



TWIN CITY TIMES

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Auburn Art Club members learn about fraud protection

AUBURN, ME - The Auburn Art Club met in March in the parish hall of Sacred Heart Church in Auburn. A presentation of fraud protection was given by AARP Maine Volunteer Pamela Partridge.

Partridge reviewed the variety of methods used by criminals to take advantage of our local citizens, including social media, emails, phone calls, and in-person visits. She emphasized the scammers' keen ability to induce a strong emotional response, thus blocking the ability to react logically. She advises to pause and reflect before taking any action, particularly financial action.

The Auburn Art Club, organized in 1880 and federated in 1892, is the oldest Women's Club in Maine. The club was originally formed by prominent Auburn women to become better acquainted with the works of ancient and modern art. Now, the club



Pamela Partridge, AARP Maine Volunteer

has evolved to accepting members from the larger community and strives to enrich members' understanding of the broad range of art in this community. The group raises money to

support an annual scholarship for a local graduating high school student who plans to pursue the study of art in college. 2026 marks the 146th year the club has been in existence.

2026 MDOT work plan for Lewiston bridge & road projects

AUGUSTA, ME - Sen. Peggy Rotundo, D-Lewiston, is pleased to announce the details of Maine's three-year transportation infrastructure work plan, and what it means for Senate District 21. The plan is released annually with an outline of the Maine Department of Transportation's strategy for road, bridge and other transportation upgrades and maintenance projects.

According to the Maine DOT, the three-year work plan makes a \$4.5 billion investment in the construction and maintenance of transportation infrastructure across the state. It includes 2,798 individual work items for the calendar years 2026, 2027 and 2028.

In 2026, the Maine DOT will undertake numerous projects to enhance transportation in Senate District 21, including new walking paths, several bridge improvements and a two-year extension of the pilot bus service connecting the Lewiston/Auburn area to Portland.

"This year will bring many critical improvements to Lewiston's pedestrian infrastructure, public transit, roads and bridges," said Sen. Rotundo. "I am proud to have supported these investments in targeted infrastructure upgrades that will advance safety, accessibility and connectivity for all those who live, work and travel in and around the Lewiston area."

The following break-

down is the planned capital and maintenance work by MDOT for communities in Senate District 21 in calendar year 2026:

Bicycle/Pedestrian
Lewiston: On-road sidewalk/trail located at the intersection of Route 196 and South Avenue.

Lewiston: On-road sidewalk/trail located at the intersection of Route 196 and Scribner Boulevard. Includes safety improvements at St. Croix Street.

Lewiston: Pedestrian safety improvements at the intersection of Eastern Avenue and Russell Street.

Bridge and Structural Maintenance:

Lewiston: Improving Route 196's Dill Bridge
See MDOT, page 14

March Special Section Women's History Month page 9

Nomination of Lewiston's David St. Pierre advances

WASHINGTON, D.C. - U.S. Senator Susan Collins announced that the Senate Judiciary Committee has advanced the nomination of David St. Pierre, who served as Chief of Police for the City of Lewiston, to be the U.S. Marshal for the District of Maine by a bipartisan vote of 20 to 2. Chief St. Pierre's nomination now moves to the Senate floor for consideration by the full body.

"I am pleased that the Judiciary Committee has advanced the nomination of David St. Pierre, who has dedicated more than three decades to protecting the people of Lewiston and strengthening partnerships across local, state, and federal law enforcement agencies," said Senator Collins. "His steady leadership during the most challenging moment in Maine's recent history, the tragic mass shooting of 2023, demonstrated his professionalism, composure, and deep commitment to both public safety and public service. With his extensive experience and unique skill set, I am confident

that Chief St. Pierre will serve the people of Maine admirably as U.S. Marshal. I look forward to supporting his confirmation on the Senate floor."

Chief St. Pierre served with the Lewiston Police Department for more than thirty years and was the city's Chief of Police from 2021 until his retirement from the Department last year. As Chief, he oversaw a department of ninety-nine employees and managed a budget exceeding \$10 million. Over the course of his career, he has held law enforcement positions ranging from patrol officer to State Drug Agent, Detective Sergeant, and Patrol Lieutenant, gaining broad experience in criminal investigations, internal affairs, and inter-agency coordination.

Chief St. Pierre played a central leadership role in coordinating the hundreds of local, state, and federal officers who responded to the deadliest shooting in Maine's history in 2023. He also guided the planning and transition to Lewiston's

new public safety facility, which brings multiple law enforcement agencies together under one roof to strengthen collaboration towards the shared mission to serve and protect the City of Lewiston.

A 2018 graduate of the 271st Session of the FBI National Academy in Quantico, Virginia, Chief St. Pierre is an active member of the FBI National Academy Associates, the International Association of Chiefs of Police, and the Maine Chiefs of Police Association.

As the senior Republican member of Maine's congressional delegation, Senator Collins is advising the Trump Administration as it evaluates candidates for federal positions in the state. As part of that process, Senator Collins established a Federal Appointments Advisory Committee comprised of community leaders and experienced attorneys from across the state. Chief St. Pierre was one of the applicants the Committee assessed for Senate-confirmed vacancies in Maine.

Ladies of St Anne Sodality hold membership meeting

LEWISTON, ME - The Ladies of St Anne Sodality, Prince of Peace Parish Holy Family will be holding a Membership meeting on Wednesday March 18, 2026 at the Church Parish Hall at 6 PM. Doors will be opened at 5:30 PM. Officers elections will be

held after the Prayers and a brief business meeting. The guest speaker will be Father Daniel Greenleaf. If there are any questions, please call Anita 207-333-0288

Light refreshment will be served.

Save a date for the Annual Card Party to be

held at the Church Hall on April 8, 2026.

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

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

CCCT presents Wizard of Oz, Youth Edition

GRAY, ME - The Cumberland County Children's Theatre invites audiences to travel somewhere over the rainbow in their production of The Wizard of Oz, Youth Edition, a magical stage adaptation of the beloved classic. Performances will take place at the Freeport Performing Arts Center, 30 Holbrook St, Freeport, ME 04032 on Saturday, March 21 at 2pm and 7pm, Sunday, March 22 at 2pm, Saturday, March 28 at 2pm and 7pm, and Sunday, March 29 at 2pm.

Join Dorothy, Toto, and their unforgettable friends as they journey down the Yellow Brick Road in search of courage, heart, wisdom, and home. Based on the timeless story by L. Frank Baum and

the iconic MGM film, The Wizard of Oz, Youth Edition features all the songs you know and love, including "Over the Rainbow," "Follow the Yellow Brick Road," and "We're Off to See the Wizard."

Adapted especially for young performers, this enchanting musical adventure showcases the incredible talents of local youth as they bring the Land of Oz to life with vibrant costumes, lively choreography, and unforgettable characters. With its enduring message about friendship, bravery, and believing in yourself, The Wizard of Oz, Youth Edition is a heartwarming experience for the entire family.

Tickets are available

in advance by visiting: <https://our.show/ccctwizard>

The Wizard of Oz, Youth Edition is presented through special arrangement with Concord Theatricals. All authorized performance materials are also supplied by Concord Theatricals. For more information about licensing The Wizard of Oz, Youth Edition or other shows, please visit www.concordtheatricals.com.

Now in its sixth season, CCCT is a Maine nonprofit whose mission is to inspire, educate, and empower young people through theater. They offer high-quality, accessible theater programming for kids ages 5-17. For more information, visit: www.ccctme.org

March proclaimed Red Cross Month in Maine



AUGUSTA, ME - Governor Janet T. Mills issued a proclamation recognizing March as Red Cross Month to honor the more than 560 Mainers who deliver care and comfort through the American Red Cross of Northern New England.

"March is American Red Cross Month, a special time to honor the kindness of our neighbors who aid families in need every day in Maine, across the United States and around the world as they carry out the mission of preventing and alleviating suffering in the face of emergencies," Governor Mills said in the proclamation. "The Red Cross aspires to turn compassion into action, and Maine people, American Red Cross volunteers, help each other when we are in need. I urge all citizens to recognize the tremendous contributions that the Red Cross and its volunteers make in Maine every day."

Read the full proclamation from Gov. Mills: https://www.maine.gov/governor/mills/official_documents/proclamations/2026-02-red-cross-month-march

What Is Red Cross Month

The Red Cross mission has been part of the country for more than half of its 250-year history. Red Cross Month began as a national call to action during WWII for individuals to address growing humanitarian needs. Now, it's a community tradition honoring neighbors who deliver support when help can't wait.

"Red Cross Month is more than a moment

of recognition — it's a powerful reminder of what's possible when we come together to care for one another," said Stephanie Couturier, regional CEO, Red Cross of Northern New England. "Here in Maine, ordinary people make an extraordinary difference every day — whether they're responding to a local disaster, rolling up their sleeves to give blood or opening their hearts to make a generous donation. In life's most difficult moments, this compassion brings relief and hope, strengthening the bonds that unite our community."

Every contribution matters — visit redcross.org to get involved by making a financial donation, giving blood or platelets, volunteering, or taking a class in lifesaving skills. During this year's campaign:

Financial donations made on March 25 for Disaster Relief will be part of Red Cross Giving Day, which aims to bring together 30,000 supporters to help ensure families don't face disasters alone.

In March, the Red Cross will provide free A1C testing on successful blood, platelet and plasma donations. Those who come to give March 1-31 will also get a \$15 Amazon Gift Card by email. See RedCrossBlood.org/March.

How Red Cross Volunteers Help in Maine

In 2025, the Red Cross in Maine:

Responded to 297 disasters (mostly home fires) assisting 956 people.

Installed more than 1,750 free smoke alarms for families in need, including nearly 400 seniors, 180 individuals with disabilities, nearly 100 veterans and more than 230 children.

Collected more than 56,500 units of lifesaving blood and held more than 2,100 blood drives.

Service to the Armed Forces volunteers logged more than 1,600 hours supporting military members, veterans and their families.

How You Can Help

The Red Cross has an urgent need for disaster action team members throughout the state. These critical volunteer positions enable us to carry out our lifesaving mission across Maine. Turn your compassion into action today!

Disaster Action Team Volunteers

Every day people are forced from their homes due to fires, storms and other disasters. Single- and multi-family fires account for 90% of our disaster responses. You can be part of a team that helps and responds to dozens of emergencies every year in Maine. From offering a caring and compassionate ear, to meeting the immediate needs of disaster survivors, such as lodging and clothing, Red Cross volunteers ensure that families don't have to face tough times alone. We supply all the training you need.

Want to learn more or sign-up? Email VolunteerNNE@redcross.org.

DaPonte String Quartet performs in Maine

MAINE - The acclaimed DaPonte String Quartet brings two masterworks of the string quartet repertoire to audiences in Maine and New Hampshire in an upcoming series of concerts featuring Ludwig van Beethoven's String Quartet in E minor, Op. 59

No. 2, and Benjamin Britten's String Quartet No. 2 in C major, Op. 36.

Additional information and tickets at www.dapontequartet.org

Thursday March 19 7:00 pm Jewish Museum Portland, ME

Saturday March 21

3:00 pm Brunswick Unitarian Universalist Church, ME

Sunday March 22 2:00 pm St. John's Episcopal Church, Portsmouth, NH

Thursday March 26 7:00 pm First Church in Belfast, ME

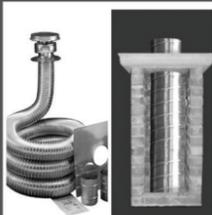
Friday March 27 5:00 pm Eagle Hill Institute, Steuben, ME.

Saturday March 28 3:00 pm The Barn at Woodlawn, Ellsworth, ME

Sunday March 29 3:00 pm St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Boothbay Harbor, ME.

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Newsmakers, Names & Faces

Working Loose presents Crystal Clutching

BLUE HILL, ME
- In the mid-1990s, Carl Sagan warned that modern society was drifting toward a second dark age. He argued that as our dependence on technology grew, our understanding of it would diminish and the sheer abundance of information would erode our sense of truth. In *The Demon-Haunted World*, Sagan imagined a culture that, unable or unwilling to think critically, would retreat into superstition—into demons, humours, and “crystal clutching.” When reasoning falters, he wrote, “the flame gutters. Its little pool of light trembles. Darkness gathers. The demons begin to stir.”

Today, that warning feels less prophetic than descriptive. AI-generated slop is promoted as the inevitable future of visual culture; cult remedies circulate as medical fact; truth collapses into opinion, algorithm, or just convenience. Answers are instant, outsourced, and frictionless—whether from a search engine, a feed, or a chatbot—while consumption continues uninterrupted, masking what has quietly disappeared: discernment, skepticism, and shared reality.

Within this landscape, the eleven artists in *Crystal Clutching* point back to the magic mirror to ask for clarification. Like the mythic amphibia—facing forward and backward at once—the works in this exhibition inhabit a space containing past and present, reason and superstition, truth and fable.

Event details: Co-curated by Annika Earley + Em Gift April 1st – June 13th, 2026 Working Loose: 49 Main Street, Blue Hill, ME 04614 Opening Reception: Friday, April 3rd 5pm - 7pm

The exhibition features works by Annika Earley, Dana Sherwood,

WORKING LOOSE | SPRING EXHIBITION

CRYSTAL CLUTCHING

APRIL 1ST - JUNE 13TH



Annika Earley • Dana Sherwood • Haley Wood • Jennifer Coates
Jenny Ibsen • Lindsay Montgomery • Mark Dion • Rachel Alexandrou
Rebecca Munce • Shari Mendelson • Stacey Rozich

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Haley Wood, Jennifer Coates, Jenny Ibsen, Lindsay Montgomery, Mark Dion, Rachel Alexandrou, Rebecca Munce, Shari Mendelson and Stacey Rozich

Dana Sherwood draws inspiration from ancient imagery, in this case the powerful mythological figure of Medusa. An enduring symbol whose meaning shifts with culture from monster to victim, Medusa glares out from Sherwood’s ceramic vessel as a snake coils around its neck.

Mark Dion, whose work often swims in the brackish waters of sculpture and scientific taxonomy, contributes a new print in which Medieval European and ancient Egyptian monsters are labeled with contemporary cultural plagues. A Boschian creature stands in for *The Super Rich* while a sword-wielding lizard monster is labeled as *Scam-Artists and Identity Thieves*. The levity created by the pairings only

emphasizes the strangeness of our current news cycle. It’s not difficult to find all sorts of monsters today.

Equally brackish is the work of Shari Mendelson, whose sculptures feel freshly unearthed and ancient until you learn that they are made of reclaimed and recycled plastic. Delicate and mysterious, they exist in two epochs at the same time, creating a crease or collapse in reality: viewing Mendelson’s sculptures is to look backwards and forwards at the same time, the magic mirror reflecting and refracting our own image once again.

Crystal Clutching reflects upon the historical murk of the dark ages while refracting contemporary anxieties around belief, doubt, and the seductive pull of the fantastical. In doing so, these artists ask not what we know, but how we know, and what we are willing to believe when the light grows uncertain?

CMMC lab tech celebrates impressive milestone

LEWISTON, ME - A Central Maine Medical Center (CMMC) lab technician reached an impressive milestone last month: 50 years on the job—all at CMMC.

Paula Bouffard, an Auburn native, was still attending the University of Maine when she reported for her first clinical shift as a lab technician. At the time, CMMC was Central Maine General Hospital.

“Well, I like what I do,” Paula said. “I enjoy doing the lab work. I liked it then and still do, obviously. It gives me something to do. I’m not bored.”

Paula says she has seen much change at CMH over half a century. The healthcare system has grown. She witnessed entire new wings being added



to the hospital. The location of the lab at CMMC has changed several times. When she started, it was where the present-day security office is.

And, of course, technology has changed considerably for the better, she says. “When I first came here, there were no computers. Zero. Everything was done on paper.” Modern day equipment, she

says, has improved everything, including accuracy and turnaround times for analyzing bloodwork and getting the results back to providers.

Paula says clocking out for the last time and retiring isn’t something on her immediate horizon, although she does like to golf and spend time with her five grandkids. “We’ll see,” she said.

Oral health’s surprising connection to heart, brain, body

AUBURN, ME - The Auburn Public Library in partnership with Lunder-Dineen Health Education Alliance of Maine is offering a free workshop on oral health on Wednesday, March 25 at 11 AM in the Androscoggin Community Room at the Auburn Public Library.

This fun and hands-on workshop is a great way to explore good oral health habits and learn about other simple ways to stay healthy. Oral health is more than having a nice smile. Daily oral care keeps teeth and gums healthy. It can also prevent more costly interventions. Older adults have greater health risks when oral care is overlooked. Dry mouth, tooth decay, gum disease and pain don’t have to be part of getting older.

Participants will receive free oral hygiene kits and walk away with more knowledge on how their oral health is connected to the health of their heart,

Join us for a fun, hands-on workshop to explore good oral health habits and other simple ways to stay healthy. Participants will receive free oral hygiene kits.

Wednesday, March 25th
11:00AM - 12:30 PM
Auburn Public Library

ORAL HEALTH: THE SURPRISING CONNECTION TO YOUR HEART, BRAIN, AND BODY

MOTIVATE
Maine's Oral Team-Based Initiative
Vital Access to Education
Oral Health Leads to Total Health

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brain, and body.

Presenters:

Leonard Brennan, DMD Harvard Dental School Faculty Adviser, National Center for Equitable Care for Elders MOTIVATE Program Adviser
Denise O’Connell, MSW, LCSW Associate Director Lunder-Dineen Health Education Alliance of Maine

Tara M. Wilson, BS Health Education Program Specialist Lunder-Dineen Health Education Alliance of Maine To learn more visit: <https://lunderdineen.org/program/>

motivate-at-home-portal/

Registration is required. To register, contact the Auburn Public Library by visiting their website at www.auburnpubliclibrary.org or call the Reference Desk at 207-333-6640, ext. 4.

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

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

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CMMC student named a 2026 New Century Workforce Scholar

MAINE - Dan Levis, a student at Central Maine Community College, has been named a 2026 New Century Workforce Scholar and will receive a \$1,500 scholarship.

This scholarship is the first of its kind to support students at associate degree-granting institutions on a national scale as they plan to enter the workforce upon completing a degree or certificate. The program is sponsored by The Coca-Cola Foundation and Phi Theta Kappa Honor Society.

New Century Workforce Scholars are selected based on their academic accomplishments, leadership, activities, and how they extend their intellectual talents beyond the classroom. More than 2,300 students from nearly 1,400 college campuses nationwide were nominated. Only one New Century Workforce Scholar was selected from each state.

"We congratulate Daniel for receiving this prestigious scholarship, and we are honored to partner with The Coca-Cola

Foundation to recognize these outstanding achievements," said Phi Theta Kappa's President and CEO, Dr. Lynn Tincher-Ladner. "Scholarship programs like this are integral for creating opportunities for students to succeed as they prepare to enter the workforce and for putting college completion within reach."

The New Century Workforce Scholars will be recognized at Phi Theta Kappa's annual convention, PTK Catalyst, in Baltimore, Maryland, March 26-28.

\$19.4M invested in Maine community colleges

AUGUSTA, ME - Maine's community colleges received \$19.4 million in federal funding for critically needed facilities and equipment in a range of programs, as part of the federal budget package signed by President Donald Trump.

"These investments championed by U.S. Senator Susan Collins will have lasting and widespread impact for the students at Maine's community colleges," said David Daigler, president of the Maine Community College System (MCCS). "Investments in equipment, program development, and key facilities benefit generations of students who are tomorrow's skilled workforce in Maine."

"We deeply appreciate Senator Collins' persevering effort and the support of U. S. Senator Angus King to ensure Maine's community colleges have the resources they need to give students a high-quality, affordable education directly tied to our state's workforce demands," Daigler said.

The federal funding will go toward the following projects:

York County Community College:

\$6.5 million towards a new \$15 million student housing project on campus. (Collins and King)

Eastern Maine Community College:

\$6.5 million to build a new simulation lab and renovate an existing lab for nursing and health care

programs. (Collins)

Southern Maine Community College:

\$2.2 million to create a new heat pump training lab and renovate an existing facility to expand the plumbing program. (Collins)

Kennebec Valley Community College:

\$1 million for equipment for the short-term workforce training mechanized logging program. (Collins)

\$180,000 to purchase equipment for the college's electrician training program. (Collins)

Central Maine Community College:

\$1 million for equipment for a nursing simulation lab. (Collins)

Northern Maine Community College:

\$1.3 million for equipment and program development to train industrial electrical and instrumentation technicians. (Collins and King)

\$650,000 to purchase labor and delivery simulation equipment for the college's nursing and health care programs. (Collins and King)

New MRWA-MCC pathway to water & wastewater careers

AUGUSTA, ME - The Maine Rural Water Association (MRWA) and the Maine Conservation Corps (MCC), part of the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation, and Forestry's Bureau of Parks and Lands, announced today that a new Maine Department of Labor (MDOL) registered pre-apprenticeship has been established to prepare MCC participants for direct entry into MRWA's Registered Apprenticeship Programs for Water and Wastewater Operator careers.

The pre-apprenticeship is designed to align with MDOL's apprenticeship system and national best practices for pre-apprenticeship as a structured pathway that helps participants enter and succeed in a Registered Apprenticeship Program.

A clear pathway to Maine's water workforce

Through this partnership, MRWA will serve as the program sponsor/lead and work with MCC and MDOL to register each pre-apprenticeship cohort beginning with MCC's June cohort launch, continuing through end-of-term activities and transition into apprenticeship with participating Maine water and wastewater employers.

"As a state, we need a strong pipeline of skilled operators to protect public health and keep essential drinking water and wastewater systems running," said Kirsten Hebert, Director of Maine Rural Water Association. "This pre-apprenticeship creates a practical, supported bridge from service and hands-on field experience to long-term careers with Maine utilities—and it's built to help participants move faster once they're hired."

MRWA's existing apprenticeship program in-

cludes water and wastewater tracks, mentorship, and technical training aimed at supporting professional licensure.

What participants will do

The pre-apprenticeship builds on MCC's structured training model—an AmeriCorps program—that emphasizes safety, teamwork, service, and field-based skill development. Participants receive training that can include OSHA 10 Construction, First Aid/CPR/AED exposure, tick-safety education, and strong safety culture expectations. MCC's curriculum also covers tools and field operations and can include DEP erosion certification components relevant to environmental work.

MRWA's contributions:

Orientation at MCC's June cohort launch introducing the water/wastewater industry and the apprenticeship pathway

Online training resources supporting attainment of the Very Small Water System (VSWS) Operator-in-Training (OIT) credential prior to pre-apprenticeship completion

Treatment plant visits and informational interviews near the end of each service term

Matching and referrals to municipal and district water utilities seeking new talent

Opportunities for select participants to attend MRWA's Annual Conference for Licensed Operators in early December

MCC's program design also includes an employment transition module with mock interviews, resume and cover letter support, and job search preparation, reinforcing the pathway into apprenticeship and employment.

Direct entry and ad-

vanced placement into Registered Apprenticeship

MRWA will provide direct entry into its Water Operator and Wastewater Operator Registered Apprenticeship Programs for successful completers and will offer advanced placement when hired, helping participants start ahead based on demonstrated competencies.

Consistent with Maine DOL guidance that pre-apprentices may carry up to 1,000 hours of on-the-job experience into a Registered Apprenticeship upon graduation, the MRWA-MCC pathway recognizes completed pre-apprenticeship hours toward apprenticeship progression.

Upon apprenticeship registration, MRWA will recognize:

40 hours of Related Technical Instruction (RTI) (plus applicable online licensing coursework, such as VSWS OIT training, if completed)

On-the-Job Training (OJT) hours equal to completed pre-apprenticeship hours, up to 1,000 hours

"For decades, MCC members have developed real-world skills through service that benefits Maine communities," said Christy Owen, Director of the Maine Conservation Corps. "This partnership strengthens those pathways by linking conservation service to registered apprenticeships and long-term careers in essential infrastructure."

How utilities and participants can get involved

MCC participants interested in water and wastewater careers can learn more through MCC program staff and MRWA's apprenticeship resources. Maine water and wastewater utilities interested in becoming participating employers are encouraged to connect with MRWA.

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Seniors Not Acting Their Age A Solo Winter Trek on Mount Willard



A hiker takes a photo of Mount Field from the cliffs of Mount Willard



The Mount Willard Trail was packed like a wilderness superhighway



The view of Crawford Notch from Mount Willard is phenomenal

Mount Willard in Crawford Notch, New Hampshire, might be the most popular winter mountain hike in the White Mountains. Surrounded by 4,000-foot peaks such as Mounts Tom, Field, Willey, Jackson and Pierce, it's situated in the midst of a mountaineering paradise. Many consider Mount Willard to be one of the most rewarding short hikes in New Hampshire and large numbers of hikers complete the relatively short 3.4-mile trek each winter. Their reward is a spectacular view of Crawford Notch from cliffs near the top.

A major factor in Mount Willard's popularity is the presence of the Appalachian Mount Club (AMC) Highland Center Lodge just a short distance from the trailhead. The lodge has the capacity to accommodate 125 visitors and an ascent of Mount Willard is a common activity for guests.

Crawford Notch has a rich mountaineering history. Settled by the pioneering Crawford family in the late-1700s, they were responsible for opening the area to trade and tourism. Abel and Ethan Allen Crawford built the Crawford Path to Mount Washington, the oldest continuously used mountain footpath in the United States. Innkeepers and guides, they established the famed Crawford Notch House in the early-1800s where mountaineers were lodged for nearly two centuries.

After spending a day Nordic skiing at Jackson Ski Touring in nearby Jackson, my goal was to complete a solo mountain climb the following day. Mount Willard seemed like the ideal choice. The relatively short trek could be completed in the morning and I was almost guaranteed to have lots of company.

Several vehicles were

parked on the side of Route 302 opposite the trailhead in Crawford Notch when I arrived on a cool, sunny early-February morning. An inspection of the trail indicated it was hard packed snow so I elected to forego snowshoes and wear micro spikes. The vast majority of the hikers I encountered wore spikes while only a handful chose snowshoes.

I crossed the Conway Scenic Railroad tracks and quickly reached Avon Trailhead. The hike starts on the Avon Trail which is part of the Appalachian Trail and the beginning of numerous mountain hikes. I reached the Mount Willard Trail on the left after .1-mile.

The hiking was superb. The hardened snow surface packed by scores of prior hikers was a virtual wilderness superhighway. In my opinion, traveling on a solid snow base above roots and rocks offers the best hiking conditions of

any season.

I trekked easily in a southwesterly direction while ascending gradually surrounded by snow-covered spruce trees in a winter wonderland. I met the first of many hikers after a short distance. He was soon followed by a trail runner who breezed past at a rapid pace.

After perhaps a mile, the trail took an abrupt left turn followed by an equally sharp right turn where I began ascending more steeply. Shortly after, I encountered a party of four hikers led by a woman with a dog on a leash. They spoke glowingly about the wondrous sunny views from the cliffs near the top and reassuringly volunteered that winds were light.

The sun was breaking through the trees as I approached the cliffs. When I arrived, a group of four exuberant hikers were

gathered on the edge of the towering escarpment exclaiming the virtues of the spectacular location. The views of Crawford Notch from that vantage point are simply phenomenal. The impressive cliffs of Mount Willard and those of Mount Webster across the valley form what is called the "gateway" to the notch.

The actual summit is in a wooded area a short distance west of the cliffs. I followed a narrow path in the snow along the cliffs, entered a dense spruce forest, and proceeded to the highpoint.

When I returned to the cliffs, the other hikers were leaving. I lingered to embrace the magnificent views; it's a rare winter day when one can comfortably spend an extended period on an exposed mountain-top.

More hikers were arriving when I began my

descent. About halfway down, I met two large groups; both had spent the night at the AMC Lodge. Some wanted reassurance that the views were as exceptional as advertised. I happily confirmed their expectations.

My book, *Maine Al Fresco: The Fifty Finest Outdoor Adventures in Maine* narrates many of the best winter mountain hikes in the state.

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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Arts & Entertainment

Points North launches new monthly documentary series

ROCKLAND, ME - Points North, the nonprofit organization behind the Camden International Film Festival (CIFF), is proud to announce the launch of Points North Presents, a new monthly screening series taking place on the fourth Thursday of March, April and May at the Strand Theatre.

In collaboration with the Strand Theatre, Points North Presents will bring some of the year's best documentaries to Midcoast Maine, with each screening followed by a lively Q&A or facilitated discussion, often with the filmmaker in attendance, creating space for genuine exchange between artists and audience.

Announced today are the first three films in the series. The inaugural screening will be free and open to all: *The AI Doc: Or How I Became an Apocalyptic*. Fresh from its Sundance premiere, the film comes from the Academy Award®-winning filmmakers behind *Ev-*

erything Everywhere All at Once and *Navalny*, and explores both the extraordinary possibilities and existential dangers of rapidly evolving AI technology.

It will be followed by *2025 Oscar-nominated Cutting Through Rocks* in April, and *Natchez*, winner of three awards including Best Documentary at the 2025 Tribeca Film Festival in May.

"For over twenty years, Points North has helped launch extraordinary documentary storytellers into the world — and each Fall we celebrate their work at CIFF," said Points North Artistic Director Sean Flynn. "Points North Presents is our chance to extend that mission year-round. These first three films will take us from Midcoast Maine to the Mississippi Delta, to rural Iran, and to the edge of the AI revolution, connecting us more deeply to the world and to each other."

"Launching this



partnership is a real milestone for the Strand, allowing us to expand our programming to include world-class documentaries and conversations," said Strand Film Programmer Brita Wanger. "The folks at Points North Institute have unmatched expertise in documentary and access to the top creators and storytellers in the field. Alongside them, we're able to

present these films in context and offer something of extraordinary value to our community."

Points North Presents is an opportunity to see films that have earned their place on the world stage — documentaries that might otherwise only be seen at major festivals, now here in Rockland. Many in this series lack formal distribution, which makes evenings like these rare chances to support independent filmmakers and encounter stories and voices that don't often make it to local screens. Whether you're a longtime CIFF attendee or walking through our doors for the first time, we'd love to have you. Come for the film. Stay for the conversation.

Spring 2026 Lineup
March 26, 7:00 PM

The AI Doc: Or How I Became an Apocalyptic

Directed by Daniel Roher and Charlie Tyrell,

2026

From the Academy Award®-winning filmmakers behind *Everything Everywhere All at Once* and *Navalny*; a father-to-be tries to figure out what is happening with all this AI insanity. *The AI Doc: Or How I Became an Apocalyptic* is a hand-made, eye-opening documentary about the most powerful technology humanity has ever created... and what's at stake if we get it wrong.

This inaugural screening will be free and open to all.

April 23, 7:00 PM

Cutting Through Rocks - filmmaker in attendance

Directed by Sara Khaki and Mohammadreza Eyni, 2025

As the first elected councilwoman of her remote Iranian village, Sara Shahverdi fearlessly breaks patriarchal traditions by training teenage girls to ride motorcycles

and stopping child marriages. When accusations arise questioning Sara's intentions to empower the girls, her identity is put in turmoil.

May 28, 7:00 PM

Natchez

post-screening Q&A

Directed by Suzannah Herbert, 2025

Natchez captures an unsettling clash between history and memory in a small Mississippi town; a layered mosaic of people contending with the weight of the past in a place where it is always present. Equal parts amusing and disturbing, we journey through an antebellum tourist destination at a crossroads as it grapples with a deeply troubled history that is so thoroughly ingrained in its present, we're left to wonder if it's actually past at all.

Tickets & Access

Tickets are \$12 General Admission and \$10 for Seniors, Students, and Strand Members, and may be purchased directly through the Strand Theatre at:

<https://www.rocklandstrand.com>

Points North Presents is produced in collaboration with The Strand. Support for the program is generously provided by The Dave Nichols Charitable Trust, with media support from Midcoast Villager. The series is a program of Points North, extending the organization's commitment to advancing the art, artists, and audiences of cinematic nonfiction storytelling throughout the year.

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TurfMutt Foundation: Tips for boosting curb appeal this spring

MAINE - As the ground thaws and the real estate market heats up, the TurfMutt Foundation, which advocates for the care and use of backyards, public parks, school yards and other green spaces, urges homeowners to “green up” their property to maximize resale value. First impressions are everything, and that starts at the curb.

“Your yard is no longer just a pretty face. It’s meaningful,” says Kris Kiser, President & CEO of the TurfMutt Foundation. “Home buyers are looking for a well-maintained outdoor space that’s purposeful whether that’s for kids’ play space, entertaining or other uses. Your landscape significantly impacts a buyer’s perception of the entire property and neighborhood.”

The financial incentive is clear. Recent real estate data shows that high curb appeal can increase a home’s value by an average of seven percent, while sophisticated landscaping can boost that premium to as much as 15 to 20 percent. In some markets, sellers see more than a 200 percent return on investment just due to basic lawn maintenance, making it one of the most cost-effective ways to drive up a final sale price.

To help homeowners win over buyers, the TurfMutt Foundation shares these important tips:

Think Like a Buyer:



Step across the street and look at your home with fresh eyes. Do you see an inviting yard, or one that comes with a big “to-do” list? Be honest with yourself, make a list of things that need attention, then make a plan and get to work.

Clean Up Winter Debris: Don’t underestimate the value of a simple yard clean-up. Removing dead limbs and clearing out matted leaves is the fastest way to show potential buyers that your home has been well-maintained.

Care for the Yard: A freshly mowed lawn, neatly trimmed edges and pruned bushes act as a frame for your home, making the entire property look more inviting to potential buyers.

Add Fresh Mulch: A fresh layer of mulch around trees and in flower beds is a low-cost face lift for your yard. It suppresses weeds and provides a finish that pops in listing photos.

Create a Vision: Show buyers how they can use the outdoor space to enhance their lifestyle. Set an outdoor dining table, string lights under a shade tree, or set up chairs around a clean firepit.

Plant with Purpose: Plant colorful flowers (using the USDA Plant Hardiness Zone Map to decide which ones are best for your microclimate) to add visual impact that also feed pollinators. If it’s too soon to add flowers to your beds, use containers to create a “move-in-ready” vibe.

“And always bear nature in mind,” adds Kiser. “Know your climate zone and make sure your landscape choices are appropriate for where you live. Remember your yard is a habitat. Plant for pollinators and wildlife.”

For more tips about creating purposeful living landscapes and the many benefits of the green space around us, visit TurfMutt.com.

Maine Right to Life announces statewide Oratory Contest winner

AUGUSTA, ME - Maine Right to Life is proud to announce the winner of its 2026 Statewide Oratory Contest, a national-level competition that showcases the passion, conviction, and public speaking talent of high school students committed to the protection of human life.

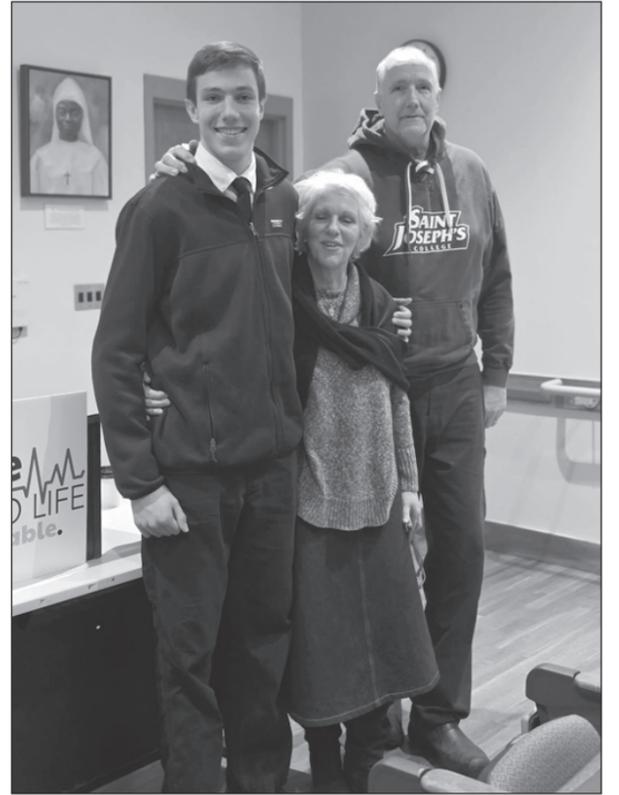
Hosted and sponsored by Saint Joseph’s College of Maine, this marked the first year Maine has participated in the National Right to Life Oratory Contest program.

This year’s winner is Christian Corcoran, a senior at Cheverus High School. Christian delivered a compelling and articulate speech defending the dignity of every human life, earning top honors at this year’s competition. Judges noted his strong expression of faith, his ability to tell a meaningful story, and the way the theme of love was thoughtfully woven throughout his presentation.

As Maine’s state champion, Christian will represent the state at the National Right to Life Oratory Contest, held during the National Right to Life Committee Annual Conference on June 12–13, 2026, in Arlington, Virginia. There, he will compete alongside other state winners from across the country.

The statewide contest mirrors the national competition, challenging students to research, write, and deliver original speeches addressing pro-life issues with clarity, compassion, and intellectual depth. Participants are evaluated on content, organization, delivery, and overall effectiveness.

Christian was joined at the event by his proud parents, Gerry and



Deanne Corcoran, as well as his two siblings—together triplets—making the occasion especially meaningful for the Corcoran family.

“We are incredibly proud of Christian,” said Mike McClellan, Executive Director of Maine Right to Life. “The Oratory Contest is about more than competition—it is about equipping the next generation to speak thoughtfully and courageously about the value of every human life.”

Maine Right to Life extends its sincere gratitude to the volunteer judges and timekeeper who made this inaugural contest possible: Suzanne Lafreniere, Jake Thibault (MRTL Board Member), Robin Burnham, and Lori Cloutier (MRTL Board President). Also, in volunteer roles were MRTL Board Members Heather Sirocki and Andy Levesque.

The Oratory Contest is part of Maine Right to Life’s broader mission

to educate and engage young people throughout the state. By encouraging students to thoughtfully examine life issues and articulate their beliefs in a public forum, the contest helps foster leadership and informed civic participation.

Maine Right to Life congratulates Christian Corcoran and looks forward to cheering him on as he represents Maine on the national stage in June 2026.

For more information about Maine Right to Life and future student opportunities, please visit www.mainerighttolife.org or contact the organization at mrtl@mainerighttolife.org (207) 782-0101.

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

St. John’s Catholic School enrollment opens for ‘26-27

BRUNSWICK, ME - St. John’s Catholic School is pleased to announce that Open Enrollment for the 2026–2027 academic year is now underway. Families seeking a faith-centered, academically strong, and community-driven education are encouraged to apply.

Serving students in a nurturing and structured environment, St. John’s Catholic School combines rigorous academics with a classical education, leadership development, and service learning. The school is committed to forming the whole child: mind, body, and spirit, while preparing students for lifelong success.

“Our mission is to provide an exceptional education rooted in faith, excellence, and community,” said school principal, John Yorkey. “We invite families to discover the difference a St. John’s education can make in their child’s life.”

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vibrant school environment firsthand. Financial aid opportunities and tuition assistance options are available for qualifying families.

Applications are being accepted on a rolling basis, with priority consideration encouraged for early submissions.

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INKED: Natural pigments from Mexico to Maine

WEST GARDINER, ME - Shop Maine Craft presents **INKED: Natural Pigments from Mexico to Maine**, a solo exhibition featuring Kaspar Heinrici of Treib Designs, on view February 27 through April 10, 2026, at the Center for Maine Craft in West Gardiner.

INKED: Natural Pigments from Mexico to Maine explores the intersection of material, perception, and place. Through drawing, painting, animation, and sculpture, Kaspar Heinrici investigates how human perception constructs meaning, value, and desire - from the mechanics of light and shadow that create illusions of depth to the cultural signals embed-

ded in designed objects. His work situates itself at the crossroads of art, design, and marketing, examining how form operates both visually and socially.

“My work investigates how human perception constructs meaning, value, and desire - from the basic mechanics of light and shadow that create an illusion of depth to the cultural signals embedded in designed objects. I am interested in how form operates not only visually, but socially: how images and objects shape assumptions about status, taste, and identity.” - Kaspar Heinrici

Kaspar Heinrici is an artist and designer working across drawing, painting,

animation, sculpture, and product design. Trained as an industrial designer, his practice bridges fine art and commercial production, examining how perception, value, and cultural signals shape material culture. Through iterative processes and cross-media translation, Heinrici explores how cost, scale, and reproduction influence access to art and design. Now based in Maine, his recent work centers on natural pigment extraction and Maine-derived materials, grounding conceptual inquiry in the physical realities of place.

About the Center for Maine Craft:

The Center for Maine Craft is a year-round re-

tail gallery and exhibition space dedicated to the work of Maine craft artists. Located at the West Gardiner Service Plaza, the gallery features work by more than 300 members of the Maine Crafts Association and presents a broad spectrum of craft media, techniques, and both contemporary and traditional approaches to design.

Location: 288 Lewiston Rd. West Gardiner, Maine 04345

Hours: Open Daily, 9am - 6pm
Dates: February 27 - April 10, 2026
Link: <https://shop-mainecraft.com/inked-in-maine-kaspar-heinrici-2026/>.



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Special section: March is Women's History Month

Two to be inducted into Maine Women's Hall of Fame

The 2026 inductees to the Maine Women's Hall of Fame will be Dr. Alane O'Connor, Director of Perinatal Addiction Medicine at MaineHealth Maine Medical Center who has been in the forefront of addiction medicine in the state, and the late Frances Perkins, U.S. Secretary of Labor under President Franklin Roosevelt and architect of New Deal programs that Americans rely on today.

This is the 36th Maine Women's Hall of Fame Induction Ceremony to honor those who have made outstanding contributions to improving opportunities for all Maine women. Organizations and individuals nominate outstanding women whose achievements have made a significant statewide impact and improved the lives of women in Maine, and whose contributions have enduring value for women. Inductees are selected by an independent panel of judges.

O'Connor, an innovative, compassionate, purpose-driven leader in addiction medicine, was born and raised in rural Maine. She earned an undergraduate degree at Colby College, a master's from Boston College and doctorate from Vanderbilt University. In 2005, she returned to Maine as the opioid epidemic was intensifying. She began caring for patients with substance use disorder as part of her rural family practice and later became board certified in addiction medicine.

O'Connor was one of the first providers in Maine to serve pregnant women with substance use disorders. She became the state's leading expert and served as the medical director of the Maine Maternal Opioid Misuse (Maine MOM) initiative, a five-year, \$5 million federal grant to expand access to substance use treatment for pregnant and postpartum women. She is the first Director of Perinatal Addiction Medicine at MaineHealth Maine Medical Center and is core faculty in Maine's only addiction medicine fellowship.

O'Connor has trained hundreds of physicians, including both residents and fellows, and published more than a dozen peer-reviewed manuscripts on maternal and infant outcomes following treatment with medication for opioid use disorder during pregnancy, as well as related postpartum healthcare utilization and health policy.

Recognizing that some of her most at-risk pregnant women were not accessing health care in traditional settings, she de-

veloped a partnership with Portland Fire Department to create Project Lifeline, a nationally innovative medical and community paramedicine program that delivers street medicine services to unhoused pregnant and postpartum women with substance use disorder who live in tents, shelters, vehicles, and on the street.

Beyond caring for pregnant women, O'Connor works in the correctional system as the Director of Addiction Medicine at Somerset County Jail and Franklin County Detention Center, and is the clinical advisor to the Maine Sheriffs' Association. In this capacity, she developed and implemented a nationally innovative program using a monthly injectable medication (rather than a daily pill) to treat incarcerated individuals with opioid use disorder. The outcomes, published in *Health & Justice*, showed that the injectable medication expanded access to treatment during incarceration, improved treatment continuation after release and reduced the risk of post-release drug overdose death. The project gained nationwide attention and was featured on the front page of the *New York Times* and a related podcast. Her current research on reproductive life experiences of incarcerated women with substance use disorder blends both health fields.

O'Connor lectures regionally and nationally on substance use disorder to a variety of audiences, including medical providers, the child welfare system, the correctional system and judiciary, and law enforcement. She is a member of the Maine Maternal Fetal and Infant Mortality Review Panel and co-chairs Maine's Opioid Response Clinical Advisory Committee, which advises the state's opioid response director on clinical and public policy issues. Throughout her career, she has dedicated herself to serving the most marginalized individuals with empathy and compassion, and believes that human-centered and innovative strategies empower vulnerable individuals to thrive.

Perkins, the first woman to serve on a presidential cabinet (1933-45), was a social worker, public servant and trailblazer who championed workers' rights. She is best known as the architect of many of the New Deal programs that protected workers, helped the country recover from the Great Depression, and created the modern middle class: Social Security, unemployment and workers'



Frances Perkins and Dr. Alane O'Connor. Frances Perkins Center and Katie Sprague Photography

compensation insurances, minimum wages, maximum work hours, bans on child labor, health and safety reforms, and more.

The Perkins family settled in Newcastle, Maine in the mid-1700s. Fannie Coralie Perkins (she would later change her name to Frances) was born and raised in Massachusetts but returned to Maine each summer to spend time with her grandmother, Cynthia Otis Perkins, who she said was the most influential person in her life. The picturesque 57-acre family homestead remained a place of respite and reflection throughout Perkins' busy career and later years. She inherited the property in 1927, owned it until her death in 1965, and was buried alongside her husband in a nearby cemetery.

In 2014, the Frances Perkins Homestead was designated a National Historic Landmark, and in 2024, the Frances Perkins National Monument.

Perkins' education and early career took her first to Mount Holyoke College, then Illinois to teach at a girls' preparatory school and volunteer in settlement houses, and eventually to New York City, where she received a master's degree at Columbia University and lobbied for worker protection laws with the New York Consumers' League. In 1911, Perkins witnessed the horrific Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire that killed 146 people, consequently investigating similar tragedies and recommending new state fire safety practices. Perkins rose in New York State politics during the 1910s and 1920s, working closely with Gov. Al Smith and later serving as the inaugural New York State Industrial Commissioner for Gov. Franklin Delano Roosevelt.

In 1933, FDR asked Perkins to join his presidential cabinet as Secretary of Labor. Later, Perkins wrote a best-selling biography of FDR, was appointed to the

U.S. Civil Service Commission, and lectured at Cornell University's School of Industrial Relations. Perkins' professional achievements were accomplished in addition to her personal responsibilities as a mother, wife, daughter, sister, grandmother, caregiver, parishioner, community member, and beloved friend to many.

Although her policy work happened elsewhere, Perkins' career continues to have a significant impact on Maine, especially the one-quarter of Mainers who receive Social Security (more than half of whom are women). Perkins know-

ingly paved the way for other women in politics and public service, strategically navigating the male-dominated government at every step of her career.

Of her decision to become Secretary of Labor, she later reflected: "The door might not be opened to a woman again for a long, long time, and I had a kind of duty to other women to walk in and sit down on the chair that was offered."

Perkins and O'Connor will join an impressive list of inductees to the Maine Women's Hall of Fame that include authors, athletes, artists, activists, administra-

tors, political and religious leaders, educators, doctors, lawyers, scientists and college presidents. Among the most recent honorees: physician Julia McDonald, community activist Nancy Fritz and astronaut Jessica Meir. A full list of inductees, starting with Sen. Margaret Chase Smith and women's health advocate Mabel Wadsworth in 1990, is online.

Business and Professional Women/Maine Futurama Foundation established the Maine Women's Hall of Fame. The Bennett D. Katz Library at the University of Maine at Augusta has a collection of photographs, video recordings and other materials from the Maine Women's Hall of Fame induction ceremonies, as well as a permanent public gallery of inductee portraits. The portraits of O'Connor and Perkins will be hung in the library immediately following the March 21 induction ceremony.

BPW/Maine Futurama Foundation, working with Maine Community Foundation, awards annual scholarships to outstanding and deserving Maine women to help them achieve economic self-sufficiency.



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Exhibitions of resilient climate designs open in Maine



BATH, ME - A free public exhibition that reimagines a resilient and hopeful future for Bath and Harpswell in the face of climate change will open on March 12, Envision Resilience announced today. The Envision Resilience: Designs for Living in a Changing Climate exhibition series features a collection of designs for the cities' working waterfronts, public parks and neighborhoods, developed by graduate and undergraduate students studying architecture, landscape architecture, fine art and urban design.

The 2025 Envision Resilience Midcoast Maine Challenge convened teams from University of Maine Augusta, Maine College of Art and Design, Northeastern University, University of Massachusetts Amherst and University of Virginia with community stakeholders and local practitioners for an iterative process exploring innovative and adaptive solutions to challenges such as affordable housing, stormwater management, local industry and changing coastlines. The work will be displayed at Patten Free Public Library, Orr's Island Library, Cundy's Harbor Library and Union + Co. from March through August 2026.

"The schematic student designs propose embracing rather than running from the stressors of a changing climate through innovating and reimagining infrastructure, housing and open spaces," said Claire Martin, executive director of Envision Resilience. "Inspired by community leaders across Bath and Harpswell who generously gave their time and encouraged bold and visionary thinking, students have explored and proposed adaptive pathways that allow daily life to continue to thrive in the face of change."

The collection of designs, curated by local artist Brian Smith and supported with illustrations by graphic artists Felipe Alvarez and Tamra Carhart, are equally visionary and tactile, innovative and implementable, exploratory and rooted in Maine's hardy and spirited history and culture.

"This year's exhibit tells the story of how design students engaged with the Midcoast's built



"Mixed Lifestyles", Isaac Austin, UMaine August



"Signals of Time", Sophia White, Maine College of Art & Design

and natural landscapes and presents their contributions to ongoing conversations about resilience at the local and regional scale through craft and curiosity," said Wendell T. Joseph, design studio manager of Envision Resilience. "Design shapes our material reality and our collective imagination. As our climate continues to change, expansive imagination continues to become critical and necessary. Thanks to our partnership with local libraries and community spaces, this body of work from design and art students is made available and accessible to the public—an invitation to imagine with us. We hope our audience leaves this exhibit with a deeper understanding of how design thinking and processes can help us better live with a changing climate."

The Envision Resilience: Designs for Living in a Changing Climate will run at the Patten Free Public Library in Bath, ME and at Orr's Island Library and Cundy's Harbor Library in Harpswell, ME through August 2026 and at Union + Co. in Bath, ME through April. Admission is free and the exhibition is open during library hours.

Since its inception, Envision Resilience has engaged more than 500 students from 20 universities, and partnered with hundreds of community leaders across Northeast

communities throughout Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Maine.

Envision Resilience works to advance innovative city planning and design in the face of climate change through student and community partnerships. By connecting current and future professionals working across disciplines, the organization creates opportunities for communities to reimagine climate challenges and inspire resilient solutions. Envision Resilience, founded by Wendy Schmidt, is part of the philanthropic organizations and initiatives created and funded by Eric and Wendy Schmidt to work toward a healthy, resilient, secure world for all.

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America's Health Rankings report released, Maine ranks 13 in nation

The United Health Foundation is proud to release the America's Health Rankings® 2025 Annual Report, which analyzes 99 measures of health and well-being drawn from 31 distinct data sources to provide a comprehensive portrait of health at both the national and state levels.

This year's report reveals encouraging progress in national mortality rates and cancer screenings. These gains were tempered by continued increases in multiple chronic conditions and socioeconomic challenges.

Between 2022 and 2023, premature death decreased 8% and the drug death rate decreased 3%. This is the first national improvement in drug deaths since 2018.

The number of mental health providers increased 5% between September 2024 and September 2025.

Several measures of mental health, including frequent mental distress,

depression, suicide and non-medical drug death, had no change in the most recent period.

Cancer screenings increased 15% between 2022 and 2024.

Cancer screenings improved 14% among adults living in rural areas. However these screenings increased more in metropolitan areas at 18%.

Between 2023 and 2024, physical inactivity decreased 10%, now meeting the Healthy People 2030 external-link goal at the healthiest level since America's Health Rankings began tracking it in 1996.

Physical inactivity was 1.2 times higher among adults living in rural areas compared with metropolitan adults.

The rate of multiple chronic conditions increased 6% between 2023 and 2024. At the same time, obesity rates held steady with no change.

Cigarette smoking decreased 4% between 2023 and 2024. At the

same time e-cigarette use increased 4%.

Between 2021 and 2022, volunteerism increased 22%. However, homelessness and the share of individuals who avoided care due to cost increased 16% and 8% respectively.

The healthiest state was New Hampshire. This was followed by Massachusetts, Vermont, Connecticut and Utah. Louisiana was the least healthy, followed by Arkansas, Mississippi, Alabama and West Virginia.

Maine has ranked No. 13 this year and experienced the following progress and challenges:

31% decrease in the uninsured population between 2019 and 2024

13% decrease in premature death between 2022 and 2023

51% increase in e-cigarette use for adults between 2020 and 2024

High prevalence of frequent mental distress with 16.4% of adults experiencing it.

FAME announces allocatees for Capital Investment Program

AUGUSTA, ME - The Finance Authority of Maine (FAME) announced the allocatees for the newly recapitalized 2026 Maine New Markets Capital Investment Program (NMCIP). This year's cohort reflects a strong mix of national and regional community development entities (CDEs) committed to bringing investment into Maine communities that need it most.

The Maine New Markets Capital Investment Program is modeled after the federal New Markets Tax Credit program and is designed to stimulate private investment in economically distressed areas. Eligible investors may claim tax credits equal to 39 percent of an approved project's total qualifying investment. FAME administers the program in partnership with Maine Revenue Services.

"This program continues to be one of Maine's most effective tools for attracting private capital to spur job growth and strengthen rural and underserved regions," said FAME CEO Carlos Mello. "We're pleased to see strong interest from both long-standing partners and new entrants who recognize the opportunity to invest in Maine's future."

2026 Allocatees
Advantage Capital – New Orleans, LA

- AMCREF Community Capital – New Orleans, LA
- Arctaris Impact Investors – Wellesley, MA
- Brownfield Revitalization (Cherokee Fund) – Raleigh, NC
- CDCVA – New York, NY
- CEI Capital Management – Brunswick, ME
- Central States Development Partners – Rock Island, IL
- Cityscape Capital Group – Princeton, NJ
- Community Business Investment Fund (Baker Tilly Advisory Group) – Chicago, IL
- Consortium America – Washington, DC
- Enhanced Community Development (ECD) – New Orleans, LA
- Evernorth – Burlington, VT
- Five Points Community Capital – Austin, TX
- Lower Brule Community Development Enterprise – Reston, VA
- MHIC – Boston, MA
- Mid City Community – Bethesda, MD
- Midwest Renewable Capital – Grimes, IA
- National Impact Fund – Wayzata, MN
- PaceSetter CDE Inc. – North Andover, MA
- Petros Community Impact Fund – Bee Cave, TX
- River Gorge Capital – Chattanooga, TN
- Stonehenge Commu-

- nity Development – Columbus, OH
- Urban Action Community Development LLC – Baltimore, MD
- USBCDE – St. Louis, MO

(A full list with contact details is available upon request.)

Program Guidelines and Next Steps

Allocatees have one year from FAME's notification to deploy their tax credit allocations into qualified Maine projects. All project investments must be reviewed and approved by FAME. Allocations not used within one year will automatically lapse and may be reallocated.

Awardees must also file annual reports to assist the Legislature in evaluating the program's economic impact.

"The NMCIP remains critical to ensuring that transformative projects—particularly in rural Maine—can secure the financing needed to move from concept to reality," added Mello.

Organizations seeking investment are encouraged to contact allocatees directly for project discussions.

More information about the Maine New Markets Capital Investment Program can be found at:

www.famemaine.com/business-financing

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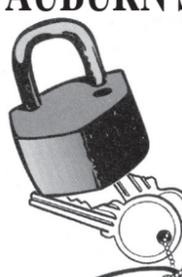
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AUBURN -- Stock up on BOOKS at great prices — 50¢ to \$3! Shop Saturday mornings at the APL Bookstore 9:00-12:30 for gently used books, ever-changing inventory, wide selection of children's, fiction and non-fiction books, plus DVDs and puzzles. Auburn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

Mar 14
SCARBOROUGH -- Public Bean Supper Saturday March 14th from 4-6pm. Two kinds of beans, hotdogs, chop suey, Mac & cheese, coleslaw, homemade biscuits and brown bread. Plus PIES for dessert. Adults \$10, under 12 \$5. Scarborough Free Baptist Church, 55 Mussey Rd, Scarborough. Corner of Spring St. and Mussey.

Mar 15
LEWISTON -- 2026 Maine Jewish Film Festival Preview this March at Bates College in Lewiston, Pettengill Hall G52

Sunday, March 15 2:00pm Las dos Mariette

Mar 16 – May 20

SOUTH PORTLAND -- Discover Tai Chi with Dr. Paul Lam will be presented in the community room of the South Portland Public Library starting on March 16 and going through May 20 on Mondays and Wednesdays from 9-10am. Many scientific studies have confirmed Tai Chi's ability to increase flexibility, reduce fall risk, and improve balance. There is no tuition for this class, but registration is requested. Please contact Peggy Foster (pcfoster@yahoo.com) or Jay Bock (principalbock@aol.com) for more information.

Mar 18
LEWISTON -- The Ladies of St Anne Sodality, Prince of Peace Parish Holy Family will be holding a Membership meeting on Wednesday 18,2026 at the Church Parish Hall at 6 PM, doors will be opened at 5:30 PM.

Mar 18

LISBON FALLS -- University of Maine Cooperative Extension will offer "Plant-Based on a Budget" from 5-7 p.m. at the Androscoggin-Sagadahoc County Extension office, 24 Main Street, Lisbon Falls.

The hands-on workshop is designed for adults interested in preparing affordable plant-based meals. Participants will learn practical strategies for shopping and meal planning, and will prepare two budget-friendly recipes using ingredients such as lentils, beans, grains and seasonal produce. The session will focus on building skills for preparing nutritious meals without relying on higher-cost meat substitutes.

The \$10 registration fee supports program costs. Registration is required and limited to six participants. Visit the program webpage to register by Wednesday, March 11.

Mar 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.

The Romance Book Club will end with Roman-tasy. On March 19th, we'll meet to discuss Swordheart by T. Kingfisher. Halla accidentally summons Sarkis, an immortal warrior trapped in a steel sword who is now sworn to protect her.

This book club is recommended for ages 18+. If you need help locating a copy of any of these titles, please contact our Lending Services Department at

513-3134 or visit the lending desk on the library's first floor.

Mar 19-29

MAINE -- The acclaimed DaPonte String Quartet brings two masterworks of the string quartet repertoire to audiences in Maine and New Hampshire in an upcoming series of concerts featuring Ludwig van Beethoven's String Quartet in E minor, Op. 59 No. 2, and Benjamin Britten's String Quartet No. 2 in C major, Op. 36.

Additional information and tickets at www.dapontequartet.org

Thursday March 19 7:00 pm Jewish Museum Portland, ME

Saturday March 21 3:00 pm Brunswick Unitarian Universalist Church, ME

Sunday March 22 2:00 pm St. John's Episcopal Church, Portsmouth, NH

Thursday March 26 7:00 pm First Church in Belfast, ME

Friday March 27 5:00 pm Eagle Hill Institute, Steuben, ME.

Saturday March 28 3:00 pm The Barn at Woodlawn, Ellsworth, ME

Sunday March 29 3:00 pm St. Columba's Episcopal Church, Boothbay Harbor, ME.

Mar 24

MAINE -- University of Maine Cooperative Extension will begin its Spring Gardening Webinar Series: Building Food Security in Maine with "Big Yields on Small Plots: Maximizing Your Garden's Footprint" from 6-7:15 p.m.

Led by Carrick Gambell, urban agriculture professional, this webinar will introduce participants to strategies to get the most out of their garden, no matter the size. Topics will include succession and com-

panion planting, trellising and season extension. Designed for gardeners of all levels, participants will leave with practical steps to grow food for themselves, their families and their communities.

Registration is required; sliding scale fee options are available. Register on the event webpage to attend live or receive the recording link.

Mar 25

AUBURN -- Auburn Public Library is hosting Oral Health: The Surprising Connection to Your Heart, Brain, and Body, taking place on Wednesday, March 25th from 11 AM - 12:30 PM. Registration is required.

Apr 3

BLUE HILL -- Working Loose presents Crystal Clutching, Co-cured by Annika Earley + Em Gift April 1st – June 13th, 2026, Working Loose: 49 Main Street, Blue Hill, ME 04614 Opening Reception: Friday, April 3rd 5pm - 7pm

Apr 9

NEW GLOUCESTER -- Free artist event at Unity Environmental University. Each event highlights a Maine-based artist with a pop-up exhibition, lecture, and catered reception. Ben Potter: Pollen and Gatorade: Materials and Connotations in the Landscape, at 5:00 pm, 70 Farm View Dr, New Gloucester, ME 04260.

Apr 18

LEWISTON -- Join us at the Lewiston Public Library for Painting Class: Flowers in Bloom in the 2nd floor Idea Lab on Saturday, April 18th at 11am. Recommended for children ages 7 – 14 years old. Come learn how to paint a spring scene with step-by-step instruction by local artist, Nicole Ann. Get creative by painting flowers in bloom using acrylic paints on canvas panels. All materials are provided. This program is free, open to the public, and no registration

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Apr 25

GORHAM -- The Gorham Police department will be having a drug take back on Saturday, April 25th, from 10 a m to 2 p m.

Apr 25

SOUTH PORTLAND -- At 10 am local time, people from around the world will gather to practice Tai Chi, which promotes health and well being. The local celebration at Scarborough Community Services, the Hub, is open to the public; no experience is necessary. Please join us for this free program and learn more about the benefits of practicing Tai Chi, which include better balance, increased flexibility, and a reduction in fall risk. For more information contact Peggy Foster pcfoster@yahoo.com.

MDOT

Continued from page 1
(#2229) over Dill Brook. Located 0.02 of a mile south of Foch Street.

Lewiston: Replacing the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge Ramp D/MCRR Bridge (#1371) over the MCRR. Located 0.12 of a mile west of Route 202.

Lewiston: Replacing the deck of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial Bridge RAMP A/MCRR Bridge (#1370) over MCRR. Located 0.40 of a mile south of the Auburn town line.

Lewiston: Rehabilitating Lincoln Street Androscoggin Mill Bridge (#5689) over Main Canal.

Located 0.16 of a mile south of Locus Street.

Lewiston: Painting Maine Turnpike Exit 13/MCRR Bridge (#0059) over Maine Central Railroad (MCRR). Located 0.07 of a mile south of Route 196 on Alfred A Plourde Parkway.

Lewiston: Replacing Hart's River Road Bridge (#0093) over Hart's Brook. Located 0.15 of a mile north of Interstate 95.

Highway Paving

Lewiston: Bates Street, beginning at Ash Street and extending north 0.22 of a mile to Route 202.

Lewiston: Pine Street, beginning at Canal Street and extending east 0.98 of a mile.

Lewiston: Ash Street, beginning at Canal Street and extending east 0.69 of a mile.

Lewiston: Municipal Partnership Initiative. Central Avenue, beginning at Russell Street and extending southwest 0.30 of a mile to Campus Avenue.

Special Programs
Lewiston, Auburn, Portland: A 2-year pilot, operating a bus service between Portland and Lewiston/Auburn.

Lewiston: Pilot project for traffic signal operations.

Lewiston: Municipal large culvert replacement on River Road.

View the entire 2026-2027-2028 Three-Year MDOT Work Plan at www.mainedot.gov.

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CMMC professionals prepare, train for worst case scenarios

LEWISTON, ME - Central Maine Medical Center's (CMMC) Emergency Department recently held mass casualty incident training to prepare staff for one of the most complex situations a hospital can face.

The simulated scenario involved an explosion at a local mill, sending 18 patients to the hospital by EMS, with injuries ranging from burns and fractures to amputations. Teams focused on the resuscitation of a critically injured 45-year-old woman triaged as a red-tag patient, indicating the highest level of urgency. Although the drill centered on one patient, staff operated as if multiple critically injured patients were arriving at once.

The training included numerous departments and healthcare professionals, including emergency physicians, trauma surgeons, nurses, patient care assistants, nursing educators, radiology, blood bank, phlebotomy and other ancillary services which all participated to reinforce coordination across departments.

"We do this so it becomes muscle memory," said Meredith Kennedy, director of Emergency Ser-



vices at CMMC. "When you're in a high-stress situation, you don't want to be questioning what comes next. You want your team to move confidently and efficiently."

Nearly all surviving patients who were victims

of the Oct. 25, 2023 mass shootings in Lewiston were treated at CMMC.

Mass casualty trainings are held several times a year, reinforcing the hospital's commitment to preparedness and patient safety.



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