



TWIN CITY TIMES

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Early New Year's Day arrival is CMMC's first baby of 2025

LEWISTON, ME -- The first baby of 2025 was born at Central Maine Medical Center CMMC on New Year's Day. The baby boy was born at 2:34 a.m. on Jan. 1 and weighed in at seven pounds, 14 ounces and was 20 inches long.

The boy's mother is Liliana Kimbela of Lewiston. She has not given her boy an official name yet and, for now, is calling him "Baby Boy Kimbela."

"What a great way to start the new year, not only for the family of the newborn, but for all of us here at CMMC," said Ta-



sha Duval, DO, chief of obstetrics and gynecology at Central Maine Healthcare. "Our team members in maternity are committed to providing a safe and nurturing environment to have a baby, and we look forward to welcoming many more newborns at CMMC in 2025."

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



again recognized CMMC as "High Performing in Maternity Care." Earlier this year, Newsweek also named CMMC one of the best hospitals in the nation for maternity.

Additionally, CMMC received a near-perfect 97 (out of 100) score on the Centers for Disease Control's (CDC) Maternity Practices in Infant Nutrition & Care survey which evaluates categories such as immediate postpartum care, breastfeeding education and support after patient discharge. The national average score was 82.

good news. In 2024, about 750 babies were born at CMMC.

Late last year, U.S. News & World Report once

Andwell Health Partners names new Hospice House manager

LEWISTON, ME -- Andwell Health Partners is pleased to announce that Keith Beck, RN, has been appointed as the new Hospice House Manager for its Hospice House facility, located in Auburn. Beck, who has been serving as the Clinical Manager of Hospice Services at Andwell Health Partners, brings a wealth of experience and expertise to his new role.

Beck has been with Andwell Health Partners since January 2023, initially serving as a Contract Hospice Case Manager before transitioning to the role of Clinical Manager of Hospice Services in July 2023. Keith worked earlier in his career at Androscoggin Home Health & Hospice (now Andwell Health Partners), where he collaborated with healthcare providers to deliver



Formerly known as Androscoggin Home Healthcare + Hospice

tailored care plans and provided emotional support to patients and their families. In between his time with Androscoggin/Andwell, Keith spent eight years as the Clinical

Manager of Hospice at Northern Light Health (formerly VNA) in South Portland.

Katherine Pushee, Director of Hospice Services, expressed her en-

thusiasm about Beck's new role: "We are thrilled to have Keith step into the role of Hospice House Manager. His extensive experience and dedication to hospice care make him an invaluable asset to our team. We look forward to his vision and support in continuing to provide exceptional care to our patients and their families".

Beck has demonstrated extensive knowl-

edge of healthcare systems, including hospice and other reimbursement mechanisms, community resources, and referral processes. He has also showcased his ability to counsel families and clients in dying and death, conduct grief counseling, and manage symptom control. He holds a Registered Nurse degree from the University of New England in Biddeford.

All aboard for the 2025 Great Falls Model Railroad Club Train Show!

Painting class: Paint a winter scene



TOPSHAM, ME -- Get ready to immerse yourself in the world of mod-

el railroads at the Great Falls Model Railroad Club Train Show in Topsham,

ME! With over 100 tables featuring new and used trains, tracks, buildings, books, and more, you'll find something for every enthusiast. From N to HO, S, O, and G scales, there's something for everyone to enjoy.

Explore incredible displays and operating layouts that bring miniature trains to life, and discover hidden gems from local and visiting dealers. Enjoy free parking and mouth-watering food while you explore.

Looking for a table? Email Margo at margo@greatfallsmodelrrclub.org

to reserve yours today!

Don't miss out on this fantastic event -- it's the perfect chance to meet fellow hobbyists and add to your collection. See you there!

For more info, visit www.greatfallsmodelrrclub.org.

Date: April 26th, 2025

Hours: 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM

Location: Mt. Ararat High School, 68 Eagles Way, Topsham, ME 04086 (Handicapped Accessible)

Admission: Just \$5 per person (kids under 12 free with an adult)

LEWISTON, ME -- Join us at the Lewiston Public Library for Painting Class: Paint a Winter Scene in the 2nd floor Idea Lab on Monday, January 27th at 4pm. Recommended for children ages 10 - 14 years old.

Come learn how to paint a winter scene with step-by-step instruction by local artist, Nicole Ann. Get creative by painting a snowy landscape scene using acrylic

paints on canvas panels. All materials are provided.

This program is free, open to the public, and no registration is required.

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



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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

BBB: What to know if using NFCs (and you probably are)

By the Better Business Bureau

If you have a smartphone purchased in the last few years, it almost certainly came with NFC capability.

The technology allows users to effortlessly transfer money, share files and knock out a growing list of other tasks. But that data transfer can create vulnerabilities.

BBB has tips on what NFCs can do and how to stay safe when using them.

What exactly is NFC?

NFC stands for Near Field Communication. It's a data transfer that only works within a very short physical range. We're talking inches, not feet. Some forms of this technology require you to tap one device against another or wave them back and forth in close proximity.

NFC also stands for National Football Conference and the National Finance Center, a branch of the USDA, but we're not going to talk about those here. Near Field Communication capabilities have been around for years, but their use is becoming much more widespread.

NFCs are based on RFID (radio frequency identification) technology, a process that uses radio frequencies to identify objects. Near Field Communication is high-frequency RFID that makes it easy for one device to communicate with another.

What does it do?

Near Field Communication uses a series of protocols to make trans-

actions easier and faster. People use them to make contactless payments, share digital content, connect one device with another, and a list of other tasks that gets longer every day.

How do they work?

An NFC relies on proximity, so when users get close to a device they want to interact with, typically, they receive a prompt asking for permission. They follow on-screen prompts from there. It's convenient because it doesn't involve downloading an app or signing up to get started.

When you activate some NFC technologies, they enable Bluetooth and use that to make your data transfer. That means you don't have to fumble around with your phone to find Bluetooth settings, choose the device you want to pair, enter the key or code, and so on.

Other NFC technologies enable Wi-Fi between two devices so they can "talk" back and forth. The big benefit here is that Wi-Fi direct has much greater bandwidth, so big files transfer faster.

What smartphones come with NFC?

New handheld devices become available all the time, so the compatible device list is constantly changing. NFCWorld maintains an exhaustive list of phones and tablets both available now and coming soon. But for most people, their mobile is already capable.

Android devices running 4.0 or later come with the ability to use NFCs for financial transactions. Phones with An-

droid 4.4 or later allow users to exchange files and messages via NFC.

iPhone was a little later to jump on the bandwagon. However, if you have an iPhone 6 or later, it supports Near Field Communications.

Are they just for financial transactions?

The possibilities and uses for near-field communications are, for the most part, just limited by the imagination. Here are just a few things people can do with them already:

Open car doors

Share contact information

Share any link you program it to have

Make wireless payments using smartphones and tablets

Create an automatic Wi-Fi/Bluetooth pairing between phone and vehicle for hands-free driving

Pay for and receive access to public parking and transportation

Send photos or video between digital cameras, cell phones and media players

Allow shoppers to receive and redeem coupons

Prevent hard sleepers from turning off their alarm until they're actually awake

Enable healthcare workers to monitor medications and track physical symptoms

Create interactive toys and games

Simplified connectivity is great, and being able to exchange funds without having to dig into our wallets was becoming

popular even before social distancing was a thing. Now it's even more helpful because it means we don't have to touch cash or transaction terminals. But every time a technology is widely adopted, hackers start focusing on how they can exploit it for unfair gain.

Near Field Communications and cybersecurity

Convenience is great, but if you're like most people, you might recognize when data is just floating around, there's a security risk, especially when technology is linked to your credit card or bank account. So how risky is NFC technology?

The good thing is if you're bumping your phone with a friend's to share music or checking out with a trusted vendor, the security risk is fairly low because of the proximity requirement. Devices must be four centimeters or less apart, and during the split seconds the data transfer actually takes to occur, it would be hard for a hacker to get in there without you noticing.

It takes more than just a bump for a transaction to occur; both sending and receiving devices must be ready to accept the data transfer. It would be difficult for a hacker to brush against you in a crowd and wirelessly withdraw from your bank account. You're not likely to collide with a stranger in the grocery store and accidentally send their

phone all your personal information. But that doesn't mean NFCs are without risk.

One problem happens when people lose their phones or have their devices stolen. If a thief can unlock your device, or if you don't secure it with a strong password, there's nothing to stop him or her from waving it over a payment terminal or ATM to get your money.

NFC tags are also vulnerable to tampering. For example, users have tapped smart tags thinking they were about to access movie trailers or visit a vendor website but instead had their personal information sent to a bad actor.

General NFC security tips

Turn NFC off when not in use: Disable NFC on your device when you're not using it to reduce the risk of unauthorized access or accidental connections.

Be mindful of proximity: NFC only works within a short range (typically 4 cm or less), but attackers could use specialized tools to attempt to intercept data. Be cautious when using NFC in crowded or untrusted areas.

Use secure apps and devices: Only use trusted apps for NFC payments or file sharing. Ensure your device has updated security features and firmware.

Enable device authentication: Use a PIN, pattern, or biometric lock on your device to prevent

unauthorized use of NFC.

Monitor permissions: Regularly check the permissions granted to apps that use NFC to ensure they only have access to necessary features.

Avoid connecting to unknown devices: Do not pair with or transfer files to unknown NFC-enabled devices or tags without verifying their source.

Encrypt sensitive data: If you're using NFC for payments or sharing sensitive information, ensure the data is encrypted and transmitted over a secure channel.

NFC payment tips

Verify payment apps: Use payment apps from trusted providers and download them only from official app stores.

Check the terminal: Inspect payment terminals for tampering or unusual devices before tapping your phone or card.

Enable notifications: Set up notifications for NFC transactions so you're immediately aware of any unauthorized charges.

Use one-time tokens: Where possible, opt for payment methods that generate one-time-use tokens for added security.

NFC tags tips

Inspect before scanning: Avoid scanning unknown or suspicious NFC tags in public areas, as they may contain malicious code or links.

Use a trusted NFC reader app: Use apps from reputable sources to read NFC tags, and review the permissions these apps require.

Program tags securely: If programming NFC tags yourself, ensure they are configured with strong security measures to prevent tampering.

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

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

Midcoast Symphony Orchestra continues 35th season in January

TOPSHAM, ME — The Midcoast Symphony Orchestra (MSO), conducted by Rohan Smith, continues the company's 35th season with a concert entitled "Invigorating Water Music" which takes place at the Franco Center in Lewiston on Saturday, January 18 at 7pm and the Orion Performing Arts Center in Topsham on Sunday, January 19 at 2:30pm. The concerts feature a number of short family-friendly pieces, including two selections from both Handel's Water Music and Duke Ellington's The River Suite. The MSO's January concert traditionally is programmed to appeal to young audience members, and in keeping with that commitment, the concerts feature a number of components showcasing students, as well as the annual "Meet the Instruments" events, which allow people of all ages to try orchestral instruments. Individual tickets for "Invigorating Water Music" are \$25 in advance and \$30 at the door, with free entrance to any audience member 25 and under. Complete concert and ticket information is available at midcoastsymphony.org or by calling the box office at (207) 481-0790.

The program for "Invigorating Water Music" includes two movements from Handel's Water Music, which was composed in 1717 and premiered by a boat full of 50 musicians trailing the king's King



Joshua Zhang (photo credit Yuegang Zhang)

George I's boat on the River Thames. The concert also features two movements from Duke Ellington's The River Suite, from a score commissioned by Alvin Ailey for his American Ballet Theater in 1970. Other works the MSO brings to life include: Charles Ives' "The Housatonic at Stockbridge," the final melodic movement of the composer's Three Places in New England; a fascinating modern composition by Alan Hovhanness, And God Created Great Whales, that included actual whale sounds; Mendelssohn's The Hebrides (Overture), inspired by

Fingal's Cave on the namesake islands; and the stirring "The Moldau" from Má Vlast, by Czech composer Bedřich Smetana. Joining the MSO for the first movement of Tomasi's Trombone Concerto is trombonist Joshua Zhang, winner of the biennial Judith Elser Concerto Competition. Joshua Zhang is a computer science and music double major at Colby College from Wayland, Massachusetts who began playing trombone in fourth grade. Additionally, Lewiston High School alumnus Kyle Almquist, winner of the MSO's silent auction last spring and son of MSO horn player Beth Almquist, conducts the orchestra in Tchaikovsky's "Swan Theme" from Swan Lake. The final youth component for these concerts takes the form of artwork, created by students from Connors Elementary in Lewiston, Bowdoinham Community School, Brunswick Junior High, Mt. Ararat Middle School, and the Portland Arts and Technology High School, that will be shown during several of the pieces.

In keeping with the focus on youth for this



Noah Smith (photo credit Robin Smith)

concert, each concert will be preceded by the popular "Meet the Instruments" event, at which audience members of all ages can try many instruments featured in the symphony's performance. MSO musicians will be present to provide instruction and guidance on how to play their instrument. This event begins one hour before each of the two concerts – at 6pm in the Heritage Hall at the Franco Center and at 1:30 in the gym at the Mt. Ara-

rat Middle School (where the Orion Performing Arts Center is located). Interested members of the public may attend this free event without purchasing a concert ticket, and MSO is offering up to two complimentary tickets to parents accompanying children under 18 to the concert. The Saturday, January 20th concert will also feature Buckfield High School student Noah Smith performing on his clarinet during intermission in Heritage

Hall at the Franco Center. Noah Smith began his journey studying clarinet at age 9 at a conservatory in France and is continuing his studies in Maine with David Hoagland. He has performed as principal clarinet with the Kennebec Valley Youth Symphony Orchestra and will be principal clarinet at All-State Festival in May. Both of these events are part of the MSO's enrichment series entitled "More with Midcoast."

he public is invited to read more about all of the compositions that are part of the 2024/25 MSO season on its website at www.midcoastsymphony.org.

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Meet the Instruments (photo credit Heather Linkin)

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Extension maple expert to present at workshops for beginners

MAINE -- University of Maine Cooperative Extension is collaborating with several local organizations in York and Androscoggin counties to present a series of maple sugaring workshops for beginners and small-scale producers in January and February. There is also an online option hosted by the Maine Organic Farmers and Growers Association.

All of the programs are designed for backyard and homestead-scale sys-

tems that require a limited initial investment in equipment. Discussions will include identifying and tapping trees, collecting and boiling sap, as well as filtering, grading and canning syrup.

On February 1, the Southern Maine Maple Sugarmakers Association (SMMSA) will host Backyard Maple Sugaring from 9 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. at the York County Extension Office, 45 Kennebunk Road in Alfred, ME. This day-long workshop



Photo courtesy University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

is developed to give participants a more in-depth overview of the sugaring

process. The morning session will include demonstrations and discussions

by UMaine Extension Maple Industry Educator Jason Lilley and several established maple syrup producers. The afternoon will include a tour of a local sugarhouse to highlight how they got started and demonstrate the sap processing equipment that they use. The cost of this workshop will be \$18 and includes a how-to guide. Visit the event webpage to register.

The remaining workshops, which do not include a sugarhouse tour,

are scheduled to last approximately 2 hours and will be held at the Julia Adams Morse Memorial Library in Greene on January 9, Massabesic Adult Education in Waterboro on January 30 and Lewiston Adult Education in Lewiston on February 4. Look for registration information about these events coming in January.

For more information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact jason.lilley@maine.edu

New Year's resolution: Prioritize lung health in 2025

AUGUSTA, ME – With the New Year right around the corner, it's a great time to set some lung health-focused goals. With each of the 23,000 breaths your lungs take daily, they perform essential work to support overall health.

Whether you're managing asthma, quitting smoking, or simply looking to keep your lungs strong, here are some tips from the American Lung Association in Maine to start the year right.

Get Regular Check-ups. Regular check-ups help prevent diseases, even when you are feeling well. This is especially true for lung disease, which sometimes goes undetected un-

til it's serious. During a check-up, your healthcare provider will listen to your breathing and you should share any concerns you may have.

Quit Smoking: The American Lung Association encourages people who smoke, vape or use tobacco to resolve to begin their quit journey in 2025 and provides tips and resources at Lung.org/quit-smoking or call the LungHelpline at 1-800-LUNGUSA (1-800-586-4872). Tobacco remains the number one cause of preventable death in the U.S., and here in Maine. E-cigarettes are not a safe or effective way to quit. Many health in-

surance plans cover quit aids and counseling, and if you are uninsured or need a plan that works better for you, open enrollment through the Affordable Care Act marketplaces is available until January 15, 2025, in most states. More info at Lung.org/open-enrollment.

Take the Quiz. In the U.S., 14 million people are at high risk for lung cancer and are eligible for lifesaving lung cancer screening. Here in Maine, only 21.2% of residents at high risk for lung cancer are screened for the disease each year. If you smoked, the low-dose CT lung cancer screening test could save your life. Lung

cancer, the leading cause of cancer deaths, is more treatable when caught early—survival rates increase by more than four times. If you're aged 50-80 and smoke or have quit within the past 15 years, you may be eligible for screening. Take the 2-minute quiz at SavedByTheScan.org.

Stay Up-to-Date on Immunizations. Get your COVID-19 and flu shots (and RSV and pneumococcal pneumonia, if eligible). The best way to stay healthy and protect others is to be up-to-date on your recommended immunizations and make sure all of your loved ones – from those aged 6 months to 100+ years – are also current on theirs.

Limit Exposure to Air Pollutants. If possible, avoid environments with



high levels of air pollution, chemical fumes, secondhand smoke and other lung irritants. It's also essential to test your home for radon, a leading cause of lung cancer, and take action if levels are elevated. If you have asthma or other lung health concerns, regularly monitor daily air quality forecasts to take precautions against outdoor air pollution. You can check conditions in your area at Airnow.gov

LUNGS! The American Lung Association hosts several community events throughout the year with fitness in mind, including the Trek Across Maine! Whether you are a fitness buff, or just getting started - consider registering for one of our events today and start training to create health habits for your lungs in 2025!

Learn more about how to protect your lung health in 2025 at Lung.org or call 1-800-LUNGUSA.

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Nominations now open for state, county teachers of the year

STATEWIDE, Maine - The Maine Department of Education (DOE) and Educate Maine are excited to announce that nominations are officially open for the 2025 County Teachers of the Year and the 2026 State Teacher of the Year. Maine's State and County Teachers of the Year serve as advocates for teachers, students, and public education in Maine.

"The Maine Teacher of the Year program is an excellent opportunity to recognize the extraordinary educators across our state who are dedicated to their schools and communities - and who are engaging, inspiring, and motivating their students every day," Maine DOE Commissioner Pender Makin said. "These nominations will give 16 Maine teachers a prominent platform to share the wonderful, innovative happenings in Maine's classrooms and advocate for public education."

Nominations can be made now through 5 p.m. on Friday, January 31, 2025 through a form on the Maine Teacher of the Year website. Nominations will be accepted from students, parents, caregivers, community members, school administrators, colleagues, college faculty members, and associations/organizations. Self-nominations and nominations from family members are not accepted.

Teachers who are nominated must:

Hold the appropriate professional certification for their teaching position;

Be a certified, in-good-standing, pre-K-12 teacher in a state-accredited public school - including career and technical education and adult education centers, public charter schools, or publicly-supported secondary schools (i.e. private schools that enroll 60 percent or more publicly-funded students, sometimes referred to as "town academies");

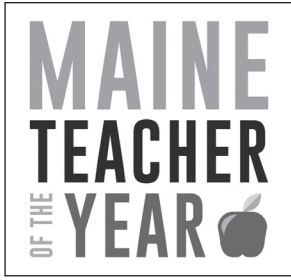
Be actively teaching students at least 50% of the workday at the time of nomination and during their year of recognition;

Maintain their teaching position and remain in the county for which they are selected throughout the year of recognition;

Have a minimum of five years of teaching, three of which are in Maine.

Beyond serving as advocates for education, Maine's State and County Teachers of the Year serve as advisors to the Maine DOE and state-level education stakeholders across Maine. State and County Teachers of the Year also join a cohort of teacher leaders who actively work together for the betterment of education in Maine. They receive ongoing professional learning and participate in many county and state leadership opportunities.

The 2025 County Teachers of the Year will be announced in May, and the



2026 Maine Teacher of the Year will be selected from the 16 county honorees. Through a selection process designed by educators, the field will be narrowed to semi-finalists and then state finalists before the Maine Teacher of the Year is announced by the Commissioner of the Maine DOE at a school assembly in the fall. Each year, State and County Teachers of the Year are honored at the annual Teacher of the Year Gala.

On behalf of, and in partnership with, the Maine DOE, the Maine Teacher of the Year program is administered by Educate Maine, a business-led organization with a mission of championing college, career readiness, and increased educational attainment. Funding is provided by Bangor Savings Bank, Dead River Company, Geiger, Hannaford, the Maine State Lottery, the Silvernail family, and Unum, with support from the State Board of Education and the Maine County and State Teachers of the Year Association.

"Educate Maine is honored to continue our partnership with the Maine



Celebrate Maine Teachers

The Teacher of the Year journey starts with your nomination. Nominations are now open: www.mainetoy.org/nominate



Department of Education to administer the Maine Teacher of the Year program," Educate Maine Executive Director Dr. Jason Judd said. "Our State and County Teachers of the Year exemplify the incredible dedication, innovation, and impact of educators across Maine. This program celebrates the vital role teachers play in shaping our future, elevates their voices, and strengthens the profession through leadership and advocacy."

The Maine Teacher of the Year program is committed to a nomination

and selection process that ensures people of all backgrounds are represented. Educate Maine and the Maine DOE champion that commitment by encouraging the nomination of educators from all culturally-diverse experiences and backgrounds. Our goal is to expand and diversify our nomination pool.

Through the generous support of Maine businesses, there is no cost to the local district when the Maine Teacher of the Year is out of the classroom on their official duties, which include representing ed-

ucators statewide and nationally and highlighting the important work of Maine schools, communities, and educators.

For more information about the Maine Teacher of the Year program, please visit the Maine Teacher of the Year website.

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

\$42M for Maine Coast Guard facilities secured

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senator Susan Collins, Vice Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, announced that she has secured a total of \$42,082,000, funding the U.S. Coast Guard requested for repairs to Coast Guard facilities in Rockland, South-

west Harbor, and Portland damaged by recent storms. This funding was included in disaster relief legislation that has passed Congress and been signed into law. It includes more than \$210 million for construction projects, of which a portion will be allocated for repairs to

Coast Guard facilities in Maine.

"Through search and rescue missions, ice breaking operations, and navigation assistance, the U.S. Coast Guard plays an important role in ensuring safe maritime traffic," said Senator Collins. "As the Vice Chair of the Ap-

ropriations Committee, I worked hard to secure this funding, which will allow for the essential repair of Coast Guard facilities that have been damaged by recent storms."

The funding requested by the Coast Guard and provided in the disaster relief legislation includes:

Rockland: \$40,700,000 to repair the pier and boathouse, which have been in need of renovations, but have significantly worsened as a result of recent storms.

Southwest Harbor: \$880,000 to replace dolphin piles, short ties,

lighting and fender systems, and piles on the pier. This funding will also support remediation and repairs to water damage to the command and boat maintenance building.

Portland: \$502,000 to repair the pier and survey for future dredging.

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Arts & Entertainment

Guest Column:

Hope House spreads good to L-A in 2024

Dear friends of Hope House,

Here are some of the highlights of 2024. We are SO thankful for each of you who have shared in Hope House's activities, helped enable them, or cheered us on!

Last year started out with good media coverage of our center's help to New Mainers. A great Spring Market season then culminated in our Family Support Center's biggest backyard BBQ yet! Held on the 4th of July, it was followed by prizes and a walk together to watch the Great Falls Fireworks show. Special thanks to our friends from the Chinese Bible Church of Greater Boston who manned the BBQ's and enabled the activities.

In the fall, HH Directors Bruce and Jan took a few months off to give

in-home hospice care to Bruce's 96yr.old mother with uterine cancer, until she went home to heaven.

Late fall brought preparations towards a Free Coat & Toy Fair, made possible by helpers both local and from Boston. "Share Your Christmas" features Coats for Kids news coverage of Hope House, as well as a song video of the holiday event on Dec 7th that drew out 140 neighborhood families in need of coats and winter help. It was fun to get to see growing babies brought to the fair, who our staff had not seen since we and their mothers saw the ultrasound images of them in our center's clinic!

In mid-Dec., Bruce slipped on icy steps at home, and x-rays showed 2 fractured ribs that are painful but slowly healing.

Jan also sustained injuries in her shoulder that are still healing, from her care of Mom. Your prayers are appreciated.

The center's Host Home, as well as the Mechanic Falls Host Home, are both presently hosting some great people who lost their apartments in December. Prayers are appreciated for the sweet family of

5, as well as for the skilled young woman, who have been displaced and are awaiting God's provision for them in the New Year.

Your friends at Hope House pray that you also know God's help to meet all your needs as you face this next year. Let us know how we might be of help. Our Family Support Center at 91 College



St. in Lewiston will have weekly market days again in the spring, but winter hours for our Free Women's Health Clinic or Free FamilyThrift Store services can be arranged by appointment to meet urgent needs. Call or text us at 207-577-1165, or email

us at hopehouse17@gmail.com. If goods are needed, we will help if supplies are in stock. Our website lists other local help agencies that may be of assistance as well.

Blessings in 2025!
Bruce & Jan Willson and the Hope House family



A unique and unforgettable play at The Public Theatre!

The Public Theatre starts the New Year with one of the most powerful and unique experiences you will ever have in a theatre with the critically acclaimed Off-Broadway hit Every Brilliant Thing playing Jan 24 – Feb 2.

Every Brilliant Thing is a funny, moving and unforgettable story told with the help of the audience in most delight-

ful and non-intimidating way.

If you have ever written a "gratitude list" or lost sight of the things that make life worth living, this humorous and heartbreaking interactive play is for you.

When a woman goes into the hospital because she finds it "hard to be happy", her 7-year-old daughter starts writing

her a list of all the brilliant things in life worth living for. No. 1: "Ice cream", No. 25: "Wearing a cape", No. 317: "The even numbered Star Trek films". As the girl grows older, her list grows longer, ultimately reminding her of all the large and small miracles in her own life.

THIS PRODUCTION WILL BE SEAT-

ING 24 LUCKY PEOPLE ON THE STAGE for only \$20!

Every Brilliant Thing is an interactive play where the audience participates in helping the actress to tell the story.

Before the show begins, the actress will identify and chat with multiple people throughout the entire audience giving then slips of paper

numbered with "brilliant things" to be read aloud when she calls out their corresponding number. Other audience members may also be asked to interact within the context of the story with strong guidance from the actress.

Participation will be sought from audience members sitting both on the stage and in the traditional theatre seats. The

powerful impact this play makes is created by the amazing community that is built to tell this unforgettable story.

Every Brilliant Thing runs Jan 24 – Feb 2 at The Public Theatre, Lewiston/Auburn's Professional Theatre located at 31 Maple St. Tickets and information at www.thepublictheatre.org or 207 782-3200.

My Little Snowflake Handprint Keepsake

Friday January 10th 10AM

3rd Floor Children's Department



Recommended for kids ages birth - 6 years old and their caregivers

Lewiston PUBLIC LIBRARY

Painting Class: Paint a Winter Scene

Monday, January 27th 4:00PM

located in the Idea Lab Second Floor



taught by local artist, Nicole Ann

Recommended for children ages 10-14

Lewiston PUBLIC LIBRARY

Snow thrower safety tips: Keep best practices in mind this winter

MAINE -- Clearing snow and ice from driveways, sidewalks and parking lots is no small job. You rely on your outdoor power equipment to do the heavy lifting, and it's important to keep safety in mind. The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) reminds home and business owners to use snow throwers, often referred to as snow blowers, safely and offers tips to help.

"Weather today is unpredictable. You need to have your snow thrower serviced and ready to power up," says OPEI President and CEO Kris Kiser. "Review your owner's manual so you can use your equipment safely." Kiser says preparation is key and that home and business owners should consider the follow-

ing:

Review the owner's manual. Check the owner's manual for safe handling procedures. If the manual cannot be found, look it up online, and store a copy on your computer so it's available to reference in the future. Review how to operate controls. Be able to shut off equipment quickly.

Check equipment. The snow thrower should be powered off when being checked over. Adjust any cables and check the auger.

Charge batteries. Locate the batteries for your snow thrower and charge them fully before it snows.

Purchase fuel. Be sure to use the correct fuel recommended by the equipment's manufacturer. For most gasoline-powered snow throwers, that is E10



or less. Often fuel stations are closed after a storm so buy gasoline in advance of storms. Fuel that is more than 30 days old can phase separate and cause operating problems. For more information on fueling properly see www.opei.org/programs/ethanolwarning

Store and use fuel properly. Place gasoline in a proper fuel container

and label it with the date purchased and the ethanol content. Store fuel safely and out of the reach of children. Fill the fuel tank outside before starting the engine and while the engine is cold. Never add fuel to a running or hot engine.

Clear the area. Snow can sometimes hide objects. Doormats, hoses, balls, toys, boards, wires,

and other debris should be removed from areas you intend to clear. When run over by a snow thrower, these objects may harm the machine or people.

Dress for winter weather. Locate safety gear now, and place it in an accessible closet or location. Wear safety glasses, gloves and footwear that can handle cold and slippery surfaces when operating the snow thrower.

KEY SAFETY TIP: Never put your hands inside the auger or chute. Use a clean out tool to unclog snow or debris from the snow thrower. Your hands should never go inside the auger or chute.

Turn OFF the snow thrower if you need to clear a clog. If you need to remove debris or unclog

snow, always turn off the snow thrower. Wait for all moving parts to come to a complete stop before clearing any clogs or debris.

Operate in visible conditions. Never operate the snow thrower without good visibility or light.

Aim with care. Never throw snow toward people or cars. Keep children or pets inside and away from your snow thrower when it is operating.

Use extreme caution on slopes and hills. Use caution when changing directions on slopes. Do not attempt to clear steep slopes.

Know where the cord is. If using an electric powered snow thrower, be aware of where the power cord is at all times. Avoid tripping.

Grant to boost dairy farm viability, climate resilience

MAINE - Dairy farmers across the Northeast can now apply for the Dairy Farm Improvement & Modernization Grant through the Northeast Dairy Business Innovation Center (NE-DBIC). With a total of \$950,000 in funding, this grant will support a wide range of projects aimed at improving farm

viability, economic sustainability, and climate resilience.

Grants will range from \$15,000 to \$100,000 with a 25% in-kind and/or cash match contribution.

This grant will support projects that modernize outdated systems or try new and innovative solutions, with the goal of

enhancing farm viability, reducing climate impacts, improving milk quality or value, improving worker conditions, and strengthening the farm's ability to respond to challenges.

Dairy farmers across the Northeast are eligible to apply. Technical service providers, producer associations, and milk buyers/

processors who have a project that directly benefits a group of dairy farmers are also eligible.

Grants are available to applicants in all 11 Northeast states served by NE-DBIC: Connecticut, Delaware, Maine, Massachusetts, Maryland, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania,

Rhode Island, and Vermont.

Applications are open from January 2 to February 20 at 2pm. Access the full request for applications here: <https://nedairyinnovation.com/grants/farm-improvement-modernization/>

The NE-DBIC's investment and project strategy promotes innovation

and resiliency for regional production of dairy products across an 11-state Northeast region. Hosted by the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets, the NE-DBIC is funded through the USDA-AMS.

For more information on NE-DBIC, visit: <https://nedairyinnovation.com/>

Snowmobile Ride-in weekend to benefit Pine Tree Camp

HERMON, ME - It's that time of year again... It's time for a parade of Celebrity Egg Riders to saddle up and raise money and awareness for Pine Tree Camp. On Saturday, February 1st, spectators at Dysart's on Coldbrook Road in Hermon will celebrate a parade of legendary Egg Riders at the 52nd annual Dysart's Snowmobile Ride-In Weekend to benefit Pine Tree Camp.

The Ride-In Weekend, which has been running for more than 50 years, raises money in support of Pine Tree Camp and its mission to serve Maine people with disabilities. 2025 is Pine Tree Camp's 80th anniversary which makes this unique Egg Ride and four day fundraiser extra special this year.

At the Ride-In, Celebrity Egg Riders stuff raw eggs down their snowmobile suits before hitting the trail. Each egg represents a \$50 pledge by supporters who want to see their favorite rider get covered in the most eggs...and raise the most money.

This is Pine Tree Camp's biggest fundraiser of the year and one hundred percent of proceeds support the camp's open door policy which provides tuition for kids

and adults with disabilities to attend this fully accessible, barrier-free summer camp on North Pond. Since 1945, Pine Tree Camp has welcomed all who could benefit, regardless of their ability to pay.

2025 Egg Riders include Maine Cabin Masters Jedi and Dixie, local social media personalities, and hometown heroes, including: Hermon Fire Chief, Cody Sullivan; Penobscot County Sheriff, Troy Morton; and Major Marcel Fortier and First Sergeant Rob Jenkins from Hermon High School's JROTC.

For a full list of Egg Riders, please visit: <https://pinetreesociety.org/egg-ride-2025-celebrity-riders/>

The Egg Ride is the highlight of the four day event which runs Thursday, January 30th through Sunday, February 2nd. The weekend begins with a spaghetti supper, WABI-TV5 telethon, a charity auction hosted by Maine Cabin Masters Jedi and Dixie, a poker run and, on the final day, a radar run hosted by the Penobscot Snowmobile Club.

The poker run is open to the public and follows the Celebrity Egg Ride route; allowing sledgers to join the parade.



Maine Cabin Master, Jared "Jedi" Baker, suits up to hit the trail as a Celebrity Egg Rider at the 2024 Dysart's Snowmobile Ride-in Weekend. This year's Egg Ride will be held Saturday, February 1st as part of a full weekend of events in Hermon including a charity auction, poker run and radar run at the Penobscot Snowmobile Club. Maine Cabin Masters Jedi and Dixie will host the auction. Photo courtesy of Pine Tree Camp.

Schedule:
Thursday, January 30: Live WABI-TV5 Telethon and Dysart's Spaghetti Dinner, 4:00pm at Dysart's Restaurant & Truck Stop, 530 Coldbrook Road, Hermon

Friday, January 31: Live and Silent Auction - Hosted by Maine Cabin Masters Jedi and Dixie, 6:00pm at Morgan Hill Event Center, 82 Morgan Hill Lane, Hermon

Saturday, February 1: Celebrity Egg Ride and Poker Run, 9:30am at Dysart's Restaurant & Truck Stop, 530 Coldbrook Road, Hermon

Sunday, February 2: Penobscot Snowmobile Club Radar Run, Noon at the Penobscot Snowmobile Club, 795 Bog Road, Hermon

Egg Ride / Poker Run Check Points on Saturday, February 1:

10:00am - Start: Dysart's (530 Coldbrook Road, Hermon)

Note: Egg Riders stuff eggs into snowmobile suits here

10:45am - Stop 1: Penobscot Snowmobile Club (795 Bog Road, Hermon)

11:30am - Stop 2: Pumpkin Patch RV Re-

sort (149 Billings Rd, Hermon)

12:15pm - Stop 3: Penobscot Snowmobile Club (795 Bog Road, Hermon)

12:45pm - Finish: Dysart's (530 Coldbrook Road, Hermon)

Note: Egg Riders de-egg here

For more information, including video and photos from last year's event, visit:

<https://www.pinetreesociety.org/events/snowmobile-ride-in/>

To donate an auction item or get involved, please contact Michaela

Collins at mcollins@pinetreesociety.org or 207-386-6033.

2025 Sponsors: Dysart's, WABI-TV5, Bangor Daily News, Star 97.7, Sappi, Carmel Electric, Irish Collision Center, Varney Auto Group, HUB, Norway Savings Bank, Ballard Truck Center, Bangor Tire Company, BDS Waste Disposal, GoNetspeed, Northern Light Health, Chase Toys, Signography Graphics, Best Western, Moosehead Trail Powersports, 201 Power Sports, Morgan Hill Event Center, Machias Savings Bank, Renewal by Andersen, and Shin Pond Village.

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Seniors Not Acting Their Age

Stunning Vistas on Iron Mountain



A panoramic vista of Conway Valley can be seen from south facing cliffs on Iron Mountain



Iron Mountain Trail weaves up an open field



Open ledges on Iron Mountain lead to a precipice with stunning views

Our friend, Laurie Wunder, is a wealth of information about hiking opportunities in New Hampshire. During a recent paddle trip on Flagstaff Lake, she mentioned that Iron Mountain near Jackson was a relatively easy trek that offered some wonderful views of the area. Since my wife, Nancy, and I were unfamiliar with the peak, we expressed interest in joining her for a future outing.

Subsequent communications with Laurie resulted in an agreement to shop for a quality weather forecast for our first ascent of what portended to be a stimulating alpine excursion. Soon after, an excellent late November day was identified.

We met Laurie in

Jackson on a breezy, partly sunny morning. The adventure on Iron Mountain begins before reaching the trailhead. Leaving Route 16, we drove steeply up Iron Mountain Road. Initially paved, the unusually precipitous passage soon transitioned to a rough twisting dirt surface. Driving a high clearance vehicle was helpful. The upper portion of the road is not open in winter and probably not passable when muddy.

There is a small parking area at the top of the road on the right. Just beyond, a driveway leading to historic Hayes Farm begins. The trailhead which offers exceptionally scenic views is located across the road.

We scrambled over

an ancient stonewall and ascended a long stairs in an open field. Looking back, we enjoyed splendid views of the northern White Mountains. Unfortunately, Mount Washington and the Presidentials were hidden in the clouds.

A narrow path weaves steadily upward through the field while continuing to offer remarkable panoramic vistas. We soon entered a mixed hardwood and conifer forest and traversed a log bridge where a sign warns hikers to remain on the trail. Shortly after, we crossed another field, reentered the woods, and hiked easily up a modest gradient in a stand of barren hardwoods presiding over a carpet of fallen leaves.

The trail soon steep-

ened where accommodating switchbacks eased our climb as we gained elevation. Beyond the switchbacks, we persisted uphill through boulder strewn terrain to the summit where the remnants of a former fire tower are scattered about. The fire tower ceased operating in 1948 and concrete abutments are the only intact remains of the original structure.

We stopped for a lunch break on ledges next to the former fire tower. The forested summit limits visibility, but Laurie advised that far better views could be observed farther south.

Intent on pursuing more scenic opportunities, we descended steeply south on a rocky trail. Subsequently, the gradient on the rough path moderated and we proceeded over gentle rolling hills past a spur trail on the left that drops to abandoned iron mines.

A short distance beyond the junction, we followed open ledges to a precipice with stunning

views facing south. The panoramic vista of Conway Valley and the surrounding mountains was phenomenal. The Moat Range dominated the western slope of the valley and the alpine-like summit of Mount Chocorua could be seen in the distance. We paused to savor the moment.

On return, we stopped at the previously bypassed spur trail to consider completing a precipitous descent to explore the old iron mines. However, time constraints precluded the time-consuming endeavor, so the potentially fascinating excursion was postponed for another time.

Since hip surgery a couple of years ago, I've experienced difficulty with steep rocky descents and a seemingly concomitant decline in my sense of balance. Of course, some of that is probably related to old age. Despite exercising caution, falls have become more common.


Shortly after passing over the summit, I slipped while negotiating down a

smooth declining ledge. When extending my right arm to cushion the fall, I cut the palm of my hand. Fortunately, we were equipped with bandages and antibiotic ointment that effectively addressed the minor lesion. While the recurring difficulties are a concern, I'm not willing to forego the benefits of mountain hiking yet – enhanced vigilance is my choice.

I was able to stay upright for the remainder of our otherwise problem-free return. Approaching the trailhead, we were again blessed with wondrous views of the northern Whites, but Mount Washington was still enveloped in clouds.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* narrates treks on the nine best mountain hikes in Maine including winter climbs in Baxter State Park.

Ron Chase resides in Topsham. His latest See Seniors, next page




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Registration now open for the 2025 WinterKids Downhill 24

CARRABASSETT VALLEY, ME — The countdown is on! Registration is officially open for the 2025 WinterKids Downhill 24, Maine's only 24-hour ski and snowboard challenge. Mark your calendars for February 27-28, 2025, as Sugarloaf transforms into a high-energy, illuminated playground for skiers and snowboarders from across New England.

This year, WinterKids is excited to spotlight a growing movement in our community: philanthropy powered by kids, for kids. From the youngest skiers to seasoned snowboarders, more young people are stepping up, fundraising, and advocating for their peers. The Downhill 24



embodies this spirit of "kids helping kids," ensuring all children can access outdoor winter fun and activities that keep them healthy and thriving.

Here's what you need to know:

What's New in 2025: Special prizes and challenges just for younger participants to inspire and reward their fundraising efforts, expanded course options, and eco-friendly

event tees. **What's Returning:** The iconic, lit-up Narrow Gauge trail (thanks to Herc Rentals and Pike Industries!), non-stop skiing and snowboarding, and the chance to ski Sugarloaf at night—the only time you can all year.

Why You Should Join: Whether you're a seasoned athlete, a weekend warrior, or just looking for a fun way to give back, this event is for you.



hill 24 is a unique opportunity to celebrate kids taking the lead in giving back to their communities. It's more than just an event; it's a chance to empower the next generation of changemakers to make a meaningful impact.

How to Register
Visit D24.org to sign up. Spots are limited and filling fast, so don't wait!

WinterKids is calling on families, friends, coworkers, and thrill-seekers to lace up their boots, hit the slopes, and make a difference. Proceeds from the event support WinterKids' programs, helping over 50,000 participants each year stay active and healthy outdoors during the winter.

This year's Down-



Maine CASA to hold training March 10-14

MAINE -- Interested in advocating for the best interests of a child? The Maine Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program is holding its next training for volunteer advocates from March 10th through March 14th, 2025.

This free, five-day training is designed to

prepare attendees for certification as volunteer guardians ad litem (GALs) in Maine child protection cases. Trainees may participate virtually or in person. For those who wish to participate in person, the training will be held in Augusta. Accommodations may be available.

The foundation of a CASA's work is learning about the case and then advising the court what the CASA believes is in the child's best interest. CASAs come from a wide variety of professional and personal backgrounds and are guided throughout the process by CASA program staff.

CASAs bring their own unique perspectives to their work as volunteers.

If you are willing to advocate for a child's best interests, we encourage you to apply to become a CASA volunteer. Those interested in the training must complete an ap-

plication and, if invited to participate, must also complete criminal and child protection services background checks.

For more information about becoming a volunteer, please contact Maine CASA at 213-2865 or by e-mail at casa@courts.maine.gov

courts.maine.gov

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

Seniors

*Continued from previous page book, "Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine" is available at [*countrypress.com/maine-al-fresco or in bookstores and through online retailers. His previous books are "The Great Mars Hill Bank Robbery" and "Mountains*](http://www.north-</i></p>
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for Mortals - New England." Visit his website at www.ronchaseoutdoors.com or he can be reached at ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net

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Sen. Collins' Autism CARES Act signed into law

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The President signed into law the Autism CARES Act of 2024, bipartisan legislation introduced by U.S. Senators Susan Collins and Ben Ray Lujan (D-NM), members of the Senate Committee on Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions. The bill will renew and expand federal support for research, services, and training related to autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities. Autism CARES is the main source of federal funding for autism research, services, training, and monitoring.

“This bill will continue the successful programming across the Department of Health and Human Services that helps us better understand the causes and the symptoms of the Autism Spectrum Disorder and improve the lives of families affected by it,” said Senator Collins. “I am proud that we have reauthorized this important law, which

is critical to expanding research at the NIH, supporting the CDC’s effort to increase public awareness and early detection of autism spectrum disorder, and strengthening and expanding the Health Research and Services Administration’s workforce training to identify and support children and youth with autism as well as their families.”

“Due to the research and increased training and awareness spurred by the Autism CARES Act, children are being diagnosed earlier and are receiving appropriate services from trained providers,” said Senator Lujan. “Not only does the Autism CARES Act of 2024 renew federal support for autism spectrum disorder and other developmental disabilities, but it also expands critical research and training programs that benefit people with autism and their families. I’m proud to see this bill pass the Senate, and now I am calling on the



House for swift passage to continue to drive research and support individuals with autism and other developmental disabilities for years to come.”

Specifically, the Autism CARES Act:

Includes over \$2 billion in authorized federal spending on autism research and training programs for the next five years;

Includes new language that directs the NIH Director to ensure a more inclusive approach to autism research;

Requires the Government Accountability Office to issue a study and report on how to increase the number of developmental behavioral pediatricians;

Includes the study of the aging process as a focus area of autism research activities to help propel future research on autism and aging; and

Creates a new Autism Intervention Research Network for Communication Needs that will benefit autistic individuals who may be unable or limited in using speech or language to communicate.

“We greatly appreciate the leadership of Senators Ben Ray Lujan and Susan Collins in advancing the Autism CARES Act of 2024 through the Senate,” said Keith Wargo, President & CEO of Autism Speaks. “Families have benefited from the tremendous impact of this law over the past two decades. This next iteration expands efforts to address gaps in autism healthcare and services and represents a forward-looking approach to driving progress in research, supports and services for autistic individuals across the spectrum and lifespan for years to come.”

“AUCD commends

Congress on its unwavering commitment to improving the lives of people with autism and their families. We are grateful to Senator Lujan, Senator Collins, Representative Smith, and Representative Cuellar for their unwavering leadership to get the Autism CARES Act reauthorized this Congress. The Autism CARES Act that includes the Leadership Education in Neurodevelopmental Disabilities will have a tremendous impact on making sure people with autism and other neurodevelopmental disabilities and their families in every state and territory receive the care needed from trained professionals to support and improve their health and wellbeing,” said AUCD Public Policy Director Cindy Smith. “We look forward to continuing to work with leaders in Congress and the community to continue to make a positive impact in the lives of people with autism and their families.”

“The reauthorization of Autism CARES brings us one step closer to ensuring stronger, more meaningful inclusion for the entirety of the spectrum in research, supports, and services. This is in great part because of the inspired leadership and deep commitment of Senator Lujan and Senator Collins to autistic people in their own districts and across the nation. Hope is on the horizon, and we are grateful,” said Cofounder and President of Profound Autism Alliance Judith Ur-sitti.

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), approximately 1 in 36 children have been diagnosed with autism – an increase of approximately 300 percent since 2006.

The legislation is supported by Autism Speaks, the Profound Autism Alliance, the Association of University Centers on Disabilities, and the Autism Society.

MaineHealth receives grant to enhance rural obstetric training

PORTLAND, ME – The U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Health Resources and Services Administration (HRSA) has awarded MaineHealth a three-year, \$667,330 grant to establish new rural obstetric training intensives through the Maine Rural Graduate Medical Education (MERGE) Collaborative.

MaineHealth, Northern Light Health, Central Maine Medical Center

and the Maine-Dartmouth Family Medicine Residency co-created the MERGE Collaborative to increase high-quality training opportunities for graduate medical students in rural communities. Funding from the HRSA grant will allow MERGE to develop obstetrics education programs focused on rural community needs.

“This grant will help address the need for more obstetrics-trained providers in our rural areas,” said Dr.



Kalli Varaklis, Designated Institutional Official at MaineHealth and the principal investigator for the HRSA grant. “It creates an opportunity for students in rural residency rotations to learn important skills to support pregnant patients and their families.”

Physicians from six hospital programs in Maine

and Eastern New Hampshire including MaineHealth Stephens Hospital, MaineHealth Franklin Hospital, Northern Light Mayo Hospital, Mount Desert Island Hospital, Maine-Dartmouth Family Medicine Residency and MaineHealth Memorial Hospital will develop the new curriculum. Dr. Jeannette Andrews, an

OB/GYN at MaineHealth Stephens Hospital, and Dr. Kathryn Hoffmann, a Family Medicine physician at Maine-Dartmouth Family Medicine Residency, will lead the effort.

“Family medicine physicians train to provide comprehensive healthcare across settings and over the lifespan, so they are well-positioned to help address the gap in obstetrical care within rural communities,” Dr. Hoffmann said. “Building

strong partnerships between family medicine and OB/GYN physicians can increase access to specialty care in rural communities by allowing OB/GYN physicians to focus on higher risk patients and surgical procedures.”

The physician leaders also will use focus groups to learn what skills patients feel residents need to learn most. Patient focus groups will begin in early 2025 with the training.

Maine Community College System: 2024 Year in review

AUGUSTA, ME — In 2024, Maine’s community colleges continued to deliver on their promise of offering an affordable, accessible, high-quality education to Mainers across the state. The colleges and system took concrete steps to improve access with ongoing Free College scholarships, expanding popular academic programs, and vastly increasing the number and type of short-term workforce training.

The year’s highlights include:

TRANSFER: Unveiling three new transfer programs: the sweeping “Transfer ME” program

with the University of Maine System that streamlines MCCS college grads into a hassle-free guaranteed direct admission to a UMS college; a similar Maine Transfer Guarantee program with six private college in Maine; and the Black Bear Advantage program that guarantees direct admission to MCCS college graduates to UMaine.

ENROLLMENT: Enrolling a second straight year of record fall enrollment at the colleges, in large part due to the success of the Free College scholarship program and the expansion of high-demand programs.

PARTNERSHIP: Joining the new Maine Defense Industry Alliance as a founding member, and securing the group’s first \$6.5M investment to expand manufacturing and trade facilities and programs at York County Community College.

FUNDING: Securing a transformative \$75 million grant that funds another five years of short-term workforce training programs at MCCS’ Harold Alfond Center for the Advancement of Maine’s Workforce.

INNOVATION: Garnering national media attention for our leading-edge model of developing short-term workforce training in close collaboration with Maine employers, including stories in Forbes.com, Inside Higher Ed, The Job newsletter, Evollution, and the Chronicle of Higher Education.

LEADERSHIP: Hiring Kristen Miller as the new president of Southern Maine Community Col-

lege, and Angela Buck as interim president of Northern Maine Community College.

STRATEGIC VISION: The Board of Trustees approved the latest MCCS Strategic Vision, a roadmap for the system that brings our mission, vision, and values into sharp focus and lays out our priorities and goals for our students, employees, and employer partners over the near- and long-term.

SPEAKERS: Attracting Governor Janet Mills and Secretary of the Navy Carlos Del Toro as graduation speakers.

NEW STUDENT FACILITIES: Announcing plans to add student housing at Kennebec Val-

ley Community College in 2025. Unveiling the system’s first Veteran’s Resource Center at Southern Maine Community College, and a first-in-the-state First Responder Training Center that opened in Alfred in collaboration with York County Community College. Central Maine Community College is expanding Kirk Hall, which houses its health care programs.

And, of course, our students are at the center of all we do, including:

Thomas Bailey went from homeless vet to BIW employed.

Southern Maine Community College culinary students won the Maine Restaurant Week

breakfast cook-off.

Eastern Maine Community College graduate Marilou Ranta won a coveted James Beard award for outstanding hospitality at her restaurant, The Quarry in Monson.

Women at the Southern Maine Women’s Reentry Center graduated from a short-time workforce training welding course as part of a pre-release program, with several landing union welding jobs upon release.

Kristen Crowley enrolled while incarcerated with the Second Chance Pell Program, graduating with a 4.0 and honored as the Washington County Community College Student of the Year.

Jason Hodsdon Masonry

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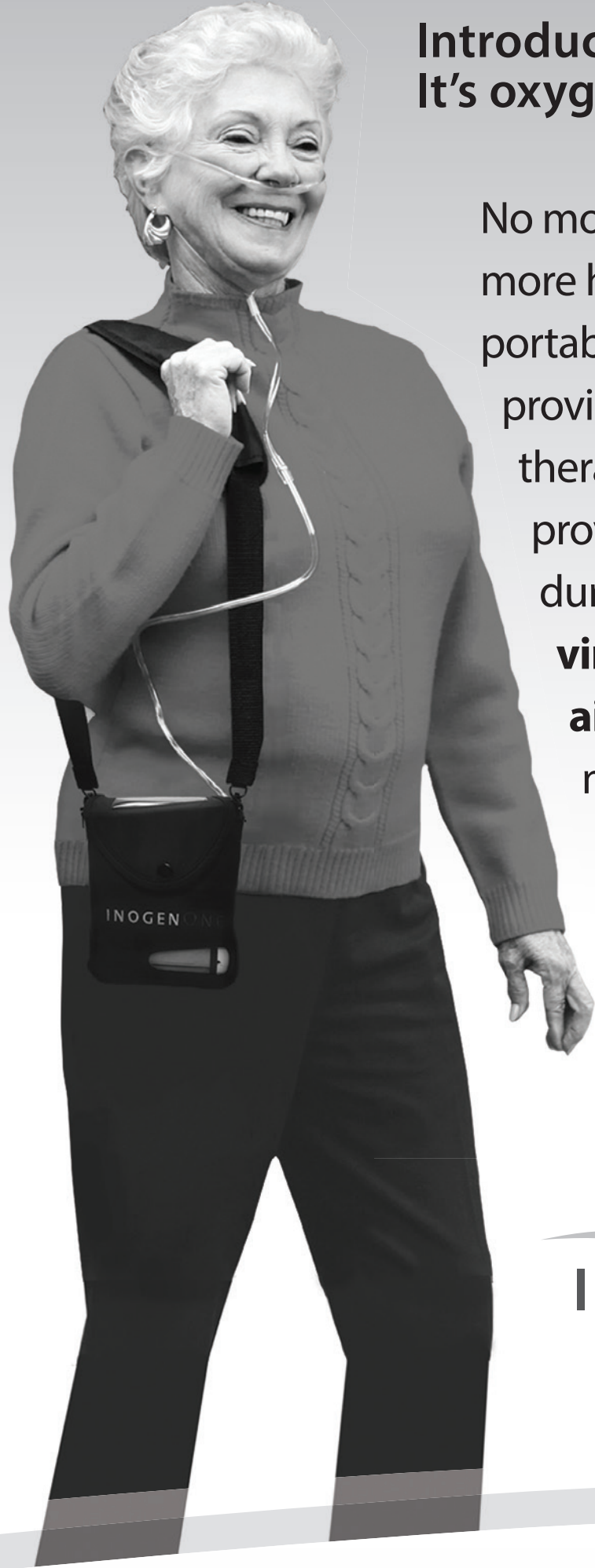
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CRCofWM receives donation

MAINE -- Staff from the Norway Center for Health & Rehabilitation presented the Cancer Resource Center of Western Maine with a check for \$3600- the proceeds from their annual ticket auction, which was held in November. Norway Center for Health & Rehabilitation staff worked all year to procure over 200 items for this ticket auction and baked goods sale, which has become a very popular annual event. "We are so grateful to the staff of Norway Center for Health & Rehabilitation for presenting the Cancer Resource Center of Western Maine



Norway Center for Health & Rehabilitation staff (left to right): Heather Jackson, Katherine Hatch, and Falishia Ward.

with this very generous donation," said Diane Madden, executive director of the Cancer Resource Center of Western Maine. "The

ticket auction is a very fun event, and with so many beautiful items, you can also do some Christmas shopping!"

Guest Column: A Single Grain of Sand

Guest Column by Peter Pinette

An older man who was advancing in years was walking alone on a deserted beach and he was in deep thought about something that had always troubled him. He was contemplating his life and trying to understand how God could know him personally and intimately. He reached down and grabbed a handful of sand and looked at all the grains of sand and thought to himself, if these grains of sand were human lives, how God could ever know us personally when this is just a handful off a beach that extends for miles. The very number of human lives living on the

earth today made the man feel very insignificant and insecure that he could be known by God and that his prayers would be heard in the midst of so much of humanity on the earth.

He held the sand in his hand and continued to contemplate this and in his heart he prayed that God would help him with this. Then it seemed that God spoke to his heart as he prayed. My son, look at the sand in your hand now and gently let it slide through your fingers until you only have a single grain of sand in your hand.

The man did as he was told, then God told him to look closely at that single grain of sand. God

told him that grain of sand was the reason that he created the earth and the entire universe with all its stars and oceans. He came to earth as a man to die for us on a cross and all of His love is centered on that single grain of sand. Nothing means more to me than that single grain of sand you are now holding. I would die many deaths for that one grain of sand.

The man was puzzled by this and wondered why God would tell him about this for just a single grain of sand. God answered him, my son, I tell you this with the greatest love for you are that grain of sand.

Peter Pinette
Woodland Me

Camden National Corp. merges with Northway Financial

CAMDEN, ME – Camden National Corporation ("Camden National") (NASDAQ: CAC), the bank holding company for Camden National Bank, today announced the closing of its merger with Northway Financial, Inc. ("Northway") (OTCQB: NWYF), the parent company of Northway Bank. The all-stock transaction was originally announced on September 10, 2024. The combined institution has total assets of approximately \$7.0 billion and 73 branches in Maine and New Hampshire.

"We are excited to have successfully completed Camden National's merger with Northway and, in doing so, to strategically bolster our New Hampshire presence, creating a premier publicly-traded, northern New England bank," said Simon Griffiths, president and chief executive officer of Camden National. "We remain committed to executing our long-term strategy of deepening customer relationships through advice-based conversations and exceptional customer service."

The conversion of Northway's banking products and services to Camden National systems is expected to occur in mid-March.

Griffiths continued, "We thank the extraordinary employees from both companies for helping to make this transaction possible and extend a warm welcome to our new team members, customers, and shareholders."

At the effective time of the merger, each outstanding share of Northway common stock was



converted into the right to receive 0.83 shares of Camden National common stock, with cash to be paid in lieu of fractional shares. Camden National issued approximately 2.3 million shares of its common stock as merger consideration.

Also today, in connection with, and effective upon, completion of the merger, Camden National announced the appointment of Larry K. Haynes to Camden National's Board of Directors. Mr. Haynes has also been appointed to the board's Audit Committee and to Camden National Bank's Board of Directors and its Trust Committee. Mr. Haynes previously served as a member of Northway's Board of Directors until the completion of the merger.

"We are extremely pleased to welcome Larry as a new independent director to our board," said Larry Sterrs, chair of Camden National's Board of Directors. "Larry is a thoughtful and highly esteemed leader, possessing an in-depth knowledge of New Hampshire's growing market with a strong commitment to serving our shareholders, customers, team members, and local communities."

As president and chief executive officer of the Grappone Automotive

Group headquartered in Bow, New Hampshire, Mr. Haynes oversees the daily operation of the five retail auto stores and 380 team members. Mr. Haynes is also responsible for various dealership and non-dealership real estate holdings. Mr. Haynes joined Grappone Automotive in 1997 as its Chief Financial Officer. Mr. Haynes' previous employment includes serving as Chief Financial Officer of MEG Asset Management, Inc. and Vice President and Controller of Hilco, Inc., a Bank of Ireland subsidiary that acquired First NH Banks Inc. Mr. Haynes began his public accounting career as an auditor for a firm which is now Deloitte.

Mr. Haynes is a Certified Public Accountant and Certified Financial Planner® and a graduate of Leadership New Hampshire. He earned his master's degree in business administration from Southern New Hampshire University and his Bachelor of Science degree in accounting, with an economics minor, from Plymouth State University.

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

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Calendar

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Wednesdays

GORHAM -- Story Hour every Wednesday from 10:30 to 11:30 at North Gorham Public Library.

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.

Recommended 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.

Jan 10

LEWISTON -- On Friday, January 10th at 10am the Lewiston Public Library Children's Department will be offering the program My Little Snowflake Handprint Keepsake. Caregivers and their young children will be able to make a wintery snowflake themed hand-

print keepsake. This activity is recommended for caregivers with children between the ages of 0-6 years old. Siblings are also welcome to attend and participate. This program will take place in the Children's Department on the third floor of the library. The activity is free and there is no registration required.

Jan 11

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

David Mallett - Sat, January 11, 2025 at 7:30 pm. Doors open 7:00 pm.

Maine's own singer-songwriter David Mallett is one of America's true troubadours. In a career that spans four decades, David Mallett has recorded 17 albums and has performed in clubs, concert halls and festivals

across the US, Canada and Europe. He has appeared on numerous broadcasts, including National Public Radio's A Prairie Home Companion. Known for his carefully written, poetic offerings, his body of work has provided material for more than 150 artists, including Alison Krauss, Pete Seeger, Hal Ketchum, Emmylou Harris, John Denver and even the Muppets, and his "Garden Song" has become an American folk classic.

Tickets: \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door, \$10 Students/Children. Available at the church office, Gulf of Maine Books, or online at <https://ticketstripe.com/pousette>.

Jan 14

LEWISTON -- In partnership with the Lewiston CareerCenter, the Lewiston Public Library will host a resume workshop on Tuesday, January 14th in the Idea Lab on the second floor from 11:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

The CareerCenter will provide professional resume writing and job connection assistance on a first-come, first-served basis. No registration is required.

Jan 16

AUBURN -- FILM SCREENING & DISCUSSION --BEYOND ELECTIONS: REDEFINING DEMOCRACY IN THE AMERICAS. Thursday, January 16, 2025 -- 3:00-5:00 p.m., Androscoggin Community Room, Auburn Public Library.

Jan 18

LEWISTON -- The Midcoast Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Rohan Smith presents "Invigorating Water Music." The performance is on January 18 at 7:00 p.m. at the Franco Center, 46 Cedar St., Lewiston. For info and tickets visit <https://www.midcoast-symphony.org/tickets> or call 207-481-0790. Tickets \$25 in advance or \$30 at the door. Age 25 and under are free. The Audience is also invited to our free "More with Midcoast" "Meet the Instruments" event that begins at 6:00pm.

Jan 19

TOPSHAM -- The Midcoast Symphony Orchestra (MSO) will be continuing their 35th season with a family-friendly program that celebrates and encourages youth involvement in the arts, held at the Orion Performing Arts Center in Topsham on Sunday, January 19 at 2:30pm.

Jan 25

GRAY -- The First Congregational Church of Gray Saturday Night Church Supper on Saturday, January 25, 2025 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

Jan 25

LISBON FALLS -- Dine In/Take Out Bean Supper, Saturday, January 25th from 4:30pm - 5:30pm or SOLD OUT

Lisbon United Methodist Church, 14 School Street, Lisbon Falls, ME

Sponsored by the Methodist Women Adults \$9.00

Menu: Pea Beans, Hot Dogs, Potato Salad, Cole Slaw, dinner roll and a slice of pie!

Jan 27

LEWISTON -- Lewiston Public Library for Painting Class: Paint a Winter Scene in the 2nd floor Idea Lab on Monday, January 27th at 4pm. Recommended for children ages 10 - 14 years old.

Come learn how to paint a winter scene with step-by-step instruction by local artist, Nicole Ann. Get creative by painting

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a snowy landscape scene using acrylic paints on canvas panels. All materials are provided. This program is free, open to the public, and no registration is required.

The Lewiston Public Library is located downtown at 200 Lisbon Street at the corner of Pine Street.

Jan 27

AUBURN -- FILM SCREENING & DISCUSSION -- ELECTIONS, POPULISM, AND DEMOCRATIC BACKSLIDING IN THE AMERICAS with Dr. Clarisa Pérez-Armendáriz, Associate Professor of Politics and Chair of the Latin American and Latinx Studies Program, Bates College, Monday, January 27, 2025 -- 4:30-5:30 p.m., Androscoggin Community Room, Auburn Public Library

Jan 30-Feb 2

HERMON -- Celebrity Egg Riders are revved up for the 52nd annual Dysart's Snowmobile Ride-in Weekend to benefit Pine Tree Camp.

Thursday, January 30: Live WABI-TV5 Telethon and Dysart's Spaghetti Dinner, 4:00pm at Dysart's Restaurant & Truck Stop, 530 Coldbrook Road, Hermon

Friday, January 31: Live and Silent Auction - Hosted by Maine Cabin Masters Jedi and Dixie, 6:00pm at Morgan Hill Event Center, 82 Morgan Hill Lane, Hermon

Saturday, February 1: Celebrity Egg Ride and Poker Run, 9:30am at Dysart's Restaurant & Truck Stop, 530 Coldbrook Road, Hermon

Sunday, February 2: Penobscot Snowmobile Club Radar Run, Noon at the Penobscot Snowmobile Club, 795 Bog Road, Hermon

Feb 13

AUBURN -- BOOK DISCUSSION --DEMOCRACY AWAKENING: NOTES ON THE STATE OF AMERICA by Heather Cox Richardson. Thursday, February 13, 2025 - 4:00-5:00 p.m., Auburn Public Library

Mar 15

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

choral singing for justice. 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/>.

Women in Harmony - Sat, Mar 15, 2025 at 7:30 pm. Doors open 7:00 pm. Tickets: \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door, \$10 Students/Children

Women in Harmony is a Portland-based chorus of 60 women's voices, which has been singing for social justice for over 20 years. It is a diverse group of gay and straight, musically sophisticated and musically untrained women who unite in song and a spirit of fairness. Women in Harmony is dedicated both to musical excellence and social justice.

Tickets: \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door, \$10 Students/Children. Available at the church office, Gulf of Maine Books, or online at <https://ticketstripe.com/womenharmony>

Apr 12

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

Guy Davis - Sat, April 12, 2025 at 7:30 pm. Doors open 7:00 pm.

Guy Davis is a two-time, back-to-back Grammy nominee for Best Traditional Blues, a musician, actor, author, and songwriter. Guy uses a blend of Roots, Blues, Folk, Rock, Rap, Spoken Word, and World Music to comment on, and address, the frustrations of social injustice, touching on historical events, and common life struggles.

Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door, and \$10 for students/children. Available at the church office, Gulf of Maine Books, or at ticketstripe.com/guydavis.



The rewards of being there for Mainers in crisis

As a mobile crisis worker, Marissa Exchange's role is all about giving back. She provides confidential support, and connects individuals in crisis to resources they need, collaborating with families, mental health providers, and other community partners to ensure that the person has a holistic network of support. Most importantly, she provides a safe, kind space for individuals in crisis to share what they're going through, and ask for help.

And yet when Marissa talks about her work, she gushes about how much she gets from it.

"It's super rewarding," said Marissa. "It feels really good to be able to make a difference, to know that people feel comfortable with me, and trust me to be a safe - or even just a neutral - place where they can say anything without fear of being judged or getting a negative response."

She also loves that she can make her own schedule, work remotely if she needs to, and manage her shifts while pursuing her master's degree in Clinical Mental Health Counseling, and training to become a Licensed Clinical Professional Counselor.

Marissa is part of a growing legion of Crisis Responders who are discovering the rewards of working with Mainers experiencing a mental health crisis to assess their needs, and guide them to an appropriate level of care.

There are a wide variety of open positions statewide that offer full-time, part-time and per-diem opportunities. The work is done in the community, outside a hospital or nursing home. Training opportunities are widely available and easy to complete.

Like Marissa, others who are working in this field are finding that it gives back much more than it takes.

"It's just been this incredible journey," said Melanie Grant, a crisis residential services worker, who provides intervention and support to ensure the safety and well-being of patients in a residential treatment facility.

"A lot of it is just working with people who are going through a hard time, whether it has to do with substances, or past trauma or loss of a loved one. It's people needing people. And we've all needed people."

To learn more about full-time, part-time and per-diem opportunities in your community, go to Mainecareerswithpurpose.org. Follow @MaineCareerswithPurpose on Facebook and Instagram.



"It feels really good to be able to make a difference."



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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.

MAY 29 - JUNE 4, 2025 - WASHINGTON, D.C.

- NATION'S CAPITAL – Trip includes 7 days and 6 nights lodging, 6 breakfasts and 4 dinners. A guided tour of Washington, D.C. which includes the US Capitol, the White House, the National Archives, Embassy Row and Georgetown. We will also visit the Washington Monument, Lincoln Memorial, the Martin Luther King, Jr. National Memorial. We will also have a

guided evening tour of all the Memorials. We will have a Guided Tram Tour of inspirational sights such as Arlington National Cemetery, Tomb of the Unknown Soldier, Kennedy Graves and the Iwo Jima Memorial.

We will visit the Smithsonian Museum and the Museum of the Bible which contains some of the oldest and most important biblical artifacts in human history. On our way home we will stop and enjoy the National Harbor which is a unique waterfront wonderland of shopping, dining and more. **A \$75.00 deposit is due when signing up for this trip. The price is \$985.00 per person double occupancy. Add \$305.00 for single occupancy. Final payment is due 3/22/25.**

SEPTEMBER 11-19, 2025 – BLUEGRASS COUNTRY & THE SMOKY MOUNTAINS

- Price includes round trip air from Logan International Airport, hotel transfers, and all transportation while on tour, 9 days, and 13 meals. Highlights of this tour are Louisville and Lexington, Kentucky – Churchill Downs, Kentucky Derby Museum, Louisville

Slugger Museum, Buffalo Trace Bourbon Distillery, Lexington Horse Farm.

Gatlinburg, Tennessee – Dolly Parton's Smoky Mountain Theme Park, Guided tour of the Great Smokey Mountain National Park (UNESCO), Cherokee, Old Smoky Moonshine Distillery. Asheville, North Carolina – Blue Ridge Mountains, tour of the Biltmore Estates Mansion and manicured grounds.

Deposit for this trip is \$698.00 per person and due by March 11, 2025. Early bookings save \$100.00 per person. For more information on pricing call Claire.

OCTOBER 6 – 10, 2025 – ATLANTIC CITY, CAPE MAY, & PHILADELPHIA

- Trip includes 5 days and 4 nights lodging, 4 breakfasts and 4 dinners and a free casino bonus for those who want to gamble.

Guided tour of Philadelphia including Liberty Bell, Independence Hall, Betsy Ross House, the Federal Reserve and Mint. Then off to Cape May with a Trolley Tour of the Victorian Mansions of Cape May and a walking tour of a historic Victorian Home. We travel to Cape May Point and the

famous Cape May Lighthouse. Our next day is a free day in Atlantic City to do as you please. Take in a show, do some gaming or just stroll down Atlantic City's Famous Boardwalk. **A \$75.00 deposit per person is due upon signing up. The price for this trip is \$849.00 per person double occupancy. Add \$210.00 for single occupancy. Final Payment is due 7/30/25.**

NOVEMBER 16-26, 2025 – CLASSICAL GREECE

- Price includes round trip air from Logan International Airport, hotel transfers and all transportation while on tour. Trip also includes 16 meals (9 breakfasts, 1 luncheon, and 6 dinners).

Highlights of this tour are Athens, the Acropolis and Parthenon, Delphi, Olympia and Ancient Mycenae. You will visit a Greek Farm, have a Cooking Class, Greek Dance Class, and visit two remote monasteries. We will also have a tasting of local wines, olive oil and sweets.

If you are interested in any of these trips or for more information, please contact Claire at 784-0302 or Cindy at 345-9569.

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