



TWIN CITY TIMES

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CMMC cardiovascular surgeons reach TCAR procedure milestone



LEWISTON, ME -- The Central Maine Heart and Vascular Institute (CMHVI), which is part of Central Maine Healthcare (CMH), recently completed its 50th TCAR procedure.

TCAR stands for Transcatheter Artery Revascularization, a minimally invasive procedure that can clear blockages and open a narrowed ca-

rotid artery. It's especially effective in high-risk patients. The procedure was approved by the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) in 2015.

"TCAR can deliver a stent to a diseased area of the carotid artery, while minimizing the risk of stroke to an at-risk patient," said Felecia Jinwala, MD, a vascular surgeon at CMHVI. "TCAR can be

a great alternative to carotid endarterectomy and allows us to offer a full spectrum of carotid interventions for our patients."

CMHVI's vascular lab recently earned a three-year accreditation in peripheral arterial, peripheral venous and extracranial cerebrovascular testing from the Intersocietal Accreditation Commission.

AREA meeting notice, April 2024

LEWISTON, ME -- The Androscoggin Retired Educators' Association will meet at 10:30 a.m. on Wednesday, April 10 at Lewiston High School's Green Ladle. The price for this meal is \$19 (\$20 at the door).

The speakers for this meeting are Joyce and Carl

Bucciantini.

Please make checks out to AREA and mail to Gina Fuller, 36 Elliott Ave, Lewiston, Maine 04240.

AREA meets five times per year: September, October, November, March, and April. Dues are \$10 per year for educators and \$6 for non-educator

spouses or partners. Dues are payable in September.

All who have served in the education profession are welcome teachers, principals, assistant teachers, guidance counselors, librarians and secretaries. You need not have taught in Androscoggin County, or even in the State of Maine.

Fill the Plate breakfast benefits Meals on Wheels

LEWISTON, ME -- SeniorsPlus, the designated Agency on Aging for Western Maine, held its annual breakfast to benefit its Meals on Wheels nutrition program. The 2024 Fill the Plate Breakfast had an audience of 170 attendees and was held on the morning of Friday, March 22 at the Hilton Garden Inn Riverwatch in Auburn. The breakfast honored Lewiston resident Lucy Bisson with the 2024 Ikaria Award and featured a talk by Maine humorist Gary Crocker.

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

Born in Lewiston and raised in North Monmouth, Crocker offered remarks and observations about his beloved Maine and her people in the classic Maine tradition. After teaching public speaking at Cony HS in Augusta, he joined the Waterville Police Department. Crocker then served as Adult Ed Director at CMVTI (now CMCC) in Auburn and eventually became the spokesman for the Community College System at the Maine State



Betsy Sawyer-Manter, President and CEO of SeniorsPlus (left) is shown with Gary Crocker (center) who was the keynote at the 2024 Fill the Plate Breakfast to benefit Meals on Wheels at SeniorsPlus, Western Maine's designated Area Agency on Aging. Lewiston resident Lucy Bisson (right) received the 2024 Ikaria Award for her outstanding contributions toward improving the lives of older adults.

Legislature.

The event included the presentation of the 2024 Ikaria Award, which recognizes an individual or organization for singular and outstanding contributions toward improving the lives of older adults, to Bisson, a former SeniorsPlus volunteer and current Executive Director of the Lewiston/Auburn Senior College. Ikaria is a Greek island in the Aegean Sea. It is considered one of the world's five "Blue Zones" -- places where an estimated one in three members of the population regularly lives an active life into their 90s.

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

The overall program goal of SeniorsPlus is to assist older adults and adults with disabilities in our tri-county area to remain at home safely for

as long as possible. The overwhelming majority of older adults (greater than 95% in an AARP survey) wish to remain at home until they die. The Meals on Wheels program provides nourishment, socialization and regular safety checks.

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

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

For Vietnam War Veterans Day, King interviews helicopter pilot

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On this Vietnam War Veterans Day, U.S. Senator Angus King (I-ME), a member of the Senate Veterans Affairs (SVAC) and Armed Services Committees (SASC), released his latest episode of “Answering the Call: Maine’s Veteran Voices.” In the 13th interview of the series, produced in partnership with the Library of Congress’ Veterans History Project, Senator King sat down with Ed Stanhope, an Auburn native, who served as an Army helicopter pilot during the Vietnam War and went on to spend nearly four decades in the Maine National Guard. During the interview, King asked Stanhope about his Vietnam War experiences and how Togus and local chapters of the VA and the American Legion support Maine’s veterans.

“Ed’s story captures the bravery and selflessness embodied by so many of our veterans,” said Senator King. “From growing up on a farm in Lisbon to flying helicopters in Vietnam, Ed shows us how a small town, look-out-for-your-neighbor mentality guided him through his time in the service. In this Vietnam War Veterans Day special of ‘Answering the Call: Maine’s Veteran Voices,’ I am proud to share Ed’s story of dedication to his country and to the state of Maine.”

Ed Stanhope grew up in Lisbon, Maine with his parents and two siblings. Ed describes his time growing up in a “one horse family” as “blessed.” After graduating high school, he received his appointment to fly helicopters for the Army. Ed completed basic

training in Fort Polk, Louisiana and went on to flight school in Fort Rucker (now Fort Novosel), Texas.

After training, Ed was deployed to Vietnam for his first tour in 1967 where he piloted Huey helicopters. Ed describes being lucky to have served with older men in his unit, who passed on valuable lessons such as “don’t take unnecessary chances, there are plenty of necessary chances in this business.”

Ed returned to Vietnam for his second tour flying the much larger Chinook helicopter and transporting artillery and ammunition pallets. He also acted as what he describes as “a helicopter ambulance,” recovering damaged helicopters to be repaired or salvaged for parts.

After his second tour, Ed transitioned out

of active service and returned to Maine. Taking advantage of the GI bill, Ed studied criminal justice at the University of Maine at Orono. He also began flying helicopters for the Maine National Guard in 1970, where he operated a medevac unit for events such as the World Cup Ski Race at Sugarloaf in 1971. Ed continued flying for the National Guard for nearly 40 years.

Ed and his late wife Janet dedicated much of their time to giving back to veterans in Maine. Janet spent many years volunteering for the Red Cross, coordinating with chapters throughout New England to expand their efforts to support veterans. Ed has a rich history of involvement in the Auburn and Augusta chapters of the American Legion, including establishing the air rifle range in

the Augusta Legion Hall, where local youth learn responsible gun safety from veteran volunteers and families compete in sporting events. Today, Ed continues to be engaged with the air rifle program, creating positive experiences for Maine veterans and youth alike.

The Veterans History Project is an effort by the Library of Congress to collect, preserve and distribute the personal accounts of American war veterans so that future generations may hear directly from veterans and better understand the realities of war. The interviews and primary documents from the project are then used by researchers, historians, students, and filmmakers across the country. Senator King joins many other members of Congress who’ve participated in the

project.

Representing one of the states with the highest rates of veterans per capita, Senator King is a staunch advocate for America’s servicemembers and veterans. Senator King uses this interview series to learn and share the stories of the lives, service, and sacrifices of Maine’s veteran community. He has been among the Senate’s most prominent voices on the need to address veterans suicide, and has repeatedly pressed for action from top Department of Defense officials on this issue. An advocate for amplifying veteran voices, Senator King held a field hearing focusing on long-term care in Maine. Additionally, he recently led a bipartisan letter calling for more support for victims of military sexual trauma.

MaineCare launches restoration of pharmacy claims system

AUGUSTA, ME — The Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) announced today that pharmacies have resumed billing MaineCare for members’ prescriptions, following the disruption to its pharmacy claims system due to the national cyber security issue affecting Change Healthcare.

Effective last week, pharmacies may again bill MaineCare for member prescriptions during the disruption period, from February 21, 2024 through March 26, 2024, as well as for ongoing claims. MaineCare will pay all eligible claims submitted during the outage.

MaineCare launched this first phase of the system restoration in a new operating environment, following consultation with the Maine Office of Information Technology

and a review of documentation provided by Optum, Change Healthcare’s parent company, and an external security firm to validate the security of the system. MaineCare additionally conducted extensive testing of payment and eligibility data.

The resumption of pharmacy claims processing and payment brings MaineCare closer to full restoration of the system. Some normal operating processes, including systems for prior authorizations, continue to be suspended while Change Healthcare works toward full restoration of its system.

“We continue to strive to limit the impact of this national disruption on MaineCare members and thank pharmacies and health providers for their partnership as we begin to return to normal

operations,” said DHHS Commissioner Jeanne Lambrew. “We are in close communication with Change Healthcare during this transitional period and will do all we can to resolve any outstanding issues and ensure MaineCare members can continue to access needed medications.”

“Pharmacies have stepped up to serve Maine people by accomplishing a tremendous amount of additional work over the last five weeks. We’re pleased that operations are returning to normal and are encouraged by the collaboration between MaineCare and pharmacies in the face of this difficult situation,” said Amelia Arnold, Legislative Liaison, Maine Pharmacy Association. “MaineCare staff provided thoughtful and thorough information during the system down-

time, allowing pharmacies to make appropriate plans. We look forward to continued collaboration as the system comes fully back online.”

The disruption resulted from a cybersecurity issue affecting Change Healthcare nationally, impacting health care systems and Medicaid members in many states. MaineCare has been working with members, pharmacies, and providers in response since Change Healthcare shut down its systems on February 21, 2024. MaineCare’s response includes authorizing pharmacies to provide prescriptions for up to 30 days to help MaineCare members access needed medications and issuing interim payments to help

local pharmacies continue to serve MaineCare members. Maine-based pharmacies will receive another interim payment the first week of April in order to continue support until the claims payments are available. These interim payments will be reconciled with actual claims payment amounts for verified MaineCare. Pharmacies are expected to resume receiving claims payments by the end of the second week of April.

The system disruption has generated unexpected additional, one-time pharmacy costs for the Department. As Governor Mills prepares her budget change package, the Department is working on an initiative for her proposal to address the state

share of these costs.

Throughout the disruption, MaineCare has urged pharmacies to continue filling prescriptions for MaineCare members. It has required pharmacies to continue to verify MaineCare coverage and provided numerous ways to do so.

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

To reach DHHS about this issue:

Pharmacies may refer to the Department’s most recent provider bulletin

MaineCare members may call the MaineCare Pharmacy Help Desk at 1-866-796-2463

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

Funds secured for Androscoggin County

WASHINGTON, D.C.—U.S. Senator Susan Collins, Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, announced that she successfully secured \$577,580,000 through Congressionally Directed Spending (CDS) for 231 projects located across Maine in the Fiscal Year 2024 Appropriations bills. Divided into two bipartisan legislative packages—these bills were signed into law on March 9 and March 23.

This funding secured by Senator Collins will support targeted investments throughout each of Maine's 16 counties.

“From increasing access to higher education, childcare, and affordable housing to supporting Maine’s working waterfronts, improving our roads and bridges, and promoting economic development, these targeted investments will provide real and direct benefits for communities in all 16 counties,” said Senator Collins. “As Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I fought hard to ensure this important funding was included in the final funding bills.”

The 231 projects requested by Senator Collins are listed by county below:

ANDROSCOGGIN
16 Projects / \$47,698,000

CMCC Health Care Training Expansion (Auburn)

Recipient: Central Maine Community College (CMCC)

Amount: \$3,325,000
Bill: LH-HS-Ed (FY24)

Project Purpose: For facilities and equipment to expand CMCC’s health care training programs.

Riverwalk Expansion (Auburn)

Recipient: City of Auburn

Amount: \$3,900,000
Bill: THUD (FY24)

Project Purpose: To extend the existing Auburn Riverwalk and link it to other local trails.

Western Maine Transportation Services Workforce Transit Project (Auburn)

Recipient: Maine Department of Transportation

Amount: \$5,108,000
Bill: THUD (FY24)

Project Purpose: To purchase transit vehicles and associated infrastructure for workforce and regional public transportation to serve Androscoggin, Cumberland, Franklin, Oxford, and Somerset Counties.

Pathways to Prosperity for a Skilled Forest Workforce (Jay and Livermore Falls)

Recipient: Maine Development Foundation

Amount: \$535,000
Bill: LH-HS-Ed (FY24)

Project Purpose: To expand workforce training to support the forest products industry.

Central Maine Medical Center Surgical Technology Upgrades (Lewiston)

Recipient: Central Maine Medical Center

Amount: \$2,100,000
Bill: LH-HS-Ed (FY24)

Project Purpose: For surgical technology facilities and equipment.

Community Concepts Housing (Lewiston)

Recipient: Community Concepts, Inc.

Amount: \$3,721,000
Bill: THUD (FY24)

Project Purpose: To renovate 12 of Community Concepts’ low-income rental housing properties in Androscoggin, Franklin, and Oxford Counties.

Maine Public Emergency Signal Expansion (Lewiston HQ)

Recipient: Maine Public Broadcasting Corporation

Amount: \$3,421,000
Bill: Agricul-

ture (FY24)

Project Purpose: To extend the reach of an emergency alert system in rural Maine including Aroostook, Oxford, Piscataquis, Penobscot, Washington Counties.

Simard Payne Park Improvements (Lewiston)

Recipient: City of Lewiston

Amount: \$3,900,000
Bill: THUD (FY24)

Project Purpose: To revitalize Simard Payne Park to better connect it to the riverfront and community, which aligns with Lewiston’s Riverfront Island Master Plan.

St. Mary’s Medical Center Substance Use Disorder (SUD) Treatment Facility (Lewiston)

Recipient: St. Mary’s Regional Medical Center

Amount: \$3,989,000
Bill: LH-HS-Ed (FY24)

Project Purpose: For facilities and equipment at the SUD inpatient treatment unit.

Tree Street Youth Family and Community Center (Lewiston)

Recipient: Tree Street Youth

Amount: \$1,000,000
Bill: THUD (FY24)

Project Purpose: To support the expansion of

Tree Street Youth’s services including, parenting support, health and wellness services, financial literacy training, and workforce development.

Trinity Jubilee Center Food, Shelter, and Jobs Center (Lewiston)

Recipient: Trinity Jubilee Center

Amount: \$2,000,000
Bill: THUD (FY24)

Project Purpose: To construct a new facility to support the Trinity Jubilee Center’s services for underserved people in the Lewiston-Auburn area.

Washburn Norlands Restoration (Livermore)

Recipient: Washburn Norlands Foundation

Amount: \$3,422,000
Bill: THUD (FY24)

Project Purpose: To restore two 19th-century historic properties for educational and community uses.

Center for Community Programs in Livermore Falls and Jay (Livermore Falls)

Recipient: United Way of the Tri-Valley Area

Amount: \$1,677,000
Bill: THUD (FY24)

Project Purpose: To make renovations that will allow this facility to continue to host childcare pro-

grams and other expanded services.

Town of Livermore Falls for Livermore Falls & Jay Wastewater Treatment Facility Upgrades (Livermore Falls)

Recipient: Town of Livermore Falls

Amount: \$7,000,000
Bill: Interior (FY24)

Project Purpose: To upgrade the Livermore Falls Wastewater Treatment Facility, which serves Livermore Falls and Jay.

Mechanic Falls Sanitary District for Wastewater Infrastructure Improvements (Mechanic Falls)

Recipient: Mechanic Falls Sanitary District

Amount: \$2,000,000
Bill: Interior (FY24)

Project Purpose: To improve wastewater infrastructure in Mechanic Falls.

Maine School Administrative District #52 for Wastewater Infrastructure Improvements (Turner)

Recipient: Maine SAD 52 (Turner, Leeds, and Greene)

Amount: \$600,000
Bill: Interior (FY24)

Project Purpose: To upgrade the wastewater infrastructure that serves Maine School Administrative District #52.

MaineCF scholarship available to Androscoggin County students

PORTLAND & ELLSWORTH — The Maine Community Foundation (MaineCF) is accepting scholarship applications from Androscoggin County students pursuing two or four-year degrees for the Annette M. Brown Scholarship Fund.

Eligible applicants must demonstrate a level of academic achievement suitable for predicting success in college; strong character and family values; and financial need. Preference will be given to first-generation college students and those attending accredited colleges

in Androscoggin County, with secondary preference to those attending schools elsewhere in Maine. Applications from students attending school outside Maine will be given the lowest priority.


Annette M. Brown taught in the Lewiston-Auburn area in the early 1900s. In her 1916 will, she left \$16,000 to establish a

scholarship fund to benefit students. Since then, the fund has given thousands of dollars to Androscoggin County students pursuing higher education.

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





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Share your strength: Give blood or platelets with the Red Cross

PORTLAND, ME — This spring, the American Red Cross asks donors to help defend the blood supply by giving blood or platelets now to combat a monstrous fact: only 3 out of 100 people donate blood. That’s why we’re teaming up with Warner Bros. Pictures and Legendary Pictures to celebrate the epic new film, *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire*, and inviting donors to rise together and give blood. When donors share their strength by coming to give March 25-April 7, they’ll get an exclusive *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* and Red Cross T-shirt, while supplies last. (Details are available at RedCrossBlood.org/GXK.)

In recent weeks, the Red Cross has seen an encouraging increase in the blood supply, but blood and platelet donation appointments remain vital

this month. People of all blood types – especially those with type O blood – are critical to ensuring hospital shelves can be replenished as soon as possible.

To book a time to give, visit RedCrossBlood.org, download the Red Cross Blood Donor App, or call 1-800-RED CROSS. Additionally, all who come to give April 8-28 will get a \$10 e-gift card to a merchant of choice, plus be automatically entered for a chance to win one of two \$7,000 gift cards. Visit RedCrossBlood.org/Spring for details.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities March 25-April 15

Androscoggin
Auburn
4/11/2024: 12:30 p.m. - 5:30 p.m., Edward Little High School, 77 Harris St.
Cumberland
Brunswick



When donors share their strength by coming to give March 25-April 7, they’ll get an exclusive *Godzilla x Kong: The New Empire* and Red Cross T-shirt, while supplies last.

4/12/2024: 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., American Legion Post 20, 1 Columbus Drive
Freeport
4/11/2024: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Freeport Community Center, 53 Depot Street
Portland
4/8/2024: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Maine Medical Dana Center, 22 Bramhall Street
Standish
4/15/2024: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Gardenside Condo Association, 12 Gardenside Drive
Westbrook
4/12/2024: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Westbrook Community Center, 426 Bridge Street
Yarmouth
4/5/2024: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., American Legion Post 91, 196 Main St
How to donate blood
Simply download the American Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit

RedCrossBlood.org, call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767) or enable the Blood Donor Skill on any Alexa Echo device to make an appointment or for more information. All blood types are needed to ensure a reliable supply for patients. A blood donor card or driver’s license or two other forms of identification are required at check-in. Individuals who are 17 years of age in most states (16 with parental consent where allowed by state law), weigh at least 110 pounds and are in generally good health may be eligible to donate blood. High school students and other donors 18 years of age and younger also have to meet certain height and weight requirements.

Blood and platelet donors can save time at their next donation by using RapidPass® to complete their pre-donation reading

and health history questionnaire online, on the day of their donation, before arriving at the blood drive. To get started, follow the instructions at RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass or use the Blood Donor App.

Amplify your impact – volunteer!

Another way to support the lifesaving mission of the Red Cross is to become a volunteer blood donor ambassador at Red Cross blood drives. Blood donor ambassadors help greet, check-in and thank blood donors to ensure they have a positive donation experience.

Volunteers can also serve as transportation specialists, playing a vital role in ensuring lifesaving blood products are delivered to nearby hospitals. For more information and to apply for either position, visit redcross.org/volunteertoday.

MaineCF scholarship available to aspiring engineers

PORTLAND & ELLSWORTH — High school seniors pursuing degrees in engineering may be eligible for the K. William Wiseman Engineering Scholarship at the Maine Community Foun-

dation (MaineCF). The fund supports students graduating from Maine high schools attending an accredited college or university. The school does not have to be in Maine. The application

deadline is Wednesday, May 1.

For more information and to apply, visit www.mainecef.org/scholarships.

The Maine Community Foundation brings people and resources to-



gether 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.

2nd annual Eid community potluck coming up at UMA

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AUGUSTA, ME – The University of Maine at Augusta (UMA) will partner with local multicultural organizations to host a community potluck for Eid al-Fitr on Saturday, April 13th at 1pm. This will be an opportunity for members of our local community to share traditions, and to learn about local organizations that support Muslim communities in Maine. Eid, meaning ‘celebration’ or ‘festival’, refers to a time of joyous celebration. There are two dedicated times of Eid in Islam that Muslims around the globe celebrate. Eid al-

Fitir, translated as “the festival of breaking the fast”, marks the end of the holy month of Ramadan and the start of Shawwal, which is the 10th month in the Islamic calendar. This festival is a particularly significant time for Muslims to get together, appreciate their blessings, share special treats and delicacies, and celebrate with the community. The potluck will be in the Fireside Lounge, Randall Student Center, on UMA’s Augusta campus at 46 University Drive, Augusta, from 1-3 p.m. All are welcome to join, and

attendees are encouraged to bring a dish to share (no pork please). If you kindly provide a list of ingredients in your dish, that would also be appreciated. The event is free and open to the public.

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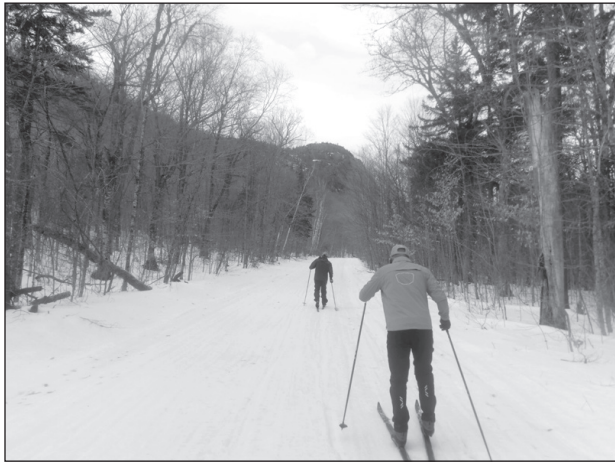
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Seniors Not Acting Their Age

Entering Baxter State Park in Winter



Skiers approach Horse Head Mountain in Baxter State Park

Perhaps the best kept winter mountaineering secret in Baxter State Park is South Branch Pond. Most skiers, ice climbers, and mountaineers focus on Chimney Pond with their sights set squarely on Mount Katahdin. Many peak baggers trek into the hut at Nesowadnehunk Field to access the four high mountains located in the northwestern sector of the park. Fewer winter enthusiasts are attracted to South Branch Pond.

Located in the northeastern part of the park, the South Branch Pond region is a unique experience. The two connected ponds, Upper and Lower South Branch Ponds, are bordered by mountains on the east and west and have the character of an inland fjord. The campground at the pond features a roomy cabin with a woodstove, gas lamps, and eight bunks. That was our destination for a late winter expedition.

Last winter, I was part of a group of eight skiers and mountaineers who trekked to South Branch Pond on a multi-day excursion. While a successful outing, heavy snow accumulations and stormy windy weather prevented us from achieving two significant goals: completion of the famed Traveler Loop and a hike over

South Branch and Black Cat Mountains. Those objectives were on our minds when eight of us obtained early March South Branch hut reservations last November 1st.

In the four month interim, medical issues impacted the makeup of the group. Two members of the team had to bow out due to serious health issues, while another couldn't leave ailing family members. In December, I was diagnosed with arthritis in my left knee and began cortisone treatments. Easily the senior citizen in the now six-person assemblage, it was unclear how much mountaineering I could do. Based on earlier winter experiences, skiing was a better option.

Obviously, no one can predict the weather when reservations are obtained four months in advance. History told us snowfall through the winter would result in hefty snow accumulations by early March. Not this year. The park, and much of Maine, received record low snow amounts and unusually heavy rainfall. Whether or not there would be adequate snow to ski into the pond was a concern. Calls to the area confirmed there was still acceptable but diminishing levels of snow on park roads. However, a warm rainy weather fore-



A team of skiers stop for a break at the summer Baxter State Park Gate

cast did not bode well for our six-day adventure.

Several of us stayed in a cabin at Matagamom Campground just outside of the park the night before the excursion began. In deference to my arthritic knee, most of us hired the campground to shuttle our gear by snowmobile on the park Perimeter Road as far as the beginning of South Branch Pond Road. Park rules prohibit snowmobiles on South Branch Pond Road so our plan was to haul gear on sleds for the remaining 2.2 miles.

Six enthusiastic skiers met at the Matagamom Winter Trailhead on a warm foggy morning. Light rain had fallen the night before leaving a soft ice and wet snow base for skiing. After the snowmobile and trailer departed with our sleds and gear, we began the 11 mile journey to South Branch Pond Road.

The skiing was surprisingly good and we completed the cruise in about 2.5 hours. While we were assembling our sleds for the haul to the pond, two Park Rangers arrived on snowmobiles. They were headed to South Branch to check ice safety and promised an update when they returned.

Some of us hauled heavy sleds wearing micro spikes while others continued with skis. Much of the

trek is uphill before leveling off and then descending to the pond. When the rangers stopped, they advised against skiing or snowshoeing on the pond as it was heavily puddled and thin in places. That eliminated the possibility of a coveted ski south on the winter Pogy Trail. Mountaineering would be our focus.

We completed the arduous sled pull in a little over an hour and settled into the bunkhouse. Cabin chores were next. Firewood was brought in from the woodshed and a fire started in the woodstove. Others retrieved water from an open section at the outlet of the pond. All water has to be purified.

During a delicious dinner, a game plan was established for the following day. We would be up early and attempt a climb of North Traveler Mountain, possibly continuing on the Traveler Loop.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* narrates several winter mountaineering and ski expeditions.

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



Pulling a heavy sled with gear is part of the challenge of entering Baxter State Park



South Branch Pond has the character of an inland fjord

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

Comedy Soup, Stand-up headliner at Great Falls Comedy Club

AUBURN, ME – Make laughter a priority this week at Great Falls Comedy Club on April 5, with Comedy Soup, and April 6, with stand-up headliner Mark Masters.

Local favorites Julie Poulin, Amanda Kinsey, Leonard Kimble, and Nate White present Comedy Soup on Friday night for an evening of improv, stand-up, sketches, and games starting at 7:30pm.

Then on Saturday, all the way from Colorado, by



way of sticky floors and majestic theaters through 36 states and Canada, Mark Masters brings his stories of crisscrossing America to the stage covering ev-

erything from pickleball to the garlic press and more.

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 or by phone at 207-200-5366.

Author David Vermette to share Franco American history

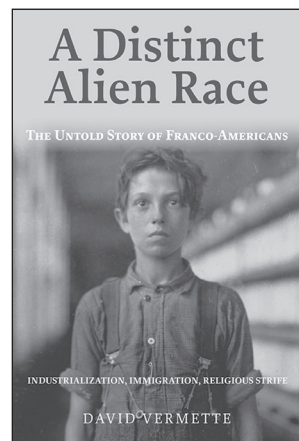
LEWISTON, ME— The Franco Center will host a presentation and book signing by author David Vermette at noon Wednesday, April 10. He will read from his book, “A Distinct Alien Race: The Untold Story of Franco-Americans: Industrialization, Immigration, Religious Strife,” have books available for purchase and signing, and follow up with questions and answers after the presentation.

“Our patrons have told us that they are very interested in attending presentations from authors who have written Franco-American related books,” said Denise Scammon, marketing and development director at the Franco Center. “This book will be of interest to historians, as well.”

On Wednesday, April 10, Vermette will discuss his book’s French Canadian immigrant theme. According to Vermette, in the later-19th century, French-Canadian Roman Catholic immigrants from Quebec were deemed a threat to the United States, potential terrorists in service of the Pope. Books and newspapers floated the



Author David Vermette will discuss his French-Canadian immigrant-themed book at noon Wednesday, April 10, at the Franco Center, 46 Cedar St., Lewiston. Submitted photo.



conspiracy theory that the immigrants seeking work in New England’s burgeoning textile industry were

plotting to annex parts of the United States to a newly independent Quebec.

Vermette’s groundbreaking study sets this neglected and poignant tale in the broader context of North American history. He traces individuals and families, from the textile barons who created a new industry to the poor farmers and laborers of Quebec who crowded into the mills in the post-Civil War period. Vermette is a writer, researcher, editor, and a speaker on Franco-American history and identity. He is originally from Massachusetts.

“Attendees at our September Books and Stories program, which featured local Franco-American author Suzanne Roy, stated that the Ku Klux Klan’s negative reflection of Franco Americans and Catholics was not something they remember hearing about,” said Scammon. “David will share information about how the Ku Klux Klan’s local activities stirred up animosity against Franco Americans.”

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

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Info session for parents of children with disabilities

ROME, ME -- Taking the leap and sending a child to overnight camp is a big decision for any parent. Overnight summer camp is an amazing opportunity for growth and development as well as an opportunity for respite for families.

Pine Tree Camp is a program of Pine Tree Society and is Maine's only American Camp Association accredited camp exclusively for children with disabilities. Week-long



summer overnight and day camp sessions are designed for children living with a full range of disabilities and no camper is ever turned away due to their ability to pay.

On Wednesday, April

24 at 7:00pm, Pine Tree Camp will host an info session for parents and caregivers via Zoom. Attendees will have the chance to meet Pine Tree Camp Director, Dawn Willard-Robinson, get a first-hand look

at the campus, experience the wide array of fully accessible programming and participate in a live Q&A.

This info session will explore all Pine Tree Camp has to offer including:

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Pine Tree Camp Info Session

Wed, April 24 at

7:00pm

Via Zoom

Pre-registration is required. The Zoom conference login will be sent to participants after registration.

https://us06web.zoom.us/webinar/register/WN_AXOUE0QaTMyv_WV2INP3RQ

For more information, please contact: Lori Chesley at lchesley@pine-treesociety.org or 207-386-5993.

Forecasting Committee anticipates flat state revenues

AUGUSTA, ME – During its meeting earlier this week, Maine's nonpartisan Revenue Forecasting Committee (RFC) confirmed that the State of Maine's revenues will remain relatively flat through the next biennium (Fiscal Years 2026-2027), while recognizing approximately \$108 million in additional one-time revenue in the current biennium (Fiscal Years 2024-2025).

RFC reduced revenue projections for the next biennium by \$3 million, confirming that revenues are remaining relatively flat after several years of strong growth that peaked in Fiscal Year 2022. This trend in revenues is consistent with that of other states which are now facing budget shortfalls. Governor Mills has proposed saving \$107 million for the next biennium to avoid facing a budget shortfall given that revenues have leveled off.

In fact, revenues are not expected to reach the same level they were in Fiscal Year 2022 until at least Fiscal Year 2026.

Meanwhile, RFC also recognized an additional \$108 million in one-time revenues in the current biennium. This increase in one-time revenues is primarily driven by strong corporate tax revenues, which can be volatile and should not be relied upon for a long-term budgeting outlook like individual income or sales tax revenues. Individual income tax revenues are not expected to reach the 2022 level until Fiscal Year 2027, and, adjusted for inflation, sales tax revenue is forecasted to decline each year starting in Fiscal Year 2025.

Maine's Constitution requires a balanced budget, which means the additional one-time revenue projected today will prompt the Governor to

submit a change package in the coming weeks for the Legislature's consideration.

"The Revenue Forecasting Committee's projections confirm what we have been preparing for – that revenues will remain relatively level through the next biennium, underscoring the importance of saving money now to meet our obligations in the future. These savings are important because, while revenues will remain largely flat, we know the costs of programs will increase in the coming years. We must take this into account now to avoid cutting later," said Kirsten Figueroa, Commissioner of the Maine Department of Administrative and Financial Services. "At the same time, corporate tax revenues are driving significant additional one-time funding for the current biennium that will lead the Administra-

tion to introduce a change package in the coming weeks that will seek to invest prudently in immediate, urgent needs while ensuring we remain on steady fiscal footing in the coming years."

The RFC's projections are based on the February 1, 2024 economic forecast from the independent Consensus Economic Forecasting Commission (CEFC) which revised its 2024 economic outlook for Maine based on strong year-to-date growth in employment and lower inflationary pressures yet showed a mix of salary and wage growth and reduction in the future. The RFC pro-

vided projections with and without consideration of the Transfer to the Maine Milk Pool as pending legislation may significantly impact this figure. The numbers included here do not include changes to the Transfer to the Maine Milk Pool.

This revenue projection for Fiscal Years 2026-2027 will serve as the foundation for the next biennial budget.

Earlier this month, Governor Mills introduced a supplemental budget proposal that invests in urgent needs to support Maine people while saving money to preserve the state's long-term fiscal health.

The Governor's proposal – which is balanced as required by the Maine Constitution – funds previously announced initiatives to address urgent challenges, like housing, education, health care, the opioid epidemic and more. It also proposes saving \$107 million to protect the State's long-term fiscal health as other states face budget shortfalls.

The proposal also takes crucial steps to strengthen disaster response following three devastating storms, and it funds public safety and mental health initiatives included in the Governor's public safety legislation.

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Studio Two, early Beatles tribute band to play Franco Center

LEWISTON, ME— Studio Two will return with their early Beatles tribute music to the Franco Center at 7 p.m. Friday, April 5. Band members include Stephen Murray who portrays John Lennon, Joshua Jones as Paul McCartney, Robert Murray as George Harrison, and Dylan Verge as Ringo Starr.

Band members are experienced musicians of today's generation dedicated to preserving the memory and fan culture of The Beatles generation. By recreating the Fab Four's music, appearance, instruments, and onstage banter, Studio Two performs favorite Beatles hits that will bring people to the dance floor.

Visit the Studio Two website to listen to their music <http://www.studiotwotributeband.com/>

According to their publicist, "Unlike other Beatle Tribute acts that try to deliver the entire Beatles catalog in single two-hour show, STUDIO TWO concentrates only on the most exciting and fun time in The Beatles career: The club and touring years. These are the years when people saw them play. The years when The Beatles crafted their sound, and their stage performance, and the years when they took the world by storm, and changed everything."

At age 11, Studio Two co-founder Steve Murray

found an old guitar in the basement and has been playing ever since. A fan of many music genres, he became a Beatles fan after watching The Beatles Anthology documentary series in November 1995.

His grandfather bought him and his identical twin brother (who plays George Harrison in Studio Two) their first guitars: a Rickenbacker and Hofner bass and got them private guitar lessons. By the age of 12, the brothers were winning talent shows and band competitions for playing Beatles tunes.

Throughout high school, Steve played drums in an award-winning percussion ensemble and marching band, but never strayed far from his true passion of Beatles rock. An accomplished musician, Steve attended Berklee College of Music and played jazz and alternative rock music before co-creating Studio Two – The Beatles Tribute with his band mates.

In addition to playing John Lennon, Steve is a live sound engineer and currently serves as the band's booking agent.

"As a trained musician, I never expected to be playing in a Beatles tribute band, but it has been an amazing experience. I am humbled to have an opportunity to portray John Lennon, who is one of the most



Studio Two: The Early Beatles Tribute band returns to the Franco Center April 5. Tickets available at 207-689-2000 and www.francocenter.org/shows. The Franco Center is at 46 Cedar Street, Lewiston. Franco Center photo.

talented musicians and composers of all time, and I am thrilled to bring Beatles music to a multitude of different generations. Best of all, I get to do this with my brother and best friends," said Steve.

Rob Murray picked up his first guitar at age 11 and has never been without one since. Like his twin brother Steve, Rob was turned on to The Beatles by watching The Beatles Anthology documentary series in 1995. He is a Beatles trivia master and is particularly knowledgeable about the equipment The Beatles used – especially vintage microphones.

As a young musician, Rob played drums in an award-winning percussion

ensemble and marching band, and continued to play guitar, often winning talent shows and band competitions for playing Beatles tunes.

A graduate of Berklee College of Music, Rob is a trained guitarist with strong audio engineering skills. For example, he has been involved in helping Beatles documentary filmmakers to sync Beatles audio to rare concert footage.

When he co-founded Studio Two in 2012, all of Rob's talents were put to use. In addition to playing George Harrison, Rob is the equipment guru, hunting flea markets, estate sales, and eBay to assemble the authentic gear the Beatles used in the early 1960s.

"Playing George Harrison and re-enacting Beatles' performances from the early years has been a thrill. I love the vintage equipment and raw sound of the Beatles' Hamburg era, and we take special care to ensure the look and sound is as close to authentic as possible," said Rob. "Studio Two has been an amazing journey, and every day I look forward to meeting both old fans of The Beatles and new fans of Studio Two!"

Dylan Verge is a Boston native entering his senior year at Berklee College of Music. He was awarded the J. Curtis Warner City Music Full Scholarship to the institution where he is pursuing his studies in the

CWP major (Contemporary Writing and Production). Verge has been influenced by Beatles music since he witnessed footage of the four lads rocking the nation on the Ed Sullivan Show in February 1964 when he was four years old.

Joshua Jones is flying in from Seattle, Washington to perform with Studio Two. Jones will portray Paul McCartney. He is a self-taught left-handed bass player. Jones tours with Beatles tribute bands all over the world.

Doors and cash bar open at 6 p.m. Concert starts at 7 p.m.

Tickets are \$30 in advance and \$35 at the door day of the show and can be purchased online at www.francocenter.org, by phone at 207-689-2000 or in person at the box office between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Franco Center is at 46 Cedar St., in a former church building. Parking is available in the mill lot. The building is handicap accessible on the Lincoln St. Alley side.

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; Ann's Flower Shop; and Dirigo Federal Credit Union.

2024 Indoor Homestead Goods & Farmers Market is tomorrow

AUBURN, ME -- Please plan to stop by the Auburn Public Library on

Friday, April 5, between 4:30 & 6:30 for their annual Homestead Goods &

Farmers Market! For this family-friendly event, the APL will welcome many

great vendors who will offer a variety of home-grown and homemade foods, treats, and crafts for sale. (We also are expecting a baby animal or two to join us!)

The Auburn Public Library's Homestead & Farmers Market is one way the library thanks all our community members and community businesses for their wonderful support.

This year's vendors

will include Blais Maple Syrup & Honey, The Chef's Cupboard, Chi-GoBee Farm, Deltacom Coffee, Hometown History Works, Lewiston-Auburn Community Garden, Meadow Muffin Pottery, Norma Warden Photography, North's Homestead Bakery, Purple Bean Bindery, Rabbit's Foot Farm, Sade Fiber Studio, Schuler Paintings, UMO Cooperative Extension, Valley View Farms, and

Well Read by Beth. Local musician Justin Carver will also be playing for us.

And before you head home, don't forget to stop downstairs at Cibo Pizza to pick up dinner!

For more information on this or other upcoming programs offered by the Auburn Public Library, visit the events page of our website – auburnpubliclibrary.org/events/upcoming.

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Art builds community, combats isolation at Waterville Creates



WATERVILLE, ME - At a time when the Surgeon General has declared loneliness an epidemic, an artist in Central Maine has teamed up with a community-based arts organization to leverage art's power to connect and heal.

Social engagement artist Peter Bruun moved to Maine five years ago for a change of scenery after a 30-year career in Baltimore, where he was celebrated for bringing that city's diverse populations together around issues of shared concern. Over decades he honed a model of social practice using art to gather people, first in the act of creating, and later as a catalyst for community conversation. The result is an art-based practice that tackles critical social issues by moving beyond mere commentary, educating and connecting people to each other and to helpful resources.

Last year Bruun partnered with Waterville Creates, a nonprofit building community through transformative arts experiences for all, to address isolation in the Waterville area. The resulting project, Together, is engaging people across the region to examine what community means to them.

"I created this project because I know that people who live on the margins in communities don't usually get to have their voices heard and experiences valued, much less have agency in effecting positive change," Bruun said. "The impact of a project like Together does not lie in the art workshops alone, it does not lie in the exhibitions alone, nor the public programs alone, but in the

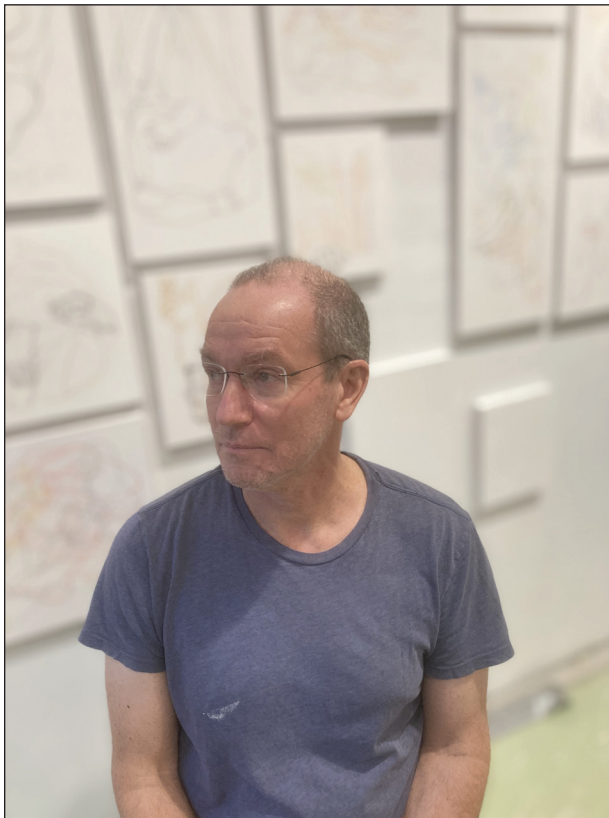
strategic sequencing of these three project components."

Bruun has conducted interviews and art workshops with hundreds of citizens, including unhoused people, those with addiction, disaffected teens, and new Mainers, through organizations such as the Waterville Area Soup Kitchen, High Hopes Clubhouse, Waterville Comprehensive Treatment Center, and the Alternative High School to unearth positive stories of community.

The resulting anecdotes paint a moving portrait of community members suffering in isolation finding meaningful connection through art. From the unhoused mother and her disabled son sharing their burdens with new friends to the frustrated teen safely expressing his feelings of invisibility through drawing, the process has been as valuable for the community as the product.

"The word 'community' is used so often but rarely feels present or real in our lives," said Serena Sanborn, manager of outreach + community partnerships at Waterville Creates. "Peter's workshops cultivate a palpable sense of community, uncovering not only whom we rely upon and uplift, but also how we forge connections and belonging. His work helps people recognize both their capacity to support others and the instances where they themselves have been uplifted by community."

Together culminates in a series of events featuring art, music, and conversation to unite participants



with local leaders and the general public and to celebrate Waterville—the city's successes and enduring qualities, as well as its potential to address challenges in new and creative ways.

An opening event on April 5 features an art-and-audio installation, Hearing, Holding, Healing in the Ticonic Gallery at the Paul J. Schupf Art Center, 93 Main Street, Waterville, in which the voices of Waterville youth complement an exhibition with nearly 100 artworks by residents, each sharing a story of positive community experience. Hearing, Holding, Healing is sponsored by Surette Real Estate, Morning Sentinel/Kennebec Journal, MaineGeneral Health, the City of Waterville, and Kennebec Savings Bank.

April 5 also marks the simultaneous openings of two additional Together exhibitions. Anecdotes and Inspirations features dozens of works created in painting and drawing workshops led by Bruun over the preceding several



months. The pieces will be on display throughout the Paul J. Schupf Art Center. Art for All is an open call exhibition representing a multitude of artworks sharing two common qualities: the art has been made in the Waterville area, and it broadly speaks to themes of living, working, and playing together in the region. The exhibition will be placed in buildings and storefronts on and around Main Street in Waterville,

Related events throughout the month will touch on the needs of youth and those affected by addiction and connect the business community by spotlighting how the arts can be an economic driver that improves livability in communities. The final event on April 27 will bring all participants together and showcase additional participating organizations, including the Waterville Area Art Society, Colby Arts, Educare, and Mid-Maine Regional Community Adult Education.

By using art as the catalyst to interrupt social patterns that lead to iso-

lation, Together offers a model of social practice that any community can emulate, creating a healthier and more connected population.

"That is the beauty of linking art to actual social outcomes in strategic ways, such as I've sought to do with Together," said Bruun. "People's voices not only rise, not only are lit up, but they also come to matter."

For more information, visit bruunstudios.com/together and watervillecreates.org/ticonic/events/together.

This project is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts and the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and realized in partnership with the Colby College Museum of Art and its Lunder Institute for American Art.

From Fear to Faith: Story of spiritual journey comes to Auburn

AUBURN, ME -- The First Universalist Church of Auburn presents a story of a spiritual journey on Sunday, April 7 @12pm in the vestry. The Adult Religious Exploration committee hosts Holly Cooney's talk, From Fear to Faith: A Solo 3-Month Biking Trip on the American Discovery Trail.

Through pictures and stories, Cooney offers a reflection about a bicycle trip she took in 2002. The trip was a life-changing journey both outward and inward.

Adult RE's new speaker series entitled,



Holly Cooney

"Treks and Sojourns," provides a space in which Unitarian Universalists can talk about their travels. The name is an invitation to fo-

cus solely on travel as a secular experience (a trek), to offer a more spiritual dimension to the excursion (a sojourn), or to share a mixture of both (trek and sojourn). FMI contact Adult RE chair Charles Nero cnero@bates.edu

The first "Treks and Sojourns" featured Bill Frayer speaking about "Croatia: The Jewel of the Adriatic."

The First Universalist Church of Auburn is located at 169 Pleasant St. Enter on Spring, St., across from Dairy Joy. Parking; accessible. FMI 783-0461 or www.auburnuu.org.

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UMA earns 2 U.S. News “Best Online” awards

AUGUSTA, ME – The University of Maine at Augusta (UMA), a leader in distance learning for over 30 years, is proud to announce that UMA has been awarded two U.S. News Top 100 Best Online Program rankings in the categories of Best Online Bachelor’s Programs and Best Online Bachelor’s Programs for Veterans.

U.S. News conducted vigorous, in-depth evaluations of U.S. based degree programs designed to be administered online. “Highly ranked programs have strong traditional academic foundations based on student-instructor access, graduation rates, and instructor credentials. They also excel at educating distance learners while offering robust career and financial support” proclaims the U.S. News website. With a student to faculty ratio of

16:1; 29 degrees available fully online; tutoring; academic advising; career advising; job search resources; and numerous financial aid options, the University of Maine at Augusta continues to prove itself worthy of this honor.

In line with UMA’s mission to provide high-quality distance education and innovative professional programs, these outstanding rankings underscore UMA’s dedication to academic excellence and commitment to U.S. veterans. Jennifer Cushman, UMA President, shared, “University of Maine at Augusta is honored to be recognized both for our long-time expertise in online education and our strong support of veterans. We are proud of the relevance of our approach to higher education in the twenty-first century. Our



historic mission to meet all populations of students where they are, to get them where they want to be, is achieved through providing workforce training for today’s economy, in multiple locations and modes, and cultivating bachelor’s and master’s level essential skills for tomorrow’s economy, like problem solving and communication.”

In addition to the Best Online Bachelor’s criteria, schools rated best for veterans have, “the best online bachelor’s degree programs that help veterans reduce the cost of school,” announced U.S. News. Vice President of Enroll-

ment Management, Jonathan Henry, stated, “UMA is proud to again be recognized for our continued support of veterans and our strength in delivering quality higher education that is both accessible and affordable.”

UMA helps all students find ways to fund their education. Utilizing the broad range of financial aid resources available, such as federal grants, the Pine Tree Pledge and the UMA 10K programs, over 80 different scholarships, and more, many students end up paying zero tuition. Qualifying active and veteran students can apply

for all the financial aid options above, as well as the Montgomery G.I. Bill® or Post 9/11 G.I. Bill®. Jamie Santiago, Director of Financial Aid at UMA advises, “to be considered for the maximum amount of financial aid possible, it is important to submit your Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) at studentaid.gov as early as you can.” To learn more about financial aid options, please visit <https://www.uma.edu/financial>.

Since its founding in 1965 when a simple “Welcome Veterans” sign encouraged Vietnam-era Veterans to enroll, UMA has continued a rich tradition of supporting military-experienced students. Amy Line, UMA Director of Military and Veterans’ Services expressed, “we are pleased to receive the Best Online Bachelor’s Programs for

Veterans again this year. UMA’s commitment to educating and providing opportunities to our military, veterans, and families continues to be a priority and it shows!” Hundreds of veterans, active military personnel, and members of the national guard now study at UMA, and all of UMA’s Admissions staff members are trained to work with the unique needs of veteran and military students. More information about military and veteran services can be found at uma.edu/veterans.

With its multiple locations and long-term expertise in online and distance learning, affordability, and dedication to student success, UMA is widely considered the university of choice for Mainers of all ages who want to attend college without uprooting their lives.

\$15M invested Maine’s community colleges

AUGUSTA, ME – Maine’s community colleges received almost \$15 million in recent federal funding, with more than half of the funds directed at adding health care training facilities and technology at multiple colleges.

The funding, included in the federal budget package signed by President Joe Biden over the weekend, is particularly timely since Maine’s community colleges recently doubled their nursing program capacity and significantly expanded short-term workforce training programs in health care to meet industry demand.

“We deeply appreciate the work by U.S. Senator Susan Collins and U.S. Senator Angus King in securing these funds to train more health care workers on cutting-edge equipment,” said David Daigler, president of the Maine

Community College System (MCCS). “There is such a desperate need right now in Maine for health care workers, and we’re seeing high demand for our health care programs.”

The federal funding will also be used to add virtual reality teaching tools, expand a plumbing lab at one college, provide temporary housing for students enrolled in short-term workforce training programs, and expand high-demand academic programs.

“Maine’s congressional delegation works tirelessly to assure that Maine’s community colleges have the resources we need to educate and train Maine workers. I would especially like to thank Senator Collins who spearheaded the complex budget negotiations to bring this funding to fruition,” Daigler said.

The federal funding will go toward the following projects:

Central Maine Community College:

Expand Kirk Hall by 7,200 square feet to train an additional 100 nurses annually, add a surgical technology program, update the science lab, improve the exercise science and physical fitness specialist programs, and enhance short-term workforce training programs in healthcare. (\$3.25 million) Collins

Eastern Maine Community College:

Instructional Space and Professional Development: Improve instructional areas and curriculum enhancements by adding new simulation, laboratory and classroom equipment; use funds to support faculty training and professional development. (\$1.65 million)

Collins Kennebec Valley Community College:

Enhanced Radiology Lab: Improve existing lab to enhance simulation tools and improve training for students in Radiologic Technician program. (\$513,000) Collins

Expanded Plumbing Lab: Expand and update plumbing lab to improve tools and expand capacity to increase the number of students in program. (\$803,000) Collins

Northern Maine Community College:

Andrews Hall Renovation: Renovate Andrews Hall to expand temporary housing for short-term workforce training students, helping to keep those in the industry trained and credentialed. (\$500K) Golden

Diesel Equipment and Technology: Expand the diesel hydraulic pro-

gram to enroll 36 students to meet workforce demands. (\$410,000) Collins and King

Technology Upgrades: Extend warranties for five human patient simulators, upgrade wireless technology and install fiber between buildings to support advanced technology training across campus. (\$550,000) Collins and King

Southern Maine Community College:

Health Care Simulation Lab: Build a new simulation lab to provide health care students with realistic hands-on technology. (\$4.1 million) Collins

Maine Fire Service Institute storage facility: Facility to store and maintain safety equipment and teaching props for current equipment and future equipment needs. (\$500,000) Collins

Washington County

Community College:

Technology Upgrades, Professional Development, Virtual Reality Technology: Purchase high-tech equipment such as virtual reality technology for labs and classrooms and provide professional development in the tools. (\$1.63 million) Collins and King

York County Community College:

Equipment purchase, Technology Upgrades, Supplies: Investments in new welding machines, pipe-fitting equipment, and testing equipment for the Sanford Instructional Site; new virtual reality lab and virtual reality training tools for the trades and multiple other programs; updated equipment for Cyber Security program; and supplies and equipment for dental, nursing, and vet tech programs. (\$986,000) Collins

\$23M contract awarded to Bath Iron Works

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senators Susan Collins and Angus King announced that the U.S. Navy has awarded Bath Iron Works (BIW) a \$22,714,829 contract to continue providing planning yard services for the

DDG 1000 Zumwalt-class destroyers.

“Time and time again, the hardworking, highly-skilled men and women at Bath Iron Works demonstrate that Bath built is best built. Recent military engagements in the

Red Sea have only confirmed this fact, as Bath built ships played a critical role in successfully protecting the global free trade system from terrorist threats,” said Senators Collins and King in a joint statement. “This new fund-

ing is a testament to the shipyard’s expertise that will strengthen Maine’s economy and allow BIW’s engineers, designers, and planners to continue producing their world-class ships. We will continue our efforts to ensure that the

shipyard has the resources it needs to construct these critical elements of our national security that protect our interests around the globe.”

As the DDG 1000 planning yard, BIW provides engineering and design services and other products as required to maintain, modernize and sustain the 3-ship Zumwalt class. This contract includes options which, if exercised, would bring the cumulative value of this contract to \$343,700,000. The work will be performed in Bath and is expected to be completed by March 2025. If addition-

al options are exercised, work will continue through March 2029.

Senator Collins is Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee and Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. Senator King is a member of the Senate Armed Services Committee and Chair of the Strategic Forces Subcommittee.

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Sewing hundreds of pajamas for children in need

MAINE -- For the second year in a row, University of Maine Cooperative Extension Homemakers across the state partnered with nonprofit Janet's Jammies to make hundreds of pajamas for children in need. Volunteers from Homemaker clubs in Aroostook, Cumberland, Franklin, Hancock and Somerset Counties turned piles of donated fabric into 260 pairs of flannel pajama bottoms.

When she heard about the effort of the Homemakers, Janet's mother, Shirley Ladd, said, "I think Janet would be in tears knowing that so many children have been blessed by the work of the Homemakers to assemble and distribute so many sets of pajamas in her name."

A red heart is sewn onto each pair of pajamas to symbolize the love that went into every stitch. United Way in several Maine counties helped to

identify families in need and then distributed the colorful pajamas with matching tee shirts to kids from ages 2 to 6.

"This has been such a fun project to work on," said Diane Parent of the Caribou Homemakers group in Aroostook County. "We're all working together across the state for the same goal."

Lisa Fishman, State Coordinator of Maine Extension Homemakers, agreed. "Whether the work was being done in Farmington, or Bucksport, or Madison, everyone had the same goal: to get warm pajamas out to kids who needed them most."

United Way representatives across the state were thrilled to receive the pajamas, with several branches staying open beyond normal business hours to receive them. The director of the Boys and Girls club of Augusta called to request additional pajamas to



Betty Robshaw (Hancock County), Rita Fortin (Somerset County), and Mary Soper (Hancock County) package pajamas for delivery to local children. Courtesy University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

make sure they could meet the needs in their area.

Janet's Jammies was established as a nonprofit in 2021 in honor of Janet Brzozowski, an avid seamstress who loved sewing clothes for others. The organization was founded on Janet's philosophy "to delight in the detail, to stitch care in every garment, and to wrap ourselves in the love of our family."

The Maine Extension Homemakers are already stitching pajamas

for the next distribution, scheduled for November. This time around, Janet's Jammies is creating larger sized patterns to accommodate older youth. The organization is also requesting donations of clean flannel material. If you have extra material you'd like to donate, contact Extension Homemakers State Coordinator Lisa Fishman at lisa.fishman@maine.edu.

The Extension Homemakers of Maine is a community-based organi-



zation comprised of caring and industrious individuals across the state. More than half of Maine counties have active chapters. Every year, Extension Homemakers take on a statewide

project with the purpose of learning something new, serving others, and benefiting communities. To learn more about Extension Homemakers in Maine visit the program webpage.

Sen. Collins secures funding for diabetes program

WASHINGTON, D.C. —U.S. Senator Susan Collins, Vice Chairman of the Senate Appropriations Committee and a member of the Senate Health Committee, announced that she secured a provision in the March 8th funding package that was signed into law last week to reauthorize the Special Diabetes Program (SDP) through December 31, 2024, at an annual rate of approximately \$160 million per year – a roughly \$10 million increase from current funding levels. This is the first funding increase for SDP in 20 years.

"Renewal of the Special Diabetes Program will help to accelerate the progress we have made over the past two decades to treat, and one day cure, Type 1 diabetes, as well as continue much-needed support, education, and



diabetes treatment in Native American and Alaska Native communities," said Senator Collins. "I am also pleased that our bipartisan efforts have resulted in continuation of the Special Diabetes Program and an overdue increase. I will continue to champion investments that support Americans living with this disease."

"JDRF is thrilled the Special Diabetes Program has been renewed until December 2024—and with a much-needed increase in funding—ensuring that critical type 1 diabetes (T1D) research continues," said Juvenile Diabetes Research Foundation CEO Aaron Kowalski, Ph.D. "This renewal

would not have been possible without the tireless work of Senate Diabetes Caucus Co-chairs Susan Collins (R-ME) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH). Senators Collins and Shaheen have been incredible allies of the T1D community and JDRF for years. We are grateful for their tremendous leadership and partnership on this important issue."

"The Endocrine Society is thrilled that Congress has reauthorized the Special Diabetes Program. We greatly appreciate the leadership of Senator Collins and Senator Shaheen to ensure that more funds are dedicated to type 1 diabetes research and type 2 diabetes prevention, education, and treatment pro-

grams for indigenous communities," said Endocrine Society Chief Medical Officer Dr. Robert W. Lash. "Diabetes is a chronic disease that affects millions of Americans, and the Special Diabetes Program supports important work to improve public health."

For more than 25 years, the Special Diabetes Program – comprised of the Special Statutory Funding Program for Type 1 Diabetes Research and the Special Diabetes Program for Indians (SDPI) – has delivered meaningful resources and research breakthroughs for those with Type 1 diabetes and

also for Native Americans and Alaska Natives. Congress has reauthorized the SDP with bipartisan support numerous times since the program's inception in 1997, yet funding has remained flat since fiscal year 2004. During this time period, the cost of research has increased, as has the size of the Indian Health Service population and the cost of medical care.

As a co-chair of the Senate Diabetes Caucus, Senator Collins has worked to increase awareness of the threats posed by diabetes, invest in research, and improve access to treatment options. Last May, Senators Collins and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) led a bipartisan letter to Senate leadership emphasizing the importance of SDP that

was signed by a total of 60 Senators. In June, Senators Collins and Shaheen introduced legislation to reauthorize the program. The Special Diabetes Program Reauthorization Act of 2023, which proposed a funding increase for both components of the SDP, advanced out of the Senate Health Committee in June by a 20-1 vote. Senator Collins also chaired the JDRF Children's Congress in July to highlight the need to reauthorize the SDP before program funding expired in September 2023. Prior to securing the increase in the March 8th package, Senator Collins secured extensions of the SDP and SDP-I in past continuing resolutions to ensure the program continued uninterrupted.

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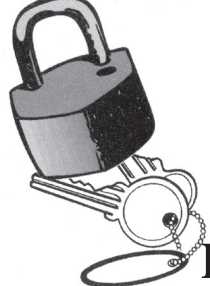
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Fridays Apr 5 – May 10

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

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

Apr 5

GORHAM -- Relay For Life of Southern Maine: A free community event to support the American Cancer Society

Friday, April 5 from 6-10pm, Costello Sports Complex USM-Gorham Campus. FMI: relayforlife.org/southernme

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

Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

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 7

AUBURN -- Sunday, April 7, “Treks and Sojourns: From Fear to Faith” featuring Holly Cooney. 12 noon; free. First Universalist Church of Auburn 169 Pleasant St. Enter on Spring, St., across from Dairy Joy. Parking; accessible. FMI 783-0461 or www.auburnu.org.

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.sacrivertheatre.org.

Apr 27

GRAY -- The First Congregational Church of Gray Saturday Night Church Supper held on Saturday, April 27, 2024 @

5:00 at the Parish House, 5 Brown Street, Gray. Handicapped Accessible. Meals are single-sized and are \$10.00 each. Please pay at the door. The Menu includes: Variety of Casseroles & Salads, Baked Pea Beans, Red Hot Dogs, Breads, Assortment of Desserts & Beverages

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 3

LEWISTON --

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Friday, May 3rd from 10:00am – 11:30am at the Lewiston Public Library: **LITTLE KEEPSAKES: MY LITTLE SUNSHINE TOTE BAGS**

Caregivers will be able to create a personalized keepsake tote bag us-

ing the handprints of their young children. The program is recommended for kids ages birth to 6 years and their caregivers. Siblings are also welcome to attend.

513-3133; www.LPLonline.org

Lewiston's Brush Pick-Up Assistance Week runs Apr. 8 - 12

LEWISTON, ME -- Spring is coming and so is Lewiston's Brush Pick-Up Assistance Week. Curbside collection is for residential properties and ONLY wood/tree waste and brush. Brush must be curbside by Sun., Apr. 7. Don't wait until you see a PW crew to place

brush curbside -- it will be too late! For more details: <https://bit.ly/48W-dAuE>

During pick-up week only, residents may bring one standard size pick-up truck load of brush (three yards) to the Solid Waste Facility, 420 River Rd, Lewiston, at no charge.

Also, Public Works

encourages sanitization of pruning tools between tree cutting to prevent any disease spread. One sanitation method is to pour a half cup of rubbing alcohol into a bowl or shallow dish. Dip pruning shears into the rubbing alcohol for one to two minutes, rinse, and dry with towel.

A/L Valley Karate Tournament invites participants, seeks sponsors

The 2024 A/L Valley Karate Tournament is happening on June 8th at Central Maine Community College. This is an open tournament which means all styles of martial arts are welcome to participate. There will be divisions for ages two and up. There will also be divisions for both children and adults with special needs.

Competitors can choose up to three events including Kata (Forms), Weapons Kata, Flag Spar-



ring, Continuous Sparring and Self-Defense.

There will also be a special performance by the Phoenix Demonstration team.

Food concessions will be available throughout the day.

This event is organized and hosted by Phoenix No Limits Karate

which is a non-profit organization located in Auburn Maine. The proceeds from this event will support its youth after school and summer leadership programs.

Sponsorship from local businesses is greatly appreciated with levels ranging from \$100 to \$1000 and your donation is tax deductible.

Please contact Donna Harris 207-577-1046 or phoenixnlimitskarate@gmail.com for more information.

Tri-Town Optimist Club announces Student of the Month



(L-R) Adult Education Teacher Susan Lasselle and Student Josiah Childers

The Tri-Town Optimist Club of Mechanic Falls, Minot and Poland is proud to announce its RSU 16 Student of the Month recipient for March. Josiah Childers, from Adult Education, is described by staff as a friendly, outgoing student who con-

sistently strives for excellence. He demonstrates humility and thoughtful consideration in everything he does and has an inquisitive nature and thirst for learning that inspires enthusiasm in those around him. Congratulations Josiah!

Bob Marley bringing comedy show to Franco Center April 7

LEWISTON, ME— Bob Marley is bringing his comedy show to the Franco Center at 7:30 p.m. Sunday, April 7. His shows feature Maine humor and audience engagement. He asks the audience questions and then has fun with their answers. If you're sitting in any seat, you might get called on by this comedian! Bob usually brings a comedian to open the show, too.

Marley has been on the comedy circuit for more than 15 years and has been featured in his own special on Comedy Central. He is one of the few

comics to do the complete late-night television circuit: Late Show with David Letterman, The Tonight Show with Jay Leno, Late Night with Conan O'Brien, The Late Late Show with Craig Ferguson, and The Late Late Show with Craig Kilborn.

The Maine native is featured regularly on Sirius XM radio and has won their Superbowl of Comedy award. He has more than 20 comedy CDs and DVDs.

Marley was inducted into The Guinness Book of World's Records for "the longest stand up com-

edy show by an individual" at 40 hours of straight standup.

He's appeared on more than 100 TV shows and costarred in Boondock Saints I and II and All Saints Day, playing Detective Greenly. He has toured the U.S., Europe, Canada, Kuwait and Iraq.

Tickets are \$44 in advance and \$49 at the door day of show.

Doors and cash bar open at 6:30 p.m. Show starts at 7:30 p.m.

Tickets can be purchased online at www.franco-center.org/shows or by

phone at 207-689-2000 or in person at our box office between 10 a.m. and 1 p.m. Tuesdays and Wednesdays.

Franco Center is at 46 Cedar St., in a former church building. Parking is available in the mill lot. The building is handicap accessible on the Lincoln St. Alley side. Additional parking, should the mill lot be full, is in the city-owned Lincoln St. lot on the corner of Lincoln and Cedar streets; in the parking garage at the corner of Lincoln and Chestnut streets; and in the Lincoln St. lot across from F.X. Marcotte.

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