

A day of creativity, kindness, and impact with MLK camp

SCARBOROUGH, ME -- Join MePowered Pastries at 174 US-1, Scarborough for a special MLK Day camp where creativity meets kindness! In this one-of-a-kind camp experience, your baker will have the opportunity to make delicious treats, create meaningful art kits, and give back to the community—all while having a blast!

Camp Highlights:
Bake for a Cause: Bakers will get their hands into the dough, baking delicious pastries to take home and share with their friends and families. These sweet creations will also be featured in a bake sale at the MePowered Pastries studio the week following camp to raise money for Maine

Needs.

Create Art Kits for Maine Needs: In the spirit of Dr. King's commitment to service, campers will assemble art kits to donate to those in need. Maine Needs distributes these to kids in our community and sends out many heading into February break. The kits will help bring joy and creativity to others in our community.

Dance Break at Salt Flat: After some fun-filled baking and crafting, campers will take a break and get moving with an energizing dance session at Salt Flat—an hour of dance to stretch and refresh before returning to the camp activities.

Donation Drive: During this day of activities



we will be hosting a donation drive for Maine Needs. They are in particular need kids waterproof gloves, kids new underwear, and new or in good condition

used children's boots/shoes (links to purchase these will be added as we get closer to the event). Drop these off when you drop off or pick up your kid and

encourage your friends and families to do as well.

Take Home Treats & Good Vibes: By the end of the day, campers will take home a bundle of their own homemade treats and a sense of accomplishment, knowing that they've made a difference by helping others.

Join us for a day full of kindness, creativity, and community spirit as we honor Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.'s legacy and give back to those in need. We can't wait to bake, create, and dance with your child!

Important Notes:
Campers will need to bring their own lunch. Snacks will be provided but you are also welcome to bring your own!

The camp will run on

MLK Day, Monday, January, 20th

Time: 10:00am-4:00pm

Ages: This class is for ages 4 and up.

Location: 174 US-1, Scarborough Maine

Cost: \$135 (this cost includes supplies we will need to make art kits)

Class price includes all ingredients and materials for one kid. We do our best to accommodate kid food allergies and sensitivities. Leave a note at checkout and we will work with you to make sure your kid is able to bake something that works for them.

Please indicate in the notes at checkout:

1. Chef's name and age
2. Any food allergies

Volunteers needed for Town of Gorham boards & committees

GORHAM, ME -- The Town Council Appointments Committee is seeking citizen volunteers for various boards and committees to serve a 3 year term. The board and committee vacancies available are as follows:

- PLANNING BOARD - 3
- GORHAM ECO-

- NOMIC DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION- 3
- CONSERVATION COMMISSION - 3
- BOARD OF APPEALS - 3
- BOARD OF TRUSTEES - BAXTER MEMORIAL LIBRARY - 3
- HISTORIC PRESERVATION COMMISSION - 2

- FAIR HEARING BOARD - 1
 - BOARD OF ASSESSMENT REVIEW - 1
 - BOARD OF VOTER REGISTRATION APPEALS - 3
 - REVOLVING LOAN FUND COMMITTEE - 2
 - BOARD OF HEALTH - 1
- If you are interest-



ed in applying to serve on any of Town board and/or committee, or for more information, please visit the Town Clerk's Office. To apply, please complete and

submit a Committee Volunteer Application available online. You may also contact the Town Clerk's Office at 222-1670 or e-mail the Town Clerk Lau-

rie Nordfors at Inordfors@gorham.me.us.

Applications will be accepted through January 23, 2025. The Appointments Committee will schedule short informal interviews with applicants starting in February and the Town Council will appoint applicants at their March meeting.

Provide a little extra for your Gorham neighbors this week



GORHAM, ME -- Coffee, along with tea, are one of those "nice to have" for our clients at

the pantry. If you're looking for something to drop in the bin this week, we'd love any small containers

of ground coffee or tea. Thanks for providing a little "extra" for our neighbors here in Gorham.

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!

Lakes Region Senior Center invites Gorham seniors to activities

GORHAM, ME -- If you are looking for a fun senior center with lots of activities daily, come join us at Little Falls Activity Cen-

ter, 40 Acorn Street, Gorham, Maine. We are open from 8:30 to 2 or 3 pm depending on the activity. Our calendar is online.

Call Gerry Day, President, at 839-3859 for more information

Membership fee is \$20 a year with many perks.



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We strongly encourage Letters to the Editor, Op/Eds, columns or any other submissions from our readers.

Agree with us or another columnist? Disagree? Write to us and let us know!

Email all submissions, including name, address and phone number, to the editor.

Newsmakers, Names & Faces

Auburn Public Library Chess Club Tournament

AUBURN, ME – The Auburn Public Library Chess Club is hosting a chess tournament on Saturday, January 25th starting at 10 AM in the Conference Room.

This will be the club's first tournament which is meant to be both a friendly and social competition. Players will be paired at random. Ratings are not required and will not apply. There will be



approximately 4 rounds in single-elimination style. Prizes will be awarded to both the 1st and 2nd place winners at the end of the tournament. First place will win a brand new chess set along with a \$20 Hannaford gift card. Second place will win a \$10 Hannaford gift card.

This program will take place in the Conference Room at the Auburn Public Library. Registra-

tion is required to guarantee your spot in the tournament, walk-ins welcome only as space allows.

The Auburn Public Library Chess Club, a new program that started in October of 2024, meets every Wednesday on the second floor of the library from 4 to 5:30 PM each week. The club is open to all and is a space for friends and neighbors to gather and play chess to-

gether, learning from one another and practicing strategy.

For more information about this and other programs offered at the Auburn Public Library, visit their website at www.auburnpubliclibrary.org or call the Reference Desk at 207-333-6640, ext. 4.

Saturday, January 25, 2025 – 10 AM to 3 PM
Auburn Public Library: Conference Room

Machias Savings Bank awards Workforce Development grants

MACHIAS, ME – Machias Savings Bank is proud to announce the recipients of its 2024 Workforce Development Grant program, which funds projects to enhance and expand Maine's workforce. A total of \$50,000 in grants was

awarded to three organizations:

Jobs for Maine's Graduates (\$25,000) – Supporting their microcredential programming.

Junior Achievement (\$15,000) – Funding to expand to 7 more schools in

Maine.

Camp Susan Curtis (\$10,000) – Supporting their youth leadership programming.

The grants support initiatives focused on upskilling, reskilling, and career readiness to strengthen

Maine's workforce. Eligible applicants included 501(c)(3) organizations, educational institutions, and municipalities committed to building career pathways, vocational training opportunities, and accessible jobs for Maine residents.

"Each year, we are inspired by the incredible work of nonprofit organizations dedicated to strengthening Maine's workforce," said Melissa Denbow, SVP of Community Impact at Machias Savings Bank. "We are proud to support these

efforts and partner with organizations helping to create thriving communities in Maine."

For more information about the grant recipients and additional giving opportunities, visit machiasavings.bank/grants-donations.

DAR Scholarship accepting applications by Jan. 31

WASHINGTON D.C. – Undergraduate and graduate students studying music can apply for the DAR Marian Anderson Legacy Scholarship through January 31, 2025. Sponsored by the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR), the scholarship provides a one-time \$5,000 award to one student annually who is pursuing undergraduate or graduate study in music.

Marian Anderson (1897-1993) was a groundbreaking African American contralto and an inspiration for civil rights. "This scholarship pays tribute to Marian Anderson's life, and the Daughters of the American Revolution seeks to honor her

legacy through today's aspiring musicians. Her legacy lives on in others who aim for excellence in musical studies, are committed to their communities, and willing to stand up for what is right," said Pamela Wright, DAR President General.

Applicants should be accepted or currently enrolled in an accredited university or college in the United States and have a concentration in music in their course of study. Music performance, composition, theory, or education are all areas that students may be specialized in to qualify for the scholarship. They should have a minimum grade point average (GPA) of 3.0 on a 4.0 scale or the equivalent GPA on



tarian or volunteer contributions on behalf of their community and/or country.

To recognize the city Marian Anderson called home, preference will be given to students from the Philadelphia, Pennsylvania metropolitan area, even if they are not pursuing music studies in the Philadelphia area.

This scholarship is not automatically renewed. However, recipients may reapply for consideration each year for up to four consecutive years.

The scholarship is supported by the Daughters of the American Revolution's Marian Anderson Legacy Fund. Learn more about the relationship between Marian Anderson and the DAR, and the organization's on-going efforts to honor her memory at www.dar.org/Marian-Anderson

the scale used by the institution.

Applications require references sent through the application system, so students need to request

their references ahead of the Jan. 31st application deadline.

In honor of Ms. Anderson's commitment to the community throughout

her life and her willingness to share her incredible talent with the world, applicants are asked to write a personal statement describing their humani-

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

New executive director of BDA named

BRUNSWICK, ME – The Board of Directors of the Brunswick Downtown Association (BDA) is delighted to announce Reilly Kons as its new Executive Director. Kons, a leader with a diverse background in community development, event management, and partnership development, officially assumed the role on Monday, January 6th 2025.

Kons brings extensive experience to the BDA, most recently serving as Director of Venture Café Providence. He led the transformation of Venture Café into a central hub for the local innovation and entrepreneurial ecosystem, overseeing the successful hosting of the largest weekly gathering

of entrepreneurs and innovators in Rhode Island. Kons also spearheaded significant fundraising efforts during his tenure, acquiring over \$125,000 in grant funding in 2023 to support historically underserved entrepreneurs through an event series that offered networking opportunities, business building workshops, and assisted in helping qualified entrepreneurs become Minority Business Enterprise Certified in the state of Rhode Island.

Before Venture Café, Kons was a member of the entrepreneurship team at the Roux Institute at Northeastern University in Portland, Maine. In this role, he supported initiatives to foster startup growth and



innovation across Maine, building connections between emerging businesses, industry leaders, and academic institutions. This

experience laid a strong foundation for Kons' expertise in driving entrepreneurial ecosystems and supporting local econo-

mies.

"I am honored to join the BDA and collaborate with such an engaged community," said Kons. "Having grown up across the bridge in Topsham, Brunswick has always held a special place in my heart. Brunswick has incredible energy, and I look forward to building on the BDA's accomplishments to further support local businesses, foster connections, and enhance the downtown experience for residents and visitors alike."

As Executive Director, Kons will focus on advancing the BDA's mission to promote Downtown Brunswick and its community as a vibrant and attractive place to

live, work, play, and do business. Key priorities include enhancing community events, expanding partnerships, and advocating for the needs of the downtown area.

The BDA Board of Directors expressed its enthusiasm for Kons' appointment. "Reilly's wealth of experience in entrepreneurship, event management, and community engagement, combined with his passion for fostering inclusive and thriving communities, makes him the ideal leader for the BDA," said Annemarie Albiston of the BDA Board of Directors. "We are excited to welcome Reilly and look forward to his contributions to Downtown Brunswick."

Red Cross: Help prevent blood shortages in 2025



PORTLAND, ME — The American Red Cross urges donors to make an appointment to give lifesaving blood or platelets in the new year to help keep the blood supply strong this winter. Type O negative blood donors and those giving platelets are especially urged

to give now to keep critical blood products on the shelves for patients in need.

The start of the new year is one of the most challenging times to collect blood products as the threat of severe winter weather builds and can often lead to widespread blood drive cancellations. Additionally, an active cold and flu season may prevent people from keeping donation ap-

pointments as they rest and recover from illness. During National Blood Donor Month, the Red Cross celebrates those who generously roll up a sleeve to help save lives and urges those who are feeling well to make and keep donation appointments to help the blood supply stay on track throughout the winter.

Don't sit on the sidelines – kick off 2025 with a

blood or platelet donation. To book a time to give, visit RedCrossBlood.org, download the Red Cross Blood Donor App, or call 1-800-RED CROSS.

For the sixth year, the Red Cross and the National Football League (NFL) are partnering in January for National Blood Donor Month to invite football fans and blood donors to join our lifesaving team and score

big for patients in need. As a special thank-you to donors for helping address the need for blood during the critical post-holiday time, those who come to give Jan. 1-26, 2025, will be automatically entered for a chance to win an exciting Super Bowl LIX giveaway. The trip includes access to day-of in-stadium pre-game activities, tickets to the official Super Bowl Experience, round-

trip airfare, three-night hotel accommodations (Feb. 7-10, 2025), plus a \$1,000 gift card for expenses. For full details, visit RedCrossBlood.org/SuperBowl.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities Jan. 16-26:

Gorham
1/16/2025: 1 p.m. - 6 p.m., Cressey Road Christian Church, 81 Cressey Road.

Girl Scouts of Maine hosting new member sign-up in Gorham

GORHAM, ME -- Are you ready to make new friends and embark on exciting adventures? We invite girls in grades K-3 and their caregivers to our unique new member sign-up event, held at Narragansett Elementary School 284 Main Street, Gorham, ME 04038 on Tuesday January 21, from 5:30-6:30PM.

What to Expect:
Make New Friends! Connect with other girls and caregivers in a welcoming environment.

Creative Activities:
Enjoy hands-on crafts like secret code bracelets and a magical unicorn-themed project!



Discover Girl Scouts: Learn about our exciting programs and volunteer opportunities that empower girls to build confidence, courage, and character.

Don't miss this chance to explore the

wonderful world of Girl Scouts and kick-start your journey of friendship and adventure!

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All submissions, including photos, must be emailed to editor@GorhamWeekly.com.

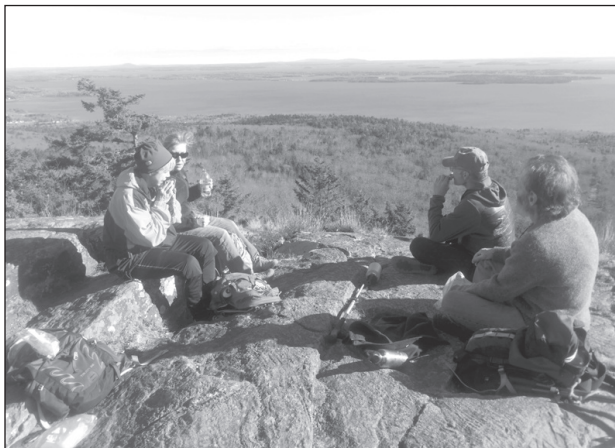
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Seniors Not Acting Their Age

Fabulous Views from Bald Rock Mountain



Hikers enjoy a leisurely lunch at the summit of Bald Rock Mountain



The top of Bald Rock Mountains offers stunning views of Penobscot Bay



A trio relaxes on a Bald Rock precipice

The Camden Hills provide some of the finest mountain views in Maine. Selecting my favorite is no easy task. Ocean Lookout on Mount Megunticook is probably the most well-known and remarkably spectacular. The Scenic Trail above Maiden Cliff provides wondrous views of Megunticook Lake. The panoramic vista of western Penobscot Bay seen from the Georges Highland Path on Ragged Mountain is exceptional. And, the fabulous seascape from the summit of Bald Rock Mountain is stunning. Unable to choose, I keep returning to all of them.

The name of my outdoor club, Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society, implies that we're primarily

a paddle club. Although paddling is our focus during spring and summer, we actually enjoy a variety of year-round activities including biking, skiing, and hiking.

Hiking is a popular club activity in fall and winter. When I recently announced a trek on Bald Rock Mountain in Camden Hills State Park, four Chowderheads quickly committed on short notice. No doubt the wonderful views and an excellent forecast were incentives.

Bald Rock Mountain is the fifth highest summit on the eastern seaboard of the United States. The fabulous views from the top of the 1,280 foot peak make it a popular hiking destination. The trail system that

provides access to Bald Rock Mountain has been used for decades and part of it was constructed by the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) during the 1930s.

The sizeable parking area was almost full when five of us met at the trailhead on a gorgeous warm, sunny late November morning. The trailhead is located near the junction of Route 173 and Youngtown Road in Lincolnville.

We began hiking easily uphill on the Multi-Use Trail. Limited to non-motorized traffic, the gravel path travels through the interior of the park and connects with park headquarters on Route One on the eastern end. About midway, the five-mile trail

passes Megunticook Cabin where overnight reservations can be arranged.

Progressing steadily upward in a mixed hardwood and conifer forest, we encountered several hikers and mountain bikers. After about a half-mile, we passed a junction with Frohock Trail on the left which leads to Frohock Mountain and provides an alternative route to the Bald Rock summit.

The gradient increased as we continued on Multi-Use Trail to a junction with Bald Rock Trail on the left. Evidence of a former shelter built by the CCC can be seen at the junction. I spent a stormy night there with friends in December 1980 when it was still intact. Coincidentally, another member of the group, Brent Elwell, also camped there at about the same time.

The character of the trek changed on Bald Rock Trail. Typical of a New England mountain trail, we ascended on a more challenging rocky, root-infested path. After weaving steeply upward on a circuitous route, we climbed an extended stone staircase likely erected by young members of the CCC nine decades ago.

The gradient moderated and the trail angled northeasterly at a location where we enjoyed encour-

aging glimpses of Penobscot Bay. After following a relatively level surface for a short distance, we scaled precipitous ledges and emerged onto the glorious summit area where all of eastern Penobscot Bay was seemingly at our feet.

Three members of another party were sitting on the edge of a precipice embracing the wonderful views. We located a nearby overlook and settled in for lunch and an extended visit.

From that vantage point, we were looking down on the 18-mile long island of Islesboro. Southeast, the ragged sister islands of North Haven and Vinalhaven appeared to blend together as one. Farther east, the high peak of Mount Champlain on Isle au Haut could be seen in the distance. A multitude of islands populate the bay northeast of Islesboro. Beyond them, on this clear day, we could see Blue Hill on Deer Isle and the peaks of Acadia National Park on Mount Desert Island.

Benefiting from warm temperatures, light winds, and clear skies, this was a truly magical experience. We lingered to fully appreciate the wonderful panoramic vista. After a leisurely lunch, we reluctantly relinquished our prized location to more arriving spectators. During our return, numerous enthusiastic

hikers were encountered also in pursuit of fabulous views.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* relates exciting treks on nine more Maine mountains including peaks in the Camden Hills and Acadia National Park.

Ron Chase resides in Topsham. His latest book, "Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine" is available at www.northcountrypress.com/maine-al-fresco or in bookstores and through online retailers. His previous books are "The Great Mars Hill Bank Robbery" and "Mountains for Mortals - New England." Visit his website at www.ronchase-outdoors.com or he can be reached at ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net

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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 Narrows 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. 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 Downhill 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!

Sen. Collins named Chair of Appropriations Committee

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senator Susan Collins officially became Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee. The Committee holds jurisdiction over all discretionary spending for the entire federal government.

First elected in 1996, Susan Collins ranks seventh in Senate seniority and is the most senior Republican woman. She is the first Republican woman to be elected to a fifth term, the first Republican

woman to Chair the Senate Appropriations Committee, and the first Mainer to Chair the Committee in 92 years.

"I am honored to be the first Maine Senator in nearly a century to lead the Committee, and I remain committed to working to ensure that federal spending produces real results for the American people and that our state's needs are met," said Senator Collins. "As Chair of the Senate Appropriations

Committee, my priorities will remain helping Maine's communities, funding lifesaving biomedical research, investing in rural communities by supporting education, workforce, and child care programs, strengthening our national security, and improving our infrastructure."

Senator Collins joined the Appropriations Committee in 2009. Last Congress, she served as Vice Chair of the Appropria-

tions Committee and Ranking Member of the Defense Appropriations Subcommittee. In previous years, she has also served as Chair and Ranking Member of the Transportation, Housing and Urban Development Appropriations Subcommittee and Ranking Member of the Financial Services and General Government Appropriations Subcommittee.

In 2021, Congress reinstated Congressio-

nally Directed Spending for non-profits and state and local governments. Following this decision, Senator Collins has secured more than \$1 billion for hundreds of Maine projects in FY 2022, FY 2023, and FY 2024 legislation. This federal funding promotes job creation, workforce training, and economic development; expands access to health care; supports law enforcement; improves public safety, education,

infrastructure, and community resources; and protects our environment. As Chair of the Appropriations Committee, Senator Collins will continue to work to secure such targeted investments that benefit Maine communities.

The last Mainer to lead the Senate Appropriations Committee, Senator Frederick Hale, served as Chair from December 1932 to March 1933, and as Vice Chair from March 1933 to January 1941.

Prevent lung cancer by testing your home for radon

BOSTON, MA — In January, the EPA recognizes National Radon Action Month and encourages Americans to test their homes for radon. Radon is an odorless, colorless, naturally occurring radioactive gas that, when left unaddressed, can build up inside a home. Over time, exposure to radon can cause lung cancer. The only way to know if your home has high levels of ra-

don is to test for it.

"Radon is a serious public health risk that can be reduced using simple, proven techniques," said Acting Director of EPA's Indoor Environments Division, Sharon White. "During this year's National Radon Action Month, we urge everyone to take the first but vital step of testing their home. This year's theme of 'Test Your Nest: Test, Fix, Save a Life,' em-

phasizes that identifying and reducing radon exposure can decrease lung cancer risk and save lives. Together we can protect our families and communities from this invisible threat."

Testing for radon is easy and inexpensive. Affordable do-it-yourself radon test kits are available for purchase online and at most home improvement and hardware stores. Some states and municipalities

even provide at-home radon test kits for free. You can also hire a qualified radon professional to test your home. Contact your state or Tribal radon program to learn more about radon services in your area.

Millions of homes in the United States have elevated levels of radon. Radon is the number one cause of lung cancer among non-smokers and is responsible for about

21,000 lung cancer deaths every year, but many people don't know about radon or the risks it can pose to their health.

If you haven't tested your home for radon, National Radon Action Month is the perfect time to take this step to protect yourself and your loved ones. Tens of millions of homes have already been tested, and millions of homes with high radon levels have

been fixed.

The EPA recommends taking action to fix your home if you discover radon levels above 4 picocuries per liter. If your home does have elevated levels of radon, a qualified professional can install a system to lower your indoor radon levels. For more guidance on how to address radon risks, see EPA's radon website.

Test. Fix. Save a life.

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Arts & Entertainment

Gorham: Kiss a calf and milk a cow for a good cause



WESTBROOK, ME -- Join Smiling Hill Farm for our January KISS A CALF and Milk a cow Event. Our event will be held from 1030-12:30.

There will be at least two stations set up for calf visiting. Calves enjoy giving kisses as well as receiving hugs, pats and kisses. Feel free to take a selfie or

two.

Our Milk A Cow offers just that, a chance to try your hand at milking. Ravenclaw has participated in this event almost a dozen times now and is a very willing participant. If milking isn't your style, feel free to talk Harry Potter to her and smile for a selfie.

Our events are by donation. Donations go to providing above and beyond care for our animals year-round.

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Big Moose Harley-Davidson hosts Battle of the Laddles

PORTLAND, ME -- Get Ready for the ultimate comfort food showdown with New England Motorcycle Group at 375 Riverside St, Portland, ME on Saturday, January 18, 2025

Event Highlights:
Categories:
Soup, Stew and Chowder
Prizes \$100

Cash and a trophy for winners in each category

Friendly Competition: An amateur cook-off
Tasting Fees: \$5 donation* gets you unlimited tastings and a vote in each category

Winners voted by People's Choice

Join us Saturday, January 18, 2025 at Big Moose Harley-Davidson. Competition begins at 11am; Voting 11am - 1pm; Awards at 1:30pm

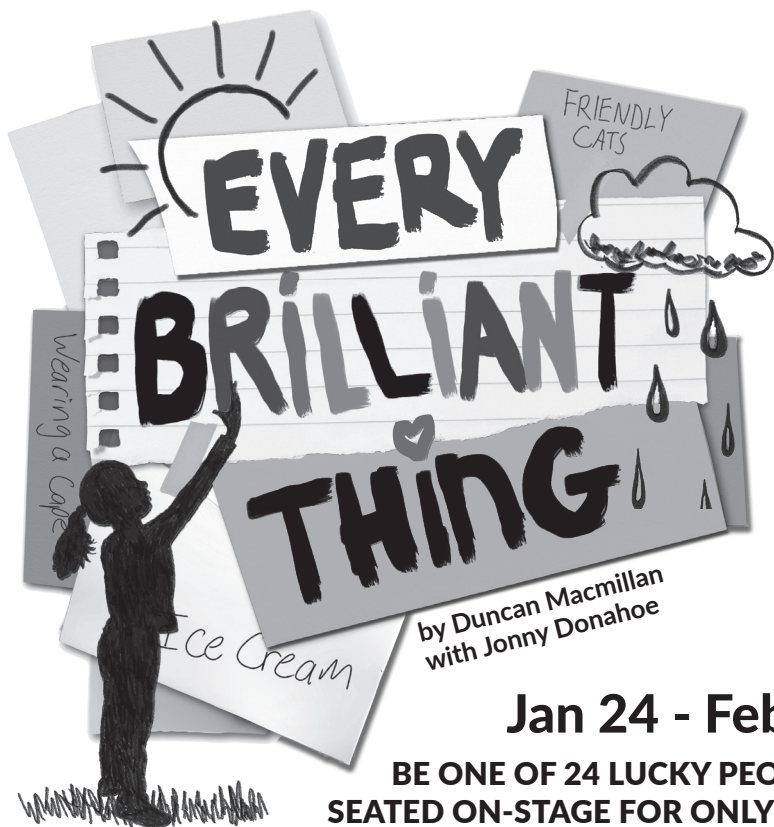
Who will become a New England Motorcycle Group Iron Ladle?

*Donations will go to the Sothern Maine HOG Chapter charities.



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Crafternoon: Tissue paper luminaries

WESTBROOK, ME -- Join us at Walker Memorial Library as we make a colorful light jar out of tissue paper and glue on January 22 from 1:30-2:30. 800 Main St, Westbrook, ME

Make a memory with your child that you'll cherish for a lifetime.



Feb 8
6:30 - 8:30 pm

Space is limited. Get your tickets today!

Children ages 4-12 are sure to treasure an evening of dressing up and dancing with their loved ones. All parents/guardians are welcome.

ThePublicTheatre.org | 782-3200

The Ball will be held at the Kora Shrine Temple, Lewiston



31 Maple Street, Lewiston

Remote education & healthcare in rural communities grant opens

WASHINGTON – U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) Rural Development Under Secretary Dr. Basil Gooden invited grant applications to improve access to remote education and health care in rural and Tribal communities.

USDA is making approximately \$40 million in funding available under the Distance Learning and Telemedicine (DLT) Grant Program.

This program funds distance learning and telemedicine equipment, like audio and video equipment. These funds will

help digitally connect people to education, training and health care resources that are otherwise unavailable or limited in remote parts of the country.

For example, DLT funding expands opportunities for:

Students to participate in classes that may be in locations too far to access in person.

Teachers to provide their expertise, trainings and educational services to students across the country.

Patients to seek specialized care and treatment from medical profes-



The Alford Youth and Community Center used a DLT grant to acquire devices to assist in physical therapy for seniors and youth.

professionals without needing to leave their homes or communities. Eligible applicants



include state and local governmental entities, federally recognized Tribes, nonprofits and for-profit businesses. Past grant recipients in Maine include RSU 10 (Rumford), the Alford Youth and Community Center in Waterville (via the University of New Hampshire

Center for Digital Health Innovation), and VNA Home Health and Hospice (dba Northern Light Homecare and Hospice, South Portland).

Applications must be submitted electronically through grants.gov no later than March 6, 2025. Additional program information is available online and via page 589 of the Jan. 6, 2025, Federal Register. Interested Maine applicants may contact Robert Fry, Telecom General Field Representative (robert.fry@usda.gov or 202-768-0589) with questions.

New Paid Family and Medical Leave employer portal launches

AUGUSTA, ME – The Maine Department of Labor announced that the new Paid Family and Medical Leave (PFML) Portal, the online system for employers to register, designate a payroll processor, file quarterly wage reports, and remit quarterly premium contributions, has launched.

“The Department is excited to be moving into the next phase of the new Paid Family and Medical Leave Program, with the launch of its portal today,” said Luke Monahan, Director of Paid Family and Medical Leave. “We encourage employers to register and explore the new

portal as soon as possible in order to be prepared to begin wage reporting in April, and encourage people to stay up to date by visiting our website.”

In the hour since the portal launched this morning, over 100 employers have already successfully registered on the portal. Designed to be a straightforward process, the average time spent registering from a desktop has been nine minutes, and the average time spent registering from a mobile device has been five minutes.

Starting January 1st, 2025, any employer with at least one Maine-based employee must have begun



payroll withholdings for their employees. Employers with 15 or more employees will contribute 1 percent of wages and may deduct up to half of the contribution from the employees’ wages. Employers with less than 15 employees will contribute 0.5

and tribal governments to elect coverage.

Employers will begin their first quarterly wage reporting and premium payments starting April 1, 2025, and they are due by April 30, 2025.

The portal can be accessed here: <https://pfml.maine.gov/contributions/>

In December, the Department launched a PFML-specific call center, which can be reached at (207) 621-5024 from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Monday-Friday. The number can also be found under the “contact us” tab on the PFML webpage.

Stay up to date by signing up for the PFML

Get Notified List and learn more in our FAQ, employer resources, recorded demonstrations, and step by step guides on our website: <https://www.maine.gov/paidleave/>

The Department partnered with FAST Enterprises to build the Maine Paid Family and Medical Leave Program’s online contributions portal. FAST Enterprises has previously worked with Maine Revenue Services to create the Maine Tax Portal, as well as the contribution collections system for the Massachusetts Department of Family and Medical Leave.

Benefits are scheduled to begin May 1, 2026.

BBB: Top resolutions for a fraud-free new year

The loss of money, personal information, and perseverance of scammers continue with online purchase scams as the third riskiest of scams.

BBB recommends adding a few precautionary steps to the New Year’s resolution list and the weight loss and financial goals to help make the upcoming days and months fraud-free.

I resolve to be cautious with email. Be wary of unsolicited emails from a person or a company. Remember, scammers can make emails look like they are from a legitimate business, government agency, or reputable organiza-

tion (even BBB!). Never click on links or open attachments in unsolicited emails.

I resolve never to send money to strangers. If you haven’t met a person face-to-face, don’t send them money. This is especially true if the person asks you to transfer funds using a pre-paid debit card or CashApp. Money sent to strangers in this way is untraceable, and once it is sent, there’s no getting it back. Scammers will try to trick you into panicking – so before making a move, think the situation through. Don’t fall for it!

I resolve to do research before making

online payments and purchases. Research the retailer before entering payment information when shopping online, or if asked to pay online, research the retailer before entering payment information. Ask: Is this a person or business I know and trust? Do they have a working customer service number? Where is the company physically located? Would I be making payments through a secure server (<https://....com>)? Have I checked to see if others have complained?

I resolve to use my best judgment when sharing my personal information. Sharing sensitive personal information with

scammers opens the door to identity theft. Never share financial information, birthdate, address, Social Security/Social Insurance number, or Medicare number with an unsolicited caller.

I resolve to create strong, unique passwords for each account. Using strong, varied passwords across accounts makes it harder for fraudsters to access multiple accounts if one is compromised.

I resolve to enable two-factor authentication. Adding this layer of security to accounts, especially those involving finances or personal data, greatly reduces the risk of unautho-

rized access.

I resolve to be social media smart. Use privacy settings on social media and only connect with people you know. Be careful about including personal information in your profile, and never reveal your address and other sensitive information – even in a “fun” quiz. Scammers may use this information to make themselves pass as friends or relatives and earn your trust. Also, be careful when buying products you see on social media. BBB Scam Tracker has received thousands of complaints about misleading Facebook and Instagram ads.

I resolve to regularly

check my financial statements. Committing to review bank and credit card statements can help catch unauthorized transactions early.

I resolve to educate myself about the latest scams. Staying informed on emerging scams helps you recognize and avoid new fraud tactics.

For more information To learn more about scams, go to [BBB.org/ScamTips](https://www.bbb.org/ScamTips). For more about avoiding scams, check out [BBB.org/AvoidScams](https://www.bbb.org/AvoidScams). If this scam has targeted you, help others avoid the same problem by reporting your experience at [BBB.org/ScamTracker](https://www.bbb.org/ScamTracker).

MECA&D to launch fully online Master of Arts in Education

PORTLAND, ME — Maine College of Art & Design has announced plans to offer a fully online Master of Arts in Education program beginning in Fall 2025 to meet growing workforce demands for art educators, leaders, and administrators across the region and country. The initiative is a strategic priority as outlined in Maine College of Art & Design’s Strategic Plan: Envision-

ing Our Future 2027.

“These online programs will build upon and leverage our unique strengths and characteristics to expand our audience and community while providing for the future adaptability of the College,” said President Laura Freid. “We ask our students to make art, make an impact, and inspire change, and these programs are a perfect fit for our portfolio and match

workforce demands.”

The new online Master of Arts in Education was designed in partnership with Dr. Rachel Somerville, Chair of Art Education at Maine College of Art & Design. The program prepares students for employment and career advancement in both traditional and contemporary work settings, including community, museum and curatorial, and educational settings.

Students can build a custom program of study that aligns with their area of expertise and focus by choosing from a robust selection of electives, or students can choose either an Arts Leadership and Administration focus or an Expressive Arts Therapy focus—both resulting in a Graduate Certificate upon completion.

Associate Dean of Online Learning, Heather Holland, shared, “Maine

College of Art & Design is a leader in art education. It is a natural next step to build these programs online enabling us to share our expertise with an even greater pool of students.”

The program can be completed in 12-18 months and is designed for working professionals who need the flexibility to balance work, life, and classes. Online classes will be small in size, a hallmark of a Maine Col-

lege of Art & Design education, making it possible for students to connect with faculty and classmates.

Online courses are offered asynchronously, allowing students to complete readings and assignments on their own schedule. Online programs are scheduled to begin in August 2025, and program leaders are now accepting applications. Learn more at online.meca.edu.

Tarot card readings and kitties tonight at MEow Lounge

WESTBROOK, ME -- A purr-fect combination... Tarot Card Readings and kitties. For those who want more than just a pet... professional readings will be provided at Westbrook's

MEow Lounge by Healing with Hannah. Come enjoy a night with a mystical vibe - feel free to bring any food/drink. January 16 from 4-6PM. Space is limited

to 10 people. Reservations required: www.meowcatlounge.com \$40 'purr' person. A Psychic Medium, Reiki Practitioner and Intuitive Card Reader, Heal-

ing with Hannah provides healing, spiritual connection, guidance, and support. Hannah aims to bring a comforting and spiritual experience that will help you along your life journey.



January marks Human Trafficking Awareness Month

LEWISTON, ME – In observance of Human Trafficking Awareness Month this January, Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Services (SAPARS) is dedicated to raising awareness about the issue of human trafficking, specifically sex trafficking, which impacts individuals and communities in Maine, across the country, and around the world.

Human trafficking can affect people of all genders, ages, races, and backgrounds, and often goes unnoticed. Victims are manipulated, coerced, or forced into sexual exploitation, which can leave them trapped in a

complicated cycle of confusion, fear, and violence. SAPARS stands firm in its commitment to addressing this complex issue by amplifying the voices of survivors, increasing public awareness, and along with the Maine Coalition Against Sexual Assault, urging Maine policymakers to develop tools to address and prevent trafficking.

"Our mission at SAPARS is to prevent all forms of sexual violence and to empower all people affected by sexual violence to find a path to healing," said Meg Hatch, Executive Director of Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Services.

"Human trafficking is a violent crime that strips away the rights and dignity of those affected. By observing Human Trafficking Awareness Month, we hope to shine a light on this hidden epidemic, educate the public, and bring about meaningful change that will ultimately protect vulnerable individuals and support survivors on their journey to healing," added Jaime Ricker, Sex Trafficking and Exploitation Advocate at SAPARS.

Key Initiatives for Human Trafficking Awareness Month

Educational Campaigns: Throughout January, SAPARS will launch a public awareness cam-

paign featuring key statistics, warning signs, and resources available for those at risk of or affected by sex trafficking. The campaign will be shared via social media, newsletter updates, and local news editorials.

Support for Survivors: SAPARS will continue its commitment to providing survivors with access to essential services, including crisis intervention, access to healthcare, and legal advocacy. During January, the organization will amplify its efforts to connect survivors with resources that can aid in their recovery.

How the Public Can Take Action

SAPARS encourages individuals and communities to get involved in the fight against human trafficking by:

Recognizing the Signs: Learn to identify red flags of vulnerability to human trafficking. We know that vulnerabilities increase the risks for traf-

ficking and exploitation. Take notice when someone seems controlled or isolated, those with unstable living situations, individuals who have experienced abuse, sexual violence, or substance use disorder.

Reporting Suspicious Activity: If you suspect that someone may be a victim of human trafficking, contact the National Human Trafficking Hotline at 1-888-373-7888 or text 233733. Law enforcement and support services can take immediate action.

Supporting Organizations: Donate to or volunteer with organizations, like SAPARS, that provide direct services to survivors of trafficking and sexual violence.

Advocating for Change: Engage in conversations with local lawmakers and policymakers to push for comprehensive legislation that addresses human trafficking and supports survivor recovery.

About Sexual Assault

Prevention and Response Services (SAPARS)

Sexual Assault Prevention and Response Services (SAPARS) is a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting survivors of sexual violence, including sex trafficking. Through a range of prevention programs, crisis intervention services, and community education, SAPARS works to reduce the incidence of sexual violence and provide healing resources for victims. For more information, please visit sapars.org

Call or text the Maine Sexual Assault Helpline 24/7 at 1-800-871-7741.

*Please do not use email for urgent matters. If you are experiencing a mental health emergency or if the situation is potentially life-threatening, call 911 to receive immediate emergency assistance or contact the Maine Crisis Hotline at 1-888-568-1112.

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Gorham BackPack Program needs your help restocking Food Closet





JANUARY

Food & Supply Drive Items of the Month

**Chapstick • Fruit Cups • Popcorn
Hot Chocolate • Cup of Noodles
CheezIt • Goldfish • CapriSun**

Items for this month can be shipped to or dropped off at:

Gorham High School
41 Morrill Ave, Gorham, ME 04038
c/o Claudine Emerson & The Backpack Program

MONETARY DONATIONS

DONATION CHECKS can be made out to:
Gorham School Department
Add: "The Backpack Program of Gorham" to the MEMO line.

Please mail checks to:
Hollis Cobb, Finance Officer
Gorham School Department
75 South Street
Gorham, Maine 04038

\$10 provides 1 weekend bag
\$150 sponsors a student for the 2024-2025 school year

A receipt will be mailed for tax purposes.
99% of donations go towards food purchases; the 1% helps pay for operational cost.

www.GrowGiveGorham.org

Waddle into 2025!

Join the penguin crew in saving the planet this January. Waddle over to our selected Hannaford store and purchase a \$2.50 reusable Fight Hunger Bag. Every bag sold will send a \$1 donation our way!

hannaford.2givelocal.com | Fight Hunger Bag Program



GORHAM, ME -- A huge THANK YOU to Coach Tanguay, Coach Stone and the members of the indoor track teams for their generous donation to the BackPack Program as part of the GHS Athletic's Winter Sports Food Drive!

For the month of January, we will focus our efforts on restocking the Food Closet at GHS. Items can be dropped off directly at the high school or mailed to GMS and we will deliver. The BackPack Program will also receive

a \$1 donation for every \$2.50 reusable Fight Hunger Bag sold during all of January at the Gorham location. We appreciate the continued support of Hannaford!

It takes a village and the Gorham village is amazing!

What do you think?

We strongly encourage Letters to the Editor, Op/Eds, columns or any other submissions from our readers.

Agree with us or another columnist? Disagree? Write to us and let us know!

Email all submissions, including name, address and phone number, to the editor.

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6:00 pm
Franco Center, Heritage Hall
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MIDCOAST SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
35th ANNIVERSARY

Guest Column:

Cabinet members must be experienced, capable leaders

By Sen. Angus King
When the season for Cabinet nominations arrives, it always reminds me of what former Patriots Coach Bill Parcells said about his team and roster: "If they want you to cook the dinner, at least they ought to let you shop for some of the groceries."

Coaches – and Presidents-elect – should have the ability to pick their team. And over the decades, Congress has given Presidents significant deference. Despite all the partisan uproar you read about in the media, there have only been nine times in American history that the United States Senate has rejected a President's cabinet nomination. Yes, you read that right.

As a former Governor, I feel strongly about

giving the Chief Executive the chance to pick his or her Cabinet. In fact, having intelligent, respectable, and competent advisors around me during my terms helped me govern and make decisions for Maine that were in the best interests of our community. President Trump should be no different – that's why I supported 75 percent of his first-term nominees – but his advisors, and especially Cabinet Members, must be qualified for the sake of the people they represent.

My position on Cabinet nominees has always boiled down to two priorities: the candidate needs to be experienced and capable, and not have a stance that is hostile to the department or bureau they would be leading.

Consider this: a person is selected to manage a busy Maine restaurant in the middle of our summer season. Yet, this person has never been a line cook, nor a hostess. And he has certainly never been a waitstaff or a food runner. How can you expect this person to understand the roles within the restaurant if he has never held any of the positions he intends to lead? The functionality of the restaurant would certainly diminish and likely result in delayed and incorrect orders, inefficiency and loss of revenue.

Cabinet nominations are no different. Betsy DeVos, President Trump's pick during his first administration to lead the Department of Education is a great example of someone lacking both suitable

experience and interest in the mission of the department she was nominated to help. With no prior experience in public education, and closely held personal beliefs that ran contradictory to the organization she was tasked to lead, DeVos was hostile to the operation and success of the public education system. In this scenario, we are not talking about an undercooked hamburger, but rather a massive failure in our ability to provide a quality public education to students across the country. So Ms. DeVos ended up being one of the 25 percent of Trump nominees I could not vote to confirm.

The framers of our Constitution set up a Senate confirmation process as a check on the executive branch to make sure that

all parts of government are working by the people and for the people. And as one of Maine's senators, I take that job seriously. Since I've been in federal office, I have met with and interviewed each cabinet nominee and questioned them on their priorities and qualifications. And throughout this time, I have only voted against six cabinet nominees that I thought were grossly unqualified. In other words, I have voted in favor of 80% of cabinet nominees across three presidents from different parties.

The nominees from this new administration will be no different. As I have consistently done, I will give all nominees the opportunity to make their case in private meetings and when they come be-

fore the committees of jurisdiction. Only then will I decide on each nominee as they come to the Senate floor.

President Trump has a herculean task ahead of him the next four years: lower the cost of consumer goods, resolve various armed conflicts across the Middle East, and reform border security to name a few. As an American, I wish him the best of luck and hope he has all the necessary tools to achieve success. And as a United States Senator, you better believe I will do my due diligence to ensure that everyone on the taxpayer payroll is working towards those goals.

Donald Trump is headed to the kitchen; let's see how he is at picking his groceries.

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 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 Teach-

er 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 educators 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.

Agriculture education scholarship available

PORTLAND & ELLSWORTH — Graduating seniors from Maine high schools who are National FFA Organization

(Future Farmers of America) members and interested in pursuing a career in farming, agriculture or natural resources are in-

cluded to apply for a Ronald P. Guerrette FFA Scholarship through the Maine Community Foundation (MaineCF).

The Guerrette FFA Scholarship Fund provides one, \$1,000 scholarship per year. The application deadline is March 1. To learn more and to apply, visit www.mainecef.org/scholarships.

The fund was created in 1998 by friends and family of Ronald P. Guerrette of Caribou to honor his life and work.

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 partici-

pate 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 application 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

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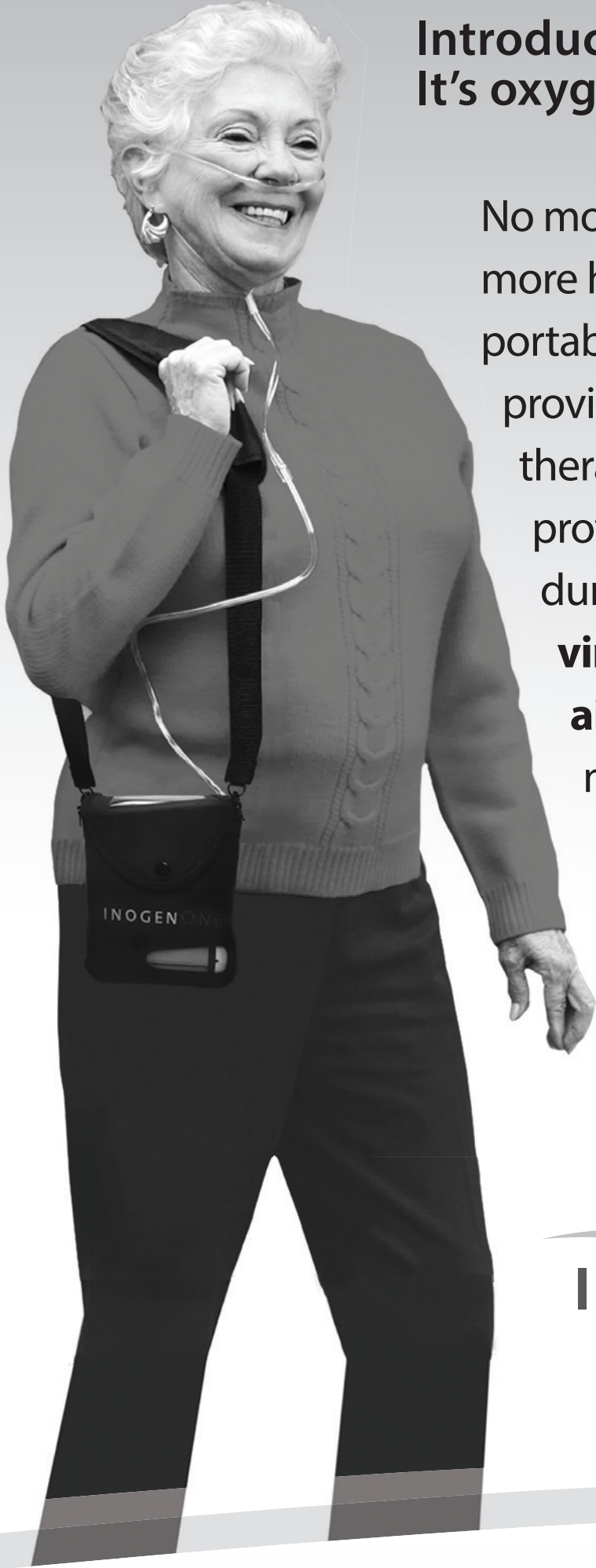
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Signed into law: Social Security Fairness authored by Sen. Collins

WASHINGTON, D.C. – The President signed into law the Social Security Fairness Act (SSFA), bipartisan legislation authored by U.S. Senators Susan Collins and Sherrod Brown (D-OH). Senator Collins attended the bill signing ceremony at the invitation of the White House. The SSFA will restore Social Security benefits for millions of teachers, school cafeteria workers, custodians and other school employees, law enforcement officers, fire fighters, and other public servants by repealing two provisions of current law – the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and the Government Pension Offset (GPO) – that unfairly reduce the Social Security benefits that public employees or their spouses have earned. The bipartisan bill overwhelmingly passed the both the U.S. House of Representatives and the U.S. Senate by votes of 327-75 and 76-20, respectively.

With the signing of the SSFA today, both the WEP and GPO have been repealed, and those previously impacted by these provisions will see their earned benefit levels restored. Following the passage of the SSFA in both chambers of Congress, Senators Collins and Brown sent a letter to

the Acting Commissioner of the Social Security Administration (SSA) Carolyn Colvin requesting that the SSA swiftly implement the Social Security Fairness Act following the President's signing of the bill. Updates on the SSA's implementation of the SSFA will continue to be released here.

Senator Collins held the first Senate hearing on this policy in 2003 as Chair of the Senate Government Affairs Committee. She, along with the late Senator Dianne Feinstein, first introduced the Social Security Fairness Act in 2005. Earlier this year, Senators Collins and Brown called on Senate leadership to immediately bring their legislation, which had 62 Senate cosponsors—above the margin needed for passage—to the Senate floor for a vote.

“In 2003, I held the first-ever Senate hearing on the WEP and the GPO, and I am pleased that with today's signing of the Social Security Fairness Act, these unfair provisions in our Social Security system have finally been repealed,” said Senator Collins. “This is a victory for thousands of teachers, first responders, public servants, and the countless advocates who fought for years to correct this unfairness. For too

SUSAN COLLINS

U.S. SENATOR FOR MAINE

long, the WEP and GPO have denied retirees and their spouses the Social Security benefits they earned through years of work and contributions to the system. This law ensures that public service will no longer come at the expense of one's earned retirement benefits.”

“The repeal of GPO and WEP is a historic win for public employees, including thousands of retired educators in Maine. We know that these unfair provisions make it more difficult to recruit and retain educators. This is a historic victory for educators, public employees, and their families. We are thankful for the bipartisan effort of our Senator from Maine, Susan Collins (R-Maine), who coauthored this bill with Senator Sherrod Brown (D-Ohio) and has been working on bringing justice to retired public service workers for over two decades,” said Jesse Hargrove, President of the Maine Education Association

“Repealing these two unfair provisions will restore Social Security benefits for teachers and educational leaders throughout our state, while also help-

ing to make it easier to recruit and retain educators for Maine's schools. The Maine Principals' Association thanks Senator Collins for championing this important bipartisan bill and her steadfast commitment to fixing this issue for public servants in Maine and across the country,” said Dr. Holly Blair, Executive Director of the Maine Principals' Association.

“The recent passage of the Social Security Fairness Act marks a significant victory for Maine Career & Technical Educators and other public sector workers across the state. This landmark legislation, authored by Maine's own Senator Susan Collins, repeals two long-standing provisions that have unfairly reduced Social Security benefits for many dedicated public servants. Career & Technical Educators, who are often recruited after working years in the private sector, will no longer be penalized by these provisions. We extend our heartfelt appreciation to Senator Collins for her unwavering commitment to this cause,” said Dave Keaton, Executive Director, Maine Administrators of Career & Technical Education.

“The Maine Chiefs of Police Association thanks Senator Collins for her leadership on the Social Security Fairness Act. This critical legislation will allow police officers and their families to receive the Social Security benefits they've earned through years of public service. Our organization appreciates the Senator's continued commitment to those who have dedicated their lives to protecting and serving Maine communities,” said Jason D. Moen, Chief of the Auburn Police Department and President of the Maine Chiefs of Police Association.

“The Social Security Fairness Act will provide our members and their families the full benefit of Social Security, helping to make a major difference in their quality of life. We want to thank Senator Collins for her dedication in getting this across the finish line. She has always been a leader and great advocate for those of us in public safety,” said Mike Scott, President of the Professional Firefighters of Maine.

“Maine Fire Chiefs Association would like to thank Senator Collins and all those involved in moving the Social Security Fairness Act forward. This bill will remove the pension offset that Social Security

currently has in place. Frequently, this offset is not discovered or readily disclosed until retirement planning is initiated, in some cases even delaying retirement. The Social Security Fairness Act will rectify this unjustified penalty and allow public employees to receive the Social Security Pension from the system they have paid into and earned. On behalf of The Maine Fire Chiefs Association's members and all those impacted, we applaud and thank Senator Collins for her efforts,” said William St. Michel, Executive Director of the Maine Fire Chiefs' Association.

More than 25,000 Mainers, who dedicated their lives to public service, are prevented from receiving the full Social Security benefits they earn due to two laws from the 1970s and 1980s. The Windfall Elimination Provision, enacted in 1983, reduces the Social Security benefits of workers who receive pensions from a federal, state, or local government for employment not covered by Social Security. The Government Pension Offset, enacted in 1977, reduces Social Security spousal benefits for spouses, widows, and widowers whose spouses receive pensions from a federal, state, or local government.

Maine author publishes novel of dementia on the Maine coast

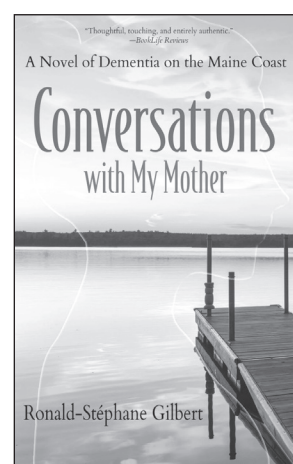
PORTLAND, ME --In *Conversations with My Mother: a Novel of Dementia on the Maine Coast*,

an elderly, good-hearted Francophone struggles with dementia as her small town succumbs to real-

estate development. Focused on her relationship with her acerbic caregiver daughter and peripatetic businessman son, the novel examines the siblings' attempts to cope with their mother's deepening decline and the impending sale of the family property to underwrite her care. With a strong sense of place that draws parallels between the beleaguered heroine's persistent kindness and the

embattled Maine coast's enduring beauty, this book is as much about gain as it is about loss, and, ultimately, is more about hope than regret.

Ronald-Stéphane Gilbert is a native French-speaker who was born and raised in Maine and frequently returns to visit friends and family. He is a participant in the Cleveland Clinic's landmark Brain and MIND



studies, as well as a member of various domestic and international Alzheimer's and dementia associations. *Conversations with My Mother*, A Novel of Dementia on the Maine Coast, an excerpt of which was recognized in the Lorian Hemmingway Short Story Competition, was inspired by his family's experience with his own mother. It is his first published novel.

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Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

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 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.midcoastsymphony.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 25

BUXTON -- Try our delicious Haddock Supper Buffet - Saturday, November 30, 2024 - 5:00 pm at Living Waters Church, Parker Farm Road, Buxton. Suggested donation: \$10 Adult, \$5 Child, \$20 Family.

Please note: We will offer the option of takeout containers for those who do not want to come inside for seating.

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 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 Cab-

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in 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 char-

ities 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>

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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:

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- Acquire tarps and field maintenance equipment
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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

Sluggers 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.

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