

CLT presents “Spring Awakening”

AUBURN, ME -- The Community Little Theatre production of “Spring Awakening” will open on Friday, April 5th at Community Little Theatre, located at 30 Academy St., Auburn. Performances will be held at 7:30 p.m. on April 5, 6, 7, 11, and 12; and at 2 p.m. on April 8, 13, and 14.

It is 1891 in Germany and a group of young teenagers are beginning their journey from adolescence to adulthood. The teenagers begin to face new challenges, and realities such as the exploration of their own sexuality, passing on to the next grade, and adults betraying and failing them.

“Spring Awakening” is based on the 1891 work of the same name written by dramatist Frank Wedekind. Turned into an angst rock musical with music by Duncan Sheik and book and lyric by Stephen Sater,

“Spring Awakening” made its Broadway debut in 2006, with leads Wendla and Melchior portrayed by Lea Michelle and Jonathan Groff respectively. Since its 2006 Broadway run, the show was revived in both West End and on Broadway in 2015 with a notable cast made up of both deaf and hearing actors. In 2022, HBO premiered a documentary titled “Spring Awakening: Those You’ve Known” chronicling the show’s 15 year, one night only reunion that took place in November 2021. The story “Spring Awakening” tells is a cautionary tale of what happens when adults are distrusting of youth, and the importance of communication, patience, and understanding between adults and children.

The cast assembled for this show includes CLT veterans and several new faces. CLT veteran Jason

Pelletier as all of the Adult Male roles including Headmaster Knochenbruch, and Herr Stiefel; Abram Dwyer as the troubled Mortiz Stiefel; Mackenzie Richard as Ilse Neumann, a young girl who has escaped from her home; Ansley Watson as the young and innocent, Thea; Megan Walz as free-spirited, Anna; Bluee Brewster as the overly-confident Hanschen Rilow; Archer Slater as the energetic Georg Zirschnitz; Edward Angelo as the shy Otto; and Elise Christie as all of the Adult Woman roles including Melchior’s mother, and Fraulein Knuppeldick, the stern teacher. Newcomers to the CLT stage include Julia Badaraco as the innocent and curious Wendla Bergmann; Savage Bloomer as rebellious and intelligent Melchior Gabor; Mikayla Jane as the strong, and kind Martha Bessell; and Anthony Delorme as the



The full cast in a scene from CLT’s production of “Spring Awakening.” Photo by Sophia Wood

sweet, naive Ernst Robel. Becca Tinkham, director of “Spring Awakening” has been assisted by an experienced crew led by assistant director Sophia Wood, stage manager Brandon Chaloux, music by assistant director So-

See CLT, page 14

Gun Owners of Maine files ethics complaint against Sen. Carney

The following is a press release and letter by the Gun Owners of Maine:

When members of the legislature behave


in an unethical way, especially when their end goal is to infringe on the rights of law-abiding Maine Gun Owners, it is our responsibility to shed light on such

occurrences and hold them accountable.

We are submitting a complaint to the Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics and Elections Practices stating Senator Anne Carney is in violation of Freedom of Access Laws by holding a meeting - originally slated to be before the full Judiciary Committee - that was designed to directly address and influence pending legislation that the public had no access to.

Transparency in the affairs of government must be of paramount importance. The public has a right to be included and aware of proceedings, as outlined in Maine Statute, anything else is unethical.

The Gun Owners of Maine Board of Directors



GUN OWNERS OF MAINE

DEFENDING GUN RIGHTS

March 21, 2024

Maine Commission on Governmental Ethics and Elections Practices
Director Jonathan Wayne
45 Memorial Circle, 2nd Floor
Augusta, Maine 04330

Director Wayne,

Based on the statute as listed in Title 1: General Provisions, Chapter 13 Public Records and Proceedings, Subchapter 1: Freedom of Access, Sections 402 and 403;

We are filing a complaint against Senator Anne Carney for violating freedom of access laws as they pertain to the closed meeting she conducted with more than three members of the Judiciary Committee on Wednesday, March 20th with Mr. James Vann, deputy assistant director with the ATF.

We hold that the meeting was held to directly address and influence pending legislation before the Judiciary Committee, that this information should have been public, and if Mr. Vann was not willing to meet on the public record no such meeting should have occurred.

Considering the Judiciary Committee rules on matters pertaining to transparency in government, we find this occurrence to be particularly grievous.

On behalf of the Board of Directors of Gun Owners of Maine,



Laura Whitcomb
President

Joshua Raines
Vice President

Richard Coshov
Treasurer

Anne Amadon
Board Member

Ryan Appleby
Board Member

Andee Reardon
Board Member

Gun Owners of Maine
PO BOX 5011
Augusta, ME 04332



From left to right: Mikayla Jane as Martha; Mackenzie Richard as Ilse; Julia Badaraco as Wendla; Ansley Watson as Thea; and Megan Walz as Anna rehearse a scene from CLT’s production of “Spring Awakening.” Photo by Sophia Wood

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Central Maine Healthcare honors its certified nurses

LEWISTON, ME -- Central Maine Healthcare joined the rest of the medical world this week in recognizing its certified nurses.

March 19 was Certified Nurses Day which is an occasion to publicly acknowledge nurses who earn and maintain the highest credentials in their specialty and contribute to better patient outcomes through their advanced certifications.

"I wanted to get certified to be a role model for my department and to lead by example," said Amandar Wotten, MSN, RN, CEN, an Emergency Department nurse leader at Bridgton Hospital, which is part of Central Maine Healthcare. "Certifications are a great way to show the community we are the very best at what we do and are constantly committed to learning more. As a leader, it builds credibility with



Gisele Castonguay
your team and connects you to many resources that can benefit colleagues and



Amandar Wotten
patients alike."
"Being certified is about intentionally gaining

the knowledge and skills to provide evidence-based care to our patients," said Gisele Castonguay, RN, CWCN. Gisele is a registered nurse who is certified in wound, ostomy and continence. "It has allowed me to earn the acceptance and respect of those who refer patients to me," she said.

According to the American Nurses Credentialing Center (ANCC), nursing certification covers a wide range of specialties, such as medical-surgical, pediatric, pain management, cardiac vascular, oncology, hospice, case management, emergency nursing, critical care and many others.

The significance of certified nurses has been especially profound in recent years, as they have been at the forefront of the global healthcare response, providing vital care during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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/HealingHearts-LA/auction>. Online auction items include: 1880's Saratoga 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>



**LA HEALING HEARTS
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At Hilton Inn Riverwatch, Auburn.

Tickets & Live Auction

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or Find us on Facebook Events!



Sen. Collins pushes for timely disbursement of TRIO awards

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Susan Collins, co-chair of the Congressional TRIO Caucus, and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) led 13 of their Senate colleagues in sending a letter to U.S. Department of Education (ED) Secretary Miguel Cardona, urging the ED to ensure timely execution of the upcoming Fiscal Year (FY) 2025 TRIO Student Support Services (SSS) grant competition. By law, TRIO awards must be determined eight months prior to the expiration of a grant. The

ED has repeatedly failed to meet this deadline, disrupting services that TRIO grantees provide.

The SSS grant program is one of eight programs under the TRIO umbrella, and provides opportunities for academic development, assists students with basic college requirements, and motivates students toward the successful completion of their postsecondary education. SSS awards fund projects providing students with academic tutoring and advising, counseling, and

financial aid information.

"As you know, SSS is the only national program providing college retention and completion supports for low-income, first-generation students and students with disabilities," the Senators wrote. "Unfortunately, the Department has an historic track record of failing to award grants to TRIO funding recipients in sufficient time to prevent disruptions to student services."

"Specifically, we urge the Department to enact a timeline that notifies grantees if competition results at least three months before the grant start date," the Senators continued. "This would prevent the previous unnecessary crises created by the Department and instead allow successful grantees sufficient time to recruit students and staff, secure campus resources and take others steps needed to ensure student success."

According to the College Board, the SSS program gives a return on investment of at least \$13 for every \$1 spent by the federal government. TRIO SSS participants were nearly 50% more likely to complete a 2-year degree

or transfer, and 18% more likely to complete a bachelor's degree, when compared to eligible non-participants in the program. In the State of Maine, the SSS program supports 2,765 students at 14 different institutions.

Last year, Senator Collins introduced the bipartisan Educational Opportunity and Success Act that would reauthorize and strengthen the federal TRIO programs while instituting commonsense reforms to make it easier for educational institutions to reach students who would benefit from these programs. These reforms came in part as a result of

the University of Maine at Presque Isle having had its TRIO application denied due to the use of one-and-a-half spacing rather than double spacing in text appearing in graphics on two of its application's 65 pages.

The letter was also signed by Senators Angus King (I-ME), Jack Reed (D-RI), Tammy Baldwin (D-WI), Bernie Sanders (I-VT), Peter Welch (D-VT), Jeff Merkley (D-OR), Maggie Hassan (D-NH), Richard Blumenthal (D-CT), Jacky Rosen (D-NV), Catherine Cortez Masto (D-NV), Ron Wyden (D-OR), Mike Crapo (R-ID), and James Risch (R-ID).



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Disaster Unemployment Assistance benefits available

AUGUSTA, ME - On March 20, 2024, President Biden approved Governor Mills' request for a major disaster declaration for Maine as it recovers from the storms on January 9 and 13, 2024. This declaration allows the Maine Department of Labor's Bureau of Unemployment Compensation to provide temporary financial assistance to people whose employment or self-employment was impacted by the January 9 and 13 storms in the following counties:

- Cumberland
- Hancock
- Knox
- Lincoln
- Sagadahoc
- Waldo
- Washington
- York

Funding will be available for eligible applicants who apply within 30 days of the declaration of a major disaster, until April 22, 2024, to assist eligible workers, business owners, and self-employed individuals who lost their jobs, job offers, or businesses, or had their work hours reduced or interrupted due to impacts brought about

by the January 9 and/or 13 storms. The Maine Department of Labor will accept applications for 30 days, starting at 8 a.m. on March 25, 2024. Individuals may be eligible if they do not qualify for regular Unemployment Insurance (UI) and they live in, work in, were scheduled to work in, or were scheduled to travel through an area affected by the January 9 and/or 13 storms and lost their employment or self-employment directly due to the disaster.

Disaster Unemployment Assistance (DUA) applies to losses for eligible people impacted by the January 9 and/or 13 storms with the first payable week of Disaster Unemployment Assistance for the week starting on January 14, 2024, and ending on September 21, 2024. Unemployment benefits start the first full week after the disaster. Claims can be filed for the weeks beginning January 14, 2024.

Full-time workers, part-time workers, and self-employed part-time individuals can be eligible for benefits. The last pay-

MAINE

DEPARTMENT OF

LABOR

able week of this emergency benefit ends September 21, 2024 as long as their unemployment or self-employment continues as a result of the disaster. Eligibility for DUA benefits will be determined on a week-to-week basis for each week they file their claim.

Who might be eligible:

An individual might be eligible for DUA benefits if they are a business owner, a self-employed person, a regular worker, or a seasonal or migrant worker who lost their job, job offer, or had their work hours reduced due to the January 9 and/or 13 storms.

To be eligible for DUA, a person can't be eligible for regular unemployment benefits in any state. When they apply,

they must be able to work, ready and willing to accept work, and have the time and means to work, unless they suffered injuries directly linked to the disaster. Additionally, they must meet at least one of the following criteria:

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

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

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

They can't get to their job due to the impact of the disaster in one of the affected areas. This also applies if they reside in a

major disaster area but are unable to reach their place of employment or self-employment outside the disaster area

They became the primary support of their family because of the death of the head of the household as a result of the disaster

How to apply: Beginning at 8 a.m. Monday, March 25, individuals can apply for DUA benefits at <https://assist.reemploy.me.maine.gov/> or by phone at 1-800-593-7660. To be considered, they need to submit their application by April 22, 2024.

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

What information is needed:

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

They will need to provide all supporting ev-

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

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

To learn about all federal assistance programs, contact FEMA's helpline at 1-800-621-3362.

Reemployment services are available at www.mainecareercenter.gov

MaineCF distributes \$4.7M to victims, families of shooting

PORTLAND & ELLSWORTH — The Maine Community Foundation (MaineCF) has distributed \$4,696,067 to 162 individual beneficiaries directly impacted by the Oct. 25, 2023, mass shootings in Lewiston from the Lewiston-Auburn Area Response Fund.

Eligible beneficiaries included direct heirs of murder victims, victims injured at Schemengee's Bar & Grille or Just-in-Time Bowling during the shootings and those present at the time of the shootings.

Eligibility was determined by a protocol drafted by the Lewiston-Auburn Area Response Fund volunteer steering committee comprising local community members. The committee solicited feedback on the protocol during a public town hall in Lewiston to better understand the



needs and wishes of those directly impacted by the tragedy.

"I think I speak for the entire steering committee when I say we are honored to have played a small part in helping our community recover," said Tom Platz, chair of the Lewiston-Auburn Area Response Fund Victims & Families Fund and principal at Platz Associates.

Applicants were supported by victim advocates throughout the application process. Each applicant's presence the night of the shootings was validated by law enforcement and applicants who sustained

injuries were validated by their medical providers.

"The foundation is humbled to have helped provide a way for people around the world to contribute to victims of this horrible tragedy and the community's road to recovery," said Deborah Ellwood, MaineCF president and CEO. "We are grateful for the volunteer committee members who quickly and compassionately offered their time to support this effort."

The Maine Community Foundation brings

people and resources together to build a better Maine through strategic

giving, community leadership, personalized service, local expertise and strong

investments. To learn more about the foundation, visit www.mainecef.org.

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McDonald’s launches partnership with the Maine Celtics

PORTLAND, ME – New England McDonald’s have launched a multi-year partnership with the Maine Celtics, the NBA G League Affiliate of the Boston Celtics. As an official partner, New England McDonald’s fans will gain access to exclusive game day app deals, giveaways and more.

“This partnership is a slam dunk for McDonald’s and basketball fans across the state,” said local Maine McDonald’s Operator Ron Lydick. “By bringing together two legacy brands, fans will have the chance to score big on our iconic menu items through the McDonald’s app. With McDonald’s and the C’s on

the court together, everyone wins.” The partnership includes opportunities for fans to cash in on exclusive digital offers through the McDonald’s app, including the chance to redeem a free Big Mac with \$2 purchase when the opponent misses a free throw. Fans may also catch glimpses of famil-

iar Celtics faces in Maine McDonald’s restaurants throughout the season. “We are thrilled to continue our partnership with McDonald’s here in Maine,” said Maine Celtics Team President Dajuan Eubanks. “The local franchise owners are a part of the fabric of our community, and the McDonald’s brand

has been intertwined with the NBA for years. This partnership makes sense for us on every level.” The collaboration also emphasizes McDonald’s and the Celtics’ shared commitment to supporting local communities through collaborative giveback initiatives. The Celtics will support Mc-

Donald’s initiatives benefiting Ronald McDonald House Charities of Maine – including Round-Up for RMHC – through player and mascot appearances. Fans can learn more about the partnership and upcoming digital deals via Instagram, Facebook and TikTok @McDonaldsNewEngland.

Mediation program offers training opportunity in April

MAINE -- The Maine Agricultural Mediation Program (MAMP) will offer a 16-hour training program on Wednesdays in April for individuals interested in learning more about conflict resolution or becoming a MAMP co-mediator. The four program sessions will meet from 9 a.m. - 1 p.m. online via Zoom on April 3, 10, 17. The last session on April 24 will be held in person in Augusta.

This 16-hour training will introduce a range of topics including conflict theory, stress response, participant rapport, interventions and ethics and provide daily opportunities to practice and review case studies around the types of conflicts and issues that arise within Maine’s agricultural community. Upon completion of this training and a 40-hour basic mediation course, participants can apply to be

a MAMP co-mediator and work with a wide range of issues and needs involving producers, loan holders, and members of the ag community. Participants will learn from service providers from U.S. Department of Agriculture, Farm Service Agency, Land for Good, SCORE, Maine Farmland Trust, UMaine Extension as well as current MAMP Co-Mediators.

The sessions will be facilitated by Lucy Wess and Leslie Forstadt from MAMP and Extension. Karen Groat, UMaine at Augusta Libra Professor and mediation professional, will also provide guidance and instruction throughout the training. For more information and to register, visit the event website. To request reasonable accommodation, please contact Lucy

Wess, maineagmediation@maine.edu, 207.974.9637. MAMP, a part of the USDA Agricultural Mediation Program, is locally managed by University of Maine Cooperative Extension. The program aims to support and promote the agricultural community in Maine by providing no-cost mediation and conflict resolution services, contract and lease co-drafting, and personal financial coaching.

Mediation is a voluntary and confidential process which is guided by trained neutrals. It can help resolve conflict around topics that include agricultural loans, conservation programs, wetland determinations, pesticides, family farm transition, lease issues, neighbor disputes and worker/employer disagreements. Visit the program website to learn more about agricultural mediation at UMaine Extension.

MaineHealth opens addiction medicine practice

PORTLAND, ME – MaineHealth has opened a Comprehensive Addiction Medicine practice at 576 St. John Street in Portland to provide substance use disorder treatment in a safe, supportive, confidential and therapeutic environment designed to support recovery and health.

It is the first practice of its kind in southern Maine. Comprehensive Addiction Medicine (CAM) differs from previous models of addiction care by using a more holistic and integrated approach to treatment. Unlike traditional models that focus on a specific aspect of ad-

diction, the comprehensive model uses a multidisciplinary team to offer individually tailored, personalized care. “The CAM practice is unique in our region,” said MaineHealth CEO Andrew Mueller, MD, at the practice’s grand opening on Feb. 5. “For the first time, a person can wake up, decide to seek help for substance use, walk into a practice that very same day and receive virtually all the support they’ll need immediately, including long-acting medications, harm reduction resources, access to a highly trained

team of addiction specialists, preventative care and more. The practice truly represents MaineHealth’s vision of working together so our communities are the healthiest in America.” MaineHealth partnered with the City of Portland and the Davis Family Foundation to fund the opening of the practice and directly address an addiction crisis that has taken the lives of more than 4,000 Mainers in the last ten years.

“It is nice to see how a collaboration of this magnitude came together for individuals in Portland and beyond who are experiencing substance use disorder and how they will have access to treatment and support in a respectful and inviting environment,” said Portland City Councilor Regina Phillips. The practice team includes addiction medicine physicians, a behavioral health clinician, nursing staff and a peer support specialist. It is open for appointments from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and walk-ins from 9 a.m. to noon weekdays. Reach the practice at (207) 661-0700.

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Seniors Not Acting Their Age

A Glorious Day on South Moat Mountain



Three hikers approach the summit of South Moat Mountain



The lower South Moat Mountain Trail passes through a handsome stand of tall conifer trees



The summit overlooks Mount Washington Valley

South Moat Mountain near Conway, New Hampshire is one of my favorite mountain hikes. I included it in my book, *Mountains for Mortals – New England*, a mountain guidebook that features what I consider to be the 30 finest most scenic mountain hikes in New England. The 2,749 foot peak is particularly beautiful during winter.

My wife, Nancy, and I began contemplating a South Moat hike in early winter. A couple of nagging ailments (mine a knee and hers a hip) prevented us from coordinating a trek. Recently, treatments for the afflictions were aligned on an exceptional winter day.

The Moat Mountain Trail to the summit of South Moat Mountain is easy to moderate in difficulty with some ledge scrambling at higher elevations. Situated in the heart of the White Mountains, partially barren Moat Ridge parallels and overshadows North Conway and Mount Washington Valley. Ledges on the south face and the summit area provide exceptional views of the White Mountains.

When we arrived at the parking area on Passaconaway Road in Conway on a glorious, sunny, cool late-February day,

several vehicles were already parked in the medium-sized lot. The trailhead is part of White Mountains National Forest and park passes must be displayed or a fee paid in the collection box. A popular hike, the trail surface was solidly packed snow. In our estimation, snowshoes were unnecessary. Instead, we chose micro spikes and used them throughout the trek.

Passing a steel gate at the entrance to the trail, we hiked easily through an open area. A short distance beyond, the trail turns sharply right beside an arrow sign posted on a tree and continues up a gentle grade in a mixed hardwood and conifer forest.

After dropping down to a narrow brook, the trail rises in a northwesterly direction through a handsome stand of tall conifer trees. After a mile of hiking, we crossed a sturdy wooden bridge over Dry Brook and met several returning hikers.

The path continues on rolling hills to an area where a long switchback begins. Given it was her first mountain outing since receiving treatment, Nancy decided she had tested her hip sufficiently and began a return.

Beyond the switchback, I climbed steadily

in rocky terrain before arriving at two steep boulder-strewn escarpments. Both required careful maneuvering. Above, I met a descending hiker. He reported gusty winds above tree line that required a parka for protection and told me there were more hikers ahead.

Shortly after, I emerged onto an extensive sloping south-facing ledge. I paused to savor exceptional views of the southern White Mountains.

Following the tracks of previous hikers in patchy spruce growth, I progressed higher on the long exposed ledge all the while enjoying views of Mount Chocorua to the west. At the top, where the path turns right and enters a wooded area, I met two hikers who again reported blustery conditions ahead.

The trail narrowed and I began scrambling over and around large boulders and oblique ledges on a partially open ridge. Higher up, I could see three hikers above tree line approaching what appeared to be the summit. I stopped to add a hooded parka.

Hiking in a thin snow pack, I persisted above tree line while enjoying marvelous views looking down into North Conway in the east. The parka was

adequate protection from piercing northwest winds when I arrived at the barren summit marked with huge boulders.

The views were phenomenal. To the east is picturesque Mount Cranmore with Mount Kearsarge slightly north. Moat Ridge extends north over Middle and North Peaks pointing towards the towering Presidential Range that was unfortunately enveloped in clouds. The White Mountains dominate the landscape south and west.

I huddled behind one of the boulders for protection from the wind and consumed a snack and water. The temptation was strong to follow the other hikers who were persevering towards Middle Peak.

However, Nancy was waiting and I had misgivings about putting more stress on my knee, so I began my return instead. It was a good decision as I experienced mild soreness during the descent and skiing was on the agenda for the next day.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* narrates nine Maine mountaineering outings, several in winter.

Ron Chase resides in Topsham. His latest book, *“Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor*

Adventures in Maine” is available at www.northcountrypress.com/maine-al-fresco or in bookstores and through online retailers. His previous books are “The Great Mars Hill Bank

Robbery” and “Mountains for Mortals – New England.” Visit his website at www.ronchaseoutdoors.com or he can be reached at ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net

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Arts & Entertainment

Looking forward to spring with Stanton Bird Club

AUBURN, ME -- There is a lot to look forward to in spring when fields and forests are filled with migrating birds. The sheer volume of songs and calls can often feel overwhelming. The question is which bird is singing which song?

At the April meeting of the Stanton Bird Club, the focus will be on helping to answer that query. Gordon Smith, who is well known in the central Maine area for his skill in leading birding walks will present "Birding by Ear". Smith, a member of the Stanton Bird Club and a board member of Merry-meeting Audubon is an avid birder who began going on birding trips before he could

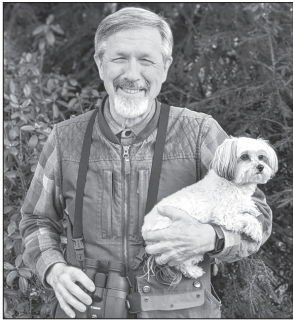


Photo Gordon Smith (with permission of Gordon Smith)

On trips in Massachusetts, Illinois and Michigan his father taught him not only how to look for birds, but how to listen for their songs and calls as well. According to eBird, Smith has recorded 876 trips and 200

species at Wharton Point, at the head of Maquoit Bay in Brunswick since his first trip there in November 2010.

The talk will be held on Monday, April 1 from 4-6pm at the Auburn Public Library. The public is welcome. This lecture is free of charge.

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

Augusta Symphony Orchestra to present spring concert

Augusta Symphony Orchestra

Spring Concert

Sunday, April 7, 2024 at 6 pm
Cony High School Auditorium
Free Admission



King Stephen Overture - Beethoven
Peer Gynt Suite No. 1 - Grieg
Symphony No. 8 - Beethoven

For more information visit www.augustasyphonymaine.org




AUGUSTA, ME -- The Augusta Symphony Orchestra will present their Spring Concert on Sunday, April 7 at 6 pm at the Cony High School Auditorium, 60 Pierce Dr, Augusta.

The concert will begin


with Ludwig van Beethoven's King Stephen Overture, followed by Peer Gynt Suite No. 1 by Edvard Grieg. Following intermission, the ASO will perform Beethoven's Symphony No 8.

Augusta Symphony Orchestra serves as an educational and charitable organization through which amateur and semi-professional musicians have opportunities to perform great music and provide a public service by presenting free concerts in the greater Augusta area. Now in its 103rd season, the symphony is under the guidance of Music Director and Conductor Jinwook Park. An accomplished violinist, Mr. Park teaches at Colby College as well as directing the Colby College Symphony.

Please join the ASO for an evening of great music! All concerts are free. Donations are gratefully welcomed. For more information, please visit www.augustasyphonymaine.org



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MaineHealth announces unified identity across healthcare system

PORTLAND, ME – MaineHealth announced today that during 2024 it will roll out a unified identity for its hospitals and other entities across its system, making it easier for patients to understand, find and access their care.

“We are updating our look, logo and names of our hospitals, practices, administrative offices and other locations to further our shared commitment to working together so our communities are the healthiest in America,” said Dr. Andrew Mueller, CEO of MaineHealth.

Mueller said that, not only would the new approach help patients better understand that they are receiving care from the region’s premier health care provider, but it will also bring the organization’s care team together with a unified identity.

“More and more, meeting our patients’ needs requires us to provide services at multiple locations with a care team working in concert across what had traditionally been separate hospital organizations.

This new approach will reinforce that we are one team committed to our vision,” said Mueller.

Mueller also noted that a well-defined brand will help in attracting and retaining talented caregivers, making it easier for them to identify with the organization’s values. That will directly benefit patients and support the organization’s bottom line by further reducing the need for expensive contract labor.

Dr. Ross Isacke, who serves as chief medical officer at Franklin Memorial Hospital in Farmington and has also practiced at Maine Medical Center in Portland and Stephens Memorial Hospital in Norway, said the unified brand will be of great benefit to patients.

“In my role at Stephens, when I would tell a patient that they need to be transferred to Maine Medical Center for a higher level of care, or when we were sending a patient from MMC back home to Stephens, there could be anxiety about leaving the hospital that they know and trust,” said Isacke. “Often, I would flip my badge over and show that I was part of both hospitals to explain that we are all one and the same. Now, with this new approach to our brand, that will be self-evident, and I think patients will better understand how we deliver care.”

Because new names for health care sites must adhere to strict regulations, and therefore require updates to critical systems, the brand update will be made in phases over a five-month period between June and October.

Locations in MaineHealth’s Southern Region, where, as previously announced, Maine Medical Center in Portland and Southern Maine Health Care in Biddeford and Sanford are coming together under a single hospital license with one medical staff, will make the brand transition in June. The Mountain Region – which includes hospitals in North Conway, N.H., Norway and Farmington - will follow in August. The Coastal Region – made up of hospitals in Belfast, Rockport, Damariscotta and Brunswick - will make the transition in September, as will systemwide services for home health and behavioral health.

Locations will be identified primarily as “MaineHealth” and will all display the same logo across the system, and in most cases local hospitals will retain an identifier consistent with their historical names.

Across the Southern Region, because the hospitals are uniting, the Maine Medical Center name will be used along with the hospital location. So, the locations will be known as follows:

MaineHealth Maine Medical Center Portland
MaineHealth Maine Medical Center Biddeford
MaineHealth Maine Medical Center Sanford

The hospitals in the Mountain Region in North Conway, N.H., Norway and Farmington will be named as follows, respectively:

MaineHealth Memorial Hospital
MaineHealth Stephens Hospital
MaineHealth Franklin Hospital

In the Coastal Region, the hospitals in Belfast, Rockport, Damariscotta and Brunswick will be named as follows, respectively:

MaineHealth Waldo Hospital
MaineHealth Pen Bay Hospital
MaineHealth Lincoln Hospital
MaineHealth Mid Coast Hospital

The health care system’s inpatient behavioral health site in Westbrook will be named “MaineHealth Behavioral Health at Spring Harbor.”

The inpatient pediatric hospital at MaineHealth Maine Medical Center Portland will have its own version of the MaineHealth logo and will be called “MaineHealth Barbara Bush Children’s Hospital.”

Most other sites across the system will also be renamed with “MaineHealth” as the primary identifier. For instance, a practice in Saco offering pediatric care will be called “MaineHealth Pediatrics Saco.”

Terri Cannan, chief marketing and communications officer with MaineHealth, said that, on a practical level, the new approach to branding will save money over time. Currently, MaineHealth operates with more than a dozen brand identities and logos. That means separate branding on everything from lab coats to stationery. It even interferes with money-saving initiatives like combining laundry services across the system and standardizing care team badges.

“We will get a really good return on this investment,” said Cannan. “Not only will we see direct savings by eliminating duplication with all those different logos, but we will also be enhancing the experience for our patients and better positioning ourselves to attract top talent as a high-quality health care system united in our commitment to our patients and communities.”

Mental health funding for Maine following Lewiston shooting

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senators Susan Collins and Angus King and U.S. Representatives Chellie Pingree and Jared Golden announced that the Maine Department of Health and Human Services (Maine DHHS) will receive \$2,048,452 through the U.S. Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration’s (SAMHSA) Emergency Response Grant program (SERG). This program is designed to meet emergency substance use and mental health needs for communities impacted by a precipitating emergency or disaster event. In this instance, the funding will be used for community mental health needs in the greater-Lewiston community, following the shooting that took place in October of last year and claimed the lives of 18 individuals and wounded 13 others.

“In the wake of last year’s horrific shooting in Lewiston, this emergency funding from SAMHSA will help meet the mental health needs of those impacted by this tragedy,” the Delegation said. “The people of Maine are resilient. While nothing we can do will bring back the lives lost, we will continue to work together with our state and federal partners to help ensure that Lewiston and surrounding communities have the resources and support needed to heal and recover.”

Following the shooting of October 25, 2023, the Maine delegation sent two letters to the Inspector General of the U.S. Department of the Army, Lieutenant General Donna W. Martin, calling for a comprehensive review of the events surrounding the shooting. The Inspector General has since announced she will conduct a formal, independent investigation into the events leading up to the shooting.



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Windham Chamber Singers in concert at Franco Center

LEWISTON, ME – The Windham Chamber Singers will perform at the Franco Center at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 3. The WCS group gained international attention in 1996 by winning the Prize of Vienna at the 25th International Youth and Music Festival in Vienna, Austria. Since then, they have captured the hearts of audiences everywhere.

Their accomplishments have been recognized on NBC Nightly News and National Public Radio. The Chamber Singers have appeared on CBS This Morning, the Today Show, and in their own prime time holiday special broadcast on WGME TV. The choir has performed at major venues including Carnegie Hall, St. Patrick’s Cathedral, Notre Dame Basilica (Montreal) and the White House.

The Chamber Singers have appeared in con-

cert with artists including John Rutter, Josh Groban, Kenny Rogers, Andy Williams, The Celtic Tenors, Dougie MacLean, and Sean Slaughter and Master Stroke Queen Tribute. Their American Family Holiday concerts have become a holiday tradition in the Lakes Region and have featured renowned guests such as Jodi Benson, Noel Paul Stookey (Peter, Paul and Mary), Sutton Foster, Norm Lewis, Lindsay Mendez, and Mandy Gonzalez.

The group has made four guest appearances at the Magic of Christmas concerts with the Portland Symphony Orchestra. The choir has released five CDs on the Pine Point label and has appeared on numerous other recordings, either as background singers or as contributors on compilation recordings.

In 2018, they celebrated the 30th anniversary



The Windham Chamber Singers are performing in a pay-what-you-can concert at 7 p.m. Wednesday, April 3, at the Franco Center, 46 Cedar Street, Lewiston. Tickets can be purchased online at www.francocenter.org/shows or 207-689-2000. The WCS have won awards, performed all over the world, and have played in concerts with well-known musical artists.

of the choir with a two-day reunion that welcomed back hundreds of alumni. The anniversary was recognized with the commission of a new piece, “Find Where the Beauty Is” by award-winning composer, Jim Papoulis.

The Windham Chamber Singers are conducted by Richard Nickerson, who is also the Artistic Director of the Maine Music Society. He has been director of Choral Activities at Windham High School in Windham,

Maine for the past 35 years.

“I’m very excited for this concert as this will be our first public performance in Lewiston in the 35-year history of the choir,” said Nickerson.

Visit the Windham

Chamber Singers’ website to listen to their music videos: <https://www.windhamchambersingers.com/video.html>

Tickets are pay what you can from \$7 to \$20.

Doors and cash bar open at 6 p.m. Tickets can be purchased in person between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesday, at www.francocenter.org, and 207-689-2000.

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

Season Underwriter is Maple Way Dental Care; media sponsors are Bennett Radio Group; Sun Journal; Turner Publishing; and Uncle Andy’s Digest. Show sponsors are: Androscoggin Bank; Dirigo Federal Credit Union; and Norway Savings Bank.

Grants available to nonprofits serving vulnerable communities

PORTLAND & ELLSWORTH —Non-profit organizations that serve disadvantaged, underserved or vulnerable communities may be eligible for grants from the Maine Community Foundation’s (MaineCF) Frances Hollis Brain Founda-

tion Fund.

The Brain Foundation Fund awards grants to nonprofits that focus on early childhood care and education; extended-day learning; community clinics and oral-health initiatives; food security; people experiencing homelessness; and le-

gal services. Organizations must serve communities in Auburn, Bath, Biddeford, Brunswick, Greater Portland, Lewiston, Saco and/or Sanford, or have a statewide mission in the fund’s focus areas. This year, priority will be given to organizations or projects

that address challenges or needs in early childhood education.

In 2023 the Brain Foundation Fund awarded 29 grants totaling \$198,213.

The 2022 grantees include:

Midcoast Maine Community Action, to support the needs of Midcoast Maine families with low incomes

Portland Community Health Center, for dental supplies and staffing to provide dental health care access to Portland pre-schools

St. Mary’s Regional Health Center, to expand the school garden and food programs in four elementary schools.

For all recent grants and for more information about the fund, visit www.mainecef.org.

mainecf.org/brain. The application deadline is April 1.

The Maine Community Foundation brings people and resources together to build a better Maine through strategic giving, community leadership, personalized service, local expertise and strong investments. To learn more about the foundation, visit www.mainecef.org.

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UMA receives grant to provide dental care to Maine veterans

AUGUSTA, ME – UMA was recently awarded \$5,000.00 to provide free dental hygiene services (cleanings, x-rays, fluoride treatment) and basic restorative care (simple fillings) to qualifying veterans.

The UMA Dental Health Programs at both the Lewiston and Bangor Dental Clinics has been a

dedicated member of the Maine Veterans’ Dental Network (MVDN) for the last three years. Northeast Delta Dental has provided \$300,000 in funding to the MVDN for their 2024 program and UMA was one of 13 clinics chosen to participate in this fabulous network of providers.

A veteran must qualify and be pre-approved to

receive the free services. Before being seen at the clinic, simply contact the MVDN’s dedicated phone line 207-287-6836 or email MVDN.mainebvns@maine.gov for approval. Currently, the UMA Dental Clinic has openings for qualifying veterans this spring 2024 and fall 2024. For appointments, please call 207-262-7872.

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City of Lewiston, LAMCC announce memorial fund

LEWISTON, ME – In the wake of the devastating mass shooting that occurred on October 25, 2023, the City of Lewiston along with the Lewiston Auburn Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce (LAMCC) has announced today the launch of the OneLewiston Resilience Fund, a fund dedicated to supporting the creation of a memorial and community unifying events to aid the city in moving forward from the tragic event that shook the entire community, state, and country.

The mass shooting, which claimed the lives of 18 individuals and injured 13 others, left an indelible mark on the City of Lewiston and reverberated across the nation as one of the worst mass shootings in recent memory. Recognizing the profound impact of this tragedy, the City of Lewiston and LAMCC are committed to a thoughtful and collaborative approach

in honoring the victims, supporting the survivors, and paying tribute to the resilience of the community.

“A July 2022 Congressional Study highlighted the detrimental effects of mass shootings on affected communities, including pessimistic views on financial and local business conditions, as well as increased reports of poor mental health,” said Shanna Cox, LAMCC President and CEO. “Understanding these challenges, we join the City in support towards the healing process and fostering a sense of unity and strength within the community. It is our hope that this memorial and remembrance events will help unify, heal, and renew Lewiston’s strength, demonstrating it as the great American city it is.”

To ensure that the

memorial is created with the utmost care and consideration, the City and the Chamber will establish a Memorial Planning Committee comprised of victims’ families, survivors, the deaf community, non-profit partners, local businesses, the Chamber, and city officials. This committee will help guide the process of designing and implementing a permanent memorial that honors the memories of those lost and the resilience of the Lewiston community and also events leading up to the memorial installation. The membership of the committee will be announced at a later date as survivors continue their attention to the commission hearings.

“It will be hard to define this memorial, and it will not be done in haste,” said Heather Hunter, Lewiston City Administrator.

“The people of Lewiston are resilient, and we will make sure we do this right by those directly impacted by this horrific event by creating a meaningful, purposeful memorial and unifying community events.”

The OneLewiston Resilience Fund will be kickstarted by proceeds from the Healing Hearts Gala to be held on Fri., Mar. 29, at 6 PM at the Hilton Garden Inn, 14 Great Falls Plaza, Auburn.

“Set against the backdrop of our vibrant artistic community, this event promises to be a night of fundraising and fun,” said Lilly Gardiner, Event Planner at BlackFin Experiences. “With the support of local businesses

and community members, we aim to make a significant impact through charitable contributions. This gala represents an opportunity for our community to come together, leveraging our collective creativity for the greater good. We invite all members of the community to join us in this endeavor, as we unite to make a positive difference.”

For tickets and further information, please contact lahealinghearts@gmail.com or find the event on Facebook.

The Healing Hearts Gala will showcase Every Other Sunday, a spectacular nine-piece dance Maine-based band, along with the Portland Sympho-

ny, delicious foods, and a great auction.

“We will continue to utilize our Foundation’s 501C3, which was used to collect donations and distribute them directly to the victims and survivors following the tragedy,” said Cox. “By doing so, it will allow people to make contributions to the memorial and community-unifying events by declaring their donation for the OneLewiston Resilience Fund. Among our goals is to make sure that we create the permanent memorial in a completely transparent way.” The LAMCC will maintain and host the website OneLewiston.org where donations can be made.

If you would like to contribute to the OneLewiston Fund or volunteer to support the healing and memorialization process by joining the committee, please visit www.OneLewiston.org.

Brush Pick-Up Assistance Week begins earlier

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 sheers 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

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

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Paid Family & Medical Leave group holds first meeting

AUGUSTA, ME – Maine’s newly confirmed Paid Family and Medical Leave Benefits Authority met for the first time on March 12, 2024 at 45 Commerce Drive in Augusta. The meeting included introductions, an overview of the Paid Family and Medical Leave statute, and commission training. Members of the public were able to watch the meeting in-person or via Zoom.

During the meeting, the Authority unanimously voted Maria Fox in as Chair of the Authority, and Samuel Hight as Vice-Chair. They also voted to adopt a remote meeting policy for when members are unable to attend in-person.

The members of the Authority who were appointed by the Governor and confirmed by the Maine State Senate are as follows:

Benjamin K. Grant-Member with expertise in issues affecting labor and independent contractors. Organization: Maine Education Association

David Barber-Employer with more than 50 employees. Organization: Barber Foods

Samuel J. Hight-Member who is self-employed. Organization: Owns and operates multiple organizations including Hight Ford, Inc., Hight Chevrolet Farmington, and Hight Properties, LLC.

Christopher J. Washburn-Expertise in issues related to paid family leave benefits and paid medical leave benefits. Organization: Delhaize America

Michelle Corry-An employer in the hospitality industry. Organization: Five fifty-five

Jay Naliboff, MD-Expertise in treating issues affecting maternity and postpartum care. Organization: Retired.

Jenni Tilton-Flood-Expertise in agriculture, a seasonal workforce or a heritage industry. Organization: Flood Brothers Farm.

Sarah Conroy-Expertise in issues affecting elder care. Organization: Androscoggin Home Healthcare + Hospice.

Ranae L’Italian-Expertise in childcare and early childhood development. Organization: Kennebec Valley YMCA.

Maria Fox- Expertise in employment law representing employee interests. Organization: Murray, Plumb and Murray

The Authority’s next meetings are scheduled for:

Tuesday, May 7 from 9-11 a.m.

Tuesday, June 11 from 9-11 a.m.

The most up-to-date information on Maine’s Paid Family and Medical Leave Program can be found here: <https://www.maine.gov/labor/pfml/>



Chair Maria Fox, and Vice-Chair Samuel Hight

Maine farms, ag products increase in value

MAINE -- The United States Department of Agriculture recently released results of the 2022 Census of Agriculture, including state- and county-level statistics. The most recent data for Maine show that farms continue to be a driver of economic activity, especially in rural communities. Agricultural land and buildings are worth more than ever before. The estimated market value of land and buildings for the average Maine farm rose to \$649,229, the highest number since 1997 even when accounting for inflation. The average Maine farm also had its largest grossing year in 2022 compared to other census years, with \$123,582 market value of agricultural products sold.

The Census also revealed that Maine has the lowest number of farms and farmland acreage since 1997. In 2022, there were an estimated 7,036 farms with 1.23 million acres of farmland, down from a peak of 8,173 operations and 1.45 million acres in 2012. Maine lost 564 farms and 82,567 acres of farmland since the last census in 2017.

“As Maine agriculture changes and grows, Cooperative Extension and the University of Maine will continue to be a vital source of evidence-based knowledge to support healthy and sustainable food, fiber and natural resource industries in our state,” said Hannah Carter, Associate Provost for Online and Continuing Education and Dean of UMaine Extension.

Specialty crops, including maple syrup, Christmas trees, hay and nursery and greenhouse

sectors, account for the bulk of agricultural activity in the state. A full 63.1% of the value from agricultural products sales is attributed to specialty crops, totaling \$548.5 million. Livestock, poultry and their products comprise the second largest single USDA commodity group, accounting for 34.3% of sales value in 2022.

“Faculty and staff within Extension are offering new programs every day that support these key sectors including our vegetable and fruit growers, Christmas tree farmers, maple sugaring, livestock and forage producers, and the nursery industry,” said Tori Jackson, Extension Program Leader for Agriculture and Natural Resources. “Through the Maine Farmer Resource Network and other group, we also coordinate with partners to build across communities and industries.”

Agritourism, direct sales and on-farm value addition remain critical components of Maine’s agricultural economy. Between 2017 and 2022, the income gained by farms from agritourism and on-farm recreational activities doubled, accounting for \$12.2 million despite the number of farms engaged in these activities remaining nearly the same at 241. Nearly 20% of the total value of Maine agricultural products sold in 2022, or \$172.6 million, was sold directly by Maine farms to consumers, institutions, local and regional retailers, restaurants and food hubs.

“The business landscape for Maine agriculture is changing rapidly,” said Jason Entsminger, State Extension Specialist

for Small Business and Assistant Professor of Entrepreneurship and Innovation. “The way farms create and capture value through new market channels, how they staff their operations, and how they make strategic decisions about supply chains, risk management and financing are some of the major challenges we’re working to help operators address every day.”

Labor continues to be the largest expenditure category for Maine farms, with a total expense of \$150.6 million in 2022. Expenditures on farm labor began to replace purchased feed for livestock as the greatest expense for Maine farms around the 2012 census. The gap between the two categories continues to widen, with the ratio of labor expenditures to feed expenditures on Maine farms more than doubling since 2007.

Conducted every five years, the Census of Agriculture helps tell the story of American producers and the role of U.S. agriculture. The data is the most comprehensive and unbiased across the industry and helps to inform decisions that shape the future of American agriculture for the next five years. The data provides a deeper understanding of producer demographics, farm operations and economics, commodities and decision-making.

For more detailed information about Maine’s statistics, visit the state page on the USDA website. To receive regular updates on programming that supports Maine agricultural producers, visit the website to subscribe to the Maine Farm News.

\$1M for developing Maine’s organic food market

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Susan Collins, Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, and Senator Angus King, announced that 5 Maine entities will receive a combined total of \$1,036,469 through the U.S. Department of Agriculture’s (USDA) Organic Market Development Grant (OMDG) Program. These grant awards will fund the development of new and expanded organic markets to help increase the consumption and production of organic agricultural commodities.

The funding comes during National Agriculture Week, which runs from March 17-23, to celebrate and highlight the farmers, ranchers, fishers, and foresters who work every day to feed Americans and strengthen our economy. In a 2020 study, Maine, per capita, ranked second in the country for the availability of organic food. For every 100,000 Maine people, there are 37 organic farms located across the state – with Maine vegetable farms producing the

most organic produce in the nation.

“Maine’s organic agricultural industry continues to thrive with the support of the USDA’s grant programs,” said Senator Collins. “This investment will give Mainers access to healthier, better quality foods and help strengthen the resiliency of our state’s food supply chain.”

“As Maine’s organic farmers face increasing challenges from changing global markets, climate change, and more, we must continue to provide resources and support to help them evolve with the times,” said Senator King. “These Organic Market Development Grants will ensure Maine’s organic farmers can continue to respond to these challenges and pave the way for the future of the organic food industry. I am proud to support Maine’s organic farmers as they provide healthy, quality foods to our communities and boost our state and local economy.”

Specifically, the funding has been awarded as follows:

Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association – \$639,449 for strengthening consumer and institutional demand for local organic dairy products.

Aurora Mills & Farm LLC – \$100,000 to expand soybean production capacity, strengthening Maine’s food systems, and for the purposes of nitrogen-fixing soils.

Crystal Spring Community Farm LLC – \$100,000 to increase access to local organic products at large-scale Northeast grocery chains by providing industry standard, cost effective, custom packaging of produce for small organic farms.

Balfour Farm LLC – \$99,511 to expand farmstead milk processing,

which will grow the Northeast organic cheese supply.

Blue-Zee Farm – \$97,509 to create and grow a niche regional market for fresh and frozen edamame, while utilizing the nitrogen-fixing ability of soybeans for soil health.

According to the USDA, the OMDG program focuses on building and expanding capacity for certified organic production, aggregation, processing, manufacturing, storing, transporting, wholesaling, distribution, and development of consumer markets. OMDG aims to increase the availability and demand for domestically produced organic agricultural products and address the critical need for additional market paths.

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Angie's list

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

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Maine Wing meets with members of Congress



Maine Wing's National Legislative Day delegation, L to R: Cadet 1st Lt. Felicity Jackson, Col. Blain Cote, Wing Commander, Lt. Col. Robert Asselin, Government Relations Advisor, Maj. Mark Hyland, Deputy Vice Commander

AUGUSTA, ME – Maine Wing members travelled to Washington, D.C. on Feb. 29, 2024 as a part of Civil Air Patrol's National Legislative Day to present the CAP Annual Report to Congress and met with Sens. Susan Collins and Angus King, and staffers from the offices of Reps. Jared Golden and Chellie Pingree. Maine Wing was represented by Wing Commander Col. Blain Cote, CAP, Government Relations Advisor Lt. Col. Robert Asselin, Wing Deputy Vice Commander Maj. Mark Hyland, Assistant Public Affairs Officer 2nd Lt. Amanda Goldman, and Cadet 1st Lt. Felicity Jackson of the Brunswick Composite Squadron.

In addition to the annual report and appropriations request, the delegation discussed Maine Wing volunteers' contributions in 2023 which translated to \$1,297,106 in overall value to the state, including 1 search and rescue mission with a credited find, 219 CAP Cadet, Air Force ROTC and Junior ROTC orientation flights, support local level shelters/warming stations, and training missions.

Jackson, a high school junior, provided a firsthand account of the impacts the Civil Air Patrol cadet program has on young people, including herself, and how it has shaped her as a leader



Senator Susan Collins greets Lt. Col. Robert Asselin, Maine Wing CAP's Government Relations Advisor



Members of Maine Wing meet with Senator Angus King on Civil Air Patrol National Legislative Day 2024 to present CAP's Report to Congress.

and influenced her progression towards achieving her goals of attending the U.S. Naval Academy and eventually becoming a U.S. Senator.

"National Legislative Day was an incredible, eye-opening experience. I had the pleasure of personally meeting both of Maine's senators and meeting with the offices of both of Maine's representatives. It is with confidence that I say that our team showed



The Maine Wing delegation poses on the steps of the Supreme Court before meeting with members of congress on CAP National Legislative Day 2024.

Maine's members of Congress the best CAP has to offer, and it was an honor and a privilege to be able to do so," said Jackson. "I learned many things, including what factors can go into the congressional decision-making process, how much of a difference personal connections can make, and how to compose myself in order to ensure that Civil Air Patrol was best represented."

Collins, King, and Golden are members of the Civil Air Patrol Congressional Squadron, each holding the grade of honorary Lieutenant Colonel, and Pingree is in the process of joining. The Congressional Squadron is a non-partisan, volunteer membership consisting of members of Congress, Congressional staff, and aviation professionals.

"Maine Wing is extremely fortunate to have the ongoing support of our members of Congress, and meeting on Capitol Hill every February is one of my favorite responsibilities as wing commander," said Cote. "It was a distinct honor to welcome Sen. King to Civil Air Patrol and present his credentials as lieutenant colonel, as well as to receive Rep. Pingree's membership application. Sen. Collins and Rep. Golden are also members of the Congressional Squadron, which is a source of great pride for all Maine Wing volunteers."

ASL performances with Pine Tree Society, Ogunquit Playhouse

BATH, ME - Pine Tree Society has partnered with Ogunquit Playhouse to provide American Sign Language (ASL) for select performances of every show this season. These ASL interpreted performances are made possible thanks to a generous grant from The Roger R. and Theresa S. Thompson Endowment Fund.

"Thanks to this grant, select performances for all five musicals this season will have Pine Tree Society ASL Interpreters performing the show alongside the cast," said Noel Sullivan, President and CEO of Pine Tree Society.

This tradition began last season when Pine Tree Society's then Director of Interpreting Services, Joshua Seal, coordinated with Ogunquit Playhouse to provide interpreters for The Da Vinci Code in September.

"Josh had the desire to make the arts accessible to the Deaf community," said Sullivan. "Before he was tragically killed in the October mass shooting in Lewiston, plans were already in the works

to provide ASL Interpreted performances for this season. That makes these ASL performances even more meaningful to us all."

Deborah Warren, Ogunquit Playhouse's Managing Director, adds "Our overarching objective has consistently been to enhance the accessibility of our performances. This commitment to inclusivity is at the heart of what we do. Through a valuable and collaborative partnership with Pine Tree Society, an organization dedicated to supporting

individuals with disabilities, we have been able to take significant steps towards this goal. We are immensely grateful to Pine Tree Society for their support and facilitation in making these ASL-interpreted shows possible. Their partnership enriches the cultural landscape by making the arts more accessible to everyone, regardless of their hearing abilities."

The ASL interpreters prepare by studying the script and attending performances. When possible, they also watch video or listen to audio recordings of the production. They make sure they understand the goals of the production first, then they begin to build an interpretation. The whole

process takes many days to achieve.

"Imagine watching TV without sound. That's what watching plays without ASL interpretation is like for Hard of Hearing audience members," concluded Sullivan. "This partnership with Ogunquit Playhouse aligns with Pine Tree Society's mission of providing opportunities for Maine people with disabilities to connect with the community."

ASL Interpreted performances will be held:

Waitress: Wed 5/22 8pm, Sun 5/26 2pm
Crazy For You: Wed 6/26 8pm, Sun 6/30 2pm
A Little Night Music: Wed 7/31 8pm, Sun 8/4 2pm
Little Shop of Horrors: Wed 9/4 8pm, Sun 9/8 2pm

My Best Friend's Wedding: Wed 10/9 8pm, Sun 10/13 2pm

Open Caption performances will be held during these date ranges:

Waitress: Wed 5/29 through Sun 6/2
Crazy For You: Wed 7/2 through Sun 7/7
A Little Night Music: Wed 8/7 through Sun 8/11
Little Shop of Horrors: Wed 9/11 through Sun 9/15
My Best Friend's Wedding: Wed 10/16 through Sun 10/20

Special ASL and Open Caption selected seats are available by calling the Ogunquit Playhouse Box Office at 207-646-5511 (10:00am to 4:00pm weekdays).



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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.

Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

Contact SeniorsPlus, at 207-795-4010, edcenter@seniorsplus.org.

Apr 6
GORHAM -- Public Bean Supper at White Rock Community Clubhouse, 34 Wilson Road, Gorham on Saturday, April 6, 4:00-5:30pm

Eat in or take out, no pre-orders. Meal includes baked kidney & pea beans, coleslaw, potato salad, macaroni & cheese, biscuits, hot dogs and dessert. \$10 adults, \$5 under 12 Follow us on Facebook for updates: facebook.com/whiterockcommunityclub

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 10-14
MAINE -- DaPonte String Quartet Concerts with guest Amanda Hardy. Oboe

Wednesday, 7 pm, April 10, Portland, Jewish Community Alliance

Thursday, 7 pm, April 11, Rockport, Union Hall

Friday, 7 pm, April 12, Freeport, Meetinghouse Arts

Saturday, 4 pm, April 13, Farmington, Nordica Hall

Sunday, 4 pm, April 14, Boothbay, St. Columba's Episcopal Church
Program: Mozart

Oboe Quartet KV 370; Dohnányi Serenade for String Trio, Op. 10; Britten Phantasy Quartet for oboe, violin, viola and cello

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 19-21, 25-28
BAR MILLS -- The Original's present A Murder is Announced by Agatha Christie at Saco River Theatre, 29 Salmon Falls Road, Bar Mills, ME, April 19, 20, 25, 26, 27 @ 7:30 PM; and April 21 & 28 at 2:30pm. Tickets: \$15 General Admission at www.sacorivetheatre.org.

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

Through a series of classes, OMA engages 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.

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 Flaggy 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

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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,

CLT
Continued from page 1

director Paul Caron, and producer Germaine Robinson. Set construction led by Gregory Lambert, costumes led by Sophia Wood, Mackenzie Richard, and Max Button, lighting design by Danny Gay, hair and makeup led by Amanda Robinson, and properties done by Brandon Chaloux. Headshots for the show were done by DNA Photography. Photos for the show were done by Sophia Wood.

CONTENT & TRIGGER WARNING (RATED R): Spring Awakening contains Content and Trigger Warnings due to mentions of verbal, physical, and sexual abuse, mental illness, abortion, death, and depictions of suicide and sexual content.

Ticket prices (including all fees) are \$25 for adults, \$22 for seniors and students, and \$17 for children ages 13 and under. Tickets may also be purchased at the door. Tickets are available online at lactl.com or by calling 207-783-0958.

Lewiston HS student serves as Senate Honorary Page



Marian Sharif, Sen. Peggy Rotundo, Rage Aden and Hawa Mohamed in the Senate Chamber.

AUGUSTA — On Tuesday, March 19, Sen. Peggy Rotundo, D-Lewiston, and other members of the Legislature welcomed Rage Aden from Lewiston High School to serve as an Honorary Pages during the

Senate session. Rage, who is in ninth grade, earned First Honors on Lewiston High School's first quarter honor roll. He was accompanied by his mother, Hawa Mohamed, and his sister, Marian Sharif.

"It was wonderful to host Rage and his family in the Senate," said Sen. Rotundo. "He has made Lewiston proud with his strong academic performance. I wish him the best as he finishes the school year and I hope to see him again in the future."

On session days, the Senate Secretary's Office manages the Honorary Page Program in the Maine State Senate. Pages perform various duties such as delivering messages; distributing documents within the Senate Chamber; interacting with State Senators; and – most importantly – taking part in a real world, legislative learning experience.

To sign up to serve as an Honorary Page, please contact Alex Ferguson at (207) 287-1540 or Alex.Ferguson@legislature.maine.gov.

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