

PRLT has volunteer openings for Gorham area

MAINE -- Although spring may seem far away, it's just around the corner! As the fieldwork season approaches, we're excited to offer a variety of rewarding volunteer opportunities with the Presumpscot Regional Land Trust. Whether you love being outdoors, enjoy working with your hands, or want to contribute to conservation efforts in your community, there's a role for you.

Join us and make a difference—connect with nature, meet like-minded people, and help protect our local lands and trails.

Water Quality Monitor Volunteers Needed: Water quality monitoring volunteers collect water samples and data every other Saturday morning, typically from 7 am-9 am,



from mid-May through mid-September. You do not need to be available for all 10 volunteer date.

Fish Migration Ambassadors: Mill Brook sup-

ports the largest migratory fish run from Casco Bay for 2-3 weeks in May/June and thousands of visitors come to see the fish migration at our Mill Brook



Preserve Ambassadors: Ambassadors will engage with visitors at the two fish viewing pools, welcoming visitors, answering questions, and supporting a successful

fish migration. Volunteer shifts will be from mid-May to mid-June, and hours are flexible.

Fish Count Volunteers: We are working in

collaboration with USM and the Department of Marine Resources to support ongoing research on the largest fish migration from Casco Bay. You can support these efforts by becoming a Fish Count volunteer. Volunteers count fish as they enter Highland Lake in Westbrook for 30 minutes at a time mid-May to mid-June.

Spring Trail Work Days: We always have projects happening on our preserves during the spring, summer, and fall. You can volunteer on your own or with a small group, whatever fits your interest and schedule.

For volunteer inquiries, email Program Manager, Toby Jacobs. To volunteer, see PRLT's website.

SEAFEST 2025 to celebrate Southeast Asian culture

WESTBROOK, ME -- Khmer Maine and the Filipino-American Samahan of Maine are excited to announce SEAFEST 2025, a first-of-its-kind Southeast Asian Festival, set to take place at Riverbank Park in Westbrook on Saturday, April 26, 2025. This community-led celebration builds on the success of the Khmer New Year Festival, expanding to include the rich cultural traditions of Southeast Asian communities in Maine.

"In times of uncertainty, with conflicts abroad and economic challenges at home, let us remember that there is more that unites us than divides us," said Marpheen Chann, Executive Director of Khmer Maine. "No matter your politics, creed, or religion, we invite you to celebrate with us at SEAFEST."

According to U.S. Census data, there are over 10,000 Mainers of Southeast Asian heritage, including over 4,500 Filipinos,



more than 3,000 Vietnamese, 2,000 Cambodians, and over 800 individuals of Thai descent.

"The collaboration among Khmer Maine, the Filipino community, and other Southeast Asian groups strengthens our shared cultural heritage, fosters friendship, and celebrates the diverse talents that enrich Maine's social and economic landscape," said Sarah Boothby, President of the Filipino-American Samahan of Maine.

SEAFEST 2025 will bring together people of all backgrounds for a day of games, cultural performances, live music, a night

market, kid-friendly crafts, karaoke, and more. Attendees can expect an immersive experience featuring traditional arts, authentic Southeast Asian cuisine, and engaging activities that highlight the diversity and vibrancy of these cultures.

"SEAFEST 2025 builds on the success of last year's Khmer New Year Festival, expanding to celebrate the rich diversity of Southeast Asian cultures," said Christina Khin, a member of the event committee and board member of Khmer Maine. "We're calling for more vendors to sign up and help us create a vibrant showcase of tal-



ents, cultures, and flavors. Sponsors are also invited to support this dynamic event, connecting with a diverse audience while celebrating the art, music, dance, and cuisine that unite us!"

The event will take place in Westbrook, Maine, where a coalition of Asian American organizations is working to establish Maine's first Asian American Community Center. To find out more about the project and the capital campaign, visit www.aacmaine.org.

Call for Vendors & Sponsors

SEAFEST 2025 is now accepting applications

for vendors and sponsors looking to connect with an engaged audience of over 10,000 Southeast Asian community members and the broader Southern Maine population. This is an incredible opportunity to showcase your business, nonprofit, or brand while supporting an event that fosters cultural exchange and unity.

We are seeking:
Food vendors (Khmer, Thai, Filipino, Vietnamese, and more!)
Artists & craftspeople
Local businesses & nonprofits
Traditional clothing & cultural artifacts sellers

Specialty goods & unique finds

Sponsorship opportunities (Gold: \$2,500; Silver: \$1,000; Bronze: \$500) are also available for businesses looking to gain high-visibility exposure to upwards of 10,000+ Southeast Asians in Maine while supporting a meaningful cultural event.

Join Us!
Be part of this landmark celebration of Southeast Asian heritage and community spirit. Whether you're a vendor, sponsor, performer, or attendee, SEAFEST 2025 promises an unforgettable experience for all!

Event Details:
Date: Saturday, April 26, 2025 from 2pm-9pm
Location: Riverbank Park, Westbrook, Maine
For more information on how to become a vendor, please visit WWW.SEAFEST2025.COM. For sponsorship inquiries, please contact marpheen@khmermaine.org.

Living Waters Church hosting haddock supper buffet

BUXTON, ME -- Try a delicious Haddock Supper Buffet - Saturday, February 22,

2025 - 5:00 pm at Living Waters Church, Parker Farm Road, Buxton. Suggested dona-

tion: \$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.

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

Newsmakers, Names & Faces

It's not too late: Stay healthy during flu season

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

Amid some of the coldest months of the year, many of us will layer up with our heaviest coats, gloves and blankets. The winter season also calls for us to layer up our immune systems by getting current on various vaccines, including for flu, COVID-19, RSV, shingles and more.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends the flu shot as your best protection against influenza, the prevalence of which is currently very high in Maine, according to UnitedHealthcare data. Not only that, but the spread of other infectious diseases tends to increase during the winter months, putting you and your loved ones at greater risk of experiencing illness, pain or even hospitalization.

To help prevent that

and to stay as healthy as possible during the winter months, here are three strategies to consider:

Get this year's flu shot. While flu is most serious for older Americans and individuals with certain chronic conditions², it can affect people of all ages. Younger children, especially those younger than age 2, are at higher risk of developing serious flu-related complications, according to the CDC. Flu vaccination is recommended for everyone ages 6 months and up, other than a few exceptions such as people with severe allergies or individuals who are immunocompromised. Data shows the flu vaccine reduces the risk of the illness by up to 60%³. Additionally, flu vaccinations can help protect people around you, especially when the vaccine is well matched to viruses circulating each year.

Get this year's COVID-19 shot. Like the

flu, the coronavirus changes from year to year, which means the vaccine is reformulated annually to better target current strains. While almost 50% of the U.S. population received the flu vaccine in 2023, fewer (29%) got the COVID-19 shot⁴. A near-record low number of Americans report being concerned about getting COVID-19, despite the fact the coronavirus is deadlier than the flu and carries the added risk of long-term symptoms⁵. If you want protection from both, you can get the flu and COVID-19 shots at the same time, along with additional vaccinations⁶.

Get vaccinated against RSV and shingles. Besides the flu and COVID-19, RSV, or respiratory syncytial virus, is another infectious disease that spreads this time of year. While symptoms are often like a common cold, the virus can develop into something more severe,

especially for older adults and young children⁷. The CDC recommends an RSV vaccine for people 60 and older⁸, as well as another option, a monoclonal antibody injection, to help protect babies and toddlers up to 2 years old⁹. For people 50 and older, it's important to get the shingles vaccine, something that only 18% of Americans in that age group have done¹⁰. Shingles, which is caused by the same virus as chickenpox, can result in large, red clusters of fluid-filled shingles blisters that are often as painful as they look. Plus, more serious side effects are possible, including long-term pain or even hearing or vision loss¹¹.

If you didn't get vaccinated during the fall, now is the time to get current during the peak of this year's flu season. In most cases, vaccines are covered through employer-sponsored, individual, Medicare and Medicaid

health plans, and shots are typically available through primary care physicians, convenience care clinics and most local pharmacies.

To find a flu shot location near you, visit UH-CFluLocator.com.

1 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/prevention>

2 National Foundation for Infectious Diseases, 2024, <https://www.nfid.org/infectious-diseases/flu-and-older-adults>

3 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/flu-vaccines-work/benefits>

4 Gallup, 2023, <https://news.gallup.com/poll/547625/new-covid-shot-uptake-lagging-behind-annual-flu-shot-rates.aspx>

5 Medpage Today, 2024, <https://www.medpagetoday.com/infectious-disease/generalinfectious-disease/110126>

6 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/flu/vaccines/coadministration.html>

7 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/rsv/causes>

8 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023, <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2023/s0629-rsv.html>

9 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2023, <https://www.cdc.gov/media/releases/2023/p-0803-new-tool-prevent-infant-hospitalization.html>

10 The Washington Post, 2024, <https://www.washingtonpost.com/wellness/2024/09/24/shingles-nerve-pain-shingrix-vaccine>

11 Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, 2024, <https://www.cdc.gov/shingles/signs-symptoms/index.html>

Collins receives Army's highest public service honor

SUSAN COLLINS

U.S. SENATOR FOR MAINE

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Susan Collins was awarded the Army Distinguished Public Service Medal, the highest public service recognition awarded by the U.S. Army. Secretary of the Army Christine Wormuth conferred the honor in recognition of Senator Collins' support for the Army through her leadership on the Senate Appropriations Committee and the Defense Appropriations

Subcommittee. Lieutenant General Paul Chamberlain, Military Deputy to the Assistant Secretary of the Army for Financial Management and Comptroller, presented Senator Collins with the award on Capitol Hill.

"Receiving this award from the U.S. Army is a tremendous honor, and I am grateful to Secretary Wormuth and the leadership of the Army for this recognition," said Sena-



tor Collins. "Throughout my Senate service, maintaining a strong national defense has been one of my highest priorities. This commitment not only enhances our national security at a time when we face the most dangerous global security environment in 50 years, but it also supports good-paying jobs at Bath Iron Works, Portsmouth Naval Shipyard, Pratt & Whitney, and elsewhere across the State of Maine."

The Distinguished Public Service Medal is awarded by the Secretary of the Army to individuals whose distinguished service makes a substantial contribution to the Army's mission.

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

Southern Maine author releases psychological thriller

SCARBOROUGH, ME --When Gwynn Denning sees Sam Townsend at an event in town, she knows she will kill him. She was told Townsend assaulted her friend, Tift Ainsley, back in college. She's a mother to an adorable little boy and the director of a home for neglected and abused children, but when she learns someone saw her leaving the event with Townsend, it sets off a series of catastrophic events. Making matters worse, she's fallen for the detective in charge of investigating the murders she's committed. The consequences of Gwynn's actions force her to confront the painful truth about her past and the dark secrets kept hidden by her family. Gwynn wants



MAINE WRITERS & PUBLISHERS ALLIANCE
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to be normal. But how far will she go to stay one step ahead of the law?

JOSEPH SOUZA toiled in South Boston during Whitey Bulger's criminal reign and once was an analyst in the Organized Crime division of the DEA. His award-winning fiction and essays have been published in various literary journals throughout the country. In 2004 he was awarded the Andre Dubus Award in short fiction from the University of Southern Maine. He won an Honorable Mention for the Al Blanchard Short Crime Story Award in 2010 and his 2009 crime story,

"The Devil's Dumping Ground" was published in Quarry; Crime Stories by New England Writers. His first novel won a Maine Literary Award and one of his later novels was runner up in the Crime category. He is the author of thirteen novels and lives in South Portland, Maine with his wife.

PRAISE from readers of *Cruel & Bitter Things*:

"If you like twisty turny stories, *Cruel & Bitter Things* by Joseph Souza needs to be on your tbr list. You won't regret it."

"Joseph Souza's *Cruel & Bitter Things* is a dark and gripping tale that



masterfully blends psychological suspense with an exploration of moral complexity."

"*Cruel and Bitter Things* is an unputdownable read, I did not expect to be suck in from the start. Totally recommend to put on your TBR list for 2025!

"I absolutely loved this book. . . My favorite part is that it's written in the killer's POV and she is a female serial killer! So it was a nice new spin I very much enjoyed. 10/10 recommending to all my fellow mystery thriller lovers."

Access free news with Gorham's BML

GORHAM, ME -- Paying too much for your news? Learn how to access full text articles for FREE from all 5 of Maine's major daily newspapers, plus The Boston Globe, The Wall Street Journal, The New York Times, and more through ProQuest US Newsstream in the

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.

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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:

- Maine's major daily newspapers
- Boston Globe
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- New York Times
- and MORE!

Registration required:



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

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

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.

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Seniors Not Acting Their Age

A Glorious Day on Mount Kearsarge North



A 115-year old fire tower stands atop Mount Kearsarge North



Rugged terrain is encountered on the Mount Kearsarge Trail



A hiker emerges onto the Mount Kearsarge summit ledges

Located on the outskirts of North Conway, New Hampshire, Mount Kearsarge North, elevation 3,268 feet, is an excellent intermediate mountain hike. Ledges on the upper western slope offer wonderful views of surrounding mountains and the distinctive fire tower at the top provides phenomenal panoramic vistas.

Originally called Mount Pequawket, Mount Kearsarge has an interesting history. Like several New Hampshire peaks, the summit was the site of a small hotel in the 19th century. A bridle path was constructed in 1845 to transport guests by horse. The hotel reputedly “blew off the mountain” and was

rebuilt, only to blow away a second time. In 1909, it was replaced by one of the earliest fire towers in New Hampshire. The Mount Pequawket Fire Tower was operated by the Forest Service until 1960. The sturdy structure has withstood over a century of adverse weather conditions and is open to the public.

My friend, Kenny DeCoster, and I are both coping with knee problems and have been considering a moderate mountain hike to test our limitations. After reviewing the various options, we decided on Mount Kearsarge, a six-mile roundtrip trek. Much of the trail is on the former bridle path so there is minimal steep rock scrambling, an activity that is particularly challenging for our ailing knees. We chose a mid-January day for the outing.

We met at a rest area on Route 16 in North Conway on a clear, sunny day with seasonably moderate temperatures. Since parking is limited at the trailhead, we left Kenny’s truck in the rest area parking lot and drove a short distance to the trailhead on Hurricane Road in North Conway. Only two parking spaces remained when we arrived.

Gusty winds were forecasted for the summit, so we packed plenty of protective clothing. However, if confronted with unusually destructive winds, retreat was

our plan. The surface at the trailhead was a combination of hard-packed snow and ice so we started out with micro spikes and wore them throughout the trek.

Some buildings were visible on the right as we hiked easily on a wide trail in a predominantly hardwood forest. After perhaps a half-mile, the path narrowed and steepened. The trail in this area has been severely damaged by erosion and sections were free of snow and ice. Since the bare ground was frozen, we decided to continue wearing micro spikes.

The surrounding forest gradually transitioned from hardwood to mixed conifer and the gradient intensified as we persisted upward. And, the snow depth began to increase.

Soon after, we arrived at a lengthy stretch of icy open ledges. The ledges provided an opportunity to enjoy partial views of the Saco River Valley and the barren summits of the Moat Range in the west.

At the top of the ledges, we entered a dense spruce growth on a narrow twisting path. This section of the trail rises steadily as it wraps around the steep northwest side of the upper reaches of the

mountain. We encountered pockets of hard ice in this area that required careful maneuvering.

Angling northeasterly, we slowly progressed over rough terrain in stunted mountain growth and emerged onto exposed summit ledges with marvelous views facing south. Contrary to the ominous forecast, the winds were almost nonexistent. We were amazed at our good fortune as conditions were nothing short of glorious.

We proceeded towards the prominent fire tower that could be seen above mountain scrub. Two hikers were leaving the impressive structure when we arrived. After removing our micro spikes, we climbed the stairway to the glass-encased enclosure. The 360-degree views from the tower and the exterior deck were phenomenal. We settled in for a leisurely lunch break surrounded by wondrous vistas.

Caution was the watchword for our return. The icy areas on the ledges were particularly hazardous and, since descending causes greater stress on knees and hips, we slowed to a deliberate pace in steep sections.

Mount Kearsarge is a popular trek and we met about a dozen hikers

during our descent. Most importantly, we experienced minimal knee discomfort during the outing. More winter hikes appear to be in our futures.

My mountain guidebook, *Mountains for Mortals – New England* provides detailed directions, a map, and precise orienteering data for this hike. And, my latest book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* narrates exciting climbs on the nine best mountain hikes in Maine.

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

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

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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 opportunities 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 suc-



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

cessful 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. Participants complete hands-on projects in areas like health, science, agriculture and civic engagement in a positive environment where they are encouraged to take on proactive leadership roles.

Plan released for Maine child safety, family well-being

AUGUSTA, ME — The Maine Department of Health and Human Services (DHHS) and the Maine Child Welfare Action Network (MCWAN) announced the release of Maine's Child Safety and Family Well-Being Plan (2025-2030), a comprehensive five-year plan aimed at promoting the safety and well-being of children in Maine by strengthening support for families.

Recognizing that children, youth, and families too often end up interacting with Maine's child welfare agency long after needed supports could or should have been accessed, Governor Mills in early 2023 announced that DHHS and MCWAN would partner to develop a plan to ensure families in Maine have the support they need, when they need it. In May 2023,

DHHS and MCWAN released an initial plan, providing a framework for state agencies and communities to enhance available support for children and families.

The new five-year plan released today builds on this 2023 framework, by further aligning state agencies, community partners, and individuals around the guiding principle that keeping children safe starts with keeping families strong. The plan, which was developed in collaboration with parents, caregivers, youth, community leaders, and state and local partners, acknowledges that creating a state where children, parents, and caregivers have the support they need to thrive requires collaboration across communities and sectors.

"The new five-year

plan released today is a step forward in our efforts to safeguard the well-being of children in Maine," said Department of Health and Human Services Commissioner Sara Gagné-Holmes. "This framework will guide collective efforts to prioritize and strengthen prevention measures, which are key to laying a strong foundation of safety and stability that benefits every child and family in Maine."

"This plan establishes a shared commitment to ensuring children and their families can get the help they need, when they need it. It's important that this plan is not just about policies – it is about people," said MCWAN Coordinator, Melissa Hackett. "It was shaped by the voices of families and communities, and we invite all Mainers to play a role in making it

a success."

About the Plan

The Maine Child Safety and Family Well-Being Plan (2025-2030) builds on the initial plan, which was released in May 2023 and provided the foundation for a coordinated child safety and family well-being system. Since then, Maine has made notable progress, including:

Increased legislative investments in family support services.

Strengthened community collaboration to expand local support networks.

Launched the "Be There for ME" campaign to raise awareness of support for parents and caregivers.

The new plan includes updated goals and strategies to advance family well-being and underscores that state and community partners share responsibili-

ty for realizing this plan.

The plan includes two core goals and aligned strategies to proactively support families and strengthen the network of resources available statewide.

Goal 1: Parents and caregivers provide safety, health, and nurturing care for their children.

Goal 2: Families experience a supportive and coordinated child safety and family well-being system.

The 2025-2030 plan is intended to be a living roadmap that can adapt to evolving needs of families and communities, while reinforcing that improving child safety in Maine depends on collaboration at every level – from state agencies and local organizations to neighbors, educators, and health professionals.

For more information about Maine's Child Safety and Family Well-Being Plan, visit <https://www.maine.gov/dhhs/programs-services/human-services/child-safety-and-wellbeing-plan>.

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Arts & Entertainment

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 surface 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 taken 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



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



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

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 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 capi-

talizes on."

Ticket Info

To purchase tickets, or for more information, visit USM Theatre online at <https://usm.maine.edu/departement-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@maine.edu.

Hearing impaired: call USM's telex / TDD number (207)780-5646

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.

Initiative connects Maine youth to climate careers

AUGUSTA, ME – The Maine Department of Labor announced that Maine has been selected by the National Governors Association (NGA) to participate in a new initiative that will help connect youth volunteers to rewarding, in-demand climate careers.

The Service-to-Career Pathways Policy Academy, an initiative of the NGA Center for Best Practices, provides states with funding and technical assistance to enhance pathways from volunteer service to employment opportunities. Maine will leverage \$50,000 in grant funding to establish new certified pre-apprentice-

ship pathways for the Maine Climate Corps and other youth corps programs, through a partnership among the Maine Department of Labor, the Governor’s Energy Office, and Volunteer Maine.

Created in 2023, the Maine Climate Corps Network empowers volunteers to help the state address effects of climate change, in areas such as community and coastal resilience, clean energy, transportation, and housing. This initiative will provide a pathway for volunteers from corps programs into registered apprenticeships for key climate occupations.

“This initiative will

empower Maine Climate Corps volunteers to transition their skills, experience, and enthusiasm into meaningful, well-paying careers,” said Governor Janet Mills. “These efforts will strengthen Maine’s workforce, help to meet demand in fast-growing sectors such as clean energy, and bolster our fight against climate change on Maine.”

“Through NGA’s Service-to-Career Pathways Policy Academy, Maine will strengthen the connection between essential Maine Climate Corps programs and high-quality climate career opportunities by certifying these

programs as pre-apprenticeships,” said Labor Commissioner Laura Fortman. “This coordinated effort will create a seamless entry point for Maine’s young adults to connect with registered apprenticeships, build the climate workforce pipeline, and provide participants the opportunity for continued growth through upskilling and advancement.”

“The National Governor’s Association’s Service-to-Career Pathways funding expands opportunities for Service Corps Members in Maine to engage in meaningful career development while they serve,” said Maryalice



Crofton, Executive Director of Volunteer Maine. “While Member development has always been a feature of AmeriCorps and similar state programs, this grant provides resources to identify specific pathways

and add certification and credentialing to the Member experience.”

Learn more about Maine’s climate goals in the state’s updated four-year climate action plan, *Maine Won’t Wait*.

AARP survey highlights needs, concerns of older Maine residents

PORTLAND, ME -- In an ongoing effort to better understand the needs and attitudes of older residents in the state, in 2024 AARP Maine conducted a Vital Voices survey with 708 Maine residents aged 45 and older. Conducted tri-annually, the survey data highlights older Mainers’ interests and concerns, assesses awareness on select topics, and signals advocacy and outreach priorities for the state office. The 2024 Vital Voices survey included issues such as health care, financial security, energy costs, caregiving, livable communities and housing.

“AARP Maine is dedicated to improving the lives of Mainers aged 50 and older, as well as their families,” said Noël Bonam, AARP Maine State Director. “Through state-specific surveys such as Vital Voices, we gain valuable insights into the needs and desires of older adults in Maine. Our re-

search bolsters our efforts to advocate for fair utility rates, seek support for Maine’s family caregivers and provide resources on health and retirement security.”

Results from the AARP Maine Vital Voices survey include the following:

Caregiving is a pressing issue for Maine adults 45-plus according to the survey:

70% are currently providing care to a loved one or have done so in the past.

87% say it is extremely or very important to be able to stay in their own home as they get older.

27% say that it is extremely or very likely that they will provide care on an unpaid basis to an adult loved one in the future.

85% of current or past caregivers said that they spend their own money on transportation, medical devices, direct care

or home modifications, to help care for a loved one.

“Maine is home to 166,000 family caregivers, which is 12 percent of the state’s total population,” explains Bonam. “With the average caregiver spending over \$7,000 out-of-pocket each year to care for a loved one, we know that this issue is of paramount importance in the state with the oldest population.”

Earlier this month, AARP Maine announced its 2025 Legislative Priorities, noting that Maine lawmakers have an opportunity to create a lasting, positive impact for Maine’s family caregivers by codifying Maine’s Respite for ME program. Launched in the fall of 2022 and funded by the Maine Jobs and Recovery Act, the Respite for ME pilot program provided eligible family caregivers with grants that enabled caregivers to access services such as respite care,

assistive technology and other resources. AARP Maine calls on our lawmakers to work together to reinstate the Respite for ME program since the pilot program ended in the fall of 2024.

Utility costs are a concern for older Mainers: 81% say that an increase in electricity bills would be a problem.

Only 20% (one in five) Maine residents say their elected officials are doing enough to keep electricity affordable.

67% have seen their electricity bill go up in the past 12 months.

“High utility rates, coupled with rising housing, food, and medicine expenses, force many vulnerable, older adults to make tough choices,” said Bonam. “Mainers need more consumer protections, and AARP Maine is committed to ensuring that all Mainers have access to fair and reasonable electric rates. Any discus-

sion of rate changes must be transparent and allow for public engagement.”

AARP Maine will continue working to address current laws that cause undue burdens to electricity customers. Any costs, particularly those covering government subsidies which are transferred to ratepayers, should be re-evaluated and restructured in a fair and reasonable manner.

Financial security in retirement is on the minds of survey respondents:

88% believe having enough income or savings to retire is extremely or very important.

89% say having adequate Social Security benefits is extremely or very important.

91% feel that having financial security throughout their lives is extremely or very important.

“We know that Mainers 50-plus continue to experience financial strain whether they are working

or already retired,” said Bonam. “It is critical that both elected and appointed leaders work to address these important issues that affect Mainers 50-plus and their families.”

“AARP’s research highlights older Mainers’ voices at a moment when they need to be heard,” said Bonam. “AARP is listening, and we’ll use these findings to inform our work and help older Mainers and their families access important tools, resources and engagement opportunities as they age.”

Methodology
The Vital Voices survey of 708 Maine residents age 45 and older was conducted between July 17, 2024 and July 28, 2024. All data have been weighted by age, gender, and race/ethnicity according to 2022 American Community Survey (ACS) 5-year estimates. Survey results have a 3.7% margin of error.

Collins championed 5 of 15 health care bills signed into law

WASHINGTON, D.C. – In the 118th Congress, there were 1,868 standalone health care bills introduced in both the U.S. Senate and the U.S. House of Representatives. Of those bills, 600 received Committee consideration, 53 passed at least one chamber of Congress, and 15 passed both chambers and were signed into law. U.S. Senator Susan Collins led or co-led 5 of those 15 bills to passage with strong bipartisan support. They are as follows:

The National Alzheimer’s Project Act (NAPA) Reauthorization – A bill to reauthorize NAPA until 2035 and update language in recognition of the need to include underserved populations, including individuals with Down syn-



drome. The Alzheimer’s Accountability and Investment Act (AAIA) – A bill to require the Director of the National Institutes of Health to submit an annual budget to Congress estimating the necessary funding to fully implement NAPA.

The Building Our Largest Dementia (BOLD) Infrastructure for Alzheimer’s Reauthorization Act – A bill to authorize \$33 million per year over the next five years to support Alzheimer’s Disease and Related Dementias Public Health Centers of Excel-

lence dedicated to promoting effective Alzheimer’s disease and caregiving interventions, as well as State Health Department cooperative agreements with the CDC to meet local needs in promoting brain health.

Supporting and Improving Rural EMS Needs (SIREN) Reauthorization Act – A bill to extend funding for five additional years for SIREN Act grants to rural fire and EMS agencies nationwide. These grants support rural EMS agencies in training and recruiting staff, conducting certification courses, and purchasing equipment,

including naloxone to address the opioid overdose epidemic.

The Autism CARES Act of 2024 – A bill to authorize over \$2 billion over the next five years for autism research and training programs, as well as required studies on how to increase the number of developmental behavioral pediatricians and on the aging process as a focus area of autism research activities. The bill will also create a new Autism Intervention Research Network for Communication Needs that will benefit autistic individuals who may be unable or

limited in using speech or language to communicate.

“These five bills will combat some of the largest public health challenges of our time by enhancing care for individuals with Alzheimer’s, autism, and substance abuse issues through improved research funding, strengthened public health programs, and workforce development,” said Senator Collins. “They also provide critical support for rural EMS agencies in Maine, equipping them to better serve their communities and address the opioid epidemic. Together, these laws represent meaningful steps to improve health care access, services, and outcomes. Throughout my Senate service, health care, biomedical research, and rural workforce develop-

ment have been among my greatest priorities and I am proud to have led to passage these bills that will benefit Maine families and communities across the state.”

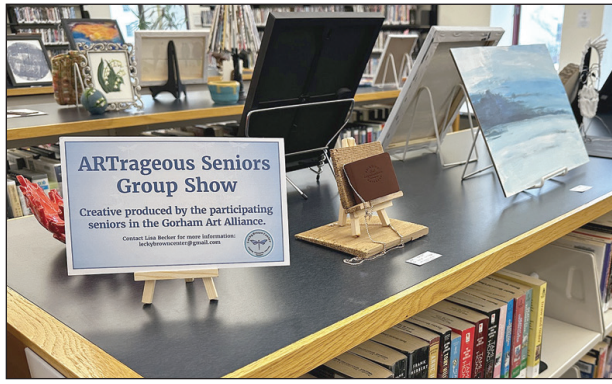
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Gorham Art Alliance's ARTrageous Seniors Group Show

GORHAM, ME - A local group of artists, The ARTrageous Seniors, are having a group show at Baxter Memorial Library in Gorham, Maine. The group is part of the Gorham Art Alliance and sponsored by the Lecky Brown Senior Center.

It is an opportunity for Seniors participating in the Art Alliance's Friday morning ARTrageous art class to show work they have done over the past few years. The group is entering its 8th year under the tutelage of GAA teacher Christina Thibault. Christina worked successfully to keep the group going during the pandemic through Zoom and bags of supplies set outside for members to pick up.

Each month features



a different subject, process or project to learn, giving the group time to learn and work toward mastery. They have worked with wire sculptures, slab clay constructions, acrylic and watercolor painting, felt constructions, batique, wood construction, paper mache, pastel drawing and so much more.

The show will be up from the first of February

until mid-March.

The show is free and open to the public whenever the Baxter Memorial Library in Gorham is open.

Location: 71 South St, Gorham, ME 04038

Hours: Monday, Friday 9 AM-4 PM

Tuesday- Thursday 9 AM-7 PM

Saturday 9 AM-1 PM

Sunday Closed



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!

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 Win-

terfest: S'mores roasting, bounce houses, photo-booth, goats, demonstrations, and live shows - all FREE!


Be sure to check out the food truck park and ar-

tisan market too. Schedule and full list of events to be announced soon. Presented by Bath Savings Institution.


Rain Date: Sunday, March 2

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

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EPA completes review at Saco Tannery Superfund site

BOSTON, MA – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency has completed a required comprehensive site cleanup review, known as a “five-year review”, for the Saco Tannery Superfund site in Maine.

As required by law, EPA conducts reviews at Superfund sites after cleanup remedies have been im-

plemented every five years. This comprehensive review of previous work helps ensure that EPA continues to evaluate the performance of cleanup efforts and determines whether any further action to protect human health or the environment is required.

The five-year review, which is available on EPA’s website, concluded that the

remedy continues to effectively protect peoples’ health and the environment and made recommendations for follow up actions where needed.

Background

The Superfund program, a federal program established by Congress in 1980, investigates and cleans up the most complex, uncontrolled, or

abandoned hazardous waste sites in the country and endeavors to facilitate activities to return them to productive use.

Throughout the process of designing and constructing a cleanup at a hazardous waste site, EPA’s primary goal is to protect public health and the environment. At many sites, EPA continues to ensure it

remains true to EPA’s mission, by requiring cleanup reviews every five years. It is important for EPA to regularly check on these sites to ensure the cleanup remedy is working properly. These reviews identify issues (if any) that may affect the protectiveness of the completed remedy and, if necessary, recommend action(s) necessary to ad-

dress them.

There are many phases of the Superfund cleanup process including considering future use and redevelopment at sites and conducting post cleanup monitoring of sites.

More information:

For more information about EPA’s Superfund program, visit www.epa.gov/superfund

Funds to support homeless services in Maine

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Susan Collins, Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, announced that 12 organizations and state agencies in Maine have been awarded a total of \$22,658,059 to support housing assistance to homeless individuals and families, as well as those fleeing domestic violence, sexual assault, and stalking. This funding was provided through the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development’s Continuum of Care (CoC) Program.

“Homelessness is a significant issue in our state, made even more urgent during Maine’s harsh winter months,” said Senator Collins. “As Chair of the Senate Appropriations Committee, I am dedicated to championing investments that deliver critical support to those in need, helping individuals and

families rebuild their lives and achieve lasting stability.”

The grant funding is allocated as follows:

- State of Maine – \$13,862,639
- Preble Street – \$2,204,349
- Maine Coalition to End Domestic Violence – \$1,969,475
- City of Bangor – \$1,543,120
- Maine State Housing Authority – \$1,346,372
- Community Care – \$833,025
- Through These Doors – \$356,318
- New Beginnings Inc. – \$164,739
- Volunteers of America Northern New England – \$161,256
- Penquis CAP – \$101,000
- Kennebec Behavioral Health – \$62,045
- OHI – \$53,721
- In the Fiscal Year 2024 Transportation,

Housing and Urban Development Appropriations bill, Senator Collins secured more than \$4 billion in funding to help design and implement local solutions to end homelessness, including through programs like the CoC Program.

The CoC Program is designed to promote a community-wide commitment to the goal of ending homelessness; to provide funding for efforts by non-profit providers, states, and local governments to quickly re-house homeless individuals, families, persons fleeing domestic violence, and youth while minimizing the trauma and dislocation caused by homelessness; to promote access to and effective utilization of mainstream programs by homeless individuals and families; and to optimize self-sufficiency among those experiencing homelessness.

Gorham Food Pantry needs mac and cheese!



GORHAM, ME -- This week’s need is mac and cheese! Did you know that we place a box of mac & cheese into each client’s box for Thursday pantry? We go through a lot of it.

If you’d like to add some to the bin at the top of the ramp, we’d be very grateful.

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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Report: Climate programs spur \$2.2B investments in Maine

AUGUSTA, ME – The past few years have seen Maine families, local businesses, and Wabanaki Nations benefit from at least \$2.2 billion in direct and induced investments in clean technology thanks to federal funding provided by Congress, according to a new analysis issued today.

For the first time, the report quantifies the total investment in Maine made possible from the Inflation Reduction Act (IRA) and Bipartisan Infrastructure Law (BIL) and comes at a time when the Trump Administration is considering cutting this lifeline for local communities.

“Federal climate investments are making a real difference for Maine families and businesses by helping us become more energy independent, creating good-paying jobs, and developing new sources

of homegrown clean energy,” said Jack Shapiro, Climate & Clean Energy Director at the Natural Resources Council of Maine (NRCM) who authored the report. “Programs like this, many of which serve Maine’s low-income and rural communities, are at risk if Congress and the Trump Administration take the drastic step of repealing these important funding sources.”

NRCM conducted a new analysis of data from the MIT/Rhodium Group Clean Investment Monitor, identifying \$2.2 billion in direct and induced public and private investments that have benefited Maine since the passage of the IRA. The total includes \$494.1 million in direct federal investment. When private investments are included, Maine has seen \$842.1 million in large-scale solar, wind,

and energy storage investments, and \$1.37 billion invested in clean energy technologies for families and businesses like rooftop solar, heat pumps, and zero-emission cars spurred on by federal programs.

“This report details the indisputable connection between clean energy and a competitive economy,” said Lindsay Bourgoine, Director of Policy and Government Affairs at ReVision Energy. “As a Maine-based and founded company, we are reinvesting these federal funds to build EV chargers, install heat pumps, and bring solar to schools, municipalities, and homeowners across the state, which creates a positive feedback loop for our local partners and communities. It is clear the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act and the Inflation Reduction Act strengthen our workforce,

drive economic growth, and offer Mainers relief on their energy bills.”

The report highlighted just a few of the local projects being supported in Maine that are benefiting Wabanaki Nations, low-income families, and local businesses:

\$206 million in energy grants and loans to rural small businesses and farms to help them reduce energy costs.

\$134 million for energy efficiency upgrades and increased access to solar energy for low-income families, and \$10 million for heat pumps in rural manufactured and mobile homes.

\$6.6 million to improve reliability of the electric grid for Wabanaki Nations and local Maine communities, and \$7.4 million to the Passamaquoddy Tribe for installation of solar and battery storage on

homes and offices.

\$23.5 million for Acadia National Park to transition to all-electric buses.

\$45 million in tax credits for energy efficiency upgrades that will benefit more than 21,000 Maine households.

\$65 million to improve the reliability of the electric grid in rural areas.

NRCM’s analysis also summarizes other findings showing clear economic benefits for Maine that result from investments in homegrown clean energy solutions:

Maine’s clean energy industry contributed \$2.31 billion to the state’s economy in 2022 alone and includes more than 2,500 clean energy businesses.

Maine’s existing renewable portfolio standard, which encourages clean energy development, already saves electricity

customers \$21.5 million per year.

Achieving the state’s goal of reaching 100% clean electricity by 2040 could reduce average household energy costs by approximately \$1,300 per year.

The programs in Efficiency Maine Trust’s latest triennial plan will push down electric rates for Maine families and businesses by more than \$490 million.

The report concludes, “Continuing federal clean energy investments and programs, and ensuring committed funding is deployed, is necessary to continue reducing energy costs for all residents, growing new jobs that keep people here, increasing energy independence, and reducing pollution, public health impacts, and climate risks in communities across the state.”

Red Cross: Donors needed to build up blood supply

PORTLAND, ME — The American Red Cross urges donors to give blood or platelets in February to help build up the blood supply after thousands of donations went uncollected last month. People of all blood types — especially those with type O negative blood — are encouraged to make and keep their donation appointments so hospitals can continue to ensure critical care for patients this winter.

Since the beginning of the year, hundreds of blood drives have been

canceled and more than 15,000 blood and platelet donations have gone uncollected due to severe winter weather and wildfires. As February continues, so does the potential for additional weather systems to disrupt blood drives. Flu and other seasonal illnesses are spreading, which could also force more people to cancel scheduled donation appointments, compounding the impact to collecting lifesaving blood products.

Give with your whole heart this month. To book a time to give blood or plate-

lets, use the Red Cross Blood Donor App, visit RedCrossBlood.org or call 1-800-RED CROSS (1-800-733-2767).

As a thank-you, all who come to give through Feb. 28, 2025 will get a \$15 e-gift card to a merchant of choice. See RedCrossBlood.org/Flurry for details.

Upcoming blood donation opportunities Feb. 20-28:

- Androscoggin
Auburn
2/27/2025: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Edward Little High School, 77 Harris St

- Greene
2/22/2025: 8 a.m. - 1 p.m., Greene Fire Department, 106 Patten Road

- Cumberland
Brunswick
2/20/2025: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Bowdoin College, 8 Polar Loop, Morrell Lounge BLDG.

- 2/26/2025: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Elks Lodge, 179 Park Row

- Falmouth
2/26/2025: 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., The Episcopal Church of St. Mary, 43 Foreside Rd
Freeport

- 2/24/2025: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Hilton Garden Inn Freeport - Old Town Hall Building, 5 Park Street

- Gorham
2/20/2025: 1 p.m. - 6 p.m., Cressey Road Christian Church, 81 Cressey Road

- North Yarmouth
2/28/2025: 10 a.m. - 2:30 p.m., Wescustogo Hall and Community Center, 120 Memorial Hwy

- Portland
2/25/2025: 9 a.m. - 2 p.m., Cambria Hotel, 25 Hancock St

- 2/27/2025: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., Jewish Commu-

- nity Alliance of Southern Maine, 1342 Congress St
South Portland

- 2/25/2025: 9 a.m. - 1:30 p.m., Eastpoint Christian Church, 345 Clarks Pond Pkwy

- 2/25/2025: 10 a.m. - 4 p.m., Southern Maine Community College Campus Center, 2 Fort Road
Westbrook

- 2/28/2025: 12 p.m. - 5 p.m., Westbrook Community Center, 426 Bridge Street

- Yarmouth
2/21/2025: 11 a.m. - 4 p.m., American Legion Post 91, 196 Main St

EPA recognizes Maine wastewater treatment entities for excellence

BOSTON, ME – The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency’s (EPA) New England Office recently awarded 2024 Regional Wastewater Treatment Awards to one Maine wastewater facility and one individual to recognize them for their commitment to improving water quality.

For the past 40 years, the EPA Regional Wastewater Awards Program

EPA Regional Wastewater Awards Program has recognized personnel in the wastewater field who have provided invaluable public service managing and operating wastewater treatment facilities throughout New England.

2024 Regional Industrial Pretreatment Program Excellence Award

York Sewer District
The York Sewer District was honored for

exceptional work inspecting, permitting, and sampling industrial users that discharge industrial waste into the collection system. The District was one of only two in New England to receive this award.

The EPA Regional Industrial Pretreatment Program Excellence Award was established to recognize and honor employees of publicly owned wastewater treatment

plants for their commitment to improving water quality through outstanding oversight of its industrial users discharging to the municipal sewer system.

2024 EPA Regional Wastewater Trainer of the Year

Dr. Patrick Wiley of Southern Maine Community College

Dr. Wiley, who is the Water Treatment Tech-

nology Instructor of the Southern Maine Community College, was recognized for his outstanding work providing training to wastewater operators across Maine. Dr. Wiley was one of only two individuals across New England to receive this award.

The EPA Regional Wastewater Trainer of the Year was established to recognize and honor

the trainers who provide exemplary education to operators in the wastewater sector. Wastewater is a constantly evolving field, and operators are required to take many hours of training prior to becoming licensed, along with annual continuing education to keep them up to date on the newest technologies, contaminants, regulations, and other industry-specific topics.

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SEE PAGE 14

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Top schools shine in 8th annual WinterKids Winter Games



Rangeley Lakes Regional School-Gold Medal Winners

MAINE – WinterKids, an industry leader dedicated exclusively to inspiring and increasing outdoor physical activity for children and families in Maine, is thrilled to announce the winners of the 8th Annual WinterKids Winter Games, a four-week outdoor learning competition that engaged over 10,000 students and teachers across Maine.

This year's WinterGames, themed around Weather, encouraged students to become young scientists by observing and recording temperature, precipitation, wind, and clouds while participating in outdoor physical activities that promoted learning, teamwork, and fun.

The 2025 Gold Medal winner is Rangeley

Lakes Regional School (Rangeley, Franklin County), earning a \$5,000 cash prize for its outstanding participation and commitment to outdoor learning.

The Silver Medal was awarded to Lamoine Consolidated School (Lamoine, Hancock County), winning \$3,000, while Community Regional Charter School (Skowhegan, Somerset County) took home the Bronze Medal and \$1,500.

While these schools earned top honors, all participating schools received cash prizes and experienced positive outcomes—making every student, teacher, and community a winner in the spirit of the WinterGames.

In total, WinterKids has awarded \$18,250 to participating schools!

“This year’s WinterGames were a celebration of Maine’s winter season, science, and the power of outdoor learning,” said Courtney Holub, Executive Director of WinterKids. “We are so proud of all the schools that embraced the challenge, engaged their students, and brought their communities together in the spirit of movement, learning, and exploration.”

WinterKids WinterGames 2025 Highlights:

□ Cross-curricular teaching: Schools integrated math, science, language arts, social studies, physical education, and health into outdoor activities.

□ Outdoor exploration: Many students gained a newfound appreciation for the natural world through hands-on weather observations and activities like snowshoeing, skiing, tubing, and dog sledding.

□ Community building: The WinterGames fostered teamwork, school spirit, and family engagement, with school-wide events such as Opening and Closing Ceremonies, Outdoor Family Nights, and Community Lunches.



Lamoine Consolidated School-Silver Medal Winners



Community Regional Charter School-Bronze Medal Winners

Positive Health & Well-being Outcomes:

□ Encouraging active lifestyles: The WinterGames kept students moving outdoors, promoting physical fitness and healthy habits.

□ Boosting student confidence: Students gained confidence through

teamwork, leadership opportunities, and the challenge of trying new activities.

□ Strengthening social connections: Schools reported increased school spirit and collaboration among students, teachers, and families.

Since its inception,

the WinterKids WinterGames has grown into a highly anticipated annual event, inspiring children to be active and engaged with the outdoors. For more information about WinterKids and the WinterGames, visit www.winterkids.org/winter-games.

THE L-A VETERANS COUNCIL WANTS YOU TO KNOW THAT IT IS NOT TOO LATE TO HAVE YOUR LOVED ONES NAME ON THE NEXT STONE IN THE VETERANS PARK. NOVEMBER 2024 CALL JERRY DEWITT (207)-576-0376 TODAY, DON'T MISS IT, CALL TODAY. COST IS \$40.00. HONOR THOSE THAT HAVE SERVED.

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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.

Saturdays

AUBURN -- Books! Books! Books! The Auburn Public Library Bookstore is now open on Saturday mornings, from 9:30-1:00. Choose from hundreds of gently used books, with most prices under \$3. We have books for children, teens, and adults, fiction and

non-fiction. We often have puzzles, CDs, and DVDs, too. Stop in and browse our ever changing selection! Auburn Public Library, 49 Spring Street.

Feb 20

AUBURN -- Auburn Public Library will be hosting a session for Teen Dating Violence Awareness Month: Identifying Healthy Relationships, on Thursday, February 20th from 2 PM to 3 PM.

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 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 Loble, 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

LISBON FALLS – Dine in / Take out dinner on Saturday, February 22nd 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!

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.

Feb 25

LEWISTON -- According to a recent study, urban greenspaces are critical components of healthy and sustainable cities. On Tue., Feb. 25, the City of Lewiston invites all to participate in the Sunnyside Park Spark Session to exchange ideas and improvements to the decades' old park.

Mar 2

GRAY -- The Youth Group of the Gray Church invites you to a free pancake and sausage breakfast on Saturday, March 2, starting at 9:30 a.m. Blueberry, chocolate chip, gluten-free, and "just plain pancakes" will be on the grills. Regular and vegetarian breakfast sausage, fresh fruit, juice, and hot beverages will also be served. At 10 a.m., the annual Pancake Flipping Challenge and a variety of Mardi Gras games begin. Experience the fun! Donations to benefit the Youth Group will be accepted at the door.

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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.

□ March 2 – Black Mountain (Teens to Trails, 100+ students)

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

Mar 8, 9

LEWISTON -- The Maine Music Society Chorale 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.

Mar 14

LEWISTON – At 10:00am the Lewiston Public Library Children's Department will be offering the program Little Masterpieces – Mess-Free Painting. During this program, caregivers will be able to help their babies create a work of art using a technique to limit the mess of traditional finger-painting while still providing babies the tactile experience and visual stimulation from manipulating paint on paper. This program is recommended for parents and their babies between the ages of 3 months – 18 months. This program will take place in the program room in the Children's Department on the third floor of the library. The activity is free and there is no registration required.

GORHAM LITTLE LEAGUE

Field Funding Campaign

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

- Develop 2 fields at White Rock
- Purchase seasonal fence for Shaw Park
- Repair dugouts and fencing, build storage centers
- Add infield mix and relevel current fields
- Acquire tarps and field maintenance equipment
- Add scoreboards

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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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