



## Auburn UU welcomes new members

**AUBURN, ME** — The First Universalist Church of Auburn (known as Auburn UU) welcomed three new members in May. This talented group learned about the history and principles of Unitarian Universalism, and opportunities to minister within the church.

New member sessions are offered by the Membership committee twice per year.

The First Universalist Church of Auburn is located at 169 Pleasant



(Left to right) Paula Spruill (Membership chair), David Liotte, Emily Felger, Rev. DC, and Suzanna Leighton

Street in Auburn. For more information, call 783-0461 or see [www.auburnuu.org](http://www.auburnuu.org).

## Absentee ballots now available

### LEWISTON ME

**LEWISTON, ME** — The Special State Candidate election to fill the vacancy in State House District 94 will be held on Tuesday, February 24. Absentee ballots for this election are currently available from the City Clerk's Office. All pending requests for absentee ballots have been filled and ballots were mailed out on Wednesday.

Registered voters wishing to obtain an absentee ballot may order one via four methods:

1) Call the City Clerk's Office at 513-3124

2) Submit an application form via the mail or red City Hall drop box;

application can be downloaded and printed from the City's website

3) In person at the City Clerk's Office, located on the second floor of City Hall; office hours are Monday, Wednesday, Thursday, 7:45am - 4:00pm and Tuesday, 7:45am - 5:30pm.

4) Online from the City's election website

State House District 94 encompasses part

of Lewiston Ward 2, part of Lewiston Ward 3, part of Lewiston Ward 4, and part of Lewiston Ward 5. If voters are unsure of

their State House district, they can look it up on the city's election website.

The City's website contains a sample ballot and other election information that voters may find useful. The website address is: <https://www.lewistonmaine.gov/117/Elections>

The statewide deadline to request an absentee ballot is 4pm, Thursday, February 19.

Voters are encouraged to contact the City Clerk's Office at 513-3124 with any questions they may have.

## Twin Cities Swim Team brings home win, 46 personal bests

**MAINE** — Twin Cities Swim Team has completed the halfway point of its 104th season of competitive swimming at The YMCA of Auburn-Lewiston. Under the leadership of new Head Coach, Peter Goulet, TCST has found its stride in the and out of the pool.

Most recently, TCST traveled to the Boothbay Region YMCA to swim the BBY Dolphins on January 17th. TCST not only came home to Auburn-Lewiston with a win, they also had 46 personal best times out of 68 swims. "Winning hap-

pens every day at TCST, it is our motto that "Everyone Swims – Everyone Wins" that is the mentality that I place in the heads of our swimmers." Best times were had by: (From Auburn) Mazelyn Biederwolf, Winnie Curtis, Tristan Proctor, Zander Proctor, Camryn Sawyer, Starla McCue, Lilyana Johnson, Jessica Cormier, Luke Gaspary. (From Lewiston) El Wronski, Anjali Chin, Xxavier Fulgham, Evan Cornish, Toni Asselin, Hazel-Rae Barnes, Sydney Flint, Addison Flint, Elise Young, Wyatt Fish,

Talon Lachance, Madden Lagasse, Emmalyn Pulk. (From Poland) Matthew Raby (From Lisbon) Emily Ellis. (From Hebron) Ziyah Proulx-Shadel. (From New Gloucester) Malik Marafa. (From Gray) Parker Welch.

On February 8th, TCST is holding its annual "Splash For Cash" Fundraiser. If you would like to help the swimmers of TCST by donating, please send your donation to: Twin Cities Swim Team, YMCA of Auburn-Lewiston, 62 Turner Street, Auburn, ME 04210.

## Auburn Republican Caucus

Saturday, January 31st

AMS Cafeteria (use the back entrance)  
38 Falcon Drive

Registration starts at 1:00PM  
Everyone must sign in before the meeting starts.

Called by Kryston Chapman

Unaffiliated voters may register the day of the meeting.  
Change of party MUST be done 15 days prior to any caucus or election.

For more information email:  
[gopauburnmaine@gmail.com](mailto:gopauburnmaine@gmail.com)

## January Special Section

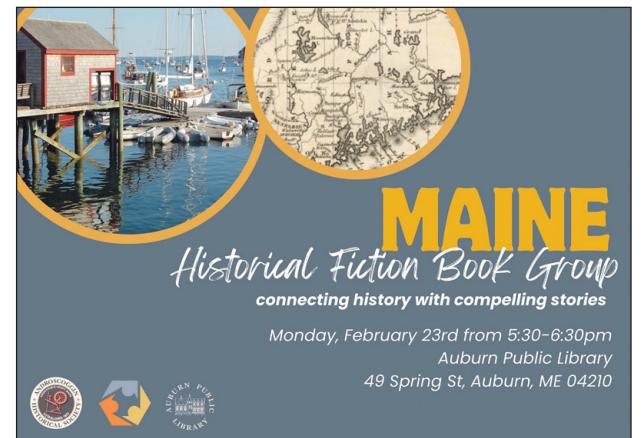
### National Human Trafficking Awareness Month

page 9 - 10

## Historical Fiction Book Group meets each month

**MAINE** — Join the Androscoggin Historical Society, Auburn Public Library, and Lewiston Public Library as we partner to explore fiction with a historical twist. We will be meeting on the last Monday of each month from 5:30 – 6:30pm to discuss a historical fiction novel. Our next meeting will take place on February 23rd @ 5:30pm, at the Auburn Public Library, located at 49 Spring St., Auburn, ME 04210.

We will be reading Stories from the Old Squire's Farm (chapters 18-36) by C.A. Stephens. Participants will be expected to obtain a copy of the book independently. You may place a hold on Minerva using your library card



or contact either the Auburn Public Library or the Lewiston Public Library for assistance with how to borrow a copy of this month's selection.

Locations of future gatherings will rotate between the Androscoggin Historical Society, Auburn

Public Library, and Lewiston Public Library. Future readings to be determined by those who come.

Free to attend. No registration required at this time. No food provided, but feel free to bring your own. Recommended for ages 18+.

## Lewiston Public Library Outreach Program

**LEWISTON, ME** — The Lewiston Public Library is working to spread the word about their Outreach Program, which offers free delivery of library materials to homebound residents of Lewiston. Although the library has been offering this program for years, they are constantly seeking new participants to help make library materials more accessible to the community.

The Lewiston Public Library Outreach Program is a free service that delivers books and other library materials to Lewiston residents who cannot come into their building. Those in either private settings or group facilities are welcome to apply for monthly delivery of up to thirty items from LPL's local collection. Patrons can utilize this service on a regular or temporary

basis.

The Outreach Program helps make the library's resources accessible to the entire Lewiston community, and if you or anyone you know would like access to library materials but are unable to visit the library, please reach out to Lending Services Librarian Regan Flieg at 207-513-3004 ext. 3506 or [rflieg@lewistonmaine.gov](mailto:rflieg@lewistonmaine.gov).

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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## Documentary film award supports bold nonfiction storytelling

**ROCKLAND, ME** — The Ellis-Beauregard Foundation, in collaboration with Points North Institute, today announced the launch of the Ellis-Beauregard Foundation Documentary Film Award, a new annual initiative designed to support visionary nonfiction filmmakers working at the post-production stage.

Ellis-Beauregard Foundation will provide one \$50,000 unrestricted grant to a feature-length documentary currently in post-production, supporting ambitious, artist-driven work that challenges convention and expands the language of nonfiction cinema. Applications will be open March 1 through March 31, 2026.

Rooted in the Ellis-Beauregard Foundation's commitment to bold artistic practice, the Award seeks to advance films with a strong cinematic point of view, a critical engagement with their subject matter, and an openness to experimentation in form and process. Projects from both emerging and established filmmakers are encouraged to apply.

"This Award reflects our belief in documentary as both a living art form

and a vital act of truth telling," said Donna McNeil, Executive Director of the Ellis-Beauregard Foundation. "In an era when truth is contested and clarity is urgently needed, we are proud to support filmmakers who are taking creative risks and advancing their work at a pivotal moment in post-production—when sustained attention and investment can have an outsized impact."

In addition to financial support, the Award includes a creative retreat opportunity hosted by Points North Institute in conjunction with the 2026 Camden International Film Festival (CIFF).

The selected film's director and editor will be invited to attend an intimate retreat focused on craft, collaboration, and creative development. Transportation from a location in the US and lodging will be provided.

During the retreat, the filmmaking team will share a work-in-progress cut in a supportive, peer-driven environment with leading documentary editors, producers, and creative advisers.

The goal is to provide rigorous feedback, space for reflection, and meaningful dialogue around

the creative challenges of post-production.

"Points North exists to create time, space, and community for filmmakers to do their most ambitious work," said Elise McCave, Executive Director of Points North Institute. "This Award is deeply aligned with that mission. By pairing substantial unrestricted funding with a retreat rooted in trust and craft, and timed to coincide with the 22nd Camden International Film Festival, we hope to support films at a moment when focused attention can help unlock their full creative potential."

Projects anticipated to be completed by Summer 2027 are preferred. Finished films will be considered for inclusion in the 2027 Camden International Film Festival.

Finalists will be reviewed by a panel of invited industry leaders, with selection based on artistic excellence, originality, clarity of vision, and creative potential.

Applications open March 1 and close March 31, 2026.

For full application guidelines and details go to [ellis-beauregardfoundation.org](http://ellis-beauregardfoundation.org).

## Off-Broadway hit **STILL** opens at The Public Theatre

**LEWISTON, ME** — What do you do when you love someone, but hate some things they believe?

Lost love is rekindled in the funny, heartbreaking, sexy and smart new play **STILL**, playing Jan 30 – Feb 8, when a couple who broke up in their 30s get another chance at love in their 60s.

Secrets are exposed, second chances are given, and an avocado goes flying in the Maine premiere of this recent Off-Broadway hit and Outer Critics Circle nominee for Best New American Play. Compelling and provocative, you'll be talking about this show all the way home.

Part love story, part fly on the wall conversation so many of us are having, **STILL** takes you on an entertaining journey filled with unexpected plot twists and surprises.

Playwright Lia Romeo will be joining the Sunday, Feb 1 post-show discussion with the director and actors to answer audience questions and share her insights about the play.

Stepping into the roles of former lovers Mark and Helen will be Equity actors Joe Gately and Janet Mitchko. Joe and Janet previously appeared together at The Public Theatre in *Good*



**Joe Gately & Janet Mitchko in "Still"**

People are thrilled to be reunited onstage. Joe has appeared onstage in New York and at various regional theatres from Colorado to Vermont, as well as on television in *Blue Bloods* and *Blacklist* among others.

Janet has been at the artistic helm of The Public Theatre for the past 33 seasons acting, directing and building the theatre from its infancy. Prior to life in Maine, Janet was an actress, director, voiceover talent and acting teacher in New York City. Some of her favorite roles at The Public include *Enchanted April*, *Educating Rita*, *Terra Nova* and *The Glass Menagerie*.

Directing **STILL** will be Mark Routhier. Mark directed and ran the new play development at The NOLA Project in New Orleans, Orlando Shakespeare Theatre,

Magic Theatre in San Francisco, and was Lit Chair for the National New Play Network.

The set for **STILL** is designed by Chad LeFebvre, lighting by Michael Reidy and costumes by Kevin Hutchins.

**STILL** runs Jan 30 – Feb 8 at The Public Theatre, Lewiston/Auburn's Professional Theatre, located at 31 Maple St. Lewiston Thurs-Friday at 7:00pm, Sat at 3pm, Sun at 2pm with a Sat evening show on Feb 7 at 7:30pm. Tickets \$35 - \$15. Tickets and information at [www.thepublictheatre.org](http://www.thepublictheatre.org) or 207-782-3200.

Sponsored by Butler Bros., DaVinci's Eatery, Twin City Times, Baxter Brewing Co.

Season Underwriters: Sun Journal, Platz Associates, Bennett Radio Group

## Free artist events at Unity Environmental University

**NEW GLOUCESTER, ME** — upcoming Artist Series Events at Free Artist Events Unity Environmental University, Freeport Hall, 70 Farm View Drive, New Gloucester, ME:

2/26 - Ian Trask "Art from the Waste Stream"

Join us on the Pine-land Farms campus for a

free lecture and reception featuring Maine-based sculptor and multimedia artist Ian Trask. Ian Trask is a sculptor and multimedia artist who transforms waste materials into objects and installations with new purpose and integrity. Some of the artist's work will be on display. There will be a catered recep-

tion.

Start time: 5:00 pm  
4/9 - Matt Russ "Mo-

ments of Clarity" Join us on the Pine-land Farms campus for a free lecture and reception featuring Maine-based landscape artist Matt Russ. Russ paints from life, working outdoors and often backpacking into remote locations. He favors protected lands, such as state and national parks. Some of the artist's work will be on display. There will be a catered reception.

Start time: 5:00 pm  
5/28 - An Artist Talk with Edwige Charlot

Join us on the Pine-land Farms campus for a free lecture and reception featuring French-born Haitian immigrant artist and designer Edwige Charlot. In their artistic practice, Charlot borrows from installation, collage, and printmaking to create works from a lexical visual Creole language. Some of the artist's work will be on display. There will be a catered reception.

Start time: 5:00 pm

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# Newsmakers, Names & Faces

## Bangor Savings Bank grant supports Trinity Jubilee Center

MAINE — The Bangor Savings Bank Foundation has awarded \$212,000 in grants to support 19 non-profit organizations across Northern New England. These grants reflect the Foundation's mission to strengthen local communities by enabling nonprofit organizations to deliver educational and economic opportunities, critical services, and create meaningful impact across the region.

"These nonprofits are tackling some of the most pressing challenges facing Northern New England — from food security and heating assistance to workforce development and access to essential health services," said Bob Montgomery-Rice, President and CEO of Bangor Savings Bank. "By supporting their efforts, we're advancing the Foundation's mission to build thriving and vibrant communities."

Among the recipients are organizations leading transformative work in their communities, including the Mark Stebbins Community Center, which is set to open in the fall of 2026 and provide collaborative services for children and families on the West Side of Manchester, NH. With a \$125,000 multi-year grant (\$25,000 over 5 years) from The Bangor Savings Bank Foundation, the Center will unite key partners to address critical needs, including economic stability, education, food, healthcare, social services, and housing.

"This investment helps us realize a dream of creating a hub where families can access essential services under one roof," said Jeanine Tousignant, Project Facilitator for the Mark Stebbins Community Center. "It's about building stronger communities and brighter futures for generations to come."

In Bangor, ME, Preble Street received a \$6,000 grant to provide basic needs and intensive casework to individuals experiencing homelessness and complex needs at Hope House. As one of only five privately operated adult low-barrier shelters in Maine—and the only one



north of Waterville—Hope House is also Preble Street's first 24/7, year-round program outside Portland.

"Hope House provides more than just a place to sleep. Staff provide trauma-informed care and harm reduction, housing navigation services, case management, healthy and nutritious meals, and more," said Heather Davis, Private Grants Director at Preble Street. "This support helps us provide more Mainers with the stability and hope they need to move out of homelessness."

Grants were also awarded to:

\$15,000  
Winslow Community Cupboard  
Winslow, Kennebec County, ME

Winslow Community Cupboard is a volunteer-powered food bank dedicated to reducing hunger and food insecurity for children and families in the Winslow area. With support from this grant, the Cupboard will install a new cooler and freezer, doubling its storage capacity, streamlining volunteer efforts, and enabling the organization to offer more fresh produce through its on-site pantry and mobile outreach initiatives, reaching even more neighbors in need.

Additional Grant Recipients Include:

Bigelow Laboratory for Ocean Sciences | \$15,000 (\$7,500 over 2 years)

East Boothbay, Lincoln County, ME  
CHIP, Inc. | \$5,500  
Newcastle, Lincoln County, ME

Christine B. Foundation, Inc. | \$15,000 (\$7,500 over 2 years)

Bangor, Statewide, ME

CityHope of New Hampshire | \$12,500

Concord, Merrimack County, NH

Eastern Area Agency on Aging | \$5,500

Brewer, Penobscot County, ME

Ellsworth Free Medical Clinic | \$5,500

Ellsworth, Hancock County, ME

FocusMaine | \$50,000

(\$25,000 over 2 years)  
Augusta, Statewide, ME

Maine Development Foundation | \$50,000 (\$12,500 over 4 years)

Augusta, Statewide, ME

MaineHealth | \$100,000 (\$25,000 over 4 years)

Portland, Statewide, ME

Mid Coast Hunger Prevention Program | \$5,500

Brunswick, Sagadahoc County, ME

New Generation | \$10,000

Greenland, Rockingham County, NH

Partners for Peace | \$5,500

Bangor, Penobscot County, ME

Penobscot Community Health Care (PCHC) | \$20,000

Belfast, Waldo County, ME

The Friendly Kitchen | \$5,500

Concord, Merrimack County, NH

The Salvation Army | \$5,500

Bangor, Penobscot County, ME

Trinity Jubilee Center Inc. | \$7,500

Lewiston, Androscoggin County, ME

## "Maine's Dynamic Flora" lecture with Stanton Bird Club

AUBURN, ME — On February 2nd, the Stanton Bird Club will be hosting the third in its 2025-26 lecture series featuring speaker, Eric Doucette on "Maine's Dynamic Flora: rare historic species and potential new arrivals".

The topic of rare historic flora caught the attention of many in Maine in the 1970's when the Furbish's lousewort, an endangered species of wildflower found only along the upper banks of the Saint John River was threatened by the proposed Dickey-Lincoln hydroelectric dam. It was one of the first plant species to be protected under the Endangered Species Act. We will be learning about other historic species and species that may be adapting to life in Maine due to the changing climate.

As the State botanist for the Maine Natural Areas program, Dr. Doucette



Eric Doucette PhD

conducts field inventories for rare plants, rare and exemplary natural habitats and manages Maine's official list of threatened and endangered plants. He is also the president of the Josselyn Botanical Society.

The talk will be held on Monday, February 2nd from 4-6pm at the Auburn Public Library. The public is welcome. The lecture se-

ries is free of charge.

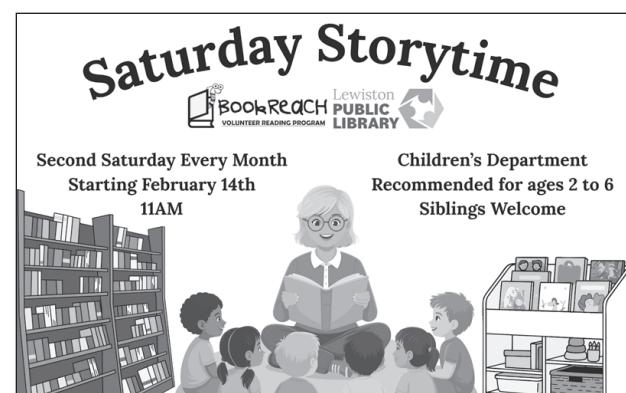
The Stanton Bird Club, a leader in environmental awareness, owns and manages the Thorne-crag Nature Sanctuary in Lewiston as well as the Woodbury Nature Sanctuary in Monmouth and Litchfield. More information about other activities of the Club can be found at [www.StantonBirdClub.org](http://www.StantonBirdClub.org).

## LPL hosts Saturday Storytime

LEWISTON, ME — Join the Lewiston Public Library for Saturday Storytime in the Children's Department on the second Saturday of every month starting February 14th at 11:00AM. Recommended for children ages 2 – 6 years old and their caregivers. Siblings are always welcome.

Enjoy an interactive storytime celebrating our BookReach Volunteer Reading Program. Join us for some fun with books, songs, and body movement while building early literacy skills.

The BookReach Volunteer Reading Program is community collaboration of volunteer readers who deliver Storytime to children in licensed family childcare homes and centers. Our mis-



sion is to raise a community of readers by enriching the lives of young children through the pleasure of reading. BookReach began in the fall of 1997 with a grant from L.L.Bean and is now funded by the Lewiston and Auburn Public Libraries. To learn how you can volunteer visit: <https://lplonline.org/events-programs/bookreach/>

This program is free, open to the public, and no registration is required.

The Lewiston Public Library is located downtown at 200 Lisbon Street at the corner of Pine Street. More information on Storytime programs is available by contacting the Lewiston Public Library at 513-3133 or [LPLKids@lewistonmaine.gov](mailto:LPLKids@lewistonmaine.gov).

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

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## Seniors Not Acting Their Age An Early Christmas Traverse of Pleasant Mountain



Two hikers descend Ledges Trail on Pleasant Mountain



Phenomenal views of Mount Washington can be seen from the summit of Pleasant Mountain



A hiker approaches the summit of Bald Peak during a Pleasant Mountain traverse

Pleasant Mountain is the tallest peak in southwestern Maine and probably the most popular mountain hike in the region. Outstanding views from Southwest Ridge and Ledges Trails coupled with an exceptionally scenic summit are the likely reasons for its popularity. Consisting of a ten-mile trail system managed by Loon Echo Land Trust, four trailheads ultimately lead to the highpoint where truly phenomenal vistas of the White Mountains in New Hampshire can be seen from west facing cliffs.

In the past, Christmas Day club hikes on Pleasant Mountain were common but that tradition ended a few years ago. Committed on Christmas Day, I announced a Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society early-Christmas climb of Pleasant Mountain scheduled for December 22nd. Long-time outdoor companion,

Brent Elwell, was able to join me during the busy holiday season.

Since multiple trails lead to the summit, there are several opportunities for a traverse. Brent and I decided on a traverse beginning at the Ledges Trailhead and ending at Bald Peak Trailhead.

Skies were partly sunny and gusty winds predicted at higher elevations when we arrived at Bald Peak Trailhead on Mountain Road in Bridgton on a cold winter morning. A recent rainstorm had washed away much of the snow leaving bare ground or a patchy ice and hardened snow surface. We elected to leave snowshoes behind and carry micro spikes. Since strong winds were forecast, we packed for severe wind chills.

We left my vehicle at the trailhead parking area and drove west on Moun-

tain Road for about two miles to Ledges Trailhead in Denmark. The large parking area was covered with ice convincing me to start with micro spikes which I wore throughout the trek. Brent opted to forego wearing them at the outset. As it turned out, there was no ideal choice.

After passing a kiosk on the right, we hiked steadily up a rocky path with patchy ice and hard-packed snow in a predominantly hardwood forest. After crossing a narrow open stream, the gradient increased and a succession of switchbacks ensued.

While ascending the right shoulder of a rocky prominence immediately beyond the switchbacks, the trail was inundated with hard ice. Working right, we bushwhacked around the treacherous surface and emerged onto extensive ledges that are

the source of the trails name. Fortunately, the ledges had less ice than expected.

We hiked easily up the ledges enjoying views of Moose and Beaver Ponds below and the Southwest Summit of Pleasant Mountain in the west. At the head of the ledges, we reentered a forested landscape and began to climb more steeply.

We soon arrived at the junction with the Southwest Ridge Trail on the left. Continuing right, climbing a precipitous ledge was next. We maneuvered up the right side, crossed to the left at the top, and followed a weaving, scenic path to the summit.

Fortunately, the predicted strong winds were nonexistent. We paused for a snack while embracing fabulous panoramic vistas of Mount Washington and the

Presidential Range in the west.

The Bald Peak Trail begins immediately east of a closed fire tower. Shortly after entering the trail, we were confronted with an extensive section of ice that continued to the Fire Tower Trail junction on the left. By bushwhacking on the right, we were able to avoid the worst of it.

Below the junction, the ice diminished and transitioned to crunchy snow as the path gradually declined in a sparse, mixed hardwood and conifer forest. Rolling terrain followed for about a mile to the foot of Bald Peak where we encountered a ridge of rising ledges partially covered with ice and snow.

We carefully negotiated to the top where there are limited views. Bald Peak is no longer bald as a stand of stunted conifers now populate the

summit area.

The steep descent of Bald Peak, and the trail below, required constant careful maneuvering to avoid a fall. The difficulty of the narrow, twisting path, already cluttered with boulders and tree roots, was increased by sporadic ice and hard-packed snow that persisted to the trailhead.

On arrival, we celebrated a successful traverse despite the various obstacles. Perhaps this will be the beginning of a new pre-Christmas hiking tradition.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* narrates many more exciting Maine mountain exploits, including a winter traverse of the Traveler Range in Baxter State Park.

The author of *The Great Mars Hill Bank Robbery* and *Mountains for Mortals – New England*, Ron Chase resides in Topsham. His latest book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* is available at North Country Press and through online retailers. Visit his website at [www.ronchaseoutdoors.com](http://ronchaseoutdoors.com) or he can be reached at [ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net](mailto:ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net)

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## LONGFELLOW DAYS 2026: Finding Your Voice

### BRUNSWICK, ME

Brunswick's month-long celebration of poetry, Longfellow Days, begins on February 1st with the first of four Sunday Readings by local, published poets in a new venue: Lancaster Lounge in Moulton Union on Bowdoin's campus.

In this, the 22nd year of honoring the legacy of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, Longfellow Days continues to offer poets, presentations, music, workshops, tours, and an interfaith service.

This year's theme, "Finding Your Voice" offers an ideal opportunity to explore the distinct acts of creating, writing, performing and enjoying poetry. Throughout February, there are chances to hear over 50 poets and community members read original work and poems they enjoy.

As ever, the month will conclude with a festive open mic celebration on Longfellow's birthday, Friday, February 27th. "Over the years we've had many emerging poets step to our Open Mic," said Longfellow Days' co-chair, Maryli Tiemann, "including local farmers, students, folks who had never shared their work before. Audiences are welcoming and inspired. We all enjoy spotlighting poetry from throughout our community."

Here are ways to join in honoring the 2026 living legacy of Longfellow, Maine's world renowned poet:

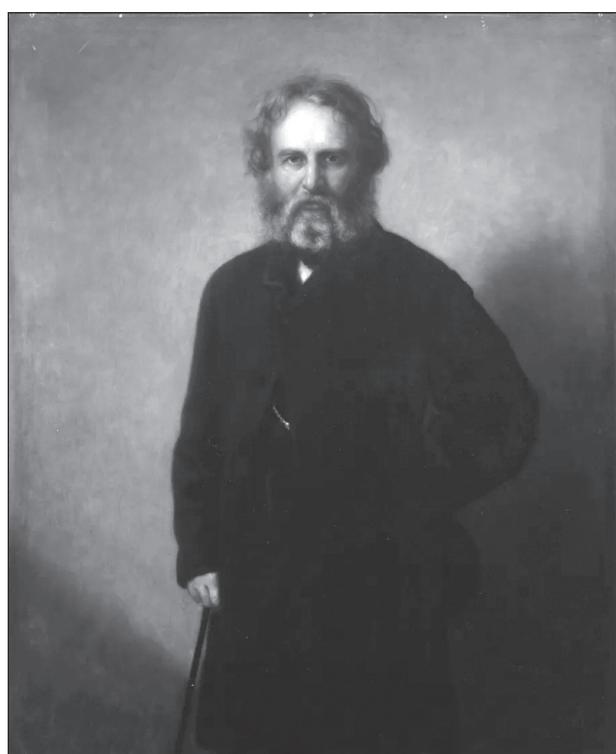
Sun, Feb 01, 1 pm, Sunday Readings Part One (Lancaster Lounge, Moulton Union, Bowdoin)

Wed, Feb 04, 1 pm, Winter Wisdom: A Poet's Dilemma (UU Church)

Sun, Feb 08, 1 pm, Sunday Readings, Part Two (Lancaster Lounge,



Bowdoin's a cappella group, the Longfellow, posing in front of the Bible Longfellow signed and donated to his church in 1878.



Portrait of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, 1862, Painted by George Peter Alexander Healy, (1813-1894), Bowdoin College Museum of Art

Moulton Union)

Thu, Feb 12, 2 pm, Interpreting a Poem (Pejepscot History Center, 159 Park Row)

Sat, Feb 14, 11 am & 1 pm, Chamberlain House Tours (226 Maine Street)

Sun, Feb 15, 10 am, Interfaith Service (UU Church)

Sun, Feb 15, Sunday Readings, Part Three (Lancaster Lounge, Moulton Union)

Fri, Feb 20, Christmas Bells Lecture (Merrymeeting Room, Thornton Oaks)

Sun, Feb 22, Sunday Readings, Part Four (Lancaster Lounge, Moulton Union)

Fri, Feb 27, Open

Mic & Longfellow Birthday Celebration (UU Church)

For the schedule of Longfellow Days with complete details of all events, go to <https://www.uubrunswick.org/programs/longfellow-days-2026/>

Longfellow Days' Funders and Collaborators include: Bowdoin College, Brunswick Downtown Association, Midcoast Senior College, Nathaniel Davis Fund, Pejepscot History Center, The Senter Fund, Thornton Oaks, and the Unitarian Universalist Church of Brunswick. Thanks to sponsors, all events are free and open to the public.

## Food for Thought Do you have a cancer-causing roommate?

By Ann Morrell, RN, Health Writer

New England homes are known for cellars, basements, and crawl spaces. We love the extra storage space for a family room, bar or pool table, and the old farms even have root cellars. But there is a danger lurking in the soil around your home. Radon: a radioactive, odorless, colorless gas is seeping into some homes and is a known cause of lung cancer. Radon is quiet, neat and never leaves a light on, but you don't want this toxic gas in your home.

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer in non-smokers and 2nd leading cause in smokers. Read that again. Prevention is the best treatment for cancer. If you can lower your risk it is worth the time to get tested. Testing is cheap and Maine has several options for reducing your home's exposure.

While exposure is likely and small amounts may be safe, if you are a smoker and your home has high radon levels, your risk for lung cancer is extremely high.

Radon occurs from Uranium that naturally decays underground. Uranium is a common element in the earth's core and New England is known to have elevated radon levels from

this element. Because it is impossible to detect by smell or sight, and there are no symptoms to show exposure to radon, testing your home's air and water is the only way to know.

There are also simple urine tests to check your body's heavy metal load of Mercury, Lead and Uranium if you do find higher levels in your home.

Reducing exposure, known as mitigation, involves sealing cracks, improving ventilation or treating water/air where they enter the home. Some homes will test positive for air, water or both. It is important to contact a water system installer to discuss the most cost effective options or the NRSB National Radon Safety Board or the Maine State Radon Office.

For more information about testing visit the Maine Indoor Air Quality Council <https://maineindoorair.org/radon/>

*FOOD FOR THOUGHT* is a monthly initiative of The Cancer Resource Center of Western Maine to share information with the public about the importance of prevention. Each month we will focus on local resources, education about cancer causing agents and where to find more information.

*About the Author*

Ann Morrell is a practicing Registered Nurse and Health Content Writer. Her varied 12+ years of nursing experience ensure that her content provides technical information with practical insights.

The Cancer Resource Center of Western Maine is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization located at 59 Winter St, Norway. They offer a variety of wellness programs and activities, travel and food assistance, and a variety of comfort items, free to anyone affected by cancer. Check out their website, [www.crcfwm.org](http://www.crcfwm.org) or for more information, find them on Facebook, or call 890-0329.

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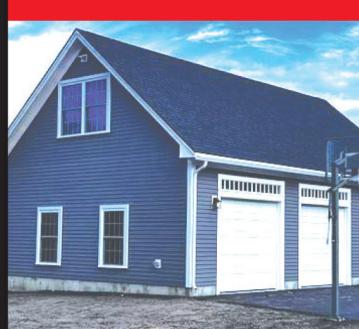
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# Arts & Entertainment

## **Yard Sauce at Side Door Coffeehouse in February**

**BRUNSWICK, ME** – The Side Door Coffeehouse is a venue for local musicians and others (professional and amateur) to share their talents, and for residents and visitors of the Midcoast community to enjoy great entertainment and conversation in a relaxed setting. Organized by a group of volunteers from the Unitarian Universalist Church of Brunswick, the Side Door Coffeehouse operates on the second Friday of every month except August.

Admission is \$12 for adults and free for children 17 and under.

The Friday, February 13th installment will feature:

Open Mic signup at 6:45 pm

Open Mic at 7:00

Yard Sauce— 8:30-9:30 pm.

YARD SAUCE is a Maine-based, acoustic string trio featuring Chris



Moore (mandolins and vocals), Jeff Christmas (guitar and vocals) and Callie Brennan (fiddle and vocals). Their dynamic live performances draw from the group's eclectic musical tastes, diverse regional traditional music influences, and a deep catalog of original songs. Old-time, bluegrass, country and folk

traditions (including traditional Shaker music) are all part of the mix in every live set. The trio trades off on lead vocal and harmony duties, delivering arrangements of traditional and original tunes with their distinctive, down-to-earth authenticity combined with virtuosic instrumental skills.

## **Augusta Symphony Orchestra Spring Concert**

**AUGUSTA, ME** – Had enough of winter? Join the Augusta Symphony Orchestra for a Spring concert on Sunday, March 8, at 3:00 pm at Cony High School's Viles Auditorium.

The program opens with Jean Sibelius's Finlandia, Op. 26, followed by Maurice Ravel's enchanting Mother Goose Suite. After a brief intermission, the orchestra concludes the afternoon with Johannes Brahms's Serenade No. 1 in D Major.

This concert will be led by Guest Conductor Michael Lund Ziegler, Executive Director of the

Portland Conservatory of Music. An active conductor, classical saxophonist, and chamber musician, he also serves as Music Director of the Kennebec Valley Youth Symphony.

Founded in 1920, the Augusta Symphony Orchestra, led by Conductor and Music Director Jinwook Park, is a community-based ensemble dedicated to enriching the cultural life of central Maine through live symphonic performances. The ASO brings together musicians of all ages and backgrounds and offers audiences access to high-quality classical pro-

gramming. With a long history and a strong commitment to accessibility, the orchestra remains a vital part of the region's artistic landscape.

Admission is free, and donations are gratefully accepted in support of the ASO's mission to provide accessible classical music to the central Maine community.

For additional information, please visit [www.augustasymphonymaine.org](http://www.augustasymphonymaine.org).

The Augusta Symphony Orchestra is supported in part by a grant from the Onion Foundation.

## **AUGUSTA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA**

### **SPRING CONCERT**

**FINLANDIA  
SIBELIUS**

**MOTHER GOOSE SUITE  
RAVEL**

**SERENADE NO. 1 IN D MAJOR  
BRAHMS**

**SUNDAY MARCH 8  
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ASO is supported in part by a grant from The Onion Foundation

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## Tips to help Maine residents maximize health benefits

By Dr. Ana Stankovic, chief medical officer at UnitedHealthcare of New England

A new year can bring a fresh opportunity to check in on your health. It's also a great time to review your health benefits and make sure you know how to get the most out of your health plan.

Whether you're aiming to improve your wellness, save more money, or simply make more informed health care choices, understanding what your health plan offers can help you get the most out of every dollar.

Chronic illnesses and mental health concerns as well as health care costs are serious challenges for people in Maine. According to the latest report from America's Health Rankings, 10.4% of Maine residents live with diabetes, 33.2% live with obesity, and 9.2% reported avoiding care in the previous year due to costs.

Many health plans offer programs that can help you save more money and live a healthier life. Here are practical tips to help you start the year feeling confident, healthy and prepared.

Understand your health plan. Understanding how your plan is structured, and your premium, copays, deductible, coinsurance and out-of-pocket maximum, may help you better estimate what you could spend on care costs for the year. Some health

plans now offer upfront pricing so you can compare options and an easy-to-use digital shopping experience.

Talk to your employer about your health plan and the benefits and programs that are available to you.

Make the most of digital health innovations. Many health plans offer new digital tools designed to make it easier to find and personalize care and services. These tools can help people with things like searching for in-network providers and comparing treatment options, and they can help you make more informed decisions about where to get care.

Use specialty benefits. Staying on top of routine dental and vision care can be a key part of overall health. Regular preventive dental care can help keep your teeth and gums healthy and reduce risk of conditions like cardiovascular disease and diabetes. Comprehensive eye exams do more than check your vision — they can help you see better and protect your overall health. These exams can detect more than 270 health conditions. These preventive services may be included in your dental or vision health plan.

Consider where you get care. Where you go for health care matters and can impact cost. Knowing when to go to the emergency room and when other care options may be

effective choices can help you save money while getting the care you need. For example, a virtual visit or seeing your primary care physician may be much less expensive than visiting the ER for everyday non-emergency concerns like pinkeye or common cold. It's also important to consider care options in your health plan's network, which may help you save on costs compared to choosing out-of-network options. If you're not sure where to go, many health plans offer tools to help you compare costs and find options that may meet your needs.

Take advantage of mental health benefits. Unfortunately, mental health concerns continue to rise. If feelings of stress, anxiety or depression persist, please don't wait — get support right away. The beginning of the new year is the perfect time to check in with your primary care provider or therapist to discuss your overall well-being. Additionally, reach out to your insurance provider to explore the mental health resources available through your health plan.

From preventive care and virtual visits to wellness programs and cost-saving tools, your benefits are designed to help support you — if you know how to use them. If you have questions about your options, talk with your employer or call the number on the back of your insurance card.

## Resources for laid off workers in Maine

MAINE — Winter often brings an increase in seasonal layoffs, with January traditionally being one of the busiest periods for unemployment insurance claims. Therefore, the Maine Department of Labor is providing the following information for people applying for unemployment insurance benefits.

If laid off, or furloughed, the Department encourages affected workers to do the following:

Immediately apply for unemployment insurance benefits, which provide partial wage replacement while a person transitions to their next employment opportunity: [www.maine.gov/unemployment/](http://www.maine.gov/unemployment/)

Claims can be filed: Online 24/7 — this is the fastest way to file;

By phone at 1-800-593-7660 Monday-Friday between 8 a.m.-3 p.m. (Phone wait times tend to be longest at the beginning of the week, and lowest

on Thursdays and Fridays. Once you are in the phone queue, do not hang up.);

In person at the Augusta, Bangor, Portland, Lewiston, and Presque Isle CareerCenters on Thursdays between 9 a.m.-3 p.m.

Over the past year, the Department has expanded its unemployment insurance assistance by offering in-person clinics and publishing a series of short videos. Video topics include eligibility requirements and how someone can reset their account password.

If a person still has questions, they can call 1-800-593-7660, or leave an online message under "contact us": <https://assist.reemployment.maine.gov/cp/landing>

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## Treasurer Perry reduces interest rate on delinquent property taxes

AUGUSTA, ME — Treasurer Joe Perry announced that the interest rate charged on delinquent property taxes will be reduced from 7.5% to 7.0%. For taxable year 2026, the maximum interest rate that a municipality may charge for delinquent property taxes is 7.0%. Municipalities may vote to determine the rate of interest that shall apply to taxes that become

delinquent during a taxable year until those taxes are paid in full.

Statutory background: The maximum rate of interest that can be charged is governed by Title 36 M.R.S. Section 505(4):

"The maximum rate of interest must be established by the Treasurer of State and may not exceed to and become part of the taxes."

in the Wall Street Journal on the first business day of the calendar year, rounded up to the next whole percent plus 3 percentage points. The Treasurer of State shall post that rate of interest on the Treasurer of State's publicly accessible website on or before January 20th of each year. The interest must be added to and become part of the taxes."

## Get ready for The Valentine Ball!

LEWISTON, ME — Treat your child to a festive evening of dressing up and dancing at The Public Theatre's 28th Annual Valentine Ball! Children 4-12 years old are sure to treasure this special time with their loved one spending quality time together cutting a rug to the music of a live DJ. Light snacks, keepsake photography and a whole lot of fun is to be had at this very popular annual event. The Valentine Ball is an inclusive event that is enjoyed by the many diverse families in our community!

The 2026 Valentine Ball will be held on February 14, 2026 from 6:30 pm – 8:30 pm at the Kora Shrine Temple in Lewiston.

Not only is the Valentine Ball a fun community event, all proceeds benefit The Public Theatre's Education Programming. Each year these important programs provide children and families with the opportunity to experience live pro-



Medo Sejdic dances with his daughter, Alana at The Public Theatre's 2024 Valentine Ball. — Andree Kehn/Sun Journal

fessional theatre and serve as an educational resource for Maine schools, enriching the lives and education of young people and encouraging our next generation's participation in the cultural life of their community.

Tickets start at \$45 for one adult with one child. Advance purchase required. No tickets will be sold at the door.

Space is limited. Visit [ThePublicTheatre.org](http://ThePublicTheatre.org) or call 207-782-3200 to get your tickets today!

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

**28<sup>th</sup> Annual Valentine Ball**

**Feb 14**  
**6:30 - 8:30 pm**

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

**Space is limited. Get your tickets today!**  
**Advance purchase required.**

**[ThePublicTheatre.org](http://ThePublicTheatre.org) | 782-3200**

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

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## Brunswick's first annual 207 Day

**B R U N S W I C K , ME** — Celebrate Maine at Brunswick's first annual 207 Day on February 7th! This new mid-winter celebration, produced by the Brunswick Downtown Association (BDA) in collaboration with community partners, brings together local creativity, outdoor fun, and Maine-grown spirit. The main event takes place on the Brunswick Town Mall and Brunswick Hotel Lawn from 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM, with a variety of local businesses offering deals and specials all day long.

207 Day Schedule:

9:00 - 10:00 AM

Town Mall Trot Fun Run

— Brunswick Town Mall

Run, walk, or jog three laps (2.07 miles) around the Brunswick Town Mall to celebrate our great state! Maine-themed costumes encouraged!

9:00 - 11:00 AM

Family Skate — Brunswick Town Mall

Bring the family to the Town Mall Ice Rink for a family skate! Music provided by the BDA.

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Whoopie Pie Bakeoff —

Brunswick Hotel Lawn

(Warming Tent)

Get out of the cold in the warming tent, where you will be able to sample whoopie pies made from local bakeries and restaurants. Cast a vote to bring bragging rights and glory to one local business that will be named "Best Whoopie Pie" in Brunswick! Local participants



include Wild Oats Bakery, Noble Kitchen & Bar, Baked on Maine, Porteur Breads, Walter's Cafe, Holy Donut, and more!

12:00 - 1:00 PM Ice Sculpture Demonstration — Brunswick Town Mall

Watch a sculptor turn winter itself into art! Onlookers will be able to ask questions as our artist brings the ice to life. Demonstration provided by SubZero Ice Carvings.

10:00 AM - 1:00 PM S'mores Stations — Brunswick Town Mall

Huddle around the fire and make a s'more with friends!

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM Lobster Slapshot Showdown — Brunswick Town Mall

Pot plastic lobsters from various distances to

score points for a chance to win prizes!

For more information on 207 Day, visit [brunswickdowntown.org/event/207-day](http://brunswickdowntown.org/event/207-day)

Brunswick Downtown Association Mission Statement: "To promote Downtown Brunswick as a vibrant and attractive place to live, work, play, and do business."

The BDA is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization.

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

## UUCB Concerts for a Cause present local folk singers



### BRUNSWICK, ME

— Jud Caswell and Lisa Redfern, award-winning singer-songwriters and favorites of the local folk scene, will share the stage at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Brunswick on February 7th at 7:30 as a part of the Concerts for a Cause series to raise money for local charities: Oasis Free Clinics and Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project.

Jud Caswell has been performing in his native state of Maine and beyond for more than 25 years. He is a master multi-instrumentalist, playing guitar, banjo, cittern, whistles and Irish drums. His interpretations of songs from modern acoustic to traditional folk and Irish are done with excellent musicianship, and his words and warm, tender voice portray his landscapes like Wyeth, with a reverence for humble beauty.

Jud's originals have won many prestigious songwriting contests in

the country, including the legendary Kerrville New Folk competition. His songs have been taught at Berklee, recorded by Judy Collins, and named "#4 Song of the Decade" by New York's WFUV. The single, "The Great Divide," from the album was the #2 song of October, 2021 on Folk Alliance International's Charts. His record "Live at the Seagull Shop" was the number 1 album on the Folk Alliance International radio charts in March of 2020.

Jud Caswell is much more than a great singer and guitar player. Jud's songs take you into the storyteller's world with clear images and characters that come to life for the listener."

- David Wilcox

With 12 solo recordings to her credit, including originals, folk songs, jazz standards, hymns, lullabies and Christmas songs, Lisa Redfern has been performing for over 35 years and has opened for some of

her favorites: The Roches, David Mallett, Livingston Taylor, and Cindy Kallet. She also played several duets with Pete Seeger. A few years ago Lisa was commissioned to write a ballad for Penobscot Indian elder and WW2 hero, Charles Norman Shay, and was honored to sing it for him at a ceremony on DDAY in Normandy, France. Lisa was rewarded with Best Song by the West Coast Songwriters Association, two Parents' Choice awards, and was a finalist in the Great American Song Contest and the USA Songwriting Competition.

"Wow, I haven't heard a voice like yours in 30 years—you sound like the original women of folk"

- Livingston Taylor  
Tickets: \$25 in advance, \$30 at the door, \$10 Students/Children. Available at the church office, Gulf of Maine Books, or online at <https://ticketstripe.com/judNlisa>

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## Special section: National Human Trafficking Awareness Month

### What January means for trafficking survivors

By Lindsey Draper, Regional Coordinator, Anti-Trafficking Services, January 16, 2026

January, for many, is a time for post-holiday recovery. We've spent time with our families, eaten good food, and celebrated the passing of another year. January marks a period of new beginnings and new opportunities. But for foreign national survivors of human trafficking in the United States, January may look a bit different. December might not have brought them time with their families, who may be separated by country borders or too afraid to travel due to heightened immigration enforcement. December might not have meant good food, or much food at all, as Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP) eligibility for trafficking survivors was cut due to the passing of H.R. 1, the One Big Beautiful Bill Act. January, for foreign national survivors of human trafficking, is often another month of uncertainty and fear.

As a Regional Coordinator in the Anti-Human

Trafficking department at the U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), January, to me, means renewed efforts to meet the needs of survivors — a commitment to providing services, despite the ever-decreasing availability of resources. Walking into work on any given day necessitates, above all, flexibility. Despite my best efforts to schedule my day, working in anti-trafficking means scrapping plans and handling emergencies as they come. One minute, I may be working on finding low-cost medical services for an uninsured survivor in South Dakota, and the next, I may be looped in on a potential active trafficking case in Colorado. A typical day could include handling incoming referrals, coordinating with various stakeholders to address active trafficking situations, providing guidance to case managers looking to enroll survivors in public benefits, identifying resources to tackle complex needs, and advocating for survivors throughout. Juggling these responsibilities and

more while prioritizing tasks is the only constant in my job.

On a typical January day, as I sit and listen to a case manager working with minors experiencing labor trafficking, I hear her worries about securing food resources at a time when food insecurity is rising and declining funding for nutrition programs. She describes her apprehensions about connecting children to mental health services while they wait months to be approved for insurance. I hear about the fears these minors have about pursuing legal status when federal immigration authorities have been reported to linger outside of courthouses, waiting to

apprehend those leaving immigration court hearings. Most of all, though, I hear someone who cares. Someone who, like me, may be having a typical January coming off the high of the holidays, but who knows that this isn't the reality for so many others. Someone who knows that January, for survivors of trafficking, is yet another month in the long path forward toward the ultimate goal of safety and stability.

You, like many, may be having a January of new resolutions. In light of January being National Human Trafficking Prevention Month, I ask that you keep the experiences of trafficking survivors



ability of vital services, and assert that January should be a time of celebration and hope for the future for everyone.

*Lindsey works in Denver, Colorado as Regional Coordinator, where she oversees ten states in the Mountain and Midwest regions for USCRI's TVAP and Aspire programs. She's been with USCRI since 2023 and has been working to support refugee and immigrant populations since 2021.*

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# Renewed Hope Act prioritizes identification of child victims

By Rosalyn Roden,  
Hope for Justice, January  
16, 2026

Hope for Justice is backing a U.S. bill which would fortify efforts to identify child victims of online sexual exploitation.

Child online sexual exploitation is where technology is used to coerce, manipulate or deceive children under 18 into sexual activity.

It is critical that we protect and safeguard children from this horrific form of exploitation, and so we are proud to endorse the bipartisan Renewed Hope Act. The legislation would strengthen federal government's work to identify the boys and girls who are depicted in child sexual abuse material (CSAM).

Sarah Butler, our United States Program Director, said: "The Renewed Hope Act is a critical step toward protecting our most vulnerable children. By strengthening resources for investigators, advancing technology, and improving coordination among agencies, this bipartisan legislation ensures that predators are held accountable and that every child has a better chance of being found, protected, and restored to safety. We are proud to support this legislation."

The bill unanimously passed the House Judiciary Committee this week and will now proceed to the full House for consideration. It was reintroduced by Representative Laurel Lee and is being co-led by Representative Debbie Wasserman Schultz.

Why do we need to

improve identification efforts?

Since 2024, the number of children depicted in sexual abuse material has risen from 57,000 to more than 89,000, according to U.S. Congresswoman Laurel Lee's office.

A recent study shows a 1,325% rise in harmful AI-generated online abuse material, such as deepfakes placing real children's faces onto sexual images, in just one year. Specifically, there were 67,000 such reports logged by the National Center for Missing and Exploited Children (NCMEC) in 2024, compared to about 4,700 the year before.

In 2024, NCMEC received more than 546,000 reports of online enticement, a 192% increase compared to 2023. Online enticement is when an adult initiates contact with a child for sexual purposes, which includes sextortion.

Most reports made to the CyberTipline in 2024 (including reports of images, videos and other files), related to suspected child sexual abuse material (CSAM). There were reports of 62.9 million images, videos and other files related to child sexual exploitation.

What would the Renewed Hope Act achieve?

If it becomes law as we hope, the legislation will:

Increase the size of the teams responding to online child sexual exploitation within law enforcement. It would improve the hiring, training and retention of

specialized victim identification personnel within Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). It calls for them to hire, train and assign no fewer than 40 forensics analysts, 30 child exploitation investigators and 130 additional forensics analysts and child exploitation investigators to support identification and rescue of victims of child sexual exploitation and abuse.

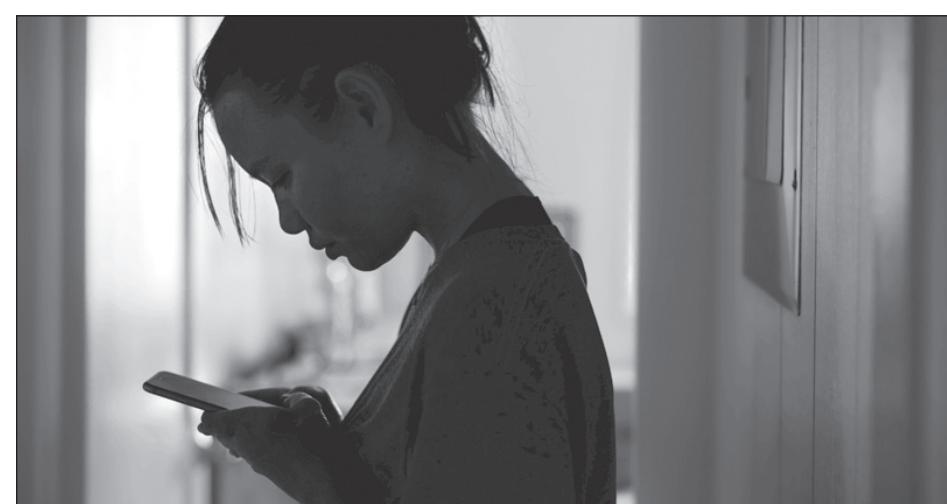
We believe that the involvement of these trained specialists would greatly enhance efforts to identify, locate and rescue children who are trapped in situations of ongoing exploitation.

Here is the January 14, 2026 press release from Congresswoman Laurel Lee, who is leading the legislation:

Congresswoman Lee's Bipartisan Renewed Hope Act Passes House Judiciary Committee

Yesterday, the House Judiciary Committee unanimously passed the bipartisan Renewed Hope Act, legislation led by Congresswoman Laurel Lee (R-FL) to strengthen federal efforts to identify child victims of online sexual exploitation. The bill, co-led by Rep. Debbie Wasserman Schultz (D-FL), now advances to the full House for consideration.

"Yesterday's bipartisan vote in the Judiciary Committee moves us one step closer to delivering real help to children who have been exploited and remain unidentified," said Congresswoman Laurel Lee. "The Renewed Hope



Act ensures law enforcement has the specialized personnel needed to find victims, rescue them, and hold predators accountable."

"Children must be protected from the staggering rise in digital predators who seek to exploit them. That means expanding efforts to identify and support these child victims of online abuse," said Rep. Wasserman Schultz. "Mounting evidence points to a disturbing escalation of extreme, violent online content. I'm proud to join my colleagues to introduce this bipartisan legislation to increase capacity to identify victims of child sexual exploitation, and invest in front-line, dedicated professionals who can find predators and save innocent lives."

"For too long, hundreds of thousands of girls

and boys have endured horrific abuse — often at the hands of adults who are supposed to protect them," said Tim Tebow. "Children in our nation are right now living in the darkest of evils, crying out for help. Their pain must stir us to act. This is why we're calling on Congress to pass legislation to strengthen our nation's response to identifying and rescuing these boys and girls. Because even with law enforcement and organizations working around the clock to rescue these children, it's just not enough. I'm deeply grateful to our leaders for shining a light on this bipartisan issue so that we can build a stronger rescue team of analysts, investigators, and law enforcement as we unite to find and safeguard every child in our nation suffering this great evil."

**Background:**  
The Renewed Hope Act strengthens the federal government's ability to identify children depicted in child sexual abuse material by expanding the hiring and retention of specialized victim identification personnel within Homeland Security Investigations (HSI). The legislation reflects recommendations from victim identification experts and law enforcement partners working to locate and rescue children trapped in ongoing exploitation.

The legislation is supported by the Tim Tebow Foundation, which has long partnered with law enforcement and victim identification organizations to combat child sexual exploitation and advocate for stronger efforts to identify and rescue victims

## IDENTIFYING HUMAN TRAFFICKING – ASK YOURSELF:

- Is the victim in possession of their own identification and travel documents?
- Is the victim coached on what to say to community members, workers, law enforcement or immigration officials? Does someone else communicate for the victim?
- Is the victim recruited for one purpose but forced to engage in other work?
- Are the victim's wages being unlawfully garnished to pay off a debt or fee? (Paying off a smuggling fee alone is not considered trafficking.)
- Is the victim forced to perform commercial sex acts?
- Has the victim or their family been threatened with harm if they attempt to leave?
- Has the victim been threatened with deportation or criminal charges?
- Has the victim been harmed, deprived of food, water, sleep, medical care, or other life necessities?
- Is the victim free to contact friends or family without being coached or monitored?
- Is the victim under the age of 18 and engaged in commercial sex?
- Is the victim living in substandard housing?

BC-IC-ENG 9/25



## SPOT THE SIGNS OF SEX TRAFFICKING

### LOOK FOR 8 KEY INDICATORS

- LIMITED FAMILY/SOCIAL CONTACT
- PHYSICAL OR SEXUAL VIOLENCE
- RESTRICTION OF MOVEMENT
- INTIMIDATION AND THREATS
- ABUSE OF VULNERABILITY
- FEAR AND ANXIETY
- UNDER-AGE
- DECEPTION

TO REPORT A CONCERN, CALL

**1-615-356-0946**

IF YOU HAVE REASON TO BELIEVE A PERSON IS IN IMMEDIATE DANGER, CALL 911 FIRST

If you think you may have encountered a victim of human trafficking, contact Hope for Justice and let us know as much information as possible.

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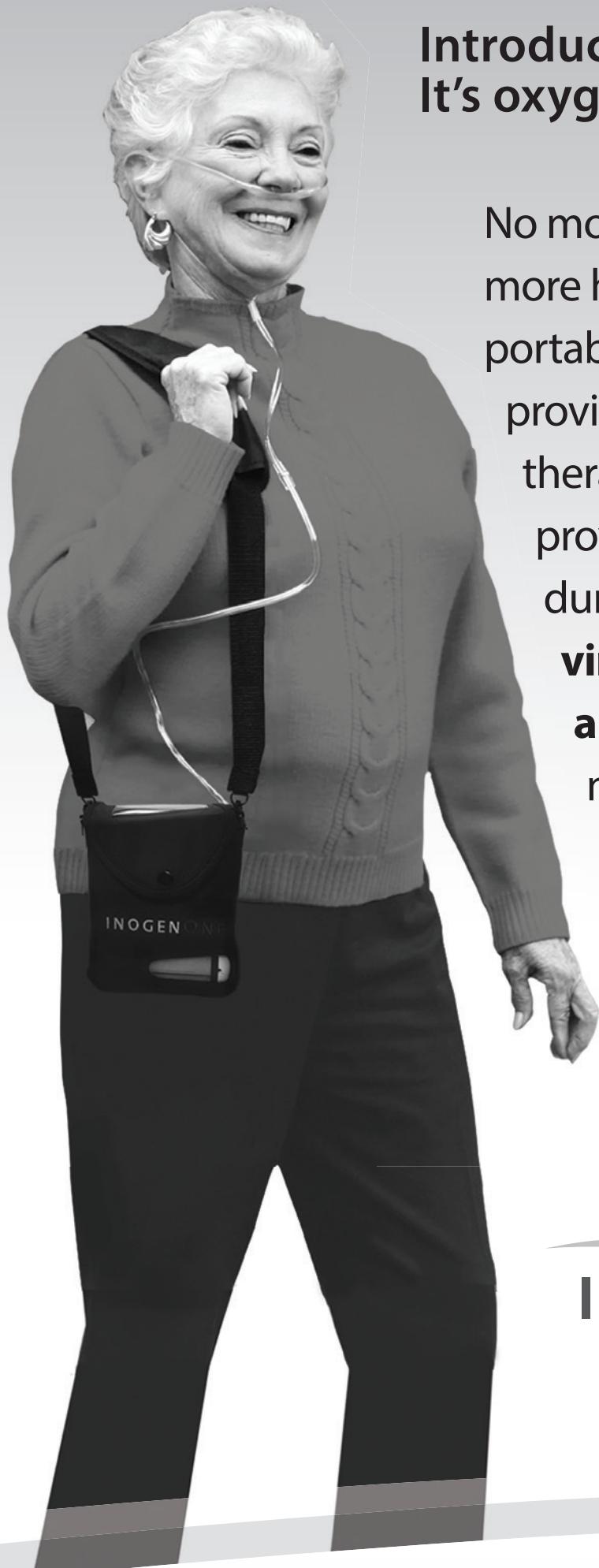
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**Jan 31**

AUBURN — There will be a baked bean supper at Sixth Street Congregational Church at 109 Sixth Street in Auburn, on Saturday, January 31 from 4:30 until 6:00. There will be two kinds of beans, red hotdogs, brown hotdogs, coleslaw, assorted casseroles, assorted desserts, and beverage. The cost of the supper is \$10 for adults, \$5 for children 6 to 12; children 5 and under are free.

**Jan 31**

BUXTON — Try our delicious Haddock Supper Buffet - Saturday, January 31, 2026 - 5:00 pm at Living Waters Church, Parker Farm Road, Buxton. Suggested donation: \$10 Adult, \$5 Child, \$20 Family.

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

**Jan 31**

AUBURN — Auburn Republican Caucus starting at 1:00PM, AMS Cafeteria (back entrance). For more information email: gopauburnmaine@gmail.com

**Feb 1-5**

B R U N S W I C K — Brunswick's month-long celebration of poetry, Longfellow Days, begins on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Here are ways to join in honoring the 2026 living legacy of Longfellow, Maine's world renowned poet: Sun, Feb 01, 1 pm, Sunday Readings Part One (Lancaster Lounge,

# Calendar

Send your submissions to the Editor. More online.

Moulton Union, Bowdoin); Wed, Feb 04, 1 pm, Winter Wisdom: A Poet's Dilemma (UU Church)

For the schedule of Longfellow Days with complete details of all events, go to <https://www.uubrunswick.org/programs/longfellow-days-2026/>

**Feb 2**

LEWISTON — The Lewiston Public Library's monthly crafters' meet up will continue into the winter. Maker Monday meets every first Monday of the month from 4-6:30pm in the Couture Room.

**Feb 2**

AUBURN — The Stanton Bird Club will be hosting the third in its 2025-26 lecture series featuring speaker, Eric Doucette on "Maine's Dynamic Flora: rare historic species and potential new arrivals". 4-6pm at the Auburn Public Library. The public is welcome. The lecture series is free of charge.

**Feb 2-14**

LEWISTON — From February 2nd to February 14th, create a Valentine's Day card at the Lewiston Public Library! Free supplies and crafting space will be available for adults on the 2nd floor and for children on the 3rd floor.

**Feb 5**

AUBURN — The Auburn Public Library is offering events in partnership with the 2026 Camden Conference:

Book discussion: "Notes on a Foreign Country: An American Abroad in a Post-American World" by Suzy Hansen, Thursday, February 5th, 4-5 PM (Registration required - books provided)

**Feb 7**

B R U N S W I C K

— Jud Caswell and Lisa Redfern, award-winning singer-songwriters and favorites of the local folk scene, will share the stage at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Brunswick on February 7th at 7:30 as a part of the Concerts for a Cause series to raise money for local charities: Oasis Free Clinics and Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project.

**Feb 8-15**

B R U N S W I C K — Brunswick's month-long celebration of poetry, Longfellow Days, begins on February 1<sup>st</sup>. Here are ways to join in honoring the 2026 living legacy of Longfellow, Maine's world renowned poet: Sun, Feb 08, 1 pm, Sunday Readings, Part Two (Lancaster Lounge, Moulton Union); Thu, Feb 12, 2 pm, Interpreting a Poem (Pejepscot History Center, 159 Park Row); Sat, Feb 14, 11 am & 1 pm, Chamberlain House Tours (226 Maine Street); Sun, Feb 15, 10 am, Interfaith Service (UU Church); Sun, Feb 15, Sunday Readings, Part Three (Lancaster Lounge, Moulton Union)

For the schedule of Longfellow Days with complete details of all events, go to <https://www.uubrunswick.org/programs/longfellow-days-2026/>

**Feb 11**

GORHAM — The Gorham Westbrook and Wyndham police triad meeting for February will be held February 11th from 11 AM to noon at the Gorham police department. Our topic for this meeting will be Domestic Abuse in Older Adults. The speaker will be Rebecca Hobbs. Our meetings are open to the public. Please come and bring a friend.

**Feb 19**

LEWISTON — Lewiston Public Library's Genre Roulette Book Club samples genres by focusing on one genre for three months at a time: join for one season or come to them all! This winter, the book club will be focusing on Romance across three sub-genres. We will meet monthly in the Couture Room from 5:30 to 6:30pm on the following Thursdays: February 19th, and March 19th.

February will focus on contemporary romance. The group will meet on February 19th to discuss Better Than Fiction by Alexa Martin. Book-hater turned

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The Tatiana Morrell Foundation was created to honor the incredible spirit of Tatiana Morrell — a young woman whose light, kindness, and heart continue to inspire us every day. One of the ways we carry her legacy forward is through something truly special: collecting prom dresses for students who may not have the means to purchase one. Tatiana believed deeply in making others feel seen, valued, and beautiful — and this mission reflects that love.

Through every dress given, every smile shared, and every moment of confidence created — Tatiana's spirit lives on. Thank you for being part of this journey with us. 



**The Story Behind Our Mission:**  
To better understand our mission, you must understand our reasoning:  
Tia lived with a heart led by kindness and intuition. When she noticed a new student struggling, she stepped in to make a difference—providing her with a beautiful dress and arranging for her mother to do her hair and makeup. That simple act of love gave the girl, who never imagined attending such an event, the night of her life.

Tia believed every young woman should feel confident, radiant, and celebrated during life's special moments. In her honor, we are dedicated to continuing that mission—ensuring that no girl misses out on the magic of prom, homecoming, or a school dance because of financial hardship.

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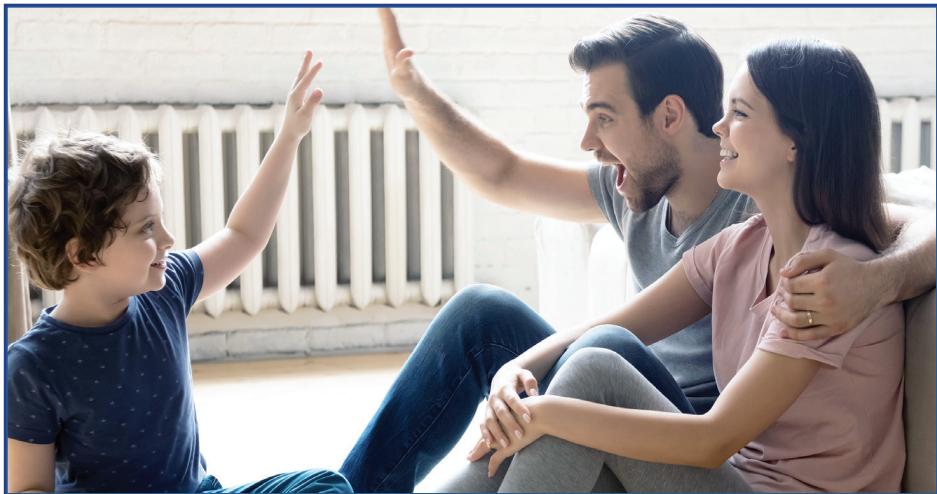
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