

Central Maine Medical Center reaches milestone for robotic surgery

LEWISTON, Maine (March 8, 2024) Surgeons at Central Maine Medical Center (CMMC), which is part of Central Maine Healthcare (CMH), recently completed the 100th successful surgery using Stryker's Mako™ robotic surgery.

The technology allows surgeons to perform arthroplasty, a procedure to restore the function of a joint, on both hips and joints, with unparalleled precision.

The Mako system uses 3D imaging and real-time data to guide surgeons during procedures, allowing for precise bone preparation and accurate implant placement. This level of precision



Pictured: Michael MacLean, CST, Elizabeth Miller, RN, Michael DeFrance, DO; Elizabeth Harlow, PA, Tanya Lepage, CST, Orthopedics team leader

can lead to better long-term function, increased implant longevity and reduced risk of complications. CMMC is the only hospital in central Maine to

use the Mako robotic equipment.

Michael DeFrance, DO, and other orthopedic surgeons at CMMC began using the Mako technology when it arrived in the fall of 2022. Dr. DeFrance says word about the cutting-edge surgery has been spreading quickly.

"I've been surprised by how many patients have come into the office asking for robotic joint replacements. It seems like a lot of patients-even through word of mouth-are hearing about their friends or neighbors or family members who've had robotic joint replacements performed by myself

and getting referrals specifically asking for it."

Dr. DeFrance says that while the 100th Mako surgery is a significant milestone, he and the staff expect to dramatically increase the number of robotic surgeries they perform in the years ahead.

About Central Maine Healthcare

Central Maine Healthcare is an integrated healthcare delivery system serving 400,000 people living in central, western and Mid-coast Maine. CMH's hospital facilities include Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston, Bridgton Hospi-

See Robotic, page 8

Entertaining, thought-provoking new play at TPT

LEWISTON, ME -- The Public Theatre, Lewiston/Auburn's professional theatre is proud to produce the compelling new play *Secret Hour*, March 15 – 24. This will be the play's second production after its world premiere last year in New York. Entertaining, humorous, poignant, and thought-provoking, if you've ever been in a relationship, you'll be discussing this provocative new play all the way home.

For fun, a married couple invents a game where they confess unflattering truths about themselves and promise to love each other anyway. But is unconditional love really possible? Is being truthful the same thing as being true to oneself? Thankfully, they have a wise and hilarious handyman with

a life coach certificate to help them answer these and other compelling questions.

Secret Hour is also a powerful play for women as its female character must face the decision of pursuing a career path or a family. The play cleverly asks if committed relationships brings out the best in us, or make us compromise our true selves in consideration of the people we love. Couples of all ages will find this play relevant to their lives and appreciate its intelligence, humor and fascinating questions.

Playwright Jenny Stafford will be joining The Public Theatre in the rehearsal process and participating in two free post-show discussions with the cast and director directly following the Saturday, March 16 and Sun-



Katharine McLeod as Kate and Jason Cadieux as Ben

day March 17th matinees. This is the second production this season where the playwright has attended their show at The Public Theatre and shared their thoughts and insights with our audience.

Playing the role of Kate, a successful college Ethics professor will be

Katharine McLeod. Katharine previously appeared at The Public Theatre in *Last Gas* and regularly performs in professional theatres across the US and Canada. Playing her husband Ben is Jason Cadieux. Jason has been seen at The Public Theatre in *Wait Until Dark* and *Wrong for Each Other*. For

the last 5 seasons, Jason has been a company member of the acclaimed Shaw Festival Theatre in Canada and has also appeared in *Blue Bloods*, *FBI* and *Law & Order: SVU*. Playing this couple's wise and hilarious handyman Leaf is Josh Adams. Although based in NY, Josh has performed to acclaim at multiple well-known theatres in the D.C. area including The Folger and The Woolly Mammoth. At the directorial helm of this production will be Chris Clavelli. Chris last directed *A Doll's House Part 2* for The Public Theatre. He is currently a resident Director at Florida Repertory Theatre, and a recipient of a Carbonell Award for Best Actor and a Barrymore Award. His direction earned him an Alan Schneider directing nomination through Theatre Communications

Group. The Set Design for *Secret Hour* will be by Chez Cherry, lights by Matt Cost, costumes by Kevin Hutchins and sound by John Morrison.

Secret Hour will be performed at The Public Theatre, Lewiston's Professional Theatre March 15 - 24. Showtimes are Thurs and Fri at 7:30pm, Sat at 3pm, Sun at 2pm with an added Sat evening on March 23 at 7:30pm. Tickets are \$30 Adults, \$25 Groups 10+, \$20 Student 19+ with ID. For tickets call 782-3200 or visit thepublictheatre.org. The Public Theatre is located at 31 Maple St., Lewiston.

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Ag Ambassador program features farm visits, career exploration

University of Maine Cooperative Extension 4-H is offering its Ag Ambassador program in March and April. The program, open to all Maine teens ages 14-18, focuses on career exploration in the local food system through farm and production visits around the state and provides opportunities to build relationships with industry professionals.

The Spring 2024 cohort will meet virtually on March 19, 26, April 2 and 9 from 3:30 p.m. - 5 p.m. and in-person on March 23 and 30. There will be an overnight Ag Symposium for all participants on April 18-19 at UMaine in Orono. For a full schedule, visit the program website.

With the shrinking number of formal agricultural programs in high schools, students are lacking opportunities



Mariah J. and Hannah J. observe ticks during the 2023 Ag Symposium visit to the UMaine Extension Tick Lab. Photo courtesy University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

to learn about local food systems and discover careers in agriculture. The 4-H Ag Ambassador program aims to help teens from all walks of life discover a future in agriculture and connect with other young people with similar goals.

Youth involved in this program will have opportunities to pursue their interest in agriculture and explore career pathways. This includes

mentoring in post-secondary opportunities, as well as investigating current issues related to food systems, livestock, crop sciences, aquaculture and climate issues impacting food systems and equity. Program participants will serve year-long terms as Agriculture Ambassadors for the Maine 4-H program under the guidance of 4-H staff.

This program is open to all Maine youth;

previous 4-H membership is not required to enroll. Register on the program website. To request reasonable accommodation, please contact extension.4hagleadership@maine.edu or call 207.622.7546. Receiving requests for accommodations at least 10 days before the program provides a reasonable amount of time to meet the request, however, all requests will be considered.

MaineCF journalism, leadership scholarships available

MaineCF journalism scholarships available

PORTLAND & ELLSWORTH — Maine students interested in careers in journalism are invited to apply scholarships from the Guy P. Gannett Journalism Scholarship Fund at the Maine Community Foundation (MaineCF).

The Gannett Scholarship provides support for students majoring in journalism or a field reasonably related, including print, broadcast or electronic media at an undergraduate, graduate, trade or technical school.

Applicants must be graduates of Maine high schools or have been home-schooled in Maine during their last year of secondary education. Students are chosen based on demonstrated interest in journalism through their choice of coursework and extracurricular activities, as well as financial need and academic achievement.

The scholarship fund — MaineCF's largest — honors businessman and entrepreneur Guy P. Gannett, who launched his newspaper career in 1921 with the purchase of two

newspapers he merged into the Portland Press Herald. By 1998, when the family sold Guy Gannett Communications, its media reach spanned several states with three daily newspapers in Maine and seven television stations.

Gannett's granddaughter Maddy Corson and her uncle John Gannett established the Guy P. Gannett Scholarship Fund in 2000. Since then, the scholarship has supported 170 students with nearly \$4 million in support. In 2023, 19 students were awarded a total of \$222,000.

The application deadline is April 1. For more information and to apply, visit www.mainecef.org/scholarships.

MaineCF scholarship available to student leaders

Graduating high school seniors who have demonstrated leadership skills are encouraged to apply for the Chet Jordan Leadership Award at the Maine Community Foundation (MaineCF).

Eligible applicants are pursuing post-secondary study for a certificate or undergraduate degree with-

in the University of Maine System, Maine Community College System, Maine Maritime Academy and all vocational and technical schools in the state. Recipients will demonstrate independent thinking, initiative, hard work and the ability to lead others in their communities.

A native of Portland, Jordan graduated from South Portland High School in 1945. He then joined the service and following World War II entered the United States Merchant Marine Academy in King's Point, New York. He grad-

uated in 1948 with a degree in marine engineering. Jordan returned to Portland and took over the family business, Jordan's Ready-to-Eat Meats. He led the company to become one of the largest independent meat processors and distributors in the country.

Jordan's family and friends established the scholarship to celebrate the rich legacy of his leadership in Maine business and civic affairs.

The application deadline is April 15. To apply, visit www.mainecef.org/scholarships.

Red Cross asks you to TEST your smoke alarms

PORTLAND, ME — Daylight saving time began on March 10 and the American Red Cross encourages everyone to test their smoke alarms to make sure the devices are working.

"Working smoke alarms cut the risk of dying in a home fire in half as you only have about two minutes to get out," said John Montes, regional disaster officer, Red Cross Northern New England Region. "Every second counts when there's a home fire and the sooner an alarm alerts you to a fire, the sooner you can get to a safer place. When

you turn your clocks forward this weekend, test your smoke alarms too to help prevent a tragedy in your home."

Over the past year (Feb. 2023 - Feb.2024), local Red Cross volunteers responded to help 952 people in Maine affected by 276 home fires, which account for most of the about 65,000 disasters that the Red Cross responds to annually across the country. Our volunteers also installed 1,088 free smoke alarms across the state during this time.

S M O K E ALARMS When turning

your clocks forward this weekend, test your smoke alarms and replace the batteries if needed. Visit redcross.org/fire for more information, including an escape plan to create and practice with your family, or download the free Red Cross Emergency app by searching "American Red Cross" in app stores.

Install smoke alarms on every level of your home, including inside and outside bedrooms and sleeping areas.

Replace smoke alarms that are 10 years or older. Components such as sensors can become less

sensitive over time. Follow your alarm's manufacturer instructions.

Practice your two-minute home fire escape plan. Make sure everyone in your household can get out in less than two minutes — the amount of time you may have to escape a burning home before it's too late.

Include at least two ways to get out of every room and select a meeting spot at a safe distance away from your home, such as your neighbor's home or landmark like a specific tree in your front yard, where everyone can meet.

IF YOU NEED HELP If you cannot afford to purchase smoke alarms or are physically unable to

install one, the Red Cross may be able to help.

Residents who need smoke alarms can request them by visiting redcross.org/EndHomeFiresNNE or calling 1-800-464-6692 (Option 4).

During these visits, Red Cross volunteers will install free smoke alarms and provide a 20-minute home fire safety tutorial. They will review the causes of home fires, how to prevent them, what to do if a fire starts and how to create an escape plan.

UPCOMING INSTALLATIONS EVENTS Anyone can request a smoke alarm installation above. Additionally, the Red Cross will be hosting installation events

in the communities below where our trained volunteer teams will visit several homes in a single day.

Saturday, April 20th — Fairfield & Winslow, ME

Saturday, April 27th — Sanford, ME

HOME FIRE CAMPAIGN SAVE LIVES Since October 2014, the Red Cross Home Fire Campaign, working with community partners, has saved at least 2,030 lives by educating families about fire safety, helping them create escape plans and installing free smoke alarms in high-risk areas across the country. To learn more about the campaign and how you can get involved, visit redcross.org/homefires.



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Fill the Plate Breakfast honors Lewiston resident for volunteerism

LEWISTON, ME – SeniorsPlus, the designated Agency on Aging for Western Maine, will hold a breakfast to benefit its Meals on Wheels nutrition program. The Fill the Plate Breakfast will be held on Friday, March 22, from 7 to 9 a.m. at the Hilton Garden Inn Riverwatch in Auburn. The breakfast will honor Lewiston resident Lucy Bisson with the 2024 Ikaria Award.

For the keynote, beloved Maine humorist Gary Crocker will present a talk titled “A Life Built on Laughter.” Tickets are \$30 per person (\$35 at the door) and are available at www.seniorsplus.org/march-for-meals or by calling 207 795-4010. Seats are limited and advance registration is recommended.

Lucy Bisson will be

the recipient of the 2024 Ikaria Award. A local business woman, in recent years she has devoted her time to volunteering. She served on boards for the City of Lewiston and volunteered at nonprofits, including SeniorsPlus where she worked as a Medicare Counselor and in the Administrative Department. Currently she is the Executive Director of the Lewiston/Auburn Senior College. The 2024 Ikaria Award recognizes an individual or organization for singular and outstanding contributions toward improving the lives of older adults. Ikaria is a Greek island in the Aegean Sea. It is considered one of the world’s five “Blue Zones” – places where an estimated one in three members of the population regularly lives an active life into their 90s.



Volunteer Lucy Bisson will be recognized on Friday, March 22 at the 2024 Fill the Plate Breakfast to benefit Meals on Wheels at SeniorsPlus.

Maine humorist Gary Crocker will be the keynote speaker. Born in Lewiston and raised in North Monmouth, Crocker will offer remarks and observations about his beloved Maine

and her people in the classic Maine tradition.

The Fill the Plate Breakfast is presented in conjunction with March for Meals, a national campaign of Meals on Wheels America.

Last year, SeniorsPlus delivered more than 170,000 meals to 1,800 homebound older adults and adults with disabilities in Androscoggin, Franklin and Oxford counties through its Meals on Wheels program. Each meal provides one-third of the recommended daily allowance of nutrition, a safety check, and a visit to these vulnerable adults. The majority of the clients of Meals on Wheels are lower income or on fixed income.

The overall program goal of SeniorsPlus is to assist older adults and adults with disabilities in our tri-county area to remain at home safely for as long as possible. The overwhelming majority of older adults (greater than 95% in an AARP survey) wish to remain at home until they die. The Meals on Wheels program provides nourishment, socialization and regular safety checks.

Since 1972, SeniorsPlus has been improving the lives of older adults and adults with disabilities. As the designated Area Agency on Aging for Western Maine, SeniorsPlus provides statewide services with an emphasis on Androscoggin, Franklin and Oxford counties for core services (ie nutrition and information and assistance) that support independent living, healthy aging, and fight isolation. The mission of SeniorsPlus is to enrich the lives of older people and adults with disabilities, their families and communities, and to support them to make informed choices. SeniorsPlus envisions a future where all older adults and individuals with disabilities are engaged and respected while living quality, independent lives in the communities of their choice. Annually, SeniorsPlus serves 8,000 individuals and fields 170,000 phone inquiries. SeniorsPlus offers a network of support, including information and assistance, short-term care management, Medicare counseling, caregiver support and respite, health and wellness education, benefits counseling, and Meals on Wheels and congregate dining.

Bill supports St. Mary’s Hospital, Tri-County Mental Health

AUGUSTA, ME — The Legislature’s Committee on Health and Human Services approved a bill from Sen. Peggy Rotundo, D-Lewiston, to provide \$10.8 million to support behavioral health services in Lewiston. The bill includes \$8.9 million for St. Mary’s Hospital in Lewiston for the purpose of allowing the hospital to continue to provide critical behavioral and mental health treatment and \$1.9

million to help Spurwink acquire Tri-County Mental Health Services. The vote was unanimous of members present.

“In the aftermath of the tragic Lewiston shooting, we are searching for policy solutions to keep us safer and better identify those who may be ill enough to do others harm,” said Sen. Rotundo. “At the same time, we are still dealing with the fallout from years of isolation during the pandemic, resulting in a skyrocketing need for all kinds of mental health services. I believe an important component of our response to these challenges should be to reinforce the existing mental health resources in our state. St. Mary’s Hospital and Tri-County Mental Health Services are staffed with dedicated professionals who do excellent work. I believe we should prioritize keeping


St. Mary’s funded so it can continue to work on the front lines of this crisis, and we should do all we can to prevent Tri-County from permanently closing its doors.”

The bill — LD 2105, “Resolve, to Protect and Enhance Access to Behavioral Health Services in Androscoggin County and Surrounding Communities” — originally sought

to appropriate \$10.4 million in Fiscal Year 2025 to St. Mary’s. The hospital is now expected to save \$1.5 million in revenues in Fiscal Year 2024 as a result of changes to MaineCare hospital rate increases proposed in the Governor’s supplemental budget. The amount needed by St. Mary’s is now projected to be \$8.9 million. The Committee also approved \$1.9 million to allow Spurwink to acquire Tri-County Mental Health Services, in order to further reinforce the continuum of care in the Lewiston area. The bill’s new total is \$10.8 million.


Representatives from St. Mary’s hospital attended the work session. LD 2105 will be the subject of votes by the full Legislature in the coming weeks.

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Jonathan Knowlton joined Champoux Insurance Group in February as an Account Executive, with 20 years of experience in the insurance and investment field. After graduating from Thomas College with honors, he went to work for MetLife as a personal financial representative. From there he worked for Allstate insurance and within 3 years, had opened his own agency on Sabattus Street in Lewiston. Jonathan closed the agency after 13 successful years. Making sure clients are educated about the risks they face and protecting them with auto, home, and life insurance products has always been important to him; local families truly are in good hands with him. Jonathan lives in Auburn with his wife and son and enjoys ice fishing, ATVing, hiking, growing hot peppers and volunteering with the Boy scouts. Champoux Insurance Group welcomes Jonathan to our Team.



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Hearo: Location based audio game unveils ‘motive for murder’

LEWISTON, ME -- Dive into the heart of Lewiston, Maine, with Hearo’s first location based audio game experience, “Motive for Murder”. This gripping narrative-driven adventure combines the thrill of a detective novel with the engagement of an interactive murder mystery game, set against the vibrant backdrop of Lewiston’s downtown and surrounding area.

Using their smartphone, players will embark on a journey through Lewiston, guided by Hearo’s immersive audio storytelling. As detectives in this unfolding mystery, they will navigate through bustling streets, listening to suspect interviews and piecing together clues with the city’s unique landscape enhancing every step of their investigation.

“Motive for Murder” isn’t just a game; it’s a new way to experience Lewiston. Whether you’re a local or a visitor, this adventure offers a unique way to experience the city. The game is playable with a walking map for downtown explorers, a driving map for those venturing into the suburbs, and even a web version playable from home using Google Street View for virtual

detectives.

“Hearo’s mission has always been to transform how people explore and connect with their surroundings,” said Jefferson Peters, Co-Founder, Hearo. “With ‘Motive for Murder’, we’re inviting players to become part of a story that immerses them in the dynamic atmosphere of Lewiston, blending the city’s vibrant culture with the sheer fun of solving a good old-fashioned mystery.”

See Hearo, page 14

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Seniors Not Acting Their Age

Snowshoeing to Stratton Brook Hut



A hiker snowshoes up Newton's Revenge towards Stratton Brook Hut



A frosty greeter welcomes a guest to Stratton Brook Hut



An overlook on Vista Trail provides a remarkable view of Bigelow Mountain.

For many years, my wife, Nancy, and I contemplated spending a night at one of the huts in the Maine Huts and Trails network. About a decade ago, we snowshoed to Poplar Hut but didn't stay. More recently, I skied there with friends. That visit stimulated a decision to plan an overnight trip.

Our choice was Stratton Brook Hut. Since neither of us had been there, that was a motivating factor. Another reason, their website reported the hut is situated in a high elevation area with spectacular views.

Stratton Brook Hut is one of four lodges in

the 80 mile trail system. The closest access point is Stratton Brook Trailhead located on Route 27 in Stratton. The distance to the hut is 3.2 miles and the elevation gain 586 feet.

Hut reservations can be made online or by telephone. Since I wanted information on trail conditions, I called. The helpful woman who answered advised that the trail would be groomed but a dearth of snow in recent days probably meant a fast surface. Nancy and I decided to snowshoe.

A gear shuttle to the huts by snowmobile is an option for overnight guests. Senior citizens,

Nancy and I enthusiastically took advantage of that welcome service. We delivered our gear to the snowmobile operator and trail groomer at the Airport Trailhead on Route 27 in Carrabassett Valley.

When we arrived at Stratton Brook Trailhead on a gray seasonably warm morning, the trail surface was packed solid. We were happy with our decision to snowshoe. Two other hut guests were preparing to leave. They elected to ski.

Carrying small day packs, we passed a kiosk at the trail entrance and began snowshoeing easily on a wide path in

a mixed hardwood and conifer forest. After .1 mile, the connector trail joins Narrow Gauge Pathway.

We immediately crossed a bridge over the Carrabassett River and turned right. The skiers soon glided past on groomed classic tracks. While proceeding south, two fat tire bikers sped by. The trail conditions were superb for biking.

Following a one mile snowshoe, we joined the well-groomed Maine Hut Trail and progressed easterly at a moderate pace on level terrain. This section of the trail to the hut is called Newton's Revenge. The gradient increases after advancing past Oak Knoll Trail on the left.

Proceeding upward, we passed the two skiers who were slowed on a steep incline. Persisting steadily higher, we arrived at a major junction. A right turn on Maine Hut Trail leads to Poplar Hut about seven miles east. Bearing left, we ascended precipitous switchbacks on Newton's Revenge to the hut.

At an elevation of 1,880 feet, the impressive hut is located in a partially exposed area in a mountainous region.

Our packs were waiting for us when we checked in. Jason, one of the hut workers, welcomed us and detailed the drill. A heated private bunkroom, inside toilets, hot showers, and a communal area warmed by a woodstove are among the amenities.

Since dinner wasn't served until 6:30, we had plenty of time to explore. A short hike up nearby Vista Trail led to an overlook with a remarkable view of the alpine peaks of Bigelow Mountain. On our return, we followed Cook's Corner Trail which winds around the knoll and connects back to the hut.

Nancy and I and the two skiers were the only guests. The four-person crew prepared an excellent dinner. Afterwards, a crew member conducted a tour of the hut's energy facilities. The unique wood-fired heating system left no doubt we'd remain warm throughout night.

Returning to the dining area, a pleasurable evening was spent sharing tales of past outdoor adventures with our fellow guests and the crew. Nancy and I were in our bunkroom and asleep early.

Hot coffee was wait-

ing the next morning and a hearty breakfast served at 7:30. The crew prepared trail lunches for us. A frigid morning, the skiers decided to wait until the snow softened. Nancy and I began the trek down after our gear was picked up.

The descent with frequent views of Sugarloaf Mountain was thoroughly enjoyable and completed in less than two hours. We're already planning another trip. Maybe Flagstaff Hut next time.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* narrates several winter expeditions including trips to 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.ron-chaseoutdoors.com or he can be reached at ron-chaseoutdoors@comcast.net

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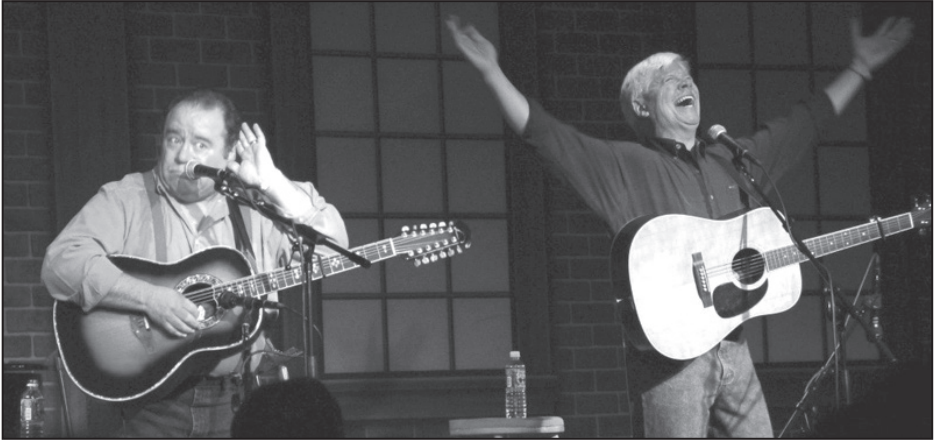
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UUCB Concerts for a Cause presents Schooner Fare

BRUNSWICK, ME
-- Maine's most renowned folk group, Schooner Fare, will be performing at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Brunswick on March 30th, 2024 at 7:30 pm as part of the UUCB Concerts for a Cause series to raise money for Midcoast New Mainers and Oasis Free Clinics.

Brothers Chuck and Steve Romanoff launched Schooner Fare with good friend Tom Rowe 49 years ago to perform original maritime and traditional folk music. They quickly became one of the favorite bands in Portland, and soon were playing all over the country and the British Isles. When Tom Rowe died in 2004, Chuck and Steve continued playing as a duo and are still entertaining legions of fans at many Maine venues.

Schooner Fare has won unanimous critical



praise for captivating harmonies and winning stage presence. In addition to their numerous original songs on both contemporary and traditional themes, the band also writes and performs topical songs, country ballads and maritime masterpieces that have made their name synonymous with the "Down East" style.

Combining their talents on six-string guitars, twelve-string guitars and

banjos, Schooner Fare's distinctive vocal and instrumental arrangements have been hailed by such folk music icons as the Kingston Trio, the Limelitters, the Chad Mitchell Trio, the Clancy Brothers, Tommy Makem and Tom Paxton. Schooner Fare's many recordings receive radio play on four continents and world-wide on satellite radio. The original songs of Schooner Fare's Chuck and Steve

Romanoff continue to be recorded and performed by other artists in the U.S., Canada, Britain, Ireland and Australia.
For this concert, Schooner Fare will perform a lively concert for folks of all ages, singing such signature original songs as Portland Town, Day of the Clipper, We the People, and many more from their 15 albums.

Tickets: \$25 in ad-



vance, \$30 at the door, \$10 Students/Children. Available at the church of-

fice, Gulf of Maine Books, or online at <https://ticket-stripe.com/schooner>.

Remembering Patricia M. Collins

Patricia M. Collins, who held leadership positions in her community, her state, and her church for more than a half-century, died on March 5 at the age of 96.

Born in Colombia, South America, Pat came to the United States with her parents, Joseph and Helen (Foskett) McGuigan, as a young child. She was raised in Port Jervis, NY, and moved to Maine to attend the University of Maine. She married Donald F. Collins in 1948 and spent the rest of her life with Don in Caribou until his death in 2018. They were married for 70 years.

Pat's ability to multitask was legendary and was marked by several "firsts."

She was the first woman to be elected Mayor of Caribou, and the first female chair of the Board of Trustees of the Univer-

sity of Maine system.

Among many other volunteer positions in public service, Pat was chair of the Caribou School Board, chair of the Maine Committee for Judicial Responsibility and Disability, a member of the Board of Visitors at the University of Maine at Presque Isle, a member of the advisory committee of the Maine Public Broadcasting Network, a court-appointed special advocate for children, chair of the Catholic Charities Maine Board of Directors and the Catholic Foundation of Maine Board of Trustees, and one of two New England representatives to the National Advisory Council of the Conference of Catholic Bishops. For nine years, she was employed as the Director of Religious Education at Holy Rosary Church in Caribou.

Pat did all of this

while holding another full-time job -- raising six children.

She also found time to write two cookbooks, become an accomplished artist and photographer, develop extraordinary skills in needlepoint, and read voraciously. A measure of her artistic ability was the project she undertook to paint watercolor portraits of several of her husband's colleagues in the Maine State Senate.

Pat held B.A. degrees in both mathematics (University of Maine at Orono) and art (University of Maine at Presque Isle). She was elected to Phi Beta Kappa as an undergraduate.

Among the honors and awards she received were an Honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from UMPLI, the Deborah Morton Award from Westbrook College, the Black Bear

Award (with her husband, Don) from the University of Maine General Alumni Association, the Diocesan Miraculous Conception Medal, and the Fogler Legacy Award from the University of Maine (awarded to the Don and Pat Collins Family). She was elected to the Maine Women's Hall of Fame in 2005.

Surviving are her six children: Kathleen Wiesendanger of South Portland; Michael, and his wife, Debbie, of Saco; Susan, and her husband, Thomas Daffron, of Bangor; Nancy, and her husband, Richard Sperry, of Haverford, PA; Samuel, and his wife, Lise, of Caribou; Gregg, and his wife, Lori, also of Caribou; 11 grandchildren and several great-grandchildren. Kathleen's husband, John Wiesendanger, died earlier this year.

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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Arts & Entertainment

Glow Dance Party coming to Franco Center March 15

LEWISTON, ME—The Franco Center will host a Glow Dance Party at Heritage Hall Bar, from 7 to 10 p.m. Friday, March 15. DJ Jake Hodgkin, production manager at the Franco Center, will lead line dancing occasionally during the evening.

“Wear as much white and neon-colored clothing as you can because blacklights will be in use throughout most of the building,” said Hodgkin. “The effect will be stunning! Glow sticks will be available for extra fun.”

A cash bar will be



Jake Hodgkin, production manager at the Franco Center. Photo credit: Franco Center.

available in Heritage Hall. “For people wondering if the Franco Center has a bar, yes, we do, and our bartenders are the best! This dance glow party is a good time to check us out,” said Hodgkin.

Cover charge is \$10 at the door or pay what you can.

The Franco Center is at 46 Cedar St., Lewiston. Parking is in the mill lot on Oxford Street. Handicap access is via an elevator on the Lincoln St. Alley side of the building. Membership is not required to attend this event.

Washington comedian appearing at Great Falls Comedy Club

AUBURN, ME – Make laughter a priority this week at Great Falls Comedy Club with headliner Anthony Schumann on March 16, at 7:30 pm.

The club proudly presents, originally from Olympia, WA, fisherman, writer, filmmaker, army veteran, and stand-up comic, Anthony Schuman, as he brings his energetic and honest but light-hearted sense of humor to the stage.

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



red awning.

For more information contact the club at [info@](mailto:info@greatfallscomedyclub.com)

[greatfallscomedyclub.com](https://www.greatfallscomedyclub.com) or by phone at 207-200-5366.

Seniors, preschoolers embrace intergenerational storytelling

AUBURN, ME -- Clover Health Care, a Senior Lifestyle community, has launched a unique and heartfelt artistic project called Journey of Hands. The initiative celebrates

the stories of residents, team members and Clover Preschool children through personal narratives coupled with photographs of paired hands, one elderly and one young.

“Our hands hold a lifetime of stories, and as we age, they become living testaments to our life’s journey,” says Clover executive director, Chris Foss. “The hands captured through

this project have built lives, weathered storms, built sandcastles, cradled babies, created works of art and discovered the world.”

The heart of the project is in its collaborative process and creating connections between generations. It has involved reminiscing, sharing stories, engaging and connecting the elderly and the young. Journey of Hands, while an artistic venture, is a celebra-



Entertaining and thought-provoking for couples of all ages.

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BY JENNY STAFFORD

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tion of life in all its phases, each unique in its life discoveries.

Journey of Hands is a national project for Senior Lifestyle, and the participating communities span the entire country. It serves as a reminder of the stories that shape our world.

Journey of Hands is currently on display at Clover Health Care located at 440 Minot Avenue in Auburn, Maine. The community is invited to come view the photographs and the stories they tell. For more information, contact Clover Health Care at 207-784-3573.

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

First Responder Deal Days at Ocean State Job Lot

NORTH KINGS-TOWN, RI – Ocean State Job Lot (OSJL), the region’s premier discount retail chain with 153 stores across the Northeast, is pleased to announce the return of its First Responder Deal Days from March 14th through March 20th.

During this period, current or retired first responders and public safety professionals who are registered as Job Lot Insiders and who spend a minimum of \$20.00 will receive 40% of their purchase price back on a Crazy Deal® Gift Card. Proof of service with photo identification must be presented at checkout; for full details, visit: oceanstatejoblot.com/first-responder-deal-days.

The promotion is available to first responders, both current and retired, with a valid professional ID, including:

- Certified first responders
- Police and other law enforcement personnel
- Firefighters (career and voluntary)
- EMTs and ambulance personnel
- Dispatchers
- Coast Guard personnel
- Doctors, physicians, and nurses
- Federal, state, and local emergency management and relief agency personnel
- Federal and state correctional officers
- Certified medical professionals

“We are pleased to offer this special program to the incredible people who dedicate their lives to the wellbeing of our communities,” said Curtis Corl, Chief Marketing Officer, Ocean State Job Lot. “Ocean State Job Lot is grateful for their service, and we are proud to support those who go above and beyond in their service of the communities in which we operate.”

This First Responder Deal Days promotion does not apply to Ship to Store purchases. Participants must be registered as a Job Lot Insider. This promotion may not be combined with any other discount, offer or promotion, including but not limited to advertised sale items, Crazy Deals®, Insider coupons, and Insider Exclusive Deals. No rainchecks. Merchandise credit and Crazy Deal® Gift Cards cannot be used as a form of tender during this promotion. Limited product exclusions apply, including Ocean State Job Lot gift cards, third party gift cards, clearance items, propane tanks and refills, beer and wine, and live plants and flowers. Offer may not be applied to past purchases. All warranty and return rules apply.

Shoppers throughout the Northeast know Ocean State Job Lot for its Crazy Deals®, Insider Club, fantastic prices, friendly customer service, and wide range of merchandise. Shoppers can find an ever-changing array of household goods, apparel, pet supplies, seasonal products (such as lawn and garden essentials; patio, pool, and beach supplies), kitchen pantry staples and a broad offering of gourmet and international specialty foods, and station/firehouse necessities. The First Responder Deal Days offer applies to almost everything* in any Ocean State Job Lot store.

Rural Energy Technical Assistance grant program extended

WASHINGTON – Today, the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development announced it is extending the application deadline to March 21, 2024, for the Rural Energy for America Technical Assistance Grant Program.

Through REAP Technical Assistance Grants, USDA Rural Development offers hands-on assistance to agricultural producers and small business owners applying for Rural Energy for America Program (REAP) funding, which will lower energy costs and make energy efficiency improvements in rural areas.

This assistance is made possible by President Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act, the nation’s largest-ever investment in combatting the climate crisis. It also advances the President’s Investing in America agenda to grow the nation’s economy from the middle out and bottom up.

Eligible recipients for these grants include state, Tribal or local governments; colleges and universities; electric cooperatives and utility companies; and nonprofit organizations. Recipients may use the funds to:

- Help rural agricultural producers and small business owners apply for REAP funding.
- Provide information on how business owners and agricultural producers can improve the energy efficiency of their operations and use renewable energy technologies and resources.
- Conduct required energy assessments and audits.
- Help agricultural producers and small business owners with planning construction and development of renewable energy or energy efficiency projects.
- Assist with the completion of environmental reports and/or documentation required for submittal of applications.

Since December 2022, USDA has made up to \$1.3 billion available in REAP funding through the Inflation Reduction Act.

To subscribe to USDA Rural Development updates, visit GovDelivery subscriber page.

State seeks public comments on plan for workforce development

AUGUSTA, ME — The Maine Department of Labor and the State Workforce Board have posted the 2024-2027 Unified State Plan for public comment.

The Unified State Plan is a requirement of the Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA)—federal legislation that directs each state to develop strategies for its workforce development system, which is made up of multiple partners and stakeholders. The Unified Plan is designed to help job seekers access education, training, support, and employment in high-wage in-demand jobs, and to match employers with the skilled workers they need to thrive.

The Plan outlines the steps needed to address the state’s workforce needs and identifies tasks and duties of each state agency and core partners.

The State Workforce Board is now seeking public comments on the Plan. Anyone interested in reviewing and commenting on this workforce Plan can find it here: <https://www.maine.gov/swb/stateplan/index.shtml>

Public comments can be submitted from March 4, 2024, through March 15, 2024, in three ways:

- by emailing DOL@maine.gov,
- through the public comment form available at the link above, or,
- by mail to State Workforce Board, Attn: WIOA Unified Plan, 54 State House Station, Augusta, ME 04333. Comments sent through traditional mail must be postmarked by March 15, 2024. Comments received after March 15, 2024, without an earlier postmark date will not be accepted.

The federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act was signed into law by the President of the U.S. on July 22, 2014. This federal legislation reauthorized the Workforce Investment Act (WIA) of 1998 and the Adult Education and Family Literacy Act. In Maine, WIOA core partners receive roughly \$55 million in federal, state and other funding.

The Maine Department of Labor is an equal opportunity provider. Alternative formats, auxiliary aids and services are available to individuals with disabilities upon request. To make a request, please contact the State Workforce Board at the above address or call the Department at (207) 623-7900 / TTY: Maine relay 711



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March exhibit at the WHA art gallery at CMMC

LEWISTON, ME -- The Woman's Hospital Association (WHA) Rotating Art Gallery at Central Maine Medical Center in Lewiston is displaying the paintings of well-known local artists, Nancy Clark and Joyce Coyne.

Clark captures the essence of a moment in time with her open and expansive seascapes and landscapes. Born and raised in rural Maine, Clark draws boundless inspiration from the magnificent layered mountains, open fields, flowing rivers, sparkling ponds and wide-open horizon of the ever-moving ocean.

This current sea and sky series which focuses on



Paintings: Dawn of a New Day – Nancy Clark – image supplied by artist

the horizon line and the effects of changing light, sets the stage for contemplating

the mystery and calling of distant spaces. "Sometimes it feels like a dance, and I



Peak's Island – Joyce Coyne - image supplied by artist

find myself swaying as I blend paints directly onto the canvas. These images are inspired by reality, but are created by allowing the painting to lead the way to its own conclusion."

As a watercolor painter, Coyne's art career

has spanned more than 30 years. In that time, she has participated in a number of solo exhibits as well as group shows including most notably the Juried Canadian Watercolorists held at Montreal's Botanical Gardens. Receiving

numerous awards at sidewalk art shows throughout Maine and New Hampshire, Coyne was instrumental in promoting area artists in the community when she owned and operated Images of Art Gallery and established and coordinated Lewiston's Downtown Artists Project.

Her favorite subject of gardens and flowers lends itself ideally to her soft, simple and colorful style.

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

The unaccounted for circles of hell: A poetry reading, discussion

AUBURN, ME -- In Dante's Inferno, he easily descends into Hell and explores circles reserved for traitors & betrayers, liars & thieves.

The Unaccounted for Circles of Hell wrestles with the terrifying notion that we are currently there, that the things we suffer on a daily basis — Violence Against Women, Body Image, Death and Dying, and Grief — are a part of some larger punishment.

Join Lynne Schmidt for a reading of their work, and a discussion of how this collection came into being. This program will take place on Friday, March 15, starting at 4 p.m., and will take place in the Androscoggin Community Room. No registration is required.

Lynne Schmidt is the granddaughter of a Holocaust survivor and a mental health professional with a focus on trauma

and healing. They are the winner of the 2020 New Women's Voices Contest and author of the chapbooks, Dead Dog Poems (Finishing Line Press), and Gravity (Nightingale and Sparrow Press) which was listed as one of the 17 Best Breakup Books to Read in 2020, and On Becoming a Role Model (Thirty West), which was featured on The Wardrobe's Best Dressed for PTSD Awareness Week. Their work has

received the Maine Non-fiction Award, Editor's Choice Award, and was a 2018 and 2019 PNWA finalist for memoir and poetry respectively.

For more information on this or other upcoming programs offered by the Auburn Public Library, visit www.auburnpubliclibrary.org.

When: Friday, March 15, 2024; 4:00-5:00 p.m.

Where: Androscoggin Community Room



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Continued from page 1

tal and Rumford Hospital. CMH also supports Central Maine Medical Group, a primary and specialty care practice organization. Other system services include the Central Maine Heart and Vascular Institute, Central Maine Oncology Institute, Central Maine Primary Care, Orthopaedic Institute of Central Maine, Central Maine Trauma and Surgery Center, Life-Flight of Maine and other high-quality clinical services.





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MSO presents youth musicians as part of series

TOPSHAM, ME—The Midcoast Symphony Orchestra (MSO) continues its community outreach “More with Midcoast” program with a pair of performances by youth musicians in March. These young musicians will be showcasing their talent in conjunction with the Brunswick-based group’s next 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 Franco Center concert on the 23rd will feature pianist Michael Bostock, a Waynflete Senior, performing 5 pieces in the Heritage Hall on the ground floor of the venue during intermission of the concert, while 14 musicians of the Maine Youth Orchestra will play 5 pieces in the lobby of the Orion before the concert on Sunday, March 23rd beginning at 1:30pm. Both events are included with tickets to the concerts, which are conducted by guest artist Jinwook Park, the Music Director of the Colby Symphony Orchestra and the Augusta Symphony Orchestra, and include Jessie Montgomery’s “Hymn for Everyone,” Mozart’s “Prague” Symphony No. 38, and “Enigma Variations,” by Edward Elgar. 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 col-



Michael Bostock

lege students with ID. Audiences are encouraged to purchase tickets in advance online or by calling the box office at (207) 481-0790. Michael Bostock is a senior at Waynflete School in Portland, Maine. He currently studies classical piano under Naydene Bowder at the Portland Conservatory of Music, and has been playing piano since 2012. Michael is the full time pianist for Raymond Village Community Church in Raymond, Maine and the First Congregational Church in Gray, Maine. He has been the pianist for the Portland Youth Symphony Orchestra (PYSO) for the last 2 years, has played in the Portland Conservatory of Music’s Noonday Concert Series and performs at the Marston-Kotzschmar and Rossini music clubs. In February 2024, Michael won 1st Place in Bangor Symphony Orchestra’s 43rd Annual Maine High School Concerto Competition, and will be the featured soloist with the Bangor Symphony Orchestra in the Young People’s Concerts May 13. Michael was also a 1st Place

winner of the 2023 Pine Tree Music Competition - Senior Piano Division. In addition to playing piano, Michael also enjoys cycling and rowing. Michael will be performing the following pieces on the 23rd: Kapustin Preludes Opus 23, No 3 and 23, “Troubled Water” by Margaret Bonds, J.S. Bach’s WTC II Prelude and Fugue No 7 in Eb Major, Fizz by Eleanor Alberta, and Chopin Étude No 11 Opus 25. The Maine Youth Orchestra (MYO) was founded in 1972 as the Brunswick Regional Youth Orchestra with the help of the late Professor Robert Beckwith of Bowdoin College and an initial grant from the Maine State Commission for the Arts and Humanities. The Orchestra was incorporated in 1974 and is managed by a volunteer board of directors. The MYO is one of the oldest continuous youth orchestras in the state and is the only organization which offers each senior student a chance at playing a concerto. This educational challenge in a nurturing environment is unique to this orchestra. MYO is conducted by Ben David Richmond and in the past has collaborated with the Greely Madrigal Singers, the Island Beats Steel Drum Band, French the Curva Via and the Vocal Ensemble Tous on Scene with Director Laurent Brack from Paris France, the North Yarmouth Academy Chorus, the Augusta Symphony Orchestra just to name a few. Conductor Richmond includes as many genres of music as possible from 14

See MSO, page 14

L-A Rotary Club welcomes new members



The Lewiston-Auburn Rotary Club recently inducted three new members who are pictured here along with their club sponsors. From left are Peter Kowalski, sponsor; Ray Dumont, new member; Monique Roy, new member; Roger Philippon, club president; Tom MacDonald, sponsor and club treasurer; Joanie Silfen, new member; and Celeste Yakawonis, sponsor. Roy, who is employed as the director of learning and development for Central Maine Healthcare, is actually a returning member who once served as president. Dumont is the new executive director of The Public Theatre in Lewiston and a former member of the Brunswick Rotary Club. New member Joanie Silfen is the owner of Bab’s Table (caterer) and Bab’s Baskets. Not pictured is Chris Martel, CIO/ISC at Spiller’s in Lewiston, another returning member who had been inducted at a previous meeting.

The Lewiston-Au-

burn Rotary Club has been serving this community since its founding in 1917. In addition to various volunteer activities, the club raises funds to support local service agencies and to provide yearly scholarships to graduating seniors

from area high schools. The club meets every Thursday at noon at the Village Inn Restaurant in Auburn. Anyone interested in joining is encouraged to come to a meeting and visit the club website at lewistonauburnrotary.org/.

Scholarship Info Night

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SeniorsPlus offers art-making program for people with dementia

LEWISTON, ME -- SeniorsPlus, Western Maine's designated Area Agency on Aging, is bringing back Opening Minds through Art (OMA), a program that strives to bring joy, art, and pride to people living with dementia and Alzheimer's in our community.

Through a series of classes, OMA engages people with dementia in creating free-wheeling art. OMA classes will be offered at all three of the offices of SeniorsPlus in 2024: from 2 to 3 p.m. on Fridays April 5 through May 10 at 9 Marston St., Norway; from 2 to 3 p.m. on Fridays June 14 through July 19 at 8 Falcon Road, Lewiston; 1 to 2 p.m. on Thursdays August 1 through September 5 at 284 Main St., Wilton; and 2 to 3 p.m. on Fridays September 27 through November 1 at 8 Falcon Road, Lewiston. Registration is required by contacting SeniorsPlus at 207-795-4010 or edcenter@seniorsplus.org. The classes are free.

During the six-week program, people with dementia (the "artists") are paired one-on-one with volunteers who help them create art using imagination instead of memory. SeniorsPlus seeks artists for the program, as well as volunteers to work one-on-one with participants in these art classes. No art background required.

OMA is an award-winning, evidence-based, intergenerational art-making program for people with dementia. Developed in 2007 at Miami University's Scripps Gerontology Center, the program is grounded in person-centered care principles. It is designed to provide creative expression and social engagement opportunities for people with Alzheimer's disease and other dementias.

La Frontière premières on Maine Public Television

ACWORTH, NH -- Filmmakers Katy Haas and Megan Ruffe are excited to announce their award-winning short documentary film, *La Frontière*, will be featured on Maine Public Television as part of their esteemed Maine Public Film Series. Viewers can watch the premiere on Thursday, March 21, at 9:00 p.m., with a re-broadcast on Saturday, March 23, at 2:00 p.m. The film will also be available to stream on the Maine PBS website.

La Frontière is a poetic documentary portrait of Maine's border with Canada, exploring the history and culture of these borderlands and the people who call them home. Both intimate and expansive, the 35-minute film provides a



La Frontière, photo by Jared Ames, potato blossom

unique perspective on this 611-mile border. It features interviews and stories from Wabanaki and Acadian communities, farmers, people who used to work and live at Loring Air Force Base, young women competing in the annual Potato Blossom Festival, and many others.

"This film was made possible by the immense

support and openness of the communities along Maine's border. Their willingness to share their time and stories has brought this project to life," Katy Haas said. Megan Ruffe added, "We were in awe of the landscapes we encountered throughout Maine, and we wanted to showcase the beauty and resilience of these areas and the people who call them



La Frontière, photo by Lindsay Taylor Jackson, Loring

home."

La Frontière is directed and produced by Katy Haas and Megan Ruffe and features the beautiful cinematography of Lindsay Taylor Jackson and Jared Ames. The documentary was made with support from the Maine Heritage Film Grant, provided by the Points North Institute and TV5Monde, to highlight

French language and culture in Maine. *La Frontière* had a successful film festival run, screening at festivals including the Camden International Film Festival in Midcoast Maine and winning the Audience Choice Award for Best Documentary Short at the Monadnock International Film Festival in Keene, NH. For more information about the film

and future broadcasts and screenings, please visit: www.lafrontierfilm.com

Maine Public is Maine's premier, independent media resource, dedicated to creating exceptional opportunities for the communities it serves to engage with critical issues, compelling stories and quality entertainment. Maine Public is renowned for creating award-winning programs, as well as airing content from PBS, NPR, and other independent producers. Formed in 1992, Maine Public is an independently owned and operated nonprofit organization with office and studio locations in Bangor, Lewiston, and Portland, Maine. For more information, visit mainepublic.org.

Low-income electric customers urged to seek help with bills

HALLOWELL, ME -- Maine Public Advocate William Harwood is urging Maine's electric ratepayers to call 2-1-1 immediately if they are struggling to pay electric bills.

"If you are already having to make decisions between necessities like food, medicine, heat and electric bills, now is the time to act," said Harwood. "It may be tempting to skip your electric bill in the months you know

the power company likely won't disconnect you, but it will be harder to get the help you need in the spring when all of the bills come due."

Last year, Maine's electric customers received more than 440,000 disconnect notices. Utilities must get special permission from Maine's Public Utilities Commission to shut off customers for nonpayment between November 15 and April 15, creating

what amounts to a disconnection moratorium during Maine's dangerously cold winter months. In April, thousands of customers who have missed payments during the moratorium will get notices informing them they need to pay or face disconnection.

The common path for financial assistance is to first apply for the Low-Income Heating Assistance Program (LIHEAP), which qualifies applicants for

other programs like the Low-Income Assistance Program (LIAP) to help pay for electricity.

"We're hearing from the utilities that a similar number of ratepayers are behind in their bills this year compared to last year," said Harwood. "Ratepayers should seek help from 2-1-1 and their local community action agencies now, since it can take several weeks for a LIHEAP application to make

its way through the approval process. You don't want to be sitting in the dark for weeks this spring."

Advocates are especially concerned this year because funding sources available last year, such as the Winter Energy Relief Fund and the Homeowners Assistance Fund are now gone. In addition, the average LIHEAP benefit this year is half of what it was last year. These factors will contribute to a challenging

spring.

"It's like we're watching an avalanche in slow motion," said Harwood. "I urge low-income ratepayers to seek assistance now before the community action agencies are overrun by people in need this spring."

Mainers can find contact information for their local community action agencies, and other local organizations offering assistance, by dialing 2-1-1.

Nonprofits partner, advance digital equity in Maine

NORTHEAST HARBOR, ME—In 2023, Maine Seacoast Mission partnered with Island Institute and Sunrise County Economic Council to help bridge the digital divide experienced in rural Maine communities. These three nonprofits engaged in Maine Connectivity Authority's (MCA) effort to build a statewide Digital Equity Plan by engaging constituents in respective and overlapping

service areas.

The Mission participated in the development of digital equity plans for Washington, Hancock, and Waldo Counties. County plans formed Maine's first, statewide Digital Equity Plan, which was recently approved by the National Telecommunications and Information Administration. The first approved in the nation, the state plan defines how Maine will ensure house-



Mission staff connect via wifi

holds receive affordable, universal high-speed internet access.

"Internet connecti-



Teenage participants in the Mission's Journey program connect to complete school work

ty is necessary for today's communities. Without good connectivity a rural community will struggle to attract and retain new businesses and families."

says Mission President John Zavodny, "We're thankful to deepen our relationship with key partners to better serve our shared communities."

As part of the Sunrise County Economic Council's Washington County Digital Equity Coalition, Mission staff facilitated communications about connectivity habits and needs amongst its constituents. The Mission's Cherryfield campus also served as a host site for the National Center for Digital Equity (NDEC). Washington County's digital equity plan includes educating residents about Maine's Affordable Connectivity Program (ACP), where access includes financial affordability, access to equipment, and support for training to use digital services. This program gives qualified ap-

plicants, including those on SNAP, WIC, and SSI, a \$30 credit towards the cost of internet. As of 2023, only 30 percent of eligible Washington County households had applied.

For Maine's unbridged, outer islands, the Mission worked with Island Institute and represented island residents during meetings of the Hancock and Waldo County Digital Inclusion Coalition. Usually smaller than mainland communities, islands can lack resources for large infrastructure projects. Feedback for the plan included fortifying connectivity to access telehealth services. Mission staff working aboard the organization's flagship vessel, the Sunbeam, facilitated completion of the 2023 statewide digital equity survey of islanders.

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Maine author presenting to local libraries

MAINE -- “It was a surprise for me to discover as a child that French was not the majority language in Maine, let alone the US,” recalls Denis Ledoux in his new memoir *French Boy / A 1950s Franco-American Childhood*. “I came to realize that my language and culture were marginal and not appreciated by the larger society.”

In *French Boy*, Ledoux explores what it meant to him to be born outside the dominant culture and language. This memoir is sure to provoke discussion and not always agreement.

“I was very interested in exploring the dynamics

of my Franco community—not as an academician but as a person whose life was shaped by the joys and frictions of the Franco life. Our experience is one of incorporating loss and fashioning a new identity.”

French Boy / A 1950s Franco-American Childhood chronicles the life of a Maine boy from 1947 through to 1960. “Born in Lewiston, a small industrial Maine city and then raised on a farm, Denis Ledoux’s life is typical of many Maine Franco men and women of his generation, and as such,” according to David Soucy, Marketing Assistant at The Memoir Network, “it is an important

addition to our understanding of one of Maine’s ethnic communities—and the USA’s—in the last century.”

“Memoirs such as my *French Boy*,” continues Ledoux, “are ones of overlooked details, of information often thought to be marginal and so too frequently lost to history. A basic function of memoir is to give witness to a time and to values gone by, and *French Boy* succeeds admirably at this function, transcending the life of the individual who is its subject. This story is bigger than me.”

In 1990, Ledoux’s short story collection,

Mountain Dance and Other Stories, won the Maine Arts Commission’s Fiction Award. In both 1992 and 1996, he won Individual Writing Fellowships from the Maine Arts Commission. In addition, he has been helping people to write memoirs since 1988 via the Memoir Network. In 1996, the Association of Personal Historians named him Personal Historian of the Year.

Ledoux’s interest in writing beyond family has created a record of a community that was once called the “unassimilable ethnics.” In *French Boy*, he writes about his generation’s amnesia as to its

history and culture. He has studied this remarkable memoir with historical information that will explain much about Franco-America to both Francos and non-Francos.

“My personal and family story is a sort of trellis through which I have intertwined Franco and American history,” said Ledoux. “*French Boy* is only partially a personal story. More than that, it is a slice of history.”

Soleil Press is the publishing arm of The Memoir Network which helps people to chronicle their lives via memoir writing. The network has assisted thousands of individuals to start

and complete memoirs.

The book is available through The Memoir Network, 95 Gould Road, Lisbon Falls, Maine 04252, through Amazon.com or Barnes and Noble. The office can be reached by calling 207-353- 5454 or emailing at memoirs@thememoirnetwork.com.

Ledoux’s memoir, *French Boy / A 1950s Franco-American Childhood*, will be the subject of a presentation at the Lisbon Library March 26; for Senior College at the Auburn Public Library on Tuesday April 2; for the Canadian American Genealogy Society at the Auburn Public Library on Saturday April 27.

Tips to “yard your way” this spring

ALEXANDRIA, VA – The TurfMutt Foundation, which is celebrating 15 years this year of advocating for the care and use of yards, parks and other green spaces, encourages homeowners to put their own spin on their personal outdoor space this spring by adopting a “yard your way” attitude.

The act of “backyarding,” which is the act of using our yards, parks and other green spaces for activities typically associated with our indoor life such as dining, working, entertaining and more, has gained much traction in recent years. Now, with spring just around the corner, the

Foundation encourages people to ratchet up their backyarding activities by identifying their personal style and personality.

“Your yard isn’t just for aesthetics,” reminds Kris Kiser, President and CEO of the TurfMutt Foundation, “It’s purposeful and contributes to our and the planet’s well-being. We encourage you to design your space that shows off your sense of style and supports what is important to your family.”

Here are six ideas to “yard your way” this spring:

Business in the front (yard) & party in the back. If you live in a

neighborhood with strict homeowner’s association regulations, you may feel hemmed in by what you can do in the public-facing areas of your yard. But you can use the backyard to really highlight your style, whether it’s cozy and family friendly or modern and sleek.

Sensible & sustainable. What you choose to plant in your yard can affect climate change on a microlevel, and eco-conscious homeowners know selecting native plants is good for the environment. They are more resilient, require less water and promote biodiversity. **BONUS:** they are also easier

to maintain.

Budget backyarding. Your yard is full of cost-saving measures that budget-conscious families can take. Skip the fancy restaurant and dine alfresco on your patio. Host a family movie night on a blanket of backyard grass. Or consider trading a pricey weekend getaway for a backyard staycation.

Biodiverse digs. Human-made and synthetic environments have changed the landscape, so pollinators and wildlife rely on our yards and community green spaces to bring equilibrium to the ecosystem. Planting for these local critters can turn your backyard into a private nature preserve.

DIY...or don’t. If you are a weekend warrior who relishes DIY projects, taking care of your yard yourself can be an excellent choice. But there is no shame in your backyard game if you outsource yardwork so you can spend your time outside just enjoying your yard. You could also have a landscaping crew do the basic mowing and maintenance so you can spend your time enjoying gardening or just enjoying it.

Park it. Community greenspace and neighborhood parks make it possible to “yard your way”



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even if you don’t have an outdoor space to call your own. Want to sit under a shade tree and read? A community park often offers these kinds of resting spots. Want to do a little hiking but not travel hours out of town? An urban trail system is an excellent opportunity to hoof it close to home. You can even stake a claim to your own patch of nature and try your hand at growing things through community gardening programs.

To learn more about

creating the yard of your dreams, visit TurfMutt.com. Look for Mulligan the TurfMutt on the CBS Lucky Dog television show.

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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 21
LEWISTON -- Great Falls Forum "Bates and Lewiston: The Early Years" is happening at The Lewiston Public Library in Callahan Hall on Thursday, March 21st, from 12 noon to 1 PM. The event listing can also be found on our website at <https://lplonline.org/events/great-falls-forum-with-pat-webber/>

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

Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

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

"A New Artistic Mélange" featuring Michael Bostock during intermission, Saturday, March 23, 2024, 7:00 p.m. - Franco Center, Lewiston

"A New Artistic Mélange" featuring the Maine Youth Orchestra before the concert, Sunday, March 24, 2024, 2:30 p.m. - Orion Performing Arts Center, Topsham

Program for "A New Artistic Mélange": Hymn for Everyone - Jessie Montgomery, Symphony No. 38 in D Major "Prague" - Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart, Enigma Variations - Edward Elgar

Tickets are \$25 in advance for adults; \$30 at the door. All concerts are free for students 18 and under or college students with identification.

For more information visit MidcoastSymphony.org, call 207-315-1712, or e-mail info@midcoastsymphony.org

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.

Mar 26
LISBON -- Denis Ledoux's memoir, French Boy / A 1950s Franco-American Childhood, will be the subject of a presentation at the Lisbon Library March 26

Mar 30
BUXTON -- Try our delicious Haddock Supper Buffet - Saturday, March 30, 2024 - 5:00 pm at Living Waters Church, Parker Farm Road, Buxton. Suggested donation: \$10 Adult, \$5 Child, \$20 Family.

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

Apr 2
AUBURN -- Denis Ledoux's memoir, French Boy / A 1950s Franco-American Childhood, will be the subject of a presentation for Senior College at the Auburn Public Library on Tuesday April 2

Fridays Apr 5 – May 10
NORWAY -- Opening Minds through Art, Fridays April 5 - May 10, 2 pm – 3 pm at Education Center of SeniorsPlus at 9 Marston St., Norway

Through a series of classes, OMA engages adults with dementia in creating free-wheeling art. Contact SeniorsPlus, at

207-795-4010, edcenter@seniorsplus.org.

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 12-13
AUGUSTA -- Maine Homeschool Exchange April 12-13 at the Augusta Armory. Details: www.homeschoolersofmaine.com

HOME's annual convention returns for another year as the Maine Homeschool Exchange! Enjoy shopping for discounted curriculum, resources, and books, attending informative workshops, participating in fun-filled activities, and getting to know homeschooling families around the state of Maine!

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

Fridays June 14 – July 19
LEWISTON -- Opening Minds through Art, Fridays June 14 – July 19, 2 pm – 3 pm, Education Center of SeniorsPlus at 8 Falcon Road in Lewiston

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adults with dementia in creating free-wheeling art. Contact SeniorsPlus, at 207-795-4010, edcenter@seniorsplus.org.

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.

Thursdays Aug 1 – Sept 5
WILTON -- Opening Minds through Art, Thursdays August 1 – September 5, 1 pm – 2 pm at Education Center of SeniorsPlus at 284 Main St., Suite 100, Wilton

Through a series of classes, OMA engages adults with dementia in creating free-wheeling art. Contact SeniorsPlus, at 207-795-4010, edcenter@seniorsplus.org.

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

This program is free and recommended for homeschool families with children of all ages. No registration is required. Contact info. 513-3133, LPLKids@lewistonmaine.gov

Hearo

Continued from page 3

The adult oriented game is perfect for individuals, groups of friends, or families looking for an adventurous day out. It offers a unique blend of entertainment and mental exercise, making it an ideal choice for those seeking an intellectually stimulating and adventurous experience.

"Motive for Murder" is available now on the website <https://www.iamhearo.com/m4m-listings-lewiston-me>

Join the adventure and see if you can catch the killer!

MSO
Continued from page 9

Pop/Rock to Classical in the MYO repertoire. Selections on the 24th will include Habanera from Carmen by Georges Bizet, Brandenburg Sinfonia by J. S. Bach, Legend by P.I. Tchaikowsky and American Folk Tunes Swallowtail Jig and Ash Grove. The full orchestra will be performing at Freeport Performing Arts Center on May 3, 2024 and the students are excited to be included in this outreach performing ahead of the Midcoast Symphony Concert on March 24th.

The Midcoast Symphony Orchestra is a community 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.



Maine Youth Orchestra (photo credit M.J. Mora)

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Send all items for What's Going On to the Editor.

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SENIOR TRIPS

MAY 11 – 19, 2024 – BILTMORE ESTATE & ASHEVILLE, NC - Trip includes 8 nights lodging including 4 nights in the Asheville area, 8 breakfasts and 6 dinners and a guided tour of the Asheville, North Carolina area. We

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

MAY 25 – JUNE 2, 2024 - MACKINAC ISLAND – Trip includes 8 nights lodging including 4 nights in Northern Michigan, 8 breakfasts and 6 dinners. We will have a guided tour of Mackinaw City and visit Mackinac Island with an included Carriage Tour of the island and see sites like the Arch Rock and Lilac Lane. We will cruise through the Soo Locks and have free time in Sault Sainte Marie. We will have a guided tour

of Quaint Mackinaw City and tour the Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse and visit Colonial Michilimackinac. We will visit "Michigan's Little Bavaria" in Frankenmuth, Michigan and so much more. A \$75 deposit per person is due at registration. Total price is \$1,209.00 pp double occupancy which includes all entrance fees, step on guide tips, meal tips and bus driver tip.

OCTOBER 6 – 14, 2024 - NOVA SCOTIA, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND & NEW BRUNSWICK – Trip includes 8 nights lodging, 8 breakfasts, 1 lunch, and 6 dinners. You will have a guided tour of Acadia National Park, Halifax, Peggy's Cove & Lunenburg. We will visit King's Landing Historical Settlement and have a guided tour of Prince Edward Island including Anne of Green Gable's Home. We will have admission to the Hopewell Rocks and you will visit the Waterside Town of Saint John, New Brunswick and much more. A \$75.00 deposit is due when signing up.

Price is \$1,639.00 per person double occupancy and this includes all entrance fees, meal tips and bus driver tip.

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

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