

Maine Maple Sunday Weekend is almost here!

MAINE -- The 42nd Annual Maine Maple Sunday Weekend is happening March 22nd & 23rd, and Real Mom Maine Guide has rounded up the best ways to celebrate with local maple makers!

From sugarhouse

tours to fresh maple treats, this is your chance to experience the sweetest weekend in Maine. Check out our list and start planning your adventure!

Our go-to resource for finding local Maine maple producers: [www.](http://www.mainemapleproducers.com)

[mainemapleproducers.com](http://www.mainemapleproducers.com)

This is just a taste of the fun that local producers have in store, so be sure to visit their pages for full details! Enjoy with your families and make some SWEET memories!

Maine Maple Sunday Weekend

Where to Celebrate around Greater Portland

Saturday March 22 & Sunday, March 23

- Pineland Farms, New Gloucester**
Tapping demo, Farm animals, cotton candy
- Cooper's Maple Products, Windham**
Farm tours, cotton candy, horse barn, pancake breakfast
- Dunn Family Maple, Buxton**
Pancake breakfast, sugarhouse demos, donuts, ice cream
- Red Door Sugar Shack, Topsham**
Kids activities, cotton candy, demos, fried dough, goats
- Parsons Maple Products, Gorham**
Pancakes, fried dough, lunch (indoor), animals
- 207 Tappers, Biddeford**
Chainsaw artist, pancake breakfast, pony rides
- Cole Farm Maple, Dayton**
Syrup on ice cream, pony rides
- Harris Farm, Dayton**
Sugarhouse demos, pancakes, donuts, cows
- Nash Valley Farm, Windham**
Cotton candy, ice cream with sryup
- Merrifield Farm, Gorham**
Pancake Breakfast, live music, ox cart rides, museum
- Fairwinds Farm, Topsham**
Pancake breakfast, maple baked beans, treats & demos

@realmainemomguide

USM Gorham presents 'Little Women, the Broadway Musical'

GORHAM, ME -- The University of Southern Maine Department of Theatre, in collaboration with the Osher School of Music, Welcomes Spring with Fantastical & Heartwarming Little Women, the Broadway Musical, April 4-13th at Russell Hall on the USM Gorham Campus.

Based on Louisa May Alcott's groundbreaking novel of the same name, Little Women, the Broadway Musical, depicts the story of Jo March as she reflects on her struggle to become a successful writer in Civil War America. Finding strength in the support and love of her mother and sisters, Jo fights to overcome enormous obstacles - including war, illness, and discrimination - in her pursuit of achieving her dreams. This reimagined and fantastical portrayal of an American classic is brought to life with glorious music filled with personal discovery, heartache, hope, and everlasting love.

Director Danny Hutchins says, "Part of the brilliance of Louisa May Alcott is her ability to tap into universal themes of love, family, passion, and determination. This is what has enabled this story to be told so many times and in so many different ways over the years." USM Theatre's production will embrace the story's reliance on memory to tell a fantastical version



L-R, Top to Bottom: Karoline Brechter (Meg), Taylor Ciotti (Jo), Kaelan Gildart (Marmee), Emma Hall (Beth), Kiki Belanger (Amy). Photo by Kat Moraros Photography

of this classic tale. With choreography by Vanessa Beyland, musical direction by Edward Reichert, puppetry and projections, normally static descriptions of memory will become dynamic, movement-fueled vignettes that engage all 18 of the production's cast members.

Taylor Ciotti, the junior Musical Theatre major from Amherst, NH who plays Jo March, thinks audiences will love this approach, "The addition of living memories makes it so that there is never a dull moment onstage. Everything you see, from scenes to songs to transitions, is meticulously choreographed to keep the show moving fluidly."

Kiki Belanger, the first-year Theatre major from Saco who plays Amy March, says that despite the non-traditional take on the show, the timeless nature of the story is beautifully

preserved. "I think audiences will be captivated by how engaging the show is. The relationships portrayed are so raw, humorous, heart-warming, and genuine, making it easy for audiences to connect emotionally with each of the scenes."

Hutchins says the performers, who are Theatre and Musical Theatre majors at USM, "...have blown me away in their seriousness of purpose and willingness to dive in. The actors are delivering beautiful, touching, and heartbreaking performances. The arts are so important in our communities, and a ticket to this show does not just provide you with a beautiful story. It allows you to support our public arts education, and the future artists that will tell the stories we need to hear in Maine."

Content Advisories: Conversations about death and the Civil War.

See *Little Women*, page 6

Maine's first-ever feature-length wildlife film premieres at USM

MAINE -- Presumpscot Regional Land Trust is proud to partner with Falmouth Land Trust and nine other Portland-area land trusts and trail organizations, to host a screening of the Maine-made wildlife documentary A Peace of Forest at USM's Hannaford Hall on Saturday, March 29th. Doors will open at 6:30 pm, and the film will

begin at 7pm. A Q+A with the filmmakers and producers, Lee Ann and Thomas Szelog, will be held from 8:30-9 pm.

Adult tickets are \$15, and kids' tickets are \$5. There are also a number of free community tickets available. Buy tickets here.

Created in Whitefield, Maine, A Peace of Forest is a grand 87-minute film

that has been described by audience members as "The most beautiful film I have ever seen, exhibiting our natural world," and "This film is a gift; it is so rich." Touted as a quiet film, A Peace of Forest is a one-of-a-kind cinematic adventure, allowing viewers to experience a wild, peaceful and mysterious world that is filled with complex



relationships and ways of wonder. A Peace of Forest celebrates the beauty and intimacy of wildlife in Maine with surprising, tender and exquisite inter-

actions of wildlife during undisturbed moments in Maine's natural world. Click here to view the movie trailer, and click here to read the reviews. For more

information about the film, please visit apeaceofforest.com

Cohosts include: Portland Trails, Chebeague Cumberland Land Trust, Freeport Conservation Trust, Cape Elizabeth Land Trust, Scarborough Land Trust, Oceanside Conservation Trust, South Portland Land Trust, and the Maine Land Trust Network.

North Star Baroque presents second concert of debut season

PORTLAND, ME -- North Star Baroque presents second concert of its debut

season, Bach's Brandenburg Concerto No. 5, Vivaldi, Concerto for soprano re-

corder, with Venezuelan recorder virtuoso Aldo Abreu, and music of Handel and

Purcell on Friday, March 28, 7:00 at Woodfords Congregational Church, 202 Wood-

ford Street, Portland, ME.

To purchase tickets through PortTix and for further information: www.NorthStarBaroque.org

North Star Baroque opened its debut season this past fall with an acclaimed concert featuring Vivaldi's The Four Seasons with Baroque violinist Christina Day Martinson.

The ensemble's Music Director, Anna Pearlman, was born and raised in the greater Boston area. She

is the daughter of Martin Pearlman, the founder and music director of Boston Baroque, America's oldest period-instrument orchestra, and spent her early years hearing, watching, and breathing Baroque music. Now a Maine resident, Anna performs throughout New England on modern and Baroque violin and viola. She is delighted to announce North Star Baroque, Portland's period-instrument orchestra.

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

Job & Resource Fair with Maine CareerCenters is March 26

AUGUSTA, ME - The University of Maine at Augusta (UMA) will host more than 50 employers ready to connect with job seekers looking for their first job, exploring new career paths or seeking better opportunities.

In collaboration with Maine CareerCenters, UMA's third annual Job & Resource Fair will be held on Wednesday, March 26, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., in the Randall Student Center Fireplace Lounge on the Augusta campus. Open to the public, the fair will provide job seekers with a wealth of opportunities to connect with local em-

ployers from numerous industries.

"We are excited to partner with Maine CareerCenters to bring this event to UMA again this year," said UMA Student Services Coordinator Haley Brown. "This is a great opportunity for students and the public to connect face-to-face with employers, network and build self-confidence as part of the job search process."

Brown emphasized the value of job fairs in the job search process, calling them an efficient use of time that allows attendees to ask questions, practice networking skills and establish important con-



At a previous UMA Job & Resource Fair, Emily Lathrop of Kennebec Savings Bank listens intently to a job seeker. KSB will be one of over 50 employers at this year's job fair.

nections. "It's a win-win for everyone," she said. "Employers can meet a lot of great candidates, while job seekers can expand their professional

networks and potentially secure their next job or internship."

Job Fair Tips:

Have a clear sense of the position you're seek-

ing and what you bring to the role. Prepare a 30- to 60-second elevator pitch to make the most of your time with employers.

Bring several copies of your résumé – more than you think you'll need.

Research the companies you're interested in before the fair, so you can incorporate what you've learned into conversations with recruiters.

Be open to talking with employers you may not have considered before. Many organizations have departments such as IT, finance and accounting that support their operations.

The Job & Re-

source Fair will take place Wednesday, March 26, from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. in the Randall Student Center Fireplace Lounge at 46 University Drive on the UMA Augusta campus. The public is invited to attend.

For more information, please contact UMA Student Services Coordinator Haley Brown at 207-621-3130 or hbrown120@maine.edu.

The UMA Job & Resource Fair is presented through a partnership of the University of Maine at Augusta Career Connections program and UMS TRANSFORMS Pathways to Careers.

AARP News You Can Use – March 2025

By Joyce Bucciantini, AARP Maine Community Outreach Volunteer

The Maine Legislature is in full swing. Legislators are working diligently through a myriad of proposed bills on a wide range of topics of concern to the citizens of Maine. In Maine, every proposed bill receives a public hearing by the appropriate legislative committee. These hearings provide opportunities for Mainers to make their voices heard by elected officials, creating empowering opportunities for community engagement.

AARP Maine is closely following LD 186,

"An Act to Clarify the Public Utilities Commission's Authority to Establish Time of Use Pricing for Standard Offer Service". This bill seeks to allow the Public Utilities Commission (PUC) to change the standard offer rate (the default rate for the supply of electricity set by the Commission) from a flat rate to a time of use (TOU) rate. Electric rates would be higher for morning and late afternoon peak usage times—a big change for most home consumers.

AARP Maine has concerns about the impact of LD 186 on the pocketbooks of Mainers who al-



ready concerned about the rising cost of electricity. Families could be forced to pay more to keep their homes warm during evening hours—often when it gets coldest. The legislation could also lead to



higher utility bills for people who rely on life saving medical devices.

AARP Maine advocacy volunteers are asking the Maine legislature to vote NO on LD 186. Instead, we encourage the PUC to wait until December 2025, when the results of an already ordered rate design study will be avail-

able. These findings will help them consider the best options for possible time of use rate changes. We're also urging the PUC to develop a pilot program that would allow consumers to opt in to time of use rates to provide useful data for consideration.

One thing I have learned on my trips to the Maine State House is that our legislators are happy to hear from their constituents about any proposed legislation. Our state legislators are concerned individuals who seek to do the best for their communities, and for our great state. Maine residents have a great oppor-

tunity in the ability to share their ideas with our legislators about the proposed bill, LD 186, or any other issues in Maine. Every voice does truly make a difference.

Joyce Bucciantini is a retired middle school educator. She currently coordinates Delta Kappa Gamma's Read to Me program, is a tutor with Literacy Volunteers-Androscoggin, and is an active AARP Maine volunteer. In her spare time, she enjoys her gardens, being outdoors and traveling.

Please use the QR Code or web address to find more information about AARP Maine and events near you.

Becoming a resilient gardener hosted by UMaine Extension

MAINE -- University of Maine Cooperative Extension will offer a webinar for home gardeners titled "Becoming a Re-

silient Vegetable Gardener" from 6 - 7:15 p.m. on Wednesday, March 26.

As gardeners in Maine deal with more

periods of intense heat, prolonged drought, dramatic rain, and a slew of pests and diseases, they need new techniques and strategies to be successful. Carrick Gambell, urban agriculture professional for USDA Natural Resources Conservation

Service and UMaine Extension, will discuss crop succession planning, season extension, techniques to protect your vegetables from the elements, and ideas for pest and disease management. This webinar is the third in the 5-part series, Gardening



New techniques can help gardeners maintain a successful vegetable garden despite shifting weather challenges. Photo courtesy University of Maine Cooperative Extension/Edwin Rensberg.

for the Future.

Registration is required; sliding scale fee options are available. Register on the event webpage to attend live or receive the recording link. For more information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact Rebecca Gray at 207.356.1348 or extension.gardening@maine.edu.

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

Area small businesses recognized by SBA

AUGUSTA, ME — The U.S. Small Business Administration is pleased to announce that Carrie Gervais and Jennifer Cousins, owners of Stepping Stones Montessori School in Chelsea, have been selected to receive the U.S. Small Business Administration's 2025 Small Business Persons of the Year Award for Maine.

"For more than 60 years, National Small Business Week has honored the risk takers, innovators and job creators who are the backbone of the American economy," Administrator Loeffler said. "I congratulate the more than 50 state and territory winners on

their recognition and look forward to this week of education and appreciation for entrepreneurship — as we highlight the small business owners who fuel prosperity, growth, and opportunity in communities across our country."

"Every year, recognizing our Small Business Award winners is a highlight for us at the Small Business Administration. These entrepreneurs are leaders in their communities as educators, mentors, employers, and inspirations to the next generation of Mainers. Hearing the stories of these winners and their businesses brings into focus the incredible



U.S. Small Business Administration

impact small businesses have on our state," said Diane Sturgeon, SBA Maine District Director.

Stepping Stones Montessori School is a Montessori school for K-8 students based in Chelsea. Founded by Gervais and Cousins in 2001, the school opened with 8 students from kindergarten through third grade, expanding to K-8 programming by 2010. Stepping Stones used the SBA's

Economic Injury Disaster Loan (EIDL) and Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) loan to navigate challenges presented by the Covid-19 pandemic and continue operating safely. With assistance from the SBA loan programs and a grant from the State of Maine, Stepping Stones has also expanded to include Pre-K programs for local families.

Stepping Stones Montessori School and

the other Small Business Award winners will be recognized at a ceremony to be held at Maple Hill Farm Inn and Conference Center in Hallowell on May 29th.

Nominated businesses selected as winners for the other categories are:

Maine and New England Young Entrepreneur of the Year, Isaac M. Young II, IMY Landscaping, LLC of Warren

Maine Veteran Owned Small Business of the Year, Rheanna Sinnett, The Floating Nomad Houseboat Rental of Bremen

Maine Home Based Business of the Year, Theresa Dube, Theresa Dube's

Daycare of Caribou Maine Woman Owned Small Business of the Year, Jill Partridge, Reform Physical Therapy of Brunswick

Maine Small Business Exporter of the Year, Alli Harper, Ourshelves of Cumberland Center

Maine Micro-Enterprise of the Year, Andrea Nash, The Kids Next Door, LLC of Durham

Maine Small Business Manufacturer of the Year, Elijah Thanhauser, North Spore, LLC of Portland

Maine Financial Services Champion of the Year, Alina Dubois, Keybank

UMaine Extension, DACF offer free rabbit health webinar

MAINE -- University of Maine Cooperative Extension and Maine Department of Agriculture, Forestry, and Conservation are offering a Rabbit Health Care for Producers webinar on Wednesday, March 26 at 7 p.m.

This webinar is for breeders and raisers seeking information on rabbit health care. Veterinarian Matt Ford of Southern Maine Hospital for Small Mammals will share information on the detection, treatment and prevention of infectious diseases for domesticated rabbits includ-



Photo courtesy University of Maine Cooperative Extension / Edwin Remsberg.

ing coccidia, E. cuniculi, and rabbit hemorrhagic disease. Also covered are approved drugs and withdrawal times to help inform meat producers. Come with questions for a discussion period at the end of the webinar.

The event is free, however registration is required to receive the webinar link. For more information and to register, visit the event webpage. For more information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact Sue Baez at 207.667.8212 or sue.baez@maine.edu.

Art students selected for Gorham Women's Club Art Competition

GORHAM, ME -- The Gorham High School Art Department would like to share that 10 of our stu-

dents had artwork selected to compete in the annual Gorham Women's Club Art Competition.

Artwork will be on display at Baxter Library through the end of March.

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.


Get active this spring with Gorham Rec.



GORHAM, ME -- Looking for ways to get moving this spring? Gorham Rec offers a variety of fitness classes, including Yoga, Pilates, Zumba, and more! Check out our website to find a program that matches your needs and intensity


Visit <https://gorhamme.myrec.com/info/default.aspx> for more info.

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Seniors Not Acting Their Age

Superb skiing on the exceptional Penobscot River Trails



A Nordic skier descends one of many hills on the Penobscot River Trails



Two skiers glide along the Riverside Trail



A skier returns on Tote Road Trail

When conditions are right, the Penobscot River Trails (PRT) in Grindstone offer some of the best Nordic skiing in Maine. As was true throughout most of Maine, snow was scarce in northern Penobscot County during the first several weeks of winter. A major mid-February snowstorm dumped sixteen inches of powder on the trail network significantly increasing the snow depth.

Established by the Butler Family Conservation Fund, the PRT consists of 25 kilometers of cross country ski and snowshoe trails along the East Branch of the Penobscot River. When there is sufficient snow, a state of the art Piston Bully Snow

Groomer with tiller is used to groom the trails.

After the storm, a check of the PRT Facebook page indicated their groomers were out rolling trails and laying track. Assuming expertly groomed trails coupled with the heavy snowfall would provide an outstanding ski experience; I packed my bags for an overnight trip.

Located on Route 11 about twelve miles north of Medway, a short dirt road on the left leads to the PRT Visitor Center. The large parking area was about half full when I arrived early afternoon on a cold, breezy, partly sunny mid-February day.

I gathered my skis, poles, and pack, and

walked a short distance to the Visitor Center. Skiing is free but all users must register. The large facility includes a warming room, wood burning stove, and heated restrooms. Equipment rentals are available for a donation.

I began skiing the well-groomed Silver Maple Trail right outside of the Visitor Center door. The tracks were fast and conditions superb.

The Silver Maple Trail travels through a mixed hardwood and conifer forest until joining Tote Road Trail. From there, I followed the two often combined trails north along the East Branch. The Silver Maple Trail separates from Tote Road and

veers closer to the river in several locations.

After about two miles, Tote Road connects with Riverside Trail at a major junction. I turned left onto hilly Riverside Trail which immediately drops abruptly and crosses the first of many sturdy bridges on the trail. Soon after, the path curves up a steep pitch. This section is indicative of the entire trail which is an absolute delight to ski.

The serpentine Riverside Trail continues along the river for about 7 miles to Long Meadows Warming Hut. Straight-forward Tote Road and the more complex Riverside Trail parallel one another and are divided into five sectors separated by connecting trails called Links. My goal was to ski to the hut and complete a loop by returning on Tote Road.

I glided along the scenic rolling path climbing and descending hills while enjoying frequent views of the snow-covered river on my left. I paused to talk with two skiers at Link 1. They had skied up Tote Road to Link 2, stopped at nearby Pines and Ridges Warming Hut and were returning to the Visitor Center.

Progressing north, I passed another skier at Link 2 who had decided to

turn back. A sign indicated Pines and Ridges Warming Hut was a short distance away. The signage on the trail system is exceptional. At each link or junction, prominent signs provide valuable information on distances back to the Visitor Center and other important landmarks.

Still intent on continuing to Long Meadows Hut, I persisted to Link 3 where I stopped to assess my progress. Based on the remaining distance to the hut, it was clear I would have to endure an unappealing return in the dark. I decided to forego my unrealistic objective and start back.

Returning to Link 2, I turned left to visit Pines and Ridges Hut. The impressive structure is located on a bluff between Riverside and Tote Road Trails. From a vantage point facing west, I was able to view the top of spectacular Mount Katahdin in the distance.

I met a skier relaxing at the hut. After a short break, we cruised back to the Visitor Center. At the parking area, we decided to ski the Hammond Ridge Trails at New England Outdoor Center near Baxter State Park the following day. For me, a new Nordic ski adventure was in the offing.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* details three of the best Nordic ski outings in Maine and narrates several epic expeditions skiing into Baxter State Park.

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

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Registration open for Bath Savings Paddle for Pine Tree Camp

OLON AND BRUNSWICK, ME – The 29th Annual Bath Savings Paddle for Pine Tree Camp returns in June with one goal in mind: to raise funds for Maine kids and adults with disabilities to experience freedom and independence at Pine Tree Camp.

On Saturday, June 7, paddlers will reunite in Solon for the traditional route down the Kennebec River. On Sunday, June 8, paddlers will come together to loop the Androscoggin River in Brunswick. Both paddles are family-friendly and perfect for all ages, skill levels and abilities.

Since 1945, Pine Tree Camp has welcomed all who could benefit, regardless of their ability to pay. This is one of our largest fundraisers of the year and 100% of proceeds support our open door policy.

Register for the paddle at this link: <https://pinetreesociety.org/paddle-for-pine-tree-camp/>

On Thursday, May

29, the 3rd Annual Hammond Lumber Company Cornhole for a Cause and Party for the Paddle to benefit Pine Tree Camp will take place at The Woodshed in Manchester. For more details and to register for this cash prize competition, please visit: <https://pinetreesociety.org/pts-events/cornhole-for-a-cause/>

29th Annual Bath Savings Paddle for Pine Tree Camp

Saturday, June 7
9:30am

Solon: Traditional route down the Kennebec River

Paddle begins at The Evergreens Campground in Solon (202 Ferry Street, off Route 201A) and ends in North Anson on the Patterson Bridge Road. This is a three mile, two-hour paddle.

Register: <https://pinetreesociety.org/paddle-for-pine-tree-camp/>

Sunday, June 8
9:30am

Brunswick: Loop on



Kathy Clement and Steven Everett, both from Starks, paddled the Kennebec River in Solon in 2024 to support Pine Tree Camp. The 29th Annual Bath Savings Paddle for Pine Tree Camp Weekend will take place Saturday, June 7 in Solon and Sunday, June 8 in Brunswick. All proceeds support the camp's tuition fund which ensures Maine kids and adults with disabilities can attend Pine Tree Camp regardless of their ability to pay.

the Androscoggin River

Paddle begins and ends at the Water Street Boat Landing (located at the end of Water Street) in Brunswick. This is a two mile, two-hour loop.

Register: <https://pinetreesociety.org/paddle-for-pine-tree-camp/>

More About Pine Tree Camp: Pine Tree Camp, which celebrates its 80th anniversary in 2025, is a program of Pine Tree Society and an

American Camp Association-accredited camp for people with disabilities. Every year, hundreds of Maine children and adults with disabilities arrive at Pine Tree Camp in Rome and their lives are

transformed. Year-round, campers experience freedom and independence by actively participating in outdoor activities like kayaking, boating, swimming, fishing, hiking, biking, archery, snowshoeing and cross country skiing thanks to Pine Tree Camp's 285-acre, fully-accessible campus on North Pond. Full tuition assistance is available. Since 1945, no camper has ever been turned away due to their ability to pay. <https://pinetreesociety.org/camp-home/>

Sponsors of the 29th Annual Bath Savings Paddle for Pine Tree Camp include: Bath Savings, Hammond Lumber Company, The Woodshed, HUB, Franklin Savings, Central Maine Power, Harvard Pilgrim Healthcare, Evergreens Campground, Marden's, NRF Distributors, Seaspray Kayaking and Paddleboarding, Assistance Plus, Brookfield Renewable and Alice's Awesome Adventures.

Social Security Fairness Act implemented

WASHINGTON, D.C. – U.S. Senator Susan Collins announced that the Social Security Administration (SSA) responded to a letter she sent last month, along with 27 of her Senate colleagues, calling for the immediate implementation of the Social Security Fairness Act (SSFA). Signed into law in January, the SSFA, coauthored by Senator Collins and former Senator Sherrod Brown (D-OH), eliminates two provisions that unfairly reduced earned benefits for individuals who worked in both the public and private sector or who had a spouse who paid into the Social Security system.

According to the SSA's letter, of the approximately 3.2 million Amer-

icans who are due benefit adjustments or retroactive payments under the SSFA, already more than more than 1 million people have received a combined total of more than \$7.5 billion in retroactive payments dating back to January 2024. The SSA also announced that the agency has completed the future benefit adjustments for more than 70% of the nearly 3.2 million people who are due such an adjustment. The SSA believes that most will see their retroactive payment by the end of this month and will see their

benefit adjustment reflected in their April benefit payment.

"I am pleased that the Social Security Administration has begun implementing the Social Security Fairness Act, ensuring that millions of retired public employees and their families receive the full benefits they have earned. This law finally repealed unfair provisions that have penalized teachers, firefighters, police officers, and other dedicated public servants for decades. I will continue to monitor the SSA's progress to ensure that the law

is implemented as swiftly and efficiently as possible," said Senator Collins.

Mainers like Maryann Murray of Orrington and Mary Small of Bath have already started receiving their retroactive benefits:

"I was proud to work at Brewer High School for almost 30 years. When I got my benefits after all this time, it just took my breath away. I said, 'I can't believe someone finally thought of us.' I'm so thankful Senator Collins did," said Maryann Murray, former administrative

assistant at Brewer High School. "I never thought this would get fixed in our lifetime. It's amazing."

"I want to thank Senator Collins for championing this legislation and restoring fairness to the social security system for teachers, law enforcement, and state retirees. This has been proposed many times before and it took real leadership and, dare I say, bipartisanship to get it passed. I was glad to receive my retroactive benefits and I'm even more excited knowing Maine teachers, firefighters, police officers and more are finally receiving the benefits they are owed. Senator Collins once again shows the advantage of working across the aisle to get

things done," said Mary Small, former state legislator.

The SSA also noted that because retroactive payments are being expedited, beneficiaries may receive their payment before receiving an explanatory notice. The agency urges beneficiaries to wait until after receiving their April benefit payment before inquiring about the timeline for their benefit adjustments.



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

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Arts & Entertainment

Little Women

Continued from page 1

Little Women is suggested for grades five and up.

Little Women, The Broadway Musical, In collaboration with the Osher School of Music. Book by Allan Knee, Music by Jason Howland, Lyrics by Mindi Dickstein. Based on the novel by Louisa May Alcott, Directed by Danny Hutchins, Musical Direction by Edward Reichert, Choreography by Vanessa Beyland.

April 4-13, 2025

Russell Hall, USM Gorham Campus

Tickets:

To purchase tickets, or for more information, visit USM Theatre online at <https://usm.maine.edu/departments-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, head to: <https://usm.maine.edu/departments-theatre/>

\$10-\$24

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.

Special April 12th Performance: A Little Women VIP Spring Soiree

To celebrate storytelling, women in literature, and the work of the USM Department of Theatre, we will be hosting "The Little Women VIP Spring Soiree" on April 12th. This special fundraising event will feature hors d'oeuvres, cash bar, a photo booth, an intermission dessert bar, a raffle, a silent auction with great items from local businesses, special student performances, a meet-and-greet with the cast after the show, and a ticket to Little Women, the Broadway Musical. Everyone is encouraged to dress in your spring soiree best. All proceeds support the USM Department of Theatre.

Tickets to Little Women VIP Spring Soiree <https://www.give-campus.com/schools/UniversityofSouthern->

MaineFoundation/events/little-women-vip-spring-soiree

Ensemble Taylor Ciotti (Jo March), third-year Musical Theatre major, Amherst, NH

Kaelan Gildart (Marmee March), third-year Musical Theatre major, South Portland, ME

Karoline Brechter (Meg March), third-year Musical Theatre major, Bridgewater, MA

Emma Hall (Beth March, Rodrigo 2), senior Musical Theatre major, Bangor, ME

Kiki Belanger (Amy March), first-year Theatre major, Saco, ME

Isabella Bonasera (Aunt March, Mrs. Kirk), senior Musical Theatre major, St. Albans, VT

Will Searway (Laurie Lawrence), third-year Musical Education major,

Will McPherson (John Brooke), senior Theatre major, Oakland, ME

Talon Moody (Mr. Laurence), second-year Theatre major, Madison, ME

Matthew Balfour(Pro-

fessor Bhaer), senior Musical Theatre major

Lily Tayler (Clarissa & Various), third-year Theatre major, Cumberland, ME

Jesse Murphy (Rodrigo & Various), second-year Theatre major, Kansas City, KS

Michael Mitchell (Braxton & Various), senior Musical Theatre major, Hollis, NH

Phoebe Edwards (Hag & Various), third-year Musical Theatre major, Auburn, ME

Elliot Giessler (Knight & Various), first-year Musical Theatre major, Tuftonboro, NH

Quintessa Marcotte (On-stage swing), second-year Theatre major, Farmington, ME

Alexis Scott (on-stage swing), first-year Musical Theatre major, Hampden, ME

Production Support Lizzy Fogg, Assistant Director, fourth-year Theatre & Musical Theatre major, Wolfboro, NH

Bailey Baldwin, Stage Manager, fourth-year Theatre major, Limerick, ME

Leah Macmaster, Assistant Lighting Designer, third-year Theatre major, Falmouth, ME

Anya Criden-Clark, Co-Costume Designer, fourth-year Theatre major, Porter, ME

Finn Schiebel, fourth-year Theatre major, Assistant Scenic Designer & Props Designer, Bloomington, IN

North Gorham Public Library hosting Plant, Book Sale



GORHAM, ME -- It's a sure sign of spring as North Gorham Public Library is already thinking about our annual Plant & Book Sale! Mark the date on your calendar.

Plant & Book Sale Saturday, June 7 from 9 to 1
Remember us as you begin to open up your gardens. We will happily accept your plant donations as we get closer to the date. Don't worry, we'll remind you!

North Gorham Public Library

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

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Liszt.....Prometheus
Schumann.....Symphony No. 2
Samuel Coleridge-Taylor.....Ballade
Stravinsky.....Firebird Suite (1919 version)

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6:00 pm - Franco Center
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MCSS President urges support for free college

AUGUSTA, ME — Maine lawmakers have good reasons to support extending Maine's Free College program to future high school graduates, Maine Community College System (MCCS) President David Daigler told Maine legislators on Tuesday.

"The Free College promise we have collectively made is changing lives," he told a joint convention of the 132nd Maine Legislature. "(It) is widening the pipeline for more skilled graduates entering the workforce and increasing transfers to our four-year college partners."

The leaders of the state's three public higher education institutions (MCCS, the University of Maine System, and Maine Maritime Academy) all addressed the lawmakers on Tuesday. It was the first in-person "State of Higher Education" event at the statehouse since 2019, before the pandemic.

The Maine Free College program covers 100% of tuition and fees for qualifying high school graduates from the graduating classes of 2020-2025. Students must live in Maine while enrolled, pursue a degree or certificate, complete the FAFSA, and accept all state and federal aid before the Free College funds are applied. It is a last-dollar scholarship.

State funding to continue the program beyond this year's high school graduates is in the governor's proposed biennial budget. MCCS has also requested an increase to its base funding to compensate employees and funding to meet financial obligations under the state's new paid medical leave law.

"Free College is an investment in our future," Daigler said. "And for those of you in the legislature, there are real financial

returns on your investment. With more college graduates, incomes rise, and balancing future budgets will be just a bit easier."

Daigler also highlighted the system's success in diversifying revenue to support expanded short-term workforce training programs; the doubling of the system's nursing programs; new transfer agreements; increased transfer rates; and expanded construction and manufacturing programs.

Daigler recognized several community college graduates in the audience, including:

Marilou Ranta, a 2016 Eastern Maine Community College (EMCC) culinary program graduate who won a coveted James Beard award for outstanding hospitality at her restaurant, The Quarry, in Monson.

Marilou's son, Gunnar, a 2021 EMCC grad-



uate who is a firefighter at Bangor International Airport.

Kristen Crowley, who

enrolled while still incarcerated through a limited "Second Chance" Pell program, eventually graduat-

ing with a 4.0 GPA and being named the Washington County Community College Student of the Year.

Cancer Resource Center offers spring activities

MAINE -- The Cancer Resource Center of Western Maine offers a variety of activities that support our mission to embrace anyone affected by cancer in a hopeful and caring community here in Western Maine. Please review our schedule of free, in-person and virtual classes to see if there is something for you. Please call if you have questions, or if you would like to make an appointment to meet with one of our staff.

Weekly Open Hours
 Monday – 9am – 3pm
 Tuesday – 11am – 3pm
 Wednesday – by appointment only
 Thursday – 9am -3pm
 Friday – by appointment only

UPCOMING ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

NATIONAL CANCER SURVIVOR DAY - JUNE 1, 2025

The Cancer Resource Center of Western Maine will once again host a FREE event in recognition of National Cancer Survivors Day on Sunday, June 1st, 2:00-4:00 pm, at King's Hill Inn & Barn, 56 King Hill Road, South Paris, Maine. There will be food catered by Blue Elephant Caterers; non-alcoholic beverages courtesy of Sips & Saddles and Stephens Hospital; and live music from the Maine musical group: Just-Because. Attendees must RSVP for this FREE event by calling (207) 890-0329.

GET IN THE SWING - FRIDAY, JUNE 6, 2025

This is the second year of Get in the Swing –

a FREE day-long retreat to introduce women who have survived cancer to the therapeutic advantages of golf. No golf experience necessary and all equipment is provided. Held at beautiful Paris Hill Country Club, on historic Paris Hill, attendees will receive hands-on golf instruction during the morning, a delicious lunch, and an afternoon of wellness workshops addressing the natural benefits of exercise, mindfulness, somatic movement, and meditation. Space is limited, so interested attendees should register early to reserve their spot by calling the Cancer Resource Center of Western Maine at (207) 890-0329.

MAINE DRAGON BOAT CLUB Celebrates Cancer Survivors - SATURDAY, JUNE 21, 2025/ Rain Date June 22nd.

In Honor of National Cancer Survivors Day in the month of June, the Maine Dragon Boat Club will sponsor a FREE paddle opportunity for anyone impacted by cancer. Cancer survivors, families and caregivers are invited to gather at 61 Lake Road, Norway, Maine. No prior experience is necessary and Club staff will be on hand to assist participants. Dragon boating is a fun, safe, worthwhile activity and has many health benefits. Around the world, dragon boating has become a very popular group sport, especially among all cancer survivors. The Maine Dragon Boat Club goal this year is to start an All Cancer Paddler Team which will include family, friends

and caregivers. **TIMES: 9:00am-5:00pm - Open House- Check out information about the MDBC and the boat. Family, friends, caregivers invited .10:00am-12:00pm and/or 2:00pm-4:00pm Participate in paddling the Dragon Boat. On land paddling and safety instruction will be given prior to going out in the boat. All equipment is provided. (No reservation needed)**

In-person Classes
Stamping Up at the Cancer Resource Center: First Monday of each month: 1:00 - 2:30pm

Join Kathy Pulsifer and make some beautiful greeting cards to take home! All materials provided.

Craft & Chat at the Cancer Resource Center: Mondays 1:00 – 3:00pm.

Drop in and explore your creative side, and meet new friends at the same time. All supplies are provided. No pre-registration is required.

Chair Yoga at the Cancer Resource Center: Thursdays 1:00 – 2:00pm. Join Kat Larsen for this gentle form of yoga which utilizes both seated and standing poses using a chair for support to provide all the benefits of traditional yoga. Chair yoga can help improve core strength and balance, promote better breathing techniques, increase flexibility and help reduce stress. Please call the Cancer Resource Center to register at 890-0329.

Chair Yoga in Bridgton: Mondays and Fridays 10am -11am. Taught by

Susan Kane, this class is open to all cancer patients and can easily be modified to anyone's ability level. You do not need to register in advance. Meet at the Bridgton Community Center, 15 Depot Street, Bridgton. (Note: 12/23 will be the last class of 2024).

Support Groups
Women's Support Group and Coffee Hour: Meets the third Wednesday of every month from 10:30 to 12:00 noon at the Cancer Resource Center. No registration needed. For more information, call Kelsey at the Center at (207) 890-0205.

Men's Rally Group: *Meets the third Friday of each month from 1:00pm-3:00pm at the Cancer Resource Center. No registration needed. For more information, call Nel Bernard at 207-312-9955 or Vance Jordan at 207-583-2975. *Note: new day of week and time.

Sacopee Valley Cancer Support Group for Men and Women: Meets the fourth Friday of each month from 1:30-3:00 pm at the Riverside United Methodist Church, 5 Porter Street, Porter. For more information, please call Marianne Wyer at: (207) 749-0392.

Access to Free Counseling Services

For patients and caregivers looking for more support during their cancer journey, please ask us about our access to free counseling programs. You have the option to meet with a professional counselor in person or via telehealth. Some limitations do

apply.

Soup Program
 The Cancer Resource Center of western Maine has begun a Free Soup Program for patients who are in treatment. For those who are too tired, feel too ill or otherwise cannot prepare a meal, the Resource Center has individual containers of frozen, homemade soup that are easy to thaw. Several kinds of soup are available. Please call or stop in during our open house hours on Thursdays to pick some up.

Other Exercise Opportunities

Exercise to Energize: This is a 6- week program offered from September to July by Stephens Memorial Hospital's Physical Therapy Department – Wellness Programs. There are two ability levels offered. The cost is \$60 for the 6-week class and can be covered under our Live Well Program. Ask us for more details!

Public Swim Passes: For cancer patients who have completed their treatment and their caregivers, the Cancer Resource Center offers a free pass for 10 visits at the Colonial Mast Campground Pool & Hot Tub in Naples Maine. Ask for more details.

Virtual Classes on our website: www.crcofwm.org

Weekly Classes: Please pre-register for the weekly classes at www.crcofwm.org, or by calling or emailing Diane at dadden@crcofwm.org or 207-890-0329.

"Mind full of Good": Monday morning med-

itation –Mondays, 9:00 -9:30am. Each class will focus upon cultivating an opportunity to grow inner resources for peace, satisfaction and joy. Led by Karen Vasil-Busch, LMT, CAP, who is a PNT Teacher, Licensed Massage Therapist, Karuna™ REIKI Master and Certified Ayurvedic Practitioner.

"A Mindful Hour" Mindfulness -based Stress Reduction: Thursdays, 9:00-10:00am. Learn how the practice of Mindful-based Stress Reduction (MBSR) can assist with reducing stress through breath, movement and meditation. Kat Larsen leads this class, and also integrates other practices from her work as a certified yoga therapist and registered yoga instructor.

Recorded Classes: Recorded classes are available via our YouTube Channel via the YouTube link on our website: www.crcofwm.org

OTHER LOCAL WELLNESS ACTIVITIES

Wellness Share at Center for Healing Arts, 180 Main St., Norway; 2nd Saturday of each month, 10am to 2pm. Free event offering Reflexology, Massage, and more. For more information: Charlotte LaBelle – 207-890-2177.

Drum Circle at Center for Healing Arts, 180 Main St., Norway – 4th Saturday of each month, 11am to 2pm. Free event, drums available for use. For more information: Dan Gravel - 207-604-0323 or Nel Bernard - 207-312-9955.

Volunteers needed for Gorham Cemetery Advisory Committee

GORHAM, ME -- The Town Council Appointments Committee is seeking citizen volunteers for a newly formed Cemetery Advisory Board Committee.

The committee has been created for the purpose of encouraging citizen involvement in maintaining, documenting and preserving Gorham's local

public cemeteries.

The committee shall consist of seven members appointed by the Town Council for staggering terms and shall be advisory in nature.

If you are interested in applying to serve on the Cemetery Advisory Board Committee, or for more information, please visit the Town Clerk's

Office. To apply, please complete and submit a Committee Volunteer Application available online. You may also contact the Town Clerk's Office at 222-1670 or email the Town Clerk Laurie Nordfors at lnordfors@gorham.me.us.

Applications will be accepted until March 27, 2025.

Skip the store, support Gorham Food Pantry with online orders



GORHAM, ME -- Pantry friends, The Gorham Food Pantry is trying a new thing! We've created a list of needs on Amazon (at <https://www.amazon.com/registries/g1/guest-view/3QN61MN>

CPU76N), being careful to choose items that are of most need (as well as a few "nice to haves") and creating a way to have them shipped directly to the Pantry bin.

If you'd like a way to help out that doesn't

involve going to the store, shopping for the item, and bringing it to the Pantry, feel free to try this out!

We'll continue to watch and edit the list over the next 30 days to make improvements. Thanks for trying it out with us!

Attention-grabbing covers with West Buxton Public Library

BUXTON, ME -- The West Buxton Public Library Creative Writers

are hosting a reception on Thursday, May 15 from 5PM - 7PM at Buxton

Town Hall, 185 Portland Road in Buxton. We hope to see you there!

Free!!!!

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MaineHealth joins NIH-funded long COVID clinical trials

PORTLAND, ME – MaineHealth will be part of new clinical trials sponsored by the National Institutes of Health (NIH) to investigate potential treatments for long-term symptoms after COVID-19 infection, including exercise intolerance and the worsening of symptoms following physical or mental exertion known as post-exertional malaise (PEM). The mid-stage trials are part of the NIH’s Researching COVID to Enhance Recovery (RECOVER) Initiative that is enrolling participants across the United States to test treatments addressing viral persistence, neurological symptoms such as brain fog and autonomic nervous system dysfunction.

The MaineHealth

Institute for Research (MHIR) is enrolling participants in two RECOVER-ENERGIZE clinical trials from now through July 2025 at its research site in Scarborough:

One trial tests a program that combines exercise training, strength and flexibility training, education and social support, collectively known as personalized cardiopulmonary rehabilitation. The program is designed to help people who experience exercise intolerance with symptoms such as shortness of breath and fatigue during exercise after having COVID-19. Participants who are identified as having PEM, via a validated PEM questionnaire, will not be included in this trial, but will be offered a spot for the trial described



below. Participants will be randomly assigned to receive either personalized cardiopulmonary rehabilitation or basic exercise education for three months.

The other trial tests a program known as structured pacing, which is designed to help participants with PEM identify, control and minimize symptoms that developed after having COVID-19 by regulating or pacing their daily activities. Currently, structured pacing is the only intervention used to treat PEM. The trial will not include any exercise training or physical movement to protect participants from developing worsened symptoms of PEM. Participants will be

randomly assigned to receive either structured pacing with a trained coach or basic PEM education for three months.

Both trials were developed using comprehensive feedback from the community and in close partnership with patient representatives. The PEM trial was developed to address concerns expressed by patient advocacy groups about patient safety and to better understand how this study program may help improve PEM symptoms.

“This NIH-sponsored intervention trial is a unique opportunity for individuals with Long COVID to participate in a program that may improve

their exercise capacity,” said Dr. Clifford Rosen, principal investigator of the RECOVER observational study and the ENERGIIZE interventional study at MaineHealth. “We hope that these studies will lead to treatments that can significantly improve these patients’ quality of life.”

With the launch of these two studies, MaineHealth is one of 50 RECOVER study sites nationwide that are investigating potential treatments for some of the most frequent and burdensome symptoms reported by people suffering from long COVID. MHIR also has participated in RECOVER’s PROMIS study, examining a possible cause of long COVID and in RECOVER’s early research examining common symp-

toms among those suffering from long COVID.

“MHIR’s participation in this important NIH-supported research is a clear example of how our care team lives the MaineHealth vision of working together so our communities are the healthiest in America,” said Dr. Doug Sawyer, MaineHealth’s chief academic officer. “The results of these studies into long COVID could have a tangible impact on the lives of our neighbors and those suffering from long COVID worldwide.”

RECOVER is testing 13 treatments across eight clinical trials and continues to enroll participants across the country. Those interested in learning more about RECOVER clinical trials should visit trials.recovercovid.org.

Repair Fair with Gorham’s Baxter Memorial Library

GORHAM, ME -- Baxter Memorial Library is bringing a Repair Fair to Gorham. Bring your broken household items, and learn to repair them with the help of other community members!

We also need your help! We are looking for

more volunteers who can repair clothing, small appliances, furniture, electronics, lamps, jewelry, bicycles, and more! You don’t need to be an expert or a professional - we’re also looking for people who are handy enough to fix things around their own homes.

If you are willing to share your skills and expertise, and help your neighbors give new life to old items, please reach out to Nissa Flanagan at nflanagan@gorham.me.us or (207) 222-1190.

March 22 10AM-1PM.

REPAIR FAIR
AT BAXTER MEMORIAL LIBRARY!

Bring your broken or damaged items, and learn how to fix them alongside our handy volunteers!

To volunteer or for more information, please contact Nissa Flanagan at nflanagan@gorham.me.us or (207) 222-1190

Saturday, March 22
10 AM to 1 PM

BAXTER MEMORIAL LIBRARY
71 SOUTH STREET GORHAM, ME 04038
WWW.BAXTERLIBRARY.ORG (207) 222-1190

Things that you can bring include:

- Lamps
- Jewelry
- Clothing & Jackets
- Small Appliances
- Wood Furniture
- Bicycles

Give new life to old items, meet your neighbors, learn repair skills, and have a cup of coffee on us!

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

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DOL: Unemployment guidance for laid off federal employees

MAINE – The Maine Department of Labor has published unemployment insurance guidance for federal employees affected by layoffs.

Topline information includes:

Prepare—Get as much information as you can

Print your paystubs – last one paid before 09/30/2023 and last one paid before 12/31/2024

Print your 2024 W-2 Before filing your claim, read through the unemployment FAQ for fed-

eral workers

File Immediately, even without all documents

Call 1-800-593-7660 to file your claim in Maine as soon as you separate from your employer. Documents will be collected for verification once your claim is started.

You must start your first unemployment insurance claim by phone. After your first claim is done, you can file weekly claims online.

File even if appealing the termination

Don't panic about a



\$0 determination— Federal wages aren't reported in state systems, so your initial claim may show \$0. As wages are verified your

Monetary Determination will be updated.

Request a wage affidavit if delayed— If your agency doesn't respond

within 12 days, you can complete an ES-935 affidavit to speed up your claim.

Once your initial claim is in system, you will find this form in your account under Correspondences.

Check messages regularly—State agencies may request additional information, so frequently check your portal, email, and mail.

Certify and job search weekly— You must certify unemployment and actively search for work each week to continue re-

ceiving benefits.

The Maine Department of Labor's Rapid Response team is holding a weekly session via Zoom at 10 a.m. every Wednesday to go over top line information for laid off workers, such as unemployment insurance, health insurance options, training and job search resources.

The full guidance and Rapid Response information for affected employees can be found here: www.maine.gov/labor/federal-workers/

Adult volunteers needed to help 4-H youth understand ticks

MAINE -- University of Maine Cooperative Extension is seeking adult volunteers in Cumberland, Androscoggin, Sagadahoc and York counties to become 4-H Tick Project Mentors. Mentors will guide youth in learning about ticks and tick safety using engaging hands-on activities offered through the 4-H Tick Project.

"Understanding ticks is crucial for both human and environmental health," says Carla Scocchi, coordinator of the 4-H Tick Project. "By training



Students at Cave Hill School learn to identify ticks and provide data for statewide research as part of the 4-H Tick Project. Photo courtesy University of Maine Cooperative Extension.

a network of dedicated mentors, we can empower youth with the knowledge and skills they need to become citizen scientists, investigate tick populations in their communities and stay safe when recreating outdoors."

Mentors should have a passion for tick safety and youth education along with a commitment to providing positive youth development experiences. Participants are required to attend a free, in-person training session on April 11 at Wolfe's Neck Farm in

Freeport and complete the 4-H volunteer enrollment process which includes a background check.

In addition to making a valuable contribution to local communities, mentors will facilitate hands-on learning experiences in classrooms, after-school programs, and/or community events; model tick collection protocols and identification techniques; and share best practices for tick safety with young people.

No prior experience with tick science is re-

quired. The training will provide all the necessary knowledge and resources. This opportunity requires volunteers to work with educators and youth in various learning environments, including outdoors in tick habitat.

To learn more and register for the training, please visit the project website. The deadline to register is March 30, 2025. To request a reasonable accommodation, please contact Emily Booth, emily.booth@maine.edu, 207.581.8205.

Lisbon Community Federal Credit Union announces staff promotions

LISBON, ME — Lisbon Community Federal Credit Union is proud to announce the promotion of two dedicated team members as we continue to grow and strengthen our organization. These internal advancements reflect our commitment to recognizing talent, fostering career development, and enhancing service to our valued members.

Veronica Williams has been promoted to Deposit and Card Services Representative after serving as a Member Services Representative in our Lisbon office. Veronica has been a key part of our team since July 2000, demonstrating exceptional service and deep knowledge of our members' needs. In her new role, she will provide expertise in



Veronica Williams

deposit accounts and card services, ensuring our members receive the best support possible.

Alexia Moody has been promoted to Financial Resolutions Specialist after serving as a Teller in



Alexia Moody

the Lisbon Office. Since joining Lisbon Community FCU in September 2023, Alexia has shown

a strong commitment to assisting members and contributing to the credit union's success. In her new role, she will focus on helping members navigate financial challenges while supporting the institution's overall financial wellness initiatives.

"These promotions reflect our continued growth and the strength of our team," said Sarah Perkins, President/CEO. "Veronica and Alexia have demonstrated an unwavering commitment to

our mission, and we are excited to see them excel in their new roles. As our credit union expands, we remain focused on investing in our people, enhancing our services, and ensuring the best experience for our members."

Lisbon Community FCU is proud of the steady progress we've made and the opportunities we continue to create for both our staff and members. Our commitment to growth is driven by our dedication to providing top-tier financial services while strengthening our community.

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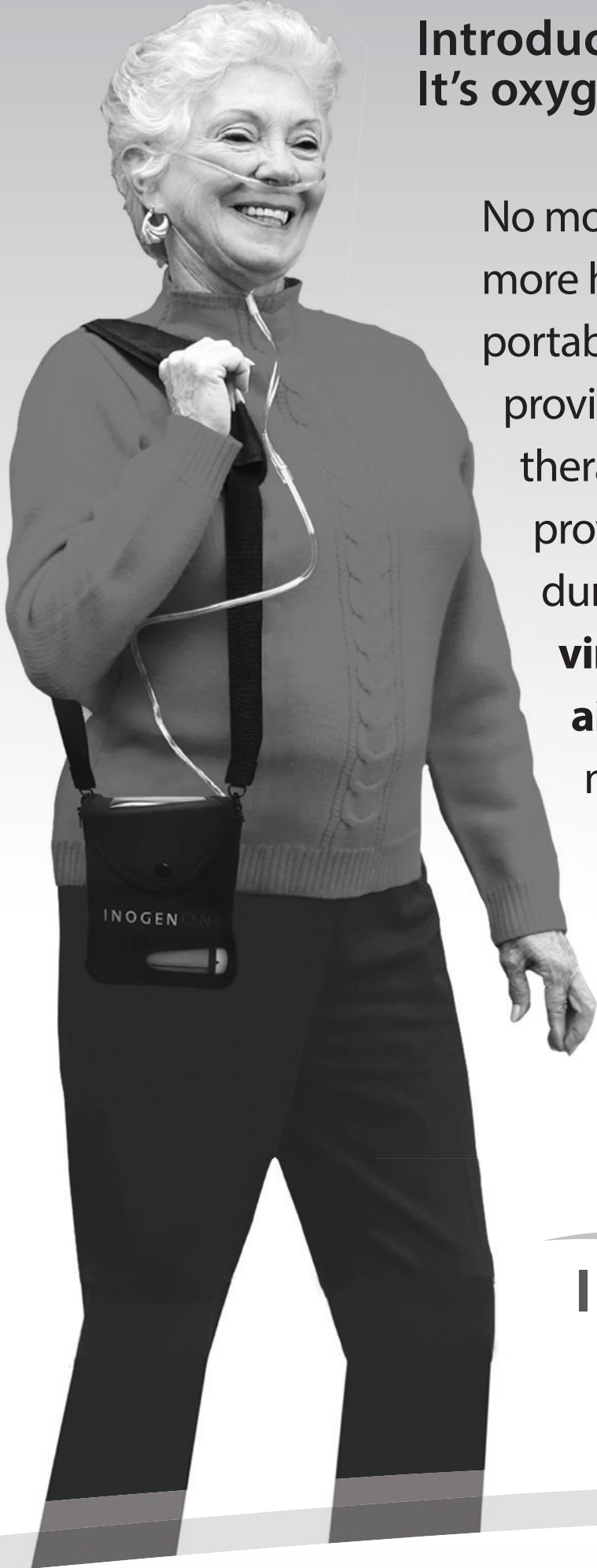
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Tips to brush up on your oral health

By Dr. Paul McConnell, National Dental Director, UnitedHealthcare Dental

Taking care of our mouth, teeth and gums is more crucial to our overall health than many people think. Since our mouths are the gateways to both our respiratory and digestive systems, germs and infections here can spread to other parts of our body, causing issues like pneumonia, heart infections, or complications during pregnancy. Additionally, health conditions that weaken our immune system, such as diabetes and HIV/AIDS, can also impact oral health.

Moreover, neglecting our dental health can lead to bad breath, toothaches and potentially gum disease and tooth loss, making everyday activities like eating, speaking and even smiling uncomfortable. In fact, over 40% of adults reported feeling mouth pain. Frequent dental problems can be a hassle and disrupt our daily routines. By the age of 34, over 80% of people have had at least one cavity, highlighting how common these issues are.

Being diligent with our oral health can help reduce the buildup of plaque (a sticky film of bacteria) and tartar (hardened

plaque). If not removed, these can contribute to tooth decay, which is the most common chronic condition with 1 in 10 adolescents and 1 in 5 adults (ages 20 to 64) having at least one untreated cavity.

The buildup of tartar along the gum line can also lead to gum disease, causing swelling, bleeding, tenderness, and pain as it progresses. Unfortunately, over 42% of adults 30 years and older have some form of chronic gum disease and this increases to 60% of people 65 years and older. Severe gum disease can be highly destructive, including the loss of tissue and bone supporting the teeth and eventually tooth loss if not treated. Hormonal changes during pregnancy and habits like smoking and chewing tobacco can increase the risk of developing gum disease, but poor oral hygiene is one of the main preventable risk factors.

Each year, untreated dental diseases cost the U.S. over \$45 billion in lost productivity, while poor oral health in children was also linked to more school absences and worse academic performance. Fortunately, the risk for common dental diseases and conditions, like tooth decay, gum disease and

tooth loss, can be reduced with good oral hygiene.

Daily oral habits for everyone

Check in and brush up on daily dental habits to ensure good oral health for the whole family. The following dental health recommendations are daily actions that can help both children and adults maintain a bright, healthy smile:

Brush your teeth (and tongue) twice a day, for at least two minutes each time using a soft-bristled toothbrush that allows you to reach all areas easily. Be sure to clean the outer, inner and chewing surfaces of your teeth. Replace your toothbrush every 3-4 months or when the bristles become frayed.

Floss daily to remove food particles and plaque. In addition to traditional dental floss, other tools including dental picks, tiny brushes and water flossers are safe and effective. Speak with your dentist and try different options to find what works best for you.

Rinse for 30 seconds with a mouthwash, which may help kill bacteria and clean parts of the mouth brushing might miss. Mouthwash is not recommended for children younger than 6 years of age.

Stay hydrated to help support overall well-being and avoid issues with dry mouth, while limiting sugary snacks and drinks.

Supplement daily habits with regular preventive care

To keep your smile healthy, it's important to maintain daily oral hygiene and visit your dentist every six months for preventive care, which most dental plans cover at no additional cost to you. Children should start visiting the dentist after their first tooth appears or by their first birthday, whichever comes first.

Regular dental check-ups and cleanings may help catch dental problems early, preventing them from becoming painful and difficult to treat. Early-stage gum disease, for example, can often be reversed with a professional dental cleaning followed by daily brushing and flossing.

Dental visits are also a great time to ask any questions or discuss concerns, including new or unusual symptoms. If you suffer from chronic dry mouth or bad breath, they can be signs of an underlying issue or future complications to your oral health.

If you or a family member feels nervous

about going to the dentist, you're not alone – nearly 40% of people in the U.S. have some form of fear regarding dental care.

Let the receptionist, hygienist and dentist know your concerns. They can answer questions and offer suggestions for coping strategies, including distraction methods or mindfulness techniques to lessen tension. For children, using books or videos about dental visits ahead of time can help build confidence.

Routine dental care and good daily oral habits are crucial to supporting your oral health and your overall health at all life stages. It's never too late to make changes to ensure a bright and healthy smile.

1 Mayo Clinic, <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/adult-health/in-depth/dental/art-20047475>

2 American Journal of Public Health, 2012, <https://doi.org/10.2105/AJPH.2011.300362>

3 Federal Practitioner, 2016, https://cdn.mdedge.com/files/s3fs-public/1016FP_HENG.PDF

4 2024 Oral Health Surveillance Report, <https://www.cdc.gov/oral-health/php/2024-oral-health-surveillance-report/selected-findings.html>

5 MedlinePlus, <https://magazine.medlineplus.gov/article/gum-disease-by-the-numbers>

6 American Dental Association, <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/all-topics-a-z/gum-disease>

7 Journal of Dental Research 97.5 (2018), <https://doi.org/10.1177/0022034517750572>

8 Journal of Pediatrics 209 (2019), <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jpeds.2019.01.045>

9 American Dental Association, <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/dental-care/daily-routine>

10 American Dental Association, <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/life-stages/babies-and-kids/first-dental-visit-for-baby>

11 Cleveland Clinic, <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/10902-dry-mouth-xerostomia>; <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/17771-bad-breath-halitosis>

12 Cleveland Clinic, <https://my.clevelandclinic.org/health/diseases/22594-dentophobia-fear-of-dentists>

13 American Dental Association, <https://www.mouthhealthy.org/all-topics-a-z/anxiety>

MaineHealth invests \$100K in care team innovation

PORTLAND, ME – MaineHealth Innovation is investing \$100,000 from its Bonfire Funding Program in a company co-founded by a MaineHealth care team member to help patients overcome cancer. Cryptomedix Inc., co-founded by MaineHealth Institute for Research Faculty Scientist Peter Brooks, is pioneering a new approach to delivering anti-cancer drugs that could lead to improved patient outcomes.

Bonfire Funding was

created by MaineHealth in 2021 as part of its not-for-profit mission of researching new ways to provide care. The funding helps care team members foster and accelerate innovations to the point where additional external funding can be secured. Recipients are companies founded by MaineHealth care team members and are evaluated by a multi-disciplinary group of reviewers from across MaineHealth and its intellectual property

and business development committee members. Innovations are measured on whether they provide a novel solution to unmet care needs that can be scaled to benefit the larger community.

“Bonfire Funding is not only a financial investment in our innovators,” said MaineHealth Vice President of Innovation, Susan Ahern. “It creates opportunities for care team members to problem-solve and collaborate with

MaineHealth’s strategic and industry partners with an eye toward improving patient care and reducing overall costs for patients.”

CryptoMedix has been developing a novel approach for the selective delivery of potent anti-cancer drugs to particularly difficult-to-treat cancers including ovarian cancer. A more precise treatment has the potential to provide better patient outcomes. The company will be using Bonfire Funding to advance preclinical studies.

“The funding that we received from MaineHealth will have a significant impact on our ability to move our research forward,” said CryptoMedix

CEO Dr. Bernd Seizinger. “This delivery system has the potential of eventually benefitting a large number of cancer patients suffering from a variety of hard-to-treat cancer types which are not effectively responding to the currently available anti-cancer therapies.”

Cryptomedix previously received \$20,000 through MaineHealth’s Ignite Funding that allowed the company to acquire materials for its experiments and secure patents. Bonfire funding will support further experiments as the company looks to attract strategic partners and develop further.

Last week, MaineHealth also announced Sa-

tya Diagnostics, Inc. would be receiving \$100,000 in Bonfire Funding so that it could expand clinical testing of its patented breast cancer biomarker, aimed at improving early detection, treatment response monitoring and long-term surveillance. MaineHealth plans to continue its Innovation Funding investments with another round of applications in 2025.

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



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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.

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

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

Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

browse our ever changing selection! Auburn Public Library, 49 Spring Street.

Mar 21

LEWISTON -- "Mouth Washington with Art Car & Curfew" at LA Arts on Friday, March 21. This punk, rock, and post-punk show kicks off LA Arts' eclectic Downstage Performance Series and will be the first plugged-in event on the organization's new stage.

Mar 21

LEWISTON -- SeniorsPlus, the designated Agency on Aging for Western Maine, will hold a breakfast to benefit its Meals on Wheels nutrition program. The 2025 Fill the Plate Breakfast will be held from 7 to 9 a.m. on Friday, March 21, at the Hilton Garden Inn Riverwatch in Auburn. The breakfast will honor Lewiston resident Margaret Craven with the 2025 Ikaria Award and feature a talk by singer Julia Gagnon. Tickets are \$30 per person (\$35 at the door) and are available at www.seniorsplus.org/march-formeals or by calling 207-795-4010. Seats are limited and advance registration is recommended.

Mar 22

LEWISTON -- Members of Lewiston's delega-

tion to the State Legislature will hold constituent office hours at the Lewiston Public Library on Saturday, March 22, from 10:30 a.m. until noon to provide local residents a chance to meet with their elected officials and discuss legislative and state government matters. The delegation will give updates on their work on various policy areas, including the state budget, law enforcement, insurance and financial affairs, taxes, transportation and veterans issues. Office hours are scheduled for the fourth Saturday of every month during the legislative session.

Mar 22

GRAY -- First Congregational Church of Gray Saturday Night Church Supper on Saturday March 22, 2025 @ 5:00 at the Parish House, 5 Brown St., 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 Beans Red Kidney & Pea, Red Hot Dogs, Breads, Assortment of Desserts & Beverages

Mar 22 and 23

LEWISTON, TOPSHAM -- "Fiery & Pas-

sionate Compositions" Saturday, March 22, 2025, 7:00 p.m. - Franco Center, Lewiston and Sunday, March 23, 2025, 2:30 p.m. - Orion Performing Arts Center, Topsham

Franz Liszt – Prometheus; Robert Schumann - Symphony No. 2, Op. 61; Samuel Coleridge-Taylor - Ballade in A Minor, Op. 33; Igor Stravinsky - Firebird Suite (1919 Version)

Tickets are \$25 in advance for adults; \$30 at the door. All concerts are free for anyone 25 and under.

"A Conversation with the Conductor" (part of the "More with Midcoast" series) Saturday, March 22, 2025, 6:00 p.m. - Franco Center, Lewiston and Sunday, March 23, 2025, 1:30 p.m. - Orion Performing Arts Center, Topsham

Mar 24

AUBURN -- Auburn Public Library will be hosting A Journey Through the Roots of American Popular Music to be taking place on Monday, March 24, 2025 from 5:30 to 6:45 PM.

Mar 25

AUBURN -- The Auburn and Lewiston Republican Committees will meet on Tuesday March 25th 6pm, at the Androscoggin Bank on 683 Minot Avenue in Auburn. Executive officers will be chosen. For more information: auburn-maine73@gmail.com

Mar 29

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Buffet - Saturday, March 29, 2025 - 5:00 pm at Living Waters Church, Parker Farm Road, Buxton. Suggested donation: \$10 Adult, \$5 Child, \$20 Family.

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Field Funding Campaign

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

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- Add infield mix and relevel current fields
- 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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