

USM Gorham broadcasts Wizard of Oz radio play, listening party



Mike Lawrence as the Wizard, Jared Lennon as the Tin Man; photo by Michael Kmack



Director Joshua N Hsu; photo by Michael Kmack

GORHAM, ME -- Maine Department of Theatre's 2024-2025 season is

North Gorham Public Library hosting local writers

GORHAM, ME -- The public is welcome to attend an hour-long reading of original works by local authors scheduled for 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 23 in the library. Refreshments will be served.

The group, Women Who Write, meets every two weeks at the library where they workshop their writing with their peers. The group includes Lynne Mentzer and Mary Snell

of Gorham, Carolyn Gaul and Cheri Wing-Jones of Windham, and Annie Boisvain of Gray.

On October 23 they will read stories, poems, and other works developed during the two years they have been working together.

Prose and Poetry Reading by Women Who Write, North Gorham Public Library at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 23, 2024

Town of Gorham announces 2024 fall brush drop off

GORHAM, ME -- Public Works will be accepting brush Saturday, 10/12 and Saturday, 10/26 from 8AM-3PM at the Gorham Public Works Department located at 80 Huston Road.

This is for Gor-

ham residents ONLY, no commercial drop off or stumps will be accepted.

Please contact Public Works with any questions.

Call the office at 207-222-4950 or email us at dpw@gorham.me.us



Hailey Gagnon as Dorothy; photo by Hannah Gravelle

off! To see the Wizard, that is, in a wonderful radio theatre adaptation of this beloved tale. Written by Linus Speary and directed by Joshua N Hsu, the show is performed by USM Theatre students. To celebrate its inaugural broadcast, we're hosting a Wizard of Oz listening party on October 26th at 7pm on the USM Gorham Campus.

In a world where ev-

everything seems too green, witches are in every direction, and roads unexpectedly end and begin, discover a land where dreams can come true. Join Dorothy and her fearless dog, Toto, as she's whisked away from Kansas to the wonderful land of Oz. Together with a Scarecrow, a Tin Man, and a Lion, they learn to depend on each other, and discover their power within. Gather friends and family and join us at our listening party. The event will feature an Oz-inspired costume contest, food and non-alcoholic beverages, raffles, fun, and, of course, a listen to the final piece.

For director Joshua N Hsu, this project has been a chance to dive deeply into an American classic in a new way, "...Oz" is a book deeply embedded in the American consciousness: it's omnipresent in our music, our films, our art, and our everyday lives. Its thoughts on friendship, self-determination, and our love for "home"

continue to endure in our cultural vocabulary. We revisit the story from generation to generation, not just because of nostalgia but because we still cherish the ideals Baum espouses. We've tried to capture and convey how much "Oz" is an influential Americana piece."

This is the second radio play produced in the Bill Dufres Memorial Studio on the Gorham Campus by the USM Department of Theatre. Last year, USM Theatre produced The War of the Worlds in the new studio and offered courses in audio engineering and podcasting.

Audiences can enjoy the Wizard of Oz radio play three ways:

Join us for a Listening Party on October 26th at 7-9 PM in Lower Brooks Student Center on at the University of Southern Maine, Gorham Campus.

This event is free and open to all. Best for ages 7 and up. Everyone is encouraged to dress in their

best Oz-inspired costume!

RSVP here: <https://usm.maine.edu/departments-theatre/box-office-tickets/>

Also streaming on WMPG 90.9, Portland and Gorham Maine, on October 26th at 7pm.

Audiences can purchase access when the finished piece is ready at: <https://usm.maine.edu/departments-theatre/box-office-tickets/>

Appropriate for ages 7 and up.

For more information, visit USM Theatre online at usm.maine.edu/theatre, or call the USM Theatre Box Office at (207) 780-5151. For more information on USM's Department of Theatre events and programs, click here.

Those needing special accommodations to participate fully in this program should contact Janice Gardner at (207)780-5289 or janice.gardner@maine.edu. Hearing impaired: call USM's telex / TDD number (207)780-5646

Town of Gorham election, referendum information

GORHAM, ME -- A General Election, Referendum Election, and Municipal Election will take place on Tuesday, November 5, 2024 in which voters will have an opportunity to vote to elect the President, one of Maine's two United States Senators, Maine's two Representatives to Congress, all members of the Maine Legislature (State Senators and State Representatives), certain county officers (which could vary by county), as well as appointments to the Gorham Town Council and Gorham School Committee. The Referendum Election will also allow Maine's citizens the opportunity to vote on

People's Veto Referenda, Direct Initiatives of Legislation (i.e. Citizen Initiatives), Bond Issues, other referenda proposed by the Legislature, and Constitutional Amendments.

The Town has two seats open for three-year terms on the Town Council, and two seats open for three-year terms on the School Committee.

Absentee voting will take place in the Council Chambers starting October 21st thru October 31st during regular business hours (Monday - Thursday, 7:00am - 5:00pm)

Extra voting hours will be offered on Saturday, October 26th from 8:00am

- noon and Wednesday, October 30th until 7:00pm.

Voter Registration Unenrolled voters can enroll in a party at any time, including Election Day, since the State of Maine offers Election Day voter registration.

Absentee Voting Absentee ballot requests are now available. You can request an absentee ballot by calling the Clerks office or by going to the Town's website. Ballots will be mailed out in early October once the Town Clerk's Office receives them.

Absentee voting will be available in the Council Chambers at the Gor-

ham Municipal Center (75 South Street, Suite 1). The last day to obtain an absentee ballot will be Thursday, October 31 at 5pm.

To be counted, absentee ballots must be returned to the Town Clerk's Office by 8pm on Election Day - November 5, 2024 by you or an immediate family member.

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

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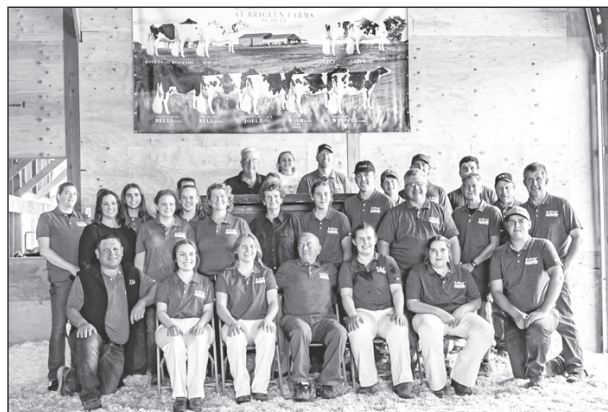
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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

10th generation dairy awarded grant

TURNER, ME
 -- Maine Farmland Trust (MFT) has awarded a \$65,000 Implementation Grant to Brigeen Farms in Turner, a 10th generation family owned and operated dairy farm. Brigeen Farms will use the funds to implement elements of a business plan to upgrade the farm's infrastructure and technology and reduce operational costs to reach efficiencies of scale.



As farmers Betsy and Bill Bullard put it: "The goal for the future is simple: to continue to evolve and position the farm in such a way that it continues to offer the same opportunities for future generations."

To become eligible to apply for the grant, Brigeen Farms completed Farming for the Long Haul, MFT's competitive two-year business planning program for experienced farmers designed to grow the long-term success and financial resilience of their businesses.

Over the course of the program, they received technical assistance to analyze their value-added enterprise, and developed a multi-year business plan to increase their milk production and finance infrastructure improvements to address labor, time, and cost bottlenecks.

"Maine dairy farms are essential to our agricultural sector, stewarding

vast acreages of farmland while contributing to rural jobs and economic opportunities throughout the supply chain. As one of Maine's longest-running family dairies, Brigeen Farms is a cornerstone in the community and a significant producer of Maine milk. Maine Farmland Trust is excited to support Brigeen Farms as they make these forward-looking investments to evolve and grow their business for years into the future," said Tricia Rouleau, Farm Network Director at Maine Farmland Trust.

Over the past 25 years, Brigeen Farms has grown from 65 milking cows to a herd of 580 registered Holstein cows, plus more than 800 crop acres for feed production. While wholesale milk is the farm's primary operation, selling 16.1 million pounds of milk in 2023 through the Dairy Farmers of America Cooperative, the farm has diversified to include Canty Cow Creamery, pro-



ducing and selling premium frozen custard, and a small compost business.

Under Brigeen Farms' multi-year business plan developed with support from MFT's Farming for the Long Haul program, their aim is to increase profitability and efficiencies of scale by growing their herd to 700 milking cows. By producing a higher volume of milk and investing in more efficient infrastructure, the farm hopes to increase its income and reduce its operational costs over the long term.

Through the Farming for the Long Haul program, Brigeen Farms also worked with a dairy expert on a financial analysis of a robotic, or voluntary, milking system to explore what such a transition might require. As labor costs continue to increase and the number of available and

interested farmworkers in the area declines, a priority in the business plan is to attract and retain employees with more opportunities to specialize and leverage newer technologies. The financial analysis identified that the gradual introduction of a robotic milking system could help to address labor challenges, but would require upgrades to on-farm milk storage and handling, the power supply, as well as changes to the way the animals are housed, feed is stored, and deliveries are made.

"The opportunity to learn from other successful Maine farm enterprise owners in workshop settings, as well as access targeted Technical Assistance funds for detailed business analyses has been extremely valuable as we chart the next steps for further modernization and improvement at Brigeen Farms. Im-

plementation Grant funds are enabling project work in 2024 to continue making strides on improved viability and profitability for our 10th generation family farm," said Betsy Bullard.

With the Implementation Grant funding, Brigeen Farms plans to construct a new operational hub facility with increased milk storage that will help set the foundation for a smooth transition of the business for generations to come at the farm. The new milkhouse will allow for greater bulk tank storage capacity, including a mechanical and water system set up, electrical upgrades, greater trucking accessibility, and easier employee workflow.

These efficiencies will reduce costs and risk, while setting the stage for the potential future introduction of a robotic milking system to achieve even greater efficiency. And as farmer-owners Betsy and Bill Bullard plan for their eventual retirement with-

in the next 25 years, they hope these improvements will position the farm business for a successful transfer to the next generation.

This is the eighth year that MFT has awarded Implementation Grants to farmers, totaling \$1,385,359 in funds to support projects to help farm businesses increase their profitability and resilience to risk. After completing Farming for the Long Haul, participants have the opportunity to apply for the Implementation Grant and bring their business plan before a review committee of MFT staff and industry experts. Awardees must source \$65,000 in addition to the \$65,000 matching grant received from MFT, resulting in a total of at least \$130,000 toward the implementation of their plan.

These Implementation Grants, and the hundreds of hours of workshops, technical assistance, and individual support delivered to farmers annually through MFT's Farm Business Planning Programs, are made possible through the generosity of The Bingham Trust, Kennebec Savings, Northeast Sustainable Agriculture Research & Education (SARE), Ram Island Conservation Fund, and the many supporters who recognize the value that local farms bring to our communities and economy.

Dairy workforce impact fund to boost jobs, skills in Northeast

MAINE – The Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC) is excited to announce the launch of the

Dairy Workforce Impact Fund, a new initiative designed to address critical workforce challenges in the region's dairy industry.

With \$1.215 million in funding, the initiative aims to strengthen the workforce pipeline, improve career advancement opportunities, increase worker retention, and reduce barriers to participation in the dairy sector across 11 Northeast states.

NE-DBIC will pilot the Fund for two years, beginning this fall. Designed to spark, grow, share, and invest in workforce solutions, the Fund will provide grants and resources to support both farm and processing businesses across the Northeast. This

initiative addresses critical challenges, including a shortage of entry-level workers and limited career pathways in the dairy sector.

The Dairy Workforce Impact Fund focuses on four Key Priorities: Strengthening the

Pipeline: Expanding the number of new workers entering the dairy industry

Building Skills and Career Opportunities: Elevating training programs that increase career advancement

Increasing Worker Retention: Fostering workplace cultures that improve employee satisfaction

Reducing Barriers: Removing obstacles for employees and new industry entrants, especially through training and development

This investment will be dispersed in one round of directed funds and two rounds of competitive grants. Directed funds will go to programs focused on strengthening Registered Apprenticeship programming, increasing access to supervisor skill-building opportunities, and growing the pipeline of new workers across the Northeast region. These programs are:

Center for Dairy
 See Dairy, page 10

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

American Idol's Julia Gagnon free Halloween mini concert



SOUTH PORTLAND, ME -- American Idol star Julia Gagnon will have a free Halloween performance at the Maine Mall-area Goodwill store 4:30-6 p.m. Friday, Oct. 18. Gagnon, a former Goodwill NNE employee, learned interpersonal skills working at the Falmouth, ME Goodwill that she now uses in her singing career. Now, Gagnon is giving back to the local nonprofit by helping to promote sustainable Halloween shopping.

"In the three years I worked at Goodwill, I learned how to talk with people and the fact that everyone has a different story

that is unique and beautiful in their own way," Julia said. "I also learned how important shopping second-hand can be when it comes to the environment." As advocates for sustainable fashion, Julia and Goodwill NNE are partnering up to bring a special DIY costume shopping experience that celebrates secondhand.

About 83% of costumes end up in landfills. Shopping secondhand, especially for Halloween, has never been more important. A leader in reuse, Goodwill NNE diverts 50+ million pounds of donated goods from landfills annually and makes shopping



secondhand accessible and affordable. That's important because according to Goodwill Industries International's 2024 Halloween Survey, inflation is impacting what families are able to spend on Halloween costumes this year.

The survey shows that more people are planning DIY costumes this year with pop-culture and character-based costumes leading in popularity. Julia and Goodwill NNE will be serving thrifted costume inspiration like "how to make

an idol" on their social media platforms and in-person at the event.

"The average consumer can no longer afford to spend \$50 dollars on something they'll only wear once," said Goodwill NNE's Vice President

of Retail, Dave Robison. "We're here to provide affordable, sustainable costumes that offer room for creativity, and discourage throw-away culture."

Revenue from Goodwill NNE stores goes towards funding their mission of helping people achieve personal stability in Maine, New Hampshire and Vermont. We at Goodwill like to call it value shopping, with values.

Julia and her fiancé Nate will be performing a mini-concert followed by a meet-and-greet at the event on Oct. 18 at the Goodwill store at 555 Maine Mall Road in South Portland. With your support, we'll make a difference to people in our northern New England community, and the planet.

Riding To The Top hosts Triple B ~ Boots, Band, and BBQ



RTT Client and volunteer riding team work with herd member, Dream

WINDHAM, ME -- Saturday October 19th from 5:30-11 pm at 14 Lilac Drive in Windham, Riding To The Top Therapeutic (RTT) Riding Center will host its 16th Annual Triple B ~ Boots, Band and BBQ.

This year's event will celebrate "Team RTT," and all the different ways that this manifests at the farm -- from riding teams to volunteers to staff to client families to paddock mates. RTT pays tribute to the people, horses, businesses and organizations that have helped sustain Riding The Top since its beginning in 1993. Organizers for the October 19th event have a goal of

raising \$200,000 to support Financial Aid for RTT's clients and Horse Care.

The evening will feature Schilly's mouthwatering barbecue, a Mission Based Auction, dancing to the live music of local favorite "Under The Covers," a fantastic raffle, photo booth, boot contests and door prizes. Michelle Taylor of 99.9 THE WOLF will return to emcee and auctioneer Elizabeth Ross Holmstrom will call the unique mission

based auction.

This annual "Party with a Purpose" plays a vital role in RTT's ability to provide equine-assisted services for local children and adults with disabilities. Sarah Bronson, RTT's Executive Director, shared that "this event has become a community favorite. While raising critical funds to support RTT's programs and most notably our Rider and Horse Funds, it's also an incredibly fun evening for our

guests, including some time meeting our horses, enjoying delicious food, music and dancing!"

This year's Triple B is supported by many local business partners led by our Grand Champion Sponsor, Portland Volvo, and Reserve Champion Sponsor, Norway Savings Bank.

If you're interested in more information or reserving your tickets today, please visit: <https://www.ridingtothetop.org/tripleb>

Clothes galore at Gorham's Mission of Hope Clothes Closet

GORHAM, ME -- The FREE Clothes Closet at Cressey Road Church (Mission of Hope Clothes Closet) is open to all who need Fellowship, Friendship and Clothes. We are located at 81 Cressey Road, Gorham, and we are open on the FIRST and THIRD Saturday of each month from 9 o'clock AM to 12 Noon.

We focus on clothes

and accessories (gloves, scarves, hats, etc.) and welcome your donations during our operating hours. Clean clothes in good shape help the most, as they go right out to help people locally or in nearby communities. An attempt is made to have season appropriate clothes available to you. After we have displayed them for a time, they are donated to our local second-hand shops.

In addition to helping folks find clothes, we want to spend time with you! There are tables to sit, talk and to share a cup of coffee and usually a goodie with volunteers or others. Come see us! You might make a new friend. All are welcome!

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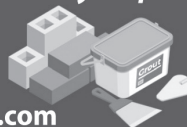
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Seniors Not Acting Their Age

Chowderheads Challenge the Petawawa River



Eggman DeCoster enters Big Thompson Rapid on the Petawawa River



Paddlers cross mirror calm Lake Travers



Paddlers Relax at Lake Travers Campsite

The Petawawa River is one of the most renowned canoe tripping rivers in Canada. Most of the river is located in Algonquin Provincial Park in north central Ontario, the oldest provincial park in Canada. Famous for its exciting whitewater and spectacular beauty, the remote waterway has a rich logging history. The Petawawa derives its unusual name from Algonquian for “where one hears a noise like this,” probably referring to the many rapids.

While vaguely familiar with the Petawawa, I never expected to paddle it. Then last December, I received an unexpected Christmas email from longtime friend Bill Blauvelt. He and his wife, Sally, were organizing a Petawawa River trip for this

September and I was invited. I readily accepted the welcome invitation.

The logistics for a Petawawa trip are daunting. Camping reservations are required in the various zones on the river but not for specific sites which are filled on a first-come first-serve basis. And, shuttle arrangements must be made for the isolated access points. The upper levels of the Petawawa are generally too low to run late summer so our plan was to begin at Lake Travers, a five-day trip. Bill did an amazing job of organizing the entire adventure.

The drive from central Maine to the Petawawa is about 10 hours (add an additional two hours if you get lost in Montreal which we managed to do). Six of us

met at the bustling village of Petawawa on a cold blustery day. Paddlers consisted of Bill and Sally in a tandem canoe, Pat Hamlin and Eggman DeCoster maneuvering solo canoes, and Ken Gordon and me navigating expedition kayaks. With the exception of Pat, all of us are Chowderheads with the Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society.

Despite stormy weather immediately before the trip, the forecast was exceptional for our five-day excursion calling for hot sunny weather, light winds, and negligible precipitation. Blackflies were a concern. Bill and Sally packed a screen tent for protection from the menaces should they appear.

On the drive to the

put-in, we stopped at Algonquin Outfitters where final shuttle arrangements were made and Pat rented a canoe. Our vehicles would be waiting for us at the take-out. Ominously, blackflies were a nuisance in the parking area. We received great news when signing into the park; no other paddlers were expected on the river – that meant no vying for campsites!

The long drive on quality dirt roads to the launch area on Lake Travers was uneventful. The lake itself was stunningly beautiful. No blackflies were noted when loading our boats. The lake was mirror calm when we embarked traveling north.

After paddling past a large island, the lake narrowed and we began searching for a campsite. Benefiting from the luxury of no competition, we inspected four potential sites before selecting an expansive island site with a magnificent view facing south – and no bugs.

Dense fog and cool temperatures greeted us in the morning. We lingered until the fog lifted and another glorious day ensued.

Soon after we departed, the lake narrowed and the river began. Three miles of flatwater brought us to the first whitewater on our journey, Big and Little Thompson Rapids. Unsure



Pat Hamlin finishes Big Thompson Rapid

of what to expect in terms of difficulty, we scouted Big Thompson from a portage trail on the right. Identifying no serious difficulties, we descended down the middle in loaded boats avoiding ledges on the left and sticky holes on the right.

Rated Grade 2, from river level Little Thompson appeared to be a straight forward plunge down the right side in feisty waves. However, when entering the moderately steep pitch we did not directly correlate with the more familiar Class II rating we use.

Around the bend, we passed a busted blue canoe on the shore. It's likely someone experienced a mishap in one of the Thompson Rapids.

Flatwater and quick water continued for several miles until we found a campsite on river left a short distance above the beginning of Grillade Rapid. We settled in anticipating that several difficult rapids would make the following day the most challenging of the trip.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* narrates the six best 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.ronchaseoutdoors.com or he can be reached at ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net

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Free classes with New Ventures Maine

AUGUSTA, ME -- New Ventures Maine is offering free workshops and classes statewide in October in three program areas: career building, starting businesses, and financial education. NVME's redesigned website provides information about classes, instructors, and loca-



tions as well as individual coaching and matched sav-

ings programs. Upcoming classes include (partial list):
Build Your Career
My Next Career Move (self-paced)
Building Confidence (one-hour online workshop)
Start Your Business
Tax Readiness for the Self-Employed (one-hour workshop)

Build Your Business
Website (six sessions)
Bookkeeping Solutions (one-hour workshop)
Manage Your Money
Matched Savings Information Session (one-hour workshop)
My Money Works (five sessions)

Let's Talk About Credit (one-hour workshop)
A schedule of free workshops and classes is regularly updated and accessible online. To learn more and choose a class that's right for you, visit newventuresmaine.org or call 207-621-3440.

Donors vital in response to Hurricane Helene impact

PORTLAND, ME — The American Red Cross continues to work to restock critically needed blood products uncollected due to the ongoing impact of Hurricane Helene's devastation in the Southeast. Donors outside of affected areas are encouraged to make an appointment to give now and help keep the blood supply stable in the weeks to come. Since making landfall, the storm and its aftermath have led to the cancellation of more than 100 blood drives, causing thousands of blood and platelet donations to go uncollected. For so many people living with urgent medical care needs, blood transfusions are essential, and donations in the Southeast are key to keeping our nationwide network stocked. The Red

Cross operates through a national inventory with the ability to move blood wherever and whenever it is needed most. The time to give blood or platelets is now. Bring hope to those in need by visiting RedCrossBlood.org, calling 1-800-RED CROSS or by using the Red Cross Blood Donor App. As the Red Cross continues to urge people to give blood or platelets now, our teams are also on the ground providing vital relief — like food, water, shelter and support — in communities devastated by Hurricane Helene. If you're able to help those impacted by disasters big and small across the country, like Helene, please consider making a gift of any amount. All who come to give blood, platelets or plas-



ma Oct. 1-31 will receive a \$10 Amazon.com Gift Card by email, plus be automatically entered for a chance to win one of three \$5,000 gift cards. For full details, visit RedCrossBlood.org/Treat.
Upcoming blood donation opportunities Oct. 8-31:
Androscoggin
Auburn
10/31/2024: 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., Central Maine Community College, 1250 Turner St
Lewiston
10/18/2024: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., CMMC, 12 High Street, Lower Level
10/22/2024: 10 a.m. - 3 p.m., Bates College Gray Cage, 124 Central Ave
Cumberland
Brunswick
10/23/2024: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Elks Lodge, 179 Park Row
10/25/2024: 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., American Legion Post 20, 1 Columbus Drive
10/30/2024: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Bowdoin College, 8 Polar Loop, Morrell Lounge BLDG.
Falmouth
10/21/2024: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., The Episcopal Church of St. Mary, 43 Foreside Rd

Gorham
10/24/2024: 1 p.m. - 6 p.m., Cressey Road Christian Church, 81 Cressey Road
Gray
10/22/2024: 8 a.m. - 1 p.m., Gray New Gloucester High School, 10 Libby Hill Road
North Yarmouth
10/25/2024: 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., Wescustogo Hall and Community Center, 120 Memorial Hwy
Portland
10/25/2024: 9 a.m. - 3 p.m., Partners for World Health, 40 Walch Dr
10/29/2024: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Cambria Hotel, 25 Hancock St
Scarborough
10/24/2024: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Scarborough Community Services, 418 Payne Rd
10/29/2024: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Saint Maximilian Church, 150 Black Point Rd
South Portland
10/23/2024: 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., South Portland Community Center, 21 Nelson Road
10/29/2024: 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., Eastpoint Christian Church, 345 Clarks Pond Pkwy
Standish
10/30/2024: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., Saint Josephs College - Alford Center, 278 Whites Bridge Rd
10/31/2024: 8 a.m. - 1 p.m., Bonny Eagle High School, 700 Saco Road
Westbrook
10/25/2024: 12 p.m. - 4:30 p.m., Westbrook Community Center, 426 Bridge Street
Windham
Yarmouth
10/18/2024: 11 a.m. - 3:30 p.m., American Legion Post 91, 196 Main St

MEMIC Group announces \$18.7M dividend

PORTLAND, ME — The MEMIC Group Board of Directors has approved an \$18.7 million dividend distribution to as many as 17,000 eligible policyholders who obtain their workers' compensation insurance from the company. This 2024 dividend brings the total capital and dividend distributions for Maine policyholders to \$370 million since 1998. MEMIC Group President and CEO Mi-

chael Bourque announced the dividend at the 2024 MaineBiz CEO Breakfast Forum in Portland. "This year's dividend, equal to approximately 11 percent of premiums paid to MEMIC in 2021, reflects our policyholders' commitment to workforce safety," Bourque stated. "It underscores our collective efforts to prevent injuries and ensure injured workers receive the best medical care for a safe return to work."

Bourque emphasized MEMIC's mutual insurance model: "As a mutual company, we champion injury prevention and management. It benefits our policyholders, their workers, and makes financial sense. We applaud our policyholder members for earning this dividend." However, Bourque also warned that significant rate decreases over the last few years, coupled with a spate of serious workplace injuries in recent months are leading to increasing loss ratios for the company. He said the company and its policyholders will need to bring even greater focus on workforce safety to continue to pay double-digit dividends. "We're seeing some tragic events occurring in our workplaces all over Maine," Bourque said. "These are life-altering injuries which are avoidable in almost every circumstance. We all need to pay attention to the risks that

surround us at work every day." The annual MEMIC dividend isn't guaranteed but reflects employers' success in injury prevention and management, as well as MEMIC's operational and investment performance. The dividend, which will be mailed to policyholders in November, is based on success from the 2021 year.



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Arts & Entertainment

Native seed sowing workshop series for Gorham area

ORONO, ME — Registration is now open for two native seed sowing workshops offered this fall by University of Maine Cooperative Extension and McLaughlin Garden and Homestead. The workshops will be held October 28 from 4 to 5:30 p.m. at Tidewater Farm in Falmouth and on November 8 from 2 - 4 p.m. at the

UMaine Extension office in South Paris.

These workshops are ideal for anyone interested in a cost-effective way to grow more native plants for their gardens. Participants will learn the basics of successful native seed starting and will have the opportunity to sow their own seeds to take home. More workshop dates and locations

will be added soon.

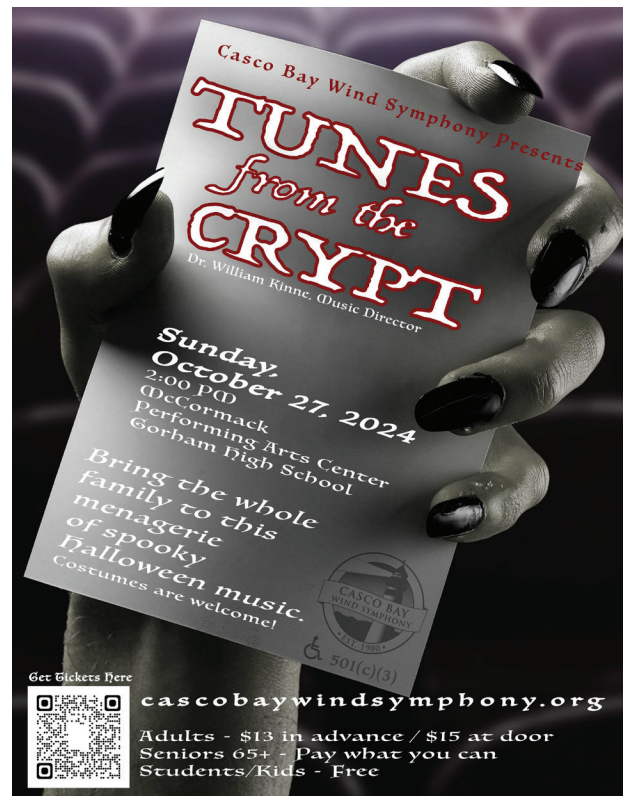
For information on program fees, financial assistance options and more, please visit the workshop series website, contact the workshop organizers at (207) 781-6099 for the Falmouth workshop and 207-743-8820 for the South Paris workshop, or email extension.gardening@maine.edu.

Symphony performs "Tales from the Crypt" in Gorham

GORHAM, ME — Casco Bay Wind Symphony Fall Concert, led by Dr. William Kinne will be held Sunday, October 27, 2024 from 2:00 PM to 4:00 PM at McCormack Performing Arts Center, Gorham High School, 41 Morrill Ave., Gorham, Me 04038.

Bring the whole family to this menagerie of spooky Halloween music performed by Maine's premiere wind band, the Casco Bay Wind Symphony. This spine-tingling concert includes a world-premiere by CBWS musician, Heather Hastings, new works from Erika Svanoe and John Mackey, and includes music from the motion pictures "Harry Potter," "Star Wars," "Beetlejuice," "The Nightmare Before Christmas," "Edward Scissorhands," and much more.

Tickets: Adults - \$13 in Advance, \$15 at the door; Seniors (65+) - Pay what you can; Students / Kids - Free; Tickets can



be purchased at the door, or on our website <https://www.cascobaywindsymphony.org/event-details/tunes-from-the-crypt> Costumes are Wel-

come!!!!!!!
Upcoming concerts:
Saturday, December 7, 2024, 2 PM
Sunday May 4, 2025, 2 PM

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

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Sun, Oct 27, 2024 at 2:00 p.m.
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UUCB Concerts for a Cause: Sally Rogers & Claudia Schmidt

BRUNSWICK, ME — Sally and Claudia, both Michigan natives, have each shared their talents as solo artists and as a duo. For over 4 decades, they have been performing together, demonstrating a deep musical connection onstage. They have played at prestigious folk venues around the world and were regulars on Garrison Keillor’s Prairie Home Companion. Their beautiful harmonies, fascinating double dulcimer work, and the mix of 6 and 12 string guitars make up their wide repertoire of originals and traditional songs.

Sally Rogers is a remarkably accomplished musician, songwriter,

storyteller, and educator. Over her career, she has recorded more than a dozen albums and has established herself as a preeminent voice in folk music. She began her career as a full-time touring musician in 1979, after encouragement from Stan Rogers, the legendary Canadian singer-songwriter. Rogers has toured extensively, performing as well as teaching workshops with adults and children. She has also appeared many times on A Prairie Home Companion and Mountain Stage and is a favorite at folk and storytelling festivals.

Claudia Schmidt is a powerful vocalist who describes herself as a



UUCB Concerts for a Cause presents an evening with the renowned folk singers, Sally Rogers and Claudia Schmidt at the Brunswick UU Church, 1 Middle Street, on October 19th at 7:30 pm. All proceeds from the concert will be given to this season’s charities, Brunswick Area Teen Center and Maine Family Planning.

“creative noisemaker,” engaging audiences with folk classics, jazz, blues, bawdy verses and humorous parodies. She has recorded 16 of her own albums, and four with Sally Rogers. Her widely acclaimed folk and jazz-based compositions have found their way into radio, TV, film and theater productions. Her musical theater performances include “Gales of November,” a 2005 retelling of the tragic 1975 sinking of the ship Edmund Fitzgerald. Like Sally Rogers, Claudia has appeared numerous times on A Prairie Home Companion, solo and as a duo with Sally. Garrison Keillor once said. “When Claudia sings a song, it

stays sung.” Sally and Claudia’s 1987 album “Closing the Distance” was voted by public radio stations throughout the country as one of the 10 most popular albums of the year. They recently released their fourth collaborative album “We are Welcomed,” which celebrates love, friendship and social justice, themes that have been the cornerstone of their intertwined careers for decades. Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door, \$10 students/children. Tickets are available at the church office, Gulf of Maine Books, or at <https://ticketstripe.com/sallyrogers>.

Holiday cards support Maine people with disabilities

BATH, ME — Pine Tree Society’s holiday cards have been a Maine tradition for over 50 years. This year’s cards by noted Maine artists Sandy Crabtree and Jeannine Staples celebrate winter in Maine. Crabtree’s painting “December Cove” is new for 2024 and Staples’ “Afternoon Play” was selected from the archives for a special limited edition re-release of this customer favorite. One hundred percent of proceeds from card sales support Pine Tree Society’s programs.

“I’m glad Pine Tree Society keeps this tradition going,” said featured artist, Sandy Crabtree. “There’s something very personal

about sending a Christmas card. I still receive cards from my family and out of state friends. You never know how touching getting a card is.”

Sandy’s painting “December Cove” depicts the incredible beauty of the Maine coast and the hard-working families who live and work here. Her paintings have been featured on Pine Tree Society’s holiday cards more than a dozen times. She is a noted children’s book illustrator and a longtime Bath resident who taught at Morse High School for nearly 30 years.

Jeannine Staples is known for her award winning Maine State Duck



“Afternoon Play” by Jeannine Staples

Stamps. “Afternoon Play” was last featured on a Pine Tree Society holiday card 25 years ago in 1999.

Pine Tree Society holiday cards can be ordered online at this link [https://app.etapestry.com/cart/PineTreeSociety/default/index](https://app.etapestry.com/cart/PineTreeSociety/default/index.php)



“December Cove” by Sandy Crabtree

php, by calling 207-443-3341 or visiting 149 Front Street in Bath.

More About Pine Tree Society: Pine Tree Society helps Maine people with disabilities lead richer, more socially connect-

ed lives. Too often, people with disabilities feel left out, even isolated. With the help of Pine Tree Society, they’re not alone. We share a spirit of innovation and desire to discover new ways to break down barriers that many

find insurmountable. It started as a bold new idea in 1936 and it continues every day. Headquartered in Bath with offices in Scarborough, Auburn and Pine Tree Camp in Rome. www.pinetreesociety.org



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UMaine Extension offers maple grading school in October

FALMOUTH, ME — University of Maine Cooperative Extension and University of Vermont Extension will offer an in-person International Maple Grading School on Friday, October 25 and Saturday, October 26 starting at 8:30 a.m. both days. The 2-day workshop will be held at the UMaine Extension Cumberland County office, 75 Clearwater Drive in Falmouth.

The course includes both research-based discussion and intensive

hands-on exercises covering the four attributes of grading maple syrup. This approach enables participants to learn how to grade or judge maple products with confidence.

A previous participant stated that the course had a “great balance of lecture and hands-on opportunities. I really liked the different exercise stations throughout the course. The off-flavored syrup samples provided during the workshop were very beneficial.” Another shared that they “learned



how to use my existing equipment in more accurate ways. Moving forward I will be more diligent at all times. We

sometimes get lax when in a hurry or doing repetitive tasks and this course was a great reminder of the importance of paying

attention to the details.”

Registration is required; space is limited to 25. Fee for the 2-day course is \$145 per person and includes lunch and refreshments on both days. Participants will also receive a tested hydrometer, a current temporary color grading kit, a thermometer, off-flavored syrup and an assortment of print materials relevant to syrup quality and grading. For more information and to register, visit the program webpage. The International Maple Grading

School is sponsored by the International Maple Grading Institute and the North American Maple Syrup Council.

To request a reasonable accommodation, contact Jenni Cappello-Ruggiero, jennifer.cappelloruggiero@maine.edu, 207-781-6099. Receiving requests for accommodation at least seven days before the program provides a reasonable amount of time to meet the request, however all requests will be considered.

Wiscasset teacher named 2025 Maine Teacher of the Year

MAINE -- The Maine Department of Education (DOE) and Educate Maine have named Wiscasset Elementary School fourth-grade teacher Becky Hallowell as Maine's 2025 Teacher of the Year. The announcement was made during a surprise ceremony with students and educators at Hallowell's school in Wiscasset.

“The Maine Teacher of the Year program recognizes exemplary educators in our state and provides a platform for highlighting the work of Maine's public schools,” Maine Department of Education Commissioner Pender Makin said. “As an innovative educator who prioritizes engaging, projects-based learning for her students, Becky Hallowell will bring a valuable perspective to this role. Her commitment to learning—both inside and outside of the traditional classroom—makes her an ideal pick for

2025 Maine Teacher of the Year.”

Hallowell's Teacher of the Year journey began in May when she was named the 2024 Lincoln County Teacher of the Year. Along with 15 other County Teachers of the Year, Hallowell was selected from a pool of hundreds of teachers who were nominated. In August, she was named one of four state finalists before being selected as the 2025 Maine Teacher of the Year.

Becky Hallowell teaches fourth-grade students at Wiscasset Elementary School on the bank of the Sheepscot River in Wiscasset, Maine. Hallowell earned her Bachelor of Arts degree in Early Childhood Education from the University of Maine at Farmington in 1994 and then received her Master of Science in Educational Leadership from the University of Southern Maine in 2011. She is the 2024 Lincoln County

Teacher of the Year. Hallowell embraces a pedagogy that honors nature and place-based learning, establishing connections between students and the local, state, and global community. She believes learning is more powerful when linked to content that students personally value and find meaningful as they engage in project-based learning. While she finds great joy in supporting student learning, Hallowell commits to her own learning and that of her colleagues both as a mentor and a mentor trainer. She has teamed with the Maine Math and Science Alliance in a research project connecting place-based learning and science sense-making, presenting her work to other educators at conferences. Hallowell also collaborated with her teaching partner and a University of Maine at Farmington professor to connect preservice teachers with fourth-grade

students to discuss literature. She presented this work with her partners at the National Council for Teachers of English conference in 2023. Hallowell enjoys exploring new trails in her free time, often finding a lesson in a unique mushroom or rock formation. She lives in Whitefield with her husband, three sons, and pesky kitty.

“Teachers have the most important job of guiding students to become the best possible versions of themselves,” said 2025 Maine Teacher of the Year Becky Hallowell. “Our children are Maine's most valuable resource, and, as Maine Teacher of the Year, I look forward to celebrating the dedicated, creative, and compassionate teachers who show up for Maine children every day.”

The Teacher of the Year Program is a year-long process that involves educator portfolio and resume submissions, interviews, oral presentations, and classroom visits made by a selection panel comprised of State Board of Education members, school administrators, Maine Department of Education staff, legacy Teachers of the Year, and other Maine business partners. Hallowell was nominated for the honor by her teaching colleague, Neera

Harmon.

“Educate Maine is thrilled to congratulate Becky Hallowell on being named the 2025 Maine Teacher of the Year. Her dedication to place-based learning and her commitment to fostering meaningful student connections are inspiring, and we look forward to supporting her as she embarks on this exciting journey,” said Dr. Jason Judd, Executive Director of Educate Maine.

As the 2025 Maine Teacher of the Year, Hallowell will spend her year of service advocating for students and teachers and speaking about the importance of education in preparing Maine students for the future. She will also represent Maine in the National Teacher of the Year program.

According to 2024 Maine Teacher of the Year Joshua Chard, “Becky is about to embark on the professional journey of a lifetime. It will be a year of professional learning, educational advocacy, and celebration of all of the amazing teaching and learning happening in schools in Maine and across the nation. Becky's passion for and leadership in outdoor education positions her perfectly to be a leader in this national cohort of exceptional educators.”

“On behalf of the entire Wiscasset schools community, I want to express our immense pride and gratitude that Becky Hallowell has been named Maine Teacher of the Year for 2025!” said Kim Andersson, Wiscasset School Department Superintendent of Schools. “This comes as no surprise to us; Becky is an innovative outdoor educator whose love of life and learning inspires and elevates everyone around her. Her work fosters care and knowledge about the environment and teaches every student the importance of their impact on the world around them. It's truly remarkable, and so is Becky!”

The Maine Teacher of the Year program is administered by Educate Maine, a business-led advocacy organization in partnership with the Maine Department of Education, the Maine State Board of Education, and the Maine County and State Teachers and County of the Year Association (MCSTOYA). Funding for the program is generously provided by Bangor Savings Bank, Dead River, Geiger, Hannaford, Maine Lottery, the Silvernail Family, and Unum.

For more information about the Maine Teacher of the Year program, visit <http://www.mainetoy.org>.

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cell: 207-577-9734 email: mileikisf@gmail.com

Highlights from the PRLT Summer Trail Challenge

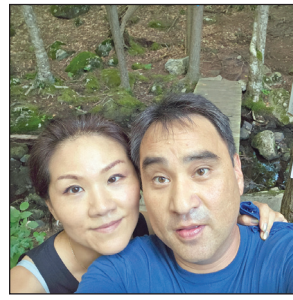
MAINE -- The 2024 Summer Trail Challenge has come to a close for Summer 2024. Presumpscot Regional Land Trust extends its thanks to the over 270 participants who signed up and the over 100 who have finished the challenge. Trail Challenge prize pick-up will be in September. Thanks to our Trail Challenge partner, REI of Westbrook, for hosting the pick-up at their store at Rock Row.

Here is some of PRLT's favorite feedback from participants:

"As a Windham resident, an avid mountain biker, and an amateur trail runner, I have been frequenting the Lowell Preserve trails for a number of years, especially connecting them with the North Falmouth Community Forest and Blackstrap Preserve trails in Falmouth. The East Windham Conservation Area has been an outstanding addition to this network. It's a truly special place with its views of the mountains and access to

Little Duck Pond. I have passed a few of these landmarks many times over the years, but this challenge was a great opportunity to stop and take the time to appreciate the natural beauty here in Windham." - April Allen

"Last week my girlfriend and I walked the East Windham Conservation Area and Lowell Preserve Trail Network and we both had an absolute blast. The vast expanse of the trail network made for a lovely afternoon of walking (and in some areas, hiking!), and knowing there were interesting landmarks to discover made the day a fun challenge. We ended our walk at the panoramic view of the mountains and we both feel we ended on a high note--the mountains are stunning, and having a map of the mountains we saw in front of us was such a great added touch (my girlfriend was proud to point out that she had climbed most of the peaks we could see). I want to thank the Presump-



scot Regional Land Trust for giving the community another fantastic place to

enjoy spending time with nature. I look forward to walking these trails again

in the future as well as other projects the PRLT has in store!" - Derek Banscom.

Thanks to all of our 2024 Trail Challenge Participants!

Guided hike, bike with FLT & PRLT



MAINE -- On Saturday, October 19th, 2024 from 9am-1pm Falmouth Land Trust (FLT) is teaming up with the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust (PRLT) for a guided hike through PRLT's Lowell Preserve and onto the connecting Cross Falmouth Trail! GPNEMBA will

also lead a guided mountain bike ride as well.

We'll meet at PRLT's Lowell Preserve in Windham at 9 am to kick off the event. Choose between a guided hike and a guided mountain bike ride for your morning adventure. The hiking group will go all the way to the parking lot of

Hadlock Community Forest for a 7-mile adventure. A shuttle will then take hikers back to the start so everyone can do a fun point-to-point hike. GPNEMBA will lead a medium-paced, no-drop 7-8 mile ride, as well as a faster-paced (but no-drop) ride of 12-14 miles out to Hadlock Community

Forest and back.

Funds from this event will support FLT and

PRLT's stewardship efforts.

We hope you'll join us and support these great trails!

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Grant to support historic preservation in Maine downtowns

HALLOWELL, ME – The Maine Development Foundation (MDF)’s Maine Downtown Center program is pleased to receive a \$750,000 grant from the Paul Bruhn Historic Revitalization Grants Program. MDF is one of only 17 recipients in 15 states to receive this funding. Known in Maine as Revitalize ME Downtown, the program will provide grants for historic preservation projects that will foster economic development in Maine’s rural downtowns. This is the third time in five years that MDF has received this highly com-

petitive funding. Similar awards in 2019 and 2021 funded projects in Maine’s Main Street and Affiliate Communities including Skowhegan, Eastport, Bath, Norway, Dover-Foxcroft and Gardiner, Rumford, Machias, Ellsworth and Augusta.

“Supporting our National Main Street and Affiliate communities by bringing historic preservation funding opportunities to them is one of the most important things MDF’s Maine Downtown Center can do,” says Anne Ball, Sr. Program Director, Maine Downtown Center.



“We are grateful to the National Park Service for funding the work we are doing in Maine.”

Revitalize ME Downtown funds are provided by the Historic Preservation Fund, as administered by the National Park Service, Department of Interior. The Historic Preservation Fund is supported by revenue from offshore oil and gas leases, not tax dollars. The program will offer

grants to historic property owners for preservation, restoration, rehabilitation, or energy efficiency projects in the downtown areas of communities currently served by the Maine Downtown Center program.

Funding in the form of subgrants will be awarded through a competitive program that will be administered by MDF. These grants will provide desperately needed financial

capacity to encourage infrastructure development and leverage private sector investment increasing the commercial, educational, residential, or civic use and value of the historic properties. Grant applications and requirements will be made available in January 2024 at www.mdf.org.

“The National Park Service helps rural areas across the country revitalize their communities through historic preservation,” said National Park Service Director Chuck Sams. “This locally stewarded work supports improvements to historic

buildings, preserving America’s cultural resources while benefiting local economies.”

These grants mark the sixth year of funding for the program honoring the late Paul Bruhn, who served as executive director of the Preservation Trust of Vermont for nearly 40 years. State and Tribal Historic Preservation Offices, Certified Local Governments, special district governments, and nonprofits are eligible to apply for funding to create a subgrant program to fund multiple preservation projects in their rural jurisdictions.

Camden National Bank collects school supplies

PORTLAND, ME – Camden National Bank is proud to announce a significant donation of school supplies collected by employees and customers from all 57 banking centers to Ruth’s Reusable Resources, a local nonprofit dedicated to bridging the gap between business and education by transferring unwanted supplies to children and their teachers. This initiative highlights Camden National Bank employees’ unwavering commitment to giving back to the communities they serve.

On Tuesday, September 24, employees gathered for Camden National Bank’s annual employee appreciation event, bringing notebooks, pencils, crayons, backpacks, and more to be donated to schools across Maine. The annual event is a time for Camden National Bank’s employees to unite, recognize, and honor their



important work supporting consumers, businesses, and local communities throughout the year.

“We believe in the importance of investing in our communities, and that starts with our next generations,” said Renée Smyth, chief executive and marketing officer. “Investing in our children’s education supports our communities’ growth and prosperity. Our employees have shown incredible dedication in this initiative, demonstrating that together, we can make a meaningful impact in the lives of local students.”

“We are thankful to

Camden National Bank’s employees for collecting school supplies and donating them to our organization,” said Lisa Thomas-Wiley, operations manager of Ruth’s Reusable Resources. “Having the tools they need in the classroom allows teachers and students throughout Maine to focus their attention on learning and maximizing each student’s potential.”

With locations across Maine and New Hampshire, Camden National Bank is dedicated to making a difference in the communities where its



Pictured from left to right: Grace Cox (Marketing Specialist), Lisa Thomas-Wiley (Ruth’s Reusable Resources’ Operations Manager), Jaimie Worster (Total Rewards & HRIS Manager), Lauren Epstein (Director of Client Services), Ruth Libby (Ruth’s Reusable Resources Founder), Jamie Bowden (Marketing Manager), Brian Medina (Saco Banking Center Manager)

employees live and work. Employees are passionate about providing financial expertise to customers and volunteering locally

in their communities. In 2023, employees dedicated over 7,500 hours volunteering to nearly 240 different organizations. For

more information about Camden National Bank’s community initiatives, please visit CamdenNational.bank.

Sen. Rotundo congratulates Androscoggin Teacher of the Year

AUGUSTA, ME— On October 7, Sen. Peggy Rotundo (D-Lewiston) joined Rep. Margaret Craven and Rep. Kristen Cloutier in recognizing 2024 Androscoggin County Teacher of the Year Leah Boucher by presenting her with a legislative sentiment at a meeting of the Lewiston School Committee.

“Leah has earned this distinction by being a dedicated, creative and dynamic educator who truly gets to know her students in order to make sure they

get the most out of school,” said Sen. Rotundo. “She cares deeply about this community and works hard to prepare our young people for the future. She has made Lewiston very proud.”

Boucher has been a fourth grade teacher at Farwell Elementary School in Lewiston for six years.

According to the Maine Department of Education (DOE), the Teacher of the Year program is part of The National Teacher of the Year Pro-



Left to Right: Senator Peggy Rotundo, Leah Boucher, Rep. Margaret Craven and Rep. Kristen Cloutier.

gram, the country’s most distinguished teacher recognition program. Sixteen

County Teachers of the Year and one State Teacher of the Year are recognized

annually. The DOE Teacher of the Year website states that “each Teacher of the Year serves as an exemplar of the teaching profession. During their year of service, they are provided with opportunities to advocate for their students, their communities, and topics in education that are important to them, along with a network of educators who support one another through professional learning and grassroots efforts to improve education in Maine.”

A legislative sentiment acknowledges and

recognizes academic, athletic, civic, professional or service-related accomplishments. It is approved by the full Legislature and signed by the President of the Senate, Speaker of the House, Secretary of the Senate and Clerk of the House.

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

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Dairy
Continued from page 2

Excellence’s Dairy Herd Manager Apprenticeship
Cornell’s Agricultural Supervisory Leadership (ASL) Program
Pilot Anne Saxelby

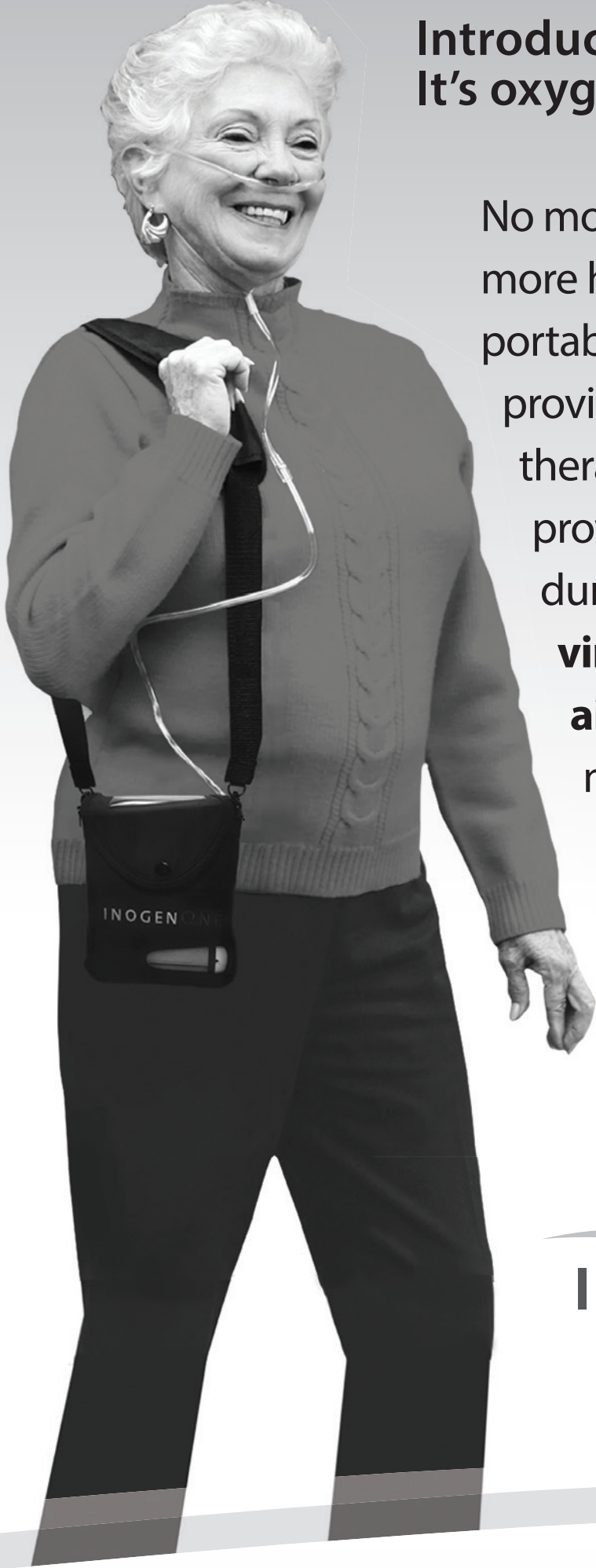
Legacy Fund (ASLF) Immersive Alumni Apprenticeship Program
The first competitive round of funding is expected to open in early 2025. Grants will be open to applicants in Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Mary-

land, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, and Vermont.
The NE-DBIC and its consulting partner KK&P have strategically developed this initiative

to enhance the workforce ecosystem for long-term growth and sustainability. For more information on the Dairy Workforce Impact Fund, visit <https://nedairyinnovation.com/resources/dairy-workforce-program/>

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Rep. Cloutier applauds MDOL for seeking public feedback

AUGUSTA, ME – In May, the Maine Department of Labor (MDOL) published a first draft of its proposed rules for the state's new paid family and medical leave (PFML) program, which was created in 2023 as part of the supplemental budget enacted by the Legislature and signed by Gov. Janet Mills.

Having received public comment on those rules, MDOL has used that

feedback to make edits and produce a second draft. In an effort to make the strongest set of rules possible for this program, MDOL released the updated rules for a second round of public comment that was due on September 30. They also held a public hearing on Tuesday, September 17 at 9:00 a.m. in the Frances Perkins Room at the Maine Department of Labor.

Sen. Mattie Daughtry, D-Brunswick,

and Rep. Kristen Cloutier, D-Lewiston, who sponsored the PFML legislation, applauded MDOL for its continued work to roll out this program. The legislators intend to review these new draft rules and provide comment.

"Maine's Paid Family and Medical Leave Program is going to be one of the most significant and transformative policies our state has seen in decades, with all Mainers

having access to a new benefit," said Cloutier and Daughtry. "It is critical that we have strong rules when we launch this program, and we're so grateful for the second opportunity for employees and employers alike to provide feedback. It's pivotal that this program be responsive to the specific needs of Mainers, and we thank MDOL for continuing to engage the public, which is crucial in creating a final result that

is thoughtful, responsible and works for everybody."

In the first round of public comment, Daughtry and Cloutier provided feedback including suggestions around the required notice of leave, premium contributions from employers with approved private equivalent plans, the minimum amount of leave that must be offered in order for a private plan to be considered substantially equivalent, and the

provisions clarifying the affinity relationships covered by the program.

Maine's PFML program will offer eligible workers in the private and public sector 12 weeks of paid time off for family or medical reasons, including illness, to care for a loved one or new child. Payroll contributions to the program are scheduled to begin in January 2025, with benefits set to become available in May 2026.

FAME's College Access Team honored

AUGUSTA, ME — At their annual meeting and awards celebration held at Lewiston's Franco Center on September 13, 2024, the Maine Development Foundation (MDF) presented the Finance Authority of Maine's (FAME's) College Access and Financial Education (CAFÉ) Team with their Champion of Education and Workforce Development Award.

MDF's awards this year recognize individuals, businesses, and community groups for demonstrated exceptional leadership and dedication to strengthening the state's economy and/or their community with efforts to attract and/or retain young people in Maine.

FAME's CAFÉ Team provides comprehensive college access and financial education services to students, families, counselors, and advisors through a

variety of college access, financial aid, financial education, and education debt management services that support higher education aspirations and attainment in Maine.

Martha Johnston, FAME's Director of Education, accepted the award on behalf of the team and noted:

"Each day, and many, many nights, FAME's College Access Team hits the road literally and virtually to help Maine students and families learn about saving for higher ed, completing and filing the FAFSA, wise borrowing, and navigation of student loan processes, and student loan repayment. We believe in the transformative power of education beyond high school to benefit someone's personal economic prospects as well as those of the state of Maine, a place we all love and call home."



FAME's College Access and Financial Education Team with their MDF award. Pictured left to right are: Martha Johnston, Director of Education, and CAFÉ Team members Jessica Whittier, Floreka Malual, Nikki Vachon, and Mila Tappan.

Helping students and families prepare to file for financial aid and supporting them through the entire process is a primary focus for FAME's College Access team. In FY 24 alone, FAME's College Access and Outreach Team coordinated and participated in:

232 financial aid in-

formation sessions and workshops for over 6,800 Maine students and families;

77 training workshops for over 4,800 counselors and advisors

41 workshops attended by 537 individuals to help students complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA);

and

129 financial wellness focused events for 6,500 students.

Because it was such a challenging year for FAFSA completion due to problems with the roll-out of the new form by the U.S. Department of Education, FAME's team worked extra hard, through the summer and as of the end of August, helped to increase the FAFSA completion rate for Maine high school seniors from the Class of 2024 nine full percentage points to over 61%.

Johnston also extended FAME's appreciation to the many partners who contribute to the success of the team, especially Maine's school counselors and other trusted professionals who share information about FAME events and available resources, as well as Maine's institutions of higher education, public and private.

The Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) is a quasi-independent state agency whose mission is to enrich business and educational outcomes through relevant, timely financial support to Maine's people. Our vision is a Maine where all people have access to improved economic outcomes through business growth and education attainment. To learn more about FAME, please visit www.famemaine.com

The Maine Development Foundation (MDF) is a non-partisan, statewide driver of equitable, inclusive, and sustainable economic growth in Maine. MDF connects people, decision-makers, and communities through trusted research, leadership development, and creative partnerships to stimulate new ideas, solve problems, and improve lives. To learn more about MDF, please visit www.mdf.org

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L-A VETERANS COUNCIL

Skelton Taintor & Abbott welcomes Alexandra W. Winter

LEWISTON, ME – Skelton Taintor & Abbott is pleased to welcome litigation attorney Alexandra W. Winter to the firm. Alexandra is joining the firm's litigation group as an Associate Attorney. After

graduating from Brandeis University and earning a Juris Doctor degree from the City University of New York School of Law, Alexandra began her career at the Law Offices of Thaddeus Day before joining the District Attorney's Office in Maine's District III. Alexandra served in the District Attorney's Office for more than 9 years, with more than 8 years as the Assistant District Attorney and an

8-month period as the Interim District Attorney.

Alexandra's practice at Skelton Taintor & Abbott will focus on commercial and business litigation, general civil litigation, probate litigation, creditor representation and collections, and foreclosures and repossessions.

Firm President, Sarah Mitchell, stated, "We are excited to welcome Alex to the Skelton Taintor &

Abbott team. She is a successful and well-respected attorney and will be a key addition to our litigation practice."

Skelton Taintor & Abbott is a full-service trial and general practice law firm representing clients throughout Maine. With the addition of Attorney Winter, the firm consists of 13 attorneys practicing in virtually all fields of law and in both federal and state courts.

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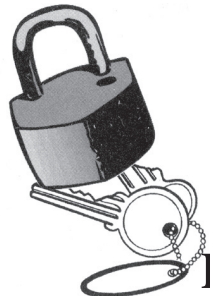
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Thursdays

LEWISTON -- Baby Sensory Playtime in the Lewiston Public Library's Children's Department every Thursday morning from 10am to 12pm.

Drop-in and join us for Baby Sensory Playtime! Babies and their caregivers will have the opportunity to interact with a variety of sensory toys and socialize with other families with young children. Playtime with sensory toys contributes to a baby's cognitive development, fine motor skills, social and emotional development, creativity, and language development.

R e c o m m e n d e d for babies ages birth-18 months and their caregivers. Siblings are always welcome. This program is free, open to the public and no registration is required.

Oct 17, 18, 19

BAR MILLS -- The Original's present Molly Sweeney, a play by Brian Friel at Saco River Theatre, 29 Salmon Falls Road, Bar Mills, ME, Oct 11, 12, 17, 18, 19 @ 7:30 PM

and Oct 13 & 20 at 2:30pm. Tickets: \$15 General Admission at www.sacorivertheatre.org.

Oct 19

BRUNSWICK -- The 2024-25 UUCB Concerts for a Cause Series season will include folk, jazz, blues, celtic, and choral singing for jus-

Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

tice. This season's charities receiving 100% of the profits from the concert are Brunswick Area Teen Center and Maine Family Planning. For further details about the concerts, go to <https://www.uubrunswick.org/events/>.

Sally Rogers & Claudia Schmidt - Sat, Oct 19, 2024 at 7:30 pm. Doors open 7:00 pm.

For decades, Sally and Claudia have been playing at prestigious folk venues around the world and were regulars on Garrison Keillor's Prairie Home Companion. They are well-known for beautiful harmonies, dulcimer & guitar duets, and a wide repertoire of originals and traditional songs.

Tickets are \$20 in advance, \$25 at the door, \$10 students/children. Tickets are available at the church office, Gulf of Maine Books, or online at <https://ticketstripe.com/sallyrogers>.

Oct 20

FREEPORT -- Mind Body Spirit Festival, 10:00-4:00. Energize your life at this festival with psychics and mediums, Reiki, massage, organic products, crystals, gems and jewelry, an animal

communicator, medical intuitive, enlightening workshops, and a lot more.

\$5.00 admission includes some workshops; other workshops and practitioners may require additional fees.

Hilton Garden Inn, 5 Park Street, Freeport, ME 04032

www.mindbodyspiritfestivals.org

Oct 20

LEWISTON -- Lewiston Farmers' Market ANNUAL FALL FESTIVAL in honor of beloved former volunteer, Joe Cook and sponsored by Munka Studio on Sunday, October 20th 9:30 am - 3:00 pm at 2 Oxford St. in Lewiston.

Oct 25, 26, 27, 31;

Nov 1, 2, 3

AUBURN - Opening night of the Community Little Theatre production of the musical '1776.' The curtain rises at 7:30 p.m. as the Founding Fathers come alive in this classic American musical. Performances will also be held at 7:30 p.m. on October 26, 31, and November 1, 2. Matinees will be held at 2:00 p.m. on October 27 and November 3. Tickets are \$25 for adults, \$22 for seniors/students, and \$17 for children aged 13 and

under. Tickets and more information are available online at <https://www.lacit.com/>.

Oct 26

GRAY -- First Congregational Church of Gray Saturday Night Church Supper, Saturday, October 26, 2024 at 5:00 at the Parish House, 5 Brown Street, Gray. Handicapped Accessible. Meals are Single-sized and are \$10.00 each. Please pay at the door. The Menu includes: Variety of Casseroles & Salads, Baked Pea Beans & Red Kidney, Red Hot Dogs, Breads, & Assortment of Desserts & Beverages.

Oct 26

AUBURN -- There will be a baked bean supper at Sixth St. Congregational Church at 109 Sixth St. in Auburn on Saturday, October 26th from 4:30 p.m. until 6:00 p.m. The menu consists of two kinds of beans, brown bread, cole slaw, red and brown hot dogs, assorted casseroles, assorted desserts and beverage. The cost of the meal is \$9 for adults, \$5 for children 5 to 12, under age 5 is free. All are welcome. Take-out is available.

Oct 26, 27

LEWISTON, TOPSHAM -- "Majestic Earth Movements"

Saturday, Oct. 26, 2024, 7:00 p.m. - Franco Center, Lewiston

Sunday, Oct. 27, 2024, 2:30 p.m. - Orion

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Jean Sibelius - Symphony No. 5 in E Flat Major, Op. 82

Tickets are \$25 in advance for adults; \$30 at the door. All concerts are free for anyone 25 and under. For more information visit MidcoastSymphony.org, call 207-315-1712, or e-mail info@midcoast-symphony.org

Nov 1

TURNER -- We are having a Bean Supper on Friday, Nov. 1st at the Turner Center Universalist Church on Route #17 across from the Gazebo from 4:30 to 7:00. We're having two kinds of Beans, Hotdogs, Coleslaw, Rolls, Beverages, and Desserts.

The cost is \$10 and \$5 for children 10 and under

Nov 2

AUGUSTA -- Join us for HOME for the Holidays Craft Fair on November 2, 2024 from 9am to 4pm at the American Legion, 396 Eastern Ave., Augusta! Enjoy browsing many different vendors as you get into the holiday season!

Nov 16

SABATTUS -- Our Lady of the Rosary Christmas Craft Fair at 131 High st. in Sabattus is running 9-3 on Saturday, November 16th. 28 vendors, raffles, and a bake sale, come enjoy this small town Christmas Fair charm!

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

GORHAM LITTLE LEAGUE

Field Funding Campaign

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

- Develop 2 fields at White Rock
- Purchase seasonal fence for Shaw Park
- Repair dugouts and fencing, build storage centers
- Add infield mix and relevel current fields
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Keystone Sprinter 5th Wheel. 2018, 31 feet, 2 super slides, large refrigerator, like new - hardly used. Full winter cover, super glide included. Asking \$25,500 - please call 207-754-2165

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SENIOR TRIPS

If interested in any of the following trips or upcoming trips, please contact Claire Bilodeau at 784-0302 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.

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.

NOVEMBER 18-20, 2024 - CHRISTMAS IN NEW YORK CITY - Trip includes 2 nights lodging with 3 days in New York City. Breakfasts each morning and 1 dinner in a Manhattan Restaurant is included. We will have a backstage tour of Radio City Music Hall and a guided tour of Lower Manhattan, Times Square, Greenwich Village, Little Italy, Ground Zero and the Financial District. You will also visit the 9/11 Memorial Museum and Rockefeller Center. On Wednesday afternoon it's off to Radio City Music Hall to see the Christmas Spectacular featuring the World-Famous Rockettes. A \$200 deposit per person is due upon registration. Trip price is \$749.00 per person double occupancy which includes guided tours, Radio City Spec-

tacular, included meals and bus driver tip. Make checks payable to White Star Tours.

DECEMBER 13-15, 2024 - WHITE MOUNTAIN HOTEL & RESORT - Trip includes 2 nights lodging with 5 meals. We will visit the Rocks Estate in Bethlehem, NH with a Moose and Bear educational program. We will stop at the Bethlehem post office where you will be able to stamp your Christmas cards with the Star of Bethlehem seal and have them mailed from Bethlehem. Trip also includes 1 afternoon comedy show and 2 evening shows. All room and meal taxes and gratuities are included. Price for a double is \$629.00 per person. Deposit is \$100.00 per person at time of registration. Make checks payable to White Mountain Hotel and Resort.

APRIL 12-20, 2025 - A WEEK IN SPAIN: BARCELONA, MADRID & SEVILLE - Trip includes 7 nights lodging, 7 breakfasts and 3 dinners, 5 sightseeing tours and two train rides. Highlights are Sagrada Familia, Royal Palace, Prado Museum, Cordoba, Olive Oil Tasting, Food Tasting and Royal Alcazar. Deposit

to reserve your spot is \$300.00 with trip protection available for \$449.00.

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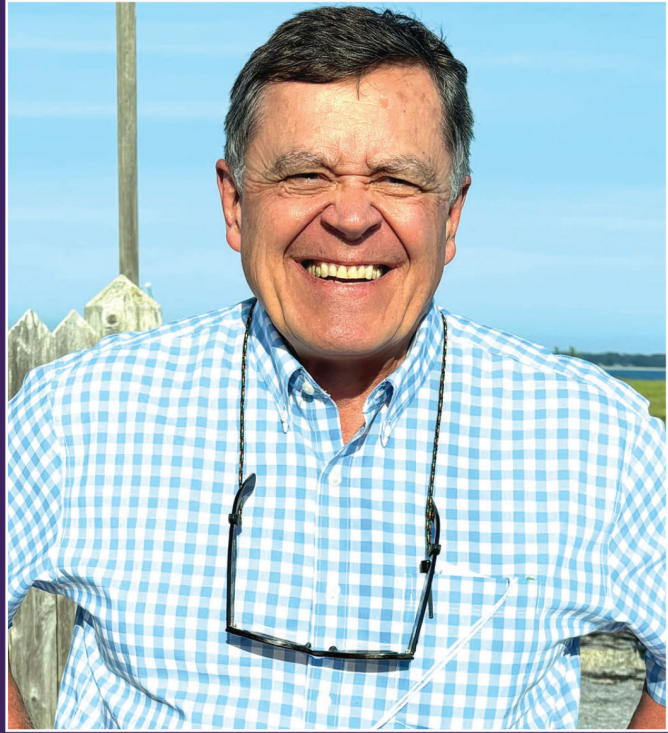
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Together, let's begin a holiday season filled with hope, love and joy. Refreshments will be served.

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