



TWIN CITY TIMES

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CMH marks somber six-month anniversary of mass casualty

LEWISTON, ME -- Central Maine Healthcare joined the central Maine community in observing the six-month anniversary of the Oct. 25, 2023 mass casualty event in Lewiston.

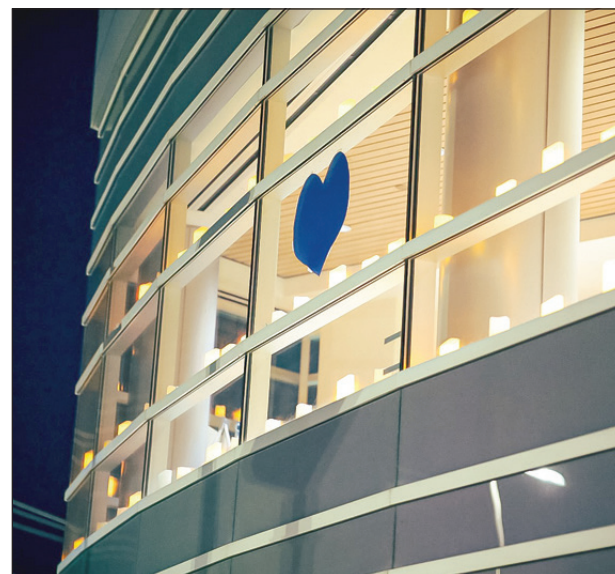
Candles returned to the atrium above the Central Maine Medical Center (CMMC) Emergency Room where they were displayed immediately after the incident and remained until the final surviving victim was discharged from CMMC last December.

Among those who gathered in the atrium today to mark the anniversary were members of senior leadership, physicians, nurses and a representative from the Spiritual Care department.

“Even with the passage of time, the ongoing healing process persists as we navigate our individual paths of recovery here at CMMC,” said Kris Chaisson, chief nursing officer, Central Maine Healthcare. “Our thoughts are with our patients and their families as our collective resilience



strengthens daily, bolstered by the unwavering support within our community.”



Summer sessions available for heat pump installer training

AUBURN, ME – The Center for Workforce and Professional Development at Central Maine Community College (CMCC) is partnering with area employers and service providers to recruit candidates interested in completing their Heat Pump Installer Training. Information and registration for the free program is available at centralmaine.cc/workforce-apply.

This 40-hour course meets the Efficiency Maine Heat Pump Installer Training requirements needed to qualify for rebates, financing, and sales leads. Using both classroom and hands-on lab instruction, it covers how to professionally install heat pump indoor units, outdoor units, and line sets. Students will get hands-on experience installing these state-of-the-art HVAC systems that are revolutionizing heating and cooling. Students completing this course and the

separately offered CMCC EPA Section 608 Refrigerant Handling, may qualify to work for the hundreds of Maine contractors installing heat pumps statewide. CMCC is an Efficiency Maine Registered Trainer for Heat Pump Installer Training. CMCC Workforce and Professional Development also offers a fee of \$195 Course: 608 Refrigerant EPA Certificate Training via ZOOM. All test materials included. The average starting wage for a Heat Pump Installer is \$51,500 in the State of Maine. Registration for this course is required.

This training is just one of the many free courses offered by Workforce and Professional Development including Introduction to Phlebotomy, Certified Pharmacy Technician, Computer Support Specialist – 2 Course Bundle, CNA, CETP Gas Training, Refrigerant EPA 608, Fiber Optic Tech-

nician, Heat Pump Installer Training, and the Welding Academy.

These programs are funded by the Maine Jobs and Recovery Program (MJRP). The course materials and exam fees are also covered. Participants must be at least 18 years of age, possess a high school diploma, GED, or HiSet, and be a U.S. citizen and/or authorized to work in the U.S. Candidates are only eligible to participate in one MJRP program being offered at any of the seven colleges in the Maine Community College System.

For more information or to register, please contact Central Maine Community College’s Center for Workforce & Professional Development at workforcedevelopment@cmcc.edu or 207-755-5280.

Absentee ballots are now available

LEWISTON, ME – Absentee ballots for the Lewiston School Budget Validation Referendum Election, to be held on Tue., May 14, are currently available from the City Clerk’s Office for Lewiston voters. The deadline to request an absentee ballot is 4 PM on Thu., May 9.

Registered voters needing an absentee ballot may order one by calling the City Clerk’s Office (513-3124), mailing in an application form downloaded from the City’s website at www.lewistonmaine.gov/elections, or visiting the City Clerk’s Office located on the second floor of City Hall, 27 Pine Street. Office hours are Monday-Friday, 8:30 PM – 4 PM.

Per State law, completed absentee ballots

cannot be submitted to the City Clerk’s Office until after the City Council adopts the school budget which is scheduled for May 7. Any absentee ballots submitted before this date must be rejected per State law.

Voted absentee ballots can only be submitted to the City Clerk’s Office between the timeframe of after the City Council adoption of the school budget and 8 PM on election night, Tue., May 14.

The City’s website, www.lewistonmaine.gov/elections, also contains a sample ballot, directions to the polling place, and other information that voters may find useful.

Voters are encouraged to contact the City Clerk’s Office at 513-3124 with any questions they may have.

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

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Janoah Bailin in meSSes

SUN, MAY 12 • 2:30PM



Andrew Silver in The Silver Circus

SUN, MAY 19 • 2:30PM



Michael Trautman in Body Talk

SUN, MAY 26 • 2:30PM



Jason Tardy’s High Energy Juggling!

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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

\$1.9M goes to 29 nonprofits supporting Lewiston recovery

P O R T L A N D & ELLSWORTH, ME — The Maine Community Foundation (MaineCF) distributed \$1.9 million to 29 local nonprofit organizations supporting the area's mass shooting recovery efforts through its Lewiston-Auburn Area Response Fund Broad Recovery & Organizations Fund.

The fund received a total of \$1,900,132 in contributions following the Oct. 25, 2023, mass shootings in Lewiston. All funds were distributed evenly and each organization received \$62,522. The recipients

- are:
- AK Collaborative
- Boys and Girls Clubs of Southern Maine
- Central Maine Medical Center
- Community Clinical Services
- Community Concepts Empowered Immigrant Women Unite
- Gateway Community Services Maine
- Generational Noor
- Ifka Community Services
- Lewiston-Auburn Area Housing Development Corporation
- Lewiston-Auburn

- Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce Foundation
- Lewiston-Auburn Youth Network
- Maine Association of the Deaf
- Maine Inside Out
- Maine MILL
- Maine Prisoner Advocacy Coalition
- New Beginnings
- New Mainers Public Health Initiative
- Safe Voices
- St. Mary's Regional Medical Center
- Somali Bantu Community Association
- Sweetser
- The Root Cellar

- Tree Street Youth
- Tri-County Mental Health Services (Spurwink)
- Trinity Jubilee Center
- United Way of Androscoggin County
- United Youth Empowerment Services
- YWCA Central Maine

Recipients were selected by a volunteer steering committee comprising local community members, including: Joleen Bedard, United Way of Androscoggin County; Kevin Bohlin, Maine Association of the Deaf and Pine Tree Society; Rebecca Swan-

son Conrad (chair), RSC Consulting; Nathan Davis, Gateway Community Services Maine; Virginia Dearani, Thomas College; Julia Harper, Good Food Council of Lewiston-Auburn; Jake Langlais, Lewiston Public Schools; Muhidin Libah, Somali Bantu Community Association; Leslie Ogilvie, formerly with Tri-County Mental Health Services; and Julia Sleeper, Tree Street Youth.

"These organizations are crucial to long-term community needs following the tragic mass shoot-

ings last fall," said Laura Lee, vice president of community impact at MaineCF. "We're so grateful to all who donated to this fund and to the volunteer steering-committee members who helped determine the best way to distribute these contributions."

Last month, MaineCF distributed \$4,752,784 million from its Victims & Families Fund to 162 individual beneficiaries directly impacted by the shootings, including family of murder victims and those injured or present during the shootings.

Facebook auction to benefit Make-A-Wish Maine

AUBURN, ME - In an exciting announcement, Fontaine Family - The Real Estate Leader is thrilled to host its 11th annual "Bid for Wishes" Facebook auction. This much-anticipated event, benefiting Make-A-Wish Maine, is set to ignite the spirit of giving from May 6th through May 13th With a stellar history of fundraising for Make-A-Wish Maine since 2009 and hosting these impactful auctions since 2013, Fontaine Family is once again inviting supporters to participate in a week-long auction to help grant the wishes of seriously ill children across Maine.

This year's auction promises hundreds of items for bidding, ranging from unique experiences and services to sought-after products, ensuring there's something for everyone. Participation is simple - join us on Facebook during the auction week to place your bids, support a noble cause, and perhaps win some fantastic items in the

process. This year our auction is in loving memory of Jackson Gibson, a remarkable young soul who graced us with his presence for 11 beautiful years, we are dedicating our efforts to support Make-A-Wish in his honor. Jackson's journey was cut short by Sanfilippo Syndrome (MPS3A), a rare genetic condition, but his impact on the world was profound. Known for his radiant smile and the light of his pure soul, Jackson effortlessly touched the hearts of all who knew him. Despite the challenges he faced, he lived his life with grace and kindness, leaving an indelible mark on those around him. Jackson's memory lives on through the love he shared and the lives he inspired. In his memory, we invite you to join us in supporting Make-A-Wish, helping to bring joy and hope to children facing similar battles. Let's honor Jackson's legacy by spreading the same kind of

happiness he brought into everyone's lives.

Make a difference one bid at a time

Every year we're overwhelmed by the generosity and enthusiasm of our community. Last year we raised over \$24,000, directly impacting the lives of children and their families dealing with serious illnesses. This year, with your support, we aim to surpass that figure and bring joy to even more children.

How to participate or donate

Whether you're looking to score some great items or wish to contribute to our auction lineup, we welcome your enthusiasm. For those interested in donating items for auction, please reach out to us at Fontaine Family - The Real Estate Leader. Donations can be picked up, or dropped off at either of our locations in Auburn or Scarborough. To donate or inquire further, please call us at 207-784-3800.

Great Falls Comedy Club has new lineup this weekend

AUBURN, ME - Make laughter a priority this week at Great Falls Comedy Club on May 4, with stand-up comedians Nick Gordon, Janet McNamara, and Emily Ruskowski.

Headliner, Ruskowski, originally from Massachusetts, performs all over and brings her cheerful demeanor to the stage as she commands attention



delivering stories loaded with punchline after punchline.

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

For more information contact the club at info@greatfallscomedyclub.com or by phone at 207-200-5366.

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

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Claims Representative

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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

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

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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
114 Pine Tree Camp

Road
Rome, Maine 04963
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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Don't miss Lunenburg at TPT



Heather Dilly as Natalie and Beth Hylton as Iris in Lunenburg playing at The Public Theatre May 3 through May 12, 2024.

LEWISTON, ME -- From the author of the hit comedy *The Ladies First*, comes the perfect combination of mystery, comedy and romance.

When Iris' husband is unexpectedly killed in a plane crash, her lawyer reveals she has inherited a beautiful home in Lunenburg, Nova Scotia - that she

never knew existed! Setting out from her home in Brunswick, Maine with her best friend by her side, she begins a laugh-filled and poignant road trip north to unravel the mystery of her husband's secret life.

Lunenburg will be performed at The Public Theatre, Lewiston's Professional Theatre May 3 -

12. Show times are Thursday and Friday at 7:30pm, Saturday at 3pm, Sunday at 2pm with a Saturday May 11 at 3pm & 7:30pm. Tickets are \$30 Adults, \$25 Groups 10+, \$20 Student 19+ with ID. For tickets call 782-3200 or visit thepublictheatre.org. The Public Theatre is located at 31 Maple St., Lewiston.

1972 – A Musical Retrospective



MMS Chorale, March 2024, photo by Jared Morneau

LEWISTON, ME -- The Maine Music Society Chorale will showcase a variety of musical genres from 1972, the year the Chorale was born, on Saturday May 11 at 7 pm and on Sunday May 12 at 2 pm at the Franco Center in Lewiston.

Under the direction of our Artistic Director, Dr. Richard Nickerson, the 70+ member chorale will regale you with time honored favorites such as "Listen to the Music" and medleys from Broadway shows like "Jesus Christ Superstar" to name just a couple. The singers will also lead you in an exploration of some of the unusual and exciting musical styles and pop rhythms of the era that are sure to leave you surprised and breathless.

Join us as we take you

back fifty years to a time that evoked an age of free spirit and creative musical expression. You definitely will want to be present as we celebrate our Golden Jubilee – 50 Years of Song!

Tickets are available online at www.mainemusicsociety.org or by calling our business office at 207-333-3386.

MMS encourages you to purchase your tickets early.

Tickets: Adult - \$27*; Senior - \$25*; Student - \$15*

Children under 12: free when accompanied by an adult. Group rates available for 10 or more tickets to the same performance purchased at the same time. Call our business office: 207-333-3386.

* Price includes all handling fees

The Maine Music Society thanks its season underwriters Hardy, Wolf & Downing and the Sun Journal, Foundation sponsor The Ladd Foundation, and the Event Sponsor Rowe Auburn for making this concert possible

The Maine Music Society Chorale is an auditioned, mixed-voice community chorus based in Lewiston-Auburn. Led by Maine Music Society Artistic Director Dr. Richard Nickerson, the 75+ voice chorale has distinguished itself with an ever-evolving level of excellence and professionalism. Founded as the Androscoggin Chorale in 1972, the group's diverse repertoire reflects its desire to advance the cultural heritage of Central Maine, to explore a broad range of musical genres — contemporary, musical theatre, classical, opera, oratorio — and to provide its members with opportunities to experience their love of singing.

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

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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

F a l m o u t h
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

G o r h a m
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

W e s t b r o o k
5/10/2024: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Westbrook Community Center, 426 Bridge Street

Y a r m o u t h
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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Auburn Girl Scout Troop serves lunch to the homeless



AUBURN, ME — For Girl Scout troops located in heavily populated areas of the state, homelessness is a local struggle that hits near and dear. For Troop 5043 based in the Lewiston-Auburn area, that means more opportunities to lend a helping hand to their community through volunteering with one of several local resource centers.

“The un-housed in our area has been an obvi-

ous issue that needed to be addressed. The kids have been helping with service projects and donations from cookie sales for years,” says Troop 5043 Leader Jamie Ribisi-Braley.

Giving back to one’s community is a longstanding pillar of the Girl Scout Experience. Troops are regularly challenged to observe local issue impacting their area and produce meaningful sustainable solutions. According to Ja-

mie, helping the homeless is always the first issue that her troop chooses to focus their efforts and energy on. This year, the troop wanted to help in a more interactive way.

Amidst the cold temperatures of mid-February, four Girl Scouts, four adults, and a sibling decided to volunteer at the Pleasant St. Drop-In Center in Auburn. Pleasant Street has a “free” store complete with necessary items such

as toiletries, clothing, backpacks, and tents, and it’s the only facility in the area that offers showers.

“The model of service that this center provides is a shining example of how we can make a huge difference by working together to help our neighbors,” says Ribisi-Braley.

During their visit, the Girl Scouts lent a hand by preparing snacks and serving warm, nutritious lunches to those in need.

“I loved all the nice people there. Handing out the food gave me a really happy feeling,” says Bella Lambert, a Junior Girl Scout from Troop 5043.

In true full-circle Girl Scout fashion, one of the guests was so moved by the troop’s act of kindness, she even recited the Girl Scout Promise, recounting her days as a former Girl Scout herself!

“The act of service is typically a humbling ex-

perience and I know that this service really opened all of our eyes to just how widespread homelessness is within our two cities,” says Ribisi-Braley.

For the Girl Scouts of Troop 5043, the experience offered them a new lens on the towns they call home, as well as a reignited inspiration to help others.

“I learned that there are more people who need help than I realized,” says Lambert.

Lewiston/Auburn Community Read 2024

LEWISTON, ME -- Welcome to the 4th Annual Lewiston/Auburn Community Read with the Lewiston and Auburn Public Libraries. This year’s book pick is *Where Are You From?* by author Yamile Saied Méndez. The Community Read initiative is in partnership with the Lewiston and Auburn Public Schools and the City of Lewiston. This initiative would not be possible this year without the support and sponsorship from The Friends of the Lewiston Public Library.

A community read event is a shared reading experience where members of the community all read one book. By having access to and reading the same book, it further builds our depth of community in our cities by a shared act. Parents, business owners, students and community members can discuss the book and the thoughts it brings forward while building a culture of literacy.

We are celebrating art since this year’s community read is a picture book.

We are inviting all ages to come to the Lewiston Public Library and create your own artwork inspired by *Where Are You From?* All artwork will then be displayed at the Community Art Exhibition in Callahan Hall on Saturday, May 11th at 11am. Come and see your artwork among many others from both cities along with art displays from each of the Lewiston Public Elementary schools. To participate, visit Callahan Hall during the open hours listed below to create your own water-

color painting or clay sculpture.

Monday, May 6th and Tuesday, May 7th 3:00PM – 6:30PM

Wednesday, May 8th and Thursday, May 9th 9:30AM – 1:30PM

Along with your artwork submission, indicate where you are from on the world map and add your chosen piece of yarn to the loom where we will be creating our very own Lewiston/Auburn woven tapestry.

Join us for the grand Community Art Exhibition Day with author Yamile Saied Méndez. In addition to the elaborately displayed community and school artwork, participants will enjoy an author talk, food, book giveaways and sign-

ing, and activities for kids. This event is for all ages and no registration is required.

Yamile (sha-MEE-lay) Saied Méndez is the author of many books for young readers and adults, including *Furia*, a Reese’s YA Book Club selection. Her books have received many accolades such as the Junior Library Guild Gold Standard, Whitney Award, Cybils Award, Américas Award, Bank Street Spanish Language Book Awards, among others. She was born and raised in Rosario, Argentina, but has lived most of her life in Utah. An inaugural Walter Dean Myers Grant recipient, she’s also a graduate of Voices of Our Nations (VONA) and the Vermont College of

Fine Arts MFA Writing for Children’s and Young Adult program. Yamile is also a founding member of Las Musas, the first collective of women and nonbinary Latine authors.

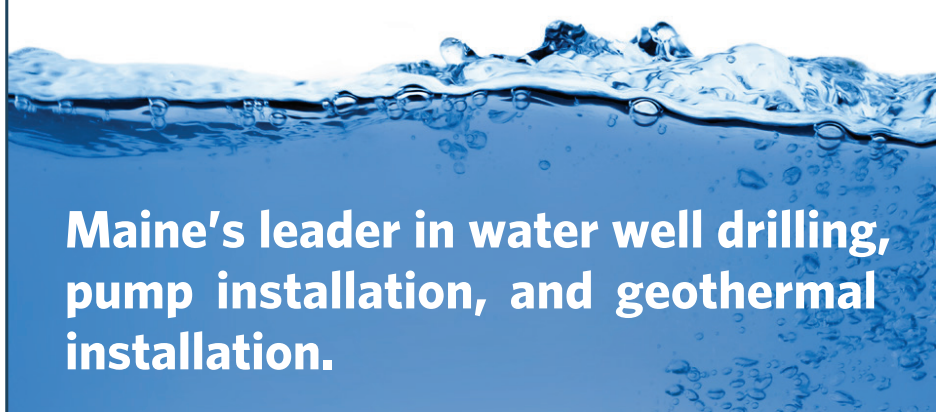
The Lewiston Public Library is located downtown at 200 Lisbon Street at the corner of Pine Street and Lisbon Street. More information on this initiative is available by contacting the Lewiston Public Library at 513-3133 or LPLKids@lewistonmaine.gov.

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

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Augusta Symphony Orchestra to hold May concert

AUGUSTA, ME -- The Augusta Symphony Orchestra presents its final regular season concert on Sunday, May 19 at 6 pm at the South Parish Congregational Church, 9 Church St, in Augusta, ME.

Under the direction of conductor Jinwook Park, the ASO will begin with Mozart's high energy

Overture from the Marriage of Figaro. The concert then spotlights ASO's cellist Jonathan Moody as soloist performing the beautiful Cello Concerto in C Major by Joseph Haydn.

After growing up in the Pineland Suzuki program, Jon received his B.M. in performance at Susquehanna University in



Jon Moody

2015, studying cello with Andrew Rammon, and his M.M. in performance at Bowling Green State University in 2017, studying with Alan Smith and Brian Snow. Jon works full time drafting CAD and has been teaching, playing in ASO, and playing as a mentor in Colby Symphony and Kennebec Valley Youth

Symphony.

Following intermission, the audience will be treated to the best of Beethoven – three of the most famous movements from his symphonies. The orchestra will conclude the concert with a special add-on performance of Bizet's famous opera Carmen Suite No 1.

As always, ASO concerts are free, with donations gratefully accepted. For more information, please visit www.augustasyphonymaine.org. Please join us for an evening of fine music!

As always, ASO concerts are free, with donations gratefully accepted. For more information, please visit www.augustasyphonymaine.org. Please join us for an evening of fine music!

Trades for ME introduces girls to trades professions

WATERVILLE, ME—Earlier today, the Waterville Trades for ME conference welcomed 8th and 9th grade girls from Lawrence Junior High School, Lawrence High School and Messalonskee Middle School to learn about careers in the trades.

The morning conference featured sessions ranging from heavy equipment operation and welding/machining to robotics and IT, and criminal justice, providing an opportunity for girls and gender-expansive youth to experience trade professions through hands-on activities, presentations, and demonstrations.

The conference was hosted by New Ventures Maine (NVME), Mid-Maine Technical Center, and Kennebec Valley Community College (KVCC) and was held at KVCC.

Riley, a student from

Lawrence Middle School, is thinking about becoming a welder and was able to try out vertical welding. "It was calm--not aggressive. And it wasn't as hard as I thought it would be," she said.

Trades for ME conferences are designed to showcase careers in which women are traditionally underrepresented. "We want students to consider potential careers they may not have thought about, and to give them the opportunity to learn from women who are working in those careers," said Kelley Glidden, NVME Workforce Specialist and Trades for ME conference organizer.

Conference admission is free. Funding for Trades for ME is provided by Maine Career and Technical Education/MaineDOE (utilizing federal Carl D. Perkins funds) and the Maine Department of Transpor-



Photo courtesy of New Ventures Maine.

Additional support and in-kind contributions are provided by businesses and community partners, including General Dynamics Bath Iron Works, Spectrum, Darling's, and Consigli Construction.

For more information visit the Trades for ME web-

site at tradesforme.org or contact Kelley Glidden at 207-621-3436 or kelly.glidden@maine.edu.

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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.

Jason Hodsdon Masonry

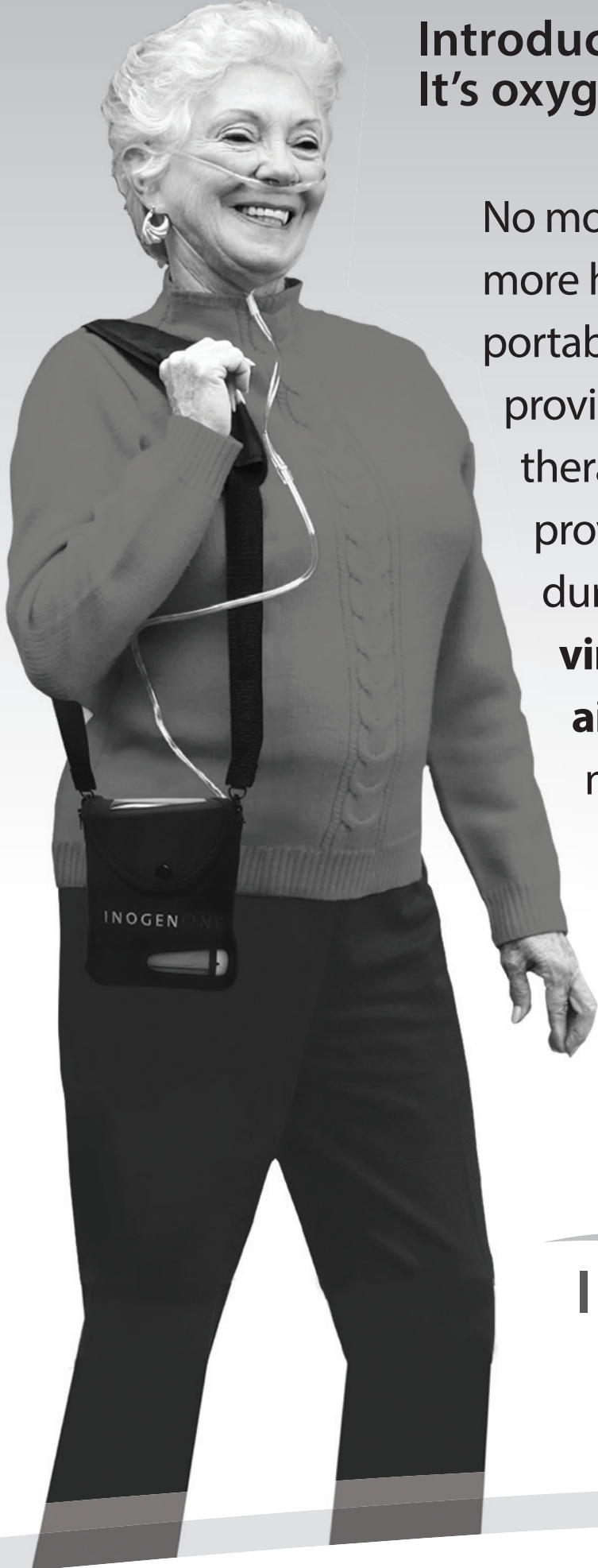
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Trust in VA among Veteran patients up 5.7%

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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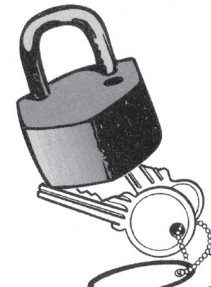
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Fridays through May 10

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

Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

Follow us on Facebook for updates: [facebook.com/whiterockcommunityclub](https://www.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.sacorivertheatre.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.sacorivertheatre.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 Flaggy Meadow Road in Gorham, Maine. The silent auction will begin at 10:00 a.m. and the live auction at 1:00 p.m. SAVE THE DATE for this event that is free and open to the public.

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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-

tivities 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.

Woodlands Senior Living earns assisted living accreditation

WATERVILLE, ME - Woodlands Senior Living has announced that seven of its ten locations have been accredited by the Joint Commission, with three additional locations expected to earn the distinction in the coming weeks. Woodlands Senior Living are the first assisted living facilities in the state to earn this designation, which is essentially a premier status for assisted living. Woodlands Senior Living of Farmington was the first to receive confirmation of accreditation.

"In order to be licensed as a residential care community in Maine by DHHS, there are certain criteria which must be met," said Matthew Walters, managing member of Woodlands Senior Living. "To earn accreditation by the Joint Commission

however, we must go well above and beyond in all areas. This designation is recognized as a benchmark of excellence for a reason. It can help residents and family members have peace of mind that Woodlands Senior Living is providing the highest quality of attention and care at every one of our locations throughout Maine. The fact that we are the first and only assisted living provider in the State of Maine that has been able to qualify to receive the Joint Commission certification is a testament to our organizations over 40 years of experience and our high standards for quality of service, living environments and staff."

In addition to Farmington, Woodlands Senior Living locations in Hallowell, Waterville, Madison, Bridgton, Lew-

iston, and Hillside Terrace of Hallowell have all been accredited. The Joint Commission's Gold Seal of Approval is earned by demonstrating continuous compliance with its rigorous performance standards. The Gold Seal is a symbol of quality that reflects a health care organization's commitment to providing safe and quality resident care.

"When I visited Woodlands Senior Living of Farmington, I was impressed by the exemplary level of care and quality of the facilities, and how that translated into a highly positive atmosphere for residents," said Senator Susan Collins. "This recent accreditation by the Joint Commission not only validates the outstanding standards I observed, but also establishes Woodlands

as the only assisted living provider in Maine to earn such a distinction, setting a new milestone for excellence in senior living across the state."

Woodlands Senior Living underwent a comprehensive, multi-day onsite review throughout eight of the ten locations between November and March, with the other two forthcoming. During the visits, a team of professional Joint Commission reviewers evaluated compliance standards focusing on resident safety and quality, while evaluating actual care processes and technology. The Joint Commission reviewers are Masters and PhD prepared RNs and administrators who have careers that have focused on the senior care portion of the healthcare continuum. The

standards are developed in consultation with health care experts and providers, measurement experts and patients. They are informed by scientific literature and expert consensus to help health care organizations measure, assess and improve performance. The surveyors also conducted onsite observations and interviews.

"As a healthcare accreditor, The Joint Commission works with health care organizations across care settings to inspire safer and higher quality of care that is more equitable and compassionate," says Ken Grubbs, DNP, MBA, RN, executive vice president of Accreditation and Certification Operations and chief nursing officer, The Joint Commission. "Through collaborating on innovative solutions

and evidence-based resources and tools, The Joint Commission helps drive improvement while maintaining accountability through our leading survey methods and standards. We commend Woodlands Senior Living for its commitment to advance safety, quality, equity and compassion for all patients."

Woodlands Senior Living started in 1980 with a 39-resident boarding home in Hallowell. The organization has since grown to include 16 communities serving more than 700 residents in 10 locations including Bridgton, Cape Elizabeth, Brewer, Lewiston, Rockland, Farmington, Madison, Waterville and Hallowell. For more information about Woodlands Senior Living <https://www.woodlandsmaine.com>.

Lewiston resident inducted into National Biological Honor Society

MANCHESTER, NH - Saint Anselm College student Julia Svor of Lewiston, ME, a Biology major in the class of 2025 has been accepted into the Chi Zeta Chapter of Beta Beta Beta (TriBeta), a national

biological honor society for the 2023-2024 academic year.

Students are invited to join the society if they have completed at least 3 semester courses in biological science, of which at

least one is not an introductory course, and maintained a cumulative GPA of 3.0 or higher, as well as a GPA of 3.0 or higher in their biology department major.

Beta Beta Beta was founded in 1922 at Okla-

homa City University--the Alpha Chapter--and has grown to more than 638 chapters throughout the United States and Puerto Rico. Chi Zeta, the chapter at Saint Anselm College, was founded in 1996.

Send all items for Names & Faces to the editor. Deadline is Friday by five pm.

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SENIOR TRIPS

MAY 11 – 19, 2024 – BILTMORE ESTATE & ASHEVILLE, NC - Trip includes 8 nights lodging including 4 nights in the Asheville area, 8 breakfasts and 6 dinners and a guided tour of the Asheville, North Carolina area. We will have a full day visit to the spectacular Biltmore Estate, America's largest privately owned home. We will visit the Biltmore Village that connects the estates present and past and provides a place for dining, shopping and historical exhibits. We will also visit the Antler Village and winery. We will tour the Blue Ridge Parkway with a guide and stops along the way. A \$75.00 deposit per person is due when signing up. Price is \$1,245.00 pp double occupancy which includes all entrance fees, meal tips and bus driver tip.

MAY 25 – JUNE 2, 2024 - MACKINAC ISLAND – Trip includes 8 nights lodging including 4 nights in Northern Michigan, 8

breakfasts and 6 dinners. We will have a guided tour of Mackinaw City and visit Mackinac Island with an included Carriage Tour of the island and see sites like the Arch Rock and Lilac Lane. We will cruise through the Soo Locks and have free time in Sault Sainte Marie. We will have a guided tour of Quaint Mackinaw City and tour the Old Mackinac Point Lighthouse and visit Colonial Michilimackinac. We will visit "Michigan's Little Bavaria" in Frankenmuth, Michigan and so much more. A \$75 deposit per person is due at registration. Total price is \$1,209.00 pp double occupancy which includes all entrance fees, step on guide tips, meal tips and bus driver tip.

OCTOBER 6 – 14, 2024 - NOVA SCOTIA, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND & NEW BRUNSWICK – Trip includes 8 nights lodging, 8 breakfasts, 1 lunch, and 6 dinners. You will have a guided tour of Acadia National Park, Halifax, Peggy's Cove & Lunenburg. We will visit King's

Landing Historical Settlement and have a guided tour of Prince Edward Island including Anne of Green Gable's Home. We will have admission to the Hopewell Rocks and you will visit the Waterside Town of Saint John, New Brunswick and much more. A \$75.00 deposit is due when signing up. Price is \$1,639.00 per person double occupancy and this includes all entrance fees, meal tips and bus driver tip.

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

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