



# TWIN CITY TIMES

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Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1999

Thursday, February 8, 2024 • FREE

## Infectious energy this weekend at Great Falls Comedy Club



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.

AUBURN, ME – Make laughter a priority this week at Great Falls Comedy Club with two shows, February 9th, and 10th at 7:30 pm.

The club is excited to bring, all the way from the left coast, comedian Peter Sers. Peter has been a Los Angeles based comedian, touring with his infectious energy and likeable stage persona throughout the country. He has appeared on The Late Late Show, Law and Order LA, MTV Homewreckers, and Friday he will host a showcase of New England comics featuring Mo Awale and Liam Hales and more. Then on Saturday, Sers headlines the club for what is to be a night full of laughter with your host Crystal Bernard and opening act, Casey Watson.

Tickets for both shows can be found at <https://www.greatfallscomedyclub.com> or purchased at the door. Great Falls

## Lewiston's Chief Assessor elected to international role



LEWISTON, ME – With the backing of 8,000 members of the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO), William "Bill" Healey, Lewiston's Chief Assessor, is the organization's new Vice-President. Bill is the first assessing officer from Maine to achieve this role in 40 years.

"I am profoundly grateful for the honor of being elected," said Healey. "The endorsement and backing of esteemed assessors worldwide hold great significance and are deeply appreciated," said Healey, who joined the IAAO in 1998.

IAAO is the preeminent source for innovation, education and research in property appraisal, assessment administration, and property tax policy. Founded in 1934, IAAO members are from gov-

ernment, business, and academic communities. Membership provides access to educational resources, networking, and research data regarding administration of property tax.

"The City of Lewiston is very fortunate to have outstanding department heads, and Bill's involvement with the International Association of Assessing Officers is a tremendous asset to the work he does here in Lewiston," said City Administrator Heather Hunter.

"I have been an IAAO member for 25 years and find networking to be a great asset. I can reach out to the membership and get assistance with nearly any assessing issue when needed. As Lewiston is undertaking a citywide revaluation to be completed by early 2026, being part of the IAAO will be a valuable resource," said Healey.

Healey has served as the City of Lewiston's Chief Assessor since 2015. He has been a Certified Maine Assessor for over 22 years and also served as Assessor for Cumberland, Yarmouth, and Scarborough Maine.

Healey has been very involved with the Maine Association of Assessing Officers, serving as Education Chair and as President and as a member of Northeastern Regional Association of Assessing Officers, where he served as Vice President.

In 2019, Healey was awarded the IAAO's Residential Evaluation Specialist Award, one of the highest honors to be achieved within the assessing profession.

## Deadline to contribute to L-A Response Fund is Feb. 20

PORTLAND & ELLSWORTH — The deadline to contribute to the Maine Community Foundation's (MaineCF) Lewiston-Auburn Area Response Fund is Tuesday, Feb. 20. To date, the fund has received more than \$5 million in contributions.

"The Maine Community Foundation is grateful for the outpouring of support from more than 3,000 donors across the world," President and CEO Deborah Ellwood said. "While these contributions cannot dull pain of this terrible tragedy, we hope they can help ease the burden on victims, families and the broader community."

The fund was established on Oct. 27, 2023, as a tax- and fee-free fund to which people can contribute to support those impacted by the tragic mass shootings at Schemengees Bar & Grille and Just-In-Time Recreation in Lewiston on Oct. 25, 2023. MaineCF has waived its administrative fees, so that 100% of ev-

ery dollar donated goes to help victims, families and nonprofit organizations supporting the recovery effort.

A deadline for contributions is necessary for the fund's steering committees to allocate contributions in a timely manner.

Donations can be made at [www.mainecef.org/lewiston](http://www.mainecef.org/lewiston) or by mail to: Lewiston-Auburn Area Response Fund, Maine Community Foundation, 245 Main St., Ellsworth, ME 04605. Donations by mail must be postmarked by Feb. 20.

Within the fund, there are two ways to direct contributions: to victims and families or to the broader recovery effort. All donations will be distributed in accordance with the protocols finalized by the fund's steering committees.

Visit [www.mainecef.org/lewiston](http://www.mainecef.org/lewiston) for detailed information on donations and the disbursement protocols. For further questions, contact [lewiston@mainecf.org](mailto:lewiston@mainecf.org).

## MCPM offers Nurse Practitioner Fellowship

LEWISTON, ME – The Maine Center for Palliative Medicine Nurse Practitioner Fellowship is a one-year program designed to nurture and educate a certified Nurse Practitioner in hospice and palliative care, across a wide range of settings.

Objectives of the MCPM Fellowship:

The NP fellow will receive supervision and conditional independence from faculty through didactic and clinical learning in order to achieve successful board certification in Advanced Hospice and Palliative Nursing.

At the end of the fellowship year, the fellow trained nurse will be able to:

Provide patient-centered care that is

compassionate, culturally sensitive, appropriate, and effective for the treatment of both common and uncommon health conditions.

Enhance knowledge of established and evolving biopsychosocial, clinical, epidemiological, and nursing sciences and use of evidence-based practice.

Demonstrate the ability to evaluate one's own practice and improve outcomes with patients. Based on the best available evidence, constant self-evaluation, and lifelong learning are imperative.

Facilitate effective communication in collaboration with patients, their families, and inter-professional colleagues.

See Fellowship, page 3

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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## CASH Greater Portland offers free tax preparation services

**PORTLAND, ME** – CASH (Creating Assets, Savings, and Hope) Greater Portland has launched free tax preparation services for the 2024 tax season. Households that earned \$64,000 or less in 2023 and meet all eligibility requirements can get their taxes filed for free with the help of an IRS-certified volunteer.

Taxpayers can also learn about programs in their community that can increase their income, reduce debt, and build savings. 9% of households in

Cumberland County live below the Federal Poverty Level, while another 28% are ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). ALICE earns more than the FPL but still struggles to afford the high cost of living in our community. 53% of people under 25 in Cumberland County are also ALICE.

CASH Greater Portland offers four free and convenient options for filing taxes.

**Option 1—In-Person Appointment:** Schedule an appointment for in-person

services at United Way of Southern Maine's Portland office by visiting [uwsme.org/taxseason](http://uwsme.org/taxseason) or calling 207-347-2335 and leaving a message with your name and phone number.

**Option 2—Fully Virtual Service:** Visit [getyourrefund.org/gpmaine](http://getyourrefund.org/gpmaine) to start the online intake process. Answer a series of questions, upload documents, receive phone calls from the CASH team, and e-sign before the return is e-filed.

**Option 3—Online DIY:** File taxes independently (with access to

helpline support) at [myfreetaxes.com](http://myfreetaxes.com).

**Option 4—Scan & Go:** Visit a Scan & Go Site to pick up an intake packet and return to have documents scanned into GetYourRefund. A list of Scan & Go sites is available at [uwsme.org/taxseason](http://uwsme.org/taxseason).

Through services like free tax preparation, CASH Greater Portland empowers people to achieve long-term financial stability, build assets, and thrive—not just survive. In 2023, CASH Greater Portland

filed 526 federal and state tax refunds and returned \$740,043 in federal tax refunds to the community. Filers saved an estimated \$122,304 in tax preparation fees.

CASH Greater Portland is supported in part by United Way of Southern Maine.

*About CASH Greater Portland*

CASH Greater Portland is a partnership of community non- and for-profit partners working together to help empower individuals and families to

achieve long-term financial stability. Since 2004, we have offered free tax preparation to qualified filers during tax season; helped employers bring financial education tools to their employees; and educated hard-working families and individuals about programs in the community that can increase their income, reduce debt, and build savings. CASH is a year-round resource, providing outreach and education about ways you can make the most of your money. [Cashmaine.org](http://Cashmaine.org)

## UMaine Extension hosts wild blueberry conference

**ELLSWORTH, ME** – The University of Maine Cooperative Extension will host its annual wild blueberry conference from 9 a.m.-4 p.m. on Feb. 17 at the Moore Community Center, 125 State St. This year, the conference will also offer a virtual option for those unable to attend in person.

The full-day event brings together experts, researchers, growers and industry leaders to discuss the latest developments and innovations in the wild blueberry industry. The conference will feature informative presentations,



panel discussions and networking opportunities for attendees.

“We are delighted to once again host the UMaine Wild Blueberry Conference and provide a platform for knowledge

sharing and collaboration within the wild blueberry industry,” said Lily Calderwood, Extension wild blueberry specialist and assistant professor of horticulture. “While we encourage in-person participation,



we understand that not everyone may be able to attend the conference. The virtual option will allow individuals to join the conference remotely and benefit from valuable insights that will contribute to the continued success of the wild blueberry industry.”

The conference will cover a wide range of topics, including wild blueber-

ry cultivation techniques, pest management strategies, market diversification ideas, and the latest research findings. Attendees will have the opportunity to hear from renowned experts in the field and gain insights into best practices and innovative approaches to wild blueberry production.

The registration

fee for the UMaine Wild Blueberry Conference is “pay what you can,” with a suggested donation of \$20. All proceeds from the conference will go directly towards supporting Extension’s wild blueberry programming, furthering research and education in the field.

Three pesticide credits will be available for full-day attendance. For more information and to register visit the program webpage. To request a reasonable accommodation, contact Mary Michaud, [mary.j.michaud@maine.edu](mailto:mary.j.michaud@maine.edu), 207.581.3175.

## Campaign for Justice highlights legal community's generosity

**AUGUSTA, ME** – Facing difficult economic headwinds, rising housing costs and scarcity, and a multitude of needs which far exceed the availability of funds to help, Maine’s civil legal aid providers had an enormous burden to assist the public in 2023. That is where the Campaign for Justice stepped in to help.

The Campaign for Justice, the annual fundraising campaign to the Maine Bar, raised over \$636,000 for needy Mainers in 2023, surpassing efforts for the year prior.

Under the leadership of Campaign Co-Chairs David Abramson of Verrill and Tim Pease of Rudman

Winchell, nearly 1,300 members of the Bar

contributed a gift. Additionally, over four dozen attorneys assisted in a volunteer capacity to support fundraising efforts.

Since 2004, the Campaign for Justice has been a cooperative effort led by the Maine Justice Foundation, the Cumberland Legal Aid Clinic, the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project, Legal

Services for the Elderly, Maine Equal Justice, Pine Tree Legal Assistance, and Volunteer Lawyers Project to raise money from the Maine Bar in support of civil legal aid. Over this time, more than \$10,000,000 has been raised to benefit thousands of Maine community members in need of civil legal assistance.

“The Campaign for Justice has been an im-

mensely successful collaborative effort of the Maine Justice Foundation, the civil legal service providers, and the Maine Bar at-large to support access to justice for thousands of Mainers in need over the last two decades. It is enduring proof that we can achieve meaningful difference by working together toward one fundamental goal – access to justice for all,” says

Michelle Draeger, Executive Director of the Maine Justice Foundation.

These legal aid providers serve over 20,000 people every year—Mainers who need, but are not able to afford, help for life-changing issues like protection from abuse and harassment, elder abuse and exploitation, divorce, eviction, health care, immigration, or loss of government benefits.

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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## DUA benefits available for impacts from Dec. 18 storm

**AUGUSTA, ME** - On January 31, 2024, President Biden approved Governor Mills' request for a major disaster declaration for Maine as it recovers from the storm on December 18, 2023. This declaration allows the Maine Department of Labor's Bureau of Unemployment Compensation to provide temporary financial assistance to people whose employment or self-employment was impacted by the December 18, 2023 storm in the following counties:

- Androscoggin County
- Kennebec County
- Oxford County
- Somerset County
- Franklin County

Note: This is for the December 18, 2023 storm only, not the subsequent storms in January 2024. However, anyone who is out of work due to the effects of any storm, even temporarily, is encouraged to apply for regular state unemployment insurance. Unemployment claims can be filed online 24/7 at <https://reemploye.maine.gov/>.

Funding will be available for eligible applicants who apply within 30 days of the declaration of a major disaster, until March 4, 2024, to assist eligible workers, business owners, and self-employed individuals who lost their jobs, job offers, or businesses, or had their work hours reduced or interrupted due to impacts brought about by the December 18 storm.

The Maine Department of Labor will accept applications for 30 days, starting at 7 a.m. on February 2, 2024. Individuals may be eligible if they do not qualify for regular Unemployment Insurance (UI) and they live in, work in, were scheduled to work in, or were scheduled to travel through an area affected by the December 18 storm and lost their employment or self-employment directly due to the disaster.

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) applies to losses for eligible people impacted by the December 18 storm with the first payable week of Disaster Unemployment

Assistance for the week starting on December 24, 2023, and ending on December 30, 2023. Unemployment benefits start the first full week after the disaster. Claims can be filed for the weeks beginning December 24, 2023.

Full-time workers, part-time workers, and self-employed part-time individuals can be eligible for benefits. The last payable week of this emergency benefit ends August 3, 2024 as long as their unemployment or self-employment continues as a result of the disaster. Eligibility for DUA benefits will be determined on a week-to-week basis for each week they file their claim.

Who might be eligible:

An individual might be eligible for DUA benefits if they are a business owner, a self-employed person, a regular worker, or a seasonal or migrant worker who lost their job, job offer, or had their work hours reduced due to the storm on December 18, 2023.

To be eligible for

DUA, a person can't be eligible for regular unemployment benefits in any state. When they apply, they must be able to work, ready and willing to accept work, and have the time and means to work, unless they suffered injuries directly linked to the disaster. Additionally, they must meet at least one of the following criteria:

They can't work or they are working reduced hours because the disaster damaged or destroyed their workplace

They can't return, resume, or start their employment or self-employment because of the disaster

They can't work due to injuries caused as a direct result of the disaster

They can't get to their job due to the impact of the disaster in one of the affected areas. This also applies if they reside in a major disaster area but are unable to reach their place of employment or self-employment outside the disaster area

They became the primary support of their family because of the death of

the head of the household as a result of the disaster

How to apply:

Beginning at 7 a.m. Friday, February 2, individuals can apply for DUA benefits at <https://assist.reemploye.maine.gov/> or by phone at 1-800-593-7660. Beginning February 2, 2024, the call center will be available Monday-Friday from 7 a.m. - 4 p.m. To be considered, they need to submit their application by March 4, 2024.

They will first have to complete the regular state unemployment form to determine eligibility for UI benefits or DUA benefits.

What information is needed:

To complete the application, an individual will need to provide their Social Security Number (SSN), and the name, address, and dates of employment of all their employers for the past two years, including out-of-state employers.

They will need to provide all supporting evidence no more than 21 days after the application has been filed. The documents they need to pro-

vide might vary depending on their circumstances and previous employers but could include proof of identity, their most recent federal income tax form, and other documents proving that they were working or self-employed when the disaster occurred. If they need to submit proof of income for the past year, they can submit those documents after the 21 days deadline but no later than the end of the disaster assistance period. However, delays in submitting their documents can impact their benefits and overall processing times.

Visit <https://www.maine.gov/unemployment/dua/> for more information about Disaster Unemployment Assistance and how to apply. Individuals can also contact the Department at 1-800-593-7660.

To learn about all the federal assistance programs you and your family might qualify for, we recommend contacting FEMA's helpline at 1-800-621-3362.

Reemployment services are available at [www.mainecareercenter.gov](http://www.mainecareercenter.gov)

## Grants available to organizations that serve people of color

**PORTLAND & ELLSWORTH** — Grants from the Maine Community Foundation's (MaineCF) Black, Indigenous, and People of Color Fund (BIPOC) are available to organizations that serve people of Native American, Latino, African, Arab and Asian descent.

The BIPOC Fund supports organizations that work to achieve greater equity in Maine by increasing racial equity,

addressing health disparities and access, providing leadership development and economic opportunity.

In 2023, the fund awarded 35 grants totaling \$327,000. An additional 17 grants totaling \$114,750 were awarded by donors with advised funds at MaineCF.

2023 grantees included:

Action for Life, to serve as peer-support specialists and interpreters for New Mainers applying for

state and health benefits

Four Directions Development Corporation, for professional development opportunities for its director of operations and grants manager

Mano en Mano, to support the area's community of farmworkers and immigrants to overcome barriers and thrive in Maine.

The deadline to submit proposals is Feb. 15. The application, details of the grant program and a

list of all recent grants are available at [www.maine.cf.org/bipoc](http://www.maine.cf.org/bipoc).

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.maine.cf.org](http://www.maine.cf.org).

### Fellowship

*Continued from page 1*

Demonstrate commitment to carrying out professional roles and responsibilities while adhering to ethical principles.

Demonstrate awareness of healthcare systems, fiscal responsibility, and the ability to effectively interface with other resources to optimize care.

Actively participate in providing leadership in health care now and in the future.

For full information please visit:

<https://androscoggin.org/maine-center-for-palliative-medicine/nurse-practitioner-fellowship/>

Application period closes on February 16th,

2024. Apply here:

[https://workforce-now.adp.com/mascsr/default/mdf/recruitment/recruitment.html?cid=5556389b-e6db-4f67-a7bd-22bb3fe1029f&c-cId=19000101\\_000001&jobId=499234&lang=en\\_US](https://workforce-now.adp.com/mascsr/default/mdf/recruitment/recruitment.html?cid=5556389b-e6db-4f67-a7bd-22bb3fe1029f&c-cId=19000101_000001&jobId=499234&lang=en_US)

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## Seniors Not Acting Their Age

# A Gusty Adventure on Williams Mountain



A gigantic boulder on an overlook provides spectacular views of mountains to the east



Much of the lengthy Williams Mountain ridge passes through a thick conifer forest



A dilapidated Fire Warden's cabin is located a short distance below the summit

By Ron Chase  
Williams Mountain is situated about fifteen miles southeast of Jackman in a remote area with the inhospitable name, Misery Township. Everything in that area seems to be miserable. Misery Gore, Misery Ridge, and Misery Knob are names assigned to nearby locations.

Convinced there must be a miserable history behind the names, I did a little research. The result was surprising. In an article in the Sun Journal on April 24, 2012, the newspaper reported that Paul Fournier wrote in his book, *Tales from Misery Ridge* that "misery" is a corruption of an

Abenaki word meaning "many things." With all due respect to Mr. Fournier, there must be a more entertaining explanation for the unconventional names, but I haven't found it.

I've been hiking mountains in Maine for about 50 years. Until a few weeks ago, I had never heard of Williams Mountain. My son, Adam, said it was a stimulating hike. His endorsement was good enough for me.

Adam and I attempted to climb Williams Mountain in early December but were turned back by icy roads. Two weeks later, we decided to try again on the first day

of winter. In addition to Adam's glowing recommendation, weather was a secondary reason for choosing Williams. The forecast called for strong northwest winds and severe wind chills. The hiking trail on Williams approaches the summit ridge from the southeast and much of it appeared to be protected from anticipated powerful gusts. Hence, there was a reasonable chance we would avoid being miserable during the hike.

From Route 15 in Sandwich Academy Grant Township we drove the rough Williams Mountain Road through a narrow sector of Misery Gore. A substantial recent rain-

storm had caused several fragmentary washouts on the road. However, we were able to successfully avoid the worst of the damage during the three mile trip to the mountain access road.

Temperatures were in the teens and the skies partly sunny when we began hiking up the partially snow-covered access road. Winds were gusting high above us as we progressed. After about a quarter of a mile, red flagging on the right marked the beginning of Williams Mountain Trail.

We hiked steadily up the narrow, predominantly snow-free path marked by blue blazes in a mixed hardwood and conifer forest. Several blow-downs appeared to be the result of the storm, and two required considerable bushwhacks around them.

A gigantic boulder on an overlook provided a spectacular panoramic vista of mountains to the east. On his previous hike, Adam enjoyed an excellent view of Mount Katahdin. Not today; the rugged Maine highpoint was enveloped in clouds.

After several hundred feet of elevation gain, we emerged onto the eastern end of the lengthy Williams Mountain Ridge. The character

of the terrain transitioned to a more gradual ascent in a thick conifer forest as we proceeded westerly on a snow-covered surface.

Venturing farther west, we entered a partially open area exposed to the full force of the icy winds. Fortunately, we were adequately dressed for the extreme conditions. The clearing offered our first glimpse of the abandoned Williams Mountain Fire Tower built in 1911.

Our trek continued across the ridge and down into a shallow saddle. We then ascended steeply up the summit knob to a short loop spur that provided exceptional views of mountains and lakes to the north and into Quebec. A brief climb brought us to the dilapidated Fire Warden's Cabin which did not appear habitable. Shortly beyond, we arrived at the 48-foot steel tower. The tower is in poor condition and winds were raging so we decided against climbing the rusty ladder.

Adam and I explored farther west on the snow-covered summit area in a densely forested landscape. We hoped to locate views of the remarkably scenic Attean Pond region. Alas, we were unsuccessful.

Dropping back down to the lee side of the Fire Warden's Cabin, we stopped for a short respite. Despite partial protection from the harsh gusts, the wind chills were still uncomfortable. We hurriedly renewed our descent.

Blustery winds continued in severity during our return to the trailhead. We had expected a lot of ice due to the recent rainstorm but encountered very little. In fact, ours was a thoroughly enjoyable outing. We were never miserable.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* narrates nine more mountain hikes around the state, several in winter.

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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# Winter coats donated to Maine Veterans

**NORTH KINGS-TOWN, RI** – Ocean State Job Lot (OSJL) is pleased to announce that its 2023 “Buy, Give, Get” program has resulted in the collection of 63,000 winter coats, surpassing the company’s goal of 55,000 coats to be donated to veterans in need this winter.

From October 2023 through early January 2024, through the “Buy, Give, Get” program, customers at each of the close-out discount retailer’s 153 stores across the Northeast

were encouraged to buy a quality, brand-name men’s or women’s winter coat for \$40.00 (retail value at \$120.00 or more), give it back to the store as a donation to a veteran in need, and then get a \$40.00 Crazy Deal Gift Card for free, to be used for a future purchase online or at any Ocean State Job Lot store.

The coats have been distributed to veterans’ organizations throughout the winter season in partnership with a multi-state network of more than 50



**On November 8, 2023, OSJL distributed 700 coats in Lewiston, Maine, to assist veterans and their families in partnership with Disabled American Veterans and the local Veterans of Foreign Wars chapter.**

veteran support agencies, organizations, assistance programs and action groups serving New En-



gland, New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania. Since the start of “Buy, Give, Get” in 2016, OSJL has provided over 300,000 coats to veterans in need and 200,000 backpacks to children in underserved

communities.

“We are so thankful to our generous and loyal customers who participated in the 2023 program,” said David Sarlitto, Executive Director, Ocean State Job Lot Charitable Foundation. “What started out as a small program has grown into one of the largest of its kind serving veterans in need across the Northeast. We are especially proud to have exceeded our goal of coats and look forward to building on that success next year.”

# New Maine DOE Student Cabinet holds inaugural session

**AUGUSTA, ME** – This Maine Department of Education (DOE) Student Cabinet convened its inaugural session for the year at the State Capitol this week. The Student Cabinet is composed of 25 Maine students spanning from 5th grade to their first year of college and representing all Maine counties.

Established in 2019, the Maine DOE created the Student Cabinet to give Maine students a voice in education policy. Addressing the Student Cabinet, Maine Education Commissioner Pender Makin underscored the significance of the initiative. “You have a very important role in Maine’s education system,” the Commissioner explained, “because you’re going to be our ears on the ground. You’ll let

us know how education is working for you, and the young people you represent.”

Students spent time meeting with Maine officials, including Governor Mills, Legislators, State Treasurer Henry Beck, and representatives from the Secretary of State’s office.

“Meeting with the governor gave us a chance to speak out on what we really think about different school systems,” commented India Veilleux, an eighth grader at York Middle School.

Throughout the day, students collaborated to outline their priorities for the upcoming 2023-2024 Cabinet session. Meilan Martine, a Cape Elizabeth High School student, advocated for increased diversity, emphasizing that “it’s

important to show perspectives of different types of people to prepare students for the real world.”

Cody Leighton of Jonesport-Beals High School in Washington County highlighted the importance of bolstering support for educators, citing, “A lack of resources the educators receive is a lack of education students receive.”

The Cabinet will convene virtually on a monthly basis to continue their discussions and work, and will meet again at the State Capitol in May.

### Student Cabinet Members

- Ahnalese Elizabeth Higgins, University of Maine at Farmington
- Ava Rosser, Caribou Community School
- Alissa Witham, Calais Middle-High School

Blake Corey Dodge, Ridge View Community School

Chase Weaver, Belfast Area High School

Cody Leighton, Jonesport-Beals High School

Dawson C. Whitten, University of Maine at Presque Isle

Dorsa Tajvidi, Orono High School

Elza Cahn, Lamoine Consolidated School

Fadumo Hussein, Lewiston Public Schools

Grace Dunton, Skowhegan Area Middle School

India Veilleux, York Middle School

Keelie M. Dunphy, Samuel L. Wagner Middle School

Kyle Andrew Petrovic, Winslow High School

Lochlan Aldrich, Morse High School

Lucas Ayden James Fortier, Oxford Hills Middle School

Maden Oliver Jovin, Oceanside Middle School

Makenzie Burton-Wing, Albert S. Hall School

Margaret McCarthy, Hope Elementary School

Mary Evelyn Gallagher, Nobleboro Central School

Meilan Martinez, Cape Elizabeth High School

Phat Thai (State Board Member), Deering High School

Robert Christopher Pollard Junior, Kennebunk

Ronan Drage, Boothbay Region Elementary School

Rosalyn L.J. Cote, Oak Hill Middle School

Ryan Hafener (State Board Member), Hampden Academy

Shelby Tracy, Mountain Valley High School

Taggart Chung, The Adams School

Winter Adams, University of Maine at Farmington

Xariah Jayne MacDonald, Mount Ararat Middle School

# Maine Warden Service expands Project Lifesaver

**NEW YORK**—The Alzheimer’s Foundation of America (AFA) has awarded grant funding to the Maine Warden Service to expand their Project Lifesaver program, which provides safety technology to families throughout Maine who are caring for a loved one prone to wandering due to a dementia-related illness. The Maine Warden

Service is a law enforcement agency that is responsible for search and rescue in the state of Maine and is a division of the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries & Wildlife.

Wandering is a common and potentially dangerous behavior among individuals with a dementia-related illness. Someone with a dementia-re-

lated illness who wanders can quickly become disoriented, unable to return to safety or not know how, or who, to call for help.

The Maine Warden Service’s Project Lifesaver program, in partnership with Project Lifesaver International, allows caregivers to voluntarily register their loved one with dementia to wear a small

wrist or ankle transmitter that emits an individualized radio frequency signal. When the transmitter is activated, the frequency allows a trained response team to locate the person and help return them home safely. In the event of an emergency, a trained response team, comprised of Game Wardens from

*See Lifesaver, page 12*

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# Arts & Entertainment

## Josée Vachon to perform in concert at Franco Center

LEWISTON, ME— Musical artist Josée Vachon will perform at 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 17, at the Franco Center. She shares her Franco American joie de vivre—her “joy of living as a Franco American” through her music. Born in Quebec and raised in Maine, Vachon has been sharing her Franco American upbringing for over 40 years, through traditional and contemporary folksongs from Quebec and Acadia, as well as her own compositions.

“Lewiston is a special place for me, just because of the strong support I received from fans at the very beginning of my career,” said Vachon. “I love coming back and having a chance to reconnect with

many fans and friends!”

Though she often entertained at her family gatherings, she began singing publicly with the support of the Franco-American Center at the University of Maine, where she discovered others who shared the same rich heritage. She quickly gained recognition as a Franco American voice through her first performances at state festivals in Lewiston and Madawaska, Maine and at schools and parish soirées.

She has a dozen solo recordings to her credit and continues to perform and record the music that best represents her love of Franco American culture.

Doors open at 1 p.m. Tickets can be purchased

online at [www.franco-center.org/shows](http://www.franco-center.org/shows), by phone at 207-689-2000, or in person at the box office between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Tickets are \$20 in advance and \$25 at the door day of show.

Season Underwriter is Maple Way Dental Care; media sponsors are Bennett Radio Group; Sun Journal; Turner Publishing; and Uncle Andy’s Digest. The show is sponsored by FACE Foundation and TV-5Monde.

The Franco Center is at 46 Cedar Street, Lewiston. Parking is in the mill lot across the street. Handicap access is on the Lincoln Street Alley side of the building.



Josée Vachon, a favorite Franco American performer among regular patrons of the Franco Center, will perform at 2 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 17. Tickets are available at 207-689-2000 and [www.franco-center.org/shows](http://www.franco-center.org/shows). The Franco Center is at 46 Cedar Street, Lewiston. Franco Center photo.

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# U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service restores wetlands

**MAINE** -- As part of the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's efforts to conserve and restore coastal wetlands, the Service is awarding \$10.8 million to support 12 projects in seven coastal states to protect, restore or enhance over 2,000 acres of coastal wetlands and adjacent upland habitats under the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program. Coastal wetlands are vitally important in protecting us from floods, filtering our water, supporting recreation and local economies and providing habitat for fish and wildlife. Despite their importance, there has been a steady loss of coastal wetlands.

State, local and Tribal governments, private landowners, conservation groups and other partners will contribute \$10.2 million in additional funds to support these projects. These grants have wide-reaching benefits for local economies, people and wildlife – using nature-based solutions to boost coastal resilience, reduce flood risk, stabilize shorelines and protect natural ecosystems. Protecting and restoring coastal wetland habitats is critical for hundreds of fish, wildlife and plant species and the many coastal commu-

nities that depend on these ecosystems.

“Coastal wetlands are important natural infrastructure systems protecting communities from the effects of climate change by mitigating the devastating impacts of storms, invasive species and sea-level rise,” said Service Director Martha Williams. “The National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grants fund projects that help recover coastal-dependent species, enhance flood protection and water quality, provide economic benefits and increase outdoor recreational opportunities for our coastal communities.”

The 2024 grants will help support recovery of threatened and endangered species, enhance flood protection and water quality, provide economic benefits to coastal communities and increase outdoor recreational opportunities.

The Service annually awards grants of up to \$1 million to states and territories based on a national competition, which enables states to identify and address their highest conservation priorities in coastal areas. Since 1992, the Service has awarded more than \$500 million in grants under the program.

States receiving funds this year are Califor-

nia, Florida, Maine, Massachusetts, North Carolina, Texas and Washington. Examples of the projects funded by the 2024 grant program, include:

Windswept Bog Ecological Restoration

The Massachusetts Department of Fish and Game Division of Ecological Restoration, in partnership with the Nantucket Conservation Foundation, is awarded \$1 million to restore and enhance a 231-acre property site containing 39 acres of former cranberry bog and 111 acres of natural wetlands. The restoration project will preserve and enhance habitat for inland freshwater species and potentially, in the long term, support marsh migration. The activities funded under this proposal will focus on restoring the natural hydrology, eliminating barriers to fish and wildlife movement, addressing farm-related physical simplification to dramatically enhance habitat, and providing opportunities for scientific research, public education, and passive recreation.

Salmon Falls Tidal River Project

The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, in partnership with the Great Works

Regional Land Trust, is awarded \$395,000 to acquire 81.4 acres in York County, Maine fronting on the Salmon Falls River, a tributary of the Piscataqua/Great Bay estuary system. The protection of riparian buffers and their contribution to water quality is important to downstream eel grass beds, shellfish, and fish habitat which are in decline in the Great Bay. This project contributes to a larger landscape scale, two-state effort, within the estuary, which is recognized as a coastal area of national significance by both the federal National Estuary Program and the federal National Estuarine Research Reserve Program.

Wetlands in coastal watersheds are diverse and complex ecosystems that are vital to the nation's economy and an important part of the nation's natural heritage. Coastal wetlands in the United States include both salt marshes in estuaries and freshwater wetlands that extend inland within the coastal watersheds. They provide billions of dollars in benefits to people and wildlife ranging from drinking water filtration, storm buffering and flood control, and contributions to the recreational and outdoor sports economies.

More information is available online at: <https://www.fws.gov/service/national-coastal-wet->

lands-conservation-grants.

The National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program is administered by the Service and funded in part by taxes or import duties collected from the sale of recreational fishing equipment, boats, electric motors and motorboat and small engine fuels under the authority of the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act. The billions of dollars generated through recreational angling, boating, waterfowl hunting and birdwatching

benefit communities in the vicinity of wetlands restoration projects.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information, visit [www.fws.gov](http://www.fws.gov), or connect with us through any of these social media channels: Facebook, Instagram, X (formerly known as Twitter), LinkedIn, YouTube and Flickr.

## Charlie Paul honored with DAR Community Service Award

Charlie Paul was recently awarded the DAR Community Service Award for his service to the Marine Corps

League, Wreaths Across America, Honor Flights, L/A Veterans Council, and Quilts of Valor, among others.



Pictured here are Susan Lamie, Regent of Mary Dillingham-Burnt Meadow Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution, Beverly Robbins, Honorary Maine State Regent and Chapter Member, and Charlie Paul, Commandant of the Marine Corps League.

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# Mediterranean theatrical dance coming to Franco Center

**LEWISTON, ME**—A Mystical Journey of the Magic Lantern and the Quest of the Golden Veils, A Theatrical Dance Performance by Imari & the Sahara Desert Dancers is coming to the Franco Center for a fundraising performance to benefit the Franco Center at 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 10.

“Don’t miss one of the most mesmerizing and colorful family events in New England, brought to life with enchanting dancing by Imari & the Sahara Desert Dancers and live music by Tribal Moon. Let us bring you along on a journey to mystical places across the beautiful Mediterranean Sea, full of shimmies, sparkles, and smiles!” said Imari, spokesperson for the dance

group. The dancers use their stage names in public.

Imari & the Sahara Desert Dancers have committed 22 years to sharing the beautiful art of belly dancing with nursing homes and hospitals throughout Maine on a volunteer basis. The dancers spend their summers entertaining at family festivals, nursing homes, and charity events region-wide.

“I am very proud to say that we have raised thousands of dollars for local charities such as the CMMC Unrestricted Annual Fund, Salvation Army, The United Way, Odd Fellows Nursing Home, St. Mary’s Hospital Breast Health Program and Make-A-Wish® Maine. I am blessed with a truly beautiful and amazing group of



Imari & the Sahara Desert Dancers will bring a theatrical dance performance featuring the art of belly dancing to the Franco Center at 1 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 10. Dancers in the group are Shuruq, Adair, Sephira, Anahita, Imari, Asisa, and Bilqeas. Tickets for their fundraising performance (to benefit the Franco Center) range from \$15 to \$30 and can be purchased at 207-689-2000 and [www.francocenter.org](http://www.francocenter.org). The Franco Center is at 46 Cedar St., Lewiston. Chad Cummings photo.

women who are my sisters in dance,” said Imari. “The women who make up my dance troupe vary in age, each balancing professional and family lives, and together we have formed an undeniably strong bond in striving to make a positive difference in our community, and beyond. We simply enjoy sharing our love for our dance with our audiences and we cannot wait to light up the stage with our upcoming show at the beautiful Franco Center! Please join us!”

Learn more about the group at [www.imaribellydancing.com](http://www.imaribellydancing.com).

Doors and cash bar open at noon. Tickets range from \$15 to \$30. Tickets can be purchased through the Franco Center’s box office in person from 10 a.m.

to 1 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays or call 207-689-2000. Ticket purchases can also be made online at [www.francocenter.org/shows](http://www.francocenter.org/shows).

The Franco Center is at 46 Cedar Street, Lewiston. Parking is in the mill lot across the street. Handicap access is on the Lincoln Street Alley side of the building.

A snow date is planned for 1 p.m. Sunday, Feb. 11, if the Saturday event is cancelled due to bad driving weather.

Season Underwriter is Maple Way Dental Care; media sponsors are Bennett Radio Group; Sun Journal; Turner Publishing; and Uncle Andy’s Digest. Show sponsors are Androscoggin Bank and DaVinci’s Eatery.

## Maine to hold first-ever semi-open Primary Election on Mar. 5

**LEWISTON, ME** - On Tue., Mar. 5, Maine will hold its first Semi-Open Primary Election which will allow unenrolled voters the opportunity to select which political party ballot they would like to vote. The ballots for the Presidential Preference Primary Election in March will only feature the race for United States President and no

other races.

Voters who are enrolled in the Democratic party will receive the Democratic ballot. Voters who are enrolled in the Republican party will receive the Republican ballot. Voters who are enrolled in the Green-Independent, Libertarian, or No Labels parties will not be eligible to receive any ballot because their political party is not participating in this election.

cal party is not participating in this election.

Voters who are unenrolled in a political party have the choice of voting on the Democratic ballot or the Republican ballot but cannot select both.

By state law, a voter must remain in a political party for three months before withdrawing or changing enrollment to

a different party. Voters who withdraw or change enrollment must do so at least 15 days before the election or will be ineligible to participate in that primary election.

The statewide deadline to change or withdraw party enrollment is Fri., Feb. 16.

To change political parties, voters can go to the City Clerk’s Office at

Lewiston City Hall, 27 Pine Street, or print out a card from the city website, [www.lewistonmaine.gov/votercard](http://www.lewistonmaine.gov/votercard), and either bring the completed card to the Clerk’s Office or mail it to the Clerk’s Office at the above-stated address.

Absentee ballots for the Tue., Mar. 5, election can be ordered now and will be available around

Mon., Feb. 5.

Election day is Tue., Mar. 5, and all voting will take place at the Longley School gymnasium, 145 Birch Street, Lewiston. Polls open at 7 AM and close at 8 PM.

Questions about this election can be directed to the City Clerk’s Department at (207) 513-3124 or [cityclerkoffice@lewistonmaine.gov](mailto:cityclerkoffice@lewistonmaine.gov)

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<sup>1</sup>APY = Annual Percentage Yield as of 9/1/23. Rates subject to change without notice. Federally insured by NCUA. Transaction requirements apply, visit [egcu.org/rise](http://egcu.org/rise) for details.

## Poland Historical Society elects officers, trustees

**POLAND, ME** -- The Poland Historical Society met in January at the Schoolhouse Museum to elect officers and trustees for 2024. Elected as President: John “Jack” Rozos; Vice-President: Jim Fernald; Treasurer: Pat Moeing; Clerk: Laura Brown; Historian: Steve Verrill; Trustees: David Andrews, Cyndi Robbins, and David Tedford.

The Poland Historical Society was founded in



1995 and meets in the 1848 Poland Corner Schoolhouse located adjacent to the Poland Town Office at 1231 Maine Street. The

building is handicapped accessible.

A schedule of programs, field trips, and tours will be announced soon.

For more information on the Poland Historical Society, call Jack Rozos at 998-5268.

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

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# Rotundo announces re-election bid

**LEWISTON, ME** -- Senator Peggy Rotundo announced that she would seek re-election to represent Lewiston in the Maine Senate.

"It is my honor to represent the people of Lewiston in the Maine Senate. I'm excited to announce my re-election campaign and look forward to continuing to work hard for Lewiston people," said Senator Rotundo. "Over the last several months, our city has experienced tragedies that have shaken us to our core. We are still grieving, beginning to heal, and forging a collective path forward. My heart and my home are here in Lewiston, and each day I look forward to serving the people of our community. I am eager and ready to continue fighting hard to improve the lives of Lewiston people, strengthen our businesses and economy, and help our community rebuild and grow into what we all know is possible."

Known for her bipartisanship, experience, and common sense leadership, Senator Rotundo chairs the powerful Appropriations and Financial Affairs Committee, which is also known as the state budget committee.

"I am proud of our work to pass two bipartisan budgets over the last year," Senator Rotundo continued. "We prioritized support for hard-working families all over Maine - and I worked hard to ensure Lewiston got our fair share of state funding.



We delivered property tax relief to help older Mainers remain in their homes. Our historic investment in housing and homeless services will help address some of our community's most pressing issues. We funded the creation of a transformative paid family and medical leave program, and increased assistance to help families pay for child care. We kept our promise to fully fund the state's obligation for public education. We also protected funding for vital programs to combat food insecurity, such as Meals on Wheels and the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program."

Senator Rotundo served her first term in the Legislature in 2000, first serving four terms in the Senate and subsequently in the House of Representatives before returning to the Maine Senate in 2022. Rotundo has chaired various legislative committees, including five terms chairing Appropriations. Thanks to her consistent leadership in bipartisan budget negotiations, Senator Rotundo has delivered on state funding to meet Lewiston's needs time and

again. "I am grateful for the opportunity to serve Lewiston people in the Maine Senate," said Senator Rotundo. "Lewiston needs strong, effective leadership in Augusta now more than ever. I am particularly eager to do all I can to meet our community's significant needs in the aftermath of the mass shootings, historic flooding, and many other challenges."

Prior to her legislative service, Senator Rotundo served on the Lewiston School Committee for 8 years. She co-founded the Center for Service-Learning at Bates College (now the Harward Center for Community Partnerships), and has been actively engaged in community organizations, including the L/A Metro Chamber of Commerce, Lewiston's Promise (Headstart), and L/A Arts. She has won numerous awards and recognition for her work in the community and in the Legislature. Senator Rotundo and her husband are proud parents of two grown children, Nick and Ann, who attended Lewiston Public Schools.

Follow Senator Rotundo's re-election campaign on Facebook for the most updated information.

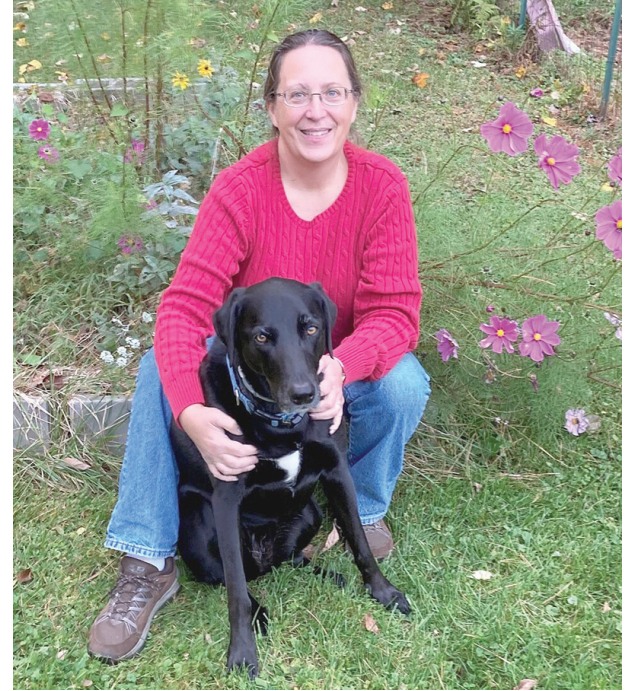
Send all items for What's Going On to the Editor. Deadline is Friday by five.

# Amy Lauze of Auburn named GSME Volunteer of the Month

**AUBURN, ME** — Girl Scouts of Maine (GSME) recently named Amy Lauze of Auburn as their November Volunteer of the Month. Lauze is a River Valley Service Unit Manager and co-leader of her great niece's Troop 1508.

Lauze began her adult Girl Scout member journey when she was asked to fill in as a troop leader for her daughters' Brownie troop. Since then, Amy has filled several roles within the River Valley Service Unit such as treasurer, troop leader, community engagement specialist, and so much more. Volunteerism is a word that comes to mind when considering the hard work and effort that Lauze embodies within every Girl Scout endeavor she takes on. In her own words, being a troop leader has been "an extremely rewarding and fun" experience in which she enjoys watching her Girl Scouts try new things and grow as individuals. Known for her diligence and commitment to completing each task she accepts with heart, accuracy, and excellence,

girl scouts of maine



Lauze ensures that River Valley troops, Girl Scouts, and volunteers are always in good hands. We at GSME would like to thank you Lauze for always being the first to step up and take on any challenge, role, or task, no matter how difficult. Congratulations to Lauze, GSME extends our highest gratitude and appreciation towards her achievement in receiving the first to step up and take on any challenge, role, or task, no matter how difficult. Congratulations to Lauze, GSME extends our highest gratitude and appreciation towards her achievement in receiving the title of November Volunteer of the Month!

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# Extension brings outdoor learning to PK-12 students statewide

**ORONO, ME** - Maine Outdoor School for All (MOSFA), a network of organizations that includes University of Maine Cooperative Extension, is announcing the expansion of its community partnership, taking a significant step toward the goal of offering outdoor education to students across the entire state.

To commemorate the milestone, a ceremonial signing event was held at UMaine on Jan. 19, symbolizing the commitment of MOSFA members to provide academically rigorous experiential learning opportunities in outdoor settings.

Founded in 2010 by The Ecology School, Chewonki, Schoodic Institute and UMaine Extension's 4-H Centers, MOSFA is a network of organizations working with Maine schools to offer school-year programs combining STEM education with the best in outdoor and experiential learning opportunities. Through engaging overnight programs, students expand their classroom learning in math, science and English while fostering a love for the outdoors, environmental stewardship and a deeper understanding of the natural world.

With the addition of four new community partners, including Hurricane Island Center for Science and Leadership, Kieve-Wavus Education, Cobscook Institute, and Maine Local Living School, the network will now be able to reach more students from all backgrounds and regions



5<sup>th</sup> graders from Woodstock Elementary School use compasses and maps to explore concepts like friction, gravity, speed, distance and angles at the 4-H Camp and Learning Center at Bryant Pond; courtesy of University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

of Maine, ensuring that outdoor education is accessible to all. The expansion is an important step toward creating equitable opportunities for students to experience the benefits of outdoor learning.

"Today Maine Outdoor School for All has doubled in size," said Ryder Scott, executive director of UMaine Extension's 4-H Camp and Learning Centers. "We have been working for more than a decade now to serve Maine schools, creating opportunities during the academic year for students to learn together in the great outdoors. To expand our capacity at this moment, when getting kids outdoors is more critical than ever, is a great achievement."

During the ceremonial signing, representatives from the organizations were joined by Extension Dean Hannah Carter and Associate Dean Jason Bolton, demonstrating the commitment of Coopera-

tive Extension as a leader in the Outdoor School for All effort.

"This is a historical date," said Drew Dumsch, president and CEO of The Ecology School at River Bend Farm, one of the founders of MOSFA. "Maine Outdoor School for All is a network that has already been working for 14 years in the state. And our goal is pretty simple: give every child in Maine a chance to come to an Outdoor School and spend three, four, five days, staying overnight and sharing meals together. We want to give kids the chance to be outside for hours at a time, learning about agriculture, conservation and climate change. Coming out of the pandemic, these experiences are critical to kids' social emotional wellbeing. It is really amazing to see what Outdoor Schools can do. To know that Extension is the bedrock supporter and, moving forward, will be working with all the other



Jason Bolton, UMaine Extension Associate Dean; Greg Kranich, UMaine Extension 4-H Professional; Keith Crowley, Chewonki Foundation VP of Program Services; Susi Acord, Schoodic Institute Development Coordinator; Jessica Decke, UMaine Extension 4-H Tanglewood Director; Shaun Haskins, Cobscook Institute Co-Director; Kara McCrimmon, Cobscook Institute Co-Director; Jennifer Mathews, Hurricane Island Center for Science and Leadership Advancement Director; Anica Miller-Rushing, MOSFA Coordinator; Nick Fisichelli, Schoodic Institute President and CEO; Hannah Carter, UMaine Extension Dean; Ryder Scott, UMaine Extension Executive Director of 4-H Camp and Learning Centers; Drew Dumsch, The Ecology School President and CEO; Ryan LeShane, UMaine Extension Blueberry Cove Director; Sam Kaplan, Kieve-Wavus Education Executive Director and Chief Operating Officer; courtesy of University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

Outdoor Schools is totally exciting."

"There has been a lot of hard work, a lot of dedication by the people in this room trying to reach kids and to create opportunity. This feels like we are taking a real tangible step forward," said Nick Fisichelli, president and CEO of Schoodic Institute at Acadia National Park. "The goal with Maine Outdoor School for All is that the programs are integrated into the classroom curriculum and aligned with state learning standards. So, it is not just a one-off separate learning experience, but it is really part of their education, part

of what they are doing in the classroom."

The coalition has been working to secure State funding to provide equitable access to high-impact outdoor educational experiences for all Maine students through LD 1817. That bill has received overwhelming bipartisan support and is pending in the Maine Legislature.

"We are grateful that the legislature recognizes the importance of outdoor education and hopeful we can find successful funding strategies to bring these opportunities to students," said Dumsch. "This is important to the people of



5<sup>th</sup> graders try out high ropes for lessons in math and science; courtesy of University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

Maine, it is important to students and kids, this is important to classroom teachers, it is important to workforce development. Outdoor learning has proven to be a powerful tool in engaging students, teaching STEM education, fostering a deeper understanding of the natural world and promoting environmental stewardship. Especially with this expansion, MOSFA can make a lasting impact on the lives of Maine students."

To date, MOSFA has raised over \$2 million through private philanthropy and corporate sponsorships to help more than 15,000 students from Maine schools attend Outdoor School programs with their classmates and teachers.

For more information visit the MOSFA webpage.

# State of the Beach exposes crisis on coasts, Maine gets an 'A'

**SAN CLEMENTE, CA** — Today, the Surfrider Foundation released its seventh annual State of the Beach Report, which grades 30 states and the territory of Puerto Rico on comprehensive laws and policies to protect our nation's beaches from coastal erosion, sea level rise, and poorly planned development.

Data shows that nearly 70% of coastal states are doing a poor job of managing their coastlines and planning for climate change impacts. This is particularly concerning as climate

change impacts are being felt more intensely along our nation's coastal communities.

Of the 31 states and territories assessed, 21 earned a grade of C or less and are doing an 'adequate to poor' job. These states tend to have less stringent policies regarding development in hazardous coastal zones, ineffective/nonexistent prohibitions on coastal armoring, poor sediment management, and lack sea level rise policies.

"Given the increase in extreme weather events and climate change im-

pacts, progressive laws and policies must be passed and effectively implemented at the local, state, and federal levels to safeguard our precious coastlines and communities," said the Surfrider Foundation's Senior Manager of the Coast and Climate Initiative, Stefanie Sekich. "Our report finds that states who score poorly often lack effective implementation of existing laws and policies. Over the years, there has been a trend of states passing strong climate change impact laws, but never actually imple-

menting the laws and policies on the books. That is precisely why we publish this report every year — to ensure states are not only passing important legislation to protect our coastlines, especially in light of climate change, but are also properly implementing laws."

In contrast, the highest-scoring states had strong policies and enforcement regarding coastal building setbacks, restrictions on coastal armoring, limiting development/redevelopment in harm's way, and are advancing progressive

sea level rise policies that encourage local governments to incorporate climate adaptation measures into their land use plans.

The State of the Beach Report doesn't just assess risk — it also provides a pathway for improved climate resilience. Over the past year, Surfrider advocated that funds from the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) go specifically toward coastal restoration and climate-resilience planning.

In a significant victory for our ocean and coasts, Surfrider helped to secure an unprecedented \$6 billion in funding for coastal resilience. Surfrider published a guide to help better educate the public about these BIL and IRA funds, which enables tribes, states, and cities to identify and use these funds to update municipal land use planning and advance nature-based solutions to make our

coastal communities more climate resilient.

To access the entire report and learn more about the Surfrider Foundation's leadership in protecting our beaches and coastal communities for future generations, visit [surfrider.org](http://surfrider.org)

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# Colorectal surgeon joins Central Maine Healthcare

**LEWISTON, ME** -- Cristan Anderson, MD, has joined Central Maine Surgical Associates, which is part of Central Maine Healthcare (CMH).

Dr. Anderson is a colorectal surgeon who graduated from medical school at Loyola University Stritch School of Medicine in Chicago. She completed her

residency at UMDNJ-Robert Wood Johnson Medical School in New Jersey.

Dr. Anderson treats both life-threatening diseases and those that significantly affect quality of life.

"In most cases, we have the ability to impact both types of disease significantly," Dr. Anderson said. "I enjoy teamwork

within colorectal surgery practice and working closely with other physicians and clinicians, as well as my patients.

"Patients are experts on their experience, and my expertise is in the medical underpinnings of disease. By partnering with them, we can ensure the best outcomes, together."



"Dr. Anderson is a great addition to our team," said Tim Counihan, MD, chief surgeon, Central Maine Healthcare. "Colorectal health is such an important factor in patients' overall well-being, and the expertise she brings to this field will be a direct benefit to them."

Central Maine Sur-

gical Associates is a team of board-certified surgeons that, supported by management, clinical, and clerical team members, provides care for general surgery and trauma patients. The surgeons offer a broad scope of surgical procedures for elective surgeries, emergent surgeries, wound care and minor office procedures.

# FAME loan repayment program applications open for 2024

**AUGUSTA, ME**—Applications are now being accepted for state education loan and loan repayment programs administered by the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME).

FAME helps to create the workforce of the future by increasing the number of Maine residents with credentials of value. We do so in a variety of ways, including by providing various student financial aid resources – for current students, professionals in certain workforce areas, and new Maine residents. Below please find information about our education financing and other programs for which we are now accepting applications:

### LOAN PROGRAMS Educators for Maine

Merit-based forgivable loans for Maine students pursuing undergraduate or graduate education degrees. Applicants must demonstrate an interest in education, speech pathology, or a career in childcare and are planning to work in Maine after graduation.

For academic the year 2024-2025, awards will be \$5,000 for undergraduates and \$4,000 for graduate students.

Loans are forgiven if the recipient is an educator or speech pathologist in an eligible elementary or secondary school or an eligible childcare program in the state of Maine.

For more information and application link, go to [famemaine.com/applications](http://famemaine.com/applications)

### Maine Health Professions Loan Program

The Maine Health Professions Loan Program is a need-based loan of up to \$25,000 for Maine residents pursuing post-graduate medical, dental, or veterinary education.

No interest accrues while in an eligible program, including an eligible residency program. During repayment, interest rate can be as low as 0% based on location and type of practice.

For more information and application link, go to [FAMEmaine.com/Med-Loans](http://FAMEmaine.com/Med-Loans)

### Maine Veterinary Medicine Loan Program

This is a need-based forgivable loan for Maine students enrolled in a program leading to a Doctor of Veterinary Medicine degree.

Maximum annual

loan amount is \$35,000.

No interest accrues while in eligible program. During repayment, interest rate can be as low as 0% based on location and type of practice.

Borrowers may qualify for loan forgiveness if practice is devoted to livestock or emergency and critical care, or if practice is in an underserved geographic region in Maine.

For more information and application link, go to [FAMEmaine.com/Med-Loans](http://FAMEmaine.com/Med-Loans).

### Maine Dental Education Loan Program

The Maine Dental Education Loan provides a forgivable loan to Maine residents who are pursuing dental education leading to a career as a dentist or other dental auxiliary profession.

The program was recently amended to also include students pursuing careers as dental hygienists, dental therapists, expanded function dental assistants, and dental assistants.

Applicants must demonstrate an interest in practicing primary dental care in an underserved population area in Maine and serving patients without regard of ability to pay.

The maximum annual loan amount is \$25,000.

Borrowers may qualify for loan forgiveness if practice is in an underserved area of Maine and 25% of patients are accepted for treatment regardless of ability to pay.

For more information and application link, go to [FAMEmaine.com/Med-Loans](http://FAMEmaine.com/Med-Loans)

### LOAN REPAYMENT PROGRAMS

#### Maine Health Care Provider Loan Repayment Pilot Program

Loan repayment program that was established to support rebuilding Maine's health care industry workforce by attracting and retaining health care professionals to address critical workforce shortages.

FAME will pay up to \$25,000 per year and, in aggregate, the lesser of \$75,000 or 50% of a recipient's outstanding education loan balance over three years.

For more information and application link, go to [famemaine.com/applications](http://famemaine.com/applications)

#### Nursing Education Loan Repayment Program

Loan repayment pro-

gram for nursing educators who teach in a nursing education program in Maine and possess an outstanding education loan relating to a master's or doctoral nursing degree.

Program recipients may receive awards up to \$40,000 (\$13,334 annually) depending on highest degree attained and work status. Awards are disbursed over a three-year term.

Program eligibility has been expanded to include part-time nurse educators (repayment amount up to \$10,000 for master's degree and up to \$20,000 for doctoral degree, over a three-year term).

For more information and application link, go to [famemaine.com/applications](http://famemaine.com/applications)

#### Maine Dental Education Loan Repayment Program

The Maine Dental Loan Repayment Program provides loan repayment assistance for dentists and certain dental auxiliary health professionals.

The program was recently amended to also include professionals who have obtained degrees re-

lated to dental hygienists, dental therapists, expanded function dental assistants, and dental assistants.

Applicants must practice primary dental care in an underserved population area in Maine and serve patients without regard of ability to pay.

New loan repayment recipients can receive up to \$25,000 annually, up to \$100,000 total.

For more information and application link, go to [famemaine.com/applications](http://famemaine.com/applications).

#### NEW MAINERS Foreign Credentialing and Skills Recognition Grant Program

Program provides small grants to assist eligible immigrants living in Maine who are not yet eligible to work in the U.S. prepare for entry into the workforce.

Grants for up to \$1,000 are available to help pay for costs associated with the process of becoming work-ready while waiting for issuance of a work permit by federal immigration authorities.

For more information and application link, go to [FAMEmaine.com/CredGrant](http://FAMEmaine.com/CredGrant).

### Lifesaver

*Continued from page 5*

the Maine Warden Service can use the signal to locate the person and help them return home safely. The technology helps reduce search and rescue times from hours or days down

to a matter of minutes.

"Since its inception, the Maine Warden Service's Project Lifesaver program has been a valuable public safety tool for families affected by Alzheimer's disease and other dementia-related illnesses,"

said Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr., President and CEO of the Alzheimer's Foundation of America. "The need for this program in the state has continued to grow and we want to make sure that the Maine Warden Service has the resources it needs

to keep people safe."

Sgt. Josh Bubier, State of Maine Search and Rescue Coordinator, said, "Project Life Saver has allowed us to provide a service to those families in need of assistance and on several occasions already resulted in quick and successful conclusions to persons with Alzheimer's or dementia that have wandered from their residences. The Alzheimer's

Foundation of America has been a wonderful partner and has better enabled us to continue to provide this resource to some families in Maine."

The \$6,000 AFA grant will be used to purchase additional receivers, transmitters, and other supplies in order to keep the program running and it will enable them to expand the number of families it can serve through this pro-

gram.

Families can voluntarily enroll in the Maine Warden Service's Project Lifesaver program by calling 207-287-5305. Those with questions about caring for a loved one with a dementia-related illness or accessing support services can call the Alzheimer's Foundation of America's Helpline at 866-232-8484 or visit [www.alzfdn.org](http://www.alzfdn.org).



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**Feb 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](http://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 8**

AUBURN -- Tween Space 2/8 from 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM - Teen Space, Auburn Public Library

Today the Teen Space will be open for teens and tweens to come hang out after school. Play games, do homework, and eat snacks with friends!

# Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

**Feb 13, 27**

AUBURN -- Teen Space Craft Club 2/13 and 2/27 from 4 PM - 5 PM - Teen Space, Auburn Public Library

Whether it be crocheting, drawing, origami or something else entirely, The Teen Space Craft Club serves as a time to work on any arts and crafts related projects, share advice and learn something new. Crafters of any experience are welcome!

**Feb 14**

AUBURN -- Love Letters to Books 2/14 from 3 PM - 4 PM - Teen Space, Auburn Public Library

Celebrate Valentine's Day by writing your favorite book a love letter! Join us in the Teen Space and write to that special book in your life.

**Feb 15**

AUBURN -- Tween Craft Club 2/15 from 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM - Teen Space, Auburn Public Library

Tween Craft Club is a time to learn something new! Learn our craft of the month or bring your own project to work on.

Crafters of any experience are welcome!

**Feb 18**

BRUNSWICK – FOCUS ON PALESTINE: A COMMUNITY EVENT with Fateh Az-zam speaking on "Palestinians and (non) Citizenship" and including Palestinian Poetry, Live Middle Eastern & Palestinian Music, Debke Line Dancing, Debke Line Dancing and excerpts from the Gaza Monologues written in 2010 by Gaza teenagers and performed by Maine students. <https://www.uubrunswick.org/events/focus-on-palestine-a-community-event/> Unitarian Universalist Church of Brunswick, One Middle Street, 2:00-4:30

**Feb 20**

AUBURN -- Healthy Relationships: SAPARS Drop In 2/20 from 2 PM - 3:30 PM - Teen Space, Auburn Public Library

February is healthy relationships month! SAPARS is stopping by the Teen Space for a drop in session for anyone looking for information

on healthy relationships, consent, and resources that are available to you.

The Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Services serves Androscoggin, Franklin and Oxford counties by educating communities and supporting victims/survivors of rape, child sexual abuse and other forms of sexual violence. They work to prevent and eliminate sexual violence and rape and to promote healing and empowerment for everyone affected by all forms of sexual harassment.

**Feb 20**

AUBURN -- Button Making 2/20 from 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM - Teen Space, Auburn Public Library

Hang out in the Teen Space and learn how to make your own buttons. Create your own designs and decorate your jacket, backpack, and more. Supplies and snacks included.

This program is a part of the Lewiston Public Library/Auburn Public Library Teen Mental Health & Support series. This series will run throughout 2024 and offer programs to help teenagers get information and resources on emotional and mental wellness, offer creative outlets for feelings and build com-

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munity. These programs are run concurrently between LPL and APL with the same or similar community partners.

**Feb 21**

AUBURN -- Anime & Manga Club 2/7 and 2/21 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 21**

AUBURN -- Dungeons & Dragons 2/21 from 3 PM - 5 PM - Teen Space, Auburn Public Library

Come to the Teen Space for a D&D adventure in a fantasy world! Open to beginners and experienced players

alike. Come with a character sheet (level 1-3) or use one that we provide.

**Feb 22**

AUBURN -- Tween Anime Club 2/22 from 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM - Teen Space, Auburn Public Library

Stop by the Teen Space to watch and talk about your favorite anime, draw or color and enjoy snacks with your friends! Snacks included.

**Feb 23**

AUBURN -- Thinking in the Box: Let's Make Comics! 2/23 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!



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