

Relay for Life coming to USM-Gorham



The following is an interview with Relay for Life leader, George Magelles,

Can you tell us about the mission of the American Cancer Society's Relay For Life event?

The mission of the American Cancer Society is to improve the lives of people with cancer and their families through advocacy, research, and patient support, to ensure everyone has an opportunity to prevent, detect, treat, and survive cancer. Relay For Life is the American Cancer Society's signature fundraiser. It offers everyone in the community an opportunity to participate in the fight against cancer. They sign up as Survivors, Caregivers, and Teams who all raise funds to fight cancer. They raise money throughout the year to support the mission of the American Cancer Society and to fund much needed research to save lives.

What inspired you to become involved with Relay For Life of Southern Maine?

I first attended a Re-

lay For Life event in 2006 in Saratoga, California as a Team Captain. In the following years I became more involved, serving as Event Lead in several California Communities before relocating back to Maine. This will be my second year as Event Lead for the Relay For Life of Southern Maine. My goal, as Event Lead, is to create the best experience possible for all of our Survivors, Caregivers, Participants, and Guests.

How does Relay For Life support cancer survivors and caregivers in the community?

Relay For Life funds the many programs and services of the American Cancer Society. These include The Hope Lodge Program that offers a free stay for cancer patients and their caregivers when they have to travel for treatment, the Road to Recovery program that offers free rides to cancer patients who would otherwise have difficulty getting to their cancer-related appointments, the Cancer Survivors Network that

provides a safe online connection where cancer patients and caregivers can find others with similar experiences and interests, the Reach To Recovery Program that connects breast cancer patients with trained volunteers to receive peer-to-peer support, and the Tender Loving Care program that offers those whose appearance has been altered by treatment a variety of affordable wigs, hats, and scarves as well as a full range of mastectomy products. Call 1-800-227-2345 or visit cancer.org for a 24/7 Cancer Helpline and to learn more about these programs and services.

What are some of the highlights and activities planned for this year's Relay For Life event in Gorham?

Our Relay For Life event in Gorham will open with cancer survivors and caregivers taking the first lap around the track at the indoor fieldhouse. This emotional time sets the stage for the importance of each participant's contribution. A festive atmo-

sphere always develops as participants make new friends and spend time with old ones. Participants will walk the track with stops at team sites to play games, enter prize drawings, and learn about the many programs and services of the American Cancer Society. Highlighting the evening is the Luminaria Ceremony of Hope to honor cancer survivors and to remember loved ones lost to cancer. Decorated white bags are lit and set out around the track, and after listening to an Inspirational Speaker we all take a Silent Lap to remember our loved ones.

Could you share a memorable moment from a past Relay For Life event that touched you deeply?

The moments that touch me deeply usually involve cancer survivors, caregivers, and youth. I recall a time when I joined two caregivers as they walked along the track one evening. They had just met at the event and were both very moved by sharing experiences about caregiving that only another caregiver could truly understand. They were very appreciative and thankful to the event leadership and promised to get more involved the next year.

How do you engage and involve local businesses and sponsors in supporting Relay For Life of Southern Maine?

We have a full range of Sponsorship levels, beginning with our \$100
See Relay, page 8

Evergreen CU raises the anchor on Sail Student Checking



Evergreen Credit Union launches Sail Student Checking, the ideal account for ages 13-24.

PORTLAND, ME – Evergreen Credit Union is proud to launch their newest rewards checking account, Sail Student Checking, designed for individuals ages 13-24.

Sail Student Checking was created for young adults ready to navigate the world of finance. "We understand that teens and young adults have financial needs," said Tim Verreault, Evergreen's COO. "It begins by helping them through various money matters, starting with savings and a free, rewards-based checking account."

With the abundance of current news about an emerging economy and student loans, Ever-

green is eager to show Maine's young adults the ropes when it comes to healthy money management. "Sail is not just a free checking account option for teens and young adults," said Verreault. "We care about their success. Good money management starts with education, and we pledge to be there by their side throughout their journey."

Evergreen CU is Maine's 5th largest credit union with over \$535 million in assets serving 6 counties in southern Maine. Their upcoming Scarborough branch opens on Rt. 1 in spring 2024. To learn more about Sail Student Checking, visit egcu.org/sail.

What do you think?

We strongly encourage Letters to the Editor, Op/Eds, columns or any other submissions from our readers. Agree with us or another columnist? Disagree? Write to us and let us know! Email all submissions, including name, address and phone number, to the editor.

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

Red Cross Month kicks off to honor community heroes

PORTLAND, ME — The American Red Cross of Northern New England is kicking off its annual Red Cross Month celebration in March to honor local community heroes who help ensure their neighbors never face crises alone.

Red Cross Month is a national tradition that began in March 1943 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt issued the first Red Cross Month proclamation — and each U.S. president has followed ever since.

“During Red Cross Month, we are proud to honor the people in our community who step up to support one another when help can’t wait during emergencies,” said Stephanie Couturier, Red Cross chief executive officer, Northern New England Region. “This relief and hope wouldn’t be possible without these local heroes. Please consider joining in their commitment by donating, volunteering, giving blood or platelets or taking a lifesaving skills course.”

Join the Red Cross Month celebration by visiting redcross.org to make a financial donation, give blood or platelets, become a volunteer or take a life-

saving skills course. Those who donate at redcross.org/givingday on March 27 will be part of the 10th annual Red Cross Giving Day, which aims to rally 30,000 supporters nationwide to help provide shelter, food, relief items, emotional support and other assistance for people affected by disasters big and small.

HELP CAN’T WAIT WHEN EMERGENCIES STRIKE Volunteers comprise 90% of the national Red Cross workforce to power its lifesaving mission, along with generous blood, platelet and financial donors; people trained in skills like first aid and CPR; and other supporters. Below are some of the ways that Maine’s nearly 600 volunteers have delivered relief with the Red Cross in times of crisis:

When catastrophic flooding devastated Maine in December, 82 trained Red Cross disaster workers raised their hands to help support the disaster relief operation. The Red Cross provided 154 overnight stays for 101 residents in 4 emergency shelters. With the help of partners, 612 meals and snacks were provided to those impacted by the storm. Our volun-



teers provided 847 relief items, including comfort kits and clean-up supplies to those in need. Red Cross caseworkers also opened 114 cases, serving 317 people with recovery support, including financial assistance and help with medical needs.

In October, unimaginable tragedy struck the Lewiston community. The Red Cross helped support individuals affected by the mass casualty event. 109 Red Cross workers, including 36 specifically trained in disaster-related health and mental health services, supported this response. With the help of partners, a total of 4,204 meals and snacks were provided. Our volunteers distributed 8,076 relief items including comfort kits, teddy bears and other supplies. Additionally, Red Cross caseworkers helped more than 100 people with recovery support.

The Red Cross responds to more than 60,000 disasters every year. Locally, the Red Cross responded to

282 disasters in Maine in 2023, assisting 1,267 individuals.

Home fires claim more lives in a typical year than all natural disasters combined, but working smoke alarms can cut the risk of dying in a home fire by half. In 2023, trained Red Cross volunteers installed 1,167 free smoke alarms in homes across Maine. Every two seconds, someone in the U.S. needs a blood transfusion. In January, the Red Cross declared an emergency blood shortage. While thousands of donors have answered the call to donate in recent weeks to combat the significant drop in the blood supply, more donors are needed to ensure the blood supply remains steady for those in need of lifesaving medical procedures. In 2023, the Red Cross collected more than 42,000 units of blood and held more than 1,800 blood drives throughout Maine.

As we approach the

final weeks of winter, the public is urged to book a time to donate blood or platelets now as we continue to strengthen the blood supply heading into spring. Much like pets provide comfort and support, so does the Red Cross in local communities. As a thank-you for providing comfort during Red Cross Month, all come to give blood or platelets March 1-24 will get a \$10 e-gift card to a pet supply merchant of choice, plus automatically be entered for a chance to win a \$3,000 gift card. There will be five winners. See rcblood.org/Pets for details.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities March 1-25:

Androscoggin
Lisbon Falls
3/14/2024: 12 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., Lisbon United Methodist Church, 14 School St.

Poland
3/9/2024: 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., Poland Town Hall, 1223 Maine Street, Rt. 26

Cumberland
Brunswick
3/14/2024: 12 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., L.L.Bean Training Center, 29 Sewall St, LL Bean training center

3/15/2024: 12 p.m. -

5 p.m., American Legion Post 20, 1 Columbus Drive
3/18/2024: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Thornton Oaks Retirement Community, 25 Thornton Way

3/23/2024: 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., Saint Pauls Church, 27 Pleasant Street
Cape Elizabeth

3/12/2024: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Saint Bartholomew Church, 8 Two Lights Rd

F a l m o u t h
3/20/2024: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., The Episcopal Church of St. Mary, 43 Foreside Rd

G o r h a m
3/14/2024: 1 p.m. - 6 p.m., Cressey Road Christian Church, 81 Cressey Road

G r a y
3/19/2024: 8 a.m. - 1 p.m., Gray New Gloucester High School, 10 Libby Hill Road

S c a r b o r o u g h
3/21/2024: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Saint Maximilian Church, 150 Black Point Rd

South Portland
3/18/2024: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., South Portland Community Center, 21 Nelson Road

W i n d h a m
3/20/2024: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., North Windham Veterans Center, 35 Veterans Memorial Drive

Y a r m o u t h
3/13/2024: 2:30 p.m. - 7:30 p.m., Harrison Middle School, 220 McCartney St

Online session for aspiring 4-H volunteers in March

MAINE -- University of Maine Cooperative Extension will host a two-part online informational session for adults interested in becoming Maine 4-H volunteers from 6-7 p.m. on March 19 and 26.

“Start Your 4-H Volunteer Journey” will provide participants with information about the UMaine Extension 4-H youth development program through four short e-Learning modules. Attendees will also participate in an experiential

educational activity, learn about the key aspects of positive youth development and be introduced to the ages and stages of youth. The two one-hour virtual sessions will wrap up with an outline of next steps and an introduction to a county staff contact to help with the application process if desired.

A 4-H volunteer is many things: mentor, advisor, friend, teacher, referee, role model, pacesetter and much more. 4-H volunteers have the opportunity

to make a positive difference in the lives of children, teach them valuable skills, help them achieve a positive self-image, accomplish personal goals and earn a sense of accomplishment.

The informational sessions are free, registration is required. To sign up, visit the program webpage.

For more information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact Jennifer Lobley, jennifer.lobley@maine.edu; 207.255.3345.



Youth engage in aquaculture activities at Waldo County Extension’s STEAM Team Ocean Xplorer meeting at the Belfast Free Library. Photo courtesy University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

Call for volunteers looking to improve the IRS

MAINE -- Civic-minded citizens in your area have a unique opportunity to make a difference in your community by applying to become a member of the Taxpayer Advocacy Panel (TAP). As a member they have a unique opportunity to protect taxpayer rights and improve IRS service, policies, products, and procedures — no tax experience needed!

TAP members serve as a conduit for bringing grassroots concerns to the attention of the IRS, and work on a variety of issues to improve IRS services

and taxpayer satisfaction. Applications for the 2025 TAP year are open until March 15.

Applications must be submitted by March 15, to be considered. Visit USA-Jobs for more details and to submit an application. Newly selected TAP members will volunteer to serve a three-year term starting in December 2024.

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



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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

Town of Gorham requests proposals for design services

GORHAM, ME -- The Town of Gorham is seeking proposals for the design and fabrication of gateway and wayfinding signage in key areas of town, to improve and promote access to municipal buildings and services, village centers, commercial corridors, trail locations, public parking, and other points of interest. The selected consultant must possess demonstrated experience in providing wayfinding services to municipalities, specifically in working with communities to develop an appropriate standard for signage to meet a variety of travel modes and community needs, and to

identify suitable locations for wayfinding and gateway signage.

The Town is primarily interested in the development of central design standards of multi-purpose signage for motorized vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians. The selected vendor will work closely with Town staff to identify specific locations and types of signage needed, and fabrication and installation services would be considered as part of this initial phase. In addition, the project may involve expanding the scope of services in the future to include signage needs for recreation (trailheads, bike paths, etc.) and other

purposes.

Background

The Town of Gorham is a thriving community and one of the fastest growing towns in Maine with a population over 18,000. With a flourishing urban village, steady industrial and commercial development, plentiful recreation opportunities, a college campus, and Greater Portland METRO public transit service, the Town of Gorham continues to attract young families and older adults for its a high-quality school system, abundant community programs and rewarding access to the outdoors, including a top ranked trail system.

Gorham is located approximately 25 minutes (13 miles) from downtown Portland and is home to the University of Southern Maine Gorham campus with 2,200 students and site of the university's sports facilities. The Sebago Lakes Region, a popular tourism destination, is also nearby and offers opportunities for Gorham to benefit from out-of-state visitors. Gorham has the advantage of being home to a diversity of business sectors, beginning with its agricultural heritage, a strong manufacturing sector and a burgeoning village center.

The wide range of residents, students, busi-

ness engagement and visitors to Gorham demonstrate the need for a system that will orient travelers and help them navigate to various end destinations. In addition, a comprehensive program that incorporates connectivity across various modes of transportation (roads, trailheads, bike paths) as well as services and amenities (parks, open space, public utilities) will help to create a deeper sense of place in our community.

Project Deliverables

The goal of the Town's wayfinding program is to provide a consistent and efficient approach to orienting and assisting the traveling

public to key destinations within the town. To achieve this, the planning process should:

Identify community-wide criteria and graphic conventions for wayfinding.

Seek input from and coordinate with Town staff and relevant Town stakeholders.

Consider wayfinding needs for all modes of travel including motorized vehicles, bicyclists, and pedestrians.

Identify ways that wayfinding can contribute to a greater sense of place for the community by incorporating recreation opportunities, points of interest, and visitor services.

Floating egg hunt and more at Easter Eggstravaganza

JOIN US FOR EASTER EGGSTRAVAGANZA 2024!

Sunday, March 24
10:00am-2:00pm

FREE Meet the Easter Bunny, Cake Walk & Candy Craze!

Schedule of Events

- 10:00am-1:00pm**
WHS Project Grad Maple Syrup Sunday Fundraiser Brunch
Enjoy all of your favorite brunch items!
\$8 per person / \$4 for children ages 10 & under | Pay at Door
- 10:00-11:30am**
Easter-Themed Cupcake Decorating Class!
Ages 4+ | \$25 per person | pre-registration required via Venmo
- 12:00-2:00pm**
Floating Egg Hunt & Meet the Maine Mermaids!
Festive Easter eggs will be scattered throughout the indoor pool and children will have a set time to collect as many as possible for prizes!
Ages 10 & Under | \$5 per child | pre-registration required
- 12:00pm-2:00pm**
Vendors will be handing out candy for kids + chance to win FREE cakes!
All ages | FREE
- 12:00-2:00pm**
Bounce Houses, Jungle Gym, Play Equipment & More!
Ages 5 & under | FREE

Westbrook Community Center - 426 Bridge Street - Westbrook, ME 207.854.0676

FMI & Register: Visit www.WestbrookCommunityCenter.org

ness engagement and visitors to Gorham demonstrate the need for a system that will orient travelers and help them navigate to various end destinations. In addition, a comprehensive program that incorporates connectivity across various modes of transportation (roads, trailheads, bike paths) as well as services and amenities (parks, open space, public utilities) will help to create a deeper sense of place in our community.

The goal of the Town's wayfinding program is to provide a consistent and efficient approach to orienting and assisting the traveling

Identify ways that wayfinding can contribute to a greater sense of place for the community by incorporating recreation opportunities, points of interest, and visitor services.

Identify ways that wayfinding can contribute to a greater sense of place for the community by incorporating recreation opportunities, points of interest, and visitor services.

FREE

Bounce Houses, Jungle Gym, Play Equipment & More in Treehouse Room - 12-2pm, Ages 5 & under | FREE

For more information or questions, please contact Caroline O'Brien, Program Coordinator, at cobrien@westbrook.me.us.

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WESTBROOK, ME -- The Westbrook Community Center will be hosting its 3rd Annual Floating Egg Hunt at the John P. Davan Indoor Pool on Sunday, March 24, beginning at 12:00pm!

Festive Easter eggs will be scattered throughout the pool. Up to six participants will be allowed to enter the pool at one time. Each participant will have their own lane. Children ages 5 & under and those who are unable to swim on their own must be accompanied by an adult and stay in the shallow end - lifejackets & floaties are encouraged. The fee to attend

the Floating Egg Hunt is just \$5.00 per child, and parents are free. Each kid will leave with a prize!

Also, meet the Mainly Mermaids!

Date: Sunday, March 24

Time: 12:00 - 2:00pm

Location: Davan Indoor Pool

To register, please visit the Youth Programs tab in the catalog at www.WestbrookCommunityCenter.org, and select one of the following time slots:

Group 1: 12-12:15pm (SOLD OUT)

Group 2: 12:15pm-12:30pm

Group 3: 12:30pm-12:45pm

Group 4: 12:45pm-1pm

Group 5: 1pm-1:15pm

Group 6: 1:15pm-1:30pm

Group 7: 1:30pm-1:45pm

Group 8: 1:45pm-2pm

Other activities and events taking place this day as part of our Easter Eggstravaganza include:

WHS Project Grad Maple Syrup Sunday Fundraiser Brunch — 10am-1pm

Enjoy all of your favorite brunch items and raise money for a great cause! \$8 per person | \$4

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

Jason Hodsdon Masonry

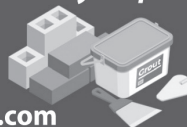
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Seniors Not Acting Their Age Skiing the Maine Huts Trails

My friend, Brent Elwell, is a frequent skier in the Carrabassett Valley region and more familiar with the trails in that area than anyone I know. While we were skiing together at Rangeley Lakes Trails Center recently, a discussion about Maine Huts and Trails ensued. The conversation evolved into a decision to ski to Poplar Hut, one of four lodges in the 80 mile trail system. Our companion, Eggman DeCoster, made it a three-some.

The Maine Huts and Trails network begins at Stratton Brook Trailhead in Stratton and weaves through the mountains and along rivers, lakes, and streams in a remote wilderness area to West Forks. The trails between Stratton Brook Trailhead and Flagstaff Hut are usually groomed but the status of grooming should be confirmed prior to planning a trip.

The closest access point to Poplar Hut is Airport Trailhead on Route 27 in Carrabassett Valley. According to the Maine Huts and Trails Map, the distance is 3.3 miles and the elevation gain 431 feet. This is also the trailhead for the Narrow Gauge Pathway and other destina-

tions in the trail system.

The three of us met at the trailhead on a gray, seasonably cool, breezy day. At Brent's recommendation, we left our touring skis behind and brought backcountry Nordic skis with edges instead. All of us carried small packs with additional layers of clothing, water, snacks, and a lightweight parka. Brent had the foresight to include a first aid kit, glide wax, and climbing skins.

We began our trek crossing an open field north of the airfield with a partial view of cloud enshrouded Little Bigelow Mountain in the distance. After traversing a bridge over the Carrabassett River, the short connector route joins Narrow Gauge Pathway and Maine Hut Trail.

At the junction, we met two skiers who had spent the night at Poplar Hut. A cheerful discussion about trail conditions, the benefits and deficiencies of different types of skis, and previous ski trips followed. They had welcome news to report; the trail to Poplar Hut was groomed and in good condition.

Initially, the narrow path travels through gentle rolling hills in a predominantly conifer forest. As we progressed, more ski-

ers and snowshoers were met returning from the hut. Nearing Poplar Stream, we plunged down a precipitous hill. Eggman was unable hold a snowplow when negotiating an abrupt right turn at the bottom and crashed into a snow-bank. That was our only mishap of the day but not the first at that location as there were several telltale siltmarks nearby. Nothing hurt but his pride, we skied on.

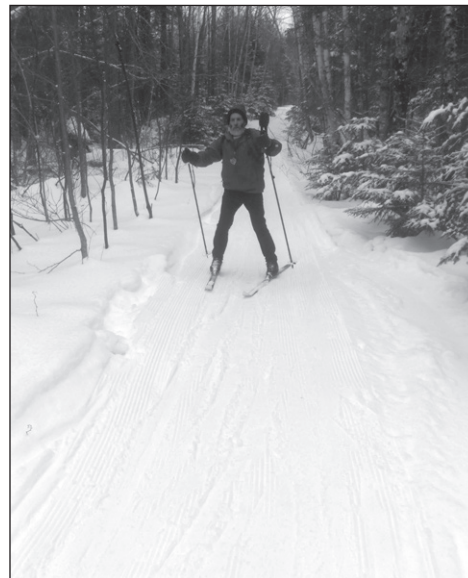
After crossing the bridge over Poplar Stream, we began climbing more steadily along the south side of the stream. When the gradient steepened, we stopped to add climbing skins to our skis. The skins eliminated the need to use the tiring herringbone technique and facilitated a much easier ascent.

Following the long climb, the trail levels off before it arrives at Poplar Hut. The impressive structure is nestled in a conifer forest and cloaked in snow this time of year.

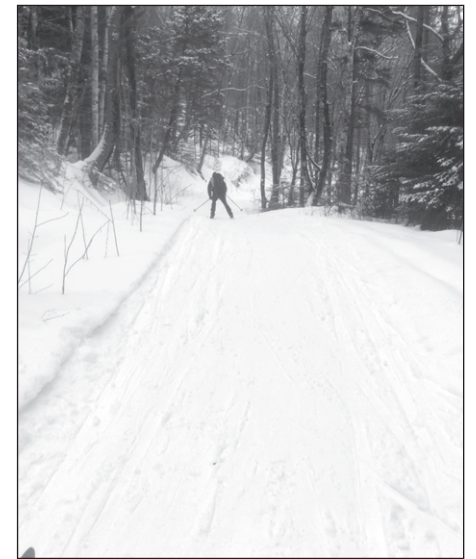
Although the hut's primary focus is to provide overnight lodging for guests, day visitors are welcome. We stacked our skis and poles, removed our boots in the entry way, and entered the warm spacious communal area.



A skier sets a snowplow before descending a hill on Maine Huts Trail



Skiers return from Poplar Hut



Long steep hills are common on Maine Hut Trail

The staff was very welcoming and we enjoyed hot drinks and snacks while relaxing next to a toasty woodstove. Spirited conversations with lodging guests were part of the entertaining experience. I decided to suggest an overnight hut excursion to my wife, Nancy.

After a pleasurable visit, we added glide wax to our skis and began our return. Soon after departing, we met a group of about twenty skiers on their way to the hut.

The choice to use backcountry skis was a good one as they were invaluable during our steep serpentine descent.

The edges assisted with maintaining ski control throughout our rollicking ride down to Poplar Stream Bridge.

While completing the remainder of our most excellent trek, we met more skiers and snowshoers advancing to the hut. I see a visit to Stratton Brook Hut in my future.

My book, Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine narrates three more ski excursions around the state and several winter expeditions into the huts in Baxter State Park.

Ron Chase resides in Topsham. His latest book, "Maine Al Fresco:

The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine" is available at www.northcountrypress.com/maine-al-fresco or in bookstores and through online retailers. His previous books are "The Great Mars Hill Bank Robbery" and "Mountains for Mortals - New England." Visit his website at www.ronchaseoutdoors.com or he can be reached at ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net.

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

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UMaine Extension offers Vegetable and Fruit School

AUGUSTA, ME - The University of Maine Cooperative Extension and the Maine Vegetable and Small Fruit Growers Association are hosting the Maine Vegetable and Fruit School from 8:30 a.m.-3:30 p.m. on March 26 at the Elks Lodge 964, 397 Civic Center Drive.

Geared toward individuals involved in vegetable and fruit pro-

duction, participants will learn from experts in the field and gain practical skills that can be applied to their own operations. Topics include pest management in various crops such as sweet corn, pumpkins and squash, onions and garlic, tomatoes and strawberries. Attendees can also attend a session on common plant diseases in high tunnels to learn how to identify and man-



Photo of Highmoor Farm courtesy University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

age diseases in controlled environments.

Additionally, the event will feature a virtual visit to Pleasant Valley Farm in Argyle, NY, where owners Paul and Sandy Arnold will share experiences and insights on diversifying growing practices.

The cost is \$45 per person and includes access to all sessions, lunch and the opportu-

nity to network with fellow growers and industry professionals. Pesticide applicator training credits are also available upon request. Registration is required.

For the full agenda and to register, visit the program webpage. To request a reasonable accommodation, or contact Stephanie Wright, stephanie.wright@maine.edu, 207.933.2100.

Initiative helps farmers, rural businesses access wind energy

WASHINGTON - The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) and the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE) today are launching a new initiative to help farmers cut costs and increase income using underutilized renewable technologies including smaller-scale wind projects. Through the Rural and Agricultural Income & Savings from Renewable Energy (RAISE) initiative, USDA is setting an initial goal of helping 400 individual farmers nationwide deploy smaller-scale wind projects using USDA's Rural Energy for America Program (REAP).

Today's announcement has the potential to make wind energy more accessible in Maine, according to USDA Rural Development Maine State Director Rhiannon Hampson. "This partnership between USDA and DOE creates new funding, technical assistance, and research and development opportunities," said Director Hampson. "In Maine, we already offer free technical assistance to farmers and small businesses pursuing distributed wind energy through our REAP TAG program. Thanks to the Inflation Reduction Act, and the new RAISE

initiative, USDA will ensure that more farmers and other rural businesses can save money and earn income from distributed renewable energy technologies. These infrastructure improvements help protect the environment and combat climate change, providing tangible benefits to all Mainers."

In 2023 USDA Rural Development in Maine awarded a REAP Technical Assistance Grant (REAP TAG) of \$152K to Pecos Wind Power Inc. The company designs, builds, and sells wind turbines for distributed generation. Increasing the use of

wind-generated power was one priority for the 2023 REAP TAG program, and the company was a successful applicant. Thanks to its USDA REAP TAG funding, Pecos Wind Power now offers free technical assistance to Maine farms and small businesses to help them plan wind generation projects and complete REAP proposals to help fund those projects.

Josh Groleau, co-founder and CEO of Pecos Wind Inc., attended the Distributed Wind Energy Association conference in Arlington, VA today where the new RAISE initiative between USDA

and DOE was announced. "This is a very logical collaboration," he said. "The DOE brings technical expertise and knowledge of wind turbine technology, while the USDA brings the needs and requirements of farmers. Together, the two agencies can bring serious economic benefit to farmers through the deployment of distributed wind power." Pecos Wind Inc. offers support to farms and rural small businesses throughout Maine.

USDA's REAP TAG program is now in its second year. Maine Rural Development is accepting REAP TAG applications

from technical assistance providers through March 15th, 2024. Contact Katrina Shaw, USDA RD Maine State Energy Coordinator (katrina.shaw@usda.gov or 207-990-9129) with questions about the REAP program or REAP TAG.

Send all items for Names and Faces to the Editor. Deadline is Friday by five.

Ocean State Job Lot fundraises to help children in need

NORTH KINGSTOWN, RI - Ocean State Job Lot (OSJL), the region's premier discount retail chain with 153 stores across the Northeast, is pleased to announce its third annual "Building Brighter Futures" fundraising campaign to help children in need throughout the region.

During the ongoing campaign, OSJL will collect customer donations at each of its stores' checkout registers and on its website, to directly

support local organizations in the Northeast that help children struggling with food insecurity, barriers to resources like clothing, and a range of mental health and developmental challenges. One hundred percent of every dollar collected during the campaign will go towards these efforts. Since the campaign's inception in 2022, the Ocean State Job Lot Charitable Foundation has raised over \$1 million to help underserved chil-



dren. "Children in our country shouldn't be facing food insecurity, inaccessibility to healthcare, and other basic necessities, but that is the reality today," said David Sar-

litto, Executive Director, Ocean State Job Lot Charitable Foundation. "Through this campaign, we hope to again make a meaningful difference in the communities we serve with the help of our customers, partners, and associates to improve the lives of children facing hardships."

The Ocean State Job Lot Charitable Foundation partners with a network of community organizations to support as many children as possible.

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Arts & Entertainment

Sign up for NCA Cheer Camp with Gorham Youth Cheering

GORHAM YOUTH CHEERING

NCA CAMP
JULY 20-23
AT HUSSON UNIVERSITY

Registration is now open, deposits due by 3/10, final payment due 5/1.

\$50 DEP

Full payment amount TBD once attire is finalized. ~\$450

GORHAM, ME -- It's time to sign up for NCA Cheer Camp!! We are taking \$50 deposits to hold your spot! The deadline for signing up is March 10. Payment will be due in full in May. We are working on finalizing the amount but you can expect it to be around \$450. We will be holding some fundraisers independently for your cheerleader to raise money for camp.

This is an overnight camp at Husson University. Lodging, food, attire, and lessons from NCA cheerleaders are included in the fee! If you have any questions, please reach out! Age recommendation would be entering third grade up to eighth grade.

MSMT's Yard Sale: Uncover treasures, empower the arts

BRUNSWICK, ME -- Maine State Music Theatre (MSMT) is thrilled to announce the return of its highly anticipated 2024 Annual Yard Sale. Scheduled for Saturday, April 27th, from 9:00 AM to 2:00 PM and Sunday, April 28th, from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM at 22 Elm Street, Brunswick, Maine, this event promises to be a treasure trove for seasoned thrift shoppers and bargain hunters alike.

Morgan Rodgers, Director of Development at MSMT, extends a warm invitation to all, emphasizing the significance of this event, stating, "This Yard Sale offers the perfect opportunity to support our organization while securing amazing deals. Our volunteers have spent the spring season meticulously cleaning, sorting, and pricing thousands of donated items, and every dollar spent directly supports MSMT."

The excitement doesn't stop there! Attendees can also plan to attend the Preview Night on Thursday, April 25th, from 5:00 PM to 7:00 PM, offering an exclusive sneak peek at the treasures awaiting discovery for a nominal fee of \$20.

Dane Whitlock, MSMT's Director of Marketing and Communications, shares invaluable tips for maximizing your Yard Sale experience, emphasizing the importance of arriving early to secure the finest treasures. "Our dedicated enthusiasts know that the early bird catches the worm," he says. "You can practically roll up with a truck and load it with everything you need to furnish a one-bedroom apartment -- from bed frames to



Maine State Music Theatre's Third Annual Yard Sale!

Furniture, homegoods, art, toys, jewelry, and so much more!

Saturday, April 27
9:00am - 2:00pm

Sunday, April 28
9:00am - 12:00pm

22 Elm Street
Brunswick, ME 04011
msmt.org

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SPECIAL PREVIEW NIGHT
Thursday, April 25, 5:00-7:00pm
\$20 at the door

MSMT

cookware, and even wall art."

Reflecting on his own experience, Whitlock adds, "Last year's Yard Sale was a goldmine for me, providing two sets of exquisite dishes, furniture pieces, and stylish lamps. For those eager to snag the hottest items, a \$20 donation to MSMT grants early access."

MSMT Accepting

Donations for Yard Sale

Starting March 13th, MSMT will accept gently used donations on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM at the Brunswick location. MSMT welcomes furniture, home goods, art, toys, jewelry, and more - with the exception of books and clothing.

The proceeds from last year's Yard Sale reached an impressive \$40,000, contributing significantly to MSMT's mission of enriching lives through musical theatre. As a 501(c)(3) organization, MSMT relies on the generosity of donors to continue presenting high-quality musicals, concerts, and family shows.

For more information, visit msmt.org/yard-sale.

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MaineCare responds to pharmacy vendor network disruption

AUGUSTA, ME — MaineCare, Maine’s Medicaid program, is continuing to respond to a disruption caused by a cyber security issue affecting Change Healthcare, an out-of-state vendor that operates MaineCare’s pharmacy claims system. This is a national issue affecting health care systems and Medicaid members in many states.

Because Change Healthcare shut down its systems on February 21, 2024 to limit the impact of the cyber security issue,

MaineCare has been temporarily unable to pay pharmacies for filling prescriptions for MaineCare members through the typical system. This has created questions and challenges for MaineCare members and pharmacies alike.

In response, the Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) Office of MaineCare Services announced today that it has authorized pharmacies to provide prescriptions for up to 30 days to help MaineCare members

access needed medications. This is an extension of the 3-day supply authorization that MaineCare provided to pharmacies last Friday. Pharmacies should continue to fill members’ prescriptions as written by providers and process claims as they normally would. The Department will pay all eligible claims submitted once the system is operational again.

While DHHS works on temporary and permanent payment systems for pharmacies,

should neither turn away nor ask MaineCare members to pay out of pocket for any prescription that is covered by MaineCare. Such prescriptions may be needed for urgent illness as well as chronic conditions.

“It’s critically important that MaineCare members have and maintain access to their prescriptions,” said DHHS Commissioner Jeanne Lambrew. “We recognize the challenges MaineCare members are facing and will continue to do all we can to limit the impact

of this disruption. We thank pharmacies for their help in ensuring access to needed medications under these extraordinary circumstances.”

DHHS is in close communication with Change Healthcare about its timeline for resolving these issues and returning to business as usual.

MaineCare members experiencing trouble getting their prescriptions filled may call the MaineCare Pharmacy Help Desk at 1-866-796-2463. They may experience delays due

to call volume. Pharmacies may refer to the pharmacy provider guidance released earlier today for additional information.

MaineCare takes the security of members’ personal information seriously. Change Healthcare has not indicated that any personal data of MaineCare members was improperly accessed as part of the network disruption.

The Department will share further updates as information becomes available.

MSO journeys through three centuries of classical music

TOPSHAM, ME — The Midcoast Symphony Orchestra (MSO), conducted by Rohan Smith, continues its 34th concert season with a concert entitled “A New Artistic Mélange” that will be performed at the Franco Center in Lewiston on Saturday, March 23rd at 7pm, and at the Orion Performing Arts Center in Topsham on Sunday, March 24th at 2:30pm. The program at both concerts consists of three pieces from different centuries showcasing the evolution of classical music through the years. Beginning with Jessie Montgomery’s “Hymn for Everyone,” the concerts continue with Mozart’s “Prague” Symphony No. 38, and conclude with “Enigma Variations,” by Edward Elgar. Both concerts will be conducted by guest Artist Jinwook Park, a member of the Colby Col-

lege faculty and the Music Director of the Colby Symphony Orchestra and the Augusta Symphony Orchestra. Complete concert and ticket information is available at midcoastsymphony.org. Individual tickets are \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door. All concert tickets are free for students ages 18 and under, or for college students with ID. Audiences are encouraged to purchase tickets in advance online or by calling the box office at (207) 481-0790.

Guest Conductor Jinwook Park is a conductor and violinist who enjoys a versatile career as a music director, performer, and educator. He is the founder and the music director of Haffner Sinfonietta, and the former music director of Philharmonia Boston. Born in South Korea, Mr. Park received his Bache-

lor of Music from Busan National University and then moved to the United States where he received a Master of Music degree in violin performance at the Boston Conservatory. He further continued his Doctor of Musical Arts studies at Boston University. Currently Mr. Park is a member of the Colby College faculty and serves as the Music Director of the Colby Symphony Orchestra, as well as the Augusta Symphony Orchestra. Mr. Park is thrilled to be conducting with the MSO as his engagement as guest conductor in March 2020 ended prematurely due to the pandemic. When asked about this concert’s program, he stated “Elgar’s Enigma variation and Mozart’s Symphony No.38 are my favorite pieces, and I always want to conduct them. This is my first time conducting “Hymn for Every-

one” by Jessie Montgomery. She is an acclaimed American composer, violinist, and educator, so studying her musical works will be a good opportunity.” He further went on to say that he would “like the audience to enjoy the style, harmony, and melody of the pieces by different composers from different eras.”

“A New Artistic Mélange” continues a year-long celebration of the 20th season of long-time MSO Music Director Rohan Smith. The concert begins with “A Hymn for Everyone,” a poignant reflection on the effects of the COVID pandemic by Jessie Montgomery, a recent winner of the 2024 Grammy for best contemporary classical composition for another work of hers. The MSO is looking forward to sharing another piece by this well-

known American violinist, composer and educator after having previously played “Banner” in 2021. The second work in the program is Mozart’s Symphony No. 38, often called the “Prague” symphony after the city in which it was first performed in 1787. Many audience members will recognize this strikingly innovative piece by one of music’s most revered composers. The finale of the concert is “Enigma Variations,” 14 musical sketches by Edward Elgar reflecting a myriad of personalities in the composer’s life at the end of the nineteenth century. The stellar reputation of this inventive piece of music is well earned based on the depth and breadth of the human experiences it conjures to mind.

The Midcoast Symphony Orchestra is a com-

munity orchestra founded in 1990. Started as a chamber orchestra, there are now more than 80 members. The MSO performs a full range of orchestral literature from the classical to modern periods with four regular concerts each season at the Franco Center in Lewiston and the Orion Performing Arts Center in Topsham. A community-based organization, the orchestra draws players and audiences from south of Portland to Rockland along the coast, and inland from Augusta to the Lewiston-Auburn area. Its members all volunteer their time to practice and perform with the Midcoast Symphony. Under the baton of Rohan Smith, the orchestra continues to attract ever more professional-caliber musicians and award-winning guest artists.



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Relay
Continued from page 1

Friend of Relay track sign recognition. Each expanding level – \$250 Purple, \$500 Bronze, \$1000 Silver, \$1500 Gold, \$2500 Platinum, and \$5000 Presenting Sponsor – includes more recognition at each level. We also invite and encourage local businesses and sponsors to register a team and join us on the track at the event.

Can you speak to the impact of community involvement and participation in Relay For Life on cancer research and patient support programs?

In addition to supporting the programs and services of the American Cancer Society, community involvement and

participation in Relay For Life helps fund the importance research by the American Cancer Society. In a recent year, there were more than 60 researchers employed to conduct cancer research full time and at any one point in time more than 800 researchers throughout the country and across cancer types are being funded by Relay For Life and the American Cancer Society.

How can individuals who are unable to attend the event still contribute to the cause and support Relay For Life?

We invite everyone to come out to our event on Friday evening, April 5 from 6-10pm. For those who can't attend and still



want to contribute, go to www.relayforlife.org/southernme

Relay For Life | Cancer Walk | Cancer Fundraising Events

Relay For Life events are life-changing cancer fundraising events that help communities across the globe fight back against cancer.

www.relayforlife.org to make a general donation or a specific one to an individual's or team's fundraiser. Contact our leadership to provide an in-kind donation such as a gift card or other gift from your company. Purchase Luminaria Bags from our website In Honor of or In Memory of your loved ones that we will decorate and place along the track at the event.

What role do volunteers play in organizing and executing Relay For Life events, and how can people get involved in volunteering for future events?

Relay For Life of Southern Maine is volunteer-led, with remote support from our staff partner, a community manager from the American Cancer Society. We have several unfilled roles for this year's event, along with general help needed to set up, operate, and take down the event. We love having volunteers from Scouting, Athletics, High School Groups, College Clubs, Local Companies, Faith Organizations, and others.

What measures are in place to ensure the safety and well-being of participants during the Relay For Life event, particularly considering the ongoing public health situation?

Relay For Life is a Tobacco-free, Alcohol-free event open to everyone. No pets other than service animals. Masks optional. Everyone is welcome to experience the event in the way

Cancer won't win.

Fighting cancer takes many things like research, free rides to chemo and lodging near hospitals, and our 24/7 helpline. But we can't do any of that without you. Join Relay For Life, the largest, most inspiring, and supportive cancer fundraising event on the planet.

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Relay For Life of Southern Maine

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that they wish to, such as meeting and interacting with others or simply walking the track on their own.

How does the Relay For Life event contribute to raising awareness about cancer prevention and early detection in the local community?

At our event – signage, banners, and an American Cancer Society Mission Table will provide information about cancer prevention and early detection in our local community.

How do you envision the future growth and

impact of Relay For Life events in Southern Maine and beyond?

We have a passionate and dedicated community of survivors, caregivers, and participants who come out for Relay For Life every year – some have been “relaying” for more than 25 years! And we know that our youth are the future of Relay. We moved our event date from late June to early April this year, partly so we can have more involvement from local schools and colleges. We would love to see a team formed from many of our local learning institutions.

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Sewing with Art Hour for Adults at Gorham's BML

ART HOUR FOR ADULTS

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THIS CLASS IS FOR PEOPLE 18+. NO SEWING EXPERIENCE REQUIRED. BRING YOUR OWN SEWING MACHINE IF YOU HAVE ONE BUT SUPPLIES WILL ALSO BE PROVIDED BY THE LIBRARY! ONLY 10 SPOTS AVAILABLE. PLEASE CALL [222-1190](tel:222-1190) OR VISIT YOUTH SERVICES TO SIGN UP!

GORHAM, ME -- Have you always wanted to learn the basics of sewing on a machine? Join us

for Baxter Memorial Library's Art Hour for Adults on Thursday March 21 from 5:30pm-6:30pm.

This class is for folks 18 and older. No sewing experience is required. Supplies will be provided by the library. Please bring your own sewing machine if you have one (sewing machine is not needed to participate).

This class requires registration. Please visit or call Youth Services at 222-1190

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Maine author Robert W. Spencer coming to Gorham's BML

GORHAM, ME -- Robert lives in southern Oxford County Maine among the foothills of the White Mountains. His three-title Lizzie Millett Series is set in this rural area of rivers, lakes and forests. His writing brings to life the people and life in small town, rural Maine between the years of 1860 and 1910, a time of wide-spread modernization. While these three titles are well-researched



historical fiction, he refers to them as novels about relationships in a historic setting.

Author Event: Robert W. Spencer
Wednesday, March 13th 6pm

Hannaford supports Backpack Program

GORHAM, ME -- Throughout March our program will receive \$1 for every Hannaford Fight Hunger Bag sold at the Hannaford in Gorham!



UMaine Extension offers master food preserver volunteer program

FALMOUTH, ME - Applications are available starting March 1 for the University of Maine Cooperative Extension Master Food Preserver Volunteer program. The program trains volunteers to extend UMaine Extension's education programs in food preservation to adults and youth in the community.



The program consists of nine hands-on kitchen labs, held Tuesdays from 5:30-8:30 p.m., June 18 to Aug. 27. The first and last class will be held at the Cumberland County Extension office in Falmouth, 75 Clearwater Drive. The remaining classes will be held at Brunswick High School in Brunswick, 71 Dragon Drive. Participants

will learn various food preservation techniques, including canning, drying, freezing, freeze drying, fermenting, and winter storage, as well as important food safety information.

The Master Food Preserver Volunteer Program is open to any Maine resident 18 years or older. Upon successful completion of the program,

volunteers will serve as valuable resources in the community, providing research-based information from UMaine Extension and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA).

Class size is limited, and interested individuals are required to fill out an application. The application deadline is 4:30 p.m. May 3. Participants will be informed of their selection

status during the last week of May.

The fee for the Master Food Preserver Volunteer Program is \$300, due upon acceptance into the program. Limited financial assistance is available. Requests for a hard copy of the application form can be made by contacting extension. rlreception@maine.edu or 207.781.6099.

For more information and to access the application form, please visit the program webpage.

To request a reasonable accommodation, contact Kathy Savoie, ksavoie@maine.edu, 207.781.6099 or 1.800.287.1471 (in Maine).

Clothes galore at Gorham's Mission of Hope Clothes Closet

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

o'clock AM to 12 Noon. We focus on clothes and accessories (gloves, scarves, hats, etc.) and welcome your donations during our operating hours. Clean clothes in good shape help the most, as they go right out to help people locally or in nearby communities. An attempt is made to

have season appropriate clothes available to you. After we have displayed them for a time, they are donated to our local second-hand shops.

In addition to helping folks find clothes, we want to spend time with you! There are tables to sit, talk and to share a cup of coffee and usually a

goodie with volunteers or others. Come see us! You might make a new friend. All are welcome!

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Sherman, Vari join Fontaine Family Team

Linda Sherman Joins Fontaine Family Team

Fontaine Family - The Real Estate Leader is proud to announce Linda Sherman as the newest addition to their growing Auburn team. Linda is from West Bend, Iowa and currently resides in Moultonborough, New Hampshire. Linda holds her Associate Broker's license and is ready to leverage her extensive knowledge and passion for real estate to serve both buyers and sellers.

Linda holds a BA in History from Illinois Wesleyan University and has spent much of her professional career as a copy editor for a prominent national auto finance company based in Dallas, Texas. Transitioning to real estate after moving to New Hampshire in 2016, Linda obtained her NH real estate license and has since been actively involved in the real estate market, initially part-time while continuing her role in auto finance. Despite the dual responsibilities, Linda successfully managed a busy schedule,

primarily focusing on assisting buyers in the picturesque Lakes Region area.

Aside from her professional accomplishments, Linda's life is enriched by her family and hobbies. She is married to Jim Sherman, a Cornwell Tools franchisee whose territory spans northern New Hampshire and Fryeburg, Maine. Together, they have a daughter, Maja, a high school senior who is eagerly anticipating the next chapter of her life. Linda describes watching Maja grow into a thoughtful, intelligent, and humorous young adult as both a joy and a privilege.

The Sherman family is completed by two lively dogs and a cat, ensuring there's never a dull moment at home. In her leisure time, Linda has a passion for refurbishing old furniture, always on the lookout for her next project to bring new life to vintage pieces.

Linda is eager to apply her skills and experience to the real estate industry, committed to providing exceptional ser-



vice to her clients. For real estate opportunities with Linda Sherman, she can be contacted by phone at (603) 273-1683 or email LSUESTEIL42@gmail.com.

Joseph Vari Joins Fontaine Family Team

Fontaine Family - The Real Estate Leader is proud to announce Joseph Vari as the newest addition to their growing Auburn office. Joseph, originally from Youngstown, Ohio, and a current resident of Lewiston, Maine, brings a unique blend of experience and passion for community and real estate to the Fontaine Family team.

Joseph Vari is no stranger to building teams and investing in people. He



has spent over two decades in college coaching. Most notably, he has served as the Head Women's Soccer Coach at Bates College since 2019, where his commitment to developing students both on and off the field has been evident. Joseph also holds a Bachelor of Arts in Psychology from Hiram College and a Master of Education in School Counseling from Lynchburg College.

His journey in coaching across four different states—from Washington to Maine, with stops in Tennessee and Virginia—has not only honed his leadership and team-building skills but also sparked a deep interest in real estate and home renovations.

This interest is a family affair, as Joseph grew up in a family deeply involved in real estate, with his mother still actively selling homes and managing rentals in Ft. Myers, Florida.

Joseph and his wife Beverly have embraced the local L/A area, immersing themselves in the community by exploring new restaurants and shops. An outdoor enthusiast, Joseph enjoys spending quality time with Beverly and their dog, Gus, whether it's cooking at home, dining out, or enjoying local eats.

Joseph is eager to leverage his skills in team building and community engagement to help clients navigate the complexities of buying and selling homes. With a strong belief in the power of investing in people and a team mentality, he is ready to make a significant impact in the real estate industry and the communities Fontaine Family serves. For real estate opportunities with Joseph Vari, he can be contacted by phone at (207) 240-4737 or email joe@fontaineteam.com.

Fontaine Family - The Real Estate Leader is a highly skilled real estate team of licensed professionals dedicated to focusing on the client. Fontaine was awarded 2019 Maine Family-Owned Business of the Year, voted Best Real Estate Company in the Greater Lewiston/Auburn Area and Greater Portland Area year after year, recognized by Real Trends as America's Top 250 Real Estate Team and published in the Wall Street Journal in the Top 250 Real Estate Professionals ranking in the top 1/2 of 1% of Realtors outperforming 99.9% of the nation's Realtors.

The Fontaine Family Team serves 8 counties - Androscoggin, Cumberland, York, Sagadahoc, Oxford, Kennebec, Franklin and Somerset - in two locations, 336 Center Street in Auburn and 432 US Route One in Scarborough. For more information visit FontaineTeam.com, download their free home search mobile app "Fontaine Family Real Estate" or call (207)784-3800 or (207)289-3830.

Maine Defense Industry Alliance announced

SANFORD, ME - U.S. Senators Susan Collins and Angus King, U.S. Representative Chellie Pingree, and Governor Janet Mills announced the Maine Defense Industry Alliance (MDIA), a newly established non-profit coalition of Maine defense companies, state agencies, community colleges and universities, and other vocational training organizations. Based at the York County Community College (YCCC) Instructional Site in Sanford, this partnership was created to attract and train thousands of new employees to perform critical jobs in Maine's defense industrial base.

Today's rollout event was attended by Senator King, Rep. Pingree, Governor Mills, the Assistant Secretary of the Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition and representatives of several of Maine's defense employers, including: General Dynamics Bath Iron Works, General Dynamics Ordnance and Tactical

Systems, Pratt & Whitney, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, and Compotech. Educational partners in attendance included representatives from the Maine Community College System (MCCS), the University of Maine System, and Maine Maritime Academy.

"This new partnership between the institutions that train and educate Mainers and the state's defense employers that rely upon a highly-skilled workforce is exciting and vital to both the state's economy and our national defense," said Senator Collins. "Providing Mainers with paths to meaningful, well-paying jobs through investments in skills training will keep more young people in the state and provide valuable resources throughout their careers. This alliance is truly a win-win for Mainers and their families, our educational institutions, our businesses, our state, and our nation."

"The Maine Defense Industry Alliance is an innovative new coalition that

will connect the educational institutions that train thousands of hard-working Maine people with our state's cutting-edge defense industry," said Senator King. "By aligning skills training with the needs of Maine's defense sector, we are opening the doors to good-paying, impactful jobs while also solidifying our state's role as a cornerstone of our nation's defense strategy. This alliance is an investment in bridging the gap between public and private sectors that can impact businesses and colleges from Aroostook to York counties and will boost our state's economy and defense workforce, as well as our national security."

"With Maine's workforce aging faster than nearly any other state, it's critical that we continue to meet economic needs and offer opportunities to earn a good living right here in Maine," said Rep. Pingree. "Our state's robust and cutting-edge defense industry has immense potential to help address challenges

like Maine's historically low unemployment rate, our aging workforce, and the decline in the number of students graduating high school. This new partnership taps into our potential—creating more opportunities for Mainers to learn skilled trades in service of our state and our nation."

"Maine has a long, storied, and proud history of supporting our national defense. From BIW built Navy ships in Bath, to Portsmouth Naval Shipyard submarine refurbishments in Kittery, to aircraft engine design and service at Pratt & Whitney in Berwick, and others elsewhere, men and women in Maine have been contributing to the defense of our nation through their craftsmanship and highly skilled work for generations," said Governor Janet Mills. "Today, we advance that legacy by establishing the Maine Defense Industry Alliance. By marshalling the resources of state government, higher education institutions, and leading defense compa-

nies, this public and private partnership will build a pipeline of skilled workers to fill good-paying jobs in Maine's defense sector and fulfil our mission of supporting the defense of our nation. My Administration is proud to be a founding member of the Maine Defense Industry Alliance and to stand shoulder to shoulder with our partners."

"We now have a powerful public-private partnership that is Maine's coordinating body for workforce development for Maine's defense manufacturers. The Maine Defense Industry Alliance will put training opportunities on the fast track, helping the state's defense employers and Maine's workforce," said MCCS President David Daigler, who is serving as the inaugural co-chair of the MDIA board of directors.

General Dynamics Bath Iron Works President Charles Krugh said, "Defense-sector manufacturing requires a vast array of skills from design and engineering to precision machining and sophisticated construction techniques. Employers like BIW need to have a seat at the table with our educational partners to ensure the training provided to Mainers prepares them for the jobs of today and tomorrow. Working collaboratively through MDIA to develop a strong pipeline of skilled people will help meet the

industry's workforce needs in the years to come and support our nation's defense."

The defense sector in Maine employs 19,000 people across more than 150 companies, totaling \$3.2 billion in defense spending in 2021. Over the next five years, the aforementioned three Maine defense employers anticipate there will be more than 7,500 skilled positions to fill, with hundreds more expected across the sector.

In July 2023, Senator Collins, Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee and Subcommittee on Defense, and Senator King advanced \$986,000 in Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) for YCCC through the Senate's Fiscal Year (FY) 2024 Labor, Health and Human Services, and Education appropriations bill to upgrade lab equipment and expand workforce training technology. The bill, which was officially approved by the Senate Appropriations Committee, awaits consideration by the full Senate and House. This request is part of more than \$13 million Senator Collins advanced for Maine's community colleges in FY 2024 appropriations bills. In 2022, Senators Collins and King secured \$1.5 million in CDS for the expansion of the Welding Training Facility at the YCCC Sanford Instructional Center.

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Letter to the editor: Protect programs for Maine seniors

In 2023, the Maine legislature took historic action by expanding eligibility for Medicare Savings Programs (MSPs) for thousands of Mainers. MSPs are for people on Medicare who have limited income and resources so they may afford health-care expenses such as copayments, deductibles, and Medicare Parts A and B. The expanded eligibility for these programs was significant. Under the law passed in 2023, people 65 and older with incomes up to \$27,681 would save \$7,300, and people with incomes between \$27,682 and \$36,450 would save \$2,000 on Medicare costs. Unfortunately, the

progress made last year is at risk because, in her supplemental budget, the Governor has proposed rolling back the MSP expansion. Under the current budget proposal, nearly 30,000 older Mainers will lose access to this critical new benefit.

Approximately 345,000 Mainers are enrolled in Medicare for their healthcare coverage. As a share of household expenses, Medicare households spend more than double that of non-Medicare households on their healthcare needs. Despite growing over time, enrollment in MSPs remains persistently low. Maine should be

expanding the availability of this program, not scaling it back. By advancing enrollment in the program, vulnerable Mainers will be more motivated to be proactive with their healthcare.

We must protect these essential programs that provide support to thousands of Mainers who need help covering their healthcare costs. I urge readers to contact their legislators and tell them that Maine should not consider a budget that cuts critical support to those who need it most.

André Chassé
AARP Maine Volunteer State President
Bangor

Camden advisor earns prestigious CEPA credential

CAMDEN, ME – With a strong commitment to supporting businesses, Camden National Bank continues to help business owners navigate complex financial and business succession decisions and is proud to announce that Camden National Wealth Management’s advisor Marsha Osgood Connors has earned the Certified Exit Planning Advisor (CEPA) certification.

The CEPA certification is obtained by completing a rigorous 5-day MBA-style program designed specifically for advisors who work closely with owners of private-

ly held companies. The program’s goal is to help protect, build, and manage wealth for business owners and their families going through an ownership transition.

“We recognize how important early planning is for business owners who want to sell their businesses and are prepared to provide guidance to those looking to exit,” said Jennifer L. Mirabile, Executive Vice President, Managing Director of Camden National Wealth Management. “Marsha has been a Wealth Advisor with Camden National Wealth Management for

nearly 20 years, and this CEPA credential signifies her deep understanding of the intricacies of exit and estate planning strategies.”

The wealth management professionals at Camden National Bank are dedicated to providing outstanding financial and investment advice to families, business owners, and investors. With the CEPA accreditation, our wealth management team provides additional expertise and depth of knowledge to help our clients make sound financial decisions that align with their goals and objectives.

FAME financing to assist Tanbark Molded Fiber Products

AUGUSTA, ME — At its monthly meeting held on February 15, 2024, the Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) approved financing for Tanbark Molded Fiber Products (Tanbark), a Saco-based manufacturer of molded fiber packaging products. The financing is expected to help create nine Maine jobs and retain an additional twenty-three Maine jobs.

FAME approved \$1,594,000 in total financing for Tanbark, which is comprised of a \$1 million FAME Direct Loan and a \$594,000 loan through the Grow Maine program. Grow Maine is administered by FAME and funded through federal State Small Business

Credit Initiative (SSBCI) funds. The funds will assist the company in purchasing and installing equipment for its micro-fiber manufacturing operation. The Maine Technology Institute also has approved financing for the project totaling \$500,000.

“We are pleased to provide support for Tanbark’s operations in York County,” stated FAME CEO Carlos Mello. “Utilizing Maine wood fiber for eco-friendly packaging is innovative and will help to support the forest products industry in Maine.”

Tanbark is a producer of high-end sustainable packaging made from Maine’s heritage wood products industry. The com-



Tanbark molded fiber food containers

pany manufactures molded fiber packaging using wood pulp largely sourced from the Maine woods. The wood-based products have a smooth finish and complex architecture with minimal draft angles. The wood products industry is a targeted sector in the state’s ten-year economic development

strategy. Additionally, Tanbark’s products are free of per-and polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS), which are a group of chemicals used to make fluoropolymer coatings and products that resist heat, oil, stains, grease, and water. Tanbark’s products can be used as a substitute for single-use plastic materials, which can damage oceans and landfills, among other things.

“We are grateful for FAME’s support, which will help us to finalize our equipment purchases and installation and enable us to begin operations,” stated Melissa LaCasse, CEO and co-founder of Tanbark. “We are also appreciative of the support of MTI. The breadth and depth

of the entrepreneurial ecosystem in Maine is impressive, and it is a great place to start and grow a business.”

Steve Femino, Tanbark Board Chair and CFO, added: “The support of FAME to complete this facility allows for future catalytic growth opportunities in Maine.”

FAME’s Direct Loan provides access to operating capital for startups and existing businesses for most business purposes. Loans up to \$1 million may be available if substantial public benefit is demonstrated and sufficient funds are available.

FAME’s Grow Maine Program, administered by FAME in conjunction with various statewide lending partners, provides SSBCI

funding to eligible Maine businesses. Funding is available through FAME and its intermediary partners across the state via loan guarantees, direct loans, and equity capital.

The Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) is a quasi-independent state agency celebrating its fortieth anniversary that provides innovative financial solutions to help Maine citizens pursue business and educational opportunities. FAME helps to lead the creation of good paying jobs for Maine citizens by working at the nexus between economic and workforce development. To learn more about FAME, please visit www.fame-maine.com

Bill to allow reusable containers approved by Maine legislature

AUGUSTA, ME – When Castine business owner Kate Pilotte wanted to offer her meal kit customers reusable packaging, she was told Maine food regulations would not allow it. Kate then asked her State Senator to file a bill that would amend state law so local entrepreneurs have the option to safely offer reusable

containers as a way to reduce plastic pollution and waste.

This week, the Maine House and Senate approved that bill, LD 2091, setting the stage for an update to state law that will allow businesses to provide food in reusable containers and receive them back for sanitizing. The bill now heads to

Governor Janet Mills’ desk for consideration.

“LD 2091 will open the door for companies around Maine to make decisions that are right for their business, safely meet customer demands, relieve burdens on local municipalities tasked with waste disposal, and explore new business models,” said Kate

Pilotte, owner of Farm and Fish, a locally sourced meal kit service, in testimony delivered before the Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry Committee. “Customers want this, but I can’t respond because the law obstructs my ability to do so.”

Reusable food and beverage packaging options for event venues, in-house dining, retail, and take-out services are popping up throughout the country. Many businesses provide reusable, returnable container programs because it

saves them money and provides a better experience for their customers. Innovative third-party businesses are also being created to support the logistics and sanitation for businesses that provide reusable and returnable containers.

“Local Maine businesses that want to offer reusable options should be able to without our laws blocking them,” said Vanessa Berry, Sustainable Maine Program Manager at the Natural Resources Council of Maine. “This bill will

allow for a safe transition to reusable packaging for a broad range of businesses, which will save money for those businesses, reduce taxpayer burdens, and reduce waste.”

The disposal and management of packaging waste in Maine is estimated to cost property taxpayers at least \$16 million a year. LD 2091 will help reduce taxpayer costs for municipal waste disposal by reducing the amount of single-use packaging that ends up in recycling or trash streams.



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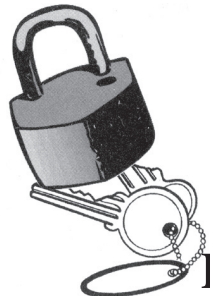
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Mar 9

MINOT -- Church bean supper on Saturday, March 9th from 5 to 6 pm at the Minot United Methodist Church at 142 Minot Avenue, Minot, Maine. Buffet service, sit in bean supper, brown bread, casseroles, desserts. \$8 or a donation. Kids under 12 are free.

Mar 11

AUGUSTA -- Monday March 11 at 6:30 PM Denis Ledoux will present a program based on his new memoir French Boy / A 1950s Franco-American Childhood at the Augusta Public Library.

Mar 14

LISBON FALLS -- There will be a blood drive at the Lisbon United Methodist Church, 14 School Street, Lisbon Falls, Maine on Thursday, March 14th from noon to 4:30pm. To schedule an appointment call 1-800-RED-CROS and use sponsor code LISBON UMC

Mar 22

LEWISTON -- Fill the Plate Breakfast to benefit Meals on Wheels of SeniorsPlus 7 am – 9 am at Hilton Garden Inn Riverwatch, Auburn. Tickets: \$30 per person (\$35 at the door); available at www.seniorsplus.org or by calling 207 795-4010. Seats are limited. Advance registration encouraged.

A breakfast to benefit the Meals on Wheels program of SeniorsPlus,

the Western Maine Agency on Aging, will feature a keynote by Maine humorist Gary Crocker and will honor Lewiston resident Lucy Bisson with the Ikaria Award for outstanding contributions toward improving the lives of older adults

Mar 23

LISBON FALLS -- Dine In/Take Out Bean Supper Saturday, March 23rd from 4:30pm until SOLD OUT; 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!

Mar 23

GRAY -- The First Congregational Church of Gray Saturday Night Church Supper, Saturday, March 23, 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, Red Hot Dogs, Breads, Assortment of Desserts & Beverages

Mar 23, 24

LEWISTON, TOP-

SHAM -- "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

Mar 26

LISBON FALLS -- Tuesday March 26 at 4 PM Denis Ledoux will present a program based on his new memoir French Boy / A 1950s Franco-American Childhood at the Lisbon Falls Public Library.

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.

Apr 27

AUBURN -- Saturday April 27 at 11 AM Denis Ledoux will present a program based on his new memoir French Boy / A 1950s Franco-American Childhood for the Maine Franco-American Genealogy Society at the community room of the Auburn Public Library. Public invited.

May 18, 19

LEWISTON, TOP-SHAM -- "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

June 15

AUBURN -- On Saturday, June 15th, the Maine Iris Society will hold its 59th Annual Flower Show from 1:30 - 4:00 pm at the Auburn Middle School, 38 Falcon Drive in Auburn. Admission is free. There will be a plant sale of potted perennials. Bare-root iris rhizomes will also be available this year for \$1.00 each. Come and vote for your favorite Iris Bloom, Iris Stalk, Peony and Hosta Leaf.

Every 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Monday

LEWISTON -- PROGRAMS FOR HOMESCHOOL FAMILIES, held the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Monday 11:15am-12:30pm 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

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and Curriculum Swap on March 13th, and a Homeschool Storytime and Craft on March 20th.

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