

# Ribbon cutting, grand opening of Extra Space Storage in Auburn

AUBURN, ME –Diamond Point Development, LLC (DPD), in partnership with The Ardent Companies, have announced that on April 15, 2025 at 3:00 pm, they will hold a Community-Wide Ribbon Cutting and Grand Opening Celebration at the new, state-of-the-art Extra Space Storage facility at 1 Center Street, in Auburn, Maine.

“In the short time the Auburn Extra Space property has been open, it has been very well received by both the residential and the business communities,” said Jason Sommer, Diamond Point Development Principal. “In appreciation

of the city’s support of the project, we are proud to make a donation to the new ‘Auburn PAL Center.’”

Auburn Mayor Jeff Harmon will be in attendance at the Ribbon Cutting ceremony on April 15, as well as other distinguished members of the city staff.

Mayor Harmon said, “Thank you so much for this support of the Auburn PAL Center - it is so meaningful and will directly impact the kids and families of this community. We look forward to welcoming you to our wonderful city of Auburn.”

Liz Allen, the City



of Auburn’s Director of Communications & Community Engagement said, “We look forward to being a community partner and to supporting positive growth

in Aburn. We are happy to connect the Extra Space team with the greater Auburn community, on April 15 and beyond.”

Eric Cousens, the

City of Auburn’s Executive Director of Public Services said, “It was great to work with Aaron and Jason from Extra Space Storage on a very challenging site. The Site was attractive due to the high traffic and that also made it a challenge. Aaron and Jason assembled additional real estate to make the access safe and made room for public access rights for a future riverfront trail while designing the site. We appreciate their collaboration and investment in Auburn.”

The Extra Space Storage is a new, state of the art 100,000 square foot multi-story, secure, cli-

mate-controlled facility. The self-storage property was built on a blighted property along the Androscoggin River.

This newly-constructed three-story self-storage facility includes approximately 75,000 rentable sq ft and 750 individual storage units. To make the storing experience more comfortable and to protect customer’s belongings from the elements, every unit is temperature and humidity controlled.

Diamond Point Development and The Ardent Companies build class A self-storage facilities up and down the East Coast.

# Indie Lens Pop-Up presents “Free for all: The public library”

AUBURN, ME — Indie Lens Pop-Up, presented by ITVS, INDEPENDENT LENS, and the Auburn Public Library will host an event featuring a shortened, preview version of “Free for All: The Public Library” followed by a discussion. “Free for All: The Public Library” tells the story of the quiet revolutionaries who created a civic institution where everything is free and the doors are open to all.

The public library is one of America’s most valued yet endangered institutions. Director Dawn Logsdon travels the United States, discovering historic and modern-day figures, especially women, who contributed to the library’s integral position within democracy. “Free for All: The Public Library” chronicles the evolution of the nation’s public libraries, tracing the battles over who can enter, what belongs

there, and who makes these decisions, while exploring how public commons are defined and defended.

WHAT: FREE preview screening of “Free for All: The Public Library” followed by a community discussion

WHO: Presenters: Indie Lens Pop-Up and the Auburn Public Library

WHEN: Thursday, March 27, 2025 - 3:30 to 5:30 PM

After the screening,

Indie Lens Pop-Up

FREE FOR ALL: The Public Library

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FREE FILM SCREENING

The Auburn Public Library Presents a Free Preview Screening of

Free for All: The Public Library

Thursday, March 27th, 2025  
3:30 to 5:30 PM  
Androscoggin Community Room

Film Screening Followed by a Discussion

PRESENTED BY

ITVS

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NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE ARTS

AUBURN PUBLIC LIBRARY

Auburn Public librarians will host an engaging and interactive discussion about how public libraries shaped the country and continue to be a sanctuary for Americans everywhere, despite the threats to funding the civic institution has faced in recent years.

“Free for All: The Public Library” will debut on April 29, 2025, at 10 p.m. ET on PBS and the PBS app (check local listings).

# City launches ‘This is Lewiston’ to transform downtown

LEWISTON, ME – Today the City of Lewiston launched a new campaign, This is Lewiston, designed to connect transformational investment in the city’s downtown to strengthening the city’s economic outlook.

“This is Lewiston presents a fresh and compelling narrative - one that speaks to residents, future neighbors, business owners, and investors alike,” said Nate Libby, the Director of Economic & Community Development for the City of Lewiston. “It’s a

declaration that Lewiston is a city of innovators, where opportunity isn’t just found but created. It reflects both the strength of our community today and the limitless potential ahead. This is Lewiston tells the world our community and our people are worth the investment.”

The campaign, designed by Lewiston-based communications firm Upstream Strategies, includes a website highlighting \$174.9M invest-

ed in Lewiston’s Choice Neighborhood following the City’s successful bid for federal Choice Neighborhood funding in 2021. The campaign’s photographs, taken by local photographer Ryan Captures Life, feature people who live, work, play, and raise their families in the Choice Neighborhood.

The City launched This is Lewiston to LA Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce breakfast attendees during a presentation about the eco-

nom ic impact of Choice Neighborhood funding. The campaign was developed thanks to funding from the John T. Gorman Foundation.

“This campaign is what businesses across Androscoggin County have wanted for years,” said Shanna Cox, President & CEO of the LA Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce. “We have all been part of conversations about the challenges our community is facing. This is Lewiston acknowledges those challenges and asks us to look at Lewiston in

its entirety. It amplifies the innovative and complex work people do here every day and that is key to strengthening our local economy.”

During a preview for the Downtown Lewiston Association earlier this week, members noted that the campaign will be a helpful boost for businesses on Lewiston’s Lisbon Street corridor.

“This is Lewiston helps to articulate exactly what discerning investors see here: a growing community worth attention, support, and putting our dollars behind,” said Danielle Snow, co-owner of 75 Park and Chair of the Downtown Lewiston Association Board of Directors. “This campaign challenges us to move beyond tired rhetoric about Lewiston and asks us to invest in what is possible here. Those conversations are critically important to our downtown businesses, and we are proud to be a part of these efforts.”

While the initial phase of the campaign focuses on the \$174.9M invested in the Choice Neighborhood from 2021-2024, City leaders noted plans to expand the campaign to highlight businesses and investments throughout Lewiston, which has seen over \$324.5M during the same period of time.

“This is Lewiston is more than a campaign - it is a statement of confidence in our city’s future,” said Mayor Carl Sheline. “Through the Choice Neighborhood Initiative and the Transformation Plan, we are not just revitalizing the Tree Streets, we are demonstrating what strategic investment can achieve. The economic momentum we are seeing is proof that when we invest in people and place, we create lasting change. Lewiston’s story is one of resilience and renewal, and we are ready for the next chapter.”

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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## 100+ Women Who Care Southern Maine hits 515 members

**MAINE** -- Deb Bergeron, founder of 100+ Women Who Care Southern Maine, announced that the group has reached a milestone of 515 members after the February 10th meeting at the Portland Elks Lodge. “This growing group of women has collectively donated over \$685,000 since its inception in 2014. At each quarterly meeting, we select a nonprofit to receive a donation made up of equal contributions from all members. Together, we create real, lasting change in our communities- beyond what any of us could accomplish alone. The charities present stories that highlight the life-changing impact they’re making, reminding us of the difference we can create when we come to-

gether.” Carol Colton from The Independent Seniors Network, a nonprofit organization dedicated to supporting seniors who wish to age in their homes, presented their organization and was selected as the February recipient. Their mission is to provide services to enable seniors to maintain active, social, safe, and independent lives through a network of volunteers and community resources. These services are offered in the greater Portland area and surrounding towns, funded by minimal membership fees, donations, and grants. As a result of the award, Independent Seniors Network has now received approximately \$24,000. The two runner-up nonprofits, In Her

Presence and Grace-Street Ministry, will each receive \$2,000. The chosen nonprofit from the November 2024 meeting, Camp No Limits, shared how the \$24,000 they received has positively impacted their program. Over the past 10 years, Maine nonprofits supporting a wide range of causes have benefited, including those focused on veterans, seniors, children with disabilities, pregnant women, fishermen, terminally ill young adults, victims of domestic abuse, animal welfare, teens, immigrant families, incarcerated youth, animal rescues, and more. Women are welcome to attend meetings as guests to see if the group is a good fit for them. Each member

commits to donating \$50 each quarter to the nonprofit chosen at each meeting, although attendance is not required. At each meeting, three nonprofits—randomly nominated by members—present 5-minute pitches, followed by 5 minutes of Q&A. Afterward, the group votes to select the nonprofit that will receive the donations. Donations go directly to the nonprofit via credit card or check. The next meeting will be held on Monday, May 5, 2025, at The Elks Lodge on Congress Street in Portland, with networking starting at 5:45 PM and the meeting beginning at 6:30 PM. For more information about 100+ Women Who Care Southern Maine, visit: [www.100womenwhocare-southernmaine.com](http://www.100womenwhocare-southernmaine.com).



Deb Bergeron, founder of 100+ Women Who Care Southern Maine. Carol Colton from Independent Seniors Network. Photo by: Susan Gatti

## Gorham grad represents Maine at National Credit Union event

**WASHINGTON, D.C.** – Emma Pierce, Communications Specialist at Evergreen Credit Union born and raised in Gorham, was selected to represent Maine as part of the Filene Institute’s Crash the GAC (Governmental Affairs Conference) program. Pierce joined 54 other young professionals from across the country at the nation’s largest credit union conference in Washington, D.C., to network with industry leaders and develop her leadership skills. Only 1 to 2 individuals from each state are chosen to be “Crashers”. Pierce quickly connected with the Crashers and easily immersed herself in the experience. “The opportunity to spend time with current and future leaders who not only

want to connect with other likeminded industry professionals but learn about the credit union movement at large is a rare opportunity,” shared Pierce about being selected to Crash the GAC in March 2025. “It feels like a ‘pinch-me’ moment to represent the state I love through my work with Evergreen Credit Union.” To be selected as a Crasher, interested young professionals need to submit backgrounds and include a 60-second video explaining why they should be selected to represent their credit union and state at the GAC. Typically, only senior-level employees attend the conference. Since 2010, the Crash the Gac program has brought emerging credit union leaders to the next



Emma Pierce, Communications Specialist at Evergreen Credit Union



level in their careers. In addition to attending the GAC, the program aims to highlight the meaningful work credit unions are doing to improve the financial well-being of their members and communities. “Crash the GAC is a brilliant program for upcoming leaders in the credit union industry. Not only do Crashers build their professional networks, but they also get to sit and learn alongside department heads and chief-level leaders from across the U.S.,” said Ja-

son Lindstrom, President/CEO of Evergreen Credit Union. “Emma has proven through her dedication and hard work with Evergreen time and time again, and she’s more than ready to add to the bigger picture of the credit union movement.” Evergreen Credit Union is Maine’s 5th largest credit union with over \$580 million in assets and serving over 31,000 members across Maine’s six southern counties. Learn more about Evergreen Credit Union at <https://www.egcu.org>.

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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## Auburn UU explores faith in grief and loss March 30

**AUBURN, ME** -- The First Universalist Church of Auburn presents About Love: Grief & Loss, 11:30-1pm. This panel talk will consider the role of faith and community in dealing with personal loss. The panel features mem-

bers who have lost a loved one. The Adult Religious Education group, chaired by Charles I. Nero, is presenting a year of programming on the theme "The Power of Love," to explore the Unitarian Universalist Association's new cove-

nant. "Love is the power that holds us together," the covenant proclaims, "and it is at the center of our shared values. We are accountable to one another for doing the work of living our shared values through the spiritual discipline of love." Nero conceived the "About Love" series to explore that accountability. Nero teamed up with Toby Haber-Giasson, director of the church's award-winning UU The-

ater group, to structure a framework for the talk. The duo also collaborated on "About Love: Esther's Story," featuring a senior member's experiences. Freewill donations to the church will be accepted in lieu of an admission fee. First Universalist Church of Auburn is located at 169 Pleasant St. (entrance on Spring St. across from Dairy Joy). Accessible; parking available. FMI, call 783-0461 or contact office@auburnuu.org.

## Machias Savings Bank expands leadership team

**MACHIAS AND BANGOR, ME** - Machias Savings Bank is pleased to welcome two experienced banking professionals, Danielle Ahern and James Gehrke, to its leadership team. Ahern joins as Senior Vice President, Director of Treasury Services, while Gehrke returns to Machias Savings Bank, stepping into the role of Senior Vice President, Regional Market Manager for Central Maine. Danielle Ahern brings over 20 years of banking expertise to the Bank, specializing in treasury management, digital payment solutions,

and fraud risk mitigation. As Director of Treasury Services, she will help businesses optimize cash utilization, enhance operational efficiency, and ensure secure, streamlined financial processes. "Machias Savings Bank is successfully combining modern banking experiences with its long-standing commitment to exceptional customer service and community engagement," said Ahern. "When businesses flourish, our communities do too. I'm thrilled to provide a distinctive and impactful experience for our customers."



**James Gehrke** Ahern is an active community leader, serving as Chairperson of the Board for Jobs for Maine Graduates and on the board of Catholic Charities Maine. She has also supported organizations including the Bangor



**Danielle Ahern** YMCA, University of Maine Alumni Association, Penobscot Theatre, and Junior Achievement of Maine. She is a graduate of Husson University and the University of Maine and resides in Bangor. James Gehrke returns

to Machias Savings Bank with nearly 20 years of experience in commercial banking. In his new role as Regional Market Manager for Central Maine, he leads a team of business bankers, fostering strong relationships with businesses across the region. Prior to rejoining Machias Savings Bank, Gehrke managed a \$150 million commercial portfolio at a large Maine community bank. "What's unique about Maine is the number of businesses, often unknown to the public, that are the backbone of our communities," said Gehrke. "I am humbled by the dedication

of these business owners and proud to be in a position to help them achieve their goals with tailored financial solutions." A graduate of the Bangor Region Leadership Institute and Maine Leadership Institute, Gehrke is deeply involved in the community. He serves on the boards of the Brewer Economic Development Corporation and Partners for Peace, where he is also Treasurer and a member of both the Finance and Executive Committees. He is a graduate of Husson University and the University of Maine at Farmington and is a resident of Brewer.

## 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 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

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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](http://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](http://www.ronchase-outdoors.com) or he can be reached at [ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net](mailto:ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net)

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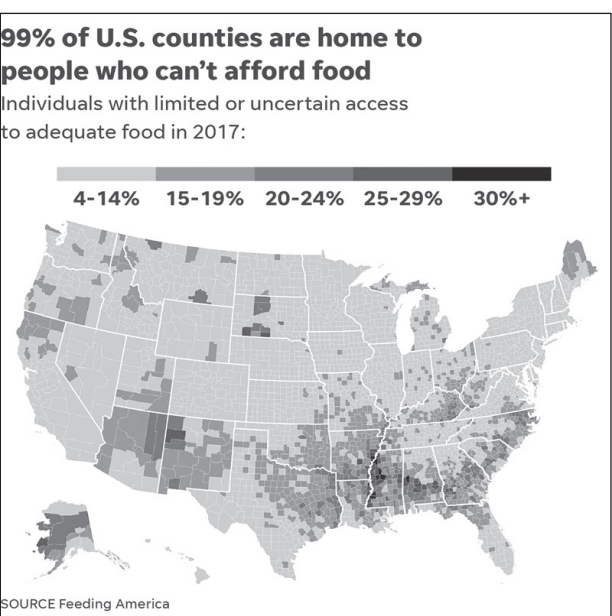
Letter to the Editor:

Eradicate hunger in Maine, Check-off box on your 1040ME

May 16, 2024: New data released from Feeding America's annual Map the Meal Gap study this week confirms what people in Maine and the statewide hunger relief network have been experiencing over the past two years: rates of food insecurity are on the rise.

December 23, 2024: Quoting a report titled Food pantries see increased need; report finds Maine food insecurity up 47%, published by WGME On Your Side: "Last week, Bangor's Salvation Army said it's seen triple the numbers of those in need just in the last year from about 30 to 35 families showing up to eighties, nineties and even into the hundreds.

March 12, 2025: Quoting an article published in the Portland PressHerald titled USDA cuts programs that supply local food to schools, food banks:"The federal agency canceled contracts to continue providing food and funding to Maine schools and nonprofits for 3 more years. The change comes



The Feeding America map shows that Maine is the highest in New England for food insecurity.

as one in eight Mainers — about 180,000 people — faces hunger. That includes roughly 45,000 children, about 20% of the state's total population under 18."

If you worry that chronic hunger may continue to afflict more than 180,000 Mainers or even increase due to additional federal policies possibly cutting back existing programs, please continue

your personal efforts in your location, but also, please consider contributing state-wide by checking off a box on:

#8. TEFAP (The Emergency Food Assistance Program) on Schedule CP of the 1040ME form.

You have the option of contributing \$5 or \$10 or \$25 by checking one of those boxes, or more



The passage of LD1046 by the Maine Legislature and signed into law by Governor Mills in 2021 established this Maine income tax check-off box option, becoming only the second state in America to establish that convenient, effective way to spread your support/contribution throughout your home state.

by checking "other" and adding the amount of your contribution.

If just half of Maine's 800,000 income taxpayers check off \$5 or \$10 or \$25, that would raise 2Million or 4Million or 10Million this year.

Your contribution will either be deducted from your refund or you will receive an invoice if you will not be receiving a refund in this tax year.

Look for Schedule CP, which is a separate form that is included in the 1040S-ME short form booklet and in the 1040-ME long form booklet. (If you typically do not itemize Charitable Contributions, you may never have seen it.)

Or let your accountant know that you would like to support TEFAP.

And this option will remain on 1040ME's

Schedule CP in future years, so consider making this a habit. Mention it to your colleagues, family, and friends. Submit a blurb to your community or religious bulletin.

Disbursement of the funds is handled by Maine's Department of Agriculture, Conservation, & Forestry (DACF) which has the ability to reach every nook and cranny of Maine, including the inhabited islands, funding food pantries and community hunger prevention programs, including the tiniest to the major non-profits working to feed those in need.

The passage of LD1046 by the Maine Legislature and signed into law by Governor Mills in 2021 established this Maine income tax check-off box option, becoming only the second state in America to establish that convenient, effective way to spread your support/contribution throughout your home state.

Sara Lambert Bloom, Biddeford

True Crime Lover's Travel Guide to New England published

MAINE -- Best Books has announced that Vacations Can Be Murder: A True Crime Lover's Travel Guide to New England by award-winning author Dawn M. Barclay was released on March 25, 2025.

It is the first of a multi-volume series covering the U.S. and beyond which should interest those who enjoy reading about true crime, law enforcement, the paranormal, and/or tombstone travel. Even families with older children obsessed with ghosts or police museums will find value here. This first volume will cover Connecticut, Maine, Mas-

sachusetts, New Hampshire, Rhode Island and Vermont.

Topics within each state will include:

Major crimes in the state and where those crimes were committed, down to the street name (but not the exact street number for private houses).

An extensive list of additional books to read about those crimes

Haunted restaurants and hotels

Restaurants and hotels with a crime or punishment connection

Crime museums and other attractions

True crime and ghost

tours

Where the criminals are jailed

Where the bodies are buried

Easy-to-follow itineraries that bring all the different pieces together in a logical way

Resources for victims of such crimes

Dr. Katherine Ramsland, an American non-fiction author of over 72 books, and a professor of forensic psychology and criminal justice, calls Vacations Can Be Murder "the perfect reference book for the U. S. crime traveler... This travel guide is a gem. Be packed and ready before you start reading

because you'll want to go explore."

Perfect for locals who want to more about their community's history or those planning road trips throughout the region, the guide can also prove useful to those who plan travel—travel agents, tourist boards, event planners and tour guides. Vacations Can Be Murder: A True Crime Lover's Travel Guide to New England will be available starting March 25th from Amazon, Barnes & Noble, Bookshops.org, and all major book distributors in both e-book and paperback format. The Amazon preorder link is [https://a.co/d/5IYC-](https://a.co/d/5IYC-6Cg)

6Cg.

About the Book: Publication Date: March 25, 2025 (PB & EB) from Level Best Books - Level Tru Imprint ISBN: 978-1-68512-910-1 (PB 298 pgs. 6" x 9" trim) \$19.95 USD | 978-1-68512-911-8 (EB) \$9.99 Nonfiction | True Crime (Trade) | Distributed by Ingram | fully discounted and returnable.

About the Author: Dawn M. Barclay is a veteran travel journalist who penned Traveling Different: Vacation Strategies for Parents of the Anxious, the Inflexible, and the Neurodiverse (Rowman & Littlefield, 2022), which won several awards, including

the Lowell Thomas Gold Award in 2023. She is the author of hundreds of trade and consumer articles, and as D.M. Barr, has written six psychological and romantic thrillers and has edited two anthologies, with a third coming out in 2025. Barclay is a member of Sisters in Crime, Mystery Writers of America, the Society of American Travel Writers, and the New York Travel Writers Association. She is available to speak to media outlets, libraries, book clubs, and bookstores as well as other interested outlets, either in person or via Zoom. Her website is [www.VacationsCanBeMurder.com](http://www.VacationsCanBeMurder.com).

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# Arts & Entertainment

## Nationally acclaimed musician Chris Robley plays in Lewiston

**LEWISTON, ME** – Singer-songwriter and award-winning poet Chris Robley may be acclaimed by critics and audiences from coast to coast, but it's Lewiston that he calls home. That's lucky for local fans, who will get the chance to see Robley play an intimate, unplugged show on Saturday, March 29th. Robley will be joined onstage at LA Arts, 168 Lisbon St. in Lewiston, by collaborators Jeff Christmas and Sorcha Cribben Merrill, both multi-instrumentalists and singers. The trio will perform an acoustic set of Robley's Americana and indie-pop songs—with lots of 3-part vocal harmony, upright

bass, percussion, guitar, and piano. Chris Robley's orchestral indie-pop and folk music has been praised by The LA Times, The Boston Globe, NPR's Second Stage, Performer, The Associated Press, and others. Skyscraper Magazine said he is "one of the best short-story musicians to come along in quite some time." His poetry has been published in POETRY Magazine, Prairie Schooner, Poetry Northwest, Beloit Poetry, and more. Robley is the winner of Boulevard's Poetry Prize for Emerging Writers, a recipient of a Maine Literary Award in poetry, and was

selected by Robert Pinsky as a finalist for the Dorset Prize. Tickets for Chris Robley Trio's 3/29 show are on sale for \$20 at laarts.org/performances. General Admission, all ages. Beer, wine, and non-alcoholic beverages will be available for purchase at the event for ages 21 and over. LA Arts, the arts agency for the cities of Lewiston and Auburn Maine, has pursued a mission to engage and inspire a vibrant community through arts and culture since 1973. The agency works with governments, businesses, schools, and local arts and cultural organizations to create opportunities for commu-

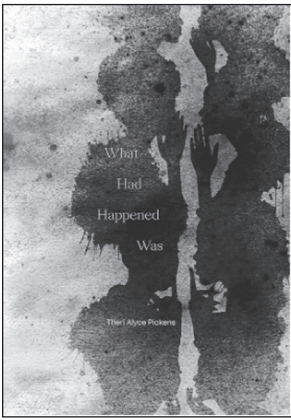


nity members across the generations to experience, learn, and participate in the arts. LA Arts organizes arts programs and initiatives, supports the work of local artists and arts organizations, and highlights the essential role the arts play in shaping an economical-ly vital, socially integrated, and forward-looking future for its community. Learn more at [www.laarts.org](http://www.laarts.org).

## Author launches debut poetry collection in Lewiston

**LEWISTON, ME** --In her debut poetry collection, *What Had Happened Was*, Theri Alyce Pickens investigates the complex structures of Black storytelling. Addressing topics ranging from Black life, popular culture, and history to individual encounters with emotion, love, and chronic disability, Pickens crafts and questions the stories we tell ourselves about who we are and who we want to be. Throughout, Pickens mines the formal structures and the play of Black English within the lives and afterlives of Harriet Tubman, Mary J. Blige, Li'l Kim, Breonna Taylor, and figments of our collective imagination. Her poetic voice flows between what she knows and what she's heard and between everyday Black conversation and her work in cultural criticism and disability studies. Traveling at the speed of thought, Pickens explores a praxis of storytelling governed by the

places where truths and fables kiss. Dr Pickens will be launching her debut poetry collection on Thursday, April 3rd at 6 pm. This event will be held in the Commons (221 & 222) of Bates College, at 136 Central Avenue in Lewiston. Dr. Pickens will be in conversation with Samaa Abdurraqib, poet and Executive Director of the Maine Humanities Council. Book signing and reception to follow. You can join this event virtually, here: [vimeo.com/event/4999616](https://vimeo.com/event/4999616). P R O F E S S O R THERI A. PICKENS received her undergraduate degree in Comparative Literature from Princeton University and her PhD in Comparative Literature from UCLA. She is a poet-scholar who focuses on Arab American Studies, Black Studies, Comparative Literature, and Disability Studies. Author of *Black Madness :: Mad Blackness* (Duke UP,



2019) and *New Body Politics* (Routledge, 2014) and editor of *Arab American Aesthetics: Literature, Material Culture, Film, and Theatre* (Routledge, 2018) and Special Issue of *African American Review* on *Blackness and Disability* (2017), her work has appeared in *The New York Times*, *The Washington Post*, *Black Girl Nerds*, *The Counter*, *Inside Higher Ed*, and *Ms. Magazine*. Her poetry has been published or is forthcoming from *Prairie Schooner*, *The Journal*, *Diode*, *Black*



*Renaissance Noire*, *Omnium Gatherum Quarterly*, *Langston Hughes Review*, *The Madison Review*, and *Cane: A New Critical Edition*. PRAISE from readers of *What Had Happened Was*: "Theri Alyce Pickens writes a poetics of the body that considers history, politics, race, gender, and the everyday mundane ways that they are experienced in bones, in the brain, and on the skin. If you understand in depth the expression, the answer is in how one would begin: "What

had happened was . . . ." - Bettina Judd, author of *Feelin: Creative Practice, Pleasure, and Black Feminist Thought* "In her constantly surprising and deftly built poems, Theri Alyce Pickens enacts a poetics that refuses binaries, attends to and extends the power of Black art, and centers a body navigating illness. Pickens seamlessly moves through and braids memory, history, pop culture. The language is precise and remarkable; it will engage and entangle you in marvelous ways."- Eduardo C. Corral, author of *Guillotine: Poems* "This collection demands attention and introspection by offering a raw yet eloquent portrayal of the intersections of history, identity, and systemic oppression. It's an essential read for people seeking to honor the complexity of the experiences of Black Americans." - Jessica Calaway, *Library Journal*

## St Anne Sodality Lewiston holding Card Party

**LEWISTON, ME** -- The Ladies of St Anne Sodality of The Prince of Peace Parish, Holy Family at 607 Sabattus St Lewiston, will be holding their annual card party on April

9th 2025 at the parish hall at 6 pm. Doors will be opened at 5:30 pm. Tickets are \$5.00 and are available by contacting any board members or by contacting Anita at 782-4576. Tick-

ets will be available at the door. There will be a 50/50, door prizes and raffled prizes. Light refreshments will be served.

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



# Green Home & Energy Show is April 5

PORTLAND, ME – The publisher of Green & Healthy Maine HOMES magazine is happy to present the fifth annual Green Home + Energy Show on April 5th at The Point Community Center in South Portland.

The Green Home + Energy Show is the place to find resources to make your home more comfortable, efficient, healthy and sustainable—whether you are renovating, building, or buying. Take advantage of a full day of programming included with your ticket. Connect with a variety of home and energy exhibitors all in one place. Test drive an electric vehicle or check out electric yard tools at the EV Expo, discover businesses prioritizing eco-friendly land-

EXHIBITORS • WORKSHOPS • ELECTRIC CARS

scaping practices at the Sustainable Landscape Expo, and learn directly from experts at 18 workshops, case studies and demonstrations offered at the event. Enjoy food trucks including Ironclad Eats, Tacos del Seoul and Totally Awesome Vegan Food Truck. Girl Scout cookies and treats from Baked With Love will also be available for purchase.

As home to many nationally recognized building science and design professionals, Maine

is leading the way in the high-performing home industry. Don't miss your chance to learn directly from these highly sought-out professionals.

The show will host informative workshops featuring a wide range of topics including creative ways to reinvest in your property with an accessory dwelling unit, pre-fab construction for high performance homes, retrofitting your foundation, planting for wildlife, accessing Efficiency Maine

rebates, and many more. These programs are included with admission. A full list of workshops and exhibitors is available at [greenmainehomes.com/show-2025](https://greenmainehomes.com/show-2025).

The presenting sponsor of this year's Green Home + Energy Show is LaPlante Home Services, and other lead sponsors include Dave's World, Mitsubishi Electric, Eco-heat Maine, Evergreen Home Performance, Han-naford Supermarkets, ReVision Energy, and El-

dredge Lumber. A full list of sponsors is available at [greenmainehomes.com/show-2025](https://greenmainehomes.com/show-2025).

The show takes place Saturday, April 5th from 9am to 4pm, with the Electric Vehicle Expo from 11am to 2pm. Tickets are \$15 at the door or \$12 when purchased online in advance. Students get in free with a valid student ID and children are free when accompanied by a ticket holding adult. Tickets can be purchased online at [greenmainehomes.com/show-2025](https://greenmainehomes.com/show-2025).

es.com/show-2025. Ticket sales will benefit The Ecology School at Riverbend Farm in Saco, Maine, a nonprofit school where sustainability means living, learning, working & playing in ways that are regenerative.

Green & Healthy Maine HOMES is a magazine and website dedicated to inspiring real Maine homes that are comfortable, efficient, healthy and sustainable. Created and published by The SunriseGuide, LLC, Green & Healthy Maine HOMES provides expert advice, informative interviews, profiles of high performing homes, and cutting-edge information about both new and tried-and-true technologies.

## How Maine residents can prioritize mental healthcare

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

Mental health challenges continue to grow and can have a significant impact on well-being<sup>1</sup>. According to new data from America's Health Rankings, nearly 18% of adults in Maine reported experiencing frequent mental distress in 2024<sup>2</sup>.

To focus on just one condition, 40 million American adults suffer from anxiety disorders which can impact quality of life<sup>3</sup>. Anxiety is now the no. 1 mental health issue among American workers<sup>4</sup>.

Workload and working long hours can have a negative impact on overall mental health, happiness, and well-being, according

to the American Psychological Association<sup>5</sup>.

Supporting Mental Health Needs

Having access to affordable mental health care is important to overall health and well-being.

Surveys show that people overwhelmingly believe support for mental health at work is important. In fact, 92% of workers said it is very or somewhat important to them to work for an organization that values their emotional and psychological well-being<sup>5</sup>.

Some employers now offer more modernized health plans that can help you more readily access needed services to support overall health and well-being. Talk to your employer about what benefits and programs might be avail-

able to you.

Modernized Health Plans Offer Better Access

The Surest health plan from UnitedHealthcare gives people the tools to search for mental health care through an easy-to-use digital shopping experience that can help improve access and lower the total cost of care. Recent studies found the Surest model lowered consumer out-of-pocket costs by 54%<sup>6</sup>.

Surest eliminates deductibles and coinsurance. Instead, members have copays that vary based on the provider and facility, with higher-value options costing less. Providers are evaluated on how they have performed historically on certain criteria like effectiveness and cost efficiency.

Women who choose Surest, for example, paid 88% less for anxiety-related provider visits and 82% less for depression-related visits compared to members on a conventional health plan, according to one recent study<sup>7</sup>.

Digital Resources Offer Support and Convenience

Studies show that Surest members also have improved access to care. Eligible Surest members can now access digital tools such as Calm Health, as a part of their mental health benefits.

Calm Health offers an entry point for eligible Surest members to connect with personalized resources to help support their mental health in-the-moment or as a supplement to engagement with a li-

censed professional.

Calm Health is an evidence-based mental health app, designed to help members access personalized mental health support, including mental health screenings, therapy referrals, personalized programs and daily self-care content.

By opting for more modern health plans and using digital resources, you can enhance your access to mental health care. These types of resources can help reduce out-of-pocket costs and help you live a healthier life in 2025.

1 Anxiety & Depression Association of America, 2021, <https://adaa.org/workplace-stress-anxiety-disorders-survey>

2 America's Health Rankings, 2024, <https://assets.america'shealthrankings.org/app/uploads/all-statesummaries-ahr24.pdf>

ings.org/app/uploads/all-statesummaries-ahr24.pdf

3 Anxiety & Depression Association of America, 2022, <https://adaa.org/understanding-anxiety/facts-statistics>

4 Forbes, 2024, <https://www.forbes.com/sites/bryanrobinson/2024/03/27/anxiety-skyrockets-to-no-1-issue-among-american-workers-new-study-shows>

5 American Psychological Association, 2023, <https://www.apa.org/pubs/reports/work-in-america/2023-workplace-health-well-being>

6 Surest Impact Study, <https://www.surest.com/performance/impact>

7 Surest Women's Health, <https://www.surest.com/performance/womens-health>

## Registration open for Bath Savings Paddle for Pine Tree Camp

SOLON 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



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.

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/>

etreesociety.org/paddle-for-pine-tree-camp/

Sunday, June 8 9:30am

Brunswick: Loop on 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.



# APL hosts Margery Schuler Silent Art Auction

AUBURN, ME – The Auburn Public Library is excited to announce the return of its 2nd Annual Margery Eyer Schuler Silent Art Auction, taking place on Saturday, March 29th, at 10:00 AM, with bidding closing at 11:00 AM. This highly anticipated event offers attendees the opportunity to support the library while celebrating local artists and their incredible talent.

Guests will enjoy a

welcoming atmosphere with light hors d'oeuvres and live music from Honey, a talented trio of Edward Little High School students, adding a harmonious touch to the morning.

Named in honor of Margery Schuler, a devoted advocate for the arts and literacy, the auction features an array of her water-themed watercolor paintings bequeathed to APL in 2023. All proceeds from the event will direct-

ly benefit Auburn Public Library programs and services, continuing Schuler's legacy of fostering creativity and learning in the community.

"This event is a wonderful way to bring together art lovers, library supporters, and community members in a meaningful way," said Haley Warden, APL's Director of Development.

The auction is open to the public, and everyone is encouraged to participate.

Whether you're an art enthusiast or simply looking to support the library, this is an opportunity to take home a unique piece while

making a positive impact. Advance ticket purchase is required, only \$5.00, and ticket sales are available on the library's website or at

the Lending Desk.

For more information, please visit the Auburn Public Library or [www.auburn-publiclibrary.org](http://www.auburn-publiclibrary.org).



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# Award winning Choir to return to Lewiston



**LEWISTON, ME** -- The Windham Chamber Singers will be appearing in concert at the Franco Center on Wednesday, April 9 at 7:00 pm as part of their 2025 Spring Tour. The Windham Chamber Singers gained international attention in 1996 when they won the Prize of Vienna, the highest award given at the International Youth Music Festival in Vienna, Austria. Since then, they have captured the hearts of audiences across the globe. They have appeared in concert with artists including the late Kenny Rogers and Andy Williams, John Rutter, Josh Groban, Noel Paul Stook-ey (Peter, Paul and Mary), Sutton Foster, Norm Lewis, Mandy Gonzalez and numerous times as special guests of the Portland Symphony Orchestra. Recent performances include their annual American Family Holiday concerts and collaborations with the Celtic Tenors and Portland

Municipal Organist, James Kennerly. Recognized for diversity, their performances include music spanning hundreds of years and many different cultures and genres. For example, in May, 2016, they were featured for the third time at St. Patrick’s Cathedral in New York City in a concert of sacred a-cappella music. In contrast, later that year they joined with tribute band, Master Stroke in a performance that featured the music of the iconic rock band, Queen. The choir has released four CDs on the Pine Point label and appears on many other compilation recordings as both a featured choir, and as backup singers. According to the conductor, Dr. Richard Nickerson, “We are so excited to begin our tour in Lewiston and honored to perform at the Franco Center!” Nickerson is also the Artistic Director of the Maine Mu-

sic Society, based in Lewiston. What: Windham Chamber Singers in concert When Wednesday, April 9, 2025 at 7:00 pm Where: Franco Center 48 Cedar Street Lewiston, ME FMI [www.windham-chambersingers.com](http://www.windham-chambersingers.com) Admission: Adults \$15, Students \$10

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# Stanton Bird Club April Meeting

**LEWISTON, ME** -- On April 7th, the Stanton Bird Club will be hosting the fifth in its 2024-25 lecture series presenting “The Amazing Adaptations and Night Shift Work of Bats” with Jocelyn Hubbell. On summer nights, while you are asleep, bats are hard at work. Join Jocelyn Hubbell to learn how bats’ nightly rounds benefit you, about their amazing adaptations, which species live in Maine, and how to listen to and view bats safely. An Interpretive Specialist with the Maine Bureau of Parks and Lands, Hubbell has worked in the field of environmental education as Senior Educator for the Wildlife Conservation Society’s Prospect Park Wildlife Center in Brooklyn, New York, for Maine Audubon as their Camps and Outreach Program Manager and as the first Executive Director of Cornerstones of Science. Her current duties include the production of



Jocelyn Hubbell (provided by Ms. Hubbell)

color guides and maps, the monthly newsletter, a weekly Nature Note, grant writing, and the development of nature programs. The talk will be held on Monday, April 7th from 4-6pm at the Auburn Public Library. The public is welcome. The lecture series is free of charge. The Stanton Bird Club, a leader in environmental awareness, owns and manages the Thorn-crag Nature Sanctuary in Lewiston as well as the Woodbury Nature Sanctuary in Monmouth and Litchfield. More information about other activities of the Club can be found at [www.StantonBirdClub.org](http://www.StantonBirdClub.org) and on its Facebook page.

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

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# Arts education in focus at spring conference

**WATERVILLE, ME**—For several years the arts scene in Waterville has been growing and expanding, cementing the city’s burgeoning reputation as a destination for concerts, festivals, creative workshops, and more. As a more central location than Portland or Bangor, Waterville is not just attracting more artists and audiences, but art teachers as well, who travel from across the state to learn new skills and share their own expertise with each other, expanding the arts experience available to Maine students.

Reflecting the city’s growing profile as a major destination for arts, the annual spring conference of the Maine Art Education Association (MAEA) will be held in Waterville April 4–6. This year’s event is organized by Waterville Creates and held in partnership with the Colby College Museum of Art and Colby Arts. This year’s spring conference has already attracted record numbers of art educators from across Maine and throughout New England.

“Attending the MAEA conference in Waterville—a community that truly values the arts—feels especially meaningful,” said Holly Hubbard, a teacher at Waterville’s George J. Mitchell School. “In Waterville



Artist and illustrator Lucky Platt will lead one of several workshops for teachers throughout the MAEA spring conference. Photo by Serena Sanborn.

Public Schools, where we strive to engage, empower, and inspire, we often see teaching itself as an art form—one that invites curiosity, creativity, and deep engagement in any subject. This gathering isn’t just for art educators; it’s for anyone who believes in the artistry of teaching. It brings together educators, artists, and community partners, sparking new collaborations and keeping creativity at the heart of our work.”

The MAEA promotes visual arts education throughout Maine, encouraging best practices in classrooms, supporting professional development for its members, and recognizing and celebrating outstanding educators. Annual conferences provide an opportunity for educa-

tors from across the state to meet, develop new skills, share ideas, and expand curricular offerings.

For Waterville Creates—a community arts nonprofit and home to the Waterville Opera House, Maine Film Center, and Ticonic Gallery + Studios—working with MAEA and supporting arts education gets to the heart of the organization’s mission.

“At Waterville Creates, our mission is ‘Arts Experiences for All,’ and that begins with supporting the educators who ignite creativity in students,” said Serena Sanborn, manager of outreach + community partnerships at Waterville Creates. “When you invest in one arts educator, you empower hundreds of students—fostering imagination, confidence, and



The Paul J. Schupf Art Center, in the heart of Waterville’s downtown arts district, will host a record number of art teachers for this year’s MAEA spring conference. Photo by John Meader.

innovation.”

The Colby College Museum of Art and Colby Arts Office have been investing beyond the borders of the school’s campus, as well. “As a teaching museum first and foremost, we center the work of both academic and K–12 educators as core to our mission,” said Christian Adame, Mirken director of learning and engagement at the Colby Museum. “Teaching is a creative practice, and we hope the MAEA convening in Waterville invites art educators to invest in that practice, to learn with others, and to discover new ways to center the visual arts in their classrooms.”

In a time of budget cuts, standardized testing, and a curricular shift towards STEM fields, groups like Waterville Creates, Colby, the MAEA, and others demonstrate just how crucial it is to work together to provide extra support for art educators and their students. Waterville is emerging as a hub for conversations across the state about the right of youth access to the arts.

“Nourishing creativity for all children through the arts is why art programs are essential to a well-rounded education,” said Jessica Hamilton Jones, art teacher at the Waterville Alternative School. “The MAEA supports the arts, art students, and art teachers and has been pivotal to my success as an art teacher. I am thrilled that Waterville and Waterville Creates are hosting our spring conference this year.”

“By bringing together arts educators, creatives, and cultural organizations, this conference is a catalyst for inspiration, collaboration, and lasting impact in our communities,” Sanborn added.

Art educators from across Maine and beyond can register for the MAEA conference in Waterville before March 25. This year, the Colby Museum and Colby Arts are sponsoring major scholarships to cover registration fees for Maine teachers. Visit [aeforme.org/2025-spring-conference](http://aeforme.org/2025-spring-conference) to learn more and register.

“We are thrilled to welcome art educators from around the state into the vibrant art spaces in downtown Waterville and on Colby College’s campus,” said Tyler French, associate director of artistic planning and community engagement at Colby. “We hope they will return and engage, to see the arts ecosystem in Waterville as rich in resources to support their professional development and their students.”

“The MAEA is so thrilled to have the opportunity to work with Waterville Creates, Colby College, and the greater Waterville community for our spring conference this year! It is sure to be an epic event,” said Matt Johnson, MAEA’s president-elect.

## Public comment open for Monarch Butterfly Endangered Species Act

**MAINE** -- The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service is reopening the public comment period for a proposed rule to list the monarch butterfly as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act. The proposed rule includes species-specific protections and flexibilities to encourage conservation of the butterfly under section 4(d) of the ESA. The comment period will be

reopened for 60 days, until May 19, 2025, to give all interested parties an additional opportunity to comment on the proposed rule, which was published on December 12, 2024. Comments that were previously submitted do not need to be resubmitted as they are already incorporated into the public record and will be fully considered in the final listing determination.

Public comments

are an integral part of the ESA listing determination process, and the Service recognizes the complexity of the information requested for public comment in the proposed rule. By reopening the public comment period, the agency is ensuring everyone has a chance to share information relevant to the conservation status of the species, including the associated 4(d) rule and pro-

posed critical habitat designation.

The reopening of the public comment period for the monarch butterfly will publish in the Federal Register Reading Room. A reopened 60-day comment period will open on March 19, 2025, and will close on May 19, 2025. Information about how to submit comments can be found on [regulations.gov](https://www.regulations.gov) by searching for docket number

FWS-R3-ES-2024-0137.

Everyone can play a role in saving the monarch butterfly. Because of the species’ general habitat use and wide distribution, all sectors of society have an opportunity to participate in a broad range of conservation efforts throughout the butterfly’s range. You can learn more about the monarch butterfly, the monarch listing proposal, and how to help conserve

monarch butterflies at [fws.gov/monarch](https://www.fws.gov/monarch).

*The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service works with others to conserve, protect and enhance fish, wildlife, plants and their habitats for the continuing benefit of the American people. For more information, visit [www.fws.gov](https://www.fws.gov) and connect with us on social media: Facebook, Instagram, X, LinkedIn, Flickr, and YouTube.*

## 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 federal 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.

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 receiving benefits.

The Maine Department of Labor’s Rapid Response team is hold-

ing 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/](https://www.maine.gov/labor/federal-workers/)

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# UMaine Extension presents webinar on perennial gardening

**ORONO, ME** – University of Maine Cooperative Extension will offer a webinar for home gardeners on selecting resilient perennials from 6 - 7:15 p.m. on Wednesday, April 9.

Herbaceous perennials support wildlife and pollinators while adding beauty to home gardens. As long-term investments, perennials can also be affected by fluctuations in temperature, rainfall and snowfall. Stephanie Bur-

nett, professor of horticulture in the School of Food and Agriculture at the University of Maine, will discuss what to consider when selecting perennials and make recommendations for resilient Maine gardens. This webinar is the final in the 4-part series, Gardening 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



Resilient perennials support wildlife and pollinators while adding beauty to your garden. Photo courtesy University of Maine Cooperative Extension/Edwin Remsburg.

information or to request a reasonable accommodation, contact Rebecca Gray at 207.356.1348 or [extension.gardening@maine.edu](mailto:extension.gardening@maine.edu).

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

# New Maine hearing loss support chapter wins national award

**MAINE** -- The national organization Hearing Loss Association of America (HLAA) has awarded the Downeast Chapter of Maine the "Up and Coming HLAA Chapter of the Year." The announcement was made on March 10, with the official award presentation scheduled for the HLAA National Convention in Indianapolis this June. Four Maine Downeast members

will be present to accept the award. HLAA Downeast was founded in 2021 after Margaret Myatt and Pat Dobbs connected during a national HLAA convention. Sharing a vision for a support network for Mainers with hearing loss, they crafted a mission statement, built a website, and established key connections. Their vision became reality in 2022, when the chapter

was officially formed and received 501(c)(3) nonprofit status. Since launching remote meetings in May 2022, HLAA DownEast has expanded to host in-person meetings and events across the state, including Kennebunkport, Portland, Augusta, Ellsworth, Bucksport, and Bridgton.

Meet the founders:  
Margaret Myatt has worn hearing aids since

age 30 and has been an HLAA leader since 2013. She previously served on the Steering Committee of HLAA-Central Massachusetts and earned HLAA's Hearing Assistive Technology (HAT) certificate. She retired to Maine in 2020.

Pat Dobbs began losing her hearing in her early 20s and now has a cochlear implant. She has been an HLAA leader for

over 20 years, founding the HLAA-Morris County New Jersey Chapter and earned a Peer Mentoring certification from Gallaudet University. She moved to Maine in 2019.

They are joined by dedicated HLAA DownEast leaders:  
Thomas Watson III (Dixmont, ME) • Andy Chandler (South Portland, ME)

Gwendolyn LaPointe (Bangor, ME)

Upcoming Events:  
Thursday, April 17, 2025, 7:00 PM – Zoom event: Hearing Loss 101  
Saturday, May 17, 2025 – In-person luncheon in Augusta

For more information or to join the mailing list, email [pat@coachdobbs.com](mailto:pat@coachdobbs.com) or visit <https://hearinglossmaine.org>.

# MDOL launches Work Source Maine Virtual CareerCenter

**AUGUSTA, ME** – The Maine Department of Labor (MDOL), along with local workforce boards, has officially launched the Work Source Maine Virtual CareerCenter, a new online platform designed to connect both job seekers and employers with essential workforce resources. The platform provides easy access to career services, hiring support, and training programs, ensuring that individuals and businesses

across the state can find the tools they need to succeed. "While in-person CareerCenter services are still available across the state, this new virtual CareerCenter option will make personalized services even easier to access," said Labor Commissioner Laura Fortman. "Job seekers and employers can now connect 24-7 with workforce resources from wherever they are, and tailor their search results to fit their

needs." The Work Source Maine Virtual CareerCenter serves as a centralized hub for workforce development, offering job seekers access to personalized job search tools, resume-building resources, career counseling, and virtual hiring events. The platform also provides employers with resources to support recruitment and retention, including hiring incentives, workforce development programs, and guidance on labor laws and best practices.

"Forty percent of Maine's population lives in rural areas. This virtual career center will help every citizen in every corner of the state to access resources and information to help them find their place in Maine's labor force—great news for job seekers and employers alike," said

Erin V. Benson, Executive Director of the Central Western Maine Workforce Development Board.

"The Northeastern Workforce Development Board is excited to see this statewide launch of the Virtual Career Center. Individuals unable to physically access one of the Career Center locations can now go online and find valuable training and employment resources with this new user-friendly platform for job seekers and employers! This resource is going to be especially important for the people of Maine who live in our more rural communities and are unable to travel due to gas prices, health reasons, winter road conditions, or simply not enough time in their day. This is a big win for Maine's workforce!" said Galan Williamson, Executive Director of the Northeastern Workforce Development Board.

their experience using the site, stating, "I really love the website. I just moved here from Boston, and the website is so well put together. There are a lot of resources there and phone numbers – the contact information was very, very helpful. Overall, it made an amazing impression because I have used other websites, and they were not as resourceful as this one."

Designed to be inclusive and accessible, the Virtual CareerCenter offers multilingual support and tailored resources for veterans, older workers, individuals with disabilities, and those re-entering the workforce. Employers can take advantage of tools that streamline hiring processes and strengthen workforce development efforts.

"The Coastal Counties Workforce Board is thrilled to know that we have a resource in Maine that can be accessed by anyone with a computer, tablet, or smartphone. The Virtual CareerCenter re-

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sources and services are invaluable for anyone who is unemployed or underemployed or for anyone wanting to change jobs who needs our services. Available services include career advising, coaching, access to job training and other support. This is not just a website for job postings! With this new online Virtual CareerCenter, visitors can obtain services from the comfort of their home, 24/7, making these resources more accessible than ever," said Antionette Mancusi, Executive Director of the Coastal Counties Workforce Board.

The Work Source Maine Virtual CareerCenter is now live and available to all Maine residents. To explore the platform and access its resources, visit [www.myworksource-maine.gov](http://www.myworksource-maine.gov).

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

**Thursdays**  
LEWISTON -- Baby Sensory Playtime in the Lewiston Public Library’s Children’s Department every Thursday morning from 10am to 12pm.

Drop-in and join us for Baby Sensory Playtime! Babies and their caregivers will have the opportunity to interact with a variety of sensory toys and socialize with other families with young children. Playtime with sensory toys contributes to a baby’s cognitive development, fine motor skills, social and emotional development, creativity, and language development.

**Recommended**  
for babies ages birth-18 months and their caregivers. Siblings are always welcome. This program is free, open to the public and no registration is required.

**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 27**  
AUBURN -- Auburn Public Library’s “Free For All: The Public Library” Film Screening & Discussion to be taking place on Thursday, March 27, 2025 from 3:30 to 5:30 PM.

**Mar 29**  
BUXTON -- Try our delicious Haddock Supper Buffet - Saturday, March 29, 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.

**Mar 29**  
AUBURN –Auburn Public Library’s 2nd Annual Margery Eyer Schuler Silent Art Auction starts at 10:00 AM, with bidding closing at 11:00 AM. This highly anticipated event offers attendees the opportunity to support the library while celebrating local artists and their incredible talent.

**Mar 30**  
AUBURN -- About

Love: Grief & Loss, 11:30-1pm. First Universalist Church of Auburn, 169 Pleasant St. (enter on Spring St. across from Dairy Joy). Freewill donations accepted. Parking; accessible. FMI 783-0461.

**Mar 31**  
LEWISTON -- Join us at the Lewiston Public Library for Read and Create Silly Storybooks in the Children’s Department on Monday, March 31st at 11am. Recommended for children ages 6 – 13 years old and siblings are welcome. Come listen in on a silly story read-aloud and create your very own silly storybook using pictures and ad libs in a paper booklet. Get creative by filling in the blanks with silly words and illustrate your very own silly story. All materials are provided. This program is free, open to the public, and no registration is required.

**Apr 4**  
AUBURN -- BOOK-STORE “Buck-A-Bag” CLEARANCE SALE - Thousands of book available for \$1 a bag. Fill any bag with books and pay just \$1 (as long as you can lift it). Friday, April 4 from 1:00 - 5:00, and Saturday,

April 5 from 9:30-3:00. Auburn Public Library Bookstore, 49 Spring Street (Ground Floor). Auburn. Contact the Library for information on tickets for the Early Bird Sale (Friday 11:00 - 1:00).

**Apr 12**  
BRUNSWICK -- The 2024-25 UUCB Concerts for a Cause Series season will include folk, jazz, blues, celtic, and choral singing for justice. This season’s charities receiving 100% of the profits from the concert are Brunswick Area Teen Center and Maine Family Planning. For further details about the concerts, go to <https://www.uubrunswick.org/events/>.

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

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

Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door, and \$10 for students/children. Available at the church office, Gulf of Maine Books, or at [ticketstripe.com/guy-davis](https://ticketstripe.com/guy-davis).

**Apr 15**  
TURNER -- Music for Mavis” hosts 2025 Cabin Fever Concerts at 98 MATHEWS WAY, OFF RT. 117 TURNER CENTER. 6:00-7:30 PM. Leave the winter blues behind and enjoy music with your fellow music lovers, right beside the gazebo, downstairs in the TPLibrary Building. The music is as follows:

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

**Apr 22**  
LEWISTON -- Celebrate Earth Day at the Lewiston Public Library in the Children’s Department on Tuesday, April 22, from 5:00 p.m. to 6:30 p.m. Children will learn about the importance of Earth Day and the ways they can reduce, reuse, and recycle. By using bottle caps, recycled paper, and plastic bags, children can create stylish friendship bracelets, goofy puppets, or adorable mini pets. This program is recommended for elementary-aged kids 6–14 years old. Free. No registration required. Bring recycled materials.

**Apr 22**  
LEWISTON -- At 11am Chewonki will present their traveling natural history program, Owls of Maine: Habits and Adaptations of Maine’s Native Owls in Callahan Hall at

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Lewiston Public Library. This program includes an intimate and detailed look at a live owl, bringing these creatures of the night into the light! Free. No registration required. All ages are welcome to attend.

**Apr 22-26**  
LEWISTON -- Join us at the Lewiston Public Library for Make an Owl Friend in the Children’s Department on the 3rd floor from April 22nd-26th. Come create your very own owl friend out of paper and feathers. Make an owl to take home or create one for display at the Lewiston Public Library. Use crayons, colored pencils, feathers and glue to decorate your paper owl. All materials are provided. Free. In person. For more information contact the Children’s Department at 513-3133 or [LPLKids@LewistonMaine.gov](mailto:LPLKids@LewistonMaine.gov)

**Apr 24**  
LEWISTON -- At 12PM at the Lewiston Public Library, don’t miss SPRING BREAK STEM: DISSECT AN OWL PELLET. Owls swallow their food whole but cannot digest bones and fur so these are separated by the owl’s gizzard. After several hours, the owl regurgitates a pellet of the undigested material. The pellets have been professionally sanitized and arrive ready for dissection, offering participants the chance to identify the bones of the owl’s previous meals. Free. No registration required. Gloves and dissection materials will be provided, as well as one owl pellet per participant. This activity is recommended for kids ages 8 and older.

**Apr 25**  
LEWISTON – 10:00am at the Lewiston Public Library: SOME BUNNY LOVES YOU KEEPSAKE. Use your young child’s footprints to create a spring bunny keepsake. Free. No registration required. Recommended for caregivers and their children between the ages of birth-5 years old. 513-3133; [www.LPLonline.org](http://www.LPLonline.org)

**Apr 26**  
TOPSHAM -- “All Aboard for the 2025 Great Falls Model Railroad Club Train Show! 10:00 AM - 3:00 PM, Mt. Ararat High School, 68 Eagles

Way, Topsham, ME 04086 (Handicapped Accessible). Admission: Just \$5 per person (kids under 12 free with an adult).

Get ready to immerse yourself in the world of model railroads at the Great Falls Model Railroad Club Train Show in Topsham, ME! With over 100 tables featuring new and used trains, tracks, buildings, books, and more, you’ll find something for every enthusiast. From N to HO, S, O, and G scales, there’s something for everyone to enjoy.

**May 4**  
LYMAN -- 5th Annual Drumming Up Wishes benefiting Make-A-Wish Maine at Funky Bow Brewery, Lyman, ME on Sunday, May 4, from noon to 6 p.m. Donations requested for admission

**May 17**  
BRUNSWICK -- The 2024-25 UUCB Concerts for a Cause Series season will include folk, jazz, blues, celtic, and choral singing for justice. This season’s charities receiving 100% of the profits from the concert are Brunswick Area Teen Center and Maine Family Planning. For further details about the concerts, go to <https://www.uubrunswick.org/events/>.

House of Hamill - Sat, May 17, 2025 at 7:30 pm. Doors open 7:00 pm.

The upcycled Celtic folk trio, House of Hamill, features Brian Buchanan and Rose Baldino of the Celtic folk-rock band Enter the Haggis. They are both accomplished traditional fiddle players and classical violinists, with over 25 years of writing and performance experience between them. They write unusual new fiddle tunes and exciting, unpredictable original songs while breathing new life into traditional and contemporary songs. A third full-time member, Caroline Browning, recently joined the duo, playing bass, mandolin, and vocals. Their music occupies a space between traditional Irish and sophisticated indie folk.

Tickets are \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door, and \$10 for students/children. Available at the church office, Gulf of Maine Books, or online at [ticketstripe.com/house](https://ticketstripe.com/house).



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From her earliest memories, Kathleen's mother, Alice, has been independent. Having raised four children largely on her own, Alice worked until she was 85 and is a fixture in their island community.

But as Alice aged, her vision began to deteriorate. She wanted to continue living independently in the home and community she loved, but she and her kids knew that she needed a helping hand to remain safe and happy.

For the family, that helping hand came from Jim, a Direct Support worker, who lives nearby, and now visits Alice for a few hours, several days a week. He supports her with a variety of household tasks, including shopping and preparing meals. Often, the most valuable support is the conversation and camaraderie he provides.

“Jim is my godsend,” Alice said. “I look forward to him every single week.”

Jim is part of the growing field of Direct Support, ensuring that Mainers with age-related, physical, behavioral, intellectual and cognitive health needs have the support they need to stay safe, independent and empowered to achieve their personal goals.

For Jim, this is the ideal encore career. At 65, he retired from his full-time job; but after two years, he began to feel restless.

“If you have too much time you can overthink things and feel like you’re missing out on something,” he said. “But when you’re helping somebody, it feels like you’re in exactly the right spot. And that’s such a good feeling.”

For Dakota, 24, the steady presence of a Personal Support Specialist, Sonya, has made all the difference in the world. Dakota, who lives with intellectual and developmental disabilities, says that Sonya’s support has allowed him to gain the independence and a sense of connection to the community that he didn’t have before. In addition to assisting with activities of daily living, her support allows him to go to the movies, go to bookstores and do many other activities he loves.

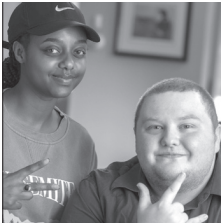
“It makes me feel so happy to be a part of society,” he said. “With her support, I really feel like I’ve been able to flourish.”

To learn more about full-time, part-time and per-diem opportunities in your community, go to [Mainecareerswithpurpose.org](https://Mainecareerswithpurpose.org). Follow @MaineCareerswithPurpose on Facebook and Instagram.



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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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