

During 2023, the Red Cross has responded to 220 home fires across Maine and assisted 791 Mainers in the aftermath of a fire, providing recovery support including financial assistance, comfort kits,

blankets as well as disaster-related health, mental health and spiritual care services. The Red Cross has also installed 944 free smoke alarms in Maine this year.

Smoke alarms help save lives. Install smoke alarms on every level of the home and outside each sleeping area. Test them

once a month and replace the batteries at least once a year. If you cannot afford to purchase smoke alarms or are physically unable to install one, the Red Cross may be able to help. Request a smoke alarm here.

**HOME FIRE CAMPAIGN SAVE LIVES** Since October 2014, the Red Cross Home Fire Cam-

*aign, working with community partners, has saved at least 1,994 lives by educating families about fire safety, helping them create escape plans and installing free smoke alarms in high-risk areas across the country. To learn more about the campaign and how you can get involved, visit [redcross.org/homefires](http://redcross.org/homefires).*

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# Arts & Entertainment

## Blue Christmas Ceremony shines a light on Winter Solstice

**OAKLAND, ME** -- The ShineOnCass Foundation will host its 3rd Annual Blue Christmas Ceremony for grieving families and friends, and those who support them, Thursday, Dec. 21, on the Winter Solstice—the longest and darkest night of the year. The ceremony begins at 6 pm at the Oakland Gazebo at Oakland Waterfront, Willey Point Road in Oakland. Light the Night Blue Christmas will feature music, speakers, and a reading of submitted names of loved ones' remembered with the lighting of memorial blue candles.

Blue Christmas ceremonies are held around the world in acknowledgement that the holiday season can be difficult for many who are grieving. "The holiday season is a time when celebrations of peace and joy contrast sharply with sadness and loneliness that come with loss," said Monica Charette, executive director of the ShineOnCass Foundation. "Our

hope is to provide a place where people feel supported, loved, and less alone in their grief."

In addition to the blue light ceremony, the evening will also feature opening music by Will McPherson, local singers, and a special performance by award-winning recording artist Joan Kennedy, and her daughter Grace, who will sing "Candle in the Window."

Charette said the idea to host a community Blue Christmas ceremony came from a gathering organized 10 years ago by her friends after the passing of her 17-year-old daughter Cassidy Charette. Cassidy, for whom the non-profit ShineOnCass Foundation was created, was a Messalonskee High School student, athlete, youth mentor, and longtime community volunteer. She died in a hayride accident on Oct. 11, 2014.

"It was incredibly meaningful how people came together to support our family at this service,

acknowledge our grief, and stand beside us during a very dark and lonely time," Charette said. "We want to share that experience with others in our community, say their loved ones' names with them, and help people feel less alone during this especially challenging time."

The ceremony will also remember the 18 lives lost from the Lewiston tragedy. Anyone can participate by sharing their loved one's name being remembered, and receive a blue candle to light at the ceremony. People are also welcome to attend in silent remembrance and offer support to others. To complete the online form, visit the Foundation's website shineoncass.org. ShineOnCass will be livestreamed on the ShineOnCass Facebook page. In case of inclement weather, Blue Christmas will be held one day later, on Dec. 22. For more information, visit shineoncass.org or email shineoncass@gmail.com.

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## West Auburn Congregational Church

811 West Auburn Road, Auburn

### Christmas Schedule:

December 17th The Annual Christmas Pageant & Festival of 9 Lessons & Carols at 4 pm with a "Live Nativity" in the church, special musical presentations with soloist Kristen Short and the WACC Choir, lighting of the candles and a reception with cookies & hot chocolate in the vestry following the service!

December 24th The Christmas Eve Vesper Service at 4pm with music from Scott Williams & Roberta Hill & the WACC Choir with a lighting of the candles.

Advent Sunday morning services December 3, 10, 17 & 24 at 9am with carols, musical anthems with the WACC Choir, Jewell Clark and organist & pianist Ryan Slocum, plus seasonal remarks, and messages from Rev. John Williams.



**3rd Annual**  
*Light the Night*  
**Blue Christmas Ceremony**

The Christmas season is hard for those whose hearts are grieving. Join us as we support one another in acknowledging loss, remembering loved ones, and

*Shine a Light on Winter Solstice.*

**Thursday, December 21, 2023**

**6 pm at the Oakland Gazebo**  
**Oakland Waterfront Park, Willey Point Road, Oakland, Maine**

**Sharing music, blue lights, kindness, and HOPE!**

Include the name of your loved one at our remembrance by visiting "Blue Christmas Ceremony" at ShineOnCass.org

*Dress warmly!*  
In case of inclement weather, we will gather December 22.

**ShineOnCass**

## Honor Flight Maine Telethon raises \$200k for veterans



**PORTLAND/BANGOR, ME** – On November 16, NEWS CENTER Maine held its sixth statewide Honor Flight Maine Telethon to raise money in support of Maine's veterans. As of this writing, NEWS CENTER Maine's 2023 Honor Flight Maine Telethon has accepted donations from individual donors and organizations totaling \$221,704. That number represents the most donations received in the six-year history of Honor Flight Maine Telethons.

Volunteers with Honor Flight Maine and NEWS CENTER Maine took calls via a phone bank throughout the state. The money donated will help transport at least 221 veterans from Maine to Washington, D.C. where the vets will tour and reflect on the war memorials built in their honor. Top priority is given to senior veterans, World War II veterans and veterans of all wars who are terminally ill.

Carl Douglas, who served 28 years in the Army, did two tours in

Vietnam, and is a Purple Heart recipient recounted his Honor Flight Maine Trip. "It was wonderful. Everybody supported us and treated us royal."

In the telethon's six years, NEWS CENTER Maine is proud to have helped raise more than one million dollars for Honor Flight Maine to help send 1,405 veterans to Washington D.C. The opportunity to donate to Maine's Veterans is still open. Visit Honor Flight Maine to donate to the Maine cause or visit Honor Flight Network to find and donate to an Honor Flight in another state.

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



# Rumford Falls Eagles Club Gives Generous Gift to CMHVI

**RUMFORD, ME--** Central Maine Healthcare is the recipient of a generous donation, courtesy of the Rumford Falls Eagle Club.

Dorie Oakes and Harry Hamner, both members of the Eagles Club, recently organized a billiards tournament to raise one thousand dollars for the Central Maine Heart and Vascular Institute (CMHVI).

Hamner lost a twin brother to heart-related

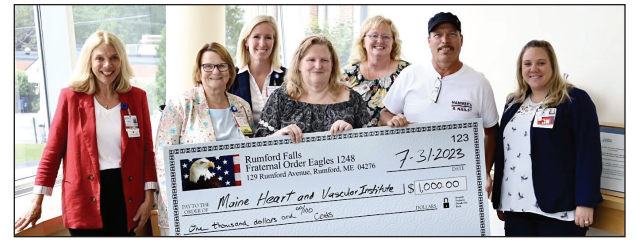
issues in 2008. Hamner, himself, was treated at CMHVI after discovering he had the same cardiovascular issues as his late brother.

CMHVI brings skilled medical specialists and innovative treatments to the people of central Maine and beyond, including rural areas such as the River Valley region. It provides a wide array of services ranging from conservative medical care and

rehabilitation to surgery for common, and sometimes complex, heart and vascular conditions. CMHVI focuses heavily on educating local communities and preventing disease before it develops.

Dorie Oakes and the Eagles Club have a long history of raising money for Rumford Hospital and the entire Central Maine Healthcare (CMH) system, particularly for the Bennett Breast Care Center.

“We are all deeply touched by this act of generosity,” said Stephany Jacques, interim president of Rumford Hospital. “This is another example of the close connection members of this community feel to Central Maine Healthcare. Time and time again, the Rumford Falls Eagles Club has taken the initiative to raise funds for our important programs and we could not be more grateful for their support.”



**Lisa LaVallee, Central Maine Healthcare grateful patient director, Jenifer Madore, interim VP of Nursing and Patient Services, Rumford Hospital, Stephany Jacques, interim president, Rumford Hospital, Dorie Oakes, Fraternal Order of Eagles #1248, Lisa Bouley, practice Manager, CMHVI, Harry Hamner, Fraternal Order of Eagles, Rumford Falls #1248, Kaitlyn Smith, director of cardiovascular and critical care services**

# Sen. Collins advocates for homeless children

**WASHINGTON, D.C. –** The U.S. Senate unanimously passed U.S. Senators Susan Collins (R-ME) and Joe Manchin’s (D-WV) bipartisan resolution designating November 2023 as National Homeless Children and Youth Awareness Month. In the United States, more than 1,200,000 students experienced homelessness during the 2021-2022 school year, including an estimated 4,400 in Maine and 13,530 in West Virginia. Companion legislation was introduced in the House by U.S. Representatives Suzanne Bonamici (D-OR) and Don Bacon (R-NE).

“Ensuring every child has a safe and secure home is a shared commit-

ment that transcends party lines,” said Senator Collins. “This bipartisan resolution helps to increase awareness of the plight of homeless children and youth, reaffirms our commitment to provide all children with the same opportunity to succeed, and recognizes the hard work being done by businesses, organizations, schools, and volunteers to prevent youth homelessness.”

“Every child deserves a roof over their head and a warm, safe place to sleep at night, but that is unfortunately not the case for more than 13,530 youth and children in West Virginia and more than 1,200,000 nationwide. Ending homelessness among children

and youth continues to be one of my top priorities, and we must work together to find commonsense solutions to this heartbreaking issue. I’m proud to lead my bipartisan colleagues in designating November 2023 as National Homeless Children and Youth Awareness Month, and I will continue fighting to end homelessness among children and youth in the Mountain State,” said Senator Manchin.

“Homelessness among children and youth is a growing crisis with a potentially devastating impact on the health, development, and future of babies, school-age children, and young adults. Yet it remains hidden from

public sight. Awareness is the first step toward action. SchoolHouse Connection applauds this bipartisan, bicameral resolution and urges all sectors of society to take steps to ensure that today’s homeless children and youth do not become tomorrow’s homeless adults,” said Barbara Duffield, Executive Director, SchoolHouse Connection.

“At the National Network for Youth, we believe that all youth in America should have access to safe housing and the ability to achieve their dreams and aspirations. We’re grateful to the champions of this bipartisan, bicameral resolution and urge communities to put systems and resources in place to prevent

homelessness and address the child, youth, and family homelessness crisis,” said Darla Bardine, Executive Director, National Network for Youth.

The resolution is endorsed by the following organizations: SchoolHouse Connection, National Network 4 Youth, First Focus Campaign for Children, National Coalition for the Homeless, Family Promise, CSH (Corporation for Supportive Housing), American Psychological Association Services, National Center for Housing & Child Welfare, National Health Care for the Homeless Council, Council of Administrators of Special Education, Western Regional Advocacy Project,

EDGE Consulting Partners, ZERO TO THREE, Covenant House International, Association of Latino Administrators and Superintendents, National Association of Elementary School Principals, National Head Start Association, Chiefs for Change and National Association of Secondary School Principals.

Senators Collins and Manchin were joined by Senators Mazie Hirono (D-HI), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Maria Cantwell (D-WA), Jack Reed (D-RI), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Chris Van Hollen (D-MD), Lisa Murkowski (R-AK), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Chris Coons (D-DE), Amy Klobuchar (D-MN) and Jon Ossoff (D-GA).



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# Celebrate with Sabattus Rec Running Club's Jingle Jog



**SABATTUS, ME** -- The Sabattus Rec Running Club will hold its annual Jingle Jog on Saturday, Dec. 16. The jog/walk event spreads cheer through the Sabattus Village area, as participants wear festive clothing,

lights, and maybe some bells on local streets.

The event starts at 10 a.m. at the Sabattus Mini Mall on Sabattus Rd. Joggers and walkers will go out for 30-45 minutes, and then return for some light refresh-

ments and see if Santa stopped by while they were out.

The Jingle Jog is all free, and the public is invited to dress up and attend for a fun time.

FMI, email [running@sabattusrec.com](mailto:running@sabattusrec.com)

# More laughter this week with Great Falls Comedy Club

**AUBURN, ME** -- Make laughter a priority this week at Great Falls Comedy Club on December 15 and 16, with the very funny, local favorite James Theberge, and Capital City Improv.

Theberge, who has entertained audiences all over Maine with his hit web series Welcome to Maine, will be joined by up and coming comic Alex Temple for a night of can't miss standup on



Friday.

Then, on Saturday, the always popular Capital City Improv returns to the stage to use your suggestions to create laughter live and on the spot.

Both shows are sure to be a laugh out loud experience.

Tickets can be found at <https://www.greatfallscomedyclub.com> or purchased at the show. Great Falls Comedy Club is located inside Craft Brew Underground at 34 Court Street, Auburn, under the red awning.

For more information contact the club at [info@greatfallscomedyclub.com](mailto:info@greatfallscomedyclub.com) or by phone at 207-200-5366.



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# December exhibit at WHA art gallery at CMMC

**LEWISTON, ME** -- The Woman's Hospital Association (WHA) Rotating Art Gallery at Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston is proud to display the photographs of Nancy Preble and the paintings of Sarah Martin for the month of December.

A lifelong resident

of the Twin Cities, Preble has been exhibited at numerous venues in Maine including the University of Southern Maine, L/A College area artist show in 2011, 2013 and 2015, the Fryeburg Fair from 2003-2016, the L/A Art Walk as well as the Sportsmen of Maine show from 2011-2016. She has several

awards for her work including a 2nd place award for her image "Winter Wonderland" in 2002 on the [maine.gov](http://maine.gov) website.

Martin is a self-taught artist who enjoys working with acrylics. It started as a hobby but eventually turned into a form of therapy after an unexpected MS diagnosis.



"The Journey" by Sarah Martin (digital image by Martin)



"Burrowing Owl" -- photograph by Nancy Preble

She explains she is "happiest sitting in front of my canvas painting whimsical sceneries and seascapes helping me to cope with the ups and downs of this illness".

The works on display may be purchased through the WHA Gift Shop located adjacent to the main lobby at Central Maine Medical Center. A percentage of sale proceeds benefits patients of CMMC.



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# LYAC announces The Dream Project

**LEWISTON, ME** -- The Lewiston Youth Advisory Council (LYAC) announced today their latest project entitled, "The Dream Project . . . You Can Reach Your Dreams Not Only in Your Sleep." It is a multi-faceted project to encourage local youth to develop goals, aspirations, and dreams for their future.

LYAC, now in its 22nd year, was established by the Lewiston City Council in 2001 to provide a means for youth to learn about municipal government, become engaged in their community, undertake projects to enhance the City of Lewiston, and to represent Lewiston youth.

The Dream Project was born after members expressed concern that some community youth face challenges that make the future seem bleak. "We want youth to know they

are not alone in this world. We also want them to understand that they have value," said Zara Bimbi, LYAC Secretary.

To start their efforts, LYAC members have discussed their personal definitions of the word success, with LYAC Treasurer Fadumo Ahmed describing it as, "Success for me means learning from my mistakes, good and bad experiences, and being able to help others because of what I have experienced. It also means being happy and putting a smile on other people's faces because you never know what someone else is going through, and a small action like a smile could mean a lot to someone."

LYAC will shortly begin sharing their definitions of success on Lewiston's social media, Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter.

In addition, to hear



(left – right): Chair Ava Golder, Vice Chair Saida Abdisamed, Treasurer Fadumo Ahmed, and member Tartila Naser work on an interactive exercise for an upcoming Dream Project youth forum

directly from other Lewiston youth, LYAC has composed a survey for Lewiston middle and high school students asking questions such as, What do you see your life looking like in ten years; what do you think you need to succeed; do you have struggles that cause anxiety about your

future; do you know what future career options are available to you; do you feel valued in school; what are you really interested in; do you have a support system?

Lewiston School Superintendent Jake Langlais approved in-school distribution of the survey, and so

far, 55 responses have been received by LYAC. According to LYAC, answers to the survey are helpful as they develop content for an upcoming Dream Project youth forum. Concerns expressed in the surveys thus far include student debt and self-doubt about being able to accomplish what they want to do. Other themes that stand out in the survey will be shared at the upcoming Dream Project youth forum.

The forum (date TBD) will focus on various careers and interactive ways to engage youth in thinking about their future, as well as helpful resources like College Board online.

"It's OK to not immediately know what you want for your future, but it's important that you end up loving what you do," said Saida Abdisamed, LYAC Vice-Chair.

Another aspect of

LYAC's outreach is The Dream Project pin, designed by Abdisamed, that Lewiston school employees may volunteer to wear. So far, a total of 89 Lewiston school employees have expressed their desire to wear The Dream Project pin.

If a student sees someone wearing a pin, the student will know that person, while on school grounds, is available to discuss dreams for the future, post-secondary goals, and resources they might not be aware of.

"We're excited about school employees wearing The Dream Project pin, as thinking about the future and what to do after high school can seem very overwhelming," said Corinne Rosario, LYAC member.

To learn more about LYAC, interested individuals may visit [www.lewistonmaine.gov/lyac](http://www.lewistonmaine.gov/lyac)

## Cast announced for CLT's *And Then There Were None*



Director Danny Gay has announced the cast for the upcoming Community Little Theatre (CLT) production of the murder mystery *And Then There Were None*.

In this classic Agatha Christie whodunit, ten strangers are summoned to a remote island. All that the guests have in common is a wicked past they're unwilling to reveal and a secret that will seal

their fate. For each has been marked for murder. Christie herself described this play as her best piece of craftsmanship.

Cast members standing from left are Harry Gray, Tony Roy, Roger Philippon, Jacob Osborne, and Ray Fletcher. Sitting are Elise Christie, Archer Slater, Andrea Myles-Hunkin, and Sarah Duncan. Not pictured is Phil Vampatella.

Performances will be held at 7:30 p.m. on January 19, 20, 25, and 26, and at 2:00 p.m. on January 21, 27, and 28. Tickets and subscriptions are available online at [www.laclt.com/box-office](http://www.laclt.com/box-office) or by calling 783-0958. Ticket prices (including all fees) are \$25.00 for adults, \$22.00 for seniors and students, and \$17.00 for children ages 13 and under.

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# FAME celebrates 40 years of Maine success stories



**Business at Work for Maine Award presentation to Springworks Farms employees: Trevor Kenkel, Founder and President (second from left); Emily Donaldson, Director of Business Development; Chris Curran; Jeff Daddio, CFO; and James Carew. FAME CEO Carlos Mello is at center and FAME Commercial Loan Officer Jay Beck is at far left. Photo by Sharyn Peavey Photography**

**AUGUSTA, ME** — The Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) celebrated forty years of business and education success stories and partnerships at its annual meeting and awards event, Showcase Maine, on Thursday, November 16, 2023, at South Portland's Portland Sheraton at Sable Oaks.

Showcase Maine is FAME's annual celebration of its successful partnerships with Maine's business, lending, governmental, and higher education communities. The event featured a reception, including a showcase of exhibits by Maine businesses and educational organizations that partner with FAME. Entertainment was provided by comedian Karen Morgan. Madeline Emery, a sophomore at Kennebec High School who studies voice at River Tree Arts, performed the national anthem, as well.

"It is through our partners in Maine's business, lending, governmental, and higher education communities that we are able to help Maine people achieve their business and education goals," said FAME CEO Carlos Mello. "None of us alone has the breadth, scale, scope, resources, and capabilities to do it alone, but together, as a public-private ecosystem, for the betterment of the businesses and people of Maine, there is nothing

we cannot accomplish. The past forty years have been bright, but they pale to what the next forty years hold in store for Maine."

During its first forty years, FAME supported with its partners nearly 10,000 Maine companies with approximately \$2.5 billion in financing, helping to create and retain over 200,000 Maine jobs. In fiscal year 2023 alone, this Maine ecosystem of lenders and economic development organizations supported a quarter of a billion dollars in financing for Maine's businesses. Since 1990, when it assumed administration of the state's higher education grant, loan, and loan repayment programs, FAME, along with its partner higher education and workforce development organizations, has awarded over \$440 million in grants and loans to over 270,000 Maine students.

This year's award recipients included:

**Business at Work for Maine Award - Springworks Farm Maine:** Springworks Farm was honored for their success at starting and expanding a unique aquaponics organic lettuce farm to produce a sustainable year-round food source thereby creating jobs and benefitting Maine's economy. The farm grows over two million heads of lettuce and produces approximately



**Education at Work for Maine Award presentation to various Maine School Counselors. FAME CEO Carlos Mello is at far left and FAME College Access and Outreach Manager Mila Tappan is at far right. School counselors pictured are: Leslie Smith (Hermon High School); Kaly Black (Mid-Maine Technical Center); Beth Doane (Yarmouth High School); Kris Croteau (Mid-Maine Technical Center); Jill Piker (Lisbon High School); Jessica Green (Southern Aroostook Community High School); Scott Harris (Scarborough Public Schools); Laura Richardson (Cony High School); Beth Russell (Cony Middle and High Schools); Rebecca Edelman (Husson University); and Maggie Davis (Gould Academy). Photo by Sharyn Peavey Photography**

150,000 pounds of tilapia fish annually. Trevor Kenkel, a Bowdoin College alumnus, started the company in 2014 at age nineteen when he bought a 168-acre farm in Lisbon. By 2021, the company had nearly forty employees and opened its third greenhouse. FAME commercial loan insurance in partnership with a loan by Farm Credit East helped to finance the construction of an additional greenhouse at its farm and to provide working capital. The company also will benefit from a Thrive Maine forgivable loan.

**Education at Work for Maine Award - Maine School Counselors:** FAME recognized all of Maine's school counselors for their unwavering and extraordinary support of Maine students throughout the COVID-19 pandemic and beyond. FAME's college access and financial education outreach team has witnessed firsthand the positive and lasting impact Maine school counselors have on their students. They help students build their confidence, provide a safe space where they can share their dreams and fears, and offer thoughtful and caring guidance to their students as they

navigate their educational and personal journeys. The award was presented to representatives of the Maine Counseling Association and the Maine School Counselor Association.

**Lender at Work for Maine Award (over \$1.5 billion in assets)- Camden National Bank:** This was the bank's thirteenth time as an awardee. Over the past year, Camden National Bank partnered with FAME on 59 loans totaling approx. \$23 million. This helped to create 100 Maine jobs and retain an additional 386 jobs. One notable transaction on which FAME partnered with Camden concerned Magic Falls Adventures, LLC, a rafting company located in West Forks. The financing helped to create 1 job and retain 20 jobs. The company, now celebrating its thirty-fifth year of operation, specializes in whitewater rafting adventures, including camping and lodging. In addition to being a top partner in stimulating economic development in Maine, Camden National Bank is actively committed to the communities in which it operates. Founded in 1875, the bank encourages employee volunteerism and makes donations to local nonprofits.

**Lender at Work for Maine Award (up to \$1.5 billion in assets) - Evergreen Credit Union:** Evergreen Credit Union was recognized for the second year in a row in the category for lenders with less than \$1.5 billion in assets.



**Lender at Work for Maine award #3 (Most Enhanced Partnership) presentation by FAME CEO Carlos Mello (right) and FAME Director of Business Jennifer Cummings (left) to First National Bank's Executive Vice President, Chief Lending Officer Jon Nickelson. Photo by Sharyn Peavey Photography**

Over the past year, FAME partnered with Evergreen Credit Union on 24 loans totaling approx. \$8.5 million. This helped to create 43 Maine jobs and retain an additional 205 jobs. One company benefitting from FAME's partnership with Evergreen Credit Union is MGS Services, LLC, d/b/a Maine GuardSafe, located in Portland and with clients in Maine and New Hampshire. The company offers a wide variety of professional security solutions from event security, corporate security and even construction site security. They also offer patrol services and pride themselves on customizing safety and security needs for their clients. Six jobs were created and 32 were retained as a result of this financing. Evergreen is one of the largest credit unions in Maine, with \$508 million in assets as of March 2023. Evergreen proudly serves individuals, families, and local businesses throughout southern Maine. They strive to benefit their neighbors and organizations by donating time and resources, as well.

**Lender at Work for Maine Award (most enhanced partnership) - First National Bank:** First National Bank was honored this year for having greatly increased its partnership with FAME on various financing projects. This past year, FAME partnered with the bank on 15 loans to Maine companies totaling approximately \$9.3 million. This helped to create 54 Maine jobs and retain an additional 115 jobs. First National Bank partnered with FAME to provide a loan to Boothbay Sea and Science Center. The company provides a community sea and science education center that offers equal and affordable access to the waterfront for youth through sailing, boating, and marine science experiential learning

programs, and activities. Boothbay Sea and Science Center aims to inspire individuals to strengthen themselves and their community through the enjoyment of the sea. First National Bank invites customers to become part of their Dream First Community. Members who open a Spark, #E-Chieve, or Inspire checking account are automatically enrolled in the Bank Local, Buy Local, Give Local Dream First Community program. By doing so, members can support local businesses while helping tackle food insecurity here in Maine. Also, when members shop locally with their First National Bank VISA® Debit Card, FNB donates money to local food banks.

Prior to the event, the FAME board of directors held its monthly meeting. The current slate of officers was re-elected to one-year terms. Officers elected for additional one-year terms include: Richard Traf-ton, Esq. (Chair); Dustin Brooks (Vice Chair); and Rebecca Asen (Treasurer).

FAME is a quasi-independent state agency celebrating its fortieth anniversary in 2023 that provides financial solutions that help Maine people achieve their business and higher education goals. FAME helps to create a Maine workforce that with good-paying jobs by focusing on the nexus of economic and educational development. FAME recently was recognized for the eighth year in a row as one of the Best Places to Work in Maine. To learn more about FAME, please visit [www.famemaine.com](http://www.famemaine.com)

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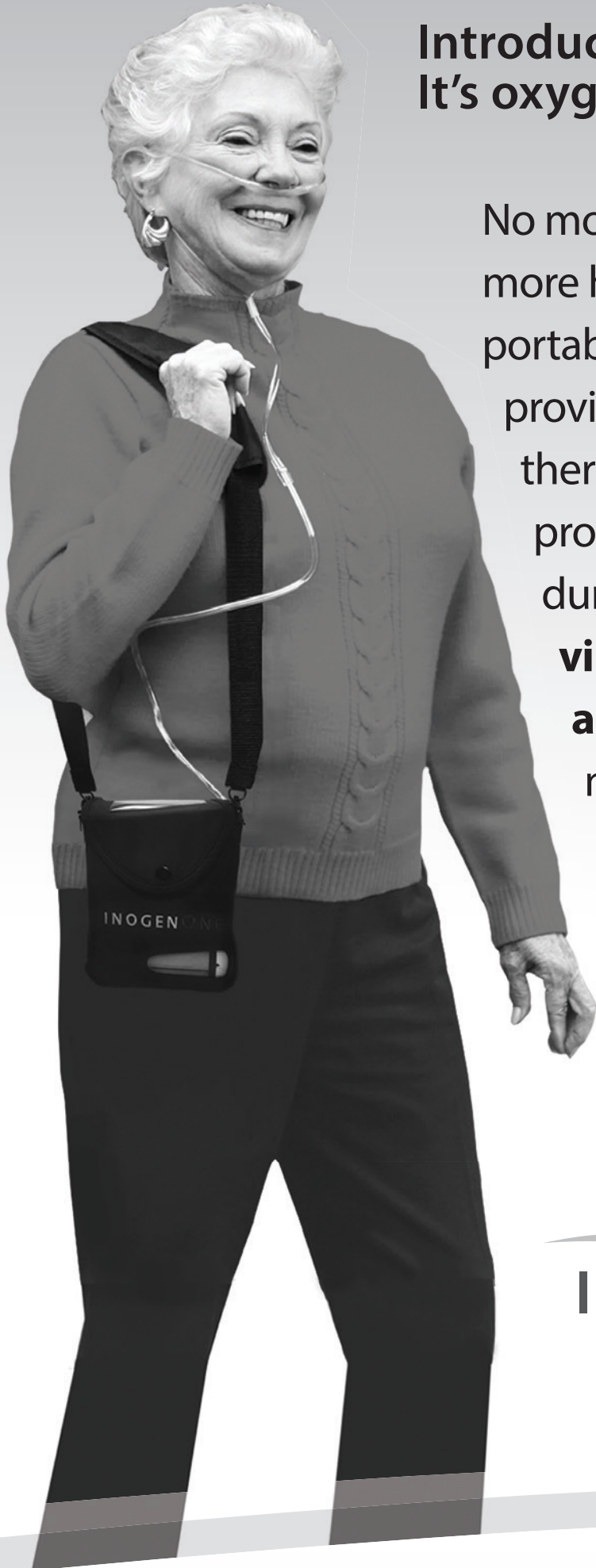
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# \$4.25M grant goes to Southwest Harbor

**BANGOR, ME** – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Maine State Director Rhiannon Hampson today announced a major grant for the Southwest Harbor Water and Sewer District. The agency has awarded the district a \$4.25M grant and a low-interest loan of \$5M. The announcement is Rural Development’s final Water and Environmental Programs (WEP) award of fiscal year 2023, during which the agency invested over \$33M for wastewater treatment projects in Maine. Such projects improve the quality of life in rural communities and help protect Maine’s waterways.

“At Rural Development we know that wastewater treatment upgrades are critically important and incredibly expensive,” said Director Hampson. “Mt. Desert Island epitomizes Maine’s culture of conservation and natural resource protection in balance with economic vibrancy. Undertaking an infrastructure project in such a place requires long-term environmental leadership, which Rural Development brings to the table. We look forward to seeing this project through to completion with Southwest Harbor’s dedicated local leaders. Towns across Maine are engaged in similar projects thanks to these major investments by the Biden-Harris Administration.”

Planning for the Southwest Harbor wastewater treatment upgrades began in 2018. Since then, the cost of equipment and materials has risen significantly. The project is further complicated by the treatment facility’s small footprint and location adjacent to a marina and near Acadia National Park. USDA Rural Development’s Civil Engineer Scott Emery advised on the

project from the start and notes that such projects routinely take several years or more to complete. The work will begin this spring.

USDA funded several other coastal WEP projects in Maine in 2023. For example:

The Lubec Water District received a grant of \$25K to assess its 25 miles of water lines and its overall water system. The pipes are over 100 years old, so the assessment effort will likely lead to significant updates in the future. This work complements an ongoing project to upgrade the town’s wastewater treatment facility and pumping stations. USDA Rural Development funded that work with a grant of \$1.6M and a loan of \$2M.

The Town of Camden received a grant of \$1.4M and a loan of \$12.5M to upgrade its wastewater treatment facility and pump stations. Formerly a pipe under the harbor conveyed sewage from a pumping station to the treatment plant. Thanks to this project, pipes have been installed under town streets instead, so sewage is no longer pumped under the harbor to the treatment plant.

The Freeport Sewer District received a grant of \$7.5M and two loans totaling over \$12.6M. The district will update its wastewater treatment plant and collection system to be more effective and to help alleviate health and sanitary concerns. Due to Freeport’s location on Casco Bay Watershed, this project will potentially benefit other coastal communities such as Yarmouth, Falmouth, Phippsburg, and Cape Elizabeth.

The Water and Waste Disposal program helps to fund clean and reliable drinking water systems, sanitary sewage disposal, sanitary solid waste disposal, and stormwater

drainage to households and businesses in eligible rural areas. State and local governments, federally recognized tribes, and nonprofits in rural communities may be eligible to apply. Contact Bob Nadeau, Community Programs Director (robert.nadeau@usda.gov or 207-990-9121) for more information.

Wastewater treatment and Maine’s coast:

Many Maine residents are familiar with private septic systems to treat sewage in situations where a municipal wastewater treatment system is not available. Septic systems are land-based, filtering liquids from sewage through leach fields. Fewer people know that there are also private systems that discharge treated wastewater directly into rivers, streams, and the ocean. The Maine Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) licenses 650 of these Overboard Discharge (OBD) locations, with many along northern Casco Bay and mid-coast Maine.

DEP has been working for years to reduce the number of OBDs in Maine. One reason is that they pose a risk to nearby shellfisheries. The Maine Department of Marine Resources (DMR) monitors and maps these locations and prohibits shellfish harvesting in the vicinity of OBD outfall pipes. Due to the risk of contamination posed by OBDs, an estimated 20,000 acres of mudflats and potential aquaculture habitat are currently closed to harvesting along Maine’s coast. As more OBDs are eliminated over time, more coastal habitats are likely to open for shellfish and aquacultural harvesting.

Efforts to expand and improve Maine’s wastewater treatment infrastructure impact the tourism industry as well. For example, the Lincolnville Sewer

District recently completed a project to build a public wastewater treatment facility. Previously, local homes and businesses managed their wastewater treatment through septic systems and OBDs, and effluent pipes discharged near Lincolnville Beach. To protect this popular tourist destination, local leaders worked with state and federal partners on a multi-year project to install a public wastewater treatment system. USDA Rural Development provided over \$3.5M in funding, and the Maine DEP’s Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) continues to support the work.

Meagan Sims, Maine Healthy Beaches Coordinator with DEP’s Bureau of Water Quality, notes that “Reducing or eliminating any potential human pollution sources through wastewater infrastructure repairs and upgrades can support improvements to existing coastal water quality conditions, protect public health, and prevent future threats to water quality.” Funding these complicated years-long projects often requires partnerships between municipal, state, and federal agencies and dogged persistence from local water district staff and town leaders.

Grants are one component of the funding assistance USDA Rural Development provides. Just as important are the low-interest loans the agency makes available to rural municipalities and water districts for these projects. For example, the Southwest Harbor Water and Sewer District was able to secure a 40-year loan at 2.125 percent.

“Rural communities often can’t budget for such improvements through fees alone,” said USDA Rural Development State Director Hampson. “That is why we dedicate so much

of our funding and staff time to supporting these vital projects. We bring taxpayer dollars back to Maine to help make these projects feasible for towns, ensuring clean drinking water and wastewater services for residents and businesses. Over the long term, we hope these projects ultimately help keep Maine’s beaches clean and our shellfisheries open. These are vital to Maine’s economy and our regional culture.”

Background:

This week USDA Rural Development Deputy Under Secretary Farah Ahmad announced that USDA is strengthening its partnership with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) and a network of 25 organizations to help people in rural and underserved communities access affordable, modern, and safe wastewater infrastructure.

“Decentralized wastewater systems are an integral component of our nation’s wastewater infrastructure, especially in rural areas where centralized treatment is often too expensive or unavailable,” Ahmad said. “USDA is committed to doing everything we can to ensure every family in America has access to modern, reliable wastewater infrastructure.”

On Tuesday, Deputy Under Secretary Farah Ahmad and EPA Deputy Assistant Administrator Benita Best-Wong signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) outlining an industry-wide initiative to improve the overall performance and management of decentralized systems in rural areas. Across the U.S., decentralized (septic or onsite) technology can provide communities and homeowners with a safe, affordable wastewater treatment option.

“Safely managing wastewater is essential to

protecting people’s health, their property, and the environment. Millions of Americans living in small, rural, and suburban communities rely on septic systems to play this important role every day,” said EPA Deputy Assistant Administrator for Water Benita Best-Wong. “This Memorandum brings together national organizations to engage with local partners to adopt best practices and help strengthen our communities.”

Last year, USDA and EPA also announced the Closing America’s Wastewater Access Gap Community Initiative, to help historically underserved communities identify and pursue federal funding opportunities, including funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law, to address their wastewater needs and eliminate harmful exposure to backyard sewage.

As the only federal program solely focused on rural water and waste disposal systems, USDA Rural Development’s Water and Environmental Programs also partner with rural communities to obtain the financing and technical assistance necessary to develop, maintain and improve drinking water and waste disposal systems. This assistance can also help mitigate health risks and increase access to safe, reliable drinking water and sanitary waste disposal services.

An estimated 2.2 million people in the United States lack basic running water and indoor plumbing. Many more live in communities with unsafe wastewater infrastructure. According to the 2015 U.S. Census Bureau’s American Housing Survey (AHS), approximately one in five homes in America are served by individual decentralized wastewater systems.



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Dec 24

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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.

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 Cen-

# Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

ter, 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 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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 ho-

meschool families with children of all ages. No registration is required. Contact info. 513-3133, LPLKids@lewistonmaine.gov

2nd and 4th

Wednesday each month

LEWISTON -- MAKE ART WITH ARTVAN 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

2nd and 4th 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 play-

ers 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.

Tick

Continued from page 3

the Maine CDC recommends those enjoying the outdoors take these "Tick Free ME" steps:

Know tick habitat and take precautions in areas where ticks may live.

Wear light-colored clothing that covers the arms and legs, tuck pants into socks.

Use an EPA-approved repellent like DEET, picaridin, IR3535, or oil of lemon eucalyptus on skin. Use permethrin on clothing.

Check for ticks daily and after any outdoor activity. Check family mem-

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bers and pets too.

Remove clothing when you get home and put it in the dryer before washing. Use high heat for 10-15 minutes to kill any crawling ticks.

Deer ticks can also spread the germs that cause anaplasmosis, babesiosis, Powassan, and Hard Tick Relapsing Fever. Common symptoms of tickborne diseases include joint and muscle pain, fatigue, chills, fever, headache, and swollen lymph nodes. People with Lyme disease may also have a "bullseye" rash anywhere on their body, not only at the site of the tick bite. If you experience any these symptoms, talk to a health care provider.

To learn more about staying Tick Free ME, visit www.maine.gov/lyme.

To view tickborne disease data on the Maine Tracking Network visit data.mainepublichealth.gov/tracking/tickborne.

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

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**MAY 11 - 19, 2024 - BILTMORE ESTATE & ASHEVILLE, NC** - Trip includes 8 nights lodging including 4 nights in the Asheville

area, 8 breakfasts and 6 dinners and a guided tour of the Asheville, North Carolina area. We will have a full day visit to the spectacular Biltmore Estate, America's largest privately owned home. We will visit the Biltmore Village that connects the estates present and past and provides a place for dining, shopping and historical exhibits. We will also visit the Antler Village and winery. We will tour the Blue Ridge Parkway with a guide and stops along the way. A \$75.00 deposit per person is due when signing up. Price is \$1,245.00 pp double occupancy which includes all entrance fees, meal tips and bus driver tip.

**JUNE 15 - 23, 2024 - WESTERN CANADA'S ROCKIES, LAKES & WINE COUNTRY** - This trip includes 9 days and 8 breakfasts, 2 lunches and 3 dinners. Highlights of this trip are Calgary, Albertan BBQ, Banff, Bow Falls, Lake Louise, Revelstoke Railway Museum, Okanagan Valley, Vineyard Dinner and Wine Tasting, Stanley Park, Granville Island and much more. Call Claire or Cindy for more information.

**OCTOBER 6 - 14, 2024 -**

**NOVA SCOTIA, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND & NEW BRUNSWICK** – Trip includes 8 nights lodging, 8 breakfasts, 1 lunch, and 6 dinners. You will have a guided tour of Acadia National Park, Halifax, Peggy's Cove & Lunenburg. We will visit King's Landing Historical Settlement and have a guided tour of Prince Edward Island including Anne of Green Gable's Home. We will have admission to the Hopewell Rocks and you will visit the Waterside Town of Saint John, New Brunswick and much more. A \$75.00 deposit is due when signing up. Price is \$1,639.00 per person double occupancy and this includes all entrance fees, meal tips and bus driver tip.

If interested in any of these trips or upcoming trips, please contact Claire Bilodeau at 784-0302 or 576-8604 or Cindy Boyd at 345-9569. If we are not available, please leave a message and we will call you as soon as we can.

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# Natalie Beaudoin from Lewiston HS signs with Pliable

**LEWISTON, ME** -- Natalie Beaudoin (Lewiston, ME), a senior at Lewiston High School announced today she has signed with Pliable Marketing, a Maine-based marketing company that helps high school, college and professional athletes build their athlete brand. Beaudoin plays soccer and basketball for the Blue Devils. She is ranked 20th in New England for the class of 2024 by Prep Girls Hoops. She will receive name, image, and likeness (NIL) representation to secure NIL partnerships and develop her athlete brand to pursue her career in college and beyond. She has verbally committed to play Division 1 basketball next season at the University of Vermont.

Beaudoin, 17, is a shooting guard on the girls basketball team at Lewiston High School. Last season, she led the Blue Devils in scoring and was named the team MVP. During her high school career, she has played in 45 games registering 543 points.

She most recently competed on the Maine Firecrackers AAU team where she won four state championships.

In the classroom, Beaudoin maintains a 4.0 GPA and ranks third in her high school class, the largest in the state.

In 2022, she earned a gold medal in the SkillsUSA regional and state competitions for medical math. She advanced to the national SkillsUSA competition in the medical math category and finished 18th of the top 50 students from across the country.

Beaudoin is a member of the National Honors Society and National Technical Honor Society. She was also the recipient of the Elmira College Key Award, presented to outstanding students in their junior year of high school or preparatory school.

“By working with Pliable, I am excited to take the next step in my basketball career. I know this partnership will help me prepare for success at the next level both on and



off the court. As I enter my senior season at Lewiston High School, I want to continue to give back to our great community in many ways, including sharing the game of basketball with the next generation. As I prepare for my college career, I am also excited about the opportunity to use my name, image and likeness to create partnerships that align with my passion for basketball and future career in the medical

field. Pliable has a proven track record of helping high school, college and pro athletes build their brand. The company is already working with many other Division I athletes on NIL partnerships and career development opportunities,” said Natalie Beaudoin, senior at Lewiston High School.

In July of 2021, the NCAA adopted an interim policy that allows college student-athletes to benefit

and receive compensation from companies, organizations, and brands in exchange for the athlete using their name, image or likeness (NIL) to promote or endorse products or services. In Maine, high school athletes can now also receive compensation from their own entrepreneurial endeavors, including posting social media content for local businesses and national brands, selling merchandise, plus hosting sports camps, providing instruction and more.

Pliable will help Beaudoin start building her athlete brand using Pliable’s Athlete Branding Playbook, recognized as one of the industry’s most forward-thinking ideas for athletes to acquire the skills and tools to build their athlete brand. She will work closely with Greg Glynn, Athlete Brand Advisor & CEO of Pliable to learn valuable marketing skills that will create future opportunities in her career.

“Natalie is extremely talented on and off the

basketball court. The combination of her athletic and academic success is remarkable. She is already a role model to many young athletes in her community and across the state. Natalie is part of the next generation of athletes who are noticing what current college and professional athletes are doing to build their brand and she wants to make the most of her athletic career. I love hearing how passionate she is about giving back to her community and increasing the popularity of women’s sports. Local and national brands have already started reaching out to work with her, she will have a lot of great opportunities in front of her,” said Greg Glynn, Athlete Brand Advisor & CEO of Pliable.

Pliable’s list of athlete branding clients consists of more than 30 high school, college, and professional athletes from across the country. To see the full list of Pliable athletes, visit [PliableMarketing.com/pliable-athletes](http://PliableMarketing.com/pliable-athletes).

## Big impacts from nonprofit arts, culture sector in Waterville

**WATERVILLE, ME**—Waterville Creates today announced that the City of Waterville’s nonprofit arts and culture industry generated \$13.5 million in economic activity in 2022, according to the newly released Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6), an economic and social impact study conducted by Americans for the Arts. That economic activity—\$9.7 million in spending by nonprofit arts and culture organizations and \$3.9 million in event-related spending by their audiences—supported 174 jobs and generated \$2.4 million in local, state, and federal government revenue. Spending by arts and culture audiences generates valuable commerce to local merchants, a value-add that few other industries can claim.

Building on its 30-year legacy as the largest and most inclusive study of its kind, AEP6 uses a rigorous methodology to document the economic and social contributions of the nation’s nonprofit arts and culture industry. The study demonstrates arts and culture are a critical economic driver of vibrant communities, both locally and nationally.

“We have always known that arts and cultural activities not only enrich and enliven our community but also generate significant economic activity. When

the film festival is happening or there is a sold-out show at the Opera House, the restaurants are packed, hotel rooms are filled, and Main Street is alive,” said Shannon Haines, president + CEO of Waterville Creates. “This study quantifies that activity in a way that demonstrates the undeniable impact of the arts as an economic driver in downtown Waterville’s revitalization efforts.”

Nationally, the Arts & Economic Prosperity 6 (AEP6) study reveals the American nonprofit arts and culture sector is a \$151.7 billion industry—one that supports 2.6 million jobs and generates \$29.1 billion in government revenue.

“Arts and culture organizations have a powerful ability to attract and hold dollars in the community longer. They employ people locally, purchase goods and services from nearby businesses, and produce the authentic cultural experiences that are magnets for visitors, tourists, and new residents,” said Nolen V. Bivens, president and CEO of Americans for the Arts. “When we invest in nonprofit arts and culture, we strengthen our economy and build more livable communities.”

Key figures from Waterville’s AEP6 study include:

The typical attendee spends \$37.62 per person

per event, not including the cost of admission.

42.7% of arts and culture attendees in Waterville were from outside Kennebec County. They spent an average of \$53.60.

88% of respondents agreed that the activity or venue they were attending was “a source of neighborhood pride for the community.”

87% said they would “feel a sense of loss if that activity or venue was no longer available.”

As Americans for the Arts’ research partner for the City of Waterville, Waterville Creates was responsible for local implementation and data collection. Waterville Creates’ local partners in AEP6 data collection included the Colby College Museum of Art, Colby Arts Office, Children’s Discovery Museum, and the Waterville Public Library.

“As Waterville continues to make significant investments in arts and culture, this data is crucial to us in demonstrating to our community and our funders the remarkable return on those investments,” said Haines. “Since opening the doors of our home at the Paul J. Schupf Art Center in December 2022, we have welcomed more than 80,000 visitors, which—based on this data—represents over \$3 million in related spending by our patrons.”

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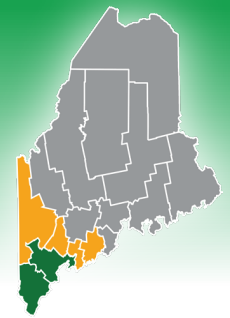
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\*No fundraising involved. Must live in one of the the six counties listed above.