



# TWIN CITY TIMES

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Your Hometown Newspaper Since 1999

Thursday, March 21, 2024 • FREE

## New pediatric providers at CMMC now accepting patients

**LEWISTON, ME** -- Three new pediatric providers at Central Maine Medical Center (CMMC), which is part of Central Maine Healthcare (CMH), are now accepting new patients.

The addition of these new providers significantly addresses the recent shortage of pediatric services in the central Maine region.

Molly Skog is a nurse practitioner (NP) who received her undergraduate degree from Saint Joseph's College in Standish and



Molly Skog

completed her pediatric nurse practitioner training at Boston College.

Zachary Newton,



Zachary Newton

MD, also received his undergraduate degree in Maine, at Colby College. He attended medical school

at the Morehouse School of Medicine in Georgia and completed his residency at Dartmouth Health Chil-



Claire Watson

dren's in New Hampshire. Claire Watson is a nurse practitioner who attended the University of Utah. She worked in Las Vegas before coming to Maine. Watson says providing strong preventative and mental health care for children are the keys to building healthy adults.

"The people of central Maine are very fortunate to have all three of these exceptional medical professionals here in our community," said Rebecca Brakeley, MD, chief of

women's and children's health at Central Maine Healthcare. "They join an all-star cast of providers, including Jared Morin, NP, David Baker, DO, Erin Van Wagenen, MD, and a kind, thoughtful office staff. We encourage any parent who is looking for a pediatrician to call Central Maine Pediatrics for an appointment."

Those wishing to schedule an appointment with Central Maine Pediatrics should call 207-795-5730.

## Healing Hearts presents Lewiston Relief Gala

**LEWISTON, ME** -- A dedicated team of Maine-based event professionals has organized the Lewiston Relief Gala, in collaboration with the Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce, with the shared goal of raising significant funds to be donated to the OneLewiston Resilience Fund to support long-term economic and community healing events related to the impacts of October 25, 2023 mass shooting in Lewiston.

On October 25, 2023, a somber event unfolded, shaking not only the City

of Lewiston but the entire State of Maine. The unfortunate incident claimed the lives of 18 individuals, leaving dozens more injured. Many families have been profoundly affected, prompting a compassionate group of Mainers to unite in support. Let's come together on March 29th to make a positive impact and assist those in need.

In addition to the event, Healing Hearts is hosting an online silent auction at <https://givebutter.com/c/HealingHeartsLA/auction>. Online auction items include: 1880's Sara-

**LA HEALING HEARTS LEWISTON RELIEF GALA**

29 March 2024 | 6PM  
At Hilton Inn Riverwatch, Auburn.

**Tickets & Live Auction**  
<https://givebutter.com/c/HealingHeartsLA>  
or Find us on Facebook Events!

toga Dome Trunk Restored by Maine Steamer Trunk Company; Four tickets to Portland Symphony Orchestra Magic of Christmas!; four tickets to experience one of the PSO's Classical or POPS! performances at Merrill Auditorium in Portland, Maine; One Night Stay & \$50 Pub Certificate at Oxford Casino; Oxbow Beer Garden Gift Basket; and White Glove Detailing Package: Bill Dodge Auto. The auction ends at 9pm on March 29, 2024.

Net proceeds from the Healing Hearts Gala will

be donated to L/A Metro Chamber of Commerce Foundation to support the long-term economic and community healing related to the impacts of October 25, 2023.

WHO: Healing Harts  
WHAT: The Lewiston Relief Gala

WHEN: Fri., March 29 from 6 PM to 10 PM

WHERE: Hilton Garden Inn, Auburn Riverwatch

14 Great Falls Plaza, Auburn

TICKETS: <https://givebutter.com/c/HealingHeartsLA>

## Providing food, habitat for wildlife in your backyard

**AUBURN, ME** -- Come to the Auburn Public Library to learn about the Androscoggin Valley Soil & Water Conservation District's new program, the Conservation Landscape Certification program. This is a free program designed to help landowners im-

prove their properties for wildlife, water quality, soil health, ecosystem support and to be more climate resilient. In line with the program's focus, we will be joined by Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife Private Lands Wildlife Biologist, Joseph

Roy. Joe will discuss ways to improve your property for wildlife including the value of standing dead trees, woody debris, the importance of pollinators and more.

AVSWCD Project Director, Emma Lorusso will introduce the District's

new program and touch on ways for folks to get signed up and improve their lands for all the creatures that live in our local ecosystem.

This program is for adults and will take place in person, in the Androscoggin Community Room on Monday, March 25, from 5:00-7:00 p.m.

This is the first of two programs presented by AVSWCD; the second, Climate Resilient Gardens & Backyard, will take place on Earth Day, Monday, April 22, 2024, also starting at 5:00 p.m.

For more information on this or other upcoming programs offered by the

Auburn Public Library, visit our website at [auburnpubliclibrary.org](http://auburnpubliclibrary.org).

When: Monday, March 25, 2024 - 5:00-7:00 p.m.

Where: Androscoggin Community Room

Contact: Donna Wallace, 333-6640, ext. 4

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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## AFA's Teen Alzheimer's Awareness scholarship opens

**NEW YORK** — The Alzheimer's Foundation of America (AFA) is offering scholarships of up to \$5,000 to college-bound high school seniors affected by Alzheimer's disease or other dementia-related illnesses as part of its annual Teen Alzheimer's Awareness Scholarship Contest. Entries can be submitted at [www.alzfdn.org/scholarship](http://www.alzfdn.org/scholarship) and must be received by Monday, April 1 at 5 pm ET.

"Whether they've had a loved one with the disease, volunteered or

worked as a caregiver, or are just passionate about the cause, teens across the country are involved in the fight against Alzheimer's, and many of them have very moving and powerful stories to tell," said Charles J. Fuschillo, Jr., President & CEO of the Alzheimer's Foundation of America. "Every student who shares their experiences helps raise Alzheimer's awareness among people of all ages. We encourage teens who have been impacted by Alzheimer's disease to submit an essay or video

and tell their story."

Eligible teens are invited to apply for the scholarship by submitting an essay (1,500 words maximum) or submitting a video (no more than four minutes) describing how Alzheimer's disease has impacted their lives and what they have learned about themselves, their family and/or their community through their experience with Alzheimer's.

Examples of ways that Alzheimer's impacted a student's life can include: Having a loved one



with Alzheimer's disease or another dementia-related illness

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

Volunteering or

working in a care setting that serves individuals with dementia

Raising Alzheimer's awareness in their school or community

Conducting Alzheimer's research

The program is open to current high school seniors living in the United States who will be attending a U.S. college or university this Fall. Students already attending college are not eligible to participate.

The top prize awarded is a \$5,000 scholar-

ship. Additional prizes are awarded for runners up and honorable mentions. More than \$428,000 in college scholarships have been awarded since the program's inception.

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

## Going the extra mile for Maine students

**Bangor, ME** — March is National Nutrition Month, and Maine has much to celebrate, particularly when it comes to food access for kids. Maine was one of the first states to offer school meals to all students at no charge thanks to a policy that took effect last year. At the same time, Maine schools have significantly increased in the amount of locally grown food served to students. There has been national recognition as well: Regional School Unit 89 in Penobscot County was one of just four school districts in the country to win a U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) "Innovation in Preparation of School Meals" award earlier this month. USDA Food and Nutrition Service (FNS) Deputy Under Secretary Stacy Dean met with local food access leaders in Brunswick last week to celebrate these milestones, joined by USDA Rural Development Maine State Director Rhiannon Hampson.

Maine nonprofit Full Plates Full Potential host-



**Left to Right: USDA Rural Development State Director Rhiannon Hampson, USDA Food and Nutrition Service Deputy Under Secretary Stacy Dean, USDA FNS Regional Administrator Lisbeth Silbermann, and former USDA FNS Under Secretary Kevin Concannon pose together after the Brunswick meeting on March 5, 2024.**

ed the March 5th meeting at the Curtis Memorial Library in Brunswick. Officials from the State of Maine, area school administrators, and representatives of stakeholder groups and nonprofit organizations participated. Former USDA FNS Undersecretary Kevin Concannon, a member of the FPPF Board of Directors, also attended the meeting. Deputy Under

Secretary Dean lauded Maine's 2021 School Meals for All legislation, an initiative championed by Full Plates Full Potential. Maine schools implemented the new policy during the 2022-2023 school year. Results included increased participation in school meals and alleviated stress and expenses for Maine families.

USDA's Food and Nutrition Service (FNS)

funds, sources, and regulates school nutrition programs nationwide. Among other projects, the agency has focused on helping schools to use more local foods to prepare student meals. Doing so encourages children to get excited about more foods and helps local producers find new markets. Maine schools have nearly tripled their use of local foods compared to last year, purchasing from eighty-four Maine farms and distributors. "We are investing extensively in local food procurement and farm-to-school across mission areas at USDA, and that is important to us," Deputy Under Secretary Dean noted during the meeting.

Thanks to Maine's Healthy School Meals for All initiative, more students have been participating in school meals. Several school administrators at the meeting mentioned the need to improve their kitchen and dining facilities to meet the increased demand. Director Hampson offered the USDA Rural Development Community Facilities Direct Loan and Grant Program as one possible funding source to help. "Maine USDA Rural

Development has worked with several food pantries to make commercial kitchen facilities improvements," said Director Hampson. "We can also fund projects for schools. As a former school nutrition director myself, I understand how critical it is to have the space and equipment to prepare good meals for kids. Food is foundational to educational success, and USDA Rural Development can help schools expand their capacity. With 29 agencies in the USDA, we often have opportunities to strategically support other mission areas and truly live up to our name as 'The People's Department'."

Offering students free meals and using more local foods means more cooking for school staff. Those gathered at the meeting in Brunswick were excited to hear more about the USDA "Innovation in Preparation of School Meals" award announced for RSU 89 last week. The award recognizes the Stacyville school unit's work to incorporate more "scratch cooking" into the weekly menu, to engage students in menu choices, and to use more local produce (work made

possible with a USDA Healthy Meals Incentive Initiative grant the previous year). Agriculture Secretary Tom Vilsack announced the award last week, saying, "For many children, school meals are the healthiest, most nutritious meals in their day-to-day lives. At USDA, we are proud to recognize the schools that are going the extra mile in providing nutritious meals for students and helping them reach their fullest potential."

Last week was also National School Breakfast Week, and Jane McLucas, Director of Child Nutrition for the Maine Department of Education reflected on the Brunswick meeting in that context. "Starting with breakfast in Kittery, and ending with a roundtable in Brunswick, the day highlighted the great work that Child Nutrition professionals are doing in our schools, the great partnerships we have and the support of the legislature in supporting our youngest citizens," she said. "Maine students are able to access healthy meals that assist them in learning to their highest potential, and we are excited to see where it can take them in the future."




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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## Norway Savings continues support of “Safe Voices” in Auburn

**AUBURN, ME--** For survivors of domestic abuse and violence, asking for help is only the beginning.

“She just held my hand while I told her everything” is how one domestic abuse survivor described her initial meeting with a Safe Voices advocate.

The survivor and the advocate worked together to find resources that would help her start over and take back control.

“I’ve met friends and feel like I’m getting my confidence back. I go to church. I take my dog out for walks. I don’t feel like I have to hide anymore.”

It’s a story that has played out countless times at Safe Voices, the only shelter and support services organization for

victims of domestic violence, sex trafficking, and exploitation in Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford counties.

With outreach offices in all three counties, Safe Voices provides one-on-one safety planning, support groups, information and referrals, court advocacy, shelter, education, professional training, and so much more. In addition to its three community-based offices in the tri-county area, Safe Voices operates three shelter facilities: two shelters for survivors of domestic abuse and one confidential safe house for survivors of sex-trafficking. The organization’s safe house is the only one of its kind in Maine.

Safe Voices supports over 2,200 survivors annu-

ally, no matter their gender identity, and is driven by the simple yet vital truth that all people deserve to be treated with dignity.

Developing and maintaining a strong safety net for those seeking support, assistance, and a life free from violence and abuse is a mission that has inspired Norway Savings Bank for over a decade. NSB has contributed over \$57,000 to support Safe Voices, including the start of a new three-year commitment to assist with operating costs. In addition, NSB team members have performed hundreds of volunteer hours at the organization, including Lin Dehetre, Market Manager VP at NSB’s Auburn branch, who has served on the Safe Voices’ Board of Directors since 2011.

“Being a board member has been one of the most rewarding experiences knowing that we are making a difference to help end domestic violence and create social awareness in our communities,” she said. “Safe Voices is committed to empowering survivors, embracing the opportunity to freely offer help, and ending the cycle of violence while promoting prevention and peace. It is so powerful.”

“This support strengthens our community and ensures that critical resources and services are available to the people who need them most and, most importantly, when they are most needed,” said Grace Kendall, Director of Development and Engagement for Safe Voices.

Beyond the crucial

individual help and advocacy given, Safe Voices works to educate the community about the seriousness and prevalence of abuse.

“All of us, whether we realize it or not, know someone experiencing domestic abuse and violence,” said Elise Johansen, Executive Director of Safe Voices. “We have an opportunity to come together and ensure that survivors get the support and resources they need with compassion and dignity. By committing our time, our talent, and our treasure to this vision, we will create a safer and more just future for our communities.”

The work to create communities that no longer tolerate abuse and violence, while also mak-

ing sure those in need of assistance receive it, is a praiseworthy mission that commands respect.

“Safe Voices creates deep and lasting opportunities for survivors and is dedicated to setting our communities on a path to their full potential,” said Dan Walsh, President and CEO of Norway Savings. “It’s a privilege to give this support to an organization that is giving hope to survivors and inspiring meaningful social change in our world.”

If you need help, Safe Voices operates a 24/7 helpline that is free, confidential, and anonymous at 1-800-559-2927.

For more information about Safe Voices, including ways in which you can offer support, visit [www.safevoices.org](http://www.safevoices.org).

## Brush Pick-Up Assistance Week begins earlier

**City of Lewiston Brush Pick-Up Assistance Week**  
April 8 – April 12, 2024

**LEWISTON ME**



Brush will be collected from Lewiston’s residential properties during the week of April 8 – 12, 2024, by Public Works Department staff.

- Brush butt ends (cut ends) **MUST** face the street.
- Brush **MUST** be curbside by no later than Sunday, April 7 – **no exceptions**
- Once Public Works staff clears a street of curbside brush, they will not return to that street to collect additional brush.
- Curbside collection is restricted to **ONLY** wood/tree waste and brush.
- Wood/tree waste that **will not be collected** includes:
  - Tree stumps (regardless of size)
  - Tree limbs greater than 12 inches diameter
  - Demolition wood fencing, decking, and/or wood from construction/demolition projects

**IN ADDITION**, during Brush Pick-Up Assistance Week—**free of charge**—Lewiston residents may bring one standard size pick-up truckload of **brush only** (three yards per residence) to the Lewiston Solid Waste Facility, 420 River Road.

If you need to dispose of household waste items, please visit [www.lewistonmaine.gov/otherdisposal](http://www.lewistonmaine.gov/otherdisposal)

**LEWISTON, ME** – Lewiston Public Works (LPW) announced that the department will start its annual Brush Pick-Up Assistance Week three weeks early this year and that residents must place brush curbside with cut ends facing the street by Sun., Apr. 7. The service is free for Lewiston residents.

Lewiston Public Works will collect brush debris from the City’s residential properties, which is three units or less, owner occupied during Brush Pick-Up Assistance Week which runs from Mon., Apr. 8, through Fri., Apr. 12.

Residents must place their brush curbside with

cut ends facing the street by Sun., Apr. 7. There are no exceptions. Curbside collection is restricted to wood/tree waste and brush only and limited to one standard pick-up truck load or three yards, per residence.

“Don’t wait until Monday or when you see LPW crews to put out your debris,” said Reggie Poussard, LPW Highway Operations Manager. “LPW crews will pick up brush starting Mon., Apr. 8, and once an LPW truck is in a neighborhood, we can’t wait or go back. We must follow a strict schedule in order to complete citywide pick-up efficiently and effectively.”

The curbside brush piles must be neatly placed in a convenient curbside location that Public Works crews can easily access from the street, and the location must be free of overhead obstructions or parked vehicles. Pick-up will follow the same routes and days used for waste and recycling collection.

Items that will not

be picked up include tree stumps regardless of size, tree limbs greater than 12 inches diameter, demolition wood – fencing, decking, and/or wood from construction/demolition projects.

“As residents prepare for Brush Pick-Up Assistance Week, we also encourage them to sterilize pruning tools between

tree cuttings to avoid spreading any diseases from one tree to another,” said Poussard.

One way to sterilize pruning tools is to pour a half cup of rubbing alcohol into a bowl or shallow dish. Dip the pruning shears in the rubbing alcohol for one to two minutes. Pull the shears out of the solution and rinse

them with water and then dry with a towel.

Also during pick-up week only, residents may bring one standard size pick-up truck load of brush to the Solid Waste Facility, 420 River Road, Lewiston, at no charge.

Questions about Brush Pick-Up Assistance Week may be directed to (207) 513-3003

### WHY PEOPLE CHOOSE CHAMPOUX INSURANCE



**Jonathan Knowlton**  
Licensed Agent

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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# Seniors Not Acting Their Age

## The relative risks of winter mountaineering

A few weeks ago, I wrote a column about my son, Adam, and me climbing Williams Mountain in western Maine. The trek occurred on the first day of winter and, as I described, we encountered strong winds and severe wind chills. One reader submitted a comment about the article: "Projected icy trails, high winds, and severe wind chills. I would hope that most folks have the common sense to avoid such conditions."

The writer appears to suggest that we exercised poor judgement choosing to hike in cold windy weather. I disagree. As with most endeavors, fitness, experience, and equipment need to be factored into the equation. We were well-prepared for the conditions.

The writer is certainly entitled to his or her opinion. I'm convinced the most dangerous thing that Adam and I did that day was to drive to and from the trailhead. Driving is something that the vast majority of us do every day. About 40,000 Americans die in car accidents each year and approximately 2.5 million are injured. I try to minimize the risks by driving



Sixty-eight year-old Suzanne Cole reaches the summit of Mount Katahdin recently

defensively.

The reader's comments motivated me to consider the relative hazards of winter mountaineering. Unlike driving, most people are not familiar with climbing mountains in winter. In fact, it's a relatively low risk activity compared to other winter sports. For instance, according to the Maine Center for Disease Control an average of six people die each year snowmobiling in Maine. Sadly, every winter a few

Maine skaters, fishermen, and other adventurers fall through the ice and drown. My research indicates there are also occasional downhill skiing fatalities in Maine. Eight years ago, a friend died in Baxter State Park of a presumed heart attack while hiking on park roads in winter. I can't find any record of a recent winter mountaineering death in Maine due to the elements.

The unknown is often a cause for fear or concern for most of us. I



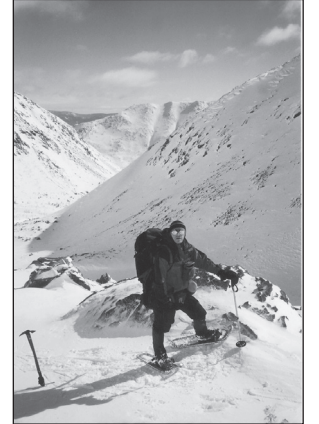
Two hikers approach the summit of Snow Mountain in western Maine



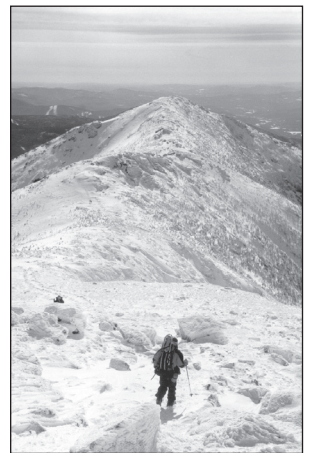
Thirteen year-old Adam Chase waves to his mother while climbing Cathedral Ridge on Mount Katahdin



Climbers haul sleds in Baxter State Park



Mountaineering in the Chic Choc Mountains in eastern Quebec



A peak bagger descends from Mount Lincoln on Franconia Ridge in New Hampshire.

Next week, friends and I are beginning a Baxter State Park expedition. We anticipate skiing, snowshoeing, mountain hiking, technical climbing, and hauling heavy sleds. I hope to return with interesting stories to relate. We'll likely experience some stormy weather. I predict the most hazardous thing we'll do is drive to and from the park.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* narrates 50 wonderful Maine outdoor escapades. All of them are potentially dangerous.

*Ron Chase resides in Topsham. His latest book, "Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine" is available at [www.northcountrypress.com/maine-al-fresco](http://www.northcountrypress.com/maine-al-fresco) or in bookstores and through online retailers. His previous books are "The Great Mars Hill Bank Robbery" and "Mountains for Mortals - New England." Visit his website at [www.ronchase-outdoors.com](http://www.ronchase-outdoors.com) or he can be reached at [ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net](mailto:ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net)*

wouldn't jump out of an airplane with a parachute unless I was certain it was going crash. I suspect that when many people think about winter hiking in the mountains they visualize the worst case scenarios and consider the venture life-threatening.

I started winter hiking with my wife, Nancy, family and friends about 45 years ago. Our son, Adam, began joining us on winter outings at a young age. He climbed Mount Katahdin in the winter when he was 13. About thirty years ago, I connected with a group of friends called peak baggers in an attempt to climb the 100 highest peaks in New England in winter. Ten of us completed the list.

Winter mountaineering is an integral part of our lives; as normal for us as others might consider a Sunday afternoon drive. Both activities are potentially dangerous. That's where evaluating the risks and assessing one's ability to deal with them become important factors. I wouldn't go for a Sunday afternoon drive during a snowstorm. I wouldn't have driven to Williams

Mountain in a snowstorm. I wouldn't have climbed Williams Mountain if I believed it was dangerous. And, if conditions had deteriorated, we would have turned back.

Safety is important in any endeavor. For me, that's true with winter mountaineering and virtually every other activity. Sometimes people have terrible accidents during Sunday afternoon drives and occasionally climbers die in the mountains. I don't believe that's a reason to forgo them.

Recently, four friends entered Baxter State Park with the intent of climbing Mount Katahdin. All of them are in their sixties and seventies; one a grandmother. Severe winter conditions were forecast for their multi-day quest. They were experienced, well-equipped and carefully evaluated the weather each day. On the final possible day, the weather improved and they reached the summit. A few may question the common sense of that undertaking. I think they did a superb job of assessing the circumstances and safely achieving their goal.

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# Workshops connect women to construction, forestry careers

**AUGUSTA, ME—** New Ventures Maine will offer two free, 60-minute online workshops in April that are designed for women to explore high-wage trade careers in Maine.

**Connecting Women to Construction Careers**

Online, Thursday, April 4, 2024, 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

**Connecting Women to Forestry Careers**

Online, Tuesday, April 9, 2024, 6:00 to 7:00 p.m.

Both workshops provide an opportunity to learn about low-cost or no-cost training programs and job opportunities in a variety of in-demand construction and forestry careers in Maine.

“Employers are recruiting in these two sectors and are offering excellent jobs that women and those who identify as gender-expansive or non-binary may not have considered,” said New Ven-



tures Maine Workforce Development Manager Suzanne Senechal-Jandreau. “Our workshops offer an introduction to many of these opportunities and to resources for learning more.”

Previous participants provided the following feedback:

“I was very interested to hear about the apprenticeship programs, as I was apprehensive of starting a job with which

I had little experience. But hearing that employers actively look for people to train gave me a new sense of hope.”

“The presenter was very respectful and knowledgeable, providing information in a way that made me feel confident in my goals not in spite of being a woman, but BECAUSE of it. The video interviews were great, too. Thank you!”

“We want to connect women with current

information, not only about training, education, and earn-while-you-learn opportunities, but also well-paying trade jobs with benefits that currently exist in our state,” said Senechal-Jandreau.

For more details and to sign up, visit bit.ly/NVMEBuildYourCareer or call 207-768-9635.

NVME trades workshops are supported by the Maine Department of Transportation.

# Camp Susan Curtis Board of Trustees welcomes new members

**PORTLAND, ME** - The Camp Susan Curtis Board of Trustees unanimously voted to welcome these two motivated and skilled community leaders, Robin Taylor-Chiarello and Kathryn (Katie) Wise. Both have expressed great enthusiasm towards creating opportunities for Maine kids and are excited to work with fellow board members and staff to further the mission of Camp Susan Curtis.

About Robin Taylor-Chiarello:

Robin Taylor-Chiarello is an active and award-winning children’s author. She has received a Gold Mom’s Choice medal and four Silver Mom’s Choice awards. Her books celebrate overcoming challenges and adversity and stress family values, faith, and determination. Robin has been a primary school art and art history teacher and has enjoyed a 20-year career designing health care environments. She is an alumna of Finch College and Harvard Graduate School of Design and has held memberships in the International Interior Design Association and American Institute of Architects. She has been an active member of the Camp Susan Curtis community for several years and works to connect Maine communities to the

camp’s mission through vibrant events.

About Katie Wise:

Katie Wise grew up in Maine and has a love for the outdoors. Katie spent summers on the lake and winters in the mountains, and enjoys many outdoor activities including skiing, swimming, gardening, and hiking. Katie is the Senior Manager of Design and Planning for L.L.Bean, leading their architecture and design department. She has a passion for design and space and brings that into all aspects of her work. Katie has an under-



**Robin Taylor-Chiarello**

graduate degree in Civil Engineering from the University of Maine and a Master’s of Architecture from the University of Massachusetts. Katie is active in the Maine architecture community and currently serves on the AIA



**Katie Wise**

Maine Board of Directors. About Camp Susan Curtis:

The mission of Camp Susan Curtis is to provide a transformative

camp experience that nurtures self-confidence and a sense of belonging in Maine children facing economic hardship, with the long-term vision that all of Maine children feel valued and have the opportunity to thrive. Camp Susan Curtis is the only camp in Maine that provides a free, 10-day camp experience exclusively for Maine children facing economic hardship. Since 1974, CSC has served over 19,000 children facing economic hardship from across the State of Maine. At camp, kids join a supportive

community that encourages them to try new things, connect with nature, build positive relationships, and develop the essential life skills that will help them find their path to a bright future.

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

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# Arts & Entertainment

## 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 an-

swer 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 Sunday March 17th matinees. This is the second production



**Katharine McLeod as Kate and Jason Cadieux as Ben**

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 Commu-

nications 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 the-publictheatre.org. The Public Theatre is located at 31 Maple St., Lewiston.

Sponsored by IBEW Local 567 Portland and Warp and Weft

Season Underwriters: Sun Journal, Platz Associates, and Bennett Radio Group

## NY comedian up this weekend at Great Falls Comedy Club

**AUBURN, ME** - Make laughter a priority this week at Great Falls

Comedy Club with two shows, March 22 and 23, at 7:30 pm, featuring the

extraordinarily funny Rob Christensen.

Christensen is a



stand-up comedian, writer, and actor who was born and raised in Brooklyn, NY - when it was still dangerous. His unique humor is smart, self-reflective, spirited, and informed by his experiences back in Brooklyn as an illegal graffiti artist, raver, and eventually, a U.S. Air Force Sergeant.

Come down to the club this weekend and check out this self-proclaimed badass ruffian who doesn't shy away from cuddling with baby animals.

Tickets for both shows 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@greatfallscomedyclub.com](mailto:info@greatfallscomedyclub.com) or by phone at 207-200-5366.

Entertaining and thought-provoking for couples of all ages.

# SECRET HOUR

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# \$22.4M for project to reconnect Maine communities

**WASHINGTON** – Today, President Biden and U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg announced \$22,400,000 for the state of Maine for projects through the Reconnecting Communities Pilot and Neighborhood Access and Equity discretionary grant programs as part of President Biden’s Investing in America Agenda. The funding is aimed at reconnecting communities that were cut off by transportation infrastructure decades ago, leaving entire neighborhoods without direct access to opportunity, like schools, jobs, medical offices, and places of worship.

The Biden-Harris Administration is taking historic action to deliver for communities that have been left behind for too long. Thanks to additional funding from the Inflation Reduction Act, this investment is 18 times larger than

the investments from the previous year’s standalone Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program. Both programs are part of the President’s Justice40 Initiative.

“While the purpose of transportation is to connect, in too many communities past infrastructure decisions have served instead to divide. Now the Biden-Harris administration is acting to fix that,” said U.S. Transportation Secretary Pete Buttigieg. “Today we are proud to announce an unprecedented \$3.3 billion to help 132 communities deliver better infrastructure that reconnects residents to jobs, health care, and other essentials.”

The Department has created a virtual story that spotlights communities’ stories, the historic context for the program, and the future it seeks through funding the reconnection of

communities online.

In this round of funding for the Reconnecting Communities Pilot and Neighborhood Access and Equity program, Maine received a grant for Reconnecting our Villages: Historic Libbytown in Portland, which consists of numerous multi-modal and street connectivity improvements. These benefits will restore Libbytown, which was severed in the 1960s when Interstate 295 was constructed through the community, as a cohesive Portland neighborhood. Transforming Congress Street and Park Avenue into two-way thoroughfares will significantly reduce a public transportation burden by allowing transit riders travel through Libbytown bidirectionally instead of in only one direction. Sidewalks on both sides of the street and bidirectional bike lanes will provide the same efficiency

for individuals who choose active transportation.

These programs are part of President Biden’s Justice40 Initiative, which set the goal that 40 percent of the overall benefits of certain Federal investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution. The Department prioritized applications from disadvantaged communities that demonstrated strong community engagement and stewardship to advance equity and environmental justice, and would catalyze shared prosperity project development and job creation.

Last year, in the inaugural round of the Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program, the Biden-Harris administration awarded grants for transformative, community-led solutions, including capping interstates with parks, filling

in sunken highways to reclaim the land for housing, and converting inhospitable transportation facilities to tree-lined Complete Streets. These projects will help revitalize communities, provide access to jobs and opportunity, and reduce pollution.

The Reconnecting Communities Pilot Program (RCP) in the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law has been combined with the newly-established Neighborhood Access and Equity discretionary grant program in the Inflation Reduction Act.

This joint application makes it more efficient and accessible than ever for project sponsors to apply for the historic levels of infrastructure funding made available by the Biden-Harris administration’s Investing in America agenda. While Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods grants can

come from either program, they share important key characteristics including prioritizing disadvantaged communities — including rural, Tribal and urban communities — and improving access to daily needs and basic services.

The Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods program is an important component of the Department’s commitment to equity and the Biden-Harris administration’s commitment to supporting communities marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution, and strengthening equitable development. Restoring communities like those awarded grants today helps give everyone an equal chance to get ahead and opportunity to accessing jobs and essential services such as healthcare services, grocery stores, and places of worship.

# Holy Cross named “Best of the 207”

**SOUTH PORTLAND, ME** – Holy Cross School is thrilled to announce its recent accolade, the “Best of the 207 Awards - Gold in Best Private School,” an honor recognizing the school’s dedication to providing an exceptional educational environment. This prestigious award is part of the annual Best of the 207 Awards, a comprehensive resource guide celebrating

Maine’s most outstanding businesses, services, and attractions.

Principal Tim Stebins expressed his gratitude and pride in the school’s achievement, stating, “Winning this prestigious award not only highlights the exceptional educational environment at Holy Cross School but also reinforces our commitment to fostering a community where every

student can thrive academically, spiritually, and socially.”

The Best of the 207 Awards saw an unprecedented level of engagement this year, with over 145,000 votes cast by the community, underscoring the public’s keen interest in acknowledging excellence across various sectors. Holy Cross School was recognized for its outstanding commitment

to excellence, innovative educational practices, and significant contributions to the community.

For more than 85 years, Holy Cross School has stood as a beacon of educational excellence and Catholic faith in South Portland. The school welcomes families to an energized learning environment that upholds community values and ac-

ademic achievement, serving students from Pre-Kindergarten to 8th grade. With a focus on small class sizes, Holy Cross School emphasizes personalized education, ensuring that each student receives attention tailored to their individual strengths and needs.

Holy Cross School’s impact extends beyond the classroom, as it draws

students from across the Greater Portland area and fosters a cooperative and collaborative educational setting. The school is committed to preparing young individuals for the challenges of high school and beyond, instilling in them a toolbox of moral and educational values to navigate life’s decisions, with a strong emphasis on service to others.



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# Powerful women performers coming to Chocolate Church

**BATH, ME** -- Screaming Orphans are a chart-topping all-sister Celtic folk and pop band from Donegal. They are known worldwide for their award-winning sound combining original pop songs with a unique take on traditional Irish music. From an early age, the Diver sisters entertained international audiences around Ireland accompanying their mother, legendary céilí singer Kathleen Fitzgerald. The band has always defied being pigeonholed, having masterfully developed their own unique fusion of folk and pop.

The sisters' trademark spine-tingling four-part harmony and mastery of their instruments combined with their highly energized performances take audiences of all ages on an exhilarating and emotional



**Darlin' Corey**

musical journey. Screaming Orphans' pitch-perfect harmonies have led them to many collaborations on recordings and stage with artists such as Sinéad O'Connor, Peter Gabriel, Joni Mitchell, Baaba Maal, and Afro Celt Sound System. The band continues to tour and play extensively across America, Canada, and Europe.

As of this year, the

band has released 15 albums, encompassing both original pop and folk/Irish music, as well as one Christmas album. Their albums Taproom, Life in a Carnival, and Sunshine and Moss have topped Billboard, iTunes, and World Music charts.

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**Screaming Orphans**

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Screaming Orphans (Celtic Folk and Pop) Saturday, March 23, 2024

7:30 PM 9:30 PM  
Ticket Prices: \$25 ADV | \$27 DOS

From the northern reach of the Appalachian Trail comes the musical trio Darlin' Corey. Draw-

ing on the many threads of North American folk music, their elegant harmonies are the beating heart of their sound, in both their original music and the traditional Folk, Old Time, and Bluegrass music they regularly showcase. In Darlin' Corey's singing and playing, you can feel the many years of dedication to these celebrated musical traditions.

Erica Brown's fiddle-playing is at turns virtuosic and completely unpretentious. Matt Shipman is an ideal counterpart as his versatility on a dizzying array of stringed instruments (guitar, Irish bouzouki, 5-string banjo, mandolin) blend seamlessly, never timid or overpowering. Add to that Kris Day's steady and tasteful bass playing and together they create an engaging performance of thoughtful originals and traditional songs and tunes that have influenced them along the way.

Tickets: <https://chocolate.na.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/16576>

Darlin' Corey with Erica Brown (Americana) Friday, March 29, 2024

7:30 PM 9:30 PM  
Ticket Prices: \$20 ADV | \$25 DOS

# City of Auburn, Meirs forge partnership

**AUBURN, ME** – Maine Immigrant & Resource Services (MEIRS) and the City of Auburn's Business & Community Development department have announced an exciting new partnership aimed at bolstering educational opportunities and case management services for Auburn residents. The collaboration will be based at the city's 95 Main Street location, which currently houses vital services such as General Assistance, Public Health, and Community Development.

Under this partnership, MEIRS will offer an array of services including resettlement support, employment assistance, and family services. Additionally, residents will benefit from regularly scheduled orientation and language classes, all conveniently located within the heart of the city.

"We are thrilled to embark on this partnership with the City of Auburn," says Abdikadir Negeye, Assistant Director of MEIRS. "It represents our shared commitment to building

a vibrant, inclusive, and sustainable community by strengthening our workforce, streamlining referrals from city staff, and better meeting the needs of Auburn residents."

Jamie Longley, General Assistance Manager for the City of Auburn, expressed enthusiasm about the integration of these services within city offices, stating, "This collaboration will streamline access to vital resources for our residents, enabling us to more effectively connect individuals



**Pictured Left to Right:** Abdikadir Negeye, MEIRS Assistant Director; Jama Mohamed, MEIRS Director of Family Service; Sidnei Degois, MEIRS Employment Team Lead; Jamie Longley, General Assistance Manager City of Auburn; TJ Abacha, DEI Workforce Analyst, City of Auburn; Mohammad Yousuf Alokozay, MEIRS Legal Case Aide; Nadifo Nur, Whole Family Services Case Manager of MEIRS; and Zakk Maher, Auburn's Deputy Director of Business & Community Development.

in need with both private and nonprofit service providers."

MEIRS joins a roster of esteemed service providers already integrated with city services, including Rumford Group Homes, Immigrant Resource Center of

Maine, Community Concepts Inc., and Housing Resources for Youth.

"This innovative partnership underscores a commitment to fostering a supportive and inclusive community environment, where all residents have access to the resources

they need to thrive," said Longley. "The combined expertise of MEIRS and the team of providers the city already hosts represents a powerful force for positive change, poised to make a meaningful impact on the lives of Auburn residents."

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# MCP announces the cast of "Heathers, The Musical"



Left to right Seated: Madeline Labonte and Avery Osella First row: Ayris Franklin, Hannah Hanson, Julie Sanborn 2nd row: Owen Lewis, Ben Simpson, Scotty Venable, Hillary Perry, Back row: Trekk Skeate, Katy Albert, Kyle Mansur, Alex Lally, Kwang Phung, Cody Watson Missing: Kierra Bouchard & Jenny Karod-Majka.

**MONMOUTH, ME** -- The Monmouth Community Players, along with MCP Marquis Sponsor Great Falls Federal Credit Union, Season Sponsors Winthrop Area Federal Credit Union, Readfield Insurance Agency and Media Sponsor Turner Publishing, are excited to announce the cast for Heathers, The Musical, lyrics and book by Laurence O'Keefe and Kevin Murphy, based on the film by the same name. The show is being directed by Jonny Bolduc. The other members of the production team are: producer, Danny Gay; music director Rachel Scala-Bolduc; assistant director, Amy Griswold; choreographer Gina Hesse; and stage manager, Ginger Smith.

Heathers, The Musical is the story of Veronica Sawyer, a brainy teenager who wants to be cool. She hustles her way into

the most powerful clique at Westerberg High, the Heathers. After Veronica falls in love with the new kid, Jason Dean (J.D.), their leader, Heather Chandler kicks her out of the group and things take a turn for the macabre.

The cast features Hannah Hanson, Katy Albert and Trekk Skeate of Lewiston; Julie Sanborn and Scotty Venable of Bath; Ayris Franklin of Brunswick; Kierra Bouchard of Lisbon Falls; Ben Simpson, Kyle Mansur and Alex Lally of Auburn; Owen Lewis of Gardiner; Madeline Labonte and Jenny Karod-Majka of Turner; Avery Osella of Leeds; Kwang Phung of Sanford; Cody Watson of Wales; and Hillary Perry of Buckfield.

Heathers, The Musical will be performed at the historic Cumston Hall in Monmouth from April

19-28, 2024. Performances will be at 7:30 pm on 4/19, 4/20 and 4/26, and at 2:00 pm on 4/21, 4/27 and 4/28. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.monmouthcommunityplayers.org](http://www.monmouthcommunityplayers.org) For more information, or to purchase group tickets, email the theater at [mcp-boxoffice@gmail.com](mailto:mcp-boxoffice@gmail.com) or call (207) 370-9566.

Heathers, The Musical is presented through a special arrangement with Musical Theatre International (MTI). Heathers, The Musical contains Strong Foul Language and Intense Mature Themes including: Sex, Bullying, Drug & Alcohol Use, Murder, Suicide, Sexual Violence, Gun Violence, Physical Violence and References to Eating Disorders. Audience attendance is highly suggested at 18+, but will be left to parental discretion due to the mature themes listed above.

# Enjoy the warm weather with Sabattus Rec Running group

**SABATTUS, ME** - Daylight is lasting longer and warmer days are here. The Sabattus Rec running program continues to hold its weekly group runs on Wednesdays and is inviting any and all walkers and runners to join in. There is

no cost and no obligation. All ages and abilities are welcome.

The 30-45 minute sessions leave from Mixers parking lot at 6 p.m. every Wednesday, throughout the year. Participants can usually find someone

matching their abilities to walk, jog, or run with. Routes can be from 2-6 miles long.

FMI, check out the Sabattus Rec Club Running Program Facebook page, or email [running@sabattusrec.com](mailto:running@sabattusrec.com)

# Auburn Art Club to host guest author

**AUBURN, ME** -- The Auburn Art Club will present author Mark Alan Leslie at 2:00 on Monday, April 1 at the Park Avenue Methodist Church. Mr. Leslie will give a presentation on the underground railroad.

Mr. Leslie wrote in a recent press release: "Mainers were crucial to helping runaway slaves escape to Canada in the 1800's, defying federal Fugitive Slave Act as they operated as "station managers," "conductors" and "financiers" in the famous Underground Railroad. Among those

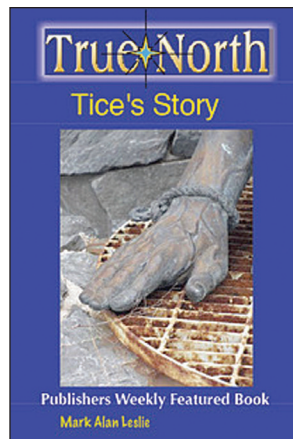


who put themselves and their fortunes at risk were a number of Androscoggin County families".

Mr. Leslie has written 13 books, including True North Tice's Story about one slave's escape over the Underground Railroad, which was named a Pub-

lishers Weekly Featured Book.

The Auburn Art Club invites the public to hear Mr. Leslie weave the tale of the brave families who housed and fed slaves in hidden rooms, attics, and elsewhere helping them on their way to freedom.



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# Artists wanted for agriculture-focused calendar

**MAINE** -- The Maine Agricultural Mediation Program (MAMP) is looking for artists for its 2025 wall calendar with a submission deadline of May 20. The 2025 calendar, which showcases the artwork by Maine-based artists, will celebrate the theme of "farming and tending to the land and sea throughout the seasons."

This annual wall calendar features artwork in all mediums except photography. Submissions should be high-quality, scanned images of 300

dpi or greater with a 2:1 aspect ratio. The final printed image will be 4 inches high by 8 inches wide. Artists' submissions are limited to two (2) entries and each artist selected for the calendar will receive up to 3 free copies of the calendar.

Artwork must be in a file size no larger than 25 MB and submitted via e-mail to [maineagrimediation@maine.edu](mailto:maineagrimediation@maine.edu). Submissions must include the artist's name, title of work, and description of the medium, and can also include a brief statement about the story



of the piece. For a detailed list of submission requirements, visit the program webpage. To request a reasonable accommodation, contact Lucy Wess, [maineagrimediation@maine.edu](mailto:maineagrimediation@maine.edu), 207.974.9637.

All proceeds from the calendar sales directly support the Maine Agricultural Mediation Program and its efforts to assist farmers and promote sustainable agriculture in Maine.

MAMP, a part of the

U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Agricultural Mediation Program, is locally managed by the University of Maine Cooperative Extension. The program aims to support and promote the agricultural community in Maine by providing conflict resolution, contract and lease co-drafting, and personal financial coaching services.

MAMP works with ag community members to help them navigate difficult conversations and develop sustainable, self-created

solutions. Mediation is a voluntary and confidential process guided by trained neutrals. MAMP staff and mediators work with participants to resolve conflict and concerns around agricultural loans, conservation programs, wetland determinations, pesticides, family farm transition, lease issues, neighbor disputes, worker/employer disagreements, and more. Visit the program website to learn more about agricultural mediation and other MAMP services at UMaine Extension.

## Camden National Bank promotes Barbara Rath to EVP

**CAMDEN, ME** – Camden National Bank is pleased to announce the promotion of Barbara Rath, who formerly served as director of treasury management and government banking, to executive vice president of commercial banking. In her elevated role, Rath will focus on accelerating core commercial business development across the

company's footprint and will continue to lead treasury management sales and service strategies.

"Barbara has an unwavering commitment to her clients," said Simon Griffiths, president and chief executive officer of Camden National Bank. "Her client-centric approach will lead us to expand our relationship banking focus as we con-



tinue to drive organic growth. Barbara's promotion represents our strategic and thoughtful succession planning as well as the exceptional talent and bench strength within our organization. I am confident Barbara will make an excellent addition to our executive team."

A leading industry expert, Rath has an extensive 20-year banking and

finance career, with four of those years cultivating treasury relationships at Camden National Bank. She has taken on increasing levels of leadership with an exceptional focus on delivering integrated financial solutions, prudent risk management, and operational excellence.

Rath earned a bachelor's degree in Rhetoric at Bates College and

an MBA with a finance concentration from the University of Southern Maine. She chairs the Board of Trustees for the Maine Health and Higher Educational Facilities Authority, serves as the Secretary of the Board of Directors for the Maine International Trade Center, and is a member of the Maine District Export Council.

## Grant to catalyze behavioral health response, resilience

**AUGUSTA, ME** — The Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) announced today that it has received a \$2,048,452 federal grant to support behavioral health, community wellness, and resiliency in the wake of the Lewiston tragedy on October 25, 2023.

The year-long grant was awarded by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). The SAMHSA Emergency Response Grant (SERG) will supplement other state and federal funding for the response, helping to reinforce the on-the-ground behavioral health workforce, recovery for individuals and families affected by the tragedy, and community resilience in Lewiston and the surrounding communities.

"This federal grant will catalyze Maine's response to the significant behavioral health needs of those directly and indirectly impacted by the tragedy in Lewiston," said

Governor Janet Mills. "I thank President Biden and the Biden-Harris Administration for their continued unwavering support for Lewiston and Maine as we continue down the road to healing."

"Following the tragedy in Lewiston, we immediately set to work developing a plan based on input from Maine residents, communities, first responders, experts, and others to support ongoing behavioral health needs in the wake of the largest mass shooting in Maine history," said DHHS Commissioner Jeanne Lambrew. "We thank the Biden Administration for this grant to catalyze community-led initiatives and best practices to help Maine residents and communities recover and rebound."

Priorities for the funding are based on input from partners following a series of listening sessions that DHHS held with behavioral health providers, health care systems' leadership, members of the Deaf and Hard of Hearing

and New Mainer communities, school staff, home-based providers, ethnic and community-based organizations (ECBOs), and other impacted parties. This funding will:

Expand community-based behavioral health workforce: Funds will be used to increase the number of on-the-ground behavioral health professionals available to engage in mobile crisis outreach, peer harm reduction, and Project Support You – an initiative of that supports first responders in de-escalating emergency calls and assists with first responder debriefing following an incident.

Launch a trauma-informed learning community: The learning community will provide training and skills for the workforce most directly connected to the populations affected by the shootings in Lewiston, including behavioral health and health care workers, educators, community workers, community officials and others. It will improve their ability to appropriately respond to and meet the

needs of those they serve. The learning community also seeks to provide training to recognize and respond to front-line workers' own traumas, helping to "care for the carers" by promoting trauma support and resiliency among the workforce. This will be launched as a partnership between Maine DHHS, NAMI Maine, AdCare, and the Co-Occurring Collaborative Serving Maine.

Raise awareness of behavioral health resources valuable to long-run resiliency: Maine DHHS will use funds to leverage its StrengthenME platform to help amplify awareness of existing behavioral health resources through tailored and targeted messages that help normalize and destigmatize reaching out for help with mental health.

Support communications for priority populations: The grant will support the development of a website that consolidates community-developed and accessible information for members of the Deaf and Hard of

Hearing community who were particularly hard hit by the Lewiston events. Funding will also support ECBOs focused on serving the New Mainer communities of Lewiston with whole-family, culturally appropriate support for the many individuals experiencing retraumatization.

"The events of October 25, 2023, have had a dramatic impact on the health of our community, and have highlighted and exacerbated the need for more mental and behavioral health services," said Jim Martin, Chief Executive Officer of Community Concepts, Inc., in Lewiston, which manages the Maine Resiliency Center. "The SERG grant will allow for increased access to these critical supports and will help fill gaps in the system of care that are desperately needed. This additional funding comes at a critical time and complements all of the recovery efforts happening across our community including the work of the Maine Resiliency Center."

"Maine's Deaf/Hard-of-Hearing community was shaken to the core by the tragedy that took place on October 25," said Matt Webster, Grant Administrator, Maine Association of the Deaf. "We had to push through the grief and move into action. We have collaborated closely with Maine DHHS to ensure that this grant will provide greater resources toward raising awareness

about our community, our distinct needs, and to ensure that we have an equal voice at the table, as we all work to build resiliency and supports for the months and years ahead."

"Recovery from mass violence can be a long journey for victims, survivors, family members, and community members," said Alyssa Rheingold of the National Mass Violence Center. "Fortunately, there are evidence-based trauma treatments that help people cope with post-traumatic stress, anxiety, grief, and depression and a network of trainers across national organizations that can offer guidance and consultation to helping organizations. This grant will help Maine connect mental and behavioral health providers to specialty training so they can best support the Lewiston and broader Maine community to foster resilience and healing in the coming years."

Resources and supports are available for anyone looking for help:

The Maine Resiliency Center is open to support individuals impacted by the events in Lewiston, with ongoing support groups and other events.

StrengthenME is the Department's resource for stress management and resiliency resources that includes information on how to access services, via phone or text support, or through community connection.

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# King stresses honoring fallen soldiers, site maintenance

WASHINGTON, D.C. — In a hearing of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee (SVAC), U.S. Senator Angus King raised the importance of honoring fallen servicemembers at national cemeteries. Under the Department of Veterans' Affairs (VA), servicemembers are entitled to burial benefits, which include a final resting place in any VA national cemetery with available space — at no cost to the family. Unfortunately only 35-percent of veterans are aware of this benefit, according to a poll conducted through the Veterans' Experience Office.

Senator King began his remarks by observing that veterans cemeteries are "a sacred topic". Then in an exchange with Matthew Quinn, the Under Secretary for Memorial Affairs with the National Cemetery Administration (NCA), King reaffirmed his support for volunteers who help operate national

cemeteries and military burial grounds. He also asked for the NCA to assist with restoring a damaged flagpole at Togus.

Senator King first expressed gratitude for the volunteers and organizations that support military burial grounds.

"The other piece that I think deserves some mention is the volunteers. Being at these, particularly the grant funded cemeteries, tremendous volunteer support, there are people that really made those cemeteries go, and I hope that there's an ability to recognize and support those volunteer organizations," began Senator King.

"Senator, I'll take that back [to my work colleagues]. I'll tell you, you know, not only the honor guard, which are typically volunteers or will work with the with the military. But also, when I go to visit our national cemeteries or grant-funded cemeteries,

the volunteers that are sitting at the front desk helping people who are there to visit, I think those are the unsung heroes," responded Quinn. "And I think our cemeteries that operate the most efficiently and the best in terms of information, it's those volunteers that are manning the desk, talking to fellow veterans when they come in.

"And raising money," added Senator King.

"Raising money for the cemetery. Yes sir," said Quinn.

"And raising awareness. So, I hope that that might be a bit of a focus of your work is to find ways to recognize and acknowledge those volunteers because I think they are really important," finished Senator King.

Senator King then raised the question of getting the flagpole at Togus National Cemetery outside Augusta, which was damaged in a storm, restored.

"Now I have a re-

ally important question. The flagpole at Togus has been damaged severely in a storm. We're having trouble getting it fixed because of some difficulty in the payment methodology with the VA and the cemetery. So, if you can help me with getting the flagpole at Togus back into service that would be important to veterans in Maine," asked Senator King.

Sir, that wouldn't be the first flagpole I noticed that wasn't operational that I ended up getting fixed. So, I will take that on and I'll find out what's going on at Togus. Contracting support has been tough post COVID. We've seen higher costs, but we'll work on Togus, we'll get that flagpole fixed. It's important to have a flag over our national cemetery," responded Quinn.

"It certainly is. And, particularly one of our oldest. What is the oldest national cemetery," asked Senator King.

"So usually about 1862 is when, you know, Abraham Lincoln said, 'Hey, we need National Cemeteries' for Civil War dead. 1862 would be the oldest when we first established," finished Quinn.

One of the first national cemeteries established was in Maine at Togus in 1866. Today the cemetery is closed to new internments, though there is another national cemetery in Maine — Acadia National Cemetery in Jonesboro. There are also four state veterans' cemeteries located throughout the state, and one administered by the tribal government in Houlton. Two of which, located in Caribou and Springfield, Senator King helped established during his time as governor.

Representing a state with one of the highest rates of veterans per capita, Senator King has been a stalwart champion for veterans and servicemem-

bers in Maine and across the country. A member of the Senate Veterans' Affairs Committee, he is committed to ensuring veterans and their families receive their earned benefits and support from the VA. He recently spearheaded the passage of legislation to better track and study servicemember suicides by job assignment. Earlier this year, Senator King held an SVAC field hearing at the University of Maine Augusta to discuss the state of veterans' long-term care in Maine and other critical issues facing veterans. In a September 2023 hearing, he questioned VA officials in an SVAC hearing to shed light on how financial strain can impact veterans' mental health. Senator King has also worked to properly honor and recognize the sacrifices of Purple Heart medal recipients, protect veterans from fraud, and expand veteran assisted living services.

# Local doctor urges support for lifesaving research, funding

AUGUSTA, ME — Harpswell, Maine resident and lung cancer advocate, Dr. Lizzie Baker, will travel to Washington, D.C. to meet with her members of Congress during the American Lung Association's LUNG FORCE Advocacy Day on March 20. As a part of the nationwide event, Dr. Baker will join more than 40 other people across the country who have been impacted by lung cancer to ask lawmakers to support \$51.3 billion in research funding for the National Institutes of Health (NIH) and \$11.6 billion in funding for the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

As a pediatric hospitalist, and cancer survivor herself, Dr. Baker is a long-time advocate for a range of public health issues. Baker acted as a caretaker for her

mother, Candice Warren, during a 7-year-long battle with lung cancer. During this time, Baker helped her mother through a range of treatments including chemotherapy, surgery, immunotherapy and other avenues available to extend her life. Baker was by her mother's side when she passed away in March 2022.

Baker said, "My mother and I were incredibly fortunate to have one another. She was my best friend and will always be my 'person.' The original prognosis was 6 months, but she lived 7 amazing and full years with a diagnosis of stage IV cancer. When she passed in March 2022, we were devastated but forever grateful for her journey and the opportunities afforded to her by current research and available

treatments. It is now part of my life's mission to carry on her legacy of bravery, generosity, and love by helping to further the treatments that prolonged our time together — and to help fund medical research that will hopefully, one day, eradicate lung cancer for good."

In addition to caring for her mother, Dr. Baker joined the Trek Across Maine in 2019 to help raise funds and awareness for lung cancer. She's also volunteered for the Dempsey Center, and been active with the Space to Breathe program, which hosts adolescents who have a sibling or parent with cancer for a weeklong camp focused on bonding and coping skills. In 2023, she competed for the title of Miss Maine for America Strong to expand her platform and raise



been approved by the FDA to treat lung cancer — giving life and hope to those impacted by this disease.

Dr. Baker encourages others in Maine to advocate for lung cancer research and healthcare protections by contacting their members of Congress, which they can do at Lung.org/AdvocacyDay. All are also welcome to join Dr. Baker on the Trek Across Maine, the American Lung Association's premier 3-day Bike Trek event, this coming June 14-16 kicking off in Brunswick, Maine.

Learn more about Dr. Lizzie Baker's story and the LUNG FORCE initiative at LUNGFORCE.org.

awareness about lung cancer to a broader audience.

Baker, formerly of Freeport and Scarborough, has lived in Harpswell since 2020. A pediatric hospitalist, she holds a medical degree from the University of Vermont and a master's degree in healthcare leadership from Brown University.

During Advocacy Day, Dr. Baker will visit the offices of Senator Angus King, Senator Susan Collins, Representative Chellie Pingree and Representative Jared Golden to share her story and her mother's experience with lung cancer and explain why investments in public health and research fund-

ing are critical.

Thousands of LUNG FORCE Heroes from across the country have raised their voices since 2014 to urge their members of Congress in Washington, D.C., to support robust, sustainable and predictable federal funding increases for lung cancer research, prevention, as well as quality and affordable healthcare. LUNG FORCE Heroes have succeeded in helping increase NIH lung cancer research funding by over 130% since the inception of LUNG FORCE in 2014. NIH has also funded research that has led to new treatments that are saving lives today. Since 2016, over 50 new therapies have

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



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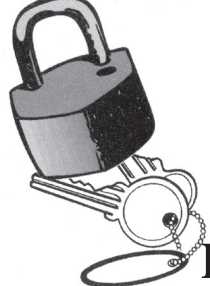
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**Mar 21**

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](http://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

# Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

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](http://MidcoastSymphony.org), call 207-315-1712, or e-mail [info@midcoast-symphony.org](mailto:info@midcoast-symphony.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**

AUBURN -- Sixth St. Church Bean Supper: There will be a baked bean supper at Sixth St. Congregational Church at 109 Sixth St. in Auburn on Saturday, March 30 from 4:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. The menu consists of two kinds of beans, brown bread, cole slaw, red and brown hot dogs, assorted casseroles, assorted desserts and beverage. The cost of the meal is \$9 for adults, \$5 for children 5 to 12, under age 5 is free. All are welcome. Take-out is available.

**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](mailto: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](http://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

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**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

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

**July 6**

GORHAM -- Hosta auctions are coming July 6th when the Maine Hosta Society will offer many exciting hosta varieties at the Treworgy Homestead and Garden at 120 Flagg Meadow Road in Gorham, Maine. The silent auction will begin at 10:00 a.m. and the live auction at 1:00 p.m. SAVE THE DATE for this event that is free and open to the public.

**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](mailto:edcenter@seniorsplus.org).

**Every 1<sup>st</sup>, 2<sup>nd</sup>, and 3<sup>rd</sup> Monday**

LEWISTON -- PROGRAMS FOR HOMESCHOOL FAMILIES, held the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Monday 11:15am-12:30pm 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](mailto:info.513-3133), [LPLKids@lewistonmaine.gov](mailto:LPLKids@lewistonmaine.gov)

## Lewiston legislative delegation to host public office hours

AUGUSTA, ME – Members of Lewiston's delegation to the State Legislature will hold constituent office hours at the Lewiston Public Library on Saturday, March 23 from 10:30 a.m. until noon to provide local residents a chance to meet with their elected officials and discuss legisla-

tive and state government matters. The delegation will give updates on their work on various policy areas, including the state budget, law enforcement, insurance and financial affairs, taxes, transportation and veterans issues. Office hours are scheduled for the fourth Saturday of every month.

Constituent Office Hours with Sen. Peggy Rotundo, Rep. Kristen Cloutier, Rep. Margaret Craven, Rep. Mana Abdi and Rep. Michel Lajoie on Saturday, March 23, 2024 from 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. at The Courthouse Room, Lewiston Public Library, 200 Lisbon Street

## Shaw law makes it easier for more Mainers to grow their own food

AUGUSTA, ME – A bill sponsored by Rep. Kathy Shaw, D-Auburn, that will make it easier for more Mainers to grow their own food, was signed into law by Gov. Janet Mills last week.

LD 2053 will exempt buildings used for the cultivation of crops from the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC), similar to current exemptions that permit buildings for housing livestock or storing harvested crops. This will make it possible for affordable structures, like hoop houses and greenhouses, to be left up year round. The change will

impact Mainers in municipalities with over 4,000 residents and other smaller towns that choose to enforce MUBEC. Additionally, the exemption does not include the cultivation of cannabis.

"My bill will help make healthy, locally-grown food more available and allow more Mainers to grow their own food in a manner that won't break the bank," said Shaw. "This legislation will reduce barriers for individuals and farmers in more urban areas and help extend our short growing season."

The new law will go into effect 90 days after

the current session of the Legislature adjourns.

Shaw is serving her first term in the Maine House representing part of Auburn. A lifelong farmer and president of the Cumberland and Falmouth farmers markets, Shaw serves on the Legislature's Joint Standing Committee on Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry.

### 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?

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