

Potluck, pie auction at Gorham's Pleasant River Assembly

GORHAM, ME -- is having a Potluck dinner with a Pie Auction to follow on May 11! This is our annual Pie Auction!

Gorham Economic Development Corporation opening

GORHAM, ME -- The Town Council Appointments Committee is seeking citizen volunteers to fill a vacancy on the Gorham Economic Development Corporation.

If you are interested in applying to serve on the Gorham Economic Development Corporation, go to the Town of Gorham's website to fill out an application. For more information, you may also contact



the Town Clerk's office at 222-1670. Applications will be accepted until May 9, 2024

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Applications will be accepted until May 9, 2024

GrowSmart Maine states position on Gorham Connector

In June 2022, GrowSmart Maine's Board of Directors issued a statement regarding the proposed Gorham Connector project led by the Maine Turnpike Authority. Between then and now, the Maine Turnpike Authority has published the proposed route and reengaged with the impacted communities – these recent developments have prompted GrowSmart's board to revisit and revise the organization's position.

The updated position statement reads as follows:

Evidence shows that when new highways are built, they generate more traffic, meaning short-term relief is followed by demand for another expansion. This approach is not sustainable. Maine can do better.

Sound decisions about transportation investments equally consider the economy, environment,

and equity. This proposed highway expansion will clearly harm the environment for dubious economic benefits, and will continue inequitable patterns of development.

New highway expansion comes at a cost beyond the dollars spent. Wetlands, farms, and natural resources that make Maine special will be permanently harmed by this project.

Land use and transportation are directly linked. Highway expansion without corresponding change to land use will not solve traffic issues. The solution must address the current disconnect between location of housing, jobs, daily services and transportation options.

This highway expansion would result in more dependence on single-occupancy vehicles and undermine the feasibility of public transportation, in

contradiction to Maine Won't Wait, the state's climate action plan.

Any short-term benefits from this project will not offset the permanent ecological, land use, and community impacts created by this proposed highway expansion. This moment presents an opportunity to craft a more comprehensive, long term solution, that sets an example for smart, climate sensitive, transportation planning.

"This proposed highway expansion will damage Maine's farms and streams forever," said Jeff Levine, GrowSmart Maine's Board Chair on behalf of the Board. "We know that building new highways can produce short-term benefits and accelerate sprawl. Instead, we need thoughtful long-term approaches to planning for new housing and good jobs."

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

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

Upcoming events at Chocolate Church Arts Center

BATH, ME -- May is going to be a busy month on our Main Stage! Check out OneBeat on May 10 and Studio Two on May 11.

OneBeat
Fri 10 May 2024,
07:00 PM

Prepare for an exhilarating musical escapade at The Chocolate Church in Bath, where 25 trailblazing artists from 19 nations are poised to deliver an electrifying performance like never before seen. Dive headfirst into the explosive sounds of Nairobi's burgeoning electronic scene, seamlessly merging with the mesmerizing melodies of the Japanese Shō, while the soul-stirring folk melodies of Saudi Arabia entwine effortlessly

with the infectious samba rhythms of Buenos Aires. Feel the pulse quicken as these OneBeat Fellows sculpt an audacious sonic journey that defies all expectations and conventions. Join us as we mark the apex of a month-long odyssey of exploration and connection, where each note and rhythm beckons you to lose yourself in a musical mosaic crafted from the vibrant tapestry of global culture and innovation. Don't miss your chance to be part of this unforgettable evening celebrating unity, diversity, and the transformative power of music.

<https://chocolate.na.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/16860>

Studio Two - The

Beatles Tribute

Sat 11 May 2024,
07:30 PM

Studio Two is a headlining Beatles band that pays tribute to the early Beatles years, choosing songs from the pre-Sgt. Pepper era. Featuring graduates from Berklee College of Music and Beatles devotees, Studio Two bandmates met in a "cellar full of noise" in a town slightly west of Liverpool (Milford, New Hampshire!) to pay homage to the greatest rock band of all time. 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,



OneBeat

appearance, instruments, and onstage banter, Studio Two performs your most favorite hits that will bring people to the dance floor. Studio Two has performed at numerous large and small venues, from large open-air festivals to nightclubs.

<https://chocolate.na.ticketsearch.com/sales/salesevent/16188>



Studio Two - The Beatles Tribute

Tyler Rose named Pine Tree Baseball League's next president

Fourth-year Manager of the Kennebec Sturgeons of Bath, Tyler Rose has been named the next President of the Maine Pine Tree Men's Baseball League (PTL) as the organization enters its 99th year. Kris Targett of Vassellboro had served as the PTL President over the last 15 years before handing over responsibilities to Rose.

"I was really lucky to have a full season of training and support from Kris who has basically seen it all," commented Rose, who worked closely alongside Targett during the 2023 season.

The historic PTL began in 1925 as an independent semi-professional baseball league, largely comprised of teams from western Maine. Mechanic Falls, Norway, Oxford, South Paris, Turner and West Paris all played host to the original six teams in the league and saw count-

less games of fierce competition, larger than life personalities and hometown pride nearly a century ago.

Entering the 2024 season, the PTL has twelve teams representing towns like the Winthrop Red Sox, regions such as the Central Maine Green Wave and rivers like the Kennebec Sturgeons.

"I always tell people we have teams from Bethel, to Bath, to Bangor and everywhere in between," said Rose. Rose hopes to bring a fresh emphasis on professionalism, communication, organization and philanthropy. In 2023, Rose led the effort to record both offensive and pitching statistics for each player in the league and then post those statistics publicly on the league website. "Well, I had a couple games personally where I almost regretted making numbers publicly accessible, but I received so much positive



Photo Courtesy of Photo Opps Photography

feedback about this addition from players and fans that it has now become a staple part of the league," mentioned Rose.

Rose also added league awards for offense, defense, pitching and rookie complete with a signed certificate in the winning player's name. Rose hopes the professional atmosphere and a focus on communicating with fans will grab the eye of public interest. Rose operates the Kennebec Sturgeons' Facebook page, which boasts several hundred followers who receive game and player updates as well

as a live audio broadcast of home games, complete with a play-by-play announcer and color commentator, followed by a video version of the games the day after. Other teams in the league have taken note and began launching their own social media pages for similar purposes.

Under Rose's leadership, the Sturgeons have completed several philanthropic projects to better their community. In 2023, the team raised money for the purchase of an outfield fence for their home field, Varnum Field in Bath. Varnum, in addition to the Sturgeons, is the home of the Bath Middle School teams as well as the local Babe Ruth league.

Prior to 2023, the field had never had a fence. The Sturgeons also partner with Dream Factory of Maine to help raise money for children with both life threatening and chronic illnesses. Rose hopes to lead by example and encourage other teams to see what they can do to help their communities as well as with youth baseball development in the state.

In the 1950s and 60s, teams from the PTL would compete against other top teams in the eastern United States for a chance to travel to Battle Creek, Michigan to play in a tournament and eventually a championship that would feature the top teams from the east and west of the Mississippi. The spectacle would attract thousands of fans from all over the country and was every PTL player's dream to be a part of.

In today's league, teams play a regular season that stretches from May through July before giving way to playoffs during the month of August. The league championship game

is held the final weekend of August for a chance at bragging rights, a cash prize and, as of 2024, a new league trophy.

The PTL is a healthy and expanding league, adding four new teams from Brunswick, Topsham, Paris and Turner over the last two years.

If you are someone aged 18 or older and interested in starting or joining a team in the PTL, reach out to Rose via the league's website. Games are played on Sunday mornings, with 2024's Opening Day set for May 5th.

For a full league schedule, list of teams and much more visit the PTL website by searching "Pine Tree Baseball League" online.

Rose concluded, "As someone who is helplessly in love with baseball, I am all in favor of more teams, more guys getting involved and getting to know people in their community. Baseball is something that can bring people and places together like little else can."

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

Norway Savings honored by Maine Senate & House

AUGUSTA, ME —“I’m very proud to recognize Norway Savings. I want them to understand the significance of their recent recognition, and it’s my pleasure to congratulate them.”

The words of Representative Sawin Millett (R-Waterford) were followed by a standing ovation by the Maine House of Representatives for the representatives of Norway Savings Bank seated in the gallery during a special presentation in Augusta on Wednesday, March 13.

The celebratory occa-

sion honored Norway Savings for several accolades bestowed upon the bank in the last two months:

NSB was named “one of the strongest banks in the nation by BauerFinancial, one of the nation’s premier bank rating firms.

NSB maintained Bauer’s 5-Star Rating for the 136th consecutive quarter (34 years)

NSB received an “Outstanding” rating for a third consecutive Community Reinvestment Act examination cycle from the FDIC, an almost unprecedented accomplishment for



(L to R): Rep. Millett, Melissa Rock, Brian Shibles, Dan Walsh, Dave Guthro, Sen. Lisa Keim (R-Oxford), Sen. Bennett

banks.

The Norway Savings delegation on Wednesday included Dan Walsh, President and CEO; Brian Shibles, Chief Financial

Officer and Treasurer EVP; Melissa Rock, Marketing Director VP; and Dave Guthro, Communications and Marketing Officer AVP.

Following their re-

ception in the House of Representatives, the Norway Savings team members received recognition and applause from the Maine Senate as well.

“Founded in 1866, Norway Savings’ success is a result of its commitment to personal values, community values, and financial values that have never faltered over 158 years,” said Senator Rick Bennett (R-Oxford) during his remarks in the Senate Chamber. “The mission of Norway Savings is to sustain strong financial performance; provide a thriving

workplace for their employees as it has received a Best Place for Working Parents designation for the last two years and Best Wellness Employer Gold Certification for five straight years; help their customers achieve their financial goals; support local non-profit organizations; and contribute to the economic development that makes our communities great places to live.”

During the visit, Representative Millett presented Norway Savings Bank with a beautiful Legislative Sentiment parchment.

EPA to review cleanup at Saco Superfund Site

BOSTON, ME – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) will conduct a comprehensive review of completed cleanup work at the Saco Tannery Waste Pits National Priorities List (NPL) Superfund site in Saco, Maine this year.

Each individual site will undergo a legally required Five-Year Review to ensure that previous remediation efforts at the sites continue to protect public health and the environment. Once the Five-Year Review is complete, its findings will be posted

to EPA’s website in a final report.

“Every step of the process at a Superfund site is critical and reflects a commitment we make with local communities to be as thorough as possible. Cleaning up hazardous waste sites takes extensive

time and effort, and these Five-Year Reviews allow EPA to ensure our cleanup efforts continue to protect public health and the environment, while keeping everyone informed and accountable, especially in those communities that have been overburdened

by industrial pollution.” said EPA New England Regional Administrator David W. Cash. “EPA continues to evaluate these cleanups, with the overarching mission to protect public health and the environment and ensuring that Maine communities will

continue to be protected.” In 2024 EPA will conduct Five-Year Reviews at the below listed sites.

Five-Year Reviews of Superfund site in Maine to be completed in 2024: Saco Tannery Waste Pits, Saco

Taxpayers save nearly \$1.3M with CASH Greater Portland

PORTLAND, ME - More than 705 households participated in CASH Greater Portland’s free tax filing program this year, saving \$142,320 in filing fees and receiving \$1,155,572 in state and federal refunds.

CASH Greater Portland, an initiative of United Way of Southern Maine in partnership with the Greater Portland community, offers four free ways for taxpayers to file, including at weekly in-person events. Nineteen community members volunteered more than 2,000 hours as tax preparers. Volunteers were certified by the IRS and trained to help filers take advantage of tax credits, including Earned Income Tax Credit.

“Many of our clients are experiencing economic hardship for the first time,” said Lucia Rico, community impact manager, CASH and financial stability at United Way of Southern Maine. “They aren’t always sure which tax credits they are eligible for. Our tax preparers

can help them get the refunds they deserve.” The program served 179 more households than in 2023.

In Cumberland County, 9% of households earn less than the federal poverty level, while an additional 28% are ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed). ALICE households live paycheck to paycheck and have little savings for emergencies or for future investments like education, home ownership, or retirement. Programs like CASH can help set ALICE households on a path to financial stability. Volunteers help clients maximize their tax credits, receive the largest tax refund possible, and guide them on the best ways to use those funds to pay off debt, purchase a vehicle to get back and forth to work, invest in a home, or contribute to generational wealth that can transform their futures.

CASH Greater Portland received financial support this year from JPMorgan Chase & Co., KeyBank, Machias Sav-

ings Bank, Gorham Savings Bank, Bath Savings Institution, and in-kind support from Systems Engineering.

ABOUT CASH GREATER PORTLAND

Creating Assets, Savings, and Hope (CASH) Greater Portland is a partnership of community leaders and industry experts working together to help empower individuals and families to achieve long-term financial stability and asset building. We offer free tax preparation to qualified filers during tax season, help employers bring financial education tools to their employees, and educate hard-working families and individuals about programs in the community that can increase their income, reduce debt, and build savings. CASH is a year-round resource, providing outreach and education about ways you can make the most of your money.

ABOUT UNITED WAY OF SOUTHERN MAINE

United Way of Southern Maine works with the community to quickly respond to emerging needs and tackle persistent issues that hold people back from

achieving financial stability and leading healthy lives. UWSM mobilizes the ideas, expertise, and resources of more than 300 businesses, foundations, government, and nonprofit partners and thousands of individuals to close gaps in

early childhood development, create pathways to educational and employment opportunities, and increase access to mental health care and addiction prevention and intervention services. Learn more at uwsme.org.

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Seniors Not Acting Their Age

Hiking into the Path of Totality



Hikers begin the Dead River Trail

I was skeptical about making the effort to view the total solar eclipse scheduled for April 8th. After several months of wet stormy very cloudy weather, I expected another gray bad weather day.

About a week in advance of the eclipse, meteorologists with the local television stations began predicting a fabulous warm, sunny day. After an Easter northeaster, an April snowstorm, and consistently gray unpleasant weather for several weeks, it was difficult to be optimistic. And, it's not like these well-intentioned folks are always accurate.

Two days in advance, the meteorologists

were still firm on the forecast. Clear sunny skies and warm temperatures were the prediction. I was becoming a believer.

My wife Nancy and I were fortunate. Our son, Adam, lives in the anticipated path of totality in West Forks. And, he was hosting a hike and eclipse party. Since we had connections, we were able to finagle an invite. Both in our seventies, neither of us had ever viewed a total eclipse of the sun. Our senior quest was on.

The extremely heavy traffic projections in the news were intimidating. The number of people traveling to northern and western Maine to view the eclipse was supposed to



Campers next to the Dead River await the eclipse

be record setting. The exceptional weather forecast heightened the probability of congestion. I devised a plan to avoid much of the traffic; however, driving from Bingham to West Forks on Route 201 was unavoidable.

Initially, my plan worked well. However, as we drove along Wyman Lake north of Bingham on Route 201 in busy late morning traffic, all of the potential parking spaces and rest spots were overfilled with eclipse worshippers. When we entered West Forks, one enterprising entrepreneur advertised parking spots for \$60. Fortunately, Adam saved us a parking space in his yard - and a

chunk of change.

We were an eclectic group consisting of six adults, two teenagers, and two dogs. Unlike everyone else, the dogs didn't appear overly excited. We were all rookies; no solar eclipse chasers in our group.

The hike began on what I call the Dead River Trail. Progressing north along the exceptionally scenic Dead River, the trail was replete with hikers and campers all awaiting the eclipse.

The dirt and crushed rock path follows the river for about two miles before ending at the foot of the most significant rapid on the river, Poplar Falls. A washed out bridge due to a recent storm prevented us from completing the final 100 yards. Conditions on the trail varied from dry to wet and muddy with patchy snow and ice in some locations.

After completing the very entertaining trek, we assembled along the Dead River shore next to a section of whitewater waves to view the eclipse. We weren't alone. There were small and large parties of viewers spread along the entire lower Dead River in West Forks.

Wearing our eclipse safety glasses, we waited with high expectations



Viewers carefully watch as the eclipse begins

while tracking the gradual changes as the moon slowly blocked the sun. We had the benefit of binoculars with protected lenses and a variety of cameras to record the momentous occasion.

The actual eclipse was a captivating experience. The change from light to darkness and chilly temperatures coupled with the brilliant ring around the moon was absolutely breathtaking. Then the glorious sun and warmth returned.

Most in our group expressed the sentiment that the event exceeded their expectations. Although we were concerned about travel problems on the return home, Nancy and I lingered to share the excitement of the moment.

The drive home was a bit of an ordeal. The usual two hour ride took over six hours. The traffic from West Forks to Bingham crawled along at a snail's pace. After that, my back roads scheme worked fairly well until we joined Interstate 95 in Augusta. It seemed like all of the traffic from the best viewing locations in northern and western Maine converged at that location. Two lanes of traffic creeping along as far as the eye could see.

We had never encountered anything like it in Maine.

Still, the traveling inconveniences were worth the effort to share such a remarkable experience with great friends and family. I don't think we'll make the next solar eclipse in Maine which doesn't occur until 2079.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* narrates numerous hikes around the state. Unfortunately, none of them include an eclipse.

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.ronchase-outdoors.com or he can be reached at ronchase-outdoors@comcast.net

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Open house presents opportunities for people with disabilities

ROME, ME – Pine Tree Camp’s week-long summer overnight camp and day programming kicks off in June, bringing Maine kids and adults with disabilities to camp for a summer of friendship, barrier-free fun and freedom to explore.

Parents, caregivers and families are invited to an open house on Saturday, May 18 to meet the team and experience Pine Tree Camp first hand. Tours will be offered throughout the day and families will have the chance to check out cabins, see the dining hall, explore campus and experience fully accessible activities, including: biking, archery, hiking and court



Courtesy of Pine Tree Camp

games. Tucked along the shore of picturesque North Pond in Rome, Pine Tree

Camp’s barrier-free setting and professional staff ensure that outdoor activities like swimming, fishing,

kayaking, boating, hiking, biking, archery and even camping in a tent under the stars are completely acces-

sible to all. Full tuition assistance is available.

What:
Pine Tree Camp Open House

Register at this link: <https://pinetreesociety.wufoo.com/forms/z1147gv00lgdwc5/>

When:
Saturday, May 18
10:00am to 4:00pm

Where:
Pine Tree Camp
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More About Pine Tree Camp: Established in 1945, Pine Tree Camp, a program of Pine Tree Society, is Maine’s only American Camp Association-accred-

ited camp for people with disabilities. Every year, hundreds of Maine children and adults with disabilities arrive at Pine Tree Camp in Rome and their lives are transformed. Year-round, campers experience freedom and independence by actively participating in outdoor activities like kayaking, boating, swimming, fishing, hiking, biking, archery, snowshoeing and even ice-fishing thanks to Pine Tree Camp’s 285-acre, fully-accessible campus on North Pond. Full tuition assistance is available. No camper has ever been turned away due to their ability to pay. <https://pinetreesociety.org/camp-home/>

Record high immunization rates for Maine school children

AUGUSTA, ME — The Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC) announced that more than 95 percent of school-age children have received all required vaccines, the first year Maine has exceeded the “herd immunity” threshold since reporting began in 2011.

The newly published Maine Annual School Assessment Survey for the 2023-2024 school year includes vaccination and exemption rates for children in kindergarten and grades 7 and 12.

Vaccination is the best means of protecting individuals and our communities against highly infectious, vaccine preventable diseases. “Herd immunity,” also known as “population immunity” or “community immunity,” is when most of a population develops immunity from infectious disease either through vaccination or previous infection. Achieving herd immunity with safe and effective vaccines makes diseases rarer and saves lives.

“Achieving herd immunity among school children represents a pivotal success for Maine,” said Jeanne Lambrew, Com-

missioner of the Maine Department of Health and Human Services. “Maine’s childhood vaccination rates are among the best in the nation, protecting not only our school-aged children but Maine families, communities and our state as a whole.”

“Maine has become a leader in childhood vaccination,” said Dr. Puthiery Va, Director of the Maine CDC. “It couldn’t come at a better time, as the United States has already seen more measles cases in the first three months of 2024 than in all of 2023. This alarming trend highlights the importance of childhood vaccinations, which reduce the risk that Maine’s youngest residents could face from these harmful and potentially fatal diseases.”

The newly published immunization and exemption rates are available in an aggregate report and by individual school. Maine law requires any preK-12 student enrolled in a designated public or private elementary, secondary, or special education facility for children of school age to show proof of immunization with the following vaccines or documented

immunity: diphtheria/pertussis/tetanus (DTaP), polio, measles/mumps/rubella (MMR), varicella (VAR), and meningococcal meningitis (MenACWY). Maine has now reached 95% vaccination or higher for all of these illnesses among school children included in the survey.

Vaccination rates among Maine school children have improved dramatically since the 2021 implementation of the law removing religious and philosophical exemptions, which Maine voters overwhelmingly upheld in 2020. Maine reported the lowest percentage of non-medical exemptions of any state in the U.S. in the 2022-2023 school year. Prior to the implementation of the law, Maine was among the five highest states reporting non-medical exemptions for the 2018-19, 2019-20, and 2020-21 school years. National comparisons for the 2023-24 school year will be published in November.

According to the World Health Organization, the percentage of people who need to be immune in order to achieve herd immunity varies with each disease. For exam-

ple, herd immunity against measles requires about 95% of a population to be vaccinated. The remaining 5% will be protected by the fact that measles will not spread among those who are vaccinated.

Achieving herd immunity helps protect those who are most vulnerable and may not be able to get vaccinated, including very young children and those who are immunocompromised. Vaccination requirements for school entry helps ensure children across all communities are up to date on their required vaccinations and aids in building community-level protection.

The Maine CDC public health nursing team is available to help schools with lower vaccination rates, including conducting on-site vaccine clinics for all school-age required vaccines. The Maine CDC highly encourages schools to take advantage of this assistance given recent outbreaks of measles in other states. Maine CDC’s public health nurses are well-equipped to help serve areas with limited provider resources or an influx of students who have previously had challenges in accessing vaccines. This

public health service is provided at no cost to Maine schools or students.

Each school year, federally funded immunization programs collect and report kindergarten vaccination data to the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (U.S. CDC). Federally funded immunization programs in all 50 states partner with their Departments of Education (DOE) to assess vaccination cover-

age and exemption status of children enrolled in public and private kindergartens. In addition to kindergartens, the Maine CDC’s Immunization Program (MIP) also collects coverage and exemption data for seventh grade students and twelfth grade students. This information is collected through an annual immunization assessment survey of all State of Maine elementary, middle, and high schools.

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Arts & Entertainment

USM expands internships for arts, humanities, nonprofits

PORTLAND, ME — The University of Southern Maine (USM) Career Exploration Internship Program is building on its success in placing students in high-impact internships with science and technology employers with an expansion into arts, humanities and nonprofit organizations.

USM students can apply for the Career Exploration Internship Program each spring and fall semester, and employers interested in partnering with the program can find out more at USM's website.

Funded as part of the University of Maine System (UMS) Pathways to Careers Initiative, this expansion gives USM the opportunity to play a lead role in increasing student access across the state to vital career development experiences in this sector, while also benefiting more Maine employers.

Pathways to Careers is part of the UMS TRANSFORMS' focus on student success and retention and is funded by the Harold Alfond Foundation and Gov. Janet Mills' Maine Jobs and Recovery Plan approved by the 130th Maine Legislature.

Leveraging UMS Pathways to Careers funding, the USM Career & Employment Hub has hired a new Internship Coordinator for Arts, Humanities and Nonprofits, who will work to broaden access to meaningful internships and create a workforce pipeline for Maine's vibrant arts and nonprofits community. Maine nonprofits employ 1 in 6 Maine workers, while arts and culture organizations enrich community, spur growth and attract workers and visitors.

This summer, the program will partner with new internship

sites such as the Telling Room, Maine Association for New Americans and Portland Empowered, in addition to long-term employer partners such as IDEXX, Kelson Marine, the Locker Project, Sweetser and VividCloud. Tobias Dewhurst, CEO of Kelson Marine, said of working with USM stu-

dents, "Their enthusiasm to apply their classroom knowledge and learn new skills has allowed them to make excellent contributions to our research and development work."

Since launching in 2016, USM's Career Exploration Internship Program has supported hundreds of interns and

is celebrating its largest cohort yet with 55 students at employers around southern Maine this spring semester. The program promotes social mobility for USM students and cultivates the skills and relationships necessary for agility in the 21st century job market. It's a chance for students to apply their classroom learning in a workplace setting, gain valuable workplace experience and connections and build on-the-job skills. Internship opportunities through the program are paid and part-time, enabling USM undergraduate and graduate students to participate while also taking classes and upholding other work and life commitments.

The University's Career & Employment Hub, which runs the program, helps students connect with the state's employer community and explore opportunities to build a

thriving future for themselves in Maine. Real world experience through internships is an integral part of how USM sets students up for success. USM senior Abby Snell shared, "When I started as a student at USM, I didn't know exactly where a new career would take me. This internship has helped me realize a new career focus and improve my professional skills and confidence. I feel really proud of how far I've come!"

With this expansion, the USM Career Exploration Internship Program will continue working to connect students like Snell to meaningful opportunities in the arts, humanities and nonprofits, knowing that students who complete paid internships are more competitive in the job market and receive more job offers and higher starting salaries than their peers.



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Race to save lives with the Red Cross

PORTLAND, ME — As May begins, the American Red Cross reminds eligible donors to keep the blood supply stable by racing to give blood or platelets in the weeks to come. Donors of all blood types — especially type O blood donors and those giving platelets — are crucial to keeping shelves fully stocked with blood products throughout the month.

Right now, there's no letting off the gas when it comes to lifesaving care. With no substitute for blood and no way to manufacture it, volun-

teer donors are essential for hospital patients who count on transfusions every single day.

Book a time to give lifesaving blood or platelets now by visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS or by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App. Thanks to Sport Clips Haircuts, all who come to donate April 29-May 31 will get a coupon for a free haircut by email. Plus, those who come to give April 29-May 19 will be automatically entered for a chance to win a trip for two and VIP racing experience to



American Red Cross

the 2024 NASCAR Cup Series and Xfinity Races at Darlington Raceway Labor Day weekend, including entry to the Sport Clips racetrack hospitality tent and a \$1,000 gift card. Additionally, those who come to give April 29-May 19 will also get a bonus \$10 e-gift card to a merchant of choice. Visit RedCrossBlood.org/racetogive for more details.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities
May 2-May 19

Androscoggin
Lisbon Falls
5/7/2024: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., Lisbon High School, 2 Sugg Drive
Cumberland
Brunswick
5/7/2024: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Brunswick High School, 116 Maquoit Road
5/7/2024: 11 a.m.

- 4 p.m., Martins Point Healthcare, 114 Bath Road
Cape Elizabeth
5/16/2024: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Saint Bartholomew Church, 8 Two Lights Rd
Falmouth
5/9/2024: 1 p.m. - 6 p.m., Holy Martyrs Church, 266 foreside road
5/16/2024: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., The Episcopal Church of St. Mary, 43 Foreside Rd
Gorham
5/9/2024: 1 p.m. - 6 p.m., Cressey Road Christian Church, 81 Cressey Road
Portland
5/2/2024: 8 a.m.

- 1 p.m., Deering High School, 370 Stevens Ave. South Portland
5/13/2024: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Eastpoint Christian Church, 345 Clarks Pond Pkwy
Westbrook
5/10/2024: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Westbrook Community Center, 426 Bridge Street
Yarmouth
5/8/2024: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., First Parish Congregational Church, 116 Main Street
5/15/2024: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Saint Bartholomews Episcopal Church, 396 Gilman Road

STARC Systems announces major expansion

BRUNSWICK, ME — STARC Systems, the leading manufacturer of temporary reusable construction walls, is proud to announce the construction of a new 85,000 square foot manufacturing and administrative facility at Brunswick Landing. This expansion marks a significant milestone in the company's growth, supporting its mission to serve numerous U.S. and international construction markets, including healthcare, airports, life sciences, commercial offices, data centers, and more.

STARC has grown to 100 employees since its incubation in 2015 at TechPlace on the former

Brunswick Naval Air Station. Now approaching \$40 MM in revenue, senior leadership will continue to maintain 30% CAGR momentum, and will continue adding 15-20% annually to the company's work force in production, manufacturing management, sales, marketing, and various support areas.

STARC has been on a steady path of raising the standards and reinventing its category. The new, expanded space will support product line extensions and provide the capacity needed to meet growing demand. Growth is propelled by strong organic demand from STARC's broad customer base, new invest-

ments from Chicago-based North Branch Capital in 2023, and the introduction of three new product platforms in the last five years.

"To support our rapid growth and to maintain our commitment to innovation and quality, we are excited to partner with Priority Group for the construction of our new facility at Brunswick Landing," said Chris Vickers, CEO of STARC Systems. "This expansion is not just about increasing our manufacturing capacity; it's also about creating opportunities for our team and contributing to the local economy."

Priority Group President and CEO Jim Howard said, "We are pleased to be

working with STARC Systems and look forward to having them as the anchor tenant at our new Brunswick Landing business park."

"MRRA has always been a big supporter and cheerleader of STARC Systems, from their start-up days in TechPlace, through their growth into other buildings on the Landing," said Kristine Logan, Executive Director of the Midcoast Regional Redevelopment Authority (MRRA). "We are thrilled about their continued success and plans for expansion here on the Brunswick Landing. STARC is a great part of the community and

we want to extend our congratulations to the entire STARC team!"

The new facility, targeted to open in the Fall of 2025, will serve as STARC's primary manufacturing hub, accommodating the company's current and future operational needs. With the addition of this 85,000 square foot building, STARC's presence will exceed 100,000 square feet, making it an anchor tenant in Brunswick Landing's new industrial park—a move which highlights the company's commitment to growth and innovation.

"We are grateful for the support from the Mid-

coast Regional Redevelopment Authority, TechPlace, Maine Technology Institute, and others who have contributed to our journey," Vickers added. "Our new facility is a testament to our team's hard work, the leadership of Rik Glover, our retiring Vice President of Manufacturing, and our partners' support, setting the stage for even greater achievements in the years to come."

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

L/A Memorial Day Ceremony announced, volunteers needed

LEWISTON/AUBURN, ME — The Lewiston/Auburn Memorial Day Ceremony will be held the Saturday before Memorial Day, May 25 at Veterans Park at 10am. All are invited to attend.

Flags will be installed at St. Peters Cem-

etry on the 18th of May at 10am. Volunteers are needed as there are over 3000 flags to install.

Volunteers are also needed to install vases on veterans' graves at Maine Veterans Cemetery in Augusta at 10am on the 19th of May.

There will also be a Memorial Day program at Maine Veterans Cemetery, Mount Vernon Road, Augusta at 10am. The public is invited to attend.

For more information, contact Jerry DeWitt at 576-0376.

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Albin, Randall & Bennett announces promotions



Ben Lord



PORTLAND, ME – Albin, Randall & Bennett is pleased to announce the promotions of John E. Hadwen, CPA, and Benjamin A. Lord, CPA, CCIFP, to Principals of the firm.

John E. Hadwen, CPA, joined ARB in 2021. He specializes in tax consulting, planning, and compliance for businesses and ownership groups, and has notable expertise in automotive dealerships, construction, real estate, and manufacturing. With a focus on overall tax planning, transaction assistance, and efficiency strategies, including entity choice, restructuring, mergers, acquisitions, and sales, John collaborates closely with

clients to achieve their tax goals and objectives.

Benjamin A. Lord, CPA, CCIFP, joined ARB in 2013. He specializes in providing consulting, tax, and accounting services to clients in the construction, real estate development, manufacturing, and distribution industries. He is also a leader in the Firm's employee benefit plan audit group and has extensive experience with ESOPs, stock-based compensation, and complex equity structures.

Both professionals have made substantial contributions to the firm and ARB is very excited to see what they accomplish in their new roles.



John Hadwen

Sen. Collins welcomes Westbrook students to Washington, D.C.

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Susan Collins spoke with a group of Westbrook High School students, parents, and teachers who traveled to Washington, D.C. for scheduled singing performances and to take part in cultural and educational opportunities. The students are members of the Westbrook High

School Chamber Singers. They gave a preview of their performance for Senator Collins, prior to their shows at the Armed Forces Retirement Home and at The Fairfax, an independent senior living community at Fort Belvoir.

“It was wonderful to welcome these bright and energetic students from

Westbrook to our nation's Capital,” said Senator Collins. “I always love having the chance to speak with Maine students, and I appreciate them previewing their choir performance for me. I am certain the audiences for their formal performances were as impressed with their talent as I was.”



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Evergreen Credit Union announces new leadership team

SCARBOROUGH, ME – Evergreen Credit Union has promoted Chelsey Cargen as AVP, Branch Manager and hired Raquel Lavigne as Assistant Branch Manager for their upcoming Scarborough location opening in Spring 2024.

Cargen and Lavigne are ready to lead, as they have been a managing team in the past. “I knew [Raquel] would be the perfect fit for this role,” said Cargen. “Her passion

and genuine commitment to helping people achieve their goals makes others feel like they are the only one in the room!”

With the Evergreen location being close to ready, both women are ready to open the doors. “I’m looking forward to working closely with the people in our community, developing and maintaining long-lasting relationships,” said Cargen.

With Evergreen’s commitment to provide



Chelsey Cargen, AVP Branch Manager, Evergreen CU



Rocky Lavigne, Assistant Branch Manager, Evergreen CU

accessible financial services to Mainers, they are looking forward to expanding into York County to achieve that mission. “Scarborough and the surrounding towns of Old Orchard Beach and Saco are all growing communities, and we feel that as a community credit union, we have a lot to offer to these areas,” said Jason Lindstrom, President/CEO of Evergreen. “We’re looking forward to Evergreen be-

ing an active part of Scarborough and the surrounding communities.”

Evergreen Credit Union is Maine’s 5th largest credit union with over \$550 million in assets across six counties in southern Maine. The Scarborough branch, opening spring 2024, will be Evergreen’s 5th retail location. To read more about Evergreen’s news and announcements, visit www.egcu.org/news.

Vivid Motion Dance celebrates life of Irish pirate queen, Grania

PORTLAND, ME – Long-time Portland staple Vivid Motion Dance brings dancers and choreographers together for their spring show, telling the tales of Grania: Pirate Queen. With a focus on entertainment and supporting the love of dance for all ages, all humans, and all levels, the all-volunteer community has become an outlet for dancers and budding choreographers, and a place where both experienced and new dancers are able to perform on the stage together.

Co-directed by Scott Potter and Ali Odlin, Vivid Motion Dance’s spring show Grania: Pirate Queen tells the tale of Grania “Grace” O’Malley, a woman born from a seafaring western Irish clan who becomes the

most feared chieftain and pirate captain of the Irish seas. Her spirit and passion for adventure are representative of the country that she eventually finds herself struggling to preserve.

Family, friends, and foes alike ebb and flow with the tides that she sails—all while she and her people fall under the lengthening shadow of the English Empire. Grania eventually comes face to face with the formidable Queen Elizabeth, her greatest rival... and perhaps the only person who could understand her.

This all ages show opens at 7:30 p.m. on Friday, May 17 at The Hill Arts on Munjoy Hill in Portland ME. Performances will run through Sunday, May 19th. Tickets are

on sale now at vividmotiondance.org.

WHO: Vivid Motion Dance, Portland’s innovative and kinda quirky dance company

WHAT: Grania: Pirate Queen

WHEN: Friday May 17, 2024 at 7:30pm; Saturday May 18, 2024 at 2:30pm; Saturday May 18, 2024 at 7:30pm; Sunday May 19, 2024 at 2:30pm

WHERE: The Hill Arts, 76 Congress Street, Portland

All tickets are \$25 in advance / \$30 at the door and are available at vividmotiondance.org.

There will also be a pay-what-you-can dress rehearsal on Thursday, May 10th at 7:30pm. For dress rehearsal reservations, please email tickets@vividmotion.org.

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New down payment assistance programs at Norway Savings Bank

NORWAY, ME—Norway Savings Bank has long provided a wide range of tailored solutions to help homebuyers, including first-time purchasers and low-to-moderate income borrowers. With rising home prices and low inventory creating affordability challenges, NSB is now offering additional support in the form of two new down payment assistance programs: Equity Builder Program and the Housing Our Workforce Down Payment As-

sistance Program.

“With the price of homes so high, the experience of purchasing a home can be a real challenge and sometimes, it seems like an impossible dream,” said Jennifer Corbett, Retail Lending Sales Manager VP for Norway Savings. “These programs are designed to help eligible borrowers purchase a new home through a less stressful and more beneficial mortgage process that reduces their financial strain and makes the pur-



chase attainable.”

Through the Equity Builder Program, eligible homebuyers can be assisted with up to \$30,806 in down-payment and closing costs. The program is available to households with incomes at or below 80% of HUD Area Median Income and is reserved for first-time homebuyers

(classified as people who have not owned a home on real property in the past three years). Grant funds are available on a first come, first served basis.

The Housing Our Workforce (HOW) Down Payment Assistance Program is designed to assist eligible homebuyers with

10% of the home sales price or up to \$25,000 in down-payment and closing costs. This program is available to households earning more than 80% and up to 120% of HUD Area Median Income and is not reserved for first-time homebuyers. Grant funds are available on a first come, first served basis.

“We also offer several additional down payment assistance programs, each with their own set of qualifications and guide-

lines,” said Corbett. “Our Mortgage Loan Officers possess years of local lending expertise and are always ready to guide interested individuals and families through their options and throughout the process.”

To speak to a Mortgage Loan Officer to learn more, make an appointment, or start an application, call Norway Savings Bank at 1-888-725-2207 or visit <https://www.norwaysavings.bank/personal-banking/mortgages>.

MCCS Board of Trustees honors students of the year

AUGUSTA, ME—Seven Maine community college students were honored today for their academic success and campus and community involvement at a luncheon ceremony at Maple Hill Farm in Hallowell. The event was hosted by the Maine Community College System (MCCS) Board of Trustees.

The 2024 MCCS Student of the Year are:

Kristin Crowley, Portland, Washington County Community College.

Maya Eichorn, Kennebunk, York County Community College.

Katahdin Javner, Chester, Eastern Maine Community College.

Jalen Lucas, Edinborough, Trinidad and Tobago, Northern Maine Community College.

Crystal MacGown,



MCCS Students of the Year (l to r) Maya Eichorn, YCCC; Crystal MacGown, KVCC; Andy Severson, CMCC; Bea Martin, SMCC; Jalen Lucas, NMCC; Katahdin Javner, EMCC; Kristin Crowley, WCCC.

Bath, Kennebec Valley Community College.

Bea Martin, Portland Southern Maine Community College.

Andy Severson, Rockland, Central Maine Community College.

The seven students being honored were selected by faculty and staff at the colleges.

In addition to being recognized as Students of the Year, they

each received a John and Jana Lapoint Leadership Award in the amount of \$1,000.

Mr. Lapoint was president of UF Strainrite in Lewiston and a trustee of the Maine Community College System. After his death in 1995, his widow, Jana Lapoint, served on the Board from 1995 to 2006 and helped establish the fund for the annual awards.

EPA awards \$62M for Maine residential solar

BOSTON, ME—As the US celebrated Earth Day, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency announced The Maine Governor’s Energy Office has been selected to receive \$62,120,000 through the Solar for All grant competition to develop long-lasting solar programs that enable low-income and disadvantaged communities to deploy and benefit from distributed residential solar. This award is part of the historic \$27 billion Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund, which was created under President Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act to lower energy costs for families, create good-quality jobs in communities that have been left behind, advance environmental justice, and tackle the climate crisis.

Maine’s program (MESA) will use this funding for four financial assistance program channels that comprehensively address the range of barriers faced by low-income and disadvantaged households: single-family and multifamily on-site solar programs as well as tar-

geted support for cooperatively-owned community solar. Energy storage is incorporated across all four channels to build resilience and maximize value. MESA also proposes a holistic range of technical assistance such as expanded workforce development opportunities, siting and permitting supports, and additional support to overcome barriers including interconnection challenges.

“Today we’re delivering on President Biden’s promise that no community is left behind by investing \$7 billion in solar energy projects for over 900,000 households in low-income and disadvantaged communities,” said EPA Administrator Michael S. Regan. “The selectees will advance solar energy initiatives across the country, creating hundreds of thousands of good-paying jobs, saving \$8 billion in energy costs for families, delivering cleaner air, and combating climate change.”

“Today, across the United States, we are celebrating more than just Earth Day; we are celebrating Solar for All—a

significant step forward in our commitment to equitable energy access and environmental justice,” said EPA New England Regional Administrator David W. Cash. “Household utility bill savings, clean energy jobs, greenhouse gas reductions—that is what today’s announcement will mean to thousands of communities across New England and the country. Whether it’s installing community solar arrays to power manufactured housing in New Hampshire, heating affordable housing units in Connecticut, or supporting Tribal communities to participate in solar energy ownership without barriers—our selectees in each of our six New England states have developed residential solar projects that bring household savings and clean energy to communities that have been overburdened or disadvantaged for far too long.”

The Maine Governor’s Energy Office is among 49 state-level awards EPA announced today totaling approximately \$5.5 billion, along with six awards to serve Tribes totaling over \$500 million, and five multistate awards totaling approximately \$1 billion.

A complete list of the selected applicants can be found on EPA’s Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund Solar for All website.

EPA estimates that the 60 Solar for All recipients will enable over 900,000 households in low-income and disadvan-

taged communities to deploy and benefit from distributed solar energy. This \$7 billion investment will generate over \$350 million in annual savings on electric bills for overburdened households. The program will reduce 30 million metric tons of carbon dioxide equivalent emissions cumulatively, from over four gigawatts of solar energy capacity unlocked for low-income communities over five years. Solar and distributed energy resources help improve electric grid reliability and climate resilience, which is especially important in disadvantaged communities that have long been underserved.

Solar for All will deliver on the Biden-Harris Administration’s commitment to creating high-quality jobs with the free and fair choice to join a union for workers across the United States. This \$7 billion investment in clean energy will generate an estimated 200,000 jobs across the country. All selected applicants intend to invest in local, clean energy workforce development programs to expand equitable pathways into family-sustaining jobs for the communities they are designed to serve. At least 35% of selected applicants have already engaged local or national unions, demonstrating how these programs will contribute to the foundation of a clean energy economy built on strong labor standards and inclusive economic op-

portunity for all American communities.

The Solar for All program also advances President Biden’s Justice40 Initiative, which set the goal that 40% of the overall benefits of certain federal climate, clean energy, affordable and sustainable housing, and other investments flow to disadvantaged communities that are marginalized by underinvestment and overburdened by pollution. All of the funds awarded through the Solar for All program will be invested in low-income and disadvantaged communities. The program will also help meet the President’s goal of achieving a carbon pollution-free power sector by 2035 and net-zero emissions economy by no later than 2050.

The 60 selected applicants have committed to delivering on the three objectives of the Greenhouse Gas Reduction Fund: reducing climate and air pollution; delivering benefits to low-income and disadvantaged communities; and mobilizing financing to spur additional deployment of affordable solar energy. Solar for All selected applicants are expanding existing low-income solar programs and launching new programs. In at least 25 states and territories nationwide, Solar for All is launching new programs where there has never been a substantial low-income solar program before. In these geographies, Solar for All selected applicants will open new markets for

distributed solar by funding new programs that provide grants and low-cost financing for low-income, residential solar.

Review and Selection Process Information

The 60 applicants selected for funding were chosen through a competition review process. This multi-stage process included review from hundreds of experts in climate, power markets, environmental justice, labor, and consumer protection from EPA, Department of Energy, the Department of Housing and Urban Affairs, Department of Treasury, Department of Agriculture, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, Department of Labor, Department of Defense, Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, and the Department of Energy’s National Labs—all screened through ethics and conflict of interest checks and trained on the program requirements and evaluation criteria. Applications were scored and selected through dozens of review panels and an inter-agency senior review team.

EPA anticipates that awards to the selected applicants will be finalized in the summer of 2024, and selected applicants will begin funding projects through existing programs and begin expansive community outreach programs to launch new programs in the fall and winter of this year. Selections are contingent on the resolution of all administrative disputes related to the competitions.

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Trust in VA among Veteran patients up 5.7%

WASHINGTON, DC – The Department of Veterans Affairs announced that Veteran trust in VA Maine Healthcare System has risen to 94.6% — up from 88.9% in 2018 (the first year since VA began conducting this survey). Additionally, nationwide trust in VA outpatient care has increased to 91.8% — up from 85.6% in 2018.

This finding is based on a survey of Veteran patients who received VA health care in the past 90 days. Within one week of using VA services, these Veterans were asked whether they trusted VA for their health care needs across a variety of categories — including scheduling an appointment, health care visits, in-person pharmacy, mail-order pharmacy, labs/imaging, and Veteran safety.

This survey mirrors the findings of recent independent studies. According

to Medicare’s latest nationwide survey of patients, VA hospitals outperformed non-VA hospitals on all 10 core patient satisfaction metrics — including overall hospital rating, communication with doctors, communication about medication, willingness to recommend the hospital, and more. VA health care has also consistently outperformed non-VA care in peer-reviewed studies, overall quality ratings, and affordability for Veterans.

Today, VA is delivering more care and more benefits to more Veterans than ever before in our nation’s history, setting an all-time record for health care provided in 2023. As Veteran trust in VA has increased, more Veterans have also begun to choose VA care. VA has enrolled 401,006 Veterans in VA health care over the past 365 days — 30% more than

the 307,831 it enrolled the previous year. This is the highest number of enrollees in a single year in at least the past five years at VA, and nearly a 50% increase over pandemic-level enrollment in 2020.

“We support a noble mission, and our employees contribute in countless ways to make VA Maine a system Veterans trust for their care,” said VA Maine Medical Center Director Tracie B. Davis. “When they come together every day with the purpose of putting Veterans first, we accomplish amazing things. I am honored to be part of this phenomenal community.”

“We at VA work to earn the trust of Veterans every day, in every part of the country, every time they come to us for their care,” said VA Secretary Denis McDonough. “We’re proud that more than 91% of Veterans now trust VA health

care, but we still have work to do. By measuring Veteran trust, we can not only learn what we’re doing well at VA — we can also learn how to get better.”

“Delivering world-class health care begins with trust,” said VA Under Secretary for Health Sherceef Elnahal, M.D. “Whenever a Veteran walks into a VA facility, we want them to know that we are going to take care of them. That’s the standard to which we hold ourselves, and we’ll never settle for anything less.”

VA’s historic health care enrollment has been made possible by the bipartisan PACT Act — signed into law by President Biden as a part of his Unity Agenda for the nation — which has allowed VA to expand VA health care and benefits to millions of Veterans. VA is also conducting the most aggressive outreach campaign in its history, including hosting over 2,600

events since the enactment of the PACT Act, launching a \$16+ million advertising campaign, using public service announcements, and — for the first time ever — sending text messages to Veterans encouraging them to enroll in VA health care. VA is continuing these vigorous outreach efforts throughout 2024, with more than 550 in-person events already scheduled for this year.

VA recently expanded health care eligibility for millions of Veterans nationwide, years earlier than called for by the PACT Act. As of March 5th, all Veterans who were exposed to toxins and other hazards while serving in the military and meet certain requirements became eligible to enroll directly in VA health care. This means that all Veterans who served in the Vietnam War, the Gulf War, Iraq, Afghanistan, the Global War on Terror, or

any other combat zone after 9/11 can enroll directly in VA health care without first applying for VA benefits. Additionally, Veterans who never deployed but were exposed to toxins or hazards while training or on active duty in the United States are also eligible to enroll. VA also recently expanded health care to all World War II Veterans.

Moving forward, VA will continue to aggressively reach out to Veterans to encourage them to come to VA. VA encourages all Veterans, family members, caregivers, and survivors to learn more about VA to understand how VA fits into their lives, and apply for their world-class health care and earned benefits today.

For more information about VA care, visit VA’s health care website. For more information about Veteran trust in VA, visit the VA trust website.

Med Matrix announces health care memberships

SOUTH PORTLAND, ME -- Since its inception in July 2023, Med Matrix has rapidly expanded, proudly serving over 1,000 patients who seek a transformative approach to healthcare. In response to the growing demand for alternative health solutions, Med Matrix is thrilled to announce the launch of an exclusive Functional Medicine Membership program, meticulously designed over the last eight months to redefine the American healthcare experience.

In an era where prominent figures like Mark Hyman and Peter Attia advocate for longevity and with significant investments flowing into the sector, Med Matrix harnesses cutting-edge treatments such as stem cell therapy, exosomes, advanced testing, peptides, and in-depth doctor visits to meet the increasing dissatisfaction with conventional medicine post-COVID.

Part of our intake process as a clinic is to understand why patients

are coming to Med Matrix. Time and again, we hear patients unsatisfied with a prognosis of being “in a range” or in “average health for their age.” As Tina, a Med Matrix patient, put it: “I don’t care that I’m 60, I don’t want to be fatigued, even if it is normal for my age.”

Looking at data from the World Economic Forum and the Edelman Trust Barometer, majority of people globally are worried that medical science is being politicized. As a result, people’s confidence in their ability to find answers

to healthcare questions and make informed health decisions has declined steeply over the past five years.

Patients are turning away from traditional care and the omnipresent “Dr. Google,” searching for more personalized and attentive healthcare solutions.

Feedback from diverse patient demographics highlights a common theme: a desire for more from their healthcare providers. Med Matrix has risen to this challenge, spearheaded by an ambitious local young entrepreneur and supported by

a dedicated team of three Institute for Functional Medicine-certified doctors, five nurses, and four clinical staffers. Together, they have developed a healthcare program focused on disease prevention and extending health span, receiving an overwhelmingly positive response from patients.

With a functional medicine approach, Med Matrix works to understand the root cause of patients’ health issues, rather than just treat their symptoms. For the uninitiated, func-

tional medicine works in unison with modern Western medicine while also using cutting-edge therapies and lifestyle/natural modalities when appropriate.

Med Matrix’s Functional Medicine Membership is not just about treatment but a commitment to changing lives through comprehensive, personalized healthcare plans that may involve supplements, hormones, diet, sleep, and lifestyle optimization. It represents a pivotal shift towards a future where health and longevity are within everyone’s reach.

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Tri-Town Optimist Club holds visual art contest

The Tri-Town Optimist Club of Mechanic Falls, Minot and Poland held a visual arts contest on the theme of HOPE. Entries were submitted for two age groups and were judged by club members at the April

25 meeting with the following winners being selected:

Up to age 7 - Perrie Cotnoir of Poland.

Ages 8-11 - Emily Audet of Poland.

These entries (attached) will be submitted to Optimist International for further judging. Winners at that level will have their image featured in a pack of 12 notecards and envelopes. Cash prizes are also available.



Ages 8-11 - Emily Audet of Poland.

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Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

Fridays through 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.

May 3
LEWISTON -- 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 using 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

May 4
GORHAM -- Public Bean Supper at White Rock Community Clubhouse, 34 Wilson Road, Gorham on Saturday, May 4, 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

May 4
BRUNSWICK -- Opus 20 - a fundraiser celebrating Rohan Smith's 20 years as MSO Music Director Saturday, May 4, 2024, 6:30 p.m. - Lemont Hall, 2 Pleasant St., Brunswick. Tickets are \$45 with all proceeds going to support the MSO's free ticket distribution program for students. For more information visit MidcoastSymphony.org, call 207-315-1712, or e-mail info@midcoast-symphony.org

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.

May 11
BAR MILLS -- CD Release Party: Jennifer Porter "Yes, I do!" at Saco River Theatre, 29 Salmon Falls Road, Bar

Mills, ME, Saturday, May 11 at 7:30 PM. Tickets: \$15 General Admission at www.sacoriv-ertheatre.org

May 12
BAR MILLS -- Vaudeville at SRT: Janoah Bailin in meSSeS at Saco River Theatre, 29 Salmon Falls Road, Bar Mills, ME, Sunday May 12 at 2:30 PM. Tickets: \$10 adults, \$5 children 5 to 18, children under 5 free at www.sacoriv-ertheatre.org

May 18
AUBURN -- West Auburn Congregational Church - Harvest Supper, May 18, 2024, at 4:30 to 6:00

Menu: Turkey, Ham, Potato, Sweet Potato, Squash, Carrots, Corn, Peas, Rolls, Beverage & Dessert. Price: Free for under 3, \$5.00 for 12 and under, \$10.00 for all other Adults

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 Flagg Meadow Road in Gorham, Maine. The silent auction will begin at 10:00 a.m. and the live auction at 1:00 p.m. SAVE THE DATE for this event that is free and open to the public.

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Thursdays Aug 1 - Sept 5

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

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

Every 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Monday

LEWISTON -- PROGRAMS FOR HOMESCHOOL FAMILIES, held the 1st, 2nd and 3rd Monday 11:15am-12:30pm at the Lewiston Public Library Children's Department

Homeschool families, are you looking for opportunities to have fun and socialize with other homeschool families? LPL will be offering ac-

activities for homeschool families in the Children's Department the first three Mondays of each month from 11:15am-12:30pm. The activities will be a Homeschool Video Game Social on March 6th, a Homeschool Lego Club and Curriculum Swap on March 13th, and a Homeschool Storytime and Craft on March 20th.

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

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

GORHAM LITTLE LEAGUE

Field Funding Campaign

The Gorham Youth Baseball & Softball Association is making a large capital investment to provide updates and add fields to accommodate practice and game schedules:

- Develop 2 fields at White Rock
- Purchase seasonal fence for Shaw Park
- Repair dugouts and fencing, build storage centers
- Add infield mix and relevel current fields
- Acquire tarps and field maintenance equipment
- Add scoreboards

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Frannie Peabody Center promotes free HIV tests

PORTLAND, ME - Frannie Peabody Center, the state's largest non-profit organization providing community-based HIV/AIDS services is launching a new video public service announcement (PSA) campaign to raise awareness about accessing free HIV self-test kits. In collaboration with 20 partner organizations, Fran-

nie Peabody Center has already distributed over 2,000 HIV self-test kits across the state, with more than 30% of individuals reporting never having been tested.

The PSA, featuring all Maine residents, was produced by Zack Bowen, of Portland, and filmed at Maine Studio Works in Portland. The project was

FRANNIE PEABODY CENTER

Comprehensive HIV & AIDS Services

funded by a grant from the CDC Foundation, awarded to 53 organizations across the country to expand access to HIV self-testing.

"Unfortunately, Maine leads the nation in late-stage HIV diagnoses, so we're using this

critical step in linking people to life-saving care."

Annually, Frannie Peabody Center serves more than 400 Mainers living with HIV/AIDS across the state through comprehensive care management and housing assistance. Over the last three years, the agency has expanded access to direct client assistance, tripled its HIV

testing capacity, and expanded its housing subsidy program. Additionally, the agency also played a critical role in passing state legislation that expanded access to HIV testing as well as HIV prevention medications.

To access free HIV self-test kits, visit Frannie Peabody Center online at www.peabodycenter.org.

MaineHealth recognized as top place to work

MAINE -- Becker's Healthcare, a leading industry publication, selected MaineHealth as one of the best 150 organizations for which to work across the entire health care industry.

Portland, Maine - Citing its comprehensive benefits package, continuing education and training opportunities as well as its investment in community well-being, Becker's Healthcare on Wednesday named MaineHealth as a top place to work across the entire U.S. health care industry.

The acknowledgment comes following recognition recently from Forbes, which named MaineHealth one of America's Best Employers By State and a Best Employer

for Women.

In addition to its comprehensive benefits package, MaineHealth has made a commitment to pay competitive wages to its care team of approximately 23,000, having invested \$296 million in annual pay increases for non-executive, non-physician employees since 2020.

"In order to achieve our vision of, 'Working together so our communities are the healthiest in America,' we need a great care team, and just as we are committed to supporting our communities, we at MaineHealth recognize the importance of investing in the people who work here," said Scott Ballard, chief people officer of MaineHealth. "We are pleased that Becker's Healthcare

has chosen to recognize this commitment."

In its listing, Becker's had this to say about MaineHealth:

"At MaineHealth, team member wellbeing is just as important as patient wellbeing. The 22,000 employees are offered a total rewards package that addresses physical health and wellbeing, featuring top health plans, a Healthy Paybacks program that rewards wellness activities, and a confidential employee assistance program. The system also supports employee career growth through an emphasis on continued education, with paid training programs, career navigation, early career exploration, internships, tuition reimbursement, tuition management

MaineHealth

assistance and partnerships with educational institutions. The system demonstrates its commitment to community health via

community programs that resulted in over \$662 million in services rendered without compensation in 2020 alone. In 2023, the

system was named one of America's Best Employers By State and a Best Employer for Women by Forbes."

**Send all items for
Names & Faces
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Deadline is Friday by five pm.**

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