

Premier Pools & Spas' Shelly Quinn receives national awards

LEWISTON, ME - Premier Pools & Spas (PPAS) of Lewiston won the 2025 Small Market Office of the Year (Silver) Award at the Premier Franchise Management (PFM) Annual Awards Conference held recently in Waikoloa, Hawaii. Design Consultant Shelly Quinn received the Salesperson of the Year Award (Silver) for the highest amount of sales in the company nationwide.

"We are incredibly honored to receive national recognition once again," said Co-owner Mike Dubuc of Premier Pools & Spas of Lewiston. "Earning the office award for the third year in a row reflects our team's commitment to workmanship, customer care, and creating custom backyard experiences that families can enjoy for a lifetime." We could not have achieved this success without the dedication of our entire staff, from the design work, ordering, billing, and building of our pools. It is a total team effort", said Messenger.

Design consultant Shelly Quinn was also acknowledged for her outstanding performance, consistency, and customer-focused approach. "Shelly continues to set the bar nationwide," added Co-owner Derek Messenger. "Her dedication and passion for guiding homeowners through the pool design process is unmatched, and we are thrilled to see her success recognized at the national level."

"It has been such an honor to work with Mike, Derek, and all my customers making their backyard dreams come true!" said Pool Design Consultant Shelly Quinn. "We have an amazing team! I am also so excited that my husband, Kenn, has joined me in selling and designing! We are looking forward to



Pictured left to right: Paul Porter, CEO of PFM; Shelly Quinn, Design Consultant of PPAS; and Brian Porter, President of Service of PFM.



Pictured left to right: Paul Porter, CEO of PFM; Greg Adams, Vice President of Franchise Development and Strategic Planning of PFM; Mike Dubuc, Co-owner of PPAS; Shelly Quinn, Design Consultant of PPAS; and Derek Messenger, Co-owner of PPAS.

an amazing 2026." Quinn added.

As part of the nation's largest pool builder, Premier Pools & Spas—which operates more than 130 locations across the United States—the Lewiston team continues to distinguish itself among an elite network of professionals. Premier Pools and Spas' mission is to help families create lasting memories right in their own backyards.

The PFM Annual Awards Conference recognizes excellence in service, sales achievement, and operational performance across the company's expanding network. The Lewiston location's continued recognition underscores its ongoing growth and leadership within the industry.

Michael Dubuc began Michael's Pool N' Patio in early 1987 and became one

of Premier Pools and Spas first franchise locations in 2011. Michael has built swimming pools his entire life and his passion has been instilled into his son Mike Dubuc who has been helping his Dad on dig sites as a child. Michael retired recently, and the company is now owned by his son, Mike Dubuc and his high school friend Derek Messenger. Mike has been building pools for more than 30 years. Premier Lewiston Pool Builders have been building swimming pools for over 45 years. With deep roots in the Lewiston community, we pride ourselves on our high standards and exemplary customer service.

For more information about Premier Pools & Spas of Lewiston or to schedule a FREE Pool Consultation, visit ppas.com or call (207) 782-1514.

February Special Section American Heart Month page 9

Maine MILL to open new exhibit: "Drawn in Light: Charlie Hewitt"

LEWISTON, ME - Maine MILL (the Museum of Innovation, Learning and Labor) is pleased to announce the opening of Drawn in Light, a compelling new exhibition that illuminates the creative process of Lewiston-born artist Charlie Hewitt. The exhibit opened on January 30, 2026 and offers visitors a rare look at Hewitt's original doodles alongside their luminous LED neon creations.

Drawn in Light showcases the transformation from spontaneous sketches to bold neon works, emphasizing simplicity and visual impact. Hewitt's art challenges the notion that meaning must always be hidden, presenting imagery that is exactly what they appear to be, while celebrating the spontaneity and playfulness at the heart of his creative practice.

"Maine MILL is thrilled to host Drawn in Light and share Charlie Hewitt's work with our community," said Rachel Ferrante, Executive Director of Maine MILL. "This exhibition not only high-

lights the artistry and inventive spirit of a Lewiston native, it invites visitors to see how everyday gestures like a simple doodle can be amplified into something luminous and unforgettable."

The exhibit also encourages audience engagement with a participatory doodle wall where visitors can add their own creative marks, fostering connection and playful expression throughout the gallery.

About the Artist

Charlie Hewitt's practice is one of constant experimentation that began in the New York of the 1960s, initially influenced by the New York School. Though largely based on painting and drawing in those heady years, today Hewitt works in multiple media, including print making, drawing, painting, neon and LED-illuminated sculpture, metal, ceramic and digital art. What threads through all of these is an inescapable grounding in the freedom of drawing and the techniques of print making.

Whether this methodology results in imagery

that is figurative or abstract, everything begins with drawing. His compulsive "doodling" feeds a visual iconography extrapolated from his richly varied life. Stylized tool shapes harken to carpentry work that funded his art career. Cards and dice refer to the gambles and risks of life, daring to win but willing to fail, all in the service of a creative life. Marquee signs allude to a magical, optimistic time of road travel in America, which were formative during road trips of his youth. But even the abstract shapes he employs in nonrepresentational compositions originate with pen or colored pencil on paper. Hewitt believes that the lexicon that arose from these doodles eventually helped release him from the shadow of New York School style.

For more information about Maine MILL and its events and exhibits, visit www.mainemill.org or call 207-333-3881. The museum is located at 35 Canal Street in Lewiston and is open Wednesday through Saturday, 10am – 4pm.

Food for the Soul at Auburn UU

AUBURN, ME - The First Universalist Church of Auburn is celebrating Black History Month throughout February with Food for the Soul.

Programming will be led by the church's Adult Religious Education Chair, Charles I. Nero, and Worship Associate John Spruill, Jr.

After worship on Feb. 8 and 15, Nero will present episodes of "High on the Hog: How African American cuisine transformed America." This docuseries

charting the paths of African Americans in the U.S. and the food legacies they carried with them on their journeys. These selections will examine the Middle Passage as a food way, and the connection between food and the Civil Rights movement. These will commence at 11:30.

The celebration will culminate in Gospel Sunday worship on February 22 at 10am, led by Worship Associate John Spruill, Jr. This beloved annual service

takes inspiration from the Black church, and features gospel selections sung by the Auburn UU choir. After the worship at 11:30, participant will enjoy a soul food luncheon in the vestry.

The First Universalist Church of Auburn is located at 169 Pleasant Street (enter on Spring St.). Worship is offered in person Sundays at 10am, or on Zoom at <https://tinyurl.com/y2zsvq2t>. FMI see auburnuu.org, call 783-0461 or message office@auburnuu.org.

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

Letter to the Editor: Hold polluters accountable

Dear editor,

Every time a climate disaster hits, we see the same story. Families lose homes, roads are washed out, crops are destroyed, insurance rates spike, and taxpayers foot the bill, all while oil and gas companies rake in profits. That is not right.

It doesn't have to be this way. Climate superfund legislation — already law in Vermont and New York — would require the fossil fuel companies most responsible for this crisis to pay their fair share for the damage they knowingly caused. Instead of taxpayers shouldering the cost, the companies that profited from creating this mess would help fund the rebuilding of roads, homes, schools, and critical infrastructure.

That's why I'm calling on local elected officials

to support legislation to hold polluters accountable. This January's Make Polluters Pay Week of Action is about shifting the cost of climate chaos off our communities and onto the polluters. It's about fairness, because if you break it, you should buy it. Maine is on the cusp to help making this happen.

Sincerely,
GARY MCGRANE
Jay, ME

AARP Maine releases 2026 legislative priorities

PORTLAND, ME - With the Second Regular Session of the 132nd Legislature now underway, AARP Maine announces its 2026 legislative agenda which includes strengthening caregiver support resources in Maine, as well as a focus on fair and affordable utility rates.

"On behalf of our nearly 200,000 members statewide, AARP Maine looks forward to working with Governor Mills and our legislative leaders in Augusta from both sides of the aisle," said Noël Bonam, AARP Maine State Director. "We know that Mainers 50-plus continue to experience the strain of providing care for loved ones, the state's affordable housing crisis, and unaffordable electricity rates. It is critical that both elected and appointed leaders work to address these important issues that affect Mainers 50-plus and their families."

society and elected officials overlook the critical role of family caregivers in our state. This must change.

In Maine, 324,000 adults are caregivers. Many Maine family caregivers provide essential care to loved ones without pay, and function as the backbone of Maine's long-term care system. Across New England, 44% of family caregivers experienced at least one negative financial impact from caregiving such as taking on more debt, being unable to afford basic expenses or ceasing to save for the future.

adults to make tough choices. Mainers need more consumer protection, and AARP Maine is committed to ensuring that all Mainers have access to fair and reasonable electric rates.

Any discussion of rate changes must be transparent and allow for public engagement. AARP Maine will continue working to address current laws and policies that cause undue burden to electricity customers. We will continue urging lawmakers to fund LD 995 which will provide funding to the Low-Income Assistance Program (LIAP) and deliver much needed resources to Maine families struggling to keep warm. We will also continue to urge the Public Utilities Commission to change its practices to reduce volatility in electricity bills.

We want to hear from you!
Please submit your letter to the editor by 5pm on Friday for next weeks edition.
Email: editor@twincitytimes.com

CASA training for guardian ad litem in March

MAINE - Interested in advocating for the best interests of a child? The Maine Court Appointed Special Advocates (CASA) program is holding its summer training for volunteer advocates from March 9th through March 13th, 2026.

This free, five-day training is designed to prepare attendees for certification as volunteer guardians ad litem (GALs) in Maine child protection cases. Trainees may participate virtually or in person. For those who wish to participate in person, the training will be held in Augusta. Accommodations may be available.

The foundation of a CASA's work is learning about the case and then advising the court what

the CASA believes is in the child's best interest. CASAs come from a wide variety of professional and personal backgrounds and are guided throughout the process by CASA program staff. CASAs bring their own unique perspectives to their work as volunteers.

If you are willing to advocate for a child's best interests, we encourage you to apply to become a CASA volunteer. Those interested in the training must complete an application and, if invited to participate, must also complete criminal and child protection services background checks.

AARP's overarching vision is a society that allows all people to live with dignity and purpose as they age and to fulfill their goals, ambitions and dreams. AARP has a long and proud history of nonpartisan voter engagement. Maine voters aged 50 and over continue to dominate turnout across the state, consistently shaping election outcomes. In 2022, voters 50-plus made up 65% of the electorate. Candidates who want to win should listen to older voters and address issues that matter to them and their families.

Family caregivers are taking on multiple tasks from bathing and meal preparation to managing medications, arranging transportation, and handling medical situations will little to no training. On average, they devote 27 hours a week to providing care, and nearly 1 in 4 provide the equivalent of a full-time job at 40 hours per week.

Maine lawmakers can take action to save caregivers time and help them access meaningful resources by supporting state and local programs, including those provided by Area Agencies on Aging which help family caregivers and the loved ones for whom they provide care.

Home and Community-Based Services: AARP Maine's 2024 Vital Voices survey found that 87% of Mainers age 45-plus say it is extremely or very important to stay in their own home as they age. To make aging in place possible, many older Mainers will need support from either family caregivers, or through home and community-based services.

AARP Maine urges lawmakers to fund the services necessary to meet individuals' long-term care needs, enabling them to remain in their communities. Maine has an opportunity to advance this goal through LD 814: The Older Mainers Act. This bill expands access to proven home and community-based services offered by Maine's Area Agencies on Aging. LD 814 empowers Mainers to age in place while delivering savings.

Fair Utility Costs: Another issue that affects many Maine families is volatile utility costs. AARP Maine continues to fight to keep utility rates fair and reasonable in the state with the country's oldest population. High utility rates, coupled with rising housing, food, and medicine expenses, force many vulnerable, older

"AARP Maine and all of our member advocates look forward to productively engaging with lawmakers during the 132nd legislative session to ensure that Maine continues to be a place where people 50-plus want to live, work, retire and thrive," Bonam said. "In 2026, we will be in Augusta on a regular basis with our AARP Maine Tuesdays at the State House program. We invite more volunteer advocates to join our efforts as we speak up for Mainers 50-plus and their families on these critical issues."

For more information about AARP Maine, visit www.aarp.org/me and follow us on social media @aarpmaine.

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News-makers, Names & Faces

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 mission 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.

St. John's Catholic School in-house food service program

BRUNSWICK, ME - St. John's Catholic School (SJCS) is thrilled to announce the launch of a new food service program that will center on fresh, scratch-made meals in the school's kitchen. This initiative represents both a step forward in student wellness and a return to the school's longstanding tradition of on-site meal preparation.

A Return to Our Roots

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, St. John's successfully operated its own food service program, with meals prepared in-house. During the pandemic and periodically throughout the school's history, SJCS partnered with MSAD 75 for meal service. This transition represents a thoughtful return to the school's pre-pandemic model, complete with a focus on locally sourced ingredients and student-centered menu planning.

Gradual Implementation for Long-Term Suc-

cess The new program started at the beginning of the school year, gradually to ensure sustainability. Each Wednesday fresh, from scratch-made meals are prepared in the St. John's kitchen. Every day, students have the option of adding a fresh salad bar with wholesome ingredients and salad topping favorites. In the new year, the made from scratch meals have expanded to two days a week.

This phased approach allows the school to balance consistency with innovation while maintaining a reliable partnership with MSAD 75 during the transition.

"We're not just serving meals—we're building healthier habits and stronger connections," said Pamela Sullivan, a St. John's teacher who is leading the nutritional team. "By bringing meal preparation back into our school kitchen and sourcing from local farms, we're teaching students the value of good nu-

trition and the importance of supporting our local community."

Fresh, Local, and Nutritious

St. John's is proud to partner with Native Maine, a statewide network of farmers dedicated to supplying schools with locally grown, high-quality produce. This partnership ensures that students benefit from nutritious meals while also supporting Maine's agricultural community. Daily menus will be planned collaboratively with MSAD 75 and tailored to student preferences based on real-time feedback.

The lunch program uses Bisson Farms as a local meat source. When things are in season, they glean from local farmer's markets and use Native Maine. "It truly has been a win-win," says Sullivan.

Community Involvement and Support

The program is powered by a combination of hired staff and parent vol-

See St. John's, page 14

Central Maine Healthcare graduates latest class of CNAs



LEWISTON, ME - Central Maine Healthcare last month held a graduation ceremony for its newest certified nursing assistants (CNAs).

A total of eight CNAs took part in the graduation ceremony at 12 High St. on the CMMC campus.

The eight-week instruction was part of Central Maine Healthcare's "Earn to Learn" program in which the students took part in a mix of classroom instruction, skills lab practice and clinical experience

in real healthcare settings and under supervision.

All eight of the graduates passed the Maine state CNA exam and were offered positions at Central Maine Healthcare.

Stephany Jacques, president of Bridgton Hospital and Rumford Hospital, spoke at the ceremony and told the graduates that she began her career as a CNA. "It's not just a job, it's a calling," Jacques told the students.

CNAs are front line healthcare professionals

who have more direct, hands-on contact with patients than anyone else in a healthcare setting. They are often called the "eyes and ears" of the nurses, assisting patients with fundamental daily activities, including bathing, dressing, feeding, grooming and mobility, as well as alerting nurses and doctors to changes in a patient's condition.

Those interested in registering for the next CNA Earn to Learn class can call (207) 795-7526.

"Come to the Upside Down" for a not-your-typical Valentine party

LEWISTON, ME — Valentine's Day weekend gets a playful twist at the Franco Center with the unique, after-work Upside Down Party, in the Center's Lower Level Bar & Lounge on Friday, February 13, with doors opening at 4 p.m.

"This is not your typical Valentine's event," said Kirsten Nunery, Franco Center event coordinator. "Whether guests arrive with a date, a best friend, or flying solo, the evening is designed to be fun, relaxed, and a little delightfully offbeat."

"Bring a Valentine! Bring a Galentine! Bring a friend!" organizers encourage. The night will feature fun games, trivia, and plenty of good times in an atmospheric setting that

feels just slightly ... upside down. "Expect moody lighting, playful surprises, and immersive ambiance," said Nunery.

The event is free to attend, with a cash bar open when doors open. No tickets, no pressure — just a welcoming space to unwind, connect, and enjoy something different.

Event Details: Friday, February 13, 2026

Doors open at 4 p.m. Franco Center – Lower Level Bar & Lounge 46 Cedar Street, Lewiston, Maine

No cover charge Cash bar available

For more information, visit francocenter.org or follow the Franco Center on social media. The Franco Center is handicap

accessible through its elevator entrance on the Lincoln St. Alley side of the building. Parking is in the mill lot on Oxford Street. The venue is at 46 Cedar Street in Lewiston.

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Seniors Not Acting Their Age

Snowshoeing to the top of Rumford Whitecap Mountain



Hikers snowshoe up Rumford Whitecap Mountain



Two Chowderheads ascend above tree line on Rumford Whitecap



Hikers find shelter from severe wind chills near the summit of Rumford Whitecap

Rumford Whitecap Mountain is one of the most popular and aesthetically stimulating mountain hikes in western Maine. Located in North Rumford, the partially barren peak offers dramatic vistas that can be seen from the extensive Rumford Whitecap ridge top. The exposed summit also provides phenomenal views of the surrounding mountains and valleys below.

An added benefit of the distinctive mountain is the relative ease of obtaining the visual rewards. Only about 1,600 feet of elevation gain on a well-designed trail brings hikers to the 2,214-foot open summit. The entire trek can be accomplished in about three and half hours hiking at a moderate pace.

When Suzanne Cole announced a Penobscot Paddle & Chowder Society late-December climb of Rumford Whitecap, I was enthusiastic about joining

the group. However, I had misgivings since she anticipated the need for snowshoes. I hadn't used snowshoes since a knee replacement in September and was unsure whether or not my new knee could handle five or six miles of snowshoeing. An experimental two-mile snowshoe trek on the Cathance River Trail in Topsham convinced me that I was probably ready. I signed on with the understanding that I would return early should the circumstances dictate.

Four of us met at the trailhead on the East Andover Road in North Rumford on a cold, partly sunny winter morning with moderate winds predicted at higher elevations. An inspection of the trail indicated snowshoes were necessary. We packed for serious wind chills and carried micro spikes in case ice was encountered on the often frozen, windswept slopes above tree line.

We began snowshoeing in a predominantly conifer forest on a wide trail that was probably a former logging road. Previous hikers had broken trail with snowshoes in what we estimated to be about 15 inches of snow. The snow was light powder so we would have been post-holing without snowshoes, an exhausting alternative.

The path narrowed as we persisted steadily uphill. After about a mile, we angled right and crossed a narrow, partially open stream.

We soon began ascending more steeply in sparsely wooded terrain until the trail turned abruptly right. The gradient diminished as we weaved along the west shoulder of the mountain. After negotiating over a tiny brook, the path angled left and the first of a series of partially exposed upsloping ledges were reached.

The trail leveled off

before arriving at Black Mountain Trail junction on the right. We turned left, dropped into a small ravine and crossed an ice-covered brook. Once through the ravine, confusing winding ledges in a scantily forested landscape became the primary trail feature.

The previous hikers were probably unsure of the correct route since their snowshoe tracks led in different directions. After accidentally exploring west on another path for a short distance, we identified our error and backtracked to the main trail. Soon after, a sign indicated the summit was a half-mile away.

Snowshoeing on twisting snow and ice-covered ledges in partially open terrain continued for perhaps 300 yards. After passing through a narrow wooded corridor, we emerged above tree line on the elongated ridge. Fabulous views were our reward and they continued

unabated to the summit and during our return to tree line.

Unfortunately, enjoyment of the views was diminished by severe wind chills. We stopped to add parkas and heavy duty mitts before progressing over two enormous barren knolls to the top.

Our summit celebration was tempered by the frigid conditions. We quickly retreated to a forested lower ridge southeast of the summit that was protected from the harsh winds and paused for a snack.

We didn't linger long before beginning our return. As we hurried down the gusty, barren ledges, several determined climbers were persevering upward. We wished them well on their blustery ascent.

Once below tree line, we slowed our pace and enjoyed a less hectic descent. As we approached the East Andover Road trailhead,

I remembered my new knee that had been largely forgotten during the exciting climb. Thanks to my surgeon and his team, the plastic and metal replacement performed quite admirably. I see more snowshoe treks in my future.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* narrates numerous winter snowshoeing expeditions that include pulling sleds and climbing peaks 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 or he can be reached at ronchaseoutdoors@comcast.net

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Northeast Bank named to All Stars

PORTLAND, ME - Northeast Bank (NASDAQ: NBN) has been named to the Piper Sandler Sm-All Stars Class of 2025, an elite list recognizing 24 of the top-performing small-cap banks and thrifts in the country.

To earn Sm-All Star

designation, financial institutions must maintain a market capitalization under \$2.5 billion and outperform industry medians across key performance metrics, including growth, profitability, credit quality, and capital strength. For this year's analysis, Pip-

er Sandler evaluated 316 banks and thrifts trading on major U.S. exchanges, ultimately selecting just 24 institutions for inclusion.

"Being named to the Sm-All Stars Class of 2025 reflects the successful execution of our business strategy and the dedication of

our exceptional team," said Rick Wayne, President and CEO of Northeast Bank. "I am incredibly proud of what our team has accomplished and their continued commitment to delivering strong, sustainable results for our shareholders and customers."

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This week declared Unclaimed Property Week

AUGUSTA, ME - Maine Treasurer, Joseph C. Perry announced that Governor Janet Mills has officially declared February 2-8, 2026 Maine Unclaimed Property Week through a proclamation put forward by the Maine Office of the State Treasurer (OST). The proclamation builds on the National Association of State Treasurers (NAST) celebration of National Unclaimed Property Day on February 1st and coincides with a telethon during Maine Unclaimed Property Week.

OST manages Maine's unclaimed property program. Unclaimed Property consists of money and other financial assets that are considered lost or abandoned when an owner cannot be located after a specified period of time of inactivity. It includes items such as bank accounts, uncashed checks, life insurance policies, unpaid wages, stocks and dividends, refunds, and safe deposit box contents. Unclaimed Property does not include real estate, animals or vehicles.

Each and every year, tens of millions of dollars go unclaimed by Maine residents. These financial assets are turned over by thousands of national and local businesses and organizations by a law called MRSA Title 33, Chapter 45: Maine Revised Unclaimed Property Act. The Treasurer's office holds these assets, free of charge, until claimed by the owner or heir. The State is currently holding over \$395,000,000 in unclaimed property. In the month of December alone, 1,900 claims were paid for \$2,176,869.98 (10,780 properties paid). The highest single payment in December 2025 was for \$120,542 (Mutual Fund).

Treasurer Perry said of the proclamation, "Maine continues to play a leading role among states in reuniting people with their unclaimed property," he said. "The Governor's proclamation recognizes and amplifies our commitment to the process, providing us a perfect launching pad for increasing awareness of unclaimed property in Maine." he said.

The Office of the Treasurer of State is established in Article V, Part Third of the Constitution of the State of Maine. The core duties of the Treasurer's Office are debt management, cash management, trust fund administration and unclaimed property administration. Other major tasks assigned to the Treasurer are directorships on many of Maine's quasi-governmental debt issuing agencies and distributions under the Municipal Revenue Sharing Program.

EPA seeks applicants for environmental education grants

WASHINGTON - U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) announced up to \$3.2 million in funding for environmental education grants to support local, community-driven projects that help Americans protect their water, health, and natural surroundings. EPA expects to award up to 16 grants nationwide, ranging from \$200,000 to \$250,000 each through the Environmental Education Grant Program.

The Environmental Education Grant Program is designed to give Americans the knowledge and skills they need to make informed decisions about their environment; from protecting local waterways to supporting responsible stewardship in their own backyards. These grants support hands-on projects that help people better understand environmental challenges in their own communities and take practical steps to address them. Projects supported under this program emphasize real-world learning, community engagement, and solutions that can be applied at the local level.

The Notice of Funding Opportunity (NOFO) is now posted on www.grants.gov and the Environmental Education Grant Notice of Funding Opportunity webpage and applications are due on March 3, 2026.

EPA's Environmental Education and Stewardship Division will host a webinar on February 5, 2026, to provide a general overview of the current NOFO, discuss how to write a competitive application, and answer commonly asked questions. Webinar registration details will be available on <https://www.epa.gov/education/grants#webinar>.

Stay up to date on all environmental education grant information, including announcements related to upcoming webinar registration, by subscribing to the Environmental Education listserv.

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Ice Dance International announces 'The Seasons'

DOVER-FOX-CROFT, ME - As figure skating gains momentum ahead of the Olympic Games, Ice Dance International (IDI) announces The Seasons, a theatrical skating experience touring 14 U.S. Cities taking place from February 28 through March 21, 2026. Olympic Champion Gabriella Papadakis headlines this celebration of artistry, athleticism, and speed, transforming the rink into a living stage. Papadakis is joined by two-time United States Champion Alissa Czisny and skating artist Rohene Ward, in a company of ten world-class skaters. The 90 minute long show is in four acts inviting the audience on a captivating journey.

In 2024 rink reservations surged by 698% according to ClassPass and reported by GWI's Global Wellness Trends and NBC's "Today." Ice Dance International is integral to the sport's renaissance as viral performances showcase the elegance and exhilaration of skating and interest grows. The non-profit organization honors the sport's legacy while exploring new creative frontiers and providing skaters professional performance opportunities outside of competition. Founded in 2014 and based in rural Maine with connections to communities across the globe, IDI bridges ballet's grace with skating's power to create a unique performing art.

"The Seasons isn't just a show—it's a pulse, a spark, a reminder that when blades meet music and movement meets heart, the ice itself begins to sing. This is a rare chance to witness the possibilities of performance on ice," remarks IDI Artistic Director Douglas Webster. IDI Board Member JoJo Starbuck adds, "Freed from rules and scores, skaters glide, fly, and soar! The Seasons is a breathtaking evening of art and athletics."

This four week tour provides audiences across the country an immersive and up close experience to watch and learn from world class skaters. The cast engages with local communities through clinics and meet-and-greets with area skating clubs—fostering community, creativity, and confidence on the ice.

Tour dates and locations are listed below. Tickets range from \$20–\$60. VIP tickets include a meet & greet with the cast. Edge classes are ticketed separately.

To purchase tickets for all locations please visit <https://icedanceinternational.org/upcoming-events>

Piscataquis County Ice Arena February 28
1049 West Main Street,
Dover-Foxcroft, ME

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Arts & Entertainment

Twin Cities Swim Team honors former coach Tom Manduca

WATERVILLE, ME - Twin Cities Swim Team (TCST) of the YMCA of Auburn-Lewiston joined teams from Bath Area YMCA, Mount Desert Island YMCA, Sanford YMCA, Old Town-Orono YMCA and the host Mid Maine YMCA on January 24-25th at the Alford Youth and Community Center for an invitational swim meet in honor of its former Head Coach, Tom Manduca who passed away suddenly in June of 2018.

This annual event is an important meet for the TCST Family. Tom's wife Karen and his son Joe were in attendance as special guests of TCST. "The Swim Team associated with the YMCA of Auburn-Lewiston is a family of over 10,000 people strong. Whether someone swam for the team when it was called the Auburn-Lewiston YMCA Dolphins or TCST, once you are associated with this team you are forever part of our family;" stated

first year Head Coach Peter Goulet, who himself was a member of the team in the 1970's and 80's.

The swimmers presented Karen and Joe Manduca with bouquets of flowers, signed TCST swim caps and a card expressing the gratitude we as a family have to Coach Manduca. In his honor, TCST swam their best times so far this year.

Emmalyn Pulk from Lewiston started the meet with a personal best time in the 100 Free, dropping her time by 15.50 seconds. She also did her best time in the 50 Free dropping by .81. Emmalyn swam the 100 Backstroke for the first time, establishing a PBR for herself with a time of 2:08.47.

Parker Welch from Gray swam a personal best record (PBR) in the 100 Free with a drop of 15.23 seconds performed in a combined trials and finals swim. He also swam the 100 Breaststroke for the first time to establish his



PBR at 2:03.16 as well as the 200 Breaststroke for the first time with a time of 4:19.54. Parker finished his weekend with a PBR in the 50 Free dropping by 3.06 seconds.

Adrian Crowell of Lewiston swam his PBR's in the 100 Free dropping by 10.23 seconds; and the 100 Breaststroke by .05 seconds. He finished his weekend with the biggest time drop on the entire

team in the 200 IM, dropping his PBR by 23.41 seconds.

Mazelyn Biedewolf from Auburn swam her PBR by .22 seconds in the 100 Free; 1.94 seconds in the 50 Breaststroke and swam for the first time the 25 Backstroke with a time of 20.64.

Ziyah Proulx-Shadel of Hebron swam her PBR's in the 100 Free dropping by 11.38 seconds, and the 50 Backstroke by 4.43 seconds. She swam three events for the first time: 25 Backstroke – 24.33, 25 Free – 20.87 and the 25 Breaststroke – 49.23.

Madden Laggase of Lewiston joined the party by swimming a PBR in the 50 Free with a time drop of 3.09 seconds.

Kyle Fish also from Lewiston had a PBR in the 200 Free dropping 4.41 seconds; and swam the

500 Free for the first time establishing his PBR of 7:25.82.

New Gloucester's Malik Marafa dropped his time in the 200 Free by 15.53 seconds while at the same time establishing PBR's for his first time ever swim in the 100 Backstroke – 1:24.49. His sister Kyda dropped her time in the 25 Free on her birthday by 2.47 seconds and a first time showing in the 25 Breaststroke with a time of 29.04. Elder brother of the two Nadir who also plays Varsity Basketball for the Gray-New Gloucester Patriots swam the 200 Free with a PBR swim of 2.31 seconds and a first-time swim in the 200 Breaststroke – 3:05.69.

Joseph Bouffard from Auburn had his PBR in the 50 Free by 1.47 seconds and swimming the 100 Backstroke for the first time with a time of 1:35.92.

Mackenzie Dorr of Lewiston swam the 100 Fly with a PBR of 1:19.74, an 8.87 second drop while Evan Cornish also of Lewiston swam the 100 Backstroke for the first time with a time of 1:57.21.

Lewiston's Xxavier Fulgham swam his PBR in the 200 Free - 2:24.55.

TCST Team Records were created by Addison Flint in the 25 Backstroke – 18.64 and in the 25 Fly – 17.64 for the 9/10 Girls Age Group while Wyatt Fish created team records in the 25 Free – 18.37, 25

Backstroke 20.49 and the 25 Breaststroke – 26.34 in the 9/10 Boys Age Group. Flint also swam a PBR in the 50 Fly with a 6.51 second drop and the 50 Breaststroke with a 1.99 second drop.

Goulet summed up the weekend stating, "I am so pleased that our swimmers showed up in such a big way on such an important weekend of swimming for the TCST Family. Under my leadership this team will always show respect and sportsmanship, model leadership and embrace community values, so that this family will continue to grow and these kids will group up to be great adults doing great things."

TCST will hold their annual "Splash for Cash" on February 8th at the Tarbell Pool on the Campus of Bates College. Anyone interested in supporting the Twin Cities Swim Team can contact Coach Goulet at pgoulet@alymca.org. The team returns to action on February 7th when they travel to Pen Bay YMCA in Rockport.

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

Funny, Heartbreaking, Sexy, and Smart!

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STILL

by Lia Romeo

Jan 30 - Feb 8

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Snow thrower safety tips: Keep best practices in mind

MAINE - Clearing snow and ice from driveways, sidewalks and parking lots is no small job. You rely on your outdoor power equipment to do the heavy lifting, and it's important to keep safety in mind. The Outdoor Power Equipment Institute (OPEI) reminds home and business owners to use snow throwers, often referred to as snow blowers, safely and offers tips to help.

"Weather today is unpredictable. You need to have your snow thrower serviced and ready to power up," says OPEI President and CEO Kris Kiser. "Review your owner's manual so you can use your equipment safely." Kiser says preparation is key and that home and business owners should consider the following:

Review the owner's manual. Check the owner's manual for safe handling procedures. If the manual cannot be found, look it up online, and store a copy on your computer so it's available to reference in the future. Review how to operate controls. Be able to shut off equipment quickly.

Check equipment. The snow thrower should be powered off when being checked over. Adjust any cables and check the auger.

Charge batteries. Locate the batteries for your snow thrower and charge them fully before it snows.

Purchase fuel. Be sure to use the correct fuel recommended by the equipment's manufacturer. For most gasoline-powered snow throwers, that is E10



or less. Often fuel stations are closed after a storm so buy gasoline in advance of storms. Fuel that is more than 30 days old can phase separate and cause operating problems. For more information on fueling properly see www.opei.org/programs/ethanolwarning

Store and use fuel properly. Place gasoline in a proper fuel container and label it with the date purchased and the ethanol content. Store fuel safely and out of the reach of children. Fill the fuel tank outside before starting the engine and while the engine is cold. Never add fuel to a running or hot engine.

Clear the area. Snow can sometimes hide objects. Doormats, hoses, balls, toys, boards, wires, and other debris should be removed from areas you intend to clear. When run over by a snow thrower, these objects may harm the machine or people.

Dress for winter weather. Locate safety gear now, and place it in an accessible closet or location. Wear safety glasses, gloves and footwear that can handle cold and slippery surfaces when operating the

snow thrower.

KEY SAFETY TIP: Never put your hands inside the auger or chute. Use a clean out tool to unclog snow or debris from the snow thrower. Your hands should never go inside the auger or chute.

Turn OFF the snow thrower if you need to clear a clog. If you need to remove debris or unclog snow, always turn off the snow thrower. Wait for all moving parts to come to a complete stop before clearing any clogs or debris.

Operate in visible conditions. Never operate the snow thrower without good visibility or light.

Aim with care. Never throw snow toward people or cars. Keep children or pets inside and away from your snow thrower when it is operating.

Use extreme caution on slopes and hills. Use caution when changing directions on slopes. Do not attempt to clear steep slopes.

Know where the cord is. If using an electric powered snow thrower, be aware of where the power cord is at all times. Avoid tripping.

New Maine book documents those shaping Maine's coastal future

MAINE - Rising Tides: Adapting to Maine's Coastal Future captures the memorable voices of Mainers in a rapidly changing world. These include oyster farmers and other aquaculturalists, fishermen, marine biologists and other scientists, and community leaders who are navigating dramatic changes along and off Maine's iconic coast. Presenting deep geological, climatological and human history, in-depth interviews and other research, the book shows the challenges and opportunities as rising seas caused by global warming, along with sometimes controversial shoreline development, are reshaping ways of life along The Pine Tree State's storied coast. The vivid changes include shifting fisheries, new industries and markets and the technology that pushes them.

The problems, opportunities and adaptations in Maine carry lessons for coastal communities around the world. These are global issues described locally through the stories of Mainers on the frontlines. A powerful and timely portrait, Rising Tides is both a warning and an inspiration. It displays the dangers posed by change while also serving as testament to the ingenuity and determination required not only in Maine, but on coasts everywhere.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Bill Perna is a documentary filmmaker, writer, and founder of Perna Content. A former Madison Avenue advertising executive, Bill has spent decades telling human-centered stories around culture, place, and resilience. He now splits his work between Maine and Italy, producing books,

podcasts, and documentary projects that amplify local voices. His previous book, Maine Oysters: Stories of Resilience and Innovation, became a regional best-seller. Rising Tides is his newest project, alongside a companion 13-episode podcast.

Best Source for Arts, Music and Theater!

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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 People and are thrilled to be



Joe Gately* as Mark and Janet Mitchko* as Helen in Still. *members of Actors' Equity Association. Photo Credit: Kaitlin Toto Photography for The Public Theatre

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 Fran-

cisco, 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 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.

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

THE PUBLIC THEATRE

Cast and crew announced for CLT's *Almost Maine*

AUBURN, ME - Directed by Jackie McDonald, *Almost Maine* is filled with love, laughter, and a touch of magic. *Almost, Maine*, a romantic comedy by Maine native John Cariani, tells the story of the residents of a remote, fictional northern town as they experience the magical, often surreal, realities of love, loss, and connection. The play unfolds through a series of whimsical, heartwarming vignettes that explore love in all its forms—unexpected, joyful, and bittersweet. Don't miss this charming and thought-provoking production that captures the beauty of human connection under the Northern Lights.

At its core, *Almost, Maine* is about connection: the struggle to express ourselves, how easy it is to miss each other, and how love can arrive softly, awkwardly, or all at once. It's funny, bittersweet, and



Front Row: Kevin Bolduc, Katy Albert, Elise Christie, Lynn McLain, Heather Marichal **Back Row:** Tony Roy, Bob Sawyer, Brian Pfohl, Jason Pelletier, Gregory Judd, Hillary Perry, Jenny Rennie, Daniel Rennie **Missing are:** Lacey Moyse, David Moyse, and Sophie Messina

deeply human, certain to get the audience smiling with a lump in their throat. The cast of *Almost Maine* includes Katy Albert as Marvalyn, Ginette, Waitress/Villain, Suzette; Heather Marichal as Ginette, Waitress/Villain, Suzette, Sandrine; Kevin Bolduc as Jimmy; Elise Christie as Marci, Glory; Gregory Judd as Pete, Dan-

iel; Lynn McLain as Hope, Rhonda; Sophie Messina as Sandrine, Hope; David Moyse as East, Phil; Lacey Moyse as Glory, Marci; Jason Pelletier as Lendall, Chad, Jason; Hillary Perry as Gayle; Brian Pfohl as Phil, Pete; Daniel Rennie as Dave, Steve, Randy; Jenny Rennie as Rhonda, Marvalyn; Tony Roy as Steve, Chad, Lendall; Bob



Front Row: Brandon Chaloux (stage manager and producer), Janelle Raven (social media publicity and assistant producer), Anthony Delorme (props master) **Back Row:** Sarah Chaloux (lighting board operator), Olliver Young (lighting designer), Riley Moyse (assistant stage manager), Jackie McDonald (director), and Alex Lally (sound designer and operator)

Sawyer as Randy, Daniel, East
Members of the production crew are: Jackie McDonald, Director and Set Designer; Brandon Chaloux, Stage Manager and Producer; Janelle Raven, Assistant Producer; Riley Moyse and Sarah Greaton, Co-assistant Stage Manag-

ers; Mark Hazard, Prompter; Jane Mitchell, Costumer; Anthony Delorme, Props Master and Tech Crew; Jim McDonald, Set Design; Julie McDonald, Set Construction Lead; Jennie Rennie, Set Decor; Alison Roberge Douglass, Set Decor Assistant; Olliver Young, Lighting Design and Programmer; Sarah

Chaloux, Light Operator; Alex Lally, Sound Design and Engineer; Owen Kane, Stunt Consultant, Janelle Raven, Social Media Publicity; Nancy Kenneally, Print Publicity; DNA Photography (Nick), Headshots; Penney Drumm, Program; Nik Sparlin, Poster/Graphic Design

CLT will present *Almost Maine* February 20th, 21st, 26th, 27th & 28th at 7:30 p.m. and February 22nd and March 1 at 2:00 p.m. Call 783-0958 or visit www.LACLt.com for tickets and information.

L/A Community Little Theatre, located at 30 Academy Street in Auburn, has been producing live theatre since 1940. A volunteer, non-profit organization, our goal is to provide affordable and quality entertainment in the performing arts as well as education, training, and experience in theatre for area youth. www.laclt.com.

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.




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Special section: February is American Heart Month

CDC: The ABCS of heart health

Every year, Americans suffer more than 1.5 million heart attacks and strokes. The good news is that you can help reduce your risk and improve your heart health by following the ABCS!

What are the ABCS of heart health?

A: Take aspirin as directed by your health care professional.

Ask your health care professional if aspirin can reduce your risk of having a heart attack or stroke. Be sure to tell your health care professional if you have a family history of heart disease or stroke, and mention your own medical history.

B: Control your blood pressure.

Blood pressure measures the force of blood pushing against the walls of the arteries. If your blood pressure stays high for a long time, you may suffer from high blood pressure (also called hypertension).

High blood pressure increases your risk for heart attack or stroke more than any other risk factor. Find out what your blood pressure numbers are, and ask your health care professional what those numbers mean for your health. If you have high blood pressure, work with your health care professional to lower it.

C: Manage your cholesterol.

Cholesterol is a waxy substance produced by the liver and found in certain foods. Your body needs cholesterol, but when you have too much, it can build up in your arteries and cause heart disease.

There are different types of cholesterol: One type is “good” and can protect you from heart disease, but another type is “bad” and can increase your risk. Talk to your health care professional about cholesterol and how to lower your bad cholesterol if it’s too high.

S: Don’t smoke.

Smoking raises your blood pressure, which increases your risk for heart attack and stroke. If you smoke, quit. Talk with your health care professional about ways to help you stick with your decision. It’s never too late to quit smoking. Visit smokefree.gov or call 1-800-QUIT-NOW today.

What do I need to know about high blood pressure?

High blood pressure is the leading cause of heart attack and stroke in the United States. It can also damage your eyes and kidneys. One in three American adults has high blood pressure, and only about half of them have it under control.

How is blood pressure measured?

Two numbers (for example, 140/90) help determine blood pressure. The first number measures systolic pressure, which is the pressure in the blood vessels when the heart beats. The second number measures diastolic pressure, which is the pressure in the blood vessels when the heart rests between beats.

When and how should I take my blood pressure?

Take your blood pressure regularly, even if you feel fine. Generally, people with high blood pressure have no symptoms. You can take your blood pressure at home, at many pharmacies, and at your doctor’s office.

Rosa’s Story

Rosa was caring for her granddaughter when she felt a sharp pain in her chest that didn’t go away. At the hospital, the health care professional told her that she had high blood pressure and that it had caused a heart attack. Rosa was surprised—she didn’t feel bad most of the time and didn’t know she had high blood pressure.

The health care professional gave Rosa medicine to help control her blood pressure and prevent another heart attack. Rosa takes her medicine every day so she can keep her blood pressure under control. It’s important to Rosa to stay healthy. She wants to see her granddaughter grow up and get married one day.

How can I control my blood pressure?

Work with your health care professional to make a plan for managing your blood pressure. Be sure to follow these guidelines:

Eat a healthy diet. Choose foods low in trans fat and sodium (salt). Most people in the United States consume more sodium than recommended.

Everyone age 2 and up should consume less than 2,300 milligrams (mg) of sodium per day.

Adults age 51 and older; African Americans of all ages; and people with high blood pressure, diabetes, or chronic kidney disease should consume even less than that: only 1,500 mg of sodium per day.

Get moving. Staying physically active will help you control your weight and strengthen your heart. Try walking for 10 minutes, 3 times a day, 5 days a week.

Take your medications. If you have high blood pressure, your health care professional may give you blood pressure medicine to help control it. It’s

Talk to your health care team about the ABCS






Aspirin when appropriate



Blood pressure control



Cholesterol management



Smoking cessation

important to follow your health care professional’s instructions when taking the medication and to keep taking it even if you feel well. Tell your health care professional if the medicine makes you feel bad. Your health care team can suggest different ways to reduce side effects or recommend another medicine that may have fewer side effects.

Who is part of my health care team?

The doctor is not the only health care professional who can help you follow the ABCS. Nurses, pharmacists, community health workers, health coaches, and other professionals can work with you and your doctor to help you achieve your health goals.

Best Source for Arts, Music and Theater! Your Hometown Paper.

February is American Heart Month

Even though heart disease is largely preventable, it’s still the leading cause of death in the United States. Heart disease affects millions of people, and its impact is not shared equally among all communities.

African American, Hispanic/Latino, Asian American/Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander, and American Indian/Alaska Native communities have higher rates of both heart disease and risk factors such as high blood pressure, high cholesterol, obesity, diabetes, and smoking. Research supported by the National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute (NHLBI) has shown that you can lower your individual risk for heart disease by taking preventive steps: being physically active, eating a healthy diet, managing stress, not smoking, getting enough sleep, and controlling your blood pressure, cholesterol, and diabetes. All this can improve your heart health, but the impact can be even greater when you join forces with friends and family members to live healthier lives – together.

Studies have shown that having positive, close relationships and feeling connected to others benefits your overall health, blood pressure, weight, among other things. NHLBI’s The Heart Truth® program suggests a few ways you can connect with friends, neighbors and colleagues to promote heart health in your own community:

1. Set up an online support group to motivate
2. Create a virtual bulletin board where your community can post encouraging comments and share heart-healthy recipes and other tips.
3. Schedule community walks to stay active together.
4. Ask a local healthcare provider, community health worker, or health educator to host heart health education sessions or blood pressure screenings.

Sharing with others where you live, work, and enjoy your free time can help foster heart-healthy lifestyles and build healthier communities. Learn more about heart health and find resources to share in your community at www.hearttruth.gov.

each other as you work to meet your health goals.

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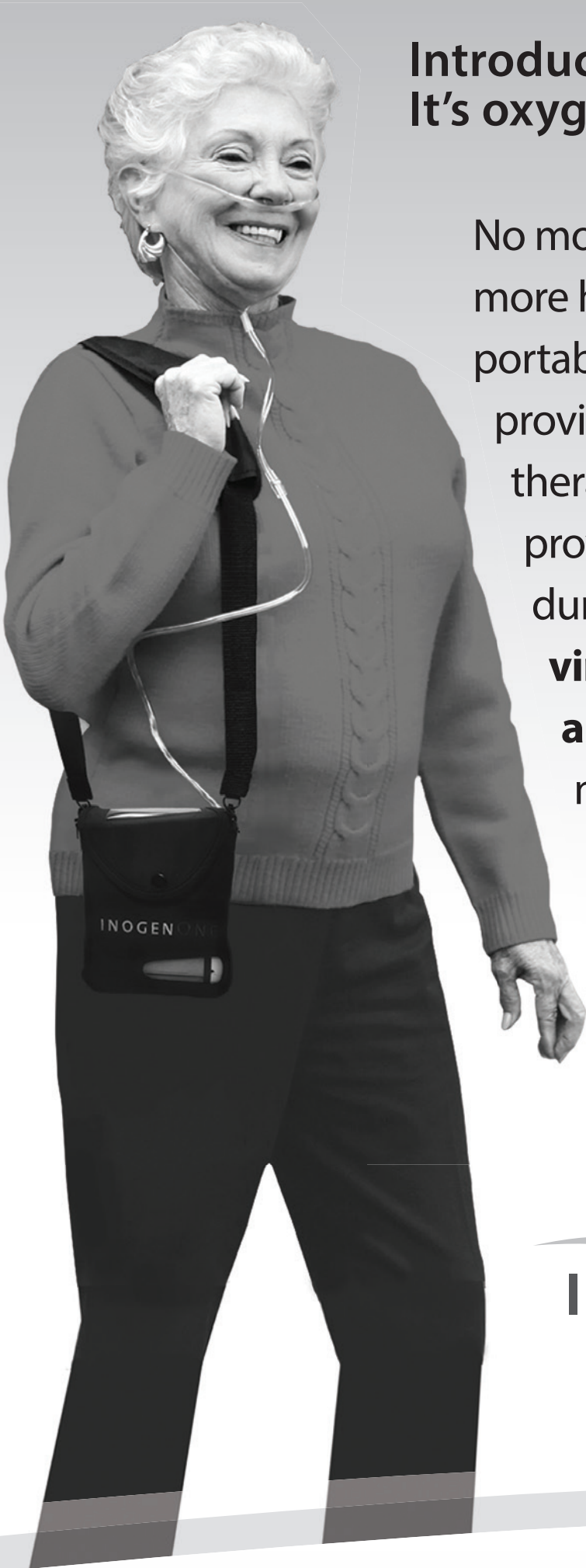
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cPort Credit Union celebrates opening of new Lewiston branch

LEWISTON, ME - cPort Credit Union proudly celebrated the grand opening of its newest branch in Lewiston with a Ribbon Cutting Ceremony held at 321 Main Street. The event marked a significant milestone in cPort's commitment to serving the Lewiston community and was attended by enthusiastic project participants, business leaders, and community partners.

A Warm Welcome
from the Lewiston Com-
munity

Members of the Lewiston community attended the festivities, reflecting the interest in cPort's expansion into the area. The ceremony brought together project partners from Platz Associates and Hebert Construction, as well as representatives from the Lewiston Public Library, Downtown Lewiston Association, Central Maine Medical Center, and members of the LA Metropolitan Chamber of Commerce. cPort branch employees and Board of Directors were also in attendance. Samantha Herriot, Director of Engagement of the LA Metro Chamber of Commerce graciously spoke at the event, expressing the community's enthusiasm for welcoming cPort as a new neighbor and highlighting the positive impact the branch is expected to have in Lewiston.

Acknowledging Project Partners

Platz Associates, as the project's architect, skillfully designed the branch to balance innovation and community warmth. Their vision and attention to detail fostered an environment that encourages member engagement and operational efficiency. With flexible meeting spaces, ample natural light, and accessible features, Platz Associates created a modern branch that supports cPort's mission. Hebert Construction played a key role in bringing the new branch to life, working closely with cPort to create a space that truly reflects the organization's vision for being in the Lewiston community. Their dedication to quality craftsmanship and thoughtful design resulted in a welcoming, functional environment. Hebert Construction helped deliver a branch that will serve the local area for years to come, highlighting cPort Credit Union's commitment to the Lewiston community.

The successful opening of the Lewiston branch was also made possible thanks to the hard work and dedication of cPort employees. Their collaborative spirit, attention to detail, and commitment to providing exceptional member service ensured a smooth launch and wel-

coming experience. The cPort team's enthusiasm and professionalism truly set the tone for the new branch's future success.

Leadership and Vision

Kelsey Marquis, President & CEO of cPort Credit Union, shared her enthusiasm for the new branch, saying, "We are so pleased to open our doors in Lewiston and welcome both current and future members. The concept for this branch was first envisioned by cPort's former President & CEO, Gene Ardito, and it has been truly rewarding seeing his vision come to life. Our team is excited to serve this vibrant community and provide the personalized service and innova-

tive banking solutions our members deserve."

Introducing Lewiston's Branch Manager

Attendees also had the opportunity to meet Chris Mbalazamo, the Lewiston Branch Manager. Chris, who began his cPort career as a teller in 2020, brings a passion for member service and community engagement to his new role. "I'm truly excited for what the future holds for cPort in Lewiston and for the chance to serve our members. Our team is dedicated to helping members achieve their financial goals and being a positive part of the community," said Chris.

Demonstrating
Community Commitment
Reflecting cPort's

dedication to community involvement, the credit union announced a \$5,000 donation to the Downtown Lewiston Association during the ceremony. This contribution reinforces cPort's tradition of supporting local initiatives and its desire to help strengthen the fabric of Lewiston.

cPort's ongoing partnerships with organizations such as the LA Metro Chamber of Commerce, Lewiston Public Library, Trinity Jubilee Center, LA Balloon Festival, Downtown Lewiston Association, and Central Maine Medical Center further demonstrate its commitment to deepening roots and supporting local well-being.

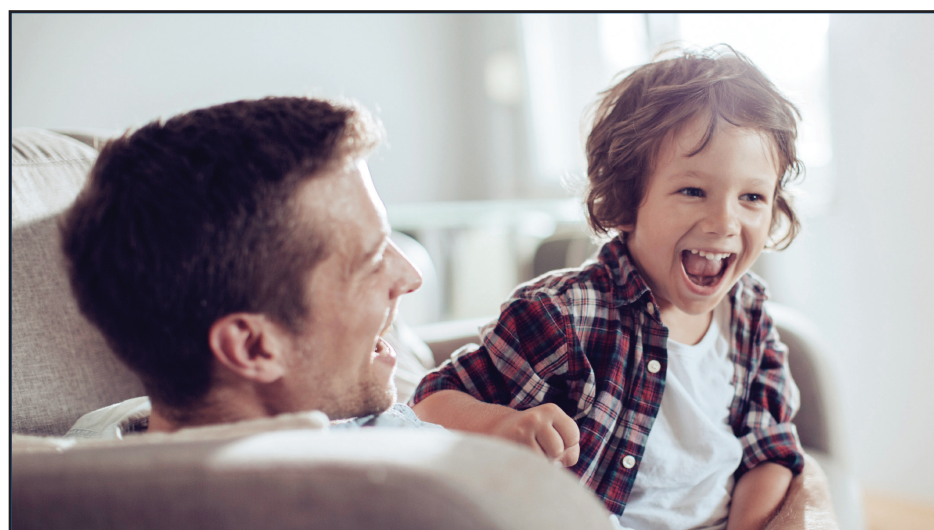
Advanced Technology for Enhanced Service
The Lewiston branch is equipped with state-of-the-art Video Teller Machines, enabling members to complete select transactions swiftly and conveniently. In addition, new Appointment Booking Kiosks have been installed to simplify the process of scheduling consultations and services, making financial management more accessible than ever.

Visit the New Branch

cPort Credit Union welcomes all members, as well as those interested in joining, to visit the new Lewiston branch at 321 Main Street. Community members are encouraged to stop in, meet the dedicated team, and discover the future of banking in Lewiston.

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Saturdays
AUBURN -- Stock up on BOOKS at great prices — 50¢ to \$3! Shop Saturday mornings at the APL Bookstore 9:00-12:30 for gently used books, ever-changing inventory, wide selection of children's, fiction and non-fiction books, plus DVDs and puzzles. Auburn Public Library, lower level, 46 Spring Street, Auburn.

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
BRUNSWICK -- Brunswick's month-long celebration of poetry, Longfellow Days, begins on February 1st. 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
BRUNSWICK --

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 Clincs and Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project.

Feb 8-15
BRUNSWICK -- Brunswick's month-long celebration of poetry, Longfellow Days, begins on February 1st. 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.

St. John's
Continued from page 3
unteers, creating meaningful opportunities for families to engage in the school community. Feedback from a recent survey showed unanimous support from families, and the program has also earned strong backing from educational and nutrition leaders.

Special thanks are extended to the professionals who guided the program's development:
Amanda Johnson, Food Service Director, MSAD 75
Allison Leavitt, Nutrition Director, Lisbon School Nutrition Program
Martha Poliquin, For-

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mer Food Service Director for Falmouth Schools, Maine DOE Regional Local Foods Project Manager
The all-inclusive model simplifies budgeting, reduces decision fatigue, and gives students full access to all meal choices at a minimal cost increase.
The initiative also strives to reduce waste with less plastic packaging and transporting food in steel pans and trays.

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Fashion News

Tias Prom Project

Dedicated to providing dresses & confidence to young women

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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St. John’s Catholic School in-house food service program

BRUNSWICK, ME - St. John’s Catholic School (SJCS) is thrilled to announce the launch of a new food service program that will center on fresh, scratch-made meals in the school’s kitchen. This initiative represents both a step forward in student wellness and a return to the school’s longstanding tradition of on-site meal preparation.

A Return to Our Roots

Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, St. John’s successfully operated its own food service program, with meals prepared in-house. During the pandemic and periodically throughout the school’s history, SJCS partnered with MSAD 75 for meal service. This transition represents a thoughtful return to the school’s pre-pandemic model, complete with a focus on locally sourced ingredients and student-centered menu planning.

Gradual Implementation for Long-Term Success

The new program started at the beginning of the school year, gradually to ensure sustainability. Each Wednesday fresh, from scratch-made

meals are prepared in the St. John’s kitchen. Every day, students have the option of adding a fresh salad bar with wholesome ingredients and salad topping favorites. In the new year, the made from scratch meals have expanded to two days a week.

This phased approach allows the school to balance consistency with innovation while maintaining a reliable partnership with MSAD 75 during the transition.

“We’re not just serving meals—we’re building healthier habits and stronger connections,” said Pamela Sullivan, a St. John’s teacher who is leading the nutritional team. “By bringing meal preparation back into our school kitchen and sourcing from local farms, we’re teaching students the value of good nutrition and the importance of supporting our local community.”

Fresh, Local, and Nutritious

St. John’s is proud to partner with Native Maine, a statewide network of farmers dedicated to supplying schools with locally grown, high-quality produce. This partnership ensures that students

benefit from nutritious meals while also supporting Maine’s agricultural community. Daily menus will be planned collaboratively with MSAD 75 and tailored to student preferences based on real-time feedback.

The lunch program uses Bisson Farms as a local meat source. When things are in season, they glean from local farmer’s markets and use Native Maine. “It truly has been a win-win,” says Sullivan.

Community Involvement and Support

The program is powered by a combination of hired staff and parent volunteers, creating meaningful opportunities for families to engage in the school community. Feedback from a recent survey showed unanimous support from families, and the program has also earned strong backing from educational and nutrition leaders.

Special thanks are extended to the professionals who guided the program’s development:

Amanda Johnson, Food Service Director, MSAD 75

Allison Leavitt, Nutrition Director, Lisbon School Nutrition Program

Martha Poliquin, Former Food Service Director for Falmouth Schools, Maine DOE Regional Local Foods Project Manager

The all-inclusive model simplifies budgeting, reduces decision fatigue, and gives students full access to all meal choices at a minimal cost

increase. The initiative also strives to reduce waste with less plastic packaging and transporting food in steel pans and trays.



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