



TWIN CITY TIMES

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Newsweek names CMMC among best maternity hospitals in U.S.

LEWISTON, ME -- Newsweek, a weekly national news publication, has named Central Maine Medical Center (CMMC) one of the best hospitals in the nation for maternity.

Newsweek evaluated U.S. hospital maternity departments using three pillars: an online survey of health care professionals and hospital managers with knowledge of maternity processes, results from patient experience

surveys and consideration of hospital quality metrics, according to Newsweek.

"It's so great to see CMMC's maternity unit get this sort of national recognition," said Rebecca Brakeley, MD, chief of women's and children's health at Central Maine Healthcare. "Having a baby is one of the most transformative, joyful, but also often stressful times in a parent's life. That is why it's good to know our



entire team of physicians, nurses and other support staff are recognized as being among the best in the nation in taking care of new mothers."

CMMC has also been recognized as "High

Performing in Maternity Care" by U.S. News & World Report.

When a baby is born at CMMC, a chime that is heard around the hospital is played to share the good news.



Sen. Rotundo observes Memorial Day in Lewiston



State Rep. and Veteran Mike Lajoie, Korean War Veteran Al Landry and Sen. Peggy Rotundo.

AUGUSTA, ME— Lewiston, joined local elected officials and citizens to observe Memorial Day at

Veterans Memorial Park in Lewiston.

"I am thankful for Veterans Park and the Lewiston/Auburn Veterans Council for providing us with a place to reflect on their bravery and loyalty. This park means a great deal to our community and I am so glad to see it being restored to its place of prominence," said Sen. Rotundo. "Thinking about how many members of our community, past and present, have lost their lives or lost people they love in the service of America fills me with enormous sadness but also with enormous gratitude."

State primary, school budget election absentee ballots available

LEWISTON, ME – Absentee ballots are now available for Lewiston registered voters from the City Clerk's Office for the State Primary and School Budget Validation Referendum Election, both on Tue., Jun. 11. The deadline to request absentee ballots is Thu., Jun. 6.

Registered voters who need an absentee ballot may call the City Clerk's Office at (207) 513-3124; order online from the City website (www.lewistonmaine.gov/elections); mail in an application form (to 27 Pine Street); or come into the City Clerk's Office, City Hall, 27 Pine Street, second floor from 8:30 AM to 4 PM on weekdays. Office hours are Mon. – Fri., 8:30 AM – 4 PM.

Since the purpose of the State primary election is for members of political

LEWISTON ME

parties to select their nominees to run in the November general election, registered voters enrolled in the Democratic or Republican parties will receive a ballot for their political party. Per State law, voters enrolled in one of the other political parties (Green-Independent, No Labels, or Libertarian) are not able to receive a State candidate ballot in this election.

Registered voters who are not enrolled in any political party have the choice to select the Democratic or Republican ballot in this election since State law changed this year to semi-open primary elections.

Every race on both party ballots is uncontested except for U.S. Representative to Congress on

the Republican ballot and House District 96 on the Republican ballot.

The following candidate races will be appearing on the Lewiston ballots: U.S. Senator, U.S. Representative to Congress, State Senate, State Representative for Districts 93, 94, 95, and 96, and Register of Probate. All voters will receive a municipal referendum ballot for adoption of the school budget.

The City's website (www.lewistonmaine.gov/elections) contains sample ballots, directions to polling places, and other information that voters may find useful.

Voters with questions may contact the City Clerk's Office at (207) 513-3124.

Local stand-up favorites at Great Falls Comedy Club

AUBURN, ME – Make laughter a priority this week at Great Falls Comedy Club on June 8, with co-headlines Tucker and Mike Gray.

Saturday night is al-

right for funny, and you will want to be there to see these two local stand up favorites. Tucker of Tophsam is a longtime comedy mainstay here in this state and is sure to make you

laugh. Gray of Lewiston is one of the area's best with his autobiographical and absurdist humor. Come check them out. You will leave in stitches.

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.

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

Maine Justice Foundation opens applications for tax credit

AUGUSTA ME

– The Maine Justice Foundation is pleased to announce that applications for the 2024 Access to Justice Tax Credit Program will open on June 1, 2024. The Foundation will accept applications from eligible attorneys from June 1- 17, 2024. Please visit <https://www.grantinterface.com/sl/TQAslr> to apply.

In an effort to encourage lawyers to provide services to underserved areas of our State, the Legislature enacted this program in 2022. 36 M.R.S. Section 5219-ZZ provides that the Maine Supreme Court or its designee shall certify up to five qualified attorneys annually for participation in the Access to Justice Tax Credit program. The Court has designated the Maine Justice Foundation to administer the program and established a Standing Committee to assist and advise the Foundation in the process. The Standing Committee includes representatives of the Maine Justice Foundation, the Maine State Bar Association, and the Maine Trial Lawyers Association.

Now in its third year, the program will authorize up to five additional eligible attorneys to receive a \$6000 tax credit in 2024 and in each year thereafter through 2027. To be eligible, attorneys must commit to practicing law in an underserved area for at least five years, must be rostered by the Maine Commission on Indigent Legal Services to accept court appointments to represent clients in an underserved area, and



must agree to perform pro bono legal services in an underserved area.

In 2022 & 2023, the Foundation received submissions from eligible applicants statewide representing Penobscot, Hancock, Waldo, Aroostook, Somerset, Androscoggin, and Cumberland Counties. The attorneys selected through this process to date include Cassandra Rogers and Benjamin Everett of Presque Isle, Taylor Kilgore of Turner, Gregory LeClerc of Standish, Ryan Rutledge of Skowhegan, Britany Sawyer of Arundel, Shamara Bailey of Patten, Lynn Madison of Rockland, Stephen Smith of Augusta, and Cheryl Saniuk-Heinig of Rockland. These attorneys can continue to claim this credit for up to five years provided they maintain their eligibility. This benefit will be expanded for up to five additional eligible attorneys each year through 2027.

“This is one more tool we can employ to support access to justice for Mainers in need,” states Michelle Draeger, Executive Director of the Maine Justice Foundation. “This benefit will encourage attorneys in underserved areas to help their neighbors in underserved areas to ac-

cess justice through quality legal representation. We are honored to administer this program and look forward to working with the Court to report on the positive benefits associated with it to the Legislature. We can collectively solve access to justice issues in our state by employing multiple creative strategies such as this tax credit,” says Draeger.

The Maine Justice Foundation, founded in 1983 as the Maine Bar Foundation, is the state’s leading funder of civil legal aid for poor and vulnerable Mainers. Find us online and support access to justice through donations to various funds at www.justicemaine.org.

FMI: Contact Michelle G. Draeger, Executive Director: 207-620-1351, mdraeger@justicemaine.org.

Best Source for Arts, Music and Theater! Your Hometown Paper.

2024 Maine Iris Society’s 59th annual Flower Show

AUBURN, ME –

The Maine Iris Society will hold its 59th Annual Flower Show on Saturday, June 15th from 1:30 – 4:00 pm at the Auburn Middle School, 38 Falcon Drive in Auburn, Maine. Many exciting varieties of irises will be on display as well as peonies and hosta leaves. Admission is free and open to the public.

Potted plants will be available for sale this year along with the very popular \$1.00 rhizomes.

The Maine Iris Society exists to develop the science of horticulture, specifically through the propagation and culture of the



genus, Iris, and to stimulate and foster interest in irises through education of the public and our members.

Annual membership dues are \$8.00 per individual and \$10.00 for two in the same household. Members receive the

informative MIS newsletter. Annual events include tours of member gardens, a picnic and plant swap, a photo contest, plant sales and auctions and an annual meeting that typically features a special speaker.

Summer alert: Blood, platelet donors needed now

PORTLAND, ME — The American Red Cross critically needs blood and platelet donors now following a concerning trend over the past month – fewer donors rolling up a sleeve to give lifesaving blood. In fact, about 20,000 fewer blood donations were collected over the past month than needed to maintain the Red Cross national blood supply.

Make an appointment to give now by visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS or by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App.

Severe weather and historic travel in May contributed to fewer blood donations. According to the Transportation Security Administration (TSA), five of the busiest travel days ever happened this month and more record-breaking travel is expected all season long – a busy time when many regular donors may

be unable to give. Additionally, as the U.S. approaches what AAA calls the “100 deadliest days” of summer for auto accidents, it’s critical hospitals have lifesaving blood products on hand for all trauma and accident victims who count on transfusions when there is no time to waste. In some of the most dire situations, medical teams may need to use hundreds of blood products to save a life.

Help build the blood supply

The Red Cross has teamed up with Tetris, creators of the iconic, best-selling video game, to celebrate their 40th anniversary and build the blood supply for patients in need. In commemoration, all who answer the call to help May 20-June 9, 2024, will get an exclusive Tetris® + Red Cross T-shirt, while supplies last, plus be automatically entered for a chance to win a trip for two to New York to

meet Tetris creator, Alexey Pajitnov. See RedCrossBlood.org/Tetris for details.

Pajitnov, a recent first-time blood donor, says now is the time to help patients play on. “I think it’s very important to not just talk about people united together and helping each other, but doing it with your real action, and that’s what I tried to do this time. So, play Tetris and donate blood!”

How to donate blood

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

Blood and platelet donors can save time at their next donation by using RapidPass® to complete their pre-donation reading and health history questionnaire online, on the day of their donation, before arriving at the blood drive. To get started, follow the instructions at RedCrossBlood.org/RapidPass or use the Blood Donor App.

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

YCCC nursing program receives ACEN initial accreditation

WELLS, ME -- York County Community College (YCCC) is proud to announce the accreditation of its Nursing program by the Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN). The ACEN accreditation is an acknowledgement of the College's commitment to excellence in nursing education and confirms the program's adherence to quality and effectiveness.

The accreditation process involved a thorough review of our program's curriculum, faculty qualifications, resources, and facilities. Nursing Program Director, Lisa Gatti-Arnold said of the recognition, "The Accreditation Commission for Education

in Nursing (ACEN) is a leading accrediting organization for nursing programs in the United States. Achieving initial accreditation from ACEN is a significant accomplishment for the Nursing Program at York County Community College and signifies that YCCC has a high-quality program that prepares nursing graduates for entry-level practice as a Registered Nurse. ACEN accreditation demonstrates that the faculty are dedicated to high standards, continuous improvement, and most of all, student success."

The plan to create an accredited Nursing program at YCCC started in 2020. Now, that the College



has achieved this goal and graduated its first cohort of students, President Michael Fischer stated, "Re-

ceiving initial accreditation for our Nursing program is a testament to the unwavering dedication of our facul-

ty, staff, students, and clinical partners. We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Maine legislature, Maine Health, and Northern Light Health for their generous support in addressing the pressing nursing shortage. Their investment in community colleges across the state has not only enabled our program expansion but also positioned us to better serve the healthcare needs of our community. This milestone reflects our collective commitment to advancing healthcare education in Maine."

The mission of York County Community College is to develop an educated, skilled, and adaptable workforce that drives socioeconomic mobility

for our students and creates economic and civic prosperity for our communities. The Nursing program exemplifies the college's dedication to students and effective industry collaborations to ensure our communities thrive.

For more information about our accredited Nursing program, please visit www.yccc.edu

The Accreditation Commission for Education in Nursing (ACEN) supports the interests of nursing education, nursing practice, and the public by providing specialized accreditations for all levels of nursing education and transition-to-practice programs. www.acenursing.org

Ambassador Girl Scout receives Future Leaders Scholarship

LEWISTON, ME — Madison Binette, a graduating Ambassador Girl Scout from Lewiston, has received a Silver Level Girl Scouts of Maine (GSME) Joanne Crepeau Future Leaders Scholarship award for her exemplary efforts within the organization and demonstrated leadership skills.

Established in 2018, the Joanne Crepeau Future Leaders Scholarship has awarded \$116,000 to 71

Girl Scouts in Maine, to date. Scholarship recipients were chosen based on their answers to three questions during the application process:

- How has Girl Scouts made a difference in your life?

- What do you see as the biggest challenge facing girls and women today?

- In 5 years, how do you see yourself addressing this challenge?

"Girl Scouts has

taught me that education is key in life," says Binette.

As someone who sees a lack of women pursuing the trades, Binette plans to break the stigma by attending SUNY Cobleskill in the fall to study agriculture and technology.

"It fills us with pride to extend scholarships to nine remarkable Girl Scouts this year, embodying our ethos of nurturing leadership. We firmly believe that these girls will

emerge as catalysts for change, champions of causes, visionaries, and trailblazers, poised to enhance our collective world," says GSME CEO, Mara Robinov-Moorhead.

Scholarships were recognized among other awards at this year's GSME Annual Celebration on May 11, in Fairfield. To learn more about the Joanne Crepeau Future Leaders Scholarship, visit <https://www.girlscoutsofmaine.org/joanne-crepeau-future-leaders-scholarship>.



Madison Binette

HAM promotes Chabot to Billing & Support Supervisor

AUBURN, ME – Health Affiliates Maine (HAM) is pleased to announce the promotion of Roxanne Chabot to the position of Billing and Support Supervisor. Roxanne has been an integral part of the HAM team since 2012, offering a wealth of experience in medical records, MaineCare, and commercial billing. These are all essential components of the services HAM provides to private practice clinicians.

Having previously served as Billing Supervisor and Operations Support Supervisor, Roxanne's extensive background makes her the perfect candidate

for this new role. As Billing and Support Supervisor, she will be responsible for maintaining billing, credentialing, and registration for the organization's clients, as well as offering crucial support to our staff to ensure their success.

Expressing her dedication to HAM, Roxanne shared, "HAM has been my 'home' for so long that I couldn't imagine working anywhere else. I am comfortable and confident in what I do every day and hope to continue to maintain that."

Roxanne's promotion reflects her hard work, leadership, and commitment to the success of the



Roxanne Chabot, Billing and Support Supervisor at Health Affiliates Maine

organization. HAM congratulates Roxanne on this well-deserved promotion and looks forward to the continued positive impact she will bring to her new role.

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MIFF to honor directors Mary Harron, Jos Stelling

WATERVILLE, ME—The Maine Film Center is pleased to announce filmmaker Mary Harron as the recipient of the 2024 Midlife Achievement Award and Jos Stelling as the 2024 Lifetime Achievement Award-winner at the 27th annual Maine International Film Festival (MIFF), held July 12–21 in Waterville, Maine.

“It’s always an honor to celebrate the works of filmmakers who have made such tremendous contributions to cinema, and to be able to present them with our famous, one-of-a-kind MIFF Moose award,” said Mike Perreault, executive director of the Maine Film Center. “Moviegoers will have the rare chance to spend a few days rediscovering the work of and engaging in conversation with Mary Harron and Jos Stelling—truly an amazing opportunity.”

The Festival is excited to present its signature Midlife Achievement Award to Canadian director



Jos Stelling

Mary Harron. Since her acclaimed 1996 feature debut *I Shot Andy Warhol*, a storied career in film and television has yielded a catalogue of compelling stories that challenge their viewers with psychologically complex, often unsettling characters, but offer tremendous reward in their clever visuals, wit, and genuine human insight. Harron will join the Festival this year for screenings of her films *Daliland* (2022, starring Ben Kingsley as Salvador Dali), *Charlie Says* (2018, offering an

unflinching profile of the women under Charles Manson’s sway), *The Moth Diaries* (2011, an unorthodox twist on a vampire story set in a girls’ boarding school), and cult classic American *Psycho* (2000, starring an unhinged Christian Bale in a tour de force role).

Harron returns to MIFF for the first time since appearing as a special guest in the festival’s ninth year in 2006 with *I Shot Andy Warhol* and 2005’s *The Notorious Bettie Page*.

“Mary Harron is a distinctive and major voice in



Mary Harron

the American independent cinema world, whose films touch on characters, often from real life, such as Salvador Dali and Bettie Page, who live on the edge,” said MIFF Programming Director Ken Eisen. “Our guest at MIFF’s ninth festival, she returns 18 years and three terrific features later, to accept our Midlife Achievement Award.”

Claiming this year’s Lifetime Achievement Award is pioneering Dutch filmmaker Jos Stelling, who in 1999 received MIFF’s inaugural Midlife Award. A glance back through the Festival archives suggests this is Stelling’s second Lifetime recognition. Indeed, the au-



teur was brought to Waterville in ’99 to receive that prize, but in his acceptance speech quipped that it was more of a “Midlife” honor, thus renaming the award which in subsequent years went to Terrence Malick, Sissy Spacek, Jonathan Demme, Peter Fonda, Ed Harris, and many more since. A quarter century down the road and with his final film set to make its U.S. premiere at MIFF, Stelling is ready to accept his long overdue Lifetime Achievement Award.

Many of Stelling’s inimitable films, including *The Pointsman* (1986), *The Flying Dutchman* (1995), and *The Girl and Death* (2012), have previously screened at Railroad Square Cinema, the former home of the Maine Film Center and the Festival, to much local acclaim. Stelling will return to the Waterville Opera House in July for the U.S. premiere of his self-proclaimed swan song, *Natasja’s Dance*.

MIFF returns to the Paul J. Schupf Art Center and the Waterville Opera House for its 27th edition July 12–21, 2024. Festival passes and packages are now available for preorder online at MIFF.org. A full festival lineup will be announced soon.

Sen. Collins attends southern Maine Memorial Day celebration

Springvale, ME —U.S. Senator Susan Collins delivered the keynote address at the Southern Maine Veterans Cemetery during its Memorial Day

event. “For more than a century and a half, Americans have faithfully kept the trust,” said Senator Collins in her remarks. “From

the founding of our nation to today, it is estimated that more than 41 million American men and women have served in uniform and some 1.2 million have

made the ultimate sacrifice. This Memorial Day, here and throughout the nation, we honor those who gave their all for all of us.”

Senator Collins was introduced by Army Reserve Sgt. Curtis Mills, treasurer of the Southern Maine Veterans Cemetery. Senator Collins and Sgt. Mills met 20 years ago when Sgt. Mills was being treated at Walter Reed Hospital after surviving a roadside bomb that detonated beneath his Humvee while he was serving in Iraq.



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Seniors Not Acting Their Age

Perfection on the Machias



Morgan Baxter canoes the waves at the bottom of Carrick Rips



Ken Gordon kayaks left at Little Falls



Rick Farnsworth clears a path through a fallen tree

I started paddling multi-day expeditions on the Machias River 45 years ago. In my opinion, it's the finest river trip in Maine, arguably the eastern United States.

About twenty years ago, I began organizing spring Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society trips on the Machias. I schedule them for late April or early May because my experience indicates that's the most likely timeframe for a quality water level and acceptable weather. Another important factor, that's normally before the dreaded blackflies arrive.

The formula is not foolproof. My friends and I have endured long periods of rain, a couple snowstorms, low water, and an unusually early appearance of Maine's super gnats. Those of us who descended the Machias in late April 2019 will not forget the near flood level waters. Six unplanned portages are still etched in our minds.

In early April, I start evaluating Machias River water levels and the Washington County weather forecast. Estimating the water level is a tricky task. For some inexplicable reason, the U. S. Geological Survey has allowed the Machias River gauge to cease operating while continuing to maintain the Old Stream gauge, a minor tributary. To forego the numerous benefits of mea-

suring one of the largest watersheds in the region defies logic.

In recent years, I've kept a record of Old Stream gauge readings when descending the Machias. As a result, I have a fairly reliable although imperfect indicator of what to expect for water levels. As a general rule, I'm looking for Old Stream gauge readings of 50 cubic feet per second (CFS) or more to paddle below the Airline and higher amounts above.

Based on my experience, the best weather for a spring Machias trip consists of cold nights and seasonably moderate daytime temperatures. Precipitation is unwanted. Cold nights are the arch enemy of blackflies whereas they seem to proliferate during extended periods of warm weather.

Lately, road closures have complicated trip planning. Access to upper portions of the Machias watershed has become increasingly limited and the road to Holmes Falls, in the middle of the river, was closed last year.

This spring, a superb weather forecast and ideal water levels arrived right on schedule, the last week of April. Three Machias River veterans enthusiastically agreed to join me. We planned to meet at the Airline Campground near Wesley and select an itinerary based on road access.

I drove to the region early to determine road options. The news wasn't good. Roads to Holmes Falls, Cranberry and Fifth Lakes, and the West Branch were gated. I did enjoy a couple of quality bike rides and was able to eliminate some options under consideration. We decided to begin about a mile above Carrick Rips near the confluence with the West Branch and paddle to Machias, a four-day trip.

After dropping off shuttle vehicles, we transported two canoes and two expedition kayaks to a location next to the river about three miles downriver from First Lake. We launched under clear skies with temperatures in the 50s, perfect Machias weather.

The flatwater above Carrick Rips was interrupted by a downed tree blocking the entire river. Canoeist Rick Farnsworth waded into the cold water with a handsaw and cleared a path.

We scouted potentially treacherous Carrick Rips on the right. Our plan to start right and move hard left into a wave train to avoid a dangerous boulder at the bottom worked to perfection. The West Branch joined soon after adding substantial volume to the river.

A series of entertaining rapids followed to the Airline. I had previously



Rick Farnsworth finishes Airline Rapid

scouted challenging Airline Rapid so we paddled in tandem down the right side and then ferried to river left where we stopped for lunch at the campground.

A few miles of flatwater interspersed with a couple of rapids brought us to complex Little Falls. After carrying gear and carefully scouting the steep pitch, we all maneuvered left with success.

The campsite at Little Falls is, in my opinion, the finest site on the river. Stopping for the night was a no brainer. Our outdoor gourmet, Rick Farnsworth, baked delicious pizza in a reflector oven for dinner.

During the cold evening, the coming days were

the topic of conversation. Wigwam Rapids, Little Holmes Falls, and Great Falls were some of the challenges ahead.

My book, Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine narrates five more exciting river trips in Maine.

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 ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net

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Arts & Entertainment

Make baby keepsakes for Father's Day with LPL



LEWISTON, ME -- On Friday, June 7th from 10:00am - 11:30am, the Lewiston Public Library Children's Department will be offering the program Baby Keepsakes: Following in Your Footsteps in honor of Father's Day. Caregivers will be able to create a personal-

ized keepsake using their baby's footprint on top of their adult shoe print. This activity will take place in the back of the Children's Department on the third floor of the library. The program is recommended for babies ages birth to 2 years and their

caregivers. Siblings are also welcome to attend. This program is free and there is no registration. Participants are invited to bring a clean adult shoe for this program. The Lewiston Public Library is located downtown at 200 Lisbon Street at the corner of Pine Street.

Baby Keepsakes: Following in Your Footsteps

**10AM
Friday
June 7th**



**Recommended for
caregivers and their
babies birth-2 yrs.**

**Lewiston
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Children's Department

For more information, please contact the Lewiston Public Library's Children's Department at 207-513-3133 or LPLKids@lewistonmaine.gov

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Five health tips to make the most of Women’s Health Month

By Dr. Ana Stankovic, Chief Medical Officer, UnitedHealthcare of New England

It’s fitting Women’s Health Month occurs each spring, a time often associated with renewal and rebirth.

As we celebrate the women in our lives and the important role they play in our families and our communities, Women’s Health Month also provides an opportunity to think about ways to help encourage women of all ages to prioritize their health. Women may face unique and varied health care needs based on age, race, culture and other factors, so a holistic approach to well-being is important.

Often the caretakers and CEOs of their families’ health care needs, some women prioritize the well-being of their partners, parents and chil-

dren while neglecting their own. In fact, a survey of American women found that nearly half of respondents had in the previous year skipped a preventive health care visit, such as an annual checkup, vaccine or recommended screening.

At the state level, Maine ranks No.21 for the overall health of women (ages 18 to 44) based on more than 40 measures of health and well-being, according to the United Health Foundation America’s Health Rankings® 2023 Health of Women and Children Report.

To recognize Women’s Health Month, consider these five tips to help support the health of women, especially expectant and new mothers:

Work in a Well-Woman Visit: Nationally, more than two-thirds (70.5%) of women (ages 18 to 44) re-

ceive an annual well-visit, slightly below the 76% in Maine. These annual visits can include important screenings, guidance and immunizations based on age and risk factors. They can also provide an opportunity to discuss with your health professional how to encourage a healthier lifestyle.

Mammograms Matter: One in eight American women will get a breast cancer diagnosis at some point in her lifetime, and most cases are detected by a mammogram before symptoms appear. Research shows the five-year breast cancer survival rate has increased in recent years, now reaching more than 90%. For patients diagnosed with early-stage breast cancer, the five-year survival rate is close to 100%. Given rising cancer rates for younger women and data showing

screenings can save lives, new federal guidance recommends women get a mammogram every other year starting at age 40, compared to prior recommendations that these tests start no later than age 50.

Take Charge of Your Health: This can mean eating well, staying active, getting sufficient sleep and limiting stress as much as possible. For expectant mothers, the U.S. Surgeon General advises that no amount of alcohol is safe during pregnancy, and smoking is unsafe for you and your baby. For support, your health plan may offer programs and online resources at no additional cost that can help you adopt a healthier lifestyle or improve the management of chronic conditions (if needed), which is important for expectant women.

Encourage Healthy,

Full-Term Deliveries: For women thinking about starting or expanding their families, it’s important to access quality pre-conception, prenatal and postnatal care. Importantly, this type of support may help improve health outcomes for both moms and babies. It may also be helpful to identify people who can provide support before, during and after delivery. One option is a doula. These non-clinical professionals can provide emotional, informational and physical support for women and families during their pregnancy and delivery journeys. Doulas have been found to improve clinical outcomes, especially for people of color.

Know Your Maternity Benefits and Rights at Work: If you work full-time and plan to return to your job after your baby is born, it is helpful to know

your company’s maternity leave policy. The Family and Medical Leave Act (FMLA) enables mothers and fathers who have worked at least one year for a company with 50 or more employees to take up to 12 weeks of unpaid time off. Many employers also offer full or partial paid leave. According to the National Partnership on Women and Families, your employer may be required to give you the same — or a substantially equivalent — job back after your leave.

By considering this information, we can continue supporting the health of women and honor them for their important contributions to our communities.

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OSJL supports military kids with ‘Buy-Give-Get’ bike program



NORTH KINGSTOWN, RI – Ocean State Job Lot (OSJL), a leading discount retailer with 153 stores across New England and the Mid-Atlantic, is proud to announce the successful conclusion of its inaugural ‘Buy-Give-Get’ bike program.

The program, which ran from May 14th to May 22nd, invited customers to buy a children’s bike for \$100.00 at any OSJL store, give it back to the store, and get a \$100.00 Crazy Deal Gift Card for

future purchases. The overwhelming generosity of OSJL customers has made it possible to provide 1,800 bikes to children of military families across the Northeast.

“We’re deeply grateful to our loyal customers for their incredible support of our first-ever ‘Buy-Give-Get’ bikes program,” said David Sarlitto, Executive Director of the Ocean State Job Lot Charitable Foundation. “Thanks to their generosity, we’re able to bring joy and the simple

pleasure of riding a bike to children whose parents have sacrificed so much.”

The donated bikes will be distributed with the help of partners such as the American Legion, Veterans of Foreign Wars, Disabled American Veterans, USA Veterans, and other veteran services. Significant events include donations at Vets Fest in Philadelphia, PA, and at Walter Reed Medical Center in Washington, DC, where bikes will be given to the children of recovering veterans.

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Franco Center kicks off business envelope challenge

LEWISTON, ME— This year marks the start of the 25th performance season of the Franco Center as a 501(c)(3) Maine nonprofit organization. The nonprofit was founded in 2000 with the mission of saving the historically significant former church building and preserving the culture and heritage of the French-Canadian immigrants. The building has been rehabilitated, providing the community with a center for live performances, educational and cultural heritage programs.

“As we look forward to sustaining the Franco Center – we need your help! We challenge members of the business community to buy an envelope (or two or three) to benefit the work we do,” said Theresa Shanahan, development administrator at the

Franco Center. “We want to continue to provide performances and educational opportunities and make improvements that benefit the experience you receive here at the Franco Center.”

Shanahan added, “Every donation makes a difference and gets us closer to our goal of \$80,200. This is a big goal, and business leaders are an important part of making it a successful one.”

What it is: The Envelope Challenge is an electronic version of the popular paper envelope fundraiser where 400 envelopes are available for “sale” on a secure website. Each envelope is worth its face value; for example, the 200th envelope is worth \$200; the 10th envelope is worth \$10. There are donation options of all amounts from \$1 to \$400.



The Franco Center’s marquee sign notes the venue is for performing arts and events, but staff say so much more goes on in the building including community rentals for weddings and business meetings, tribute band concerts, history tours, escape room activities, French-themed luncheons, and other programs. The nonprofit organization is initiating a fundraising campaign that staff hopes brings in funds to cover operating expenses. Franco Center photo.

“Each donation brings a chance to win any of our gift prizes: \$100 gift card to L.L. Bean, Downeaster

voucher for a round trip for two, passes for our ‘Escape’ room, Franco Center History Tours, business ad on our website – and more,” said Penny Drumm, administrator at the Franco Center. “The more you purchase the greater your chances! When you choose an envelope, we will mail you the physical envelope so you will have your raffle ticket along with whatever you may have won.”

As a 501 (c)(3) non-profit organization, all donations are tax deductible, and every donation will receive a tax letter.

To make a donation online, visit www.franco-center.org and the Business Envelope Challenge information is prominently displayed. A click on the Donate Now button brings you to a page where you can select an envelope that

matches your donation amount.

“Going back to the first events held at the Franco Center in the early 2000s, ticket sales still don’t cover the operating costs of the venue,” said Denise Scammon, marketing director at the Franco Center. “This fundraising campaign aimed at local businesses will hopefully bring in operating cash.”

Scammon added, “Androscoggin County has 110,000 residents. If each donated \$20 once a year, we would be able to cover operating costs and urgent repairs and improvements to the building. We’d like to keep our doors open.”

The Franco Center is at 46 Cedar Street in Lewiston. Other donations can be made online at www.franco-center.org/donate or call 207-424-0401.

NSB provides free tickets to youth for Maine music society events

LEWISTON, ME— The sounds of a harmonious blend of 70 singers filling the Franco Center as a delighted audience absorbs the dulcet sounds and enjoys every moment.

For over 50 years, it is an enchanting scene that has touched thousands of Mainers of all ages thanks to the exhilarating performances of the Maine Music Society

(MMS), comprised of the MMS Chorale and the MMS Chamber Singers.

Norway Savings Bank has long supported the groups as they have captivated their audiences, and this year, NSB is helping to ensure that young people get a possibly transformative opportunity to take it all in.

“This year, our contributions will help subsi-

dize free tickets to all MMS concert events for children 12 and under during the 2024-25 season,” said Dan Walsh, President and CEO of Norway Savings. “We were thrilled to see that as a sponsorship opportunity for the upcoming season as we love the idea of students having the chance to see these talented choruses present a broad range of musical

genres, including contemporary, musical theater, and classical. In many cases, these students wouldn’t be exposed to these concerts, particularly events featuring immensely talented performers.”

The MMS Chorale is an auditioned, mixed-voice community chorus led by MMS Artistic Director Dr. Richard Nickerson. The Chorale is known around the region for an ever-evolving level of excellence and professionalism as well as a diverse repertoire.

The MMS Chamber Singers is a 15-voice, a cappella group that offers additional events. The Chamber

Singers have performed at a variety of venues, large and intimate, including the Inauguration Celebration for Governor Mills.

“We are so thankful for NSB’s longtime support of the Maine Music Society,” said Dr. Nickerson. “The bank recognizes the importance of our organization and appreciates the role we play in the community. We are able to connect these talented and engaged singers and offer cultural initiatives that reach people who otherwise wouldn’t be exposed to the arts and the beauty of this music.”

“NSB’s loyalty means a lot and has truly helped us

present varied programming to thousands over the course of many years,” said Penny Drumm, Administrator at the Franco Center. “There is nothing more awe-inspiring than hearing live music. Contributing to help these children witness the concerts is a tremendous way to ensure that the tradition of MMS extends to and inspires a new generation of audience members and performers.”

To learn more about the Maine Music Society, visit the organization’s website. To discover the ways in which you can help support the society, call 207-333-3386.

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CLT's "Alice in Wonderland" opens June 14

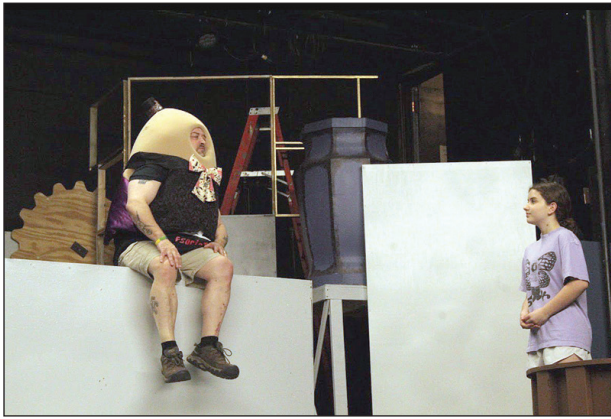


The Playing Cards rehearse with the Dormouse: Cards: L to R: Mara Cunningham; Helenna McCauley; Evie True, Link Brown; Shayna Barnhard; Mia Rodriguez; Angela Gallant; Julie Pfohl (Dormouse)

AUBURN, ME -- A creative twist on a classic tale, Community Little Theater's production of Alice in Wonderland promises to be an unforgettable experience. Based on the famous novel by Lewis Carroll, Alice in Wonderland tells the well-known story of Alice, a young girl who goes on an incredible journey when she falls down a rabbit hole and finds herself in a colorful and whimsical fantasy world. While most of us are very familiar with the tale, Jason Pizzarello's adaptation of this beloved tale throws in some new

twists, while still staying to the original story. The production will have a unique steampunk motif, some amazing special effects and an impressive cast of 25 talented actors.

Director, Britny Anderson, said that she chose Alice in Wonderland because of her love of fantasy and interesting characters along with her interest in the deeper themes that run through the storyline. Alice in Wonderland is full of underlying themes and hidden meanings. Anderson stated that she chose the Jason Pizzarello adaptation because she appreciated



Humpty Dumpty (Tony Roy) meets Alice 2 (Maisy Seaver)

how strongly the theme of identity was apparent in the story.

To further embellish on the story, she decided to add a unique steampunk motif to the production. She stated "I decided to apply a steampunk concept to the show, which takes the nostalgia and technology of the Victorian era and adds the whimsy of this fantastic futuristic version of it". She added, "Wonderland is open to any interpretation; it is moldable and I find that very freeing"

The set, which includes working gears, steamworks and other exciting features, was also designed by Britny An-

derson. "The goal", she said, "is to have the show be as immersive as possible". When asked how Cheshire Cat's famous grin would be achieved, she say "we're going to use a little theater magic."

The costumes, designed by Jennifer Fox, will be the traditional Alice in Wonderland costumes with a little steampunk flair added on.

During her adventures in Wonderland, Alice (Izabelle Rizzolo) meets the some fun and peculiar characters, such as The White Rabbit (Dana Chabot), The Mad Hatter (Jason Pelletier), The March Hare (Greg Lam-



Alice 1 (Isabella Rizzolo) encounters the Cheshire Cat (Oliver Caron)



Alice 2 (Maisy Seaver) rehearses with the White Knight (Jacob Osbourne)

bert) Tweedle Dee and Tweedle Dum (Shayna Barnhard and Oliver Caron), just to name a few. Among the whimsy and chaos, along this crazy journey, Alice even meets herself (Maisy Seaver).

CLT will present "Alice in Wonderland" June 14th, 15th, 20th, and 21st at 7:30 p.m, and June 16th, 22nd and 23rd at 2:00 p.m. Call 783-0958 or visit www.LACLCT.com for tickets and information.

"Buddy Ball" breeding bright smiles in Auburn

AUBURN, ME--- With each exchange of a high five or delighted smile on a young person's face, the beauty and grace of "Buddy Ball" in Auburn is visible on and around the diamonds of Auburn Suburban Baseball & Softball (ASBS).

"Our 'Buddy Ball' program is open to any young person with special needs, including physical or cognitive differences. The division allows for a 'buddy' to help the players as needed with hitting, running the bases, and catching the ball," said Mark Porter, Treasurer of ASBS. "The league is designed so everyone can have fun and participate in America's favorite pastime."

The games are held

weekly from late April through the end of June, with each player receiving a team hat and personalized jersey.

Norway Savings Bank is proud to be a sponsor of "Buddy Ball" and has also had several team members volunteer their time as "buddies," including Richelle Wallace, Executive VP and Senior Resources Officer at NSB.

"It is so rewarding, and the kids and families appreciate it so much. It's really a blast," said Richelle. "Both the athletes and their 'buddies' are amazing to watch. It fills your heart."

Thanks to community support, there is no registration fee.



"We're thankful for the support of Norway Savings and our other sponsors who make it possible for our staff and volunteers to provide this beloved program," said Porter.

"It's heartwarming to watch these athletes participating in the games, developing a love for baseball, and feeling fulfilled as a member of a team," said Dan Walsh, President and CEO of Norway Savings Bank. "It's an

unforgettable and positive experience for the players and provides heartwarming moments for families and spectators. NSB applauds the efforts of ASLL and is proud to be listed as a sponsor of such a worthy and impactful program."

If you would like to volunteer as a "buddy," contact Ashley at patsfan83@yahoo.com. To learn more about becoming an individual or business sponsor of this extraordinary league, contact Mark at maporter65@yahoo.com.



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For Memorial Day, King interviews Army mechanic

WASHINGTON, D.C. — On this Memorial Day, U.S. Senator Angus King, a member of the Senate Veterans Affairs (SVAC) and Armed Services Committees (SASC), released his latest episode of “Answering the Call: Maine’s Veteran Voices.” In the 14th interview of the series, produced in partnership with the Library of Congress’ Veterans History Project, Senator King spoke with Leslie Brown of Presque Isle. Brown was a U.S. Army jet engine mechanic who served for nearly three decades and faced two deployments during Operation Enduring Freedom. During the interview, King asked Brown about her experiences serving at Army installations across the world and her work today supporting veterans in northern Maine.

“Leslie’s story is one that inspires and embodies the selfless service of so many of our veterans,”

said Senator King. “Following in the footsteps of her father, an Air Force mechanic, Leslie succeeded in her field and became a highly respected leader. Today, she still continues to serve by supporting her fellow veterans back home in Maine. As we commemorate Memorial Day, we honor and recognize all the men and women who made the ultimate sacrifice, as well as thank our heroes back here at home, like Leslie. It is a privilege to share these stories of unwavering dedication to our country.”

Leslie Brown grew up in Woodland, Maine, the daughter of an Air Force mechanic. After graduating Caribou High School, Leslie briefly attended the University of Maine Fort Kent and later went on to enlist in the Army where she began training to become a jet engine mechanic, following in the footsteps of her father.

After completing training, Brown was sent to Germany where she served as helicopter mechanic for nearly six years. During her tour in Germany, she witnessed the fall of the Berlin Wall, met her husband and welcomed two children.

After her tour ended in Germany, the family moved back stateside to Fort Campbell, Kentucky. After leaving Kentucky, Brown’s career took her all across the country: Hunter Army Airfield in Savannah, Georgia; Schofield Barracks in Honolulu, Hawaii; Fort Drum in Jefferson County, New York and Fort Irwin in San Bernardino County, California.

She also was stationed twice in South Korea — both times were considered “hardship tours” where she went alone and her family remained stateside. The first tour was in the late 1990s, and, during her second tour a few years

later, she was in charge of a helicopter engine shop but also had additional duties such as teaching English to Korean soldiers who assisted the Army.

During her career, Brown was deployed two times to Afghanistan during Operation Enduring Freedom. The first time she was deployed to Forward Operating Base Salerno where she helped with humanitarian aid efforts and her unit was awarded humanitarian medals for their work. During her second deployment, Leslie received news that her husband had passed away. She immediately returned to the states where her son was finishing high school and her daughter had recently enlisted in the Army. After her son graduated high school, Brown returned to Afghanistan to finish out her deployment. After her tour in Afghanistan ended, she made the decision to retire and moved back to

northern Maine.

Today, Brown serves as a veterans outreach program counselor with the Maine Department of Labor where she has the opportunity to work directly with veterans like herself — connecting them to support and resources at the Department of Veterans’ Affairs (VA) and within the northern Maine community.

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

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

MaineHealth announces retirement of CFO Al Swallow

PORTLAND, ME -- MaineHealth today announced that Chief Financial Officer Albert G. Swallow III will retire in early 2025.

A dedicated MaineHealth leader for over 30 years, Swallow began his journey in 1994 at Maine Medical Center, where he held various leadership roles for more than two decades until he was

appointed to his current role in 2015. Throughout his tenure, Swallow has played a key role in many significant initiatives, including the unification of MaineHealth in 2019 and navigating the financial challenges posed by the COVID-19 pandemic.

“Al has had an unwavering commitment to our vision of ‘working together so our communities



MaineHealth

are the healthiest in America,’ and his impact will be felt for many years to come,” said Chief Executive Officer Andy Mueller, MD.

A Maine native and graduate of Thomas College, Swallow has also

been a prominent leader and mentor within the community. He has served as chair of the boards of the Portland Regional Chamber of Commerce and the United Way of Greater Portland, and as a board member for the

Maine State Chamber of Commerce, Hospice of Southern Maine, Cancer Care Center of York County and the Maine Health Management Coalition. In recognition of his decades of service, the American Heart Association honored

Swallow with the Crystal Heart Award in March 2024.

“Al’s contributions to our state and our health system are immeasurable. We are incredibly grateful for his dedicated service and leadership,” said Mueller.

MaineHealth will begin the search for Swallow’s successor later this spring.

UMA launches new music technology program

AUGUSTA, ME – To further complement its popular existing music program, the University of Maine at Augusta (UMA) is offering a new innovative Music Technology degree program. The Bachelor of Arts in Music Technology is designed to empower the next generation of musicians and artists with innovative tools and skills to navigate the evolving landscape of the music industry.

As recognized by the University of Maine System (UMS) Board of Trustees January 29 meeting, UMA is the only UMS university physically equipped with the recording facility space

and associated technology needed to deliver a program of this kind. Notwithstanding, the program enjoys the full support of every other university in the System, including the School of Computing and Information Science at the University of Maine (UMaine), which houses the Bachelor of Arts in New Media, as well as the University of Maine at Farmington’s (UMF) Division of the Arts. UMA Music Technology students will have access to three UMF Music courses, and UMaine will offer its upper-level New Media coursework to those students as well.

In an age where tech-

nology is reshaping every facet of our lives, UMA recognizes the importance of integrating these advancements into music education. The Music Technology program at UMA is set to redefine traditional music education by providing students with a comprehensive curriculum that merges musical artistry with cutting-edge technological expertise. As with other music programs at UMA, the Music Technology courses can be completed online, in person, or in a hybrid format (combination of online and face-to-face).

“At UMA, we believe in preparing our students not just for today’s

music industry, but for the future. This new program is a testament to our commitment to innovation and excellence in music education and in preparing students with the appropriate technical skills to succeed,” said Dr. Anita Jerosch, Associate Professor of Music and Music Program Coordinator.

The program is structured to equip students with a diverse set of skills, ranging from music production and sound engineering to digital composition and interactive performance. Utilizing UMA’s facilities and industry-standard software, students will have hands-on experience in creating,

producing, recording, and using audio electronics for various fields of music business.

A key highlight of the music programs at UMA is its emphasis on collaboration. In addition to course collaboration with other UMS universities, students have the opportunity to work on interdisciplinary projects, collaborating with peers from various disciplines such as business, education, and sociology to mirror the real-world scenarios that musicians face today. Similar to other existing music students at UMA, collaboration is also experienced online with course projects and opportunities for online participation in a variety of ensembles from Rock to Classical and everything in between.

The faculty at UMA’s Music program bring a wealth of industry experience to the classroom. “Students are learning from the best, gaining insights into the latest trends and technologies

shaping the music industry. I’m very proud of the expertise UMA brings in its music faculty which ranges from audio engineering to hip-hop mixing to immersive 3-D audio,” said Joseph Szakas, Provost and Chief Academic Officer at UMA.

UMA’s commitment to accessibility is reflected in the program’s flexibility. Whether students are aspiring producers, sound designers, or interactive media artists, the Music Technology Program caters to a broad spectrum of interests within the realm of music and technology. For more information, visit www.uma.edu/musitech.

UMA transforms the lives of students of every age and background across the State of Maine and beyond through access to high-quality distance and on-site education, excellence in student support, civic engagement, and professional and liberal arts programs. For more information, please visit <https://www.uma.edu/>.

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Android co-founder headlining Maine Innovation Exchange

ORONO, ME — Entrepreneurs seeking ideas, support networks and resources for revolutionizing their business and adapting to an evolving economy are invited to attend the Maine Innovation Exchange, headlined by Android co-founder and venture capitalist Rich Miner and TimberHP President and CEO Joshua Henry.

The Maine Innovation Exchange will be held from 9 a.m.-5 p.m. on Thursday, June 13 at the University of Maine's Innovative Media Research and Commercialization (IMRC) Center. In addition to the keynote speech from Miner and Henry, the

all-day event will feature talks from other executives, startup founders, scientists, engineers and business experts. Sessions will explore artificial intelligence and other emerging technologies, the economic ramifications of climate change and other environmental threats, opportunities for collaboration and inspiring stories of innovation in Maine's heritage and burgeoning industries.

Register and learn more by visiting the Maine Innovation Exchange website. The event is hosted by UMaine's Office of Strategic Partnerships, Innovation, Resources and Engagement (SPIRE).

Swim season is almost here! Red Cross shares water safety tips

PORTLAND, ME — The American Red Cross encourages families to prepare for the fast-approaching summer swim season by learning to be "water smart." Research shows that participation in formal water safety and swim lessons can reduce the risk of drowning by 88% for one to four-year-olds.

swim through Red Cross lifesaving aquatics programs. These programs incorporate the latest science-based curriculum and industry best practices, helping to keep individuals and families safer while enjoying water activities. Through this work, over the last century, the Red Cross has helped to reduce accidental drownings by nearly 90% nationwide. In 2023, nine Maine providers enrolled 3,225 youth in Red Cross aquatics and water safety classes.

the Red Cross. **IMPORTANT WATER SAFETY TIPS** This summer, remember these four water safety tips.

1. Nobody should ever swim alone – adults and teens as well as children. Never leave a young child unattended near water, and do not trust a child's life to another child.

2. It's best to always designate a "water watcher" who will keep a close eye and constant attention on children and weaker swimmers in, on and around water until the next water watcher takes over.

3. Have young children or inexperienced swimmers wear properly fitted U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets around water, but do not rely on life jackets alone.

"Before families head out to pools, beaches and lakes, it's important for all family members to learn and review critical water safety skills," said Stephanie Couturier, chief executive officer, Red Cross Northern New England Region. "Knowing fundamental Red Cross water safety skills will help you feel more prepared for fun outings in, on and around the water."

"Preventing unsupervised access to water, providing constant, active adult supervision and knowing how to swim are critical layers of protection to help prevent drowning," said Connie Harvey, director of Aquatics Centennial and Survival Programs for

4. Reach or throw, don't go! In the event of an emergency, reach or throw an object to the person in trouble and tell them to grab on. Don't go in! You could be in danger of drowning yourself.

"We encourage families to educate themselves on safer water habits, to learn to swim and know how to handle emergencies," said Harvey. "Our aquatic training providers offer swim education and classes for both children and adults. We recommend that you also learn first aid and CPR, so you'll know what to do until help arrives."

to help children from all backgrounds in kindergarten through 5th grade learn vital water safety behaviors without having to be in or near the water.

Community Partnerships Our Aquatics Centennial Campaign, launched in 2014 to recognize 100 years of Red Cross leadership in swimming and water safety, is active in nearly 100 communities across the country. The program works to reduce drowning rates in locations where drowning rates are above the national average alongside valued community partners.

Each year, more than 2.5 million people learn to

Red Cross Swim app can help children and adults learn with kid-friendly video and activities on mobile devices. Do your part. Be "water smart."

WHALE TALES FOR CHILDREN The Red Cross recently revamped its Longfellow's WHALE Tales Water Safety for Children program. The no-cost program is designed

to help children from all backgrounds in kindergarten through 5th grade learn vital water safety behaviors without having to be in or near the water. Educators, swim instructors, parents, caregivers and others can teach critical water safety lessons to children before the swim season kicks off. WHALE Tales are short, engaging and age-appropriate lessons that cover important water safety topics in different environments such as pools, waterparks, oceans, lakes and rivers. The free downloadable resources include lesson plans, course presentations and engaging materials such as videos and activity sheets and can be accessed at redcross.org/WHALEtales. If you're a parent or caregiver teaching your own children, vis-

GET STARTED TODAY Go to redcross.org/watersafety for swim program information and a variety of resources. The Red Cross Swim app can help children and adults learn with kid-friendly video and activities on mobile devices. Do your part. Be "water smart."

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\$11.5M goes for public housing throughout Maine

WASHINGTON, D.C. – Today, U.S. Senator Susan Collins, Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, announced that 17 Public Housing Authorities (PHAs) in Maine have been awarded a total of \$11,648,244 through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development's (HUD) Public Housing Capital Fund Formula Grant program to support the development, financing, and modernization of Public Housing projects and for management improvements.

"The dedicated staff at housing authorities throughout Maine work hard to link seniors, individuals with disabilities, and low-income individuals and families with access to an array of programs that help them improve their living conditions and achieve economic independence," said Senator Collins. "With this funding, housing authorities across the state will continue their work within their local communities to ensure that the needs of their residents are met."

The grant funding is allocated as follows:
Portland Housing Authority - \$3,335,695
Bangor Housing Authority - \$2,014,299
Lewiston Housing Authority - \$1,274,622

South Portland Housing Authority - \$746,295
Waterville Housing Authority - \$708,966
Presque Isle Housing Authority - \$663,710
Auburn Housing Authority - \$468,412
Brewer Housing Authority - \$441,799
Sanford Housing Authority - \$402,841
Bar Harbor Housing Authority - \$370,928
Van Buren Housing Authority - \$320,724
Fort Fairfield Housing Authority - \$257,184
Old Town Housing Authority - \$246,869
Ellsworth Housing Authority - \$151,713
Southwest Harbor Housing Authority - \$134,925
Tremont Housing Authority - \$58,832

Mount Desert Housing Authority - \$50,430
The HUD's Public Housing program ensures safe, decent, and affordable housing, and creates opportunities for residents' self-sufficiency and economic independence.

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Summer 2024

NORWAY -- Art Exhibition "If You Lived Here, You Would" at the award-winning Gingerbread House, Main Street, Norway, Maine. The show will dialogue with the history of this incredible edifice, which pours out of its every nook and cranny. "If You Lived Here You Would..." is a consideration of the home's past that offers a glimpse into its potential future through a selection of sculptures, paintings, drawings, and mixed-media pieces—brought to western Maine for the very first time—by a group of internationally recognized and acclaimed artists.

June 6

LEWISTON -- 3:30 PM – 5:30 PM Community Block Party, Community Concepts, 240 Bates Street

June 7

LEWISTON -- From 10:00am - 11:30am, the Lewiston Public Library Children's Department will be offering the program Baby Keepsakes: Following in Your Footsteps in honor of Father's Day. Caregivers will be able to create a personalized keepsake using their baby's footprint on top of their adult shoe print. This activity will take place in the back of the Children's Department on the third floor of the library. The program is recommended for babies ages birth to 2 years and their caregivers. Siblings are also welcome to attend.

This program is free and there is no registration. Participants are invited to bring a clean adult shoe for this program.

June 7-8

MAINE — Though wages for the lowest paid jobs have risen across the country at the fastest rate in four decades, the number of households struggling to get by in Maine grew nearly 7,000 from 2021 to 2022. As a result, a total of 249,725 households (or 42%) were living paycheck to paycheck, according to a new Update from

Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

BATH -- Studio Theatre of Bath (STB) is thrilled to announce "Impossible Destinations: Postcard Edition", our 3rd Impossible Dream Musical Revue, at the Chocolate Church Arts Center (CCAC) in Bath.

From the CCAC's main stage, STB's Impossible Dream Singers will journey from a tropical island to southern pines, past cable cars to the streets of London and other wonderful sites before we ultimately arrive in Sin City. Please join our celebration of our favorite travel and adventure themes from classic standards and Broadway showtunes, as well as popular music of the last 60 years.

June 7

LEWISTON -- 5:30 PM, Unveiling of Robert Shetterly Portrait of Dr. Bernard Lown in the Bates Mill Atrium

Dr. Lown was an LHS graduate, renowned cardiologist, won a Nobel Peace Prize, invented the defibrillator, was a peace advocate and author. Lewiston named a bridge after him, the Bernard Lown Peace Bridge, in 2008.

June 11

LEWISTON -- June 11 is Primary Day, which means residents will vote by ward. As such, all regular polling places will be open from 7 AM - 8 PM. For questions about polling locations, please visit www.lewistonmaine.gov/elections or call the City Clerk's Office at

(207) 513-3124.

June 13

Sampson AFB Veterans and persons with a connection to those who took Air Force Basic Training there will have a get together Thursday, June 13 at the Governor's restaurant at noon time for lunch. All veterans of any branch or era are welcome to join us and share your experiences with us. FMI call 207-657-4909 Bob Sawyer or email wwmtkwkr1933@gmail.com

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

GORHAM -- Gorham Garden Club Plant sale, June 15th 9AM -12 PM. Location: Baxter Library next to the Gazebo, 71 South St., Gorham, Maine

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.

June 20

SOUTH PARIS -- University of Maine Cooperative Extension and McLaughlin Garden and Homestead will host a panel on how climate change impacts plants on Thursday, June 20, 2-3:30 p.m. at 97 Main Street, South Paris.

June 26

LEWISTON -- Birds and Flora of New Zealand talk will be happening at Lewiston Public Library on Wednesday, June 26, 2024, from 11:30 am to 12:30 PM. FMI: <https://lplonline.org/events/lpl-to-host-the-stanton-bird-club/>

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.

July 13

GORHAM -- The Maine Iris Society will hold its annual auction of bearded iris rhizomes on Saturday, July 13th, starting at 1:00 pm at the Treworgy Homestead and Garden located at 120 Flagg Meadow Road in Gorham, Maine, A complimentary self-guided tour of the Treworgy Garden is included. This event is free and open to the public.

July 13, 14

LEWISTON -- Sat.

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July 13, at 7:30 PM and Sun., July 14, at 2 PM Late and Alone – An unforgettable one-man tribute to Johnny Cash featuring his greatest hits and stories from his life and career performed by Scott Moreau. The Public Theatre, 31 Maple Street - www.thepublictheatre.org

July 17

AUBURN -- Read ME Summer Book Discussions at the Auburn Public Library, Wednesday, July 17, 2024 -- 4:00-5:00 p.m. (Moon in Full)

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.

Aug 14

AUBURN -- Read ME Summer Book Discussions at the Auburn Public Library, Wednesday, August 14, 2024 – 4:00-5:00 p.m. (The Road to Dalton)

Sept 14

LEWISTON -- From 12 noon to 3 PM 4th Annual Rally for Recovery hosted by the Lewiston Area Public Health Committee in Kennedy Park

Every 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Monday

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

Homeschool families, are you looking for opportunities to have fun and socialize with other homeschool families? LPL will be offering activities for homeschool families in the Children's Department the first three Mondays of each month from 11:15am-12:30pm. The activities will be a Homeschool Video Game Social on March 6th, a Homeschool Lego Club and Curriculum Swap on March 13th, and a Homeschool Storytime and Craft on March 20th.

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

Despite bigger paychecks, struggling households increase

MAINE — Though wages for the lowest paid jobs have risen across the country at the fastest rate in four decades, the number of households struggling to get by in Maine grew nearly 7,000 from 2021 to 2022. As a result, a total of 249,725 households (or 42%) were living paycheck to paycheck, according to a new Update from

United Ways of Maine and its research partner United For ALICE.

That calculation includes the 70,445 Maine households in poverty as well as another 179,280 defined as ALICE (Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed), earning above the Federal Poverty Level but less than what's needed to survive

in the current economy. ALICE workers include child care providers, home health aides and cashiers — those working low-wage jobs, with little or no savings and one emergency from poverty.

ALICE in the Cross-currents: An Update on Financial Hardship in Maine shows that while wages were increasing, so too

were costs. For a family of four with an infant and a preschooler, the basic costs to live and work in Maine, excluding tax credits, rose from \$87,468 in 2021 to \$91,536 a year later. Compounding the issue in 2022 was the loss of up to \$15,000 in federal child tax credits and stimulus payments that this family had access to in 2021.

"There is no doubt, bigger paychecks helped, but inflation and the loss of pandemic supports converged to keep ALICE trapped," said Dan Coyne, senior vice president, community impact and governance at United Way of Southern Maine. "This latest data is a reminder that while we have made some progress, our work is far from over."

The findings in this one-year period are consistent with a more than decade-long trend: Since the end of the Great Recession, despite some ups and

downs, the number of ALICE households in Maine has been steadily growing. From 2010 to 2022, the total number of households rose by 9%, households in poverty remained flat — and the number of ALICE households grew by 29%.

"The data is showing persistent and widespread financial hardship — a red flag that the current system isn't working for ALICE," said Stephanie Hoopes, Ph.D., United For ALICE National Director. "Current policy has not been enough to break down the barriers that trap ALICE households in financial hardship, from lack of access to housing and child care that's affordable, to inadequate community supports such as broadband internet."

Additional insights include:

From 2010 to 2022, people ages 65 and over made up the fastest-growing age group in Maine

— and the group with the largest increase (46%) in the number of households struggling to make ends meet.

Racial disparities persisted in the rates of financial hardship; 57% of Black and 51% of American Indian/Alaska Native households in Maine were either in poverty or ALICE in 2022, compared to 41% of white households.

Food assistance continued to elude many vulnerable families in Maine. Partly due to the SNAP income eligibility level in the state (185% of the Federal Poverty Level), only 40% of all Maine households in poverty and 18% of all ALICE households participated in SNAP in 2022.

To read the Update and access online, interactive dashboards that provide data on financial hardship at the state, county, and local levels, visit aliceinmaine.org.

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

Community Credit Union's Recycle Day turns 15

LEWISTON, ME - On Saturday, April 20, 2024, Community Credit Union hosted their annual Community Recycle Day event at the Auburn Branch. This year marks the 15th Recycle Day event! The event is a collaboration of local organizations offering our community members options to reduce, reuse, repurpose and recycle resources in honor of Earth Day.

Several local partners and volunteers joined forces to make this event a great success, including Community Credit Union, Androscoggin Hospice Thrift Store, Kaydenz Kitchen, Kommunity Kritters, North Coast Services, Shredding On Site and Stratham Tire. The following was recycled because of this event:

North Coast Services accepted/rescued 2,370 lbs. of electronic items (CPUs/laptops, printers, monitors and televisions) from landfills.

Stratham Tire's truck was filled with tires that will be repurposed for projects by another Maine business.

Shredding On Site professionally destroyed over 4,000 pounds of personal and confidential documents on site, protecting

individuals and businesses from identity theft.

Kaydenz Kitchen was able to accept children and adult clothing, toiletry items, non-perishable items, monetary donations and more.

Kommunity Kritters was able to rehome pet food, cat litter, toys, and beds to help some special 4-legged emotional supports in our community. Due to the generosity of local partners and community members, bottle and can donations totaling \$78.15 was also raised for Kommunity Kritters.

Numbers and community feedback are validating event growth year over year. This is a drive-thru event and Community Credit Union couldn't do it without an amazing group of volunteers. Despite the rainy weather nearly half of all CCU employees volunteered at this year's event! "This was an incredibly successful Earth Day celebration. Erin Dunn-Kimball, Marketing Specialist does a wonderful job collaborating with area organizations and trying to find new partners for the recycling needs she hears community members asking for each year. If community organizations



Tire Crew, Stratham Tire

want to be involved in this event please reach out to her through the Facebook event or calling Community Credit Union," said Betsy Sibley, Chief Marketing Officer, Community Credit Union.

Community Credit Union has scheduled their next Community Recycle Day Event for April 26, 2025. Visit www.communitycreditunion.com to learn more about upcoming community efforts.

Community Credit Union is a member-owned, full service financial insti-

tution that has been serving its members and all of Androscoggin County since 1945. The Credit Union has a low-income designation from NCUA as well as certified as a Community Development Financial Institution (CDFI). Community Credit Union has branches located at 144 Pine Street, Lewiston, 40 Stanley Street, Auburn and 1025 Auburn Road in Turner serving approximately 12,000 members. For more information, log onto www.communitycreditunion.com.



Kommunity Kritters



Kaydenz Kitchen



AndWell

New law makes it easier to grow your own food

AUBURN, ME - On March 11, a bill sponsored by Representative Kathy Shaw, D-Auburn, was

signed into law by Maine Governor Janet Mills. LD 2053, "An Act to Exempt Buildings Used to Cultivate Crops from the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code," will make it easier for more Mainers to

grow their own food. The City of Auburn values and embraces agriculture and local foods and is one of the few, if not the only, communities in the State of Maine that has a chapter of its Comprehensive Plan dedicated to local food production, food access and the agricultural economy. In fact, opportunity abounds for food production in Auburn, with land use policies that support rural land uses, including agriculture.

grow their own food.

In recent years, city staff have encountered an obstacle to the permitting of greenhouses and other structures for the cultivation of food that was preventing their widespread use.

"We discuss the requirements with property owners quite often during the summer months in Auburn," said Eric Cousens, Director of Planning, Permitting and Code. "Many of those discussions result in the disappointment of a homeowner and a decision not to pursue the structure."

Representative Kathy Shaw, who is involved locally with the Agriculture and Natural Products Working Group, offered to explore solutions. That discussion resulted in the

drafting of legislation that became LD 2053. Working closely with stakeholders, including the City of Auburn, the Good Food Council of Lewiston-Auburn, the Maine Farmland Trust, GrowSmart Maine, and the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry, Shaw's bill garnered wide support.

LD 2053, which will go into effect 90 days after the current session of the Legislature adjourns, will exempt buildings used for the cultivation of crops from the Maine Uniform Building and Energy Code (MUBEC), similar to current exemptions that permit buildings for housing livestock or storing harvested crops. This will make it possible for affordable structures, like hoop houses and greenhouses, to be left up year-round. These structures can significantly increase productivity and extend the short growing season in Maine.

"It has been an honor to work with Representative Shaw to resolve the challenge that we encounter in permitting structures for growing crops," said Cousens. "The desire of the public to produce or buy local healthy foods is increasing, and this law will make growing healthy

food attainable to more homes or farms close to where people live, without endangering public safety."

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

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

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



Pictured are Rebekah, Amanda D., and Elizabeth from MFCU with Joel from The Store Next Door.

In 2023, our membership raised \$1,320 through Maine Credit Unions' Campaign for Ending Hunger. Recently, we had the pleasure of donating these funds, alongside a contribution of food items, to The Store Next Door Project. These contributions aim to assist Lewiston students facing food insecurity.

Community is at the heart of everything we do. Join us in celebrating the spirit of giving and together, let's continue to make a difference where it matters most. To learn more about or to donate to this amazing program, visit The Store Next Door on Facebook.



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