

USM Gorham opens haunting adaptation of *The Birds*

GORHAM, ME - Hunker down, seal up the doors and windows, don't go outside... The Birds is almost here! The USM Department of Theatre invites audiences into the dark, unsettling world of Conor McPherson's *The Birds* at Russell Hall on the USM Gorham Campus from February 21st through March 2nd.

Adapted from Daphne du Maurier's short story, the basis for Alfred Hitchcock's classic film, McPherson's stage version is a gripping, moving look at human relationships in the face of societal collapse. In an isolated house, two strangers take shelter from relentless masses of attacking birds. They find

sanctuary but not comfort or peace; there's no electricity, little food, and a nearby neighbor is watching them. Another refugee arrives with some news of the outside world, but her presence disrupts the delicate balance of survival. Paranoia takes hold inside the makeshift fortress as mistrust and betrayal begin to match the threat of the birds outside.

For director Liz Carlson, the play offers abundant opportunities to explore the human condition amidst societal crisis. She says, "Conor McPherson writes these plays that have a haunting undercurrent of grief, menace, horror, and complexity. There is so much going on beneath the sur-



L-R - Director Liz Carlson works with USM Students Lucious K. Fox as Nat and Emma Graffam as Diane Photos by Kat Moraros Photography.

face of a character in a McPherson play - every time I work on his plays I get to discover things with actors that I never noticed before."

To bring theatre-goers into the world of the story, the USM Theatre design team has walled off Russell Hall's 140-

seat theater and just 40 audience members per show will be sitting on stage with the four performers. Carlson's vision is to evoke the claustrophobia of being confined in a small space with strangers while dangers constantly lurk outside. "The design team has tak-




L-R - USM Students Ellie Backman as Julia, Lucious K. Fox as Nat, Emma Graffam as Diane in rehearsal. Photos by Kat Moraros Photography.

en this idea and run with it, welcoming the audience into the space with us. This closeness invites a specificity and attention to detail from actors and designers alike that isn't always required when the audience is at a greater distance."

And while the birds are the external threat, audiences will feel their presence in subtle ways. "I think people come to this play with a certain expectation", says Carlson. "They see the swarms of birds from the distance." *See The Birds, page 6*

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Zoom Webinar
Wed., February 26
6:30-7:30pm


Join B.J. Jamieson (Maine State Library) to learn how to access FREE news using Digital Maine Library, including:

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Digital Maine Library, a service of the Maine State Library!

Join B.J. Jamieson of the Maine State Library staff to learn how to access daily news for free. The Readfield Community Library and Baxter Memorial Library (Gorham) are offering this virtual Zoom

webinar program along with other Maine libraries through MECollab (shared library programming).

Event will be offered via Zoom on Wednesday, February 26 at 6:30-7:30pm.

Registration is required; use the QR code to register.

Gorham dance team debuting 2025 routines at Showcase

GORHAM, ME -- Come support our Performance Team at Gorham High School as they debut their routines for the 2025 season!

Tickets are \$10 and can be purchased at the front desk. Proceeds go directly to our dancers! We will also have concessions, a 50/50 raffle, and a table of amazing raffle prizes!

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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!

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

USM celebrates Gorham native's contribution to baseball in Asia

PORTLAND, ME — The University

of Southern Maine hosted a Japanese delegation including Boston Red Sox outfielder Masataka Yoshida in a celebration of Horace Wilson, a teacher from Gorham, Maine who introduced baseball to Asia in the 19th Century.

The event also included Seiichiro Takahashia,

Japan's Consul General in Boston, Portland Mayor Mark Dion, American Ralph Bryant, who became a star baseball player in Japan and USM President Jacqueline Edmondson.

The USM event was preceded by a visit to the Wilson family home in Gorham.



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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

WinterKids announces Ski Free Days

MAINE – WinterKids, a nonprofit dedicated exclusively to inspiring and increasing outdoor physical activity for children and families in Maine, is thrilled to announce three upcoming “Ski Free” days. These special events will provide unforgettable winter sports experiences for over 200 youth, thanks to partnerships with Teens to Trails, Black Mountain of Maine, Downeast Family YMCA, Camden Snow Bowl, Central Aroostook Association, and Big Rock Mountain.

Ski Free Days are fully sponsored by WinterKids and all participants will be provided with lift tickets, rentals, and instruction at no cost to them. These outings aim

to make skiing accessible to all kids, regardless of where they live or their financial situation.

WinterKids Ski Free Days Schedule:

Tuesday, February 18, 2025 – Camden Snow Bowl In partnership with the Downeast Family YMCA, over 40 kids and chaperones from the Rockland area will learn to ski and ride at Camden Snow Bowl.

Sunday, March 2, 2025 – Black Mountain of Maine In partnership with Teens to Trails, over 100 students from 10 different middle and high schools will head to Black Mountain for a group ski trip.

Saturday, March 8, 2025 – Big Rock Mountain In partnership with



Central Aroostook Association and instructional assistance from the Adaptive Outdoor Education Center,



up to 40 participants will enjoy winter recreation at Big Rock Mountain.

Supporting WinterKids’ Mission

Ski Free Days put our mission into action by helping children develop healthy lifelong habits through education and fun, outdoor winter activity. WinterKids supports all winter enthusiasts, from first-time skiers to experienced riders, and is especially passionate about introducing new participants to winter sports and recreation in Maine.

Approximately 50% of attendees at these

events will be experiencing skiing or snowboarding for the first time. By eliminating financial and geographic barriers, WinterKids aims to give all children the opportunity to participate in, and enjoy, winter sports.

WinterKids would also like to recognize and extend a special thank you to Black Mountain of Maine, Big Rock Mountain, and Camden Snow Bowl for their partnership and support in making these ski trips a reality. For more information about WinterKids, please visit <https://winterkids.org>.

2025 proclaimed “Year of Youth in Agriculture” in Maine

AUGUSTA, ME – Governor Janet Mills, in collaboration with the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry (DACF) and Maine Department of Education (DOE), has proclaimed 2025 as the “Year of Youth in Agriculture” in Maine. The Year of Youth in Agriculture will provide opportunities to spotlight and elevate young adult voices in agriculture by leveraging resources, including events, partnerships, and the work of engaging and inspiring the next generation of agricultural leaders, including through nationally recognized organizations like 4-H and FFA.

“I am pleased to proclaim 2025 as the ‘Year of Youth Agriculture’ in Maine, celebrat-

ing the young people who are shaping the future of Maine’s agricultural sector,” said Governor Janet Mills. “In the coming months, the Maine Department of Agriculture and the Maine Department of Education will work with partners across the state to ensure Maine’s next generation of farmers and growers have the training, mentorship, and resources necessary to carry forward Maine’s rich agricultural heritage.”

The Year of Youth in Agriculture will focus on integrating youth perspectives into key activities throughout the year, fostering opportunities for learning, networking, and showcasing their contributions to the future of farming.

Some highlights in-

clude:

Youth Panel at the Ag Trades Show Commissioner’s Luncheon (January 14): Young people involved in agriculture through FFA, 4-H, and Cultivating Community shared their ideas and hopes for the future of farming. This panel aimed to provide insight into the interests, aspirations, and challenges faced by youth in agriculture today.

Engagement on Agriculture Day in the Legislature (March 18): A cohort of youth will be invited to gain exposure to the many exhibiting organizations while meeting DACF staff and policymakers to deepen their understanding of agricultural policy and legislative processes and issues.

Highlighting community involvement: Many youth are proudly involved in our agricultural fairs, school gardens, and other settings where farming and

food and fiber production contribute to their communities. We will look to spotlight these stories, celebrating youth leadership throughout the year, including highlighting their participation at the “Big E” in Springfield, MA, during September. This year’s Big E marks the 100th anniversary of the Maine Building, showcasing youth contributions and achievements in a regional spotlight.

The Year of Youth in Agriculture initiative underscores a commitment to fostering agricultural talent and creating meaningful opportunities for youth to engage with Maine’s food and fiber agriculture community and its future, and we invite all agriculture-related organizations, businesses, and associations to join us in looking for meaningful ways throughout the year to engage with and elevate the perspectives of young people, and to explore the many types

of careers that support agriculture in Maine.

“Talking with young people who have a passion for agriculture is always a source of great inspiration,” said DACF Commissioner Amanda Beal. “This Year of Youth in Agriculture provides an opportunity to shine a spotlight on their contributions while strengthening their connection to agriculture and its essential role in our future.”

“The Department of Education is committed to empowering Maine’s young people by providing opportunities that connect them with real-world experiences, like those in agriculture,” said DOE Commissioner Pender Makin. “Through partnerships with programs like FFA, 4-H, and initiatives like the Year of Youth in Agriculture, we’re ensuring that students understand the role agriculture plays in our communities and see

the endless possibilities for their futures.”

“Supporting engagement in agriculture is about cultivating knowledge, skills, and a sense of purpose that will sustain Maine for generations to come,” said Craig Lapine, Director of the Maine Bureau of Agriculture, Food and Rural Resources.

“We are excited to help showcase the work and creativity being done by youth across the state on their way to becoming tomorrow’s agricultural leaders,” said Dean Hannah Carter of the University of Maine Cooperative Extension. “Through programs like our Agriculture Ambassadors, YOUth Have a Voice, and Oh Yea! 4-H Grows True Leaders, hundreds of Maine youth participate in hands-on activities to learn the skills they need to be engaged community members and innovative contributors to the food systems in Maine and beyond.”

In her official proclamation, Governor Mills highlights the foundational role of agriculture in Maine’s economy and culture, as well as the critical need to encourage and support the next generation of agriculturalists.

Get Involved

Maine’s Year of Youth in Agriculture in 2025 provides an opportunity to align schools, communities, and the agriculture industry in celebrating and empowering young agriculturalists. Follow DACF and Real Maine, subscribe, and call (207) 287-7513 for Maine Year of Youth in Agriculture information, including opportunities to get involved.

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Antiques Roadshow making first-time stop in Maine

BOSTON, MA — It's an anniversary year for ANTIQUES ROADSHOW! Part adventure, part history lesson and part treasure hunt, PBS's most-watched ongoing series heads out for its 30th Tour in 2025 to capture tales of family heirlooms, flea market finds, and items saved from attics and basements.

The pop-culture phenomenon series will film for Season 30 in five cities including a stop in Boothbay, Maine on Wednesday, June 18! Do you have ROADSHOW's next big find?

"I look forward to every new season of ROAD-

SHOW but there is something extra special about making our very first stop in Maine visiting Boothbay as part of our Season 30 tour," said executive producer Marsha Bemko. "Celebrating three decades of making television with people across the country and their treasures as stars of the show is magical — the items might be old, but the stories never are!"

ANTIQUES ROADSHOW 2025 Production Tour Dates and Cities:

Wednesday, June 18 — Boothbay, ME

ROADSHOW will reveal the distinctive and historic venues for each



event in the coming weeks.

At each appraisal event, guests will receive free verbal evaluations of their antiques, art, and collectibles by experts from the country's leading auction houses and independent dealers. Each ticketed guest is invited to bring two items for appraisal.

From each of the 2025 events, three episodes of ROADSHOW per city will be created for inclusion in the 22-time Emmy® Award-nominated production's 30th broad-

cast season, to air on PBS in 2026.

Admission to ANTIQUES ROADSHOW is free but tickets are required and must be obtained in advance. Fans can enter for a chance to win one pair of free tickets per household. The 2025 ANTIQUES ROADSHOW Sweepstakes opens Monday, January 13. To enter for a free pair of tickets to a 2025 ROADSHOW event and to see complete entry rules, go to pbs.org/roadshowtickets. Deadline for entries is

Monday, March 24, 2025, at 11:59PM PT. Information about ANTIQUES ROADSHOW and the 2025 Tour is available by calling toll-free 888-762-3749.

A small number of free tickets will also be available on social media to fans who enter on Instagram. Social media entries will be accepted beginning January 13, with an entry deadline of Thursday, February 13, 2025, at 11:59PM PT.

For both sweepstakes, no purchase is necessary, restrictions apply, you must be 18 or age of majority. For the ANTIQUES ROADSHOW Sweepstakes you

must be a resident of US or Canada (excluding Quebec). All Social Media Sweepstakes entrants must be US residents only. Void where prohibited.

More information and complete rules can be found at the 2025 Tour Complete Rules page.

To see FAQs about ANTIQUES ROADSHOW events, go to: pbs.org/wgbh/roadshow/tour-faq/.

Produced by GBH, ANTIQUES ROADSHOW reaches more than 5 million loyal weekly viewers on TV, streaming, online, and social media. ROADSHOW airs Mondays at 8/7c PM on PBS.

Gently used donations accepted in March for MSMT's yard sale

BRUNSWICK, ME — Maine State Music Theatre (MSMT) is thrilled to announce the return of its Fourth Annual Yard Sale this May, and it promises to be bigger and better than ever before. The highly anticipated event continues to grow each year, offering more incredible deals and treasures for bargain hunters from across the state.

While the Yard Sale itself will take place in May, MSMT is calling on the community to start gathering their gently used items for donation starting next month! Donations will be accepted from March 12th through April 16th, every Wednesday and Saturday from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM at 22 Elm Street in Brunswick. Donations are essential to the success of the event and directly support MSMT's productions and programs.

"We are always overwhelmed by the generosity of our community," said Curt Dale Clark, Executive Director of MSMT. "As we head into our



fourth year, we continue to see the Yard Sale grow thanks to the support of donors and volunteers. It's incredible to think that everything from furniture to household goods could help fund the next amazing MSMT production."

The Presale Event will take place on May 1st from 5:00 to 7:00 PM. For a \$25 entry fee, attendees can enjoy exclusive early access to an array of incredible items.

The main Yard Sale will follow on May 3rd from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, and the Half-Off Sale will be on May 4th from 9:00 AM to 12:00 PM for those looking for even better deals.

Behind the scenes, MSMT's volunteers are the unsung heroes who help make the Yard Sale a success. From accepting donations and sorting through items to merchandising and assisting during



the sale, these volunteers give their time and effort to ensure a smooth and enjoyable event for all.

"We simply couldn't do it without our volunteers and Angels," Clark added. "Their hard work and dedication to MSMT help ensure that all proceeds go directly to supporting our productions, making the Yard Sale a vital part of our fundraising efforts."

Whether you're looking to score great deals, declutter your home, or support the arts, MSMT's Fourth Annual Yard Sale is the place to be. Last year's Yard Sale raised over \$40,000 for MSMT, supporting the theatre's incredible productions and community programs. Don't miss your chance to be part of this fantastic event—donate, shop, and help support the arts!

For more information, visit msmt.org or call the MSMT office at 207.725.8769.

MSMT's 2025 Yard

Sale
Presale Event: May 1st, 5:00 - 7:00 PM (Entry Fee: \$25)

Yard Sale: May 3rd, 9:00 AM - 2:00 PM

Half-Off Sale: May 4th, 9:00 - 11:00 AM

Donations Accepted: March 12th to April 16th, Wednesdays and Saturdays, 9:00 AM - 12:00 PM at 22 Elm Street, Brunswick, Maine.

Note: MSMT will not be able to accept books, clothing, large exercise equipment, beds, mattresses, or gas-powered lawn equipment.

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 Center, 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


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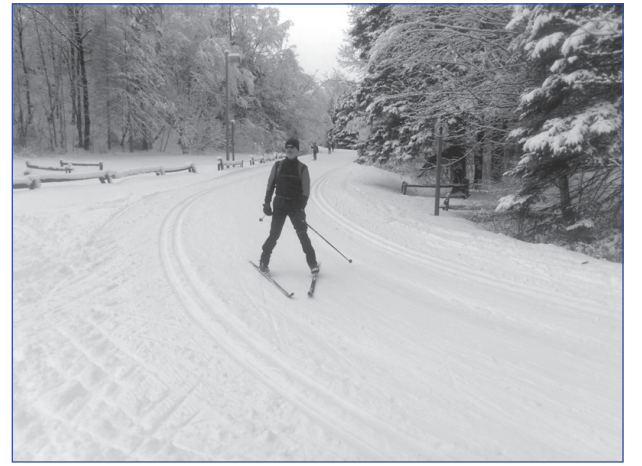
Challenging Nordic Skiing in Quebec



Bruce Weik begins a turn at Mont Sainte Anne Cross Country Ski Center



A member of the ski center safety patrol looks for fallen trees



Ken Gordon snowplows to a stop on Trail 37

Quality Nordic skiing has been difficult to find this winter. Seven Mainers planned three days of skiing near Mont Sainte Anne in Quebec over the recent New Year's week. Situated farther north, our hope was the higher latitude would offer deeper snow levels.

We reserved a condo in the village of Beupre at the foot of the mountain a short distance from the Monte Sainte Anne Cross Country Ski Center in Sainte-Ferreol-les-Neiges. In the days leading up to our arrival, the ski center reported adequate snow and a majority of the trails were open and groomed,

an improvement over anything in Maine.

The weather was uncooperative when we traveled to Quebec. Heavy rain fell much of the day and into the evening forcing the ski center to close the trails for maintenance on New Year's Eve. We spent the day canyon hiking instead.

Rain in Beupre was the disappointing beginning of New Year's Day. However, the ski center website indicated two trails were open and groomed. Since the facility is located at a higher elevation about five miles from Beupre, two members of the group drove north to obtain a

first-hand assessment. About two miles uphill, the rain turned to wet snow.

Three of us decided to brave the elements. We weren't alone as there were a modest number of determined skiers gathered at the ski center lodge when we arrived.

Dressing for heavy wet snow, gusty winds, and unseasonably warm temperatures was a dilemma. We selected breathable water resistant outerwear while wearing minimal lightweight inner layers. But, there was no ideal choice. As soon as the snow landed on our clothing, warm body temperatures from our exertions

while skiing melted the snow and the moisture insidiously seeped through. In short, we got drenched.

Only Trails 37 and 34 were open but they were well-groomed for classic and skate skiing and provided a hilly loop approximating 10 kilometers. We began classic skiing north following Trail 37 on a fast surface with wind-driven snow blowing in our faces. Hoods provided some protection but true relief came when we turned south.

Continuing south, we cruised along on gentle terrain until crossing a bridge over the Jean Larose River. Again skiing north, the headwind slowed our progress and limited visibility. The wet snow covered trail signs so determining the correct route was difficult. Our intent was to continue north until connecting with Trail 34; however, we accidentally followed a one-way return loop.

On our second try, we made the proper turn and proceeded north until joining hilly Trail 34. Shortly after, we began a long steep climb that required using the herringbone technique near the top.

Persisting uphill, we passed under a power line in an open field before angling west. We glided eas-

ily over a relatively level landscape before turning south and plummeting down a steep decline, again crossing a bridge over Jean Larose River.

With strong winds propelling us from behind, we enjoyed a primarily downhill ski for several kilometers. The final long descent double-poling to the lodge was particularly exhilarating. After warming up, and partially drying out, we did it all over again.

The following day brought more complications at the Nordic ski center. Overnight, snow-laden trees exposed to powerful winds resulted in numerous blowdowns blocking many trails. Crews at the center only had time to clear the same two trails open the previous day. Five of us decided try our luck.

Although the trails were expertly groomed, cold temperatures resulted in fast sometimes icy surfaces. And, the gusty winds continued.

While descending a moderately steep grade in icy groomed tracks, I experienced my first fall of the season when unable to slow sufficiently on a sharp turn and lost control. Another impediment, climb-

ing the slick hills was very demanding.

Only three of us chose to complete a second loop. In the interim, the wind had toppled another tree obstructing part of Trail 34 at about the midway point. The threat of falling trees presented another potential hazard. Fortunately, we made it safely to the lodge without incident.

Despite the many obstacles, we managed to salvage two days of skiing and a day of canyon hiking during our Quebec visit – but, it wasn't easy.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* dedicates three chapters to Maine's best Nordic skiing.

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

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Opportunity to learn more about volunteering with 4-H

MAINE -- University of Maine Cooperative Extension is hosting online informational sessions for adults interested in becoming Maine 4-H volunteers. Participants can choose from two options: noon–1 p.m. on February 21 and 28 or 6–7 p.m. on March 3 and 10.

“Start Your 4-H Volunteer Journey” will provide participants with information about the

UMaine Extension 4-H youth development program through four short e-Learning modules. Attendees will also participate in an experiential educational activity, learn about the key aspects of positive youth development and be introduced to the ages and stages of youth. The two one-hour virtual sessions will wrap up with an outline of next steps and an introduction to a county staff contact to



Photo courtesy University of Maine Cooperative Extension / Edwin Remsburg.

help with the application process if desired.

4-H is a positive youth development program that helps youth “find their spark” and thrive. Volunteers play key roles in these experiences, making a difference by helping youth explore and discover the skills they need to lead successful and fulfilling lives. Adults interested in starting a 4-H club, sharing expertise and passion

through shorter programs that last a few hours or a few weeks, or assisting with local county 4-H events are encouraged to attend.

The informational sessions are free; registration is required on the program webpage. For more information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact Jennifer Lobley, jennifer.lobley@maine.edu, 207.255.3345.

Ambassador program features farm visits, career exploration

MAINE -- University of Maine Cooperative Extension 4-H is offering its Ag Ambassador program in March and April. The program, open to all Maine teens ages 14-18, focuses on career exploration in the local food system through farm and production visits around the state and provides opportunities to build relationships with industry professionals.

The Spring 2025 cohort will meet virtually on March 4, 11, 25, April 2 and 15 from 3:30-5 p.m. with in-person farm visits on March 22 at Mook Sea Farm and March 29 at Agri Cycle at Stoneyvale Farm. There will be an overnight Ag Symposium for all participants on April 21-22 at UMaine in Orono. For a full schedule, visit the program website.

With the shrinking number of formal agricultural programs offered to high school youth, students are lacking opportu-

nities to learn about local food systems and discover careers in agriculture. The 4-H Ag Ambassador program aims to help teens from all walks of life discover a future in agriculture and connect with other young people with similar goals.

Youth involved in this program will have opportunities to pursue their interest in agriculture and explore career pathways.

This includes mentoring in post-secondary opportunities, as well as investigating current issues related to food systems, livestock, crop sciences, aquaculture and climate issues impacting food systems and equity. Program participants will serve year-long terms as Agriculture Ambassadors for the Maine 4-H program under the guidance of 4-H staff.

This program is open to all Maine youth; previous 4-H membership is not required to enroll. Register on the program website.



Ag Ambassadors at Pineland Farms learn about the dairy cattle herd and agritourism.

All participants will be enrolled as members of the Maine 4-H program. To request reasonable accommodation, please contact Alisha Targonski at alisha.targonski@maine.edu or call 207.622.7546.

University of Maine Cooperative Extension: As a trusted resource for over 100 years, Extension has supported UMaine’s land and sea grant public education role by conducting community-driven,

research-based programs in every Maine county. UMaine Extension seeks to build thriving communities and help grow the food-based economy. Extension also leads Maine’s 4-H program, the most successful out-of-school youth educational program in the state. 4-H programs are grounded in the belief that kids learn best by doing and suit a variety of backgrounds, interests, budgets and schedules.



Ag Ambassadors exploring experimental seedlings going into the Roger Clapp Greenhouses on the University of Maine Orono campus.

Participants complete hands-on projects in areas like health, science, agriculture and civic en-

agement in a positive environment where they are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles.

12 nonprofit leaders awarded MaineCF grants

PORTLAND & ELLSWORTH, ME — Twelve nonprofit leaders from across the state have been awarded grants from the Maine Community Foundation’s (MaineCF) Investing in Leaders of Color program.

The program supports nonprofit leaders at organizations serving communities of color and promoting racial equity in Maine. It provides one-on-one coaching, a stipend for professional development and operating costs and

networking opportunities. Since its launch in 2019, 54 leaders representing 33 organizations have completed the program.

2024 grantees: Khadija Ahmed, Food for All Services; Athena Bryce, June-

teenth Downeast Karen Castillo, Presente! Maine; Alice Kabor, Hope Acts; Bruce King, Maine Boys to Men; Alda Lubota, Her Safety Net

Alivia Moore, Niweskok; Claudette Ndayinahaze, In Her Presence; Adele Ngoy, Women United Around the World; Rilwan Osman, Maine Immigrant and Refugee Services

Archana Palaniappan, Nature Based Education Consortium; Abdikhdar Shire, AK Health and Social Services. For more information about Investing in Leaders of Color, visit www.mainecef.org/iloc.

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Arts & Entertainment

New Ventures Maine offers free classes

AUGUSTA, ME— New Ventures Maine will offer free online workshops and classes in February and March that are designed to help people in Maine gain the skills, knowledge, and confidence to build a career, start a business, and manage money.

The full class schedule is accessible at bit.ly/NVMEClasses. Single- and multi-session workshops include (partial list):

- Building Careers
- Changing Jobs: Finding Work That Fits (Online): Wednesdays, Feb 12 – 26 (3 sessions), 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. Are you considering a job change?

This online class designed for women will help you identify work options and benefits that fit with your interests, skills, and values.

My Next Career Move (Online): Wednesdays, Mar 5 – 26, 12:00 – 1:30 p.m. In four weekly Zoom sessions of lively activities and discussion, you will assess your own skills, interests, and experiences to figure out what career options might be best. You will then be guided to create an action plan that will help you achieve success.

- Starting Businesses
- Business Basics (Online), Thursdays, Feb 13 – 27 (3 sessions), 6:00 –



7:30 p.m. This class covers topics such as the business plan outline, marketing, recordkeeping and cash planning. Our professional staff will help you assess the feasibility, desirability, and viability of your business idea and get you started with your business plan.

Tax Readiness for the Self-Employed (Online): Tuesday, Feb 25, 6:00 –

7:30 p.m. Learn how to organize your financial records, understand your tax responsibilities, become familiar with tax forms, and file your taxes with confidence. This workshop is designed for sole-proprietors.

Managing Money Money Management Workshops (Online): Wednesdays, Feb 12 - 26,

12:00 – 1:00 p.m. Learn to budget, repair your credit, and create a savings plan. Join us for one, two, or all three workshops. Feb 12: Budgeting Basics; Feb 19: Let's Talk About Credit; Feb 26: Build Your Savings.

My Money Works: Tuesdays, Feb 25 – Mar 25 (5 sessions), 6:00 – 7:00 p.m. Online. This interactive class with our professional staff will help you gain the skills and confidence you need to stretch your money, pay your bills, reduce debt, save, plan for retirement, and set personal financial goals to achieve greater financial stability.

To learn more, visit newventuresmaine.org or call 207-621-3440.

About New Ventures Maine (NVME)

New Ventures Maine provides classes and individual coaching in planning careers, starting businesses, and managing money. A statewide education and economic development program of the University of Maine at Augusta, University of Maine System, NVME helps Maine people succeed in the changing economy and achieve economic security for themselves and their families. For more information visit newventuresmaine.org.

Help out the Gorham Food Pantry with jam donations

GORHAM, ME – Gorham Food Pantry friends: As you plan your shopping for this weekend, we would LOVE some strawberry jelly / jam donations. As always,

you can drop them in the bin at the top of the ramp, and we'll put them to good use.

Thank you for helping to feed your neighbors here in Gorham!



Bar Mills Community Church seeking donations for food drive

BAR MILLS, ME -- Thank you to everyone who helped with Bar Mills Community Church's January mission of collecting T-shirts, socks, and briefs. It was a great help.

Our February mission is a food drive to benefit the Buxton Community Cupboard.

We are collecting non-perishable food items. The items can be dropped off at the Bar

Mills Community Church on 13 Hermit Thrush Dr. in Buxton across from the town hall. There will be a box in front of the church to put the items in. We thank you for your generosity.

Outdoor fun with Discover Downtown Westbrook

WESTBROOK, ME -- Join us for Winterfest 2025! Discover Downtown Westbrook is excited to host you once again at Riverbank Park for another year of Winterfest: S'mores roasting, bounce houses, photobooth, goats, demonstrations, and live

shows - all FREE! Be sure to check out the food truck park and artisan market too. Schedule and full list of events to be announced soon. Presented by Bath Savings Institution.

Rain Date: Sunday, March 2



The Birds

Continued from page 1

Hitchcock film and expect to see a version of that in the theatre. This play is especially fun because it defies the audience's expectations while still creating those visceral feelings and reactions that Hitchcock capitalizes on."

Ticket Info
To purchase tickets, or for more information, visit USM Theatre online at <https://usm.maine.edu/department-theatre/box-office-tickets/> or call the USM Theatre Box Office at (207) 780-5151. For more information on USM's Department of Theatre events and programs, click here. Ticket Prices: \$8-\$18; Special student & senior pricing Pay-What-You-Can performance on Thursday, February 27th.

The Birds by Conor

McPherson from a story by Daphne du Maurier, directed by Liz Carlson

February 21-March 2, 2025 Russell Hall, USM Gorham Campus

Performances:
Friday, February 21, 7pm
Saturday, February 22, 7pm
Sunday, February 23, 2pm
Wednesday, February 26, 10am
Thursday, February 27, 7pm (pay-what-you-can)
Friday, February 28, 10am
Friday, February 28, 7pm
Saturday, March 1, 7pm
Sunday, March 2, 2pm
Content Advisory & Age Recommendation:
Content advisory: Strong language, adult themes
Recommended for ages 13 and up.



Those needing special accommodations to participate fully in this program, contact Janice Gardner at (207)780-

5289 or janice.gardner@usm.maine.edu. Hearing impaired: call USM's telex / TDD number (207)780-5646

Sen. Collins receives Fraternal Order of Police Advocacy award

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Susan Collins was presented with the Fraternal Order of Police (FOP) National President’s Legislative Advocacy Award at a ceremony that took place at the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial in Washington. The FOP recognized Senator Collins with this award for her more than two decades of work to repeal the Windfall Elimination Provision (WEP) and Government Pension Offset (GPO) with the Social Security Fairness Act (SSFA), which was signed into law last month. This is the first time the FOP has awarded a Legislative Advocacy Award. After the SSFA was signed into law, the FOP sent a letter on behalf of its more than 377,000 members to Senator Collins, thanking her for her leader-

ship on the bill. “Receiving this award from the Fraternal Order of Police was a great honor, and I am thankful for the FOP’s steadfast support in the fight to repeal the WEP and GPO,” said Senator Collins. “Repealing these unfair provisions was a great victory for all public servants, including the brave men and women who make up our country’s law enforcement. In Maine and throughout the United States, we are fortunate to have so many law enforcement officers who are devoted to keeping our communities safe, and I was proud to lead the effort to restore their well-earned retirement benefits.” “Senator Collins, you have been the lead Republican in the Senate on this bill for more than 20 years and we so very grateful for



your leadership and support. Your efforts finally paid off as you worked the bill through the Senate’s often arduous process. Your tenacity and commitment will change the lives of public employees and

their families,” said FOP National President Patrick Yoes. “Because of your work, nearly three million law enforcement officers, fire fighters, and other public employees who earned themselves a Social Se-

SUSAN COLLINS

U.S. SENATOR FOR MAINE

curity benefit, only to see those benefits reduced by the Windfall Elimination Provision, will finally begin to receive every penny that they earned. Because of your work, families impacted by the Government Pension Offset which reduced or, in most cases, eliminated the survivor’s benefit received by surviving spouses, will finally be able to collect what they are owed. We owe you a debt of gratitude and are pleased to present you with the National President’s Legislative Advocacy Award.”

The SSFA, which Senator Collins coauthored with former Senator Sherrod Brown of Ohio, restored the Social Security benefits for millions of

public servants, including law enforcement officers, by repealing two provisions – the WEP and GPO – that unfairly reduced the Social Security benefits that public employees or their spouses have earned. Following the passage of the SSFA, Senators Collins and Brown sent a letter to the Social Security Administration (SSA) requesting that the SSA swiftly implement the Social Security Fairness Act.

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.

BBB Tip: Preparing for winter travel

Traveling in the winter can offer lower rates, smaller crowds, and different views.

However, it also comes with its own set of potential hazards. From being stuck on the highway for hours to dealing with flight cancellations, winter weather can hinder travel and vacation plans in a variety of ways. Preparing for potential weather-related emergencies, delays or cancellations can help mitigate the stress of these situations.

Here are a few tips on preparing for winter traveling from the Better Business Bureau:

If you’re road tripping...

Get your vehicle ready. Before hitting the road for any extended trip, it’s important to make sure everything on your vehicle is in working order, but it’s even more paramount in the winter when conditions can become more precarious. Here are some basics of what you should

do before venturing out in the winter:

Check the battery. Ensure it’s fully charged and functioning well, as cold weather reduces its efficiency.

Test the brakes. Have them inspected to ensure they respond properly in icy or snowy conditions.

Top off the fluids. Ensure windshield washer fluid is rated for freezing temperatures and check the antifreeze level.

Replace wipers. Install winter wipers for better performance against snow and ice if you live in a colder climate.

Check lights. Ensure all exterior lights are clean and functioning.

Have a full tank of gas: A half tank or more of gas limits the moisture condensates in the tank, preparing you to tough out an unexpected traffic jam or survive being stuck in the snow.

Check under the hood: Check the battery and cables for erosion,

cracks, and dirt. Inspect hoses and belts for any cracks, soft spots, or bulges. For a thorough inspection, visit an auto service provider.

Make sure you have good tires: Tires with good traction are essential to safe winter driving. Check tire pressure monthly, topping off as necessary, keeping in mind that cold winter temperatures can lower tire pressure. Inspect tread depth, which should be at least 1/8 of an inch in thickness. Tread depth can be gauged using a quarter and measuring from the coin’s edge to Washington’s head. Look for uneven tread wear, which typically indicates poor wheel alignment or worn suspension components. Before investing in new tires or getting a professional assessment, visit BBB.org to find a qualified tire specialist.

Prepare an emergency kit: Keep an emergency preparedness kit in your vehicle at all times. During

winter travel, having the following items easily available is essential:

- Jumper cables
- Flashlight
- Extra batteries
- Basic first-aid supplies
- Blanket and warm clothing
- Battery-powered radio
- Toolkit
- Bottled water and non-perishable food
- Safety flares
- Windshield ice scraper
- Tire chains (if allowed in your area) and a tire repair kit

Put together a list of potential places to shelter along your route: If continuing your travels uninterrupted just isn’t possible, having an idea of where you can pull off and safely stay for the night is important. Take some time to map out any hotels, motels, and even truck stops along your route, particularly those located on long stretches between towns or

cities. Check out hotels in the U.S. and hotels in Canada on BBB.org for a full list of options ahead, or hotels near me to see places to stay while already on the road.

If you’re flying...

Stay in the know: Stay up to date on your flights by signing up for any offered alerts or updates regarding your flight. Additionally, follow the airline you’re using on social media and check for posts related to your travel plans. In case of a cancellation, social media can offer an additional avenue through which to communicate with an airline and might actually be more expedient than other forms of communication.

Keep documentation: When flights are canceled by the airline, consumers are always entitled to a full refund, including any bag fees or other extras, such as additional legroom for a seat. Keep receipts related to your flight and record any expenses incurred as

a result of a significantly delayed or canceled flight, such as renting a hotel room.

Prepare a carry-on: If a flight gets canceled after you’re already checked in at the airport, there’s a chance your luggage made it off the runway while you stayed grounded. To ensure you’re not without essentials while waiting for another flight, pack what you absolutely need in your carry-on, such as:

- Your Passport or ID
- Phone and device chargers
- Change of clothes
- Headphones
- Daily medication
- Hygiene products
- Cash, credit, or debit cards

Car keys
While winter traveling might require some extra precautions, it can offer the chance for a great getaway with proper planning.

For more information visit BBB Travel for travel tips and news.

Funds to protect wetlands, build coastal resiliency

MAINE -- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is awarding \$25.7 million to support 28 projects in 11 coastal states to protect, restore or enhance over 10,000 acres of coastal wetlands and adjacent upland habitats and more than eight miles of streams and shoreline under the National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program. Coastal wetlands are vitally important in protecting us from floods, filtering our water, supporting recreation and local economies, and providing habitat for fish and wildlife. Despite their importance, there has been a steady loss of coastal wet-

lands. State, local and Tribal governments, private landowners, conservation groups and other partners will contribute \$16.8 million in additional funds to support these projects. These grants will have wide-reaching benefits for local economies, people and wildlife – using nature-based solutions to boost coastal resilience, reduce flood risk, stabilize shorelines and protect natural ecosystems.

“Conserving coastal wetlands is essential for supporting ecosystems that protect wildlife and our communities from climate change impacts,” said Ser-

vice Director Martha Williams. “Wetlands provide critical habitat for countless species of wildlife and birds while also increasing our resilience to floods and storms. Through these grants, we prioritize the conservation of these important areas and help create a healthier environment for future generations, ensuring that nature and local communities can thrive together.”

The Service annually awards grants of up to \$1 million to states based on a national competition, which enables states to identify and address their highest conservation priorities in coastal areas. Since 1992,

the Service has awarded more than \$530 million in grants contributing to the long-term protection and restoration of 600,000 acres under this program.

The 2025 grants will help support recovery of threatened and endangered species, enhance flood protection and water quality, provide economic benefits to coastal communities and increase outdoor recreational opportunities.

States receiving funds this year are California, Hawai’i, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, North Carolina, South Carolina, Texas, Virginia, Washington, and Wisconsin. Examples of the

projects funded by the 2025 grant program, include:

Wetlands in coastal watersheds, including on national wildlife refuges, are part of a diverse and complex set of ecosystems that are vital to the nation’s economy and an important part of our natural heritage.

Coastal wetlands in the United States include both salt marshes in estuaries and freshwater wetlands that extend inland within the coastal watersheds. They provide crucial habitat for fish, birds and other wildlife at various life stages.

More information is available online at: <https://www.fws.gov/service/>

national-coastal-wetlands-conservation-grants.

The National Coastal Wetlands Conservation Grant Program is administered by the Service and funded in part by taxes or import duties collected from the sale of recreational fishing equipment, boats, electric motors and motorboat and small engine fuels under the authority of the Dingell-Johnson Sport Fish Restoration Act. The billions of dollars generated through recreational angling, boating, waterfowl hunting and birdwatching benefit communities in the vicinity of wetlands restoration projects.

Over 75 right whales sighted off the coast of Maine

BOSTON, MA – Aerial surveys over the Gulf of Maine have detected the presence of dozens of critically endangered North Atlantic right whales this week, triggering a voluntary slow zone for vessels in the area in an effort to prevent vessel strikes. The surveys also documented the presence of fishing gear, which puts those whales at additional risk of entanglement.



A surface active group of right whales on Jan. 12, 2025. CREDIT: New England Aquarium, under NMFS Permit #25739

The aerial survey team from the Anderson Cabot Center for Ocean Life at the New England Aquarium flew over southern Maine waters on Jan. 12 and 13. During the flights, the scientists documented over 75 unique individual right whales, a high number of whales for this area of the ocean in the wintertime. The whales, which represent 20 percent of the population, were seen just off the western edge of Jeffreys Ledge, a raised underwater area along the coast of New Hampshire and Maine that brings whales, fish, and fishers together. Jeffreys Ledge has been an area where right whales have been seen in smaller numbers in the past, typically in the fall.

“From the plane, we could see right whales in all directions: at the

surface, swimming, and diving,” said Kate Laemmle, associate research technician in the Anderson Cabot Center who was aboard the aerial survey flights. “Seeing such a high percentage of the population in one place, at one time, was a profound and exciting experience.”

The whales were spread out over 10 miles, with the majority feeding deep below the surface. Among the individual whales sighted were “Milipede” (Catalog #3520), an adult female who had a calf in 2021, and “Loki” (Catalog #3596), an adult of unknown sex who has been seen just six times in 20 years and only in New England waters. The scientists also spotted “Nimbus” (Catalog #3812), a

16-year-old male who was entangled in fishing rope in 2023. The aerial survey observers captured photos of him swimming near active fishing gear during the Jan. 12 flight.

“The last time our aerial survey documented Nimbus, we confirmed that he was free of fishing gear after a disentanglement attempt,” said Orla O’Brien, a research scientist who leads the Aquarium’s aerial surveys. “While it was encouraging to see Nimbus displaying normal behaviors again like feeding, observing him in an area that overlaps with gear raises the risk for future entanglements, which is cause for concern.”

The New England Aquarium regularly conducts aerial surveys in



Right whales “Prescott” (Catalog #2271), “Wavy Gravy” (Catalog #1627), and unnamed Catalog #1177 seen near fishing gear on Jan. 12, 2025. CREDIT: New England Aquarium, under NMFS Permit #25739

southern New England, coastal Maine, and the Gulf of Maine. These flights help monitor changes and recognize trends in where right whales are found.

Determining where right whales occur and how they are using habitats provides crucial information that can be used to promote responsible ocean use. This is particularly important because right whale scientists have been documenting aggregations of right whales in New England waters during times of the year when they are not expected and therefore unprotected.

“Over the past year, we have documented several large right whale aggregations in areas or

at times where we didn’t quite expect them. This puts into perspective the dynamic nature of the whales’ movements and highlights the strong need for measures that can reduce the risk of vessel strikes and entanglement,” O’Brien said.

The January right whale sightings triggered the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration (NOAA) to initiate a voluntary slow speed zone, called a Dynamic Management Area (DMA), where mariners are requested to reduce their speed to 10 knots to protect the whales. The DMA was in effect until Jan. 28 and is one of several voluntary slow zones currently active from Maine to Vir-



ginia in response to right whale sightings.

Around 370 North Atlantic right whales remain in the population, including an estimated 70 breeding females. Vessel strikes and entanglement in fishing gear pose the top two threats to this critically endangered species, requiring action to advance responsible ocean uses. The New England Aquarium continues to partner with industry and other stakeholders to drive such uses toward ensuring ocean and animal health are maintained, restored, or improved, including the broad-scale adoption of ropeless or “on-demand” gear and weaker ropes.

Warming waters in the northern Atlantic Ocean have led to shifts in right whale habitat use, making the animals more vulnerable to human activities in certain areas. Scientists are monitoring right whale movement along the East Coast, including the presence of newborn calves off Florida and Georgia along with the increased activity in New England waters.

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

Living Waters Church hosting haddock supper buffet

BUXTON, ME Waters Church, Parker Farm Road, Buxton. Suggested donation: \$10 Saturday, February 22, 2025 - 5:00 pm at Living

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

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OTIS Federal Credit Union promotions, certification

MAINE -- OTIS Federal Credit Union is pleased to announce the recent promotion of seven staff members.

Kariss Carlton has been promoted to Senior Loan Officer. Kariss is well known for putting members first, her community focus, and providing strong support to the Credit Union's lending department.

Craig DeRosby works behind the scenes overseeing Information Security and Information Technology, helping ensure the accuracy and security of member information. In recognition of his dedication and steadfast guidance, he has been promoted to Director of IS & IT, where he also manages

custom programming for the Credit Union.

Darcie Hunt joined OTIS in June of 2024 and has made a positive impression on members, her fellow peers, and management since joining the Credit Union. She has been promoted to Member Experience Representative and helps set the tone of the member experience.

Darice Roy has served in a variety of roles over the years with a strong dedication and commitment to the Credit Union movement. She is actively involved with community events, and also Co-Chairs the OTIS Ending Hunger committee. She has been promoted to Executive Vice President, where she

will help set the strategic vision of the Credit Union.

Ryan Souther has been promoted to Director of Digital Strategy & Facilities. He is well known by membership and has been a great asset to the Credit Union and community, serving as Co-Chair of the OTIS Ending Hunger committee and on the local Special Olympics board. Ryan provides support in many areas, and in this expanded role will provide critical vision for digital strategy and facilities.

Jamie Turcotte has consistently shown herself to be a great leader for OTIS and the Lending Department. In recognition of her dedication to the Credit Union and her fellow col-

leagues, she has been promoted to Vice President of Lending, where she will be responsible for key Lending initiatives, and strategy.

Jennifer Weston has been promoted to Executive Administrative Assistant, recognizing a strong work ethic and commitment to the Credit Union. She is well known for her refreshing and positive demeanor, dedication, wealth of knowledge, and helping ensure various employee initiatives run smoothly.

OTIS FCU's President/CEO Chris Bouchard remarked, "Each of these individuals has made a notable impact and contribution moving the Credit Union forward. This recognition supports their ded-

ication and commitment and reflects the positive impact they continue to make at OTIS and in the community."

In addition to these promotions, OTIS FCU is proud to announce that Supervisory Committee Chair Sam Howes achieved his Certified Credit Union Supervisory Committee Member (CCUSC) designation through America's Credit Unions. This certification provides Howes with extensive knowledge of the financial objectives and requirements related to his role.

Regarding Howes's achievement, OTIS FCU President/CEO Chris Bouchard commented, "We are thankful to have

Sam as Supervisory Committee Chair for the Credit Union. He is not only passionate about serving our membership, but also the local area. In addition to his volunteer work on behalf of OTIS, he is a board member of multiple historical societies as well as Maine's Paper and Heritage Museum. We want to extend heartfelt congratulations for his notable achievement."

OTIS Federal Credit Union congratulates all these recipients, whose commitment to the Credit Union's success adds to the overall strength of the OTIS team and positions the Credit Union for continued growth and future success.

United Way board announces new president & CEO

MAINE -- After an extensive national search conducted by ProSearch with a committee of board and community members, the Board of Directors of United Way of Southern Maine announced Dan Coyne's appointment as the new President and CEO, effective March 3.

"After conducting a series of interviews with strong local and national candidates from a pool of 150 applicants, we are thrilled to announce that Dan Coyne has been chosen to lead United Way of Southern Maine," said Todd Cesca, CEO Search Committee member and Board Chair of United Way of Southern

Maine and Partner, Charter Oak Capital Management. "Dan's impressive track record of strategic leadership, collaboration, innovation, and commitment to meaningful change made him an ideal candidate."

Coyne, who joined United Way of Southern Maine in 2012, currently is serving as the Chief Impact and Governance Officer. Coyne has led the evolution of United Way's collective impact work, taking an innovative and responsive approach to address our community's most pressing issues. A recent example is United 4 Child Care, a collaborative solution powered by United Way, which ad-

dresses the child care crisis by providing high-quality, affordable, and flexible child care for working families at multiple locations across Southern Maine.

Before joining United Way, Coyne held a variety of leadership roles in the public and nonprofit sectors, including working for former Congressman Tom Allen, with state and federal judges, and to advance economic prosperity for families we now know by name as ALICE, an acronym for Asset Limited, Income Constrained, Employed.

Under Coyne's leadership, United Way of Southern Maine will continue to focus on driving relevant

and responsive solutions to address our community's most pressing challenges, fostering cross-sector collaboration and maximizing impact across Southern Maine.

"I am humbled and thrilled to continue building on the 96-year legacy of addressing our community's most urgent needs, with a clear vision of future growth," Coyne says. "With deep partnerships and our incredible team of staff and volunteers, we are well

positioned to continue to innovate and build a stronger, more thriving future for Southern Maine."

A native of South Portland, Coyne is a graduate of Bowdoin College and the University of Maine School of Law.

Coyne will succeed Liz Cotter Schlax who announced her resignation last June and will remain with United Way of Southern Maine until February 28 to ensure a smooth transition.

"On behalf of the

Board, staff, and the entire Southern Maine community, I want to thank Liz Cotter Schlax, our outgoing President and CEO, for her ten years of extraordinary leadership and dedication," said Cesca. "Under her guidance, United Way of Southern Maine has been a cornerstone of support for Southern Maine, and her contributions have established a strong foundation for Dan to build upon. We wish her the very best in her future endeavors."

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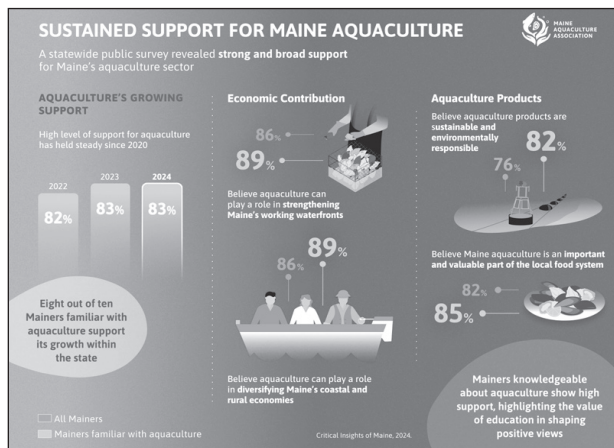
Poll: Mainers support locally aquaculture

GARDINER, ME — New public opinion research highlights overwhelming support among Maine voters for the state's growing aquaculture industry. The poll reveals that eight in 10 Mainers who say they are familiar with aquaculture support its growth, a trend that has remained steady for the past four years.

"Aquaculture in Maine is helping to keep our working waterfronts working and fishermen on the water," said Sebastian Belle, executive director of the Maine Aquaculture Association. "Mainers value high-quality, local seafood, and they support the people and the industry that make that food possible."

According to the survey, Maine voters believe that aquaculture strengthens Maine's economy and helps to sustain coastal heritage.

Eighty-six percent of respondents said Maine's



aquaculture industry plays an important role in preserving working waterfronts and diversifying the economic base of coastal and rural communities.

A growing number of fishermen are supplementing their income with aquaculture. More than 170 commercial fishing license holders also hold aquaculture licenses, using aquaculture to expand the use of their skills and equipment working on the water. Not included in that number are the many fishermen employed on farms

in their off-season and farm employees who fish part-time.

"The growth of aquaculture doesn't just mean better access to seafood — it means new careers, new businesses and a stronger Maine economy overall," said Andrea Cianchette Maker, President of Focus-Maine, which sponsored the survey. "Maine's aquaculture farmers work hard to produce locally grown, delicious, nutritional food, and it's clear that Maine residents recognize and support their efforts."



Three oyster farmers working on their farm off Mount Desert Island

Eighty-two percent of respondents say aquaculture is an important and valuable part of the local food system. With the United States importing about 85% of its seafood, aquaculture offers an opportunity to produce sustainable, healthy seafood domestically, reducing the carbon emissions associated with long-distance imports.

Eighty-two percent of respondents also say Maine's aquaculture products meet these high standards. This commitment to sustainability resonates

with voters, as 83% support further expansion of aquaculture in Maine.

"Maine farmed seafood is renowned for its quality. Maine aquaculture products are required to meet some of the highest environmental and food safety standards in the world, ensuring they are safe, sustainable and responsibly grown. Over three-quarters of respondents believe that aquaculture products are sustainable, environmentally responsible and delicious," Belle said.

"As we look to the



future, the support of Mainers will continue to be essential in ensuring that aquaculture grows responsibly and contributes to our state's resilience."

The Critical Insights on Maine tracking survey, conducted by Digital Research, Inc., is a long-standing public opinion poll of registered Maine voters, providing insights on a variety of topics for over 25 years. The Fall 2024 survey gathered responses from 604 participants via phone and online, ensuring a representative sample reflective of Maine's voting population. Results specific to the Maine aquaculture sector were drawn from proprietary questions included in the survey and have a margin of error of ± 4.0 percentage points at a 95% confidence level.

Maine to expand broadband, digital skills training

WASHINGTON, D.C. — U.S. Senators Susan Collins and Angus King are announcing the National Telecommunications and Information Administration (NTIA) is awarding \$24.8 million to expand broadband and digital skills training across Maine. Awarded through the NTIA's Digital Equity Competitive Grant Program, this Maine funding will ensure communities have the access and skills to fully participate in the digital world, regardless of their background or circumstances. The grant program was signed into law under the Biden Administration through King's bipartisan Digital Equity Act, and included in the Infrastructure Investments and Jobs Act, to provide \$2.75 billion to establish three grant programs that promote digital equity and inclusion.

More specifically, the National Digital Equity Center (NDEC) based in Wiscasset will receive \$13.7 million to expand access to digital skills training statewide and increase capacity of the State

of Maine's libraries and other community organizations to provide digital equity services, including telehealth. The Greater Portland Council of Governments will also receive \$11.1 million to expand workforce development and digital literacy and cyber safety for seniors at community hubs among other goals.

"Access to high-speed Internet is critical to the vitality of rural communities, which is why I have long championed expanding access to broadband across Maine," said Senator Collins. "From spurring job creation to supporting telemedicine and education, the Internet unlocks almost endless benefits and possibilities. I co-authored the broadband section of the bipartisan infrastructure law to help bridge the digital divide between rural and urban areas, and I am pleased that this funding will help Maine make historic investments to extend its high-speed network to ensure that families have a reliable connection to their loved ones, co-workers, schools, and medical ser-

vices."

"In today's digital age, it is necessary for us to continue modernizing our state's infrastructure to equip Maine people with access to affordable high-speed internet and digital literacy resources," said Senator King. "This \$24.8 million investment from the bipartisan Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act propels us toward our goal of closing the digital divide by having both statewide connectivity and statewide digital literacy. I look forward to continue working with the new administration to ensure all Maine people have access to 21st century technology that is essential for work, education, health, and personal use, and the digital skills to make the most of the opportunity this connectivity provides."

Funding for the National Digital Equity Center and Greater Portland Council of Governments builds on the \$5.7 million funding for Maine's Digital Equity Capacity Grant awarded in December 2024. More information on the projects can be found

here.

"The National Digital Equity Center (NDEC) has worked tirelessly since 2018 to help close the digital divide in Maine and across the United States. NDEC and its partners are deeply honored to be awarded the NTIA Competitive Grant award. We are so delighted and incredibly humbled to have the opportunity to expand and continue this very important work for Maine and its people," said Susan Corbett, Executive Director of the National Digital Equity Center.

"This funding will allow us and our partners to increase access to high-speed internet for all Mainers regardless of their income, background, or location. Our efforts will include providing affordable devices and affordable internet access. We'll teach people how to stay safe when online, and we'll help them realize the benefits of digital technology, such as how to use a video conferencing app to connect with their doctor," said Kristina Egan, Executive Director of the Greater

Portland Council of Governments.

"The award for GP-COG and its regional and Wabanaki partners all around the state is an enormous boost for Maine, at the best moment. Just when broadband infrastructure deployment is accelerating to serve every location in Maine, this grant will ensure that Maine people and communities in every part of the state will have access to support and services to maximize economic, educational, and workforce opportunities, improved access to care, and more that better connectivity can provide," said Maggie Drummond-Bahl, Senior Director of Digital Equity and Partnerships at Maine Connectivity Authority.

"These critical resources from the federal government will help Washington County residents take advantage of the opportunities that increased broadband access has created. Full access to the digital economy is essential to rural communities like ours, and we appreciate this investment that will help make that

possible," said Charles J. Rudelitch, Esq., Executive Director of the Sunrise County Economic Council.

Senator King is a longstanding advocate for the expansion of broadband access; his first op-ed as a Senate candidate in 2012 was to tout the potential of statewide connectivity. He introduced the Digital Equity Act of 2021, creating new federal investments toward programs promoting digital equity, and went on to be a key negotiator in securing \$65 billion toward broadband infrastructure as part of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law in 2021. Senator Collins co-authored the broadband section of the Bipartisan Infrastructure Law with Senator Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) and worked closely with Commerce Secretary Gina Raimondo to negotiate the provisions. The largest broadband program in the infrastructure bill is the Broadband Equity, Access, and Deployment (BEAD) Program which provides \$42.45 billion to expand high-speed internet access across the country.

Alice James Books awarded \$45K literary arts grant

NEW GLOUCESTER, ME—Alice James Books (AJB), a leading independent poetry publisher, announced that it has been approved by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for a Grants for Arts Projects award of \$45,000. In total, the NEA announced 1,474 awards totaling \$36,790,500 to support the arts in communities

in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, and Washington, DC.

"The NEA is proud to continue our nearly 60 years of supporting the efforts of organizations and artists that help to shape our country's vibrant arts sector and communities of all types across our nation," said NEA Chair Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD. "It is inspiring to see the wide range

of creative projects taking place—those that address our past and help us consider our future, integrate arts and culture in new ways into our lives and communities, and provide powerful opportunities for people throughout our nation to come together through a shared arts experience."

Alice James Books currently publishes an av-

erage of 8 books a year and maintains a list of over 250 titles. In addition, the press helps its writers achieve purposeful engagement with a broad audience and communities. These grant funds will support the ebook and print publication, distribution, and promotion of new works of poetry. Scheduled 2025 authors include: Matthew Nienow,

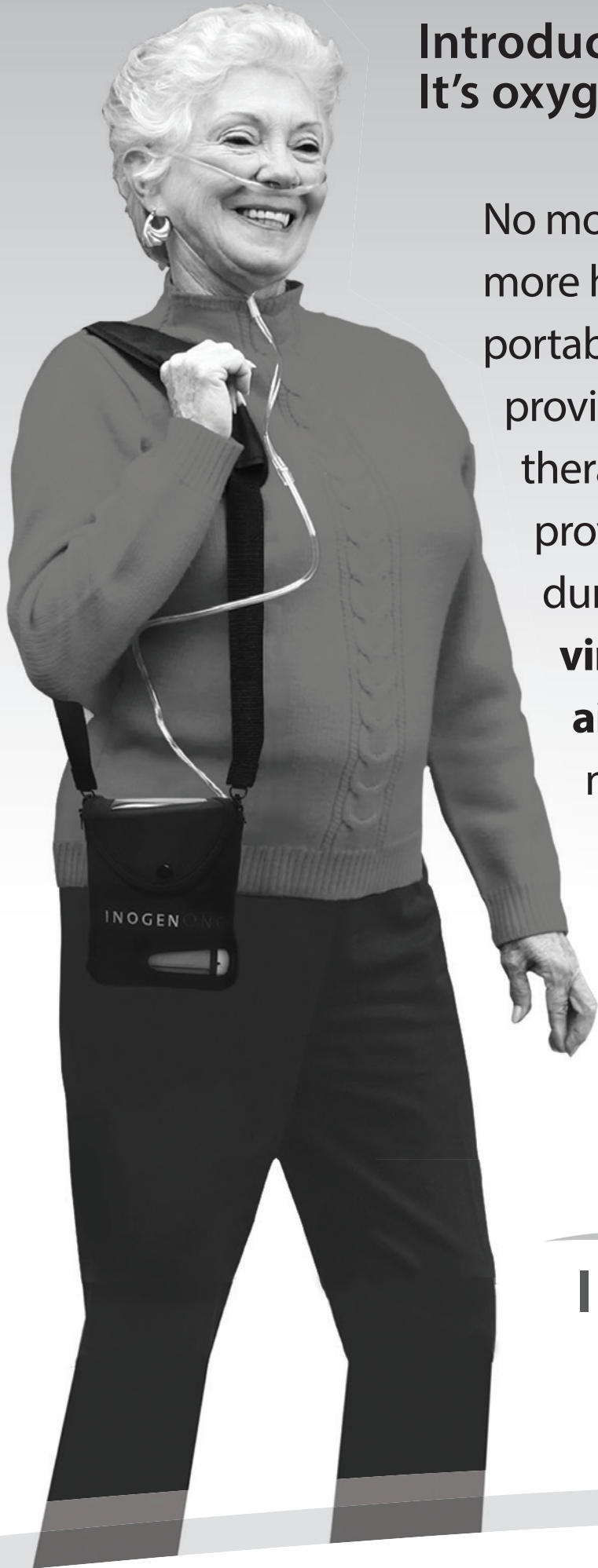
Esther Lin, Mary Helen Callier, Mia Ayumi Malhotra, Leigh Sugar, Michael M. Weinstein, Iain Haley Pollock, Cecily Parks, and Ally Ang.

"Alice James is overjoyed to receive such foundational support from the National Endowment for the Arts this year, along with many other esteemed organizations that sustain

and nourish our national literary ecosystem. These funds will aid the press significantly in publishing and promoting our amazing roster of 2025 poets, especially as costs to independent arts organizations and publishers continue to increase dramatically," said Carey Salerno, Executive Director & Publisher of Alice James Books.

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All aboard, inland schools! Grant brings students to waterfront

ORONO, ME — An educational program led by Maine Sea Grant at the University of Maine bridges the gap between inland and coastal Maine, giving students from rural communities hands-on access to the state's vital marine ecosystems.

Since its launch in fall 2023, the "Bringing the Sea to Inland and Rural Youth" initiative connected nearly 400 middle and high school students with cutting-edge aquaculture practices, marine science careers and Maine's coastal heritage. Many students had never seen the ocean, let alone stepped aboard a boat.

Following the successful pilot year, which included five additional field trips this past fall, the program is gearing up for spring 2025 activities. Schools interested in participating in the "Bring-

ing the Sea to Inland and Rural Youth" program can contact Keri Kaczor at keri.kaczor@maine.edu or 207.974.9502.

For students like those at Sacopec Valley High School, who live 40 miles from the coast, their day on Casco Bay was a revelation.

"I was pleasantly surprised at how many experts were willing to come with us and give our students so much information. Everyone was willing to share, answer questions and just generally seemed to enjoy working with the students. It was awesome!" said Elizabeth Sanborn, extended learning opportunities coordinator at Sacopec Valley High School.

Experiences like these reshape students' perspectives and inspire them to consider futures in science, aquaculture



Students from Sacopec High School in Hiram, Maine enjoyed a boat ride on Casco Bay. Photo courtesy of Maine Sea Grant.

and environmental stewardship.

In fall 2024, each of the five participating schools were classified as vulnerable, overburdened and/or underserved. Through field trips, classroom visits and mentorship from Maine Sea Grant experts, students gain the knowledge and confidence to envision a broader range of academic and career possibilities.

"This program is

about much more than field trips," said Kaczor, environmental literacy and workforce development manager at Maine Sea Grant. "It's about connecting rural youth to the Gulf of Maine and showing them how their futures can be tied to Maine's growing marine economy. Whether it's a career in fisheries or aquaculture, sustainability or marine science, we want these students to explore

opportunities they would not have imagined otherwise."

Read an in-depth story about the Bringing the Sea to Inland and Rural Youth program on the Maine Sea Grant website.

Given aquaculture's growing importance to Maine's economy, the program's focus on that industry is particularly timely. By introducing students to careers in the blue economy — industries that use ocean resources for economic growth without jeopardizing the environment, Maine Sea Grant is working to bolster its workforce.

This program is one of many examples of how UMaine, Maine Sea Grant and University of Maine Cooperative Extension are preserving and propelling the state's blue economy. Through innovation and

workforce development, they broaden insight into ecological and sociological changes that affect the state's coastal communities and businesses. UMaine faculty and students are also exploring opportunities for new sectors and markets and investigating potential resources to mitigate the ramifications of climate change.

Bolstering these efforts is the UMaine Marine Aligned Research, Innovation, and National-ly-recognized Education (MARINE) Initiative, which fosters collaboration and synergy among researchers, industry, government and communities. Together, they integrate and innovate transdisciplinary marine research, education and outreach to enhance the socioeconomic well-being of people in Maine and beyond.

Camden National Bank celebrates 150th anniversary

CAMDEN, ME— Camden National Bank, in celebration of its 150th anniversary, announced it would kick off its year-

long celebration by increasing its community commitment to fighting homelessness through its unique Hope@Home pro-

gram.

Founded in 2015, Hope@Home's mission is to support organizations working to combat homelessness through unrestricted funding. For every new home financed through Camden National Bank, the Bank donates \$100 of unrestricted funds in the buyer's name to a nearby homeless shelter. Camden National Bank pledges to increase the donation to \$150 for each of the first 150 homes financed through the bank in 2025. Since 2015, this program has generated over \$837,000 in unrestricted funding for more than 50 shelters.

Camden National Bank was founded in 1875, sharing space with the local Five and Ten Cent Store in Camden, Maine, to support the individuals and small

businesses in the community. The bank has grown from this one location, where the Main Office still serves customers and its headquarters, to 73 branches throughout Maine and New Hampshire.

"This year, we celebrate 150 years of serving our customers, communities, and shareholders. As we recognize this major milestone of progress and service, we reflect on the remarkable journey and

incredible employees that have shaped us into the innovative financial institution we are today," said Simon Griffiths, president and chief executive officer of Camden National Bank. "Over the past century and a half, we've built a legacy of trust, innovation, and dedication, driven by a passion for continually evolving to meet the needs of our customers and communities."

In recognition of this

milestone year, Camden National Bank will soon launch a debit card sweepstakes to reward and help cover the cost of some big moments and aspirations for its valuable customers in 2025.

Griffiths continued, "As we look to the future, we remain committed to being there for our customers no matter where they are on their financial journey, providing guidance and solutions they can count on. This anniversary is not just a celebration of the past but reflects the bright future we are building together."

Camden National Bank introduced its temporary logo, which you will see occasionally throughout the upcoming year. It's one of the many fun things they have in store for 2025.



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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.

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

Feb 14

LEWISTON -- At 10am the Lewiston Public Library Children's Department will be offering a Valentine's Day Keepsake

program. Caregivers and their young children will be able to make a collaborative family handprint keepsake on canvas for Valentine's Day. All family members can participate in this program.

Free. No registration required. Recommended families and their young children ages birth-6 years old. Older siblings are also welcome to attend and participate.

Feb 15

WESTBROOK -- The Chinese and American Friendship Association of Maine (CAFAM) will ring in the Year of the Snake, Saturday, February 15, 2025, at the Westbrook Performing Arts Center, 471 Stroudwater Road, Westbrook, ME

Feb 15-16

MAINE -- Free Fishing Weekend is February 15-16, 2025! Grab a friend, neighbor, family member, colleague... it's time to go fishing! During Free Fishing Weekend, any person may fish without a license. Those whose license has been suspended or revoked cannot participate in Free Fishing Weekend.

Feb 18, Mar 18, Apr 15

TURNER -- Mu-

sic for Mavis" hosts 2025 Cabin Fever Concerts at 98 MATHEWS WAY, OFF RT. 117 TURNER CENTER. 6:00-7:30 PM. Leave the winter blues behind and enjoy music with your fellow music lovers, right beside the gazebo, downstairs in the TPLibrary Building. The music is as follows:

February 18: Stan Keech & friends, Bluegrass/folk

March 18: Robbie Coffin, Maggie, & Dave Rockin' Rock & Roll

April 15: Jim Galant and Billy Belskis, Instrumentals/blues/Celtic/a mix

Feb 18, Mar 2, Mar 8

MAINE -- For the second year in a row, WinterKids, a nonprofit dedicated to keeping kids active in winter, is hosting three Ski Free Days in February and March in partnership with local organizations. These events will provide lift tickets, rentals, and instruction at no cost to participants, making skiing accessible regardless of where kids live or their financial position.

□ Feb. 18 - Camden Snow Bowl (Downeast Family YMCA, 40+ kids)

□ March 2 - Black Mountain (Teens to Trails,

100+ students)

□ March 8 - Big Rock Mountain (Central Aroostook Association, 40+ participants)

Feb 19

LEWISTON -- Let's Grow Crystals at 11am, Lewiston Public Library Children's Department. Children will be provided with materials to grow tetragonal crystals by creating a solution with water and a package of monoammonium phosphate and powdered pigments.

Because the crystals take many days to grow, the crystal solutions will be kept in the display case so patrons can see their growth. After 2 weeks or so the finished crystals will be removed from their solution. The crystals will be kept in the display case on a lighted stand. Participants may also take the crystals home at that time.

Free. No registration required but supplies are limited. Recommended kids 8-12 years old. The Lewiston Public Library is located downtown at 200 Lisbon Street at the corner of Pine Street.

Feb 21 and 28 or Mar 3 and 10

MAINE -- University of Maine Cooperative Extension is hosting online informational sessions for adults interested in becoming Maine 4-H volunteers. Participants can choose from two options: noon-1 p.m. on February 21 and

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28 or 6-7 p.m. on March 3 and 10. The informational sessions are free; registration is required on the program webpage. For more information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact Jennifer Lobley, jennifer.lobley@maine.edu, 207.255.3345.

Feb 21

LEWISTON -- Join us at the Lewiston Public Library for Family Movie Morning in the 3rd floor Callahan Hall on Friday, February 21st from 10:30am - 12:30pm. Children and siblings of all ages welcome. Children under 8 must be accompanied by a caregiver.

Feb 22

BUXTON -- Try our delicious Haddock Supper Buffet - Saturday, February 22, 2025 - 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.

Feb 22

GRAY -- First Congregational Church of Gray Saturday Night Church Supper, Saturday, February 22, 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.

Mar 8, 9

LEWISTON -- The Maine Music Society Chorus announces its upcoming concert, Out of the Ashes: Music Born of Tragedy, on Saturday, March 8, 2025, at 7:00 p.m. and Sunday, March 9, 2025, at 2:00 p.m. at the Franco Center in Lewiston.

GORHAM LITTLE LEAGUE

Field Funding Campaign

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

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- Purchase seasonal fence for Shaw Park
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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

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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