



# TWIN CITY TIMES

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## Welcome to Maine comedy show at Franco Center Feb. 3



Comedians Ian Stuart and James Theberge will bring their Welcome to Maine comedy show featuring Maine themes and topics to the Franco Center at 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 3. Tickets can be purchased at 207-689-2000 and [www.francocenter.org/shows](http://www.francocenter.org/shows). The Franco Center is at 46 Cedar Street, Lewiston. Ian Stuart selfie photo.

LEWISTON, ME—The Welcome to Maine comedy show will be coming to the Franco Center at 7 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 3. Maine-based comedians Ian Stuart and James Theberge began filming the Welcome to Maine series in late 2020. As part of the comedy show, Ian portrays Mark and James portrays Troy, fictional Main-

ers. Aiming to be both funny and informative, Welcome to Maine blends a mix of updated traditional Maine humor with historical facts and a whole bunch of “yuhts.”

This comedy show is inspired by traditional Maine humorists such as Bert and I, and Tim Sample but are far from being copies of the now-classic comedians.

Welcome to Maine is brutally honest and unassuming. They are not shy to share some of the bold truths that are common elements of daily Maine living.

The troupe’s material features well-known Maine themes and topics which include Allen’s Coffee Brandy, weed stores, and Marden’s. Mark is the straight man of the team with a standard reply, Yuht, Oh yuht, or Ooooh yuht, as Troy sets up all the material. They produced a comedy album which includes skits reminiscent of an Adam Sandler album.

Visit the Welcome to Maine Facebook page for videos of this comedy act at <https://www.facebook.com/WelcomeToMaineShow> or on their website at <https://www.welcometomaineshow.com/>

Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door the day of the show. Cash bar and doors open at 6 p.m. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.francocenter.org/shows](http://www.francocenter.org/shows) or by phone at 207-689-2000. Tickets can also be purchased in person at our box office between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. on Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Season Underwriter is Maple Way Dental Care; Media Sponsors are Sun Journal, Turner Publishing, Uncle Andy’s, Bennett Radio Group. The show is sponsored by Berman & Simmons and Lawn Guard LawnCare.

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

## Central Maine Healthcare statement on reorganization

LEWISTON, ME -- Central Maine Healthcare (CMH) is reorganizing management and administrative positions so that the health system may better support the needs of our communities and continued growth.

This realignment eliminates 45 positions.

In 2023, CMH hired 639 team members, including 52 medical staff members, and will continue to expand its workforce to support growth in clinical care areas, including orthopedics, oncology, cardiovascular, obstetrics and gynecologic services.

Today, CMH employs 3100 team members.

All team members affected will be offered open positions within the health system or benefit and severance packages should they choose to separate.

## Lewiston legislative delegation to host public office hours

AUGUSTA, ME – Members of Lewiston’s delegation to the State Legislature will hold constituent office hours at the Lewiston Public Library on Saturday, January 27 from 10:30 a.m. until noon to provide local residents a chance to meet with their elected officials and discuss legislative and state government matters. The delegation will give updates on their work on various policy areas, including the state budget, law enforcement, insurance and financial affairs, taxes, transportation and veterans issues. Office hours are scheduled for the fourth Saturday of every month.

Constituent Office Hours  
Sen. Peggy Rotundo, Rep. Kristen Cloutier, Rep. Margaret Craven, Rep. Mana Abdi and Rep. Michel Lajoie  
Saturday, January 27, 2024 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

The Couture Room, Lewiston Public Library, 200 Lisbon Street

# Maine delegation supports request for Disaster Declaration

WASHINGTON, D.C.— Maine’s Congressional Delegation wrote to President Biden today in support of Governor Janet Mills’ request for a Major Disaster Declaration to help address the extreme winter storm damage across ten Maine counties that occurred in December.

U.S. Senators Susan Collins and Angus King and Representatives Chellie Pingree and Jared Golden asked the President to fully grant the Governor’s requests to make available federal assistance for Androscoggin, Franklin, Hancock, Kennebec, Oxford, Penobscot, Piscataquis, Somerset, Waldo, and Washington Counties.

“As demonstrated in the Governor’s request, it is clear that each of these counties experienced substantial dam-

ages that collectively exceed the State’s capabilities,” the Delegation wrote in the letter. “The storm that entered Maine on December 17 brought wind gusts of nearly 70 miles per hour and more than 2.5” of rain. The multi-day, multi-hazard event caused countless downed trees and power lines across the state, left nearly 420,000 Mainers without power, and resulted in widespread flooding. We received a number of reports of possible gas leaks, contaminated water, and other related hazards and anticipate a lengthy recovery effort.”

“We urge you to expeditiously approve Governor Mills’ request for Major Disaster Declarations for the counties in question,” the Delegation continued. “Expedited review is especially war-

ranted as many of these areas have been affected by other disasters, some natural, some economic, all of which have made this a particularly difficult year for the region. The people of Maine are in great need of this federal assistance, and we thank you for your support.”

Initial estimates placed the cost of damage to public infrastructure alone at \$20 million.

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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## High levels of radon detected in 36.5% of Maine homes

**MAINE** – Radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer and the “State of Lung Cancer” report reveals that it is detected at high levels in about 36.5% of homes in Maine. During January for National Radon Action Month, the American Lung Association in Maine is urging everyone to help save lives by testing their home for radon and mitigating if high levels are detected.

Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas emitted from the ground. Radon is odorless, tasteless and colorless, and can enter a home through cracks in floors, basement walls, foundations and other openings. Radon can be present at high levels inside homes, schools and other buildings. It is responsible for an estimated 21,000 lung cancer deaths every year and is the lead-

ing cause of lung cancer in people who have never smoked.

Here in Maine about 36.5% of radon test results equal or exceed the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) action level of 4 pCi/L, according to the Lung Association’s “State of Lung Cancer” report.

“Radon in homes is more common than you think. In fact, high levels of radioactive radon

gas have been found in every state but most places in the country remain undertested, so this isn’t something that should be taken lightly. Exposure to radon is the second leading cause of lung cancer in the United States,” said Lance Boucher, director of advocacy for the Lung Association. “Testing for radon is the only way to know if the air in your home is safe. The good news is

that it is easy to test. Do-it-yourself test kits are simple to use and inexpensive.”

After high levels are detected, a radon professional should install a radon mitigation system, which is easy and relatively affordable. A typical radon mitigation system consists of a vent pipe, fan and properly sealing cracks and other openings. This system collects radon gas from underneath the foun-

dation and vents it to the outside. Contact your state radon program for a list of certified professionals in your state. Some state health departments offer financial assistance or low interest loans for radon mitigation.

Learn more about radon testing and mitigation at [Lung.org/radon](http://Lung.org/radon) and take the Lung Association’s free Radon Basics course at [Lung.org/Radon-Basics](http://Lung.org/Radon-Basics).

## AFA’s Teen Alzheimer’s Awareness Scholarship opens

**NEW YORK** – High school seniors impacted by Alzheimer’s disease can earn up to \$5,000 for college through the Alzheimer’s Foundation of America’s (AFA) Teen Alzheimer’s Awareness Scholarship Contest. Students can enter the contest by visiting [www.alzfdn.org/scholarship](http://www.alzfdn.org/scholarship).

“You’re never too young to make a difference in the lives of others, and teens are showing that every day in the fight against Alzheimer’s disease,” said Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr., AFA’s president

and CEO. “Teens across the country are helping to care for loved ones with Alzheimer’s, volunteering at care settings, raising awareness, and even conducting scientific research. We encourage them to share their stories through this scholarship contest.”

“Through the stories and struggles of many teens impacted by Alzheimer’s disease, it is our hope a new generation will use their experiences to bring awareness on the impact of the disease and advocate for more care-

giver support and research in the years to come,” said Stephanie Evans Ariker, AFA’s Director of External Relations.

College-bound high school seniors are invited to apply for the scholarship by submitting an essay (1,500 words maximum) or submitting a video (four minutes in length or less), describing how Alzheimer’s disease has impacted their lives and what they have learned about themselves, their family and/or their community through their experience with Alzheimer’s. En-

tries can be submitted by visiting [www.alzfdn.org/scholarship](http://www.alzfdn.org/scholarship). The deadline for submissions is April 1, 2024, at 5:00 pm ET. Students already attending college are not eligible to participate.

Experiences that students can write about include:

Having a loved one with Alzheimer’s disease or another dementia-related illness

Helping care for someone with Alzheimer’s disease or another dementia-related illness

Volunteering or

working in a care setting that serves individuals with dementia

Raising Alzheimer’s awareness in their school or community

Conducting Alzheimer’s research

The first-place winner receives a \$5,000 scholarship. Additional prizes awarded for runners up and honorable mentions. More than \$428,000 in college scholarships have been awarded since the program’s inception.

Alzheimer’s disease affects millions of families across the United States.

More than 6 million Americans currently live with Alzheimer’s disease, a number projected to more than double by 2060, according to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

AFA is able to provide scholarship funds through the generous support of charitable donors. Individuals wishing to support this and other programs and services for families affected by Alzheimer’s disease can do so by visiting [www.alzfdn.org/donate](http://www.alzfdn.org/donate) or calling AFA at 866-232-8484.

## State parks see decline in use, anticipate upward trend for 2024

**AUGUSTA, ME** - The Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry’s Bureau of Parks and Lands (BPL) Director Andy Cutko announced a slight decline in visitation to Maine State Parks during 2023, with 2.93 million visitors spending time at the bureau’s 48 state parks and historic sites (2.64 million day-use visitors and 291K campers). While visitation fell below the record-breaking years of 2022 and 2021, with 3.28 million and 3.3 million visits, the slight 2023 de-

crease was attributed to poor weather. Maine State Parks welcomed 319K campers in 2022 and 315K in 2021. Despite this decrease, BPL anticipates a continued upward trend in visitation.

“The parks are an amazing value, and we thrive because of the talented staff who welcome millions of outdoors enthusiasts who love and care for these treasured places,” stated Cutko. “Another and lesser-known contributor to our success are the many partnerships that continue to emerge,

such as our work with L.L. Bean, which provides loaned equipment stored in “Beach Boxes,” Maine Cancer Foundation and Impact Melanoma sunscreen dispensers, collaboration with Trail Monster on bike, snowshoe, and running races, and the Portland Museum of Art “Art on the Trail” installations.”

The BPL is infusing \$50 million in Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan investments in Maine State Parks. Completed projects include improved roads at Sebago Lake, Peaks-Ken-

ney, Camden Hills, Rangeley Lake, and Lily Bay State Park, a renovated bridge at Reid State Park, and numerous equipment purchases. Ongoing architecture and design work includes park entrance stations, washrooms and plumbing improvements, campsite redesigns, and much more.

\*\*Maine State Park Camping Reservation Center Opening February 1\*\*

On February 1, starting at 9 a.m., BPL will accept reservations for Lily Bay State Park and Seba-

go Lake State Park. (The storm date if state offices are closed is February 2.)

On February 6, starting at 9 a.m., BPL will accept reservations for All parks. (The storm date if closed is February 7, 2024)

The BPL Campground Reservation Center accepts phone and online reservations for all 12 Maine State Park campgrounds.

Book camping reservations online (@ [www.CampWithME.com](http://www.CampWithME.com)) and reach the camping reservation call center by call-

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

Group Campsite and Picnic Shelter Reservations are by phone only and begin February 1, 2023. Find park phone lines, instructions, and fees on BPL’s Group Camping and the Group Shelters web pages.

Campers are encouraged to Read the Reservation Tips and FAQs before reserving.



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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## Register now! Spots are filling up fast for Tarot 101 Workshop


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# TAROT 101 WORKSHOP

## February 6, 2024

From 5 to 6:30 pm

Please bring your own traditional 78-card deck and something to take notes with



**LEWISTON, ME**

-- The Lewiston Public Library will host a Tarot 101 Workshop on Tuesday, February 6, 2024, from 5 to 6:30 pm in The Jeanne Couture Room. The Tarot 101 Workshop will feature the return of Kate Sheridan, a.k.a The Laundress. This workshop is free and open to both teens and adults. Registration is required.

This event is for anyone who wants to learn more about tarot cards, using the classic Smith-Rider-Waite deck as a guide. The program will cover basic tarot theory, a brief history of tarot cards, and an introduction to all 78 cards and how they work together. The goal is to demystify the tarot to empower you to use the cards. Throughout the evening,

you'll be invited to consider card images using both the information from the workshop and your own intuition. At the end of the evening, you'll be shown how to conduct a reading for yourself or others, and you'll leave with practical next steps to do at home.

While some of the workshop material will certainly apply to Oracle cards, please note that this workshop is focused on the traditional 78-card tarot. Please bring your own 78-card deck and something to take notes with you to the program. Only a few tarot decks will be available to borrow for the program.

Kate Sheridan, a.k.a. The Laundress, is a tarot reader and astrologer who believes that fortunes are created rather than told. Her style is down-to-earth

and conversational, and she draws heavily on her previous life as a high school English teacher to ensure that her clients understand the logic behind the intuitive information she provides. After she left teaching in 2019, she turned her longtime interest in Western Astrology into an intensive study. She has been playing with tarot cards for 20 years, studying them seriously for nearly 10, and reading professionally since 2019.

The Lewiston Public Library is located downtown at 200 Lisbon Street at the corner of Pine Street and Lisbon Street. More information on Tuesday's program is available by contacting the Lewiston Public Library at 513-3135 or [LPLReference@lewis-tonmaine.gov](mailto:LPLReference@lewis-tonmaine.gov).

## “Celebrate People’s History” exhibition, programs in Feb.

**LEWISTON, ME** – Netty Provost, Director of USM’s Lewiston campus announced the second in the 2023-2024 Atrium Gallery exhibitions at 51 Westminster Street and welcomes the public to view exhibitions Monday-Friday, 9AM - 4:30PM. Posters from the Celebrate People’s History Series and a new poster celebrating the Papermaker’s strike that took place in Jay, Maine during 1987-1988 are featured in the main Atrium Gallery, January 11-February 20, 2024. The show also includes artifacts from the strike—buttons, t-shirts, posters, books and ephemera.

The Celebrate People’s History posters are rooted in the do-it-yourself tradition of mass-produced and distributed political propaganda, but detoured to embody principles of democracy, inclusion, and group participation in the writing and interpretation of history. Since 1998, nearly 200 posters by over 150 artists and designers have been produced, with over half a million total posters in circulation. These posters have hung in classrooms, union halls,

community centers, health-care clinics, and city streets across the globe.

The exhibition is sponsored by the Dr. Charles A Scontras Center housed at USM. Established in May 2023, the Scontras Center provides training, education, and resources to unions, community groups, and worker organizations and is named for Dr. Charles Scontras, a noted Maine labor historian, author, and educator who died in March 2021.

The Center takes a hands-on, community outreach approach to create participatory, popular education classes that make complex subjects such as workers’ rights and labor history accessible to working-class generations and New Mainers alike.

Several free, public events are scheduled during the exhibition.

On Friday, January 19, the public was invited to an opening reception with Elizabeth Jabar, printmaker and artist who created a new poster specifically for the exhibit. Jabar is a feminist I printmaker who explores a range of personal-political issues in her work including cultur-

al identity, representation, equity and maternal ethics. Her practice is located in the studio, the classroom and the community where she co-creates collaborative and participatory projects with students, colleagues and community members.

Other speakers included Michael Hillard, USM labor historian and author of *Shredding Paper: The Rise and Fall of Maine’s Mighty Paper Industry*, Peter Kellman, lifelong union leader and labor educator, and other special guests.

On Thursday, February 15, 6-8PM, Center teaching fellow Kevin Van Meter will present a talk, “Of Pirates, Witches, and Workers: 500 Years of Labor History.” For 500-years, “the cause of labor is the hope of the world.” The talk begins in the conflict over the collection of firewood and then circulates through the witch-hunts, pirate utopias and slave resistance, corresponding societies and the communards of Paris, the 8-hour day movement and mine wars, great sit-down strikes and great mi-

grations, wartime strikes and the Treaty of Detroit, neo-liberal responses to worker-student and civil rights movements, and the return of the labor movement today. With stories that reverberate throughout labor history, across the planet, and in our working lives.

Union organizer, labor educator, and author, Kevin Van Meter, Ph.D.

is a teaching fellow at the Scontras Center for Labor and Community Education at the University of Southern Maine. Long a premier exhibition space in Lewiston-Auburn, the first show of the 2023-2024 season featured the work of Rwandan genocide survivor Frederick Ndabaramiye, now living in Portland. A gallery reception was held on Tuesday, January 9,

2024, 5-7PM with an Artist’s Talk with Frederick Ndabaramiye at 6PM. Ndabaramiye’s show moved to an adjacent space on January 10 and will be on exhibit until February 28 The Atrium Gallery is free and open to the public, Monday - Friday, 9AM - 4:30PM and is accessed through the main campus entrance at USM, 51 Westminster Street.

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# Seniors Not Acting Their Age

## An Exciting Opening Day at Rangeley Lakes Trails Center



A classic skier passes a winding stream on Lower Pipeline Trail at Rangeley Lakes Trails Center



The snowshoeing is excellent on Tote Road Trail



A Nordic skier climbs Lower Pump House Road

By Ron Chase  
We'd been waiting for a couple of weeks for Opening Day at Rangeley Lakes Trails Center. I wanted to ski and my wife, Nancy, planned to snowshoe. December 9th was the magical day. A phone call confirmed that many of the ski trails were groomed for classic and skate skiing and snowshoe trails packed by snowmobile.

The exceptional Rangeley Lakes Trail system is situated at the foot of Saddleback Mountain. They receive copious amounts of snow each winter. As a result, it's one of our favorite winter sports destinations.

The trails are maintained by the Rangeley Lakes Cross Country

Ski Club. The dedicated members do a masterful job of keeping the trails in the best possible condition while operating a yurt where passes are purchased.

When we arrived early on a cool partly cloudy day, some vacant parking spots remained in the lot adjacent to the yurt. Additional space is available in an overflow parking area across the street. The helpful yurt manager confirmed she had skied the Tote Road Trail earlier and it was in good condition. She also informed us that another volunteer was out grooming trails and had reported that Bridge Trail was scratchy in places. As far as she knew, the snowshoe trails were fine, but

asked Nancy to report back on her findings. We were ready to ski and snowshoe.

A classic skier, I began skiing on Tote Road while Nancy left on Snowshoe Alley. The Tote Road classic tracks were groomed to perfection. I glided effortlessly east in a scenic wintry setting.

After reaching a major intersection at the end of Tote Road where four trails meet, I continued straight on Bridge Trail. As predicted, the snow pack was thin which prevented the groomer from setting tracks for classic skiing. However, there was sufficient snow to climb the gradual circuitous incline to View Trail.

View Trail lived up to its name furnishing excep-

tional views of the peaks of the Saddleback Mountain Range. Snow conditions were excellent for a steady ascent to the highpoint. However, the descent on the western slope was rough in spots and required careful maneuvering to avoid a fall. An old man in fear of injury, I held a snowplow for much of the steepest section.

At the bottom of the hill, View Trail joins Lower Pump House Road. Turning right on Lower Pump House, I began an easy climb past a side trail on the left which connects with Hoffman Run to the north. Persisting uphill to the top, a stimulating descent followed to the eastern end of Hoffman Run. The approximately one mile Lower Pump-house/Hoffman Run Loop was the best skiing of the day. I added to the entertainment by skiing the loop twice.

While I was contemplating my next trail choice at the Hoffman Connector and Lower Pumphouse junction, several skiers converged there. All expressed excitement and enthusiasm with the arrival of

opening day.

I followed another skier double-poling downhill on Lower Pumphouse to Lower Pipeline Trail. We should have paid closer attention to the guidance provided at the yurt; the northern portion of Lower Pipeline was ungroomed. We alternated packing a route on the partially broken path until crossing a bridge where the trail was again groomed and tracked. Skiing next to a winding open stream with Saddleback Mountain as a backdrop was remarkably scenic.

Upper Pipeline Trail begins at the Tote Road/Bridge Trail intersection. The straightforward path ascends steadily uphill for about a mile towards Saddleback Mountain. The benefits of a potential climb seemed worth the effort. When I met a skier enjoying a thrilling ride down, that was all the incentive needed to push on. After completing the strenuous undertaking, I experienced the most exhilarating downhill ski of the day.

Several cheerful skiers were encountered when I returned to the yurt on

Tote Road. Shortly before arriving, I met Nancy finishing her trek. She too had enjoyed an invigorating outing.

Rangeley Lakes Trails Center has some of the finest Nordic ski and snowshoe trails in Maine. We anticipate returning this winter for more exciting adventures. "Do a snow dance," encouraged the yurt manager when we departed.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* includes two more Nordic Ski trips and several winter mountaineering expeditions.

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

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# 2024 Lunar New Year Celebration coming up

**CAPE ELIZABETH, ME** -- The Chinese and American Friendship Association of Maine (CAFAM) will ring in the Year of the Dragon, Saturday, February 24, 2023, at the Cape Elizabeth High School, 345 Ocean House Road, Cape Elizabeth, ME.

This always popular

and exciting event is in its 33rd year and is the oldest and largest Lunar New Year celebration in Maine.

Performance by a professional arts group, Boston Chinese Folk Art Workshop, (CFAW Boston) the performance is called 龙行天下迎甲辰 (The Dragon Strides Across the World, Ush-

ering in the Year of Jia Chen), which will include traditional Chinese music, drumming, and dance. This performance begins at noon. First come, first served seating.

The Bangor Chinese School will also perform a dragon dance and a harvest dance, as well as teaching calligraphy.

There will be a Chinese Cultural Village: Open from 10:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. with crafts for kids, vendors, and more. The village will also be open during performance intermission.

Chinese food from the China Xpress Restaurant will be available beginning at 11:00 a.m.

Admission prices: Adults \$15, Children 12 to 5 \$5, Children under 5 Free. The discounted price for CAFAM members is \$10 for adults. Tickets are available in advance from Eventbrite.com. Day of event tickets: Only cash or check. No credit or debit cards! .

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If the live event is cancelled all of the tickets purchased from Eventbrite will automatically be fully refunded.

Sponsored the Chinese and American Friendship Association of Maine (CAFAM). For more information go to [www.cafam-maine.org](http://www.cafam-maine.org).

# WinterKids to host “ski free” days

**WESTBROOK, ME** – WinterKids, a non-profit organization dedicated to getting children outside and active in the winter months, is thrilled to announce two upcoming “ski free” days, providing unforgettable winter sports experiences for over 160 youth in collaboration with Augusta Recreation Dept, Lost Valley, Boys & Girls Club of the Border Towns, Micmac tribe, Healthy Peninsula, and BigRock Mountain.

Web Link: <https://winterkids.org/blog/winterkids-to-host-two-ski-free-days-expanding-access-to-winter-sports-for-local-youth/>

Date: Saturday, February 3, 2024

Location: BigRock Mountain, Mars Hill

Partnerships with Boys & Girls Club of the Border Towns and Micmac tribe in the greater Presque Isle area, and Healthy Peninsula in Blue Hill: More than 110 students will have an exciting day filled with skiing, snowboarding, and trail adventures at BigRock Mountain. WinterKids is committed to providing lift tickets, rental equipment, and lessons for all attendees.

“We are thrilled to partner with Augusta Recreation Dept, Lost Valley,



Boys & Girls Club of the Border Towns, Micmac tribe, and Healthy Peninsula to offer these ‘ski free’ days for the youth in our community. WinterKids believes in the transformative power of outdoor winter activities and aims to break down barriers that may prevent children from experiencing the joy of skiing and snowboarding,” said Julie Mulkern, Executive Director at WinterKids.

“Augusta Parks and

Recreation was pleased to be part of the WinterKids Ski Trip to Lost Valley on Sunday, January 21st, 2024. Working with WinterKids was an easy process that brings outdoor education and enjoyment together in a way that warms our hearts! We are anticipating great ski conditions and students are excited to have an immersive experience in learning how to ski! Thank you for this opportunity to share our love for outdoor edu-

cation!” said Kelli Gilzow Stowell, Program Coordinator at Augusta Parks and Recreation.

These events align with WinterKids’ mission to promote healthy, active, and vibrant kids through outdoor winter fun. WinterKids supports all winter kids from first timers to avid weekend warriors being active outdoors, but we especially like introducing new kids to winter sports in Maine. WinterKids estimates that approximately 50% of the participants will be brand new to skiing and snowboarding. WinterKids would like to extend a special thank you to Lost Valley and BigRo-

ck for supporting our mission and making these ski trips happen.

For more information about WinterKids and its initiatives, please visit <https://winterkids.org>.

**Best Source for Arts, Music and Theater! Your Hometown Paper.**

# \$10M in literacy grants for Maine schools

The Mills Administration announced a \$10 million literacy grant opportunity for schools to support the development, expansion, and enhancement of evidence-based core literacy instruction and targeted interventions for Maine students. These literacy grants through the Maine Department of Education (DOE) are intended to build the capacity of year-long, core literacy instruction for all students and support core literacy instructional components, including phonics, phonemic awareness, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

Grant funds can be used by schools to compensate educators for participating in evidence-based literacy professional learning opportunities and internal instruction and program review processes, for professional learning opportunities on evidence-based literacy practices, to train instructional coaches, and to purchase evidence-based literacy materials.

“Literacy is a foundational skill that enables students to thrive in school, work, life, and as citizens in our democracy. This investment in literacy will help schools and educators provide all stu-

dents in Maine with evidence-based core literacy instruction and interventions. It’s an investment in the future of our state,” said Maine Education Commissioner Pender Makin.

The grants were developed following the work by a Maine DOE workgroup of literacy specialists to analyze early literacy programs in Maine to understand better which assessment measures, programs, resources, evidence-based practices, and educator supports have yielded strong student growth. The Maine DOE workgroup created recommendations,

which were provided to the Maine Legislature in December 2022. This \$10 million grant initiative was designed out of LD 1526, which was passed by the Legislature and signed by the Governor, to increase student reading proficiency in Maine.

“The literacy grant the DOE is providing is giving schools the opportunity to participate in the much needed and requested professional development around the science of reading. These funds will allow us to provide vital training in this area and the opportunity to pur-

See Literacy, page 7

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# Arts & Entertainment

## Stanton Bird Club to hold February meeting

AUBURN, ME -- Winter tracking will be the focus of the Stanton Bird Club's February 5th meeting at the Auburn Public Library. Ben Nugent, District Supervisor for USDA Wildlife Services in Maine, will be the guest speaker. Looking for animal tracks is a fun activity to do any time of year, but it is especially easy to do in the winter. Snow covers the ground and lets us see traces left by animals of where they've been and what they are up to.

Nugent grew up in VT and graduated from the University of Vermont. Prior to working with the USDA Wildlife Services, he worked for Hodges Outfitters in Alaska, Great Smoky Mountains National Park, and the Institute for Wildlife Studies in California. He will be sharing photographs on winter wildlife tracking,

with pictures and examples from the wildlife in our local area. In addition, he will share a rare and special winter wildlife experience he had in Thorncrag in 2011.

The talk will be held on Monday, February 5th from 4-6pm at the Auburn Public Library. The public is welcome. The lecture series is free of charge. With the rise in respiratory cases in Androscoggin County, we encourage participants to wear masks.

The Stanton Bird Club, a leader in environmental awareness, owns and manages the Thorncrag Nature Sanctuary in Lewiston as well as the Woodbury Nature Sanctuary in Monmouth and Litchfield. More information about other activities of the Club can be found at [www.StantonBirdClub.org](http://www.StantonBirdClub.org) and on its Facebook page.



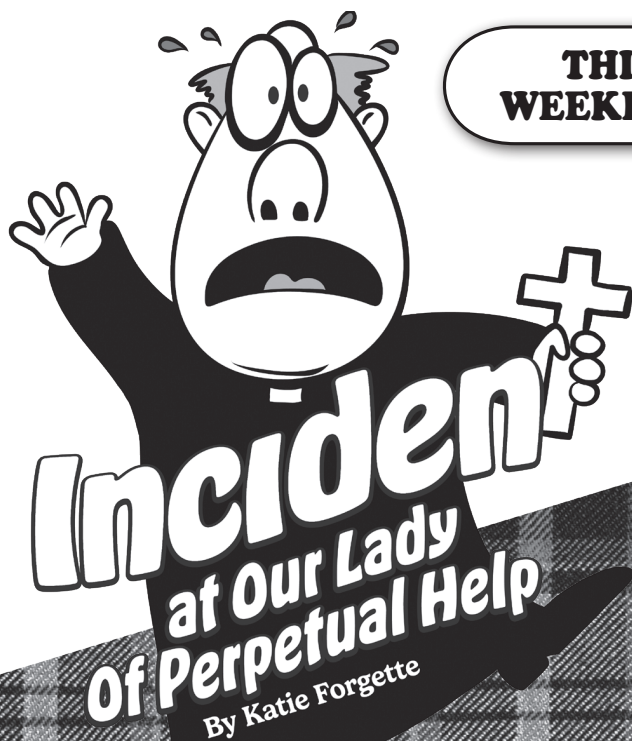
Winter Tracks – photo by Bird Club member Dan Marquis



Photo of Ben Nugent provided by Nugent

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A portion of these proceeds will go to the CLT Eastman Family Scholarship Fund to benefit high school seniors going on to study Performing Arts.

**Literacy**

*Continued from page 5*

chase classroom materials for literacy instruction. In RSU14, this means we can train more staff than we budgeted for using local funds. We are grateful to have this opportunity to support our staff,” said Christine Hesler, Director of Curriculum for RSU14. “The Maine DOE literacy grant is a great opportunity for many districts to reach their goal of all students becoming readers. Through providing professional development, purchasing additional resources and materials that are focused on research-based literacy strategies, this goal is attainable. These funds will supplement the financial investment districts already commit to literacy instruction,” said Deb McIntyre, Executive Director of the Maine Curriculum Leaders Association.

The grants also build off extensive efforts by the Mills Administration to strengthen child literacy skills in Maine, including investing \$10 million through the Governor’s Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan to create and expand pre-k programs across Maine. In 2022, the Maine DOE released, Literacy for ME 2.0, a revamped state literacy plan grounded in research-based literacy practices and organized around key components central to building comprehensive literacy programs.

Recognizing the vital importance of foundational literacy development and in response to school system inquiries related to early literacy program development, the Maine DOE and a team of Maine educators and educational partners, developed guidance to support School Administrative Units in

designing and implementing systematic and explicit early literacy instruction. This guidance is designed as a supportive tool for early elementary educators, administrators, and literacy leadership teams to reflect on current practices and to potentially adjust educational design to support high-quality and evidence-based early literacy learning for all PreK to Grade 3 students. The Maine DOE also provides interdisciplinary instructional programming and resources around literacy for pre-K, kindergarten, and first grade.

The Maine DOE has obtained a preschool development grant through the federal government to support professional learning in birth through grade three literacy practices grounded in science and the Department is working to secure access to on-de-

mand literacy modules that cover a wide variety of literacy content grounded in science for elementary educators, including content related to brain development, instructional practices connected to the essential components of reading and writing, dyslexia, and multilingual learners.

Last month, the Mills administration expanded the state’s partnership with Dolly Parton’s Imagination Library, with 4,500 eligible Maine children currently receiving free, high-quality, age-appropriate books through the program. The Maine DOE recently announced a partnership with I’m Your Neighbor Books to provide Welcoming Libraries to 16 schools across Maine, with each library containing 60 books featuring stories of immigrant families and the diversity of America. The Maine DOE also hosts the

Read to ME Challenge every February to encourage adults to read aloud to children and Read to Ride Summer, a contest that qualifies students who read at least 500 minutes over the summer a chance to win one of 48 donated bikes and helmets.

The DOE has also created several literacy-related educator groups, for educators and education organizations across Maine to share and develop resources and guide the state’s literacy work, including the State Literacy Team, Maine Association for Improving Literacy (MAIL) Network, State Dyslexia Advisory Group, Screening Project & Dyslexia Plan, and the Higher Education Pre-Service Literacy Faculty Group. These groups also share information, facilitate text studies, and offer training related to dyslexia aware-

ness, the Science of Reading, the neuroscience of the reading brain, systematic and evidence-based Tier I instruction to lower special education referral rates, support for striving readers, alignment and collaboration between general and special education for IDEA, and inclusive literacy instruction for students identified as having specific learning disabilities.

Literacy grants will be allocated to school administrative units (SAUS) and Education in Unorganized Territory (EUT) schools based on a formula model and the Maine DOE will be contacting SAUs & EUT directly through the Grants4ME platform with more information about their participation in the literacy grant program. Federal emergency relief funding was used to support these grants.

## \$120K in MaineCF grants to support transportation programs

**PORTLAND & ELLSWORTH** —The Maine Community Foundation’s (MaineCF) has awarded \$120,000 to nonprofit organizations that provide transportation services to Mainers. MaineCF’s Maine Charity Foundation Fund awarded

\$91,000 to 14 organizations and another \$29,000 was awarded to four organizations by donors with advised funds at MaineCF.

The Maine Charity grant program supports organizations that provide transportation services to people in Maine with lim-

ited or no access to transportation, including New Mainers, older people, people experiencing homelessness, those recovering from substance use disorder and survivors of domestic violence.

2023 grantees include:

Neighbors Driving Neighbors, to expand rider, driver, and destination outreach and increase capacity to meet demand for rides.

Age Friendly Saco, for its transportation program that helps residents access essential services: \$5,000

Bucksport Bay Healthy Communities Coalition, to offer free, bimonthly excursions for older people: \$1,000

Healthy Acadia, to develop a transportation program for under-resourced community members to access healthcare

appointments and social support services: \$10,000

Intercultural Community Center, for transportation for New Mainers to access education, health and social services: \$5,000

Knox County Homeless Coalition, to hire a  
*See MaineCF, page 10*



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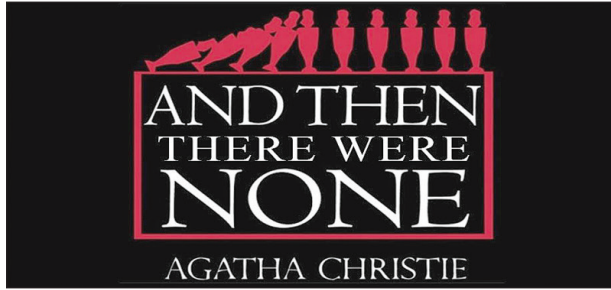
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# Final performances of *And Then There Were None* at CLT



AUBURN, ME -- The famous Agatha Christie murder mystery *And Then There Were None* is



being presented again this weekend at Community Little Theater (CLT) in Auburn.

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.

From left in a scene from the play are cast members Archer Slater as Anthony Marston, Tony Roy as William Blore, and Phil Vampatella as General Mackenzie.

Performances will be held at 7:30 p.m. on January 25 and 26, and at 2:00 p.m. on January 27 and 28. Tickets 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. Tickets may also be purchased at the door.

## Premier Pools & Spas named National Builder of the Year

LEWISTON, ME. -- Premier Pools & Spas of Lewiston, Maine, a family-owned builder of Gunite, Vinyl Liner, and Fiberglass pools, is proud to announce it has been awarded the "2023 National Builder of the Year - small market" at the annual Premier Pools and Spas Awards Conference. With over 160+ Independently owned and operated franchise locations nationwide, Premier Pools and Spas is the largest pool builder in the U.S.A.

Co-owners Mike Dubuc and Derek Messenger received the award at the Premier Pools and Spas Annual Awards Conference, and each had something to share. "Earning the small market Builder of the Year Award is a testament

to the hard work of our incredible team and the wonderful families that allow us the privilege to build their backyard dreams. Achieving this high honor is beyond what I could have imagined for our organization and community. We are excited to make a run at a repeat in 2024!" said Dubuc.

"The whole Premier Pools and Spas Maine team is dedicated to one goal: ensuring they bring customers' dreams to life. This starts at the very top with Mike and Derek. The bar is set so high that exceeding customers' wildest expectations is the benchmark. This why so many families have trusted Premier Pools and Spas Maine with such an important investment." said Josh Rickaby, Execu-



Premier Pools and Spas Co-owner Derek Messenger on left, Co-owner Mike Dubuc holding the award, and Salesperson Shelly Quinn left of Dubuc.

tive Vice-President Sales.

"This is our first time winning this prestigious award, and we are so proud of our team. These last few

years have been very challenging for us in this industry, and achieving this level of success says a lot about our people. It has been our

honor and privilege to partner with so many families to make their dreams come true and to be part of our Premier Family. We could not have done it without them, and I want to thank each and every one of them," said Messenger.

Premier Pools and Spas - Lewiston has been building swimming pools for over 30 years, building between 60-70 in-ground pool projects annually. With deep roots in the Lewiston community, we pride ourselves on our high standards and exemplary customer service.

If you're considering a new pool for your family or property, Premier Pools & Spas can make your dream a reality. Request a free consultation and estimate by contacting Shelly

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## YWCA'S Women of Achievement Awards open for nomination

Nominations for YWCA Central Maine's Women of Achievement Awards are now open. The awards brunch to be held on March 10th, 2024, at the Hilton Garden Inn Auburn Riverwatch will honor four distinguished women from Androscoggin County and the Greater State of Maine.

The Women of Achievement Awards Brunch is one the YWCA's largest bi-annual fundraisers and was founded in 2015 to honor the power-

ful leadership of women in Maine. This award program began to recognize the outgoing YWCA Board President, Lee Young. The decision to honor her work inspired YWCA executive leadership to create annual awards to celebrate the accomplishments of women in our community and state. The brunch convenes a diverse cross-section of our community, including organization leaders, educators, activists, artists, entrepreneurs, politicians, and supporters of the

YWCA. The Women of Achievement Awards Brunch is not only a uniquely, powerful celebration of women leaders, it is also an opportunity for proceeds to support the YWCA's work in the community, which provides meaningful programming and services to further the mission of empowering women, and eliminating racism, including scholarships for children in our community to attend sum-

*See YWCA, next page*



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# Heart-warming laughter and all the polyester you can handle!

**LEWISTON, ME** -- Whether you grew up Catholic or lived through the 1970's, the heartwarming comedy Incident at our Lady of Perpetual Help, playing at The Public Theatre, January 26 - Feb 4 is for you.

Take a trip down memory lane, to a time when telephones hung on walls, and public ridicule in a hermetically sealed Catholic parish was the ultimate nightmare.

It's 1973 and the O'Shea family faces a comic crisis of biblical proportions when the parish priest overhears their 19-year-old daughter tell her younger sister about "the birds and the bees". Holy hell and hilarity break loose as the O'Sheas must band together to save their reputation and prove that nothing is more sacred than family. "It's fun to see

how much the world has changed - and hasn't", says director Janet Mitchko. "This nostalgic and loving look at a quirky Irish Catholic family brings back a time when everyone used classic movies as references and you lived your life not on social media, but in person. It's the timeless story of a family glued together by love, loyalty, and humor that everyone will be able to relate to, whether you were raised Catholic or not".

Playing the role of Mike, the patriarch of the family (among other roles) is Doug Rees. Doug appeared previously at The Public Theatre in Middletown and Under the Skin and has the honor of originating roles in plays by Christopher Durang and Michael Hollinger both Off-Broadway and in regional theatres. Playing Jo,



Seated Left to right: Alison Briner Dardenne as Terri, Doug Rees as Mike, Scarlett Thomas as Becky. Standing left to right: Kelsey Petersen as Linda and Cate Damon as Jo

the mother who manages the O'Shea household is Cate Damon. Cate, who has a long list of Boston and regional theatre credits, was actually born in

Maine and is happy to return! Playing the role of Terri, Jo's quick witted sister temporarily living with the family, is Allison Briner Dardenne. Allison

has performed in a long list of Broadway and National Tours including Mamma Mia, Titanic, Les Miserables and Bright Star among others. Playing the eldest daughter Linda, the narrator of our story, is Kelsey Petersen, a Chicago based actress who has performed in leading roles for several seasons at the Asolo Theatre in Florida. Her 13-year-old sister Becky is played by Maine actress Scarlett Thomas, who most recently appeared as Louisa in Ogunquit Playhouse's production of The Sound of Music in Portsmouth. The 1970's set is designed by Jennifer B. Madigan, lights by Florence Cooley, sound by Scott O'Brien and groovy costumes by

Anne Collins.

Incident at our Lady of Perpetual Help, will be performed at The Public Theatre, Lewiston's Professional Theatre Jan 26 - Feb 4. Showtimes are Thurs and Fri at 7:30pm, Sat at 3pm, Sun at 2pm, Sat. Feb 3 at 3pm & 7:30pm. Tickets are \$30 Adults, \$25 Groups 10+, \$20 Student 19+ with ID. For tickets call 782-3200 or visit thepublictheatre.org. The Public Theatre is located at 31 Maple St., Lewiston.

Sponsored by Cross Insurance, Berube's Auto Care, Napa Coastal Auto Parts and Baxter Brewing. Season Underwriters: Sun Journal, Platz Associates, and Bennett Radio Group

## YWCA

Continued from previous page mer camp and swim lessons.

YWCA Central Maine invites the community to submit nominations for our Women of Achievement award that includes four distinct categories honoring: Leadership, Social Justice, Service, and Philanthropy. The award namesakes have all contributed their service to YWCA and their legacies inspire the work of the organization. The four awards include the Lee Young Leadership Award, the Marcia Baxter Social Justice Award,

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the Tonic Ramsey Service Award, and the Priscilla Gendron Legacy Award. Nominations are open until February 1, 2024. To nominate go to: <https://bit.ly/NominateWOA> Tickets for Women of Achievement can be purchased at: <https://YWCAMaine-WOA.eventbrite.com>

If you are interested in sponsoring this event or donating an item to the silent auction please reach out to Jennifer Molloy, Chief Development and Communications Officer at [jmolloy@ywcaine.org](mailto:jmolloy@ywcaine.org)

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### MaineCF

*Continued from page 7*

second driver to extend its transportation service hours: \$10,000

Maine Association of New Americans, to increase capacity for its transportation program that serves immigrants, asylum seeker and refugee families: \$5,000

MSAD #52, for a rideshare program for immigrant students: \$2,500

Neighbors Driving Neighbors, to expand rider, driver, and destination outreach and increase capacity

to meet demand for rides: \$10,000

Penquis Community Action Program, for free transportation for older people in Penobscot and Piscataquis counties: \$5,000

People Plus, to expand capacity of its Volunteer Transportation Network to connect older adults to essential services and programs: \$10,000

Preble Street, to strengthen transportation access for Florence House clients to meet casework and housing goals and pro-

vide enrichment opportunities that positively impact wellbeing: \$7,500

Town of Windham, to provide transportation options to the community: \$5,000

Veterans Inc., to provide transportation for older veterans or veterans with disabilities to access housing, employment and other opportunities: \$10,000

Western Maine Transportation Services Inc., for workplace and dialysis transportation: \$5,000

2023 grants from donor-advised funds:

MSAD #52, for a rideshare program for immigrant students: \$2,000

United Recovery Fund, to provide transportation for Mainers re-entering the workforce after criminal justice involvement and/or are in early recovery from a substance use disorder: \$10,000

The Progress Center, to expand Children's In-Home Supports that serves children with developmental disabilities, mental health diagnoses and learning disorders: \$10,000

Safe Voices, to pro-

vide transportation assistance to survivors of domestic abuse, sex trafficking, and sexual exploitation in Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford counties: \$7,000

The Maine Charity Foundation was established in 1921. In September 1993, its assets were transferred to the MaineCF, where it became a competitive grant program. Over the years, the grant program criteria and priorities have changed to meet the needs of Mainers. In 2023, the fund broad-

ened its scope to include organizations that provide transportation services for those with limited or no access to transportation.

For more information about the fund, visit [www.mainecharity.org](http://www.mainecharity.org).

The Maine Community Foundation brings people and resources together to build a better Maine through strategic giving, community leadership, personalized service, local expertise and strong investments. To learn more about the foundation, visit [www.mainecharity.org](http://www.mainecharity.org).

## OPEI offers 12 tips to help prepare ahead of storms

**MAINE** -- The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) reminds home and business owners that it's important to make sure you have the right outdoor power equipment on hand and are prepared before a storm.

"Across the country, we're seeing weather events that are more significant and more frequent. These present real challenges to homeowners and businesses. Thankfully, outdoor power equipment is here to help. There is a product and power source for every need and to address every scenario," said Kris Kiser, President and CEO of OPEI. "At all times of the year, it's important to keep your outdoor power equipment in working order, to have the right fuel on hand, and to know where your safety gear is. Get prepared now,

so you are ready."

OPEI offers the following tips:

Make a list of what you need to clean up. Survey your property. Consider the damage a storm might cause and make a list of what tools might be needed for repairs. You might need a chainsaw, pole pruner, water pump, portable generator, snow thrower, or utility vehicle.

Take stock of your outdoor power equipment. Make sure equipment is in good working order. If needed, take your equipment to an authorized service center for maintenance or repair.

Find your safety gear. Avoid the scramble for sturdy shoes, safety goggles, hard hats, reflective clothing and work gloves, which should be stored in an accessible area with your equipment.



Review the owner's manuals for your equipment. Read product manuals to ensure you know how to operate your equipment safely.

Have the right fuel on hand. Fuel stations may be closed after a storm, so it's important to have the proper fuel for your equipment. Store your fuel in an approved container. Use the type of fuel recommended by your equipment manufacturer. It is illegal to

use any fuel with more than 10% ethanol in outdoor power equipment (for more information: [www.LookBeforeYouPump.com](http://www.LookBeforeYouPump.com)).

Use common sense when using outdoor power equipment. After the storm, take time to think through a strategy for clean-up efforts, and use the appropriate equipment for the job. If necessary, call a professional landscape contractor or tree

care service.

Keep batteries charged. Make sure batteries for your equipment are fully charged in advance of a storm, and only use manufacturer-approved charging systems. Keep a couple of extra batteries on hand to keep equipment running.

Trim trees safely. Keep both feet firmly on the ground, and observe the safety zone, which means keeping bystanders and power lines (those above you and any that might have fallen down) at least 50 feet away from your work area.

Ensure portable electric generators have plenty of ventilation. Generators should never be used in an enclosed area or placed inside a home or garage, even if the windows or doors are open. Place the generator outside and away

from windows, doors, and vents that could allow carbon monoxide to come indoors. Keep the generator dry, and make sure you have adequate lengths of extension cords. Before refueling, turn the generator off and let it cool down.

Drive utility vehicles (UTVs) with caution. Keep the vehicle stable and drive slowly. Do not turn the vehicle mid-slope or while on a hill.

Be aware of others. Keep bystanders, children and animals out of your work area. Do not allow other people near outdoor power equipment when starting the equipment or using it.

Listen to your body. Storm cleanup can be draining. Do not operate power equipment when you are tired, drink plenty of water and take regular breaks.

## MaineCF grants available to statewide nonprofits

**PORTLAND & ELLSWORTH** —Non-profit organizations and projects that support statewide initiatives may be eligible for grants from the Maine Community Foundation's (MaineCF) Community Building Grant Program.

The grant program invests in local projects and organizations that help build strong communities. In 2023, 22 nonprofit organizations were awarded grants totaling \$203,371. Donors with advised funds at MaineCF awarded 11 additional grants totaling \$95,000.

The Community Building Grant Program

supports projects and organizations that invest in people, engage with the people served, and strengthen community resources. Applicants must identify how the organization or project invests in people's skills, knowledge and/or well-being. They will also be asked to explain how they engage the people served in the design, delivery and/or evaluation of the work. The grantmaking committees are also interested to learn which community resources are being strengthened.

Nonprofit organizations and projects that serve three or more counties are eligible to



# Maine

Community Foundation

apply for statewide funding from the Community Building Grant Program. Organizations and projects that serve only one county should apply to their county funds.

Last year's statewide grantees included:

Hardy Girls Healthy Women, to expand the Feminist Action Board,

a free program for high schoolers

Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project, to expand legal immigrant services for asylum seekers

Maine Youth for Climate Justice, to stipend youth leaders, increase staff capacity and expand programming.

For a full list of 2023 Community Building grants by county, visit [www.mainecharity.org/recentgrants](http://www.mainecharity.org/recentgrants).

The Community Building Grant Program is MaineCF's largest grant program. It is one of the only grant programs in the state that supports a broad range of inter-

est areas, including arts, education, environment, economic development and human services.

The grant program offers two types of funding: project grants and general support. Project grants are only available to larger organizations for new projects. General support grants are geared towards smaller organizations and this flexible funding may support new, expanding or ongoing programs as well as operational needs.

Learn more about Community Building Grant Program qualifications and the application process at [www.mainecharity.org/communitybuilding](http://www.mainecharity.org/communitybuilding).

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# TurfMutt's tips for enjoying your yard, a winter wonderland

**ALEXANDRIA, Va.** – Spending time outside in your own backyard and community green space – backyarding, as the TurfMutt Foundation calls it – is good for you no matter what time of year. When winter hits and the temperatures drop and the days get shorter, it just takes a little more creativity to turn your yard into an outdoor oasis.

“Our living landscapes transform when our yards and parks are covered with white snow,” says Kris Kiser, President & CEO of the TurfMutt Foundation, which advocates for the care and use of our backyards, community parks and public green spaces. “Mutt Mulligan the TurfMutt and I really enjoy

spending time outside even when it's cold and snowy. We just have to prepare properly for it and plan ahead.”

Here are the TurfMutt Foundation's suggestions for turning your backyard into a winter wonderland:

Take cues from your dog. Most dogs love to play in the snow because it offers new smells to sniff out and a new layer to dig through. Lace up your winter boots and enjoy your yard with your family, including your dog. Snowballs make for an excellent game of fetch. If you get enough snow, you can even create an obstacle course for your furry friend. Using a snow thrower will make quick work of the task and can provide a clear

path for your pup to do his “business,” too.

Light it up. Create a welcoming ambience that draws your family outside by stringing lights in your trees and shrubs and on your patio. You can also add lanterns and solar and battery operated candles around your yard to bathe your outdoor space in sparsely, inviting light.

Add warmth. Being comfortable in the wintertime is all about temperature. Firepits are an excellent choice to add warmth, and they create an opportunity to gather around to make s'mores or tell stories. Patio heaters and outdoor fireplaces are another option to warm up your outdoor living room. For

an added layer of comfort, set out a basket of blankets, along with packets of hand and toe warmers.

Create snow activities. Lure your family outside by creating winter-themed activities that are fun for all ages. Snowball fights, snowman building sessions, a game of freeze tag, and even tic-tac-SNOW are just a few ways to make a game of being outside this winter.

Attract wildlife. Throughout the year, your yard is an important part of the connected ecosystem, linking nature to the man-made world of our neighborhoods. Support wildlife in the wintertime by adding bird and squirrel feeders to your trees and patio. Then

observe the kinds of wildlife that visit your yard and how they are different from other seasonal wildlife.

Involve your community. Who says neighborhood block parties can only happen in the summertime? Create community this winter by inviting your neighbors to participate in a Winter Wonderland Block Party. You can host a snowman building contest or snowball competition and serve hot chocolate to warm up.

Explore community green space. Take your winter backyarding into the community by exploring your neighborhood parks and other community green spaces. Take a nature walk to identify the wildlife you

can spot in the wintertime. Or lace up your snowshoes or cross-country skis to explore the winter landscape. Grab the other kids on your block or in your building and hit the sledding hill at the community park. The options are endless!

Dress for success. As the saying goes, there is no such thing as bad weather, just bad clothing choices. Remember to bundle up and wear layers when you head outside this winter. You will also want to keep your pet safe by monitoring their time outside and removing the snow from under their bellies and in between their paw pads before heading back inside. Remember, if you are cold, your pet probably is, too.

# MaineCF awards \$470K to Maine environmental initiatives

**PORTLAND & ELLSWORTH, ME** — The Maine Community Foundation (MaineCF) has awarded \$469,623 to 25 conservation initiatives around the state.

The foundation's Maine Land Protection grant program awarded \$127,199 to three nonprofit organizations and donors with advised funds at MaineCF awarded an additional \$105,000 to three more organizations. In total, the grants will conserve nearly 2,600 acres.

2023 Maine Land Protection grantees include:

Coastal Mountains Land Trust, to acquire 119 acres in Waldo

Hearty Roots, to secure 400 acres in Bremen for mindful recreation

Somerset Woods Trustees, to acquire 75 acres in Anson on the Carrabassett River for public access and protection of four endangered and threatened species.

MaineCF's Conservation for All grant program awarded \$186,034 to 13 nonprofit organizations that build strong connec-

tions between Maine people and its land and water. Donors with advised funds at MaineCF awarded and additional \$51,390 to seven nonprofit organizations.

2023 Conservation for All grantees include:

Downeast Institute, to engage youth in outdoor activities that focus on sustaining natural resources and stewardship of land and water

Intercultural Community Center, to provide outdoor access to New Mainers through education and nature-based learning activities

Maine Association for New Americans, to provide immigrant youth recreation opportunities through outdoor retreats.

The Fund for Maine Land Conservation grant program started in the early 1990s. In 2018, MaineCF closed the Fund for Maine Land Conservation grant program and in its place created two new land conservation grant programs: Conservation for All, which offers general support and Maine Land Protection, which offers support for land acquisi-

tions and easements.

For more information, visit [www.maine.cf.org/mlp](http://www.maine.cf.org/mlp) and [www.maine.cf.org/c4a](http://www.maine.cf.org/c4a).

2023 Conservation for All grantees:

Downeast Institute, to engage youth in outdoor activities that focus on sustaining natural resources and stewardship of land and water: \$15,000

Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters, for the Katahdin Learning Project that connects area youth to nature, community and career pathways through place-based education programs: \$14,000

Intercultural Community Center, to provide outdoor access to New Mainers through education and nature-based learning activities: \$15,000

Kindling Collective, to expand its gear library and programming to engage queer people in outdoor activities and increase their access to nature: \$15,000

Land in Common, to create secure, affordable, lifetime access to land with and for Maine's BIPOC community: \$15,000

Maine Association for New Americans, to provide immigrant youth recreation opportunities through outdoor retreats: \$15,000

Maine Community Integration, for “Sprout Lewiston,” a hands-on ecology education program for New Mainer youth in partnership with Maine Audubon: \$15,000

Maine Youth for Climate Justice, to expand the Outing Club and Food Sovereignty Cohort: \$10,034

Piscataquis County Soil and Water Conservation District, for land and trail maintenance and to expand access to community forests: \$15,000

Southern Maine Conservation Collaborative, to expand capacity: \$15,000

Western Maine Addiction Recovery Initiative, for a Recovery Outings program to connect people in recovery and those affected by substance use disorder through recreation: \$12,000

Wild Seed Project, to partner with Portland schools to create Indigenous plant landscapes: \$15,000

Women for Healthy Rural Living, for Outdoor Women Lead, a program that strengthens women's

and girls' confidence in the outdoors: \$15,000

From donor-advised funds:

Belfast Bay Watershed Coalition, for a year-round, afterschool nature club for middle schoolers: \$2,600

Climate Change for All Educators, to train Maine educators in lesson plan creation for the Maine Education Hub: \$15,000

Community Conservation Initiative, to educate and empower Black immigrants and asylum seekers in environmental and ecological stewardship: \$15,000

Friends of Katahdin Woods and Waters, for the Katahdin Learning Project that connects area youth to nature, community and career pathways through place-based education programs: \$1,000

Friends of L.C. Bates Museum, for outdoor community activities that use museum resources for environmental learning experiences: \$1,290

Hearty Roots, to improve youth mental wellness through outdoor programming: \$7,500

Somali Bantu Community Association, to provide land access, culturally appropriate livelihood development and increased food security to immigrant

families: \$10,000  
2023 Maine Land Protection grantees:

Coastal Mountains Land Trust, to acquire 119 acres in Waldo: \$38,600

Hearty Roots, to secure 400 acres in Bremen for mindful recreation: \$50,000

Somerset Woods Trustees, to acquire 75 acres in Anson on the Carrabassett River for public access and protection of four endangered and threatened species: \$38,599

From donor-advised funds:

Blue Hill Heritage Trust, to conserve the Bridges property on the Bagaduce River: \$5,000

Greater Lovell Land Trust, to purchase 1,350-plus acres of forest and 4 miles of Kezar River frontage: \$50,000

The Trust for Public Land, to create and protect 446-acre Rumford Community Forest for recreation, habitats and sustainable forestry: \$50,000

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**Jan 25**  
LEWISTON --  
THROWBACK THURSDAY MOVIE MATINEE

Our fifth event is Thursday, January 25, 2024, from 4 to 6 p.m. in Callahan Hall and will feature a movie open to all age groups. Come enjoy the sequel to the 90s classic that got us all quacking on ice and rooting for Team USA. Some snacks will be provided but patrons are welcome to bring their favorite movie treats along with them. 513-3135; www.LPLonline.org

**Jan 26**

AUBURN -- Thinking in the Box: Let's Make Comics! from 3 PM - 4 PM - Teen Space, Auburn Public Library

Have you ever wanted to make your own comic? If you're unsure what to write, not sure how to produce your comic or if you're interested in how comics are made, stop by the Teen Space and get some ideas!

**Jan 27**

GRAY -- First Congregational Church of Gray Saturday Night Church Supper on Saturday January 27, 2024 @ 5:00 at the Parish House, 5 Brown Street, Gray. Handicapped Accessible

Meals are Single-sized and are \$10.00 each. Please pay at the door. The Menu includes: Variety of Casseroles, & Salads, Baked Pea Beans,

# Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

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**Jan 27**

BUXTON -- Try our delicious Haddock Supper Buffet - Saturday, January 27, 2024 - 5:00 pm at Living Waters Church, Parker Farm Road, Buxton. Suggested donation: \$10 Adult, \$5 Child, \$20 Family.

Please note: We will offer the option of takeout containers for those who do not want to come inside for seating. Wearing of face masks for those who wish is optional. Hand sanitizer is available for those who wish to use it.

**Jan 27**

LISBON FALLS -- Dine In/Take Out Bean Supper Saturday, January 27th from 4:30pm - 5:30pm or SOLD OUT at Lisbon United Methodist Church, 14 School Street, Lisbon Falls, ME. Sponsored by the Methodist Women;

Adults \$9.00. Menu: Pea Beans, Hot Dogs, Potato Salad, Cole Slaw, dinner roll and a slice of pie! FMI-Gwen Rioux 353-6814

**Jan 31**

AUBURN -- Anime & Manga Club from 4 PM - 5 PM - Teen Space, Auburn

Public Library

Join us in the Teen Space to watch anime, read manga and share your fanart with fellow fans. While we have plenty of manga in the stacks, feel free to bring some of your own to share with the group!

**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.

**Feb 4, 7, 8, 9, 10**

MAINE - DaPonte String Quartet Concerts in February. Program: Beethoven String Trio in D Major, Op. 9 no 2, Francaix String Trio & Arensky Quartet No. 2 in A minor, Op. 35 for violin, viola and 2 cellos with guest artist, cellist Fred Edelen. Tickets and additional information available at www.dapontequartet.org

Sunday, February 4, 2:00 pm, St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Boothbay

Wednesday, February

7, 7:00 pm, Union Hall, Rockport

Thursday, February 8, 7:00 pm, Jewish Community Alliance, Portland

Friday, February 9, 7:00 pm, Nordica Hall, University of Maine, Farmington

Saturday, February 10, 2:00 pm, Lemont Hall, Brunswick

**Feb 5**

LEWISTON -- TAROT 101 WORKSHOP AT LPL

The Lewiston Public Library will host a Tarot 101 Workshop on Tuesday, February 6, 2024, from 5 to 6:30 pm in The Jeanne Couture Room. The Tarot 101 Workshop will feature the return of Kate Sheridan, a.k.a The Laundress. This workshop is free and open to both teens and adults. Registration is required and the link to sign up can be found on the Lewiston Public Library's website under events.

Please bring your own 78-card deck and something to take notes with you to the program. 513-3135; www.LPLonline.org

**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

**May 18, 19**

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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

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

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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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# Youth Food Champion Award winners named

**LEWISTON/AUBURN** - On January 15th The Good Food Council of Lewiston-Auburn (GFCLA) was honored to award the 2023 'Youth Food Champion Award' winners at the Bates College MLK Day workshop "Young Mainers' Efforts for Food and Climate Justice." The event also included a talk on Food Sovereignty and Youth Activism from Scarlet Labbé-Watson from Maine Youth for Climate Justice.

The Youth Food Champion Awards are hosted annually by the GFCLA to celebrate the unique contributions of up to five individuals or groups from the greater Lewiston-Auburn area who 'lead by example' within one, or more, of the five principles of the LA Community Food Charter to create a more vibrant and healthy local food system from farm-to-fork. In 2023, the Awards—sponsored by Bangor Savings Bank, Double Z Land & Livestock, St. Mary's Nutrition Center, and Austin Associates—honor and celebrate five individual youth and youth groups, ages 11-25, in Androsco-

gin County. Winners were selected from among nominations made by the public on the GFCLA website this spring. The following are the 2023 'Youth Food Champion Award' winners:

Houda Aden (Lewiston)

Houda is a teenage Lewiston resident attending Edward Little High School in Auburn. As part of St. Mary's Nutrition Center's Fall Gardener Program, Houda worked in the community gardens at both the Nutrition Center and at Hillview, which is part of Lewiston Public Housing in Lewiston. Houda hopes to put the knowledge she gained from this work toward an education in biology.

Odivio Mariano (Lewiston)

Odivio is a 20 year old Lewiston resident. He has also been a participant in St. Mary's Nutrition Center's youth programs for a number of years, most recently as Team Leader for a new program collaboration called Gateway to Opportunity. Working with 14 and 15 year olds, Odivio helped introduce young people to



**2023 Youth Food Champion Award Winners (seated) receive recognition and pose with staff and members of the Good Food Council of Lewiston-Auburn, elected officials, and event sponsors at "Young Mainers Efforts for Food & Climate Justice" workshop at the annual Bates College MLK Jr Day event on January 15th, 2024. From L to R (seated): Odivio Mariano of Lewiston, Isha Kasai of Lewiston, Houda Aden of Lewiston, and Brayden Nadeau of Auburn; From L to R (standing): Kate & Zoe Webber (GFCLA); Erica Dostie (Austin Associates), Carl Sheline (Mayor of Lewiston), Jeff Newell (GFCLA), Eric Fleischmann (GFCLA), and Julia Harper (GFCLA).**

gardening, cultivating the land, local food systems and nourishing meals by working with them in the gardens and in the kitchen and empowering them to expand their skills and curiosity in these areas.

Isha Kasai (Lewiston)

Isha is a Lewiston resident and the Youth Program Coordinator for

the Somali Bantu Community Association. Taking on many different roles in SBCA including a contributor to projects at Liberation Farms, her primary role is designing and implementing programming for children and teens. This summer, she worked with teen leaders and dozens of children to create different recipes on

a weekly basis, which enabled them to grow their cooking skills and to try new foods. Since August, she has been facilitating the program Oh Yea! 4-H Grows True Leaders, which helps youth learn about their local food system and support farm-to-table efforts.

Brayden Nadeau (Auburn)

Brayden is a 13 year old Auburn resident, who, several years ago, began farming his grandfather's land—both growing food and taking care of livestock—and operating his own vegetable stand. He has been featured in the Washington Post, the Sun Journal, and Scholastic News and has received additional national attention for the work he does at such a young age providing food to his community and his neighbors' enthusiastic responses and support through good times and tough times.

In addition to a physical award, each winner received a \$100 Buoy Local Card from Bangor Savings Bank, a \$50 Gift Card to OTTO Pizza Auburn, and movie passes to Flagship Cinemas.

The LA Community Food Charter was launched in 2016 as a way to highlight the community's food values, build greater awareness and support for a more vibrant local food system, as well as provide a framework for discussion by community members and policy-makers. The LA Food Charter was the first of its kind in the State of Maine, and since its creation, two additional Maine communities have created their own: Western Foothills Community Food Charter and Knox County Food Charter. The cities of Auburn and Lewiston have endorsed the LA Food Charter, as have over 300 individuals, businesses, and organizations. Anyone interested is encouraged to sign the LA Food Charter on the GFCLA website to demonstrate their own support for, and commitment to, a healthy and sustainable local food system from farm-to-fork.

The public is invited to follow the GFCLA on Facebook and Instagram for updates. For questions, contact Eric Fleischmann at 513124545 or goodfoodcouncila@gmail.com.

# Onion Foundation appoints Rosalind Erwin

**AUBURN, ME** -- The Onion Foundation in Auburn, Maine has announced the appointment of Rosalind Erwin to serve as its Environment Program Officer. She will have responsibility for leading the Environment Program, which focuses on Equitable Outdoor Access, Nature Learning, and Advocacy and Movement Building. Erwin joined the foundation on January 8, 2024.



Erwin joined the foundation on January 8, 2024. "We are excited to have Roz join our team. With her 12 years of philanthropic experience, she will take the lead in our work to build a stronger environmental sector with the goal of increasing access to and enjoyment of the state's natural resources," said Susan Onion, co-founder of the foundation. Erwin recently served as a Senior Program

Officer at New Hampshire Charitable Foundation, where she oversaw environmental grantmaking across the state as well as a community grantmaking program in southeastern New Hampshire and southern Maine. There she had responsibility for designing and implementing a new environmental grantmaking strategy. "Roz shares our commitment to advancing equity and is eager to work with the nonprofit com-

munity, peer funders, and others to develop inclusive and effective environmental programs and organizations," said Diana Morris, executive director of the foundation. Earlier in her career, Erwin was a Program Officer at the Leona M. and Harry B. Helmsley Charitable Trust and developed environmental conservation grantmaking programs nationally as well as in Myanmar and Mexico. She also served as a Resilience Project Manager and as a Senior Program Manager at Cities of Service, where she worked directly with ten municipalities across the country, launched a new grants program, and cultivated a community of practice to develop climate resilience programs in vulnerable communities. Erwin

captured the municipalities' experiences and learning in several publications as well as in blog posts.

Erwin holds a Bachelor

of Arts in Biology from Colby College, concentrating in Environment Science, as well as a Master of Science in Biology from

Fordham University, specializing in Ecology. She lives in Kennebunk, Maine with her husband and two children.

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