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Since 1852 • Vol. 172 • No. 21 | Machias, Maine • December 24, 2025 | $1.50

Merry Christmas from all of us at the Machias Valley News Observer!



For Unto Us a Child Is Born: Live Nativity CHRISTmas Parade float from The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints of Machias. (Loretta McClellan photo)

And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flock by night. And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for, behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people. For unto you is born this day in the city of David a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord. And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, And on earth peace, good will toward men.

(Luke 2:8-14 KJV)

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Index

Calendar of Events.....13
Church Directory.....12
Classifieds.....19
Community News.....8
Games.....12
Help Wanted.....18-19
Legals/Notices.....18
Obituaries.....16
Op-Ed.....5-7
Outdoors.....20
Sports.....14-15

7 18122 07310 8

After Months of Turmoil, County Adopts $11.6 Million Budget

By Paul Sylvain

Despite months of dueling rhetoric, proposals, counterproposals, and threats of apocalyptic cuts and massive layoffs in public safety operations, Washington County Commissioners and the Budget Advisory Committee on Dec. 17, settled on a kinder, gentler 2026 county budget, totaling just under $11.6 million.

At $11,586,126, the budget sent back to the BAC, following an hour-long work session by commissioners on Dec. 17, represents a slight reduction of $215,694 from the $11.8 million county budget passed by the BAC on a split 6-5 vote on Dec. 3.

Still, the 2026 county budget represents a 17.3% increase over the 2025 budget adopted a year ago.

As noted by BAC Chairman Brian Schuth, the final budget rings in about $800,000 less than the first version of the budget it received from the commissioners to begin the 2026 budget process back in September.

Over the course of the ensuing two-and-a-half months, the BAC managed to whittle it down to the $11.8 million budget the BAC sent to the commissioners for consideration at their Dec. 11 meeting. Commissioners promptly rejected it and returned it to the BAC, saying deeper cuts need to be made from patrol deputies, jail, and emergency dispatch budgets, all administered by Sheriff Barry Curtis.

Meanwhile, in October, District 2 Commissioner Chairman David Burns proposed not only leaving three vacant patrol deputy positions unfilled through 2026, but also pushed to lay off an additional three deputies, plus other staffing cuts for the jail and dispatch.

BAC Vice Chair Ben Edwards sided with Burns and then went a step further, proposing that additional patrol positions be chopped from the budget. His suggestion met with a firestorm of objections from some members of the BAC, the public, county employees, and Sheriff Curtis. Curtis responded on Dec. 12 by posting a scathing attack on Burns and Edwards on social media, while pleading his case for public support to not cut public safety beyond the currently vacant positions.

At some point between Dec. 12 and the joint BAC and commissioners budget meeting on Dec. 17, something changed. Instead of what was expected to be a lengthy, hotly contested meeting to revisit and revise the BAC's budget, rejected by the commissioners nearly a week earlier, several soft cuts were passed and put forward to the BAC for a vote. There was only a brief discussion before the BAC voted in agreement with the commissioners, and the 2026 spending package was passed without fanfare or drama.

In the end, one additional vacant patrol deputy position will not be filled in 2026, resulting in a cut of $96,509. Another $5,000 from the uniforms allowance and $7,000 from fitness incentives, related to the deputies, were also cut. Another $75,000 was chopped, following a decision not to replace one of the department's cruisers. One probate position was removed, while the finance director was changed from part-time to full-time at about $77,000. Other deductions included a 0% pay increase for non-union employees, amounting to a $23,000 savings, and a $2,000 cut in cell phone stipends.

Most of the line item cuts were passed by 2-1 votes, with Burns and District 1 Commissioner Billy Howard supporting the revisions and District 3 Commissioner Courtney Hammond opposed.

BAC member Lewis Pinkham called the final version of the budget "the best option" for maintaining services in 2026. In the end, even the budget's toughest critic — Edwards — conceded that he agreed with Pinkham. Said Edwards, "I agree with Lewis, although I am disappointed that we didn't get more serious [about making deeper cuts]. Even though I would like to keep fighting, we should accept this budget as-is."

Schuth, meanwhile, stated for the record that if the 2025 tax anticipation note (TAN) is not paid, the outstanding balance would become part of the budget's tax bills. Municipalities that pre-pay their portion of the TAN would, however, be exempt.

The BAC followed Edwards' comments by voting 9-2 to approve the budget, as revised by the commissioners. The BAC offered no further adjustments before voting on it. Crystal Galina and Wayne Jones were the only two BAC members to vote against the budget.

Commissioners Howard, Hammond, and Burns reconvened moments after the BAC finished their business and voted unanimously to adopt the budget as passed by the BAC. While he voted to do so, Howard said he was doing so "reluctantly." Howard's remark was not surprising, considering that he has been lobbying to make much more decisive and "meaningful" cuts to the budget since last spring.

Burns said afterwards that commissioners spared the county further public safety cuts in light of plans to possibly move funding for some of the patrol deputies from the general county budget and into the county's Unorganized Territories budget. Burns admitted it could take several months to work something out and put it into play, but noted that he and Howard had only recently learned that several other Maine counties are already doing that.

The county's fiscal year ends on Dec. 1, though commissioners have also put towns and the public on notice that they will be shifting the county's fiscal year to align with the state's and most municipalities — one of the root causes of this year's shortfall — in the years to come.

Machias Valley News Observer

Website Notice

We are curently in the process of updating the website and it will be down into the new year. We thank you for your patience and we understand and apologize for the inconvenience.

SSC Presents Climate Change Through Generational Eyes

By Joan Miller

Sunrise Senior College is pleased to present Ms. Jacinta Kinyunzu, who will discuss climate change through generational eyes. She will explore how climate change impacts the health and well-being of different generations with a focus on the experiences, challenges, and strengths of older adults in coastal communities like ours. She will explain how rising seas, a change in weather patterns, and shifting ecosystems affect physical health. She will use case studies and local perspectives to illustrate her points.

Participants will exchange stories, compare experiences across different age groups, and discuss resilience strategies. Together, we will celebrate the wisdom, adaptability, and leadership to safeguard community well-being in a changing climate.

Our instructor, Jacinta Kinyunzu, is an environmental chemist and education professional with a Master's degree in environmental chemistry and has taught for many years at a Catholic University in Eastern Africa. She has a vast amount of educational experience. Her work blends scientific analysis with global case studies to examine climate change and how it impacts coastal communities.

This is a hybrid class held in person at UMM's Science 102 and on Zoom. The instructor will teach remotely from mid-Africa.

The class will be held in four sessions, beginning Feb. 11 from 10-11:30 a.m. The cost is $15 for SSC members, and members of colleges in the Maine Senior College Network may also register. If you are not a member, the registration cost is $20. For more information, go to our website, machias.edu/ssc/, or scan the QR code.

Hope to see you there, enjoying another aspect of climate change.

PET OF THE WEEK

Our "Pet of the Week" feature is your opportunity to show off your very special companion in the MVNO. Photos should be clear and sharp and include the name of your pet, its owner, the town it lives in, and maybe something unique about your pet. Please submit your photos via email to: psylvain.mvno@gmail.com

Jeepers-Peefer, Mr. McGhee



Meet Annie Lamb's favorite bird, the amazing Peefers McGhonagle McGhee! Annie writes, "Peef doesn't like all this snow very much, so we've been watching a lot of holiday movies instead!" "It's a Wonderful Life," indeed. (Annie Lamb photo)

Machias Valley News Observer

Washington County Weekly
Published Since 1852

Telephone Numbers:
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Fax: (207) 255-4058

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www.machiasnews.com

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editor@machiasnews.com

Open: M - F 10 a.m. - 3 p.m.

Advertisements, Subscriptions, and Payments must be mailed to
Post Office Box 357
Machias, ME 04654

Online subscriptions can be placed by credit card at
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Published weekly on Wednesday, the Machias Valley News Observer, Inc.
41 Broadway (PO Box 357)
Machias, Maine 04654

Edited and Designed in Maine
Printed in the U.S.

Periodicals Postage Paid at Machias, ME

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Subscription Price:
Payable in advance by credit card, check or money order:
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Newsstand price $1.50 per copy

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Front Page

Donations Pour into Machias Food Pantry Helping Families in Need Ahead of Christmas

By Will Tuell

Tuesday, Dec. 16, was a cold, raw day in a string of cold, raw days Downeast. But for Machias Food Pantry directors Nancy Lewis and Ken Warner, who were hard at work prepping for the arrival of dozens of needy families the next day, the warmth was evident.

Lewis and Warner burst with pride as they showed off their Kennebec Road facility, a facility which they repeatedly chalked up to the generosity of the greater Machias community as we surveyed rows of stocked shelves, donations yet to be sorted, and a state-of-the-art deep-freeze area where some of the more perishable items are kept.

One generous donor, Warner said, had insisted that every family that comes through the door receive a bag of baking goods for Christmas, instructing him and Lewis to go to Hannaford and get what they needed. Rows of gift bags full of flour, butter, and other baking essentials could be seen neatly lined up on a table in anticipation of the pantry's Wednesday crowd.

That donation illustrates something both Lewis and Warner repeated throughout our visit — that the Machias Area Food Pantry is blessed with many donors who understand the tough times their friends and neighbors are facing and who have stepped up to keep the shelves well stocked, whether it's regular donations from Hannaford, hams and turkeys purchased through the Washington County Turkey-A-Thon, or funds for the anonymously donated baked goods.

That isn't to say that they don't run short; however, Lewis was struck by the fact that she has seen people who utilize the pantry give amounts as small as $5 to $10 to help see that others who are "worse off than they are" get the food they need to get them through a week.



Machias Food Pantry co-directors Nancy Lewis and Ken Warner welcome one ton of fresh, Maine potatoes to the pantry's distribution center Dec. 16. (Will Tuell photo)

A few minutes later, a big rig from Ross Transport maneuvered its way into the pantry's parking lot carrying a ton of 6-to-8-pound bags of fresh Maine potatoes — the second such delivery since mid-November.

Those potatoes were purchased with funds from Machias Savings Bank, donated to the annual Potato Palooza event in Portland every fall. The event, organized by Jason Briggs, draws business, political, and community leaders from around the state and neighboring New Hampshire, and funds the purchases of Maine potatoes for large food pantries such as the Harrison Food Bank, to small Mom-and-Pop operations like the Machias pantry.

Lewis and Warner pointed out that with the two tons of potatoes that they had received since mid-November, the hundreds of families in the area who depend upon the pantry for all or part of their food budget were well situated for the festive season. They estimated that with this latest shipment, there should be enough of Maine's most famous vegetable to last into the new year.

When asked how many families routinely visit the pantry, Warner said that it was difficult to say definitively. Nearly 400 folks have signed up, but he insists that some only visit sporadically, while there is a core group of 150-200 families who stop by when the pantry is open on Mondays or Wednesdays.



Machias Food Pantry Co-Director Ken Warner wheeled a ton of potatoes donated by Machias Savings Bank through the Potato Palooza fundraiser earlier this fall into the pantry's food distribution center on Kennebec Road last week. (Will Tuell photo)

Lewis added that there has been an uptick and that Christmas week will likely see a surge, but that, like most Downeasters, the pantry is good at stretching a dollar and has made the most out of everything it receives — noting that there may even be enough funding from the Washington County Turkey-A-Thon to ensure that the pantry can provide Easter dinner as well as Thanksgiving and Christmas meals, if all goes well.

"We purchased turkeys for Thanksgiving, and hams for Christmas," Warner said, adding that he can't say enough good about the pantry's volunteers who do all they can to make the most of what they have.

Additionally, the pantry has a commercial kitchen area where food preparation classes can be taught, and, Warner said, students from Machias Memorial High School's culinary arts program had visited, where they learned how to make lasagna. While funding for food nutrition programs has become challenging, the pantry is in hopes of reviving those programs in the future and working with the community to expand their offerings.

Machias Food Pantry is located at 43 Kennebec Road in Machias.

DOWNEAST TIDE TABLE FOR WASHINGTON COUNTY

Eastport

DATE		HIGH				LOW				☀	☾	
24	Wed	1:18	17.4	1:31	18.5	7:31	2.0	7:58	0.6	7:04	3:51	
25	Thu	2:00	17.6	2:16	18.4	8:16	1.9	8:42	0.7	7:04	3:51	
26	Fri	2:45	17.8	3:04	18.2	9:03	1.8	9:29	0.8	7:04	3:52	
27	Sat	3:34	18.1	3:56	18.0	9:55	1.6	10:20	1.0	7:05	3:53	
28	Sun	4:26	18.4	4:53	17.8	10:51	1.3	11:15	1.1	7:05	3:54	
29	Mon	5:23	18.8	5:54	17.8	11:51	0.9			7:05	3:54	
30	Tue	6:21	19.3	6:55	18.0	12:13	1.1	12:51	0.3	7:05	3:55	

Lubec

DATE		HIGH				LOW				☀	☾	
24	Wed	1:18	17.4	1:31	18.5	7:31	2.0	7:58	0.6	7:03	3:51	
25	Thu	2:00	17.6	2:16	18.4	8:16	1.9	8:42	0.7	7:04	3:52	
26	Fri	2:45	17.8	3:04	18.2	9:03	1.8	9:29	0.8	7:04	3:52	
27	Sat	3:34	18.1	3:56	18.0	9:55	1.6	10:20	1.0	7:04	3:53	
28	Sun	4:26	18.4	4:53	17.8	10:51	1.3	11:15	1.1	7:05	3:54	
29	Mon	5:23	18.8	5:54	17.8	11:51	0.9			7:05	3:55	
30	Tue	6:21	19.3	6:55	18.0	12:13	1.1	12:51	0.3	7:05	3:55	

Cutler

DATE		HIGH				LOW				☀	☾	
24	Wed	1:10	13.0	1:21	14.1	7:14	1.7	7:43	0.4	7:04	3:53	
25	Thu	1:52	13.2	2:06	13.9	7:59	1.5	8:26	0.4	7:04	3:53	
26	Fri	2:38	13.4	2:55	13.7	8:47	1.4	9:13	0.5	7:04	3:54	
27	Sat	3:27	13.7	3:48	13.5	9:40	1.2	10:04	0.6	7:05	3:55	
28	Sun	4:20	14.0	4:47	13.4	10:37	0.9	10:59	0.7	7:05	3:55	
29	Mon	5:17	14.4	5:48	13.4	11:37	0.5	11:58	0.7	7:05	3:56	
30	Tue	6:15	14.8	6:51	13.5			12:39	0.0	7:05	3:57	

Machiasport

DATE		HIGH				LOW				☀	☾	
24	Wed	1:19	12.0	1:32	12.8	7:22	1.4	7:49	0.4	7:04	3:53	
25	Thu	2:01	12.1	2:17	12.7	8:07	1.3	8:33	0.5	7:05	3:54	
26	Fri	2:46	12.3	3:05	12.6	8:54	1.2	9:20	0.6	7:05	3:55	
27	Sat	3:35	12.5	3:57	12.4	9:46	1.1	10:11	0.7	7:05	3:55	
28	Sun	4:27	12.7	4:54	12.3	10:42	0.9	11:06	0.8	7:06	3:56	
29	Mon	5:24	13.0	5:55	12.3	11:42	0.6			7:06	3:57	
30	Tue	6:22	13.3	6:56	12.4	12:04	0.8	12:42	0.2	7:06	3:58	

Jonesport

DATE		HIGH				LOW				☀	☾	
24	Wed	1:08	10.6	1:06	12.1	7:04	1.6	7:39	0.2	7:05	3:55	
25	Thu	1:48	10.8	1:51	11.9	7:49	1.5	8:22	0.3	7:05	3:55	
26	Fri	2:32	11.1	2:41	11.6	8:40	1.4	9:08	0.3	7:05	3:56	
27	Sat	3:19	11.4	3:35	11.4	9:34	1.1	9:57	0.5	7:06	3:57	
28	Sun	4:10	11.8	4:34	11.1	10:33	0.8	10:50	0.6	7:06	3:57	
29	Mon	5:04	12.3	5:38	11.0	11:34	0.4	11:48	0.6	7:06	3:58	
30	Tue	6:01	12.8	6:43	11.1			12:38	-0.2	7:06	3:59	

Milbridge

DATE		HIGH				LOW				☀	☾	
24	Wed	1:17	10.5	1:24	11.6	7:37	1.9	8:09	0.7	7:06	3:56	
25	Thu	2:01	10.7	2:12	11.4	8:24	1.8	8:54	0.8	7:06	3:56	
26	Fri	2:48	11.0	3:03	11.3	9:15	1.6	9:41	0.9	7:07	3:57	
27	Sat	3:37	11.3	3:57	11.0	10:10	1.4	10:31	1.1	7:07	3:58	
28	Sun	4:28	11.6	4:56	10.8	11:08	1.1	11:26	1.2	7:07	3:58	
29	Mon	5:24	11.9	5:59	10.7			12:09	0.6	7:07	3:59	
30	Tue	6:22	12.3	7:01	10.8	12:24	1.2	1:09	0.1	7:07	4:00	

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MPD Officer Frauenhoffer Receives Lifesaving Award

By Paul Sylvain

The Machias Police Department recognized one of their own with a lifesaving award during the Machias Selectboard's Dec. 17 meeting.

Patrol Officer James Frauenhoffer was on duty the afternoon of Dec. 5 when an emergency 9-1-1 call reporting an unresponsive individual without a pulse was received at the Regional Communications Center in Machias. Hearing the call being dispatched to Machias Ambulance Service, Machias Police Chief Keith Mercier said Officer Frauenhoffer raced to the scene, arriving less than two minutes later, and immediately started CPR, ahead of the Machias Ambulance Service arriving at the scene.



Machias Police Chief Keith Mercier (right) presents Patrol Officer Jim Frauenhoffer with the department's Life Saving award certificate and uniform ribbon for his quick response and lifesaving efforts on Dec. 5 involving an unresponsive man who was found not breathing and without a pulse. The award was presented at the Dec. 17 Machias Selectboard meeting. Fellow police officers and members of the Machias Ambulance Service and Fire Department also attended to show their support. (Paul Sylvain photo)

"One thing we've tried to focus on this year was ambulance calls," Mercier told the selectboard. "We almost tripled our ambulance responses from last year. So that has been a priority for our guys, when they're able to turn up and do anything to help when an ambulance call comes in. If we can provide first aid, CPR, we can do that. We do lift assists and whatever we can do to help out, and that's been a pretty good effort. We talked to [Machias Ambulance Service Chief Ryan Maker] and the folks over at the fire department. They invited us, so it's kind of a win-win."

Continuing, Chief Mercier said, "We don't often get to respond to critical incidents and make an impact, so we like to recognize when that does happen."

The chief said Officer Frauenhoffer, who answered the call along with Lt. Tim Mace, arrived on the scene to find that the subject was not breathing and had no pulse.

"Although it didn't have the outcome, we wished it would've had," said Mercier, "the gentleman did survive for almost a week. Without Jim's efforts, there is no doubt in anybody's mind, including EMS, that he would not have survived the day. He wouldn't have made it to the hospital. So Jim revived him and kept him alive until the ambulance and advanced medical care folks could take care of the gentleman."

With that, Mercier announced he was awarding Frauenhoffer with a lifesaving award. Frauenhoffer, who was genuinely surprised, said, "What? I wasn't expecting that."

Reading from the award certificate, Mercier said, "In recognition of your prompt and alert actions on 5 December 2025, to a male subject who was found unresponsive and with no pulse, your quick response, and the life-saving techniques you provided, assured his survival until advanced medical care could be rendered. Due to your efforts, vitals were restarted, and the patient was stabilized and transported to the hospital."

Frauenhoffer "also wouldn't be relieved when he was asked," added Mercier. "He kept at it; he was into doing it. Again, we would've hoped for a better outcome, but he kept him alive long enough to bring this gentleman's family up to say goodbye. That's a win."

Sad Mercier, "Without his efforts, [the subject] would not have made it to the hospital, so we're pretty proud. So that's why we're going to be handling [these types of] calls, because without that quick response, it would've been way worse."

"I've been 21 years with Machias [Fire Department]," Machias Fire Chief Joseph Thompson Sr. said, "and of three police chiefs [in that time], this has been the best group that I've had of being part of the team and sticking up for us and being there for us."

Machias Selectman Vice Chairman Ben Edwards admitted, "I've been asked a lot lately why Machias has a police department when we also pay for the sheriff's department, and this is why we do. This is two minutes of response time, and it can save lives."

Machias PD Logs Busy Year, Responds to 1,731 Calls

By Paul Sylvain

Machias Police Chief Keith Mercier presented the Machias Selectboard with a statistical breakdown of calls for service his department received and responded to from Jan. 1 through Dec. 16.

With two weeks remaining in 2025, Machias police received a total of 1,731 calls for service, which is up by 353 from 2024, when the department logged 1,378 calls. That works out to an average of five calls a day, and the year isn't over yet.

"New Year's Eve is coming up and we have quite a few events going on in town," Mercier told the selectboard at the board's Dec. 17 meeting. "So, we have seven officers working New Year's Eve, including an impaired driving detail that will go from approximately 8 p.m. until 2 a.m. We'll have plenty of staffing for New Year's Eve. Hopefully it'll be dead — it usually is — but you never know."

The chief noted that his department also responds to ambulance calls, which he said have tripled for his department this year. "We render first aid, do lift assists, and whatever we can do to help," the chief said.

Through the first 350 days of the year, the statistical breakdown covers everything from littering incidents, juvenile runaways, and motor vehicle accidents to calls involving drugs, fights, criminal threatening, and missing persons.

In fact, the selectboard remarked on there being 10 missing person incidents. Mercier was quick to report that all 10 of those people were subsequently located. The board also complimented Mercier's department for citing several people for littering, rather than ignoring the complaints.

The full list is as follows: criminal trespass, 19; agency assist, 51; disorderly conduct, 24; M/V stops, 144; 911 missed dial, 65; suspicious activity, 92; drug information, 24; criminal, threatening, 16; juvenile problem, 16; juvenile runaway, 1; assault, 11; residential burglary, 7; harassment, 31; crash, detection, 3; warrant arrest, 20; noise complaint, 7; suicidal 10; unattended, death, 6; attended death, 1; OUI, 4; alcohol offense, 1; sexual assault, 2; assault with a knife, 1; shots fired, 3; theft, 37; property, damage accidents, 133; fights, 6; motor vehicle complaints, 114; paper service, 23; fire, 16; drug related, 3; criminal mischief, 14; alarm, 53; fish and game, 4; domestic, 43; warrant search, 7; remove subject, 8; property checks, 59; motorist assist, 16; sex, offender registry, 1; found property, 7; violation of protection order, 8; vehicle pursuit, 4; overdose, 1; probation check, 1; abandoned vehicle, 4; littering, 3; miscellaneous complaint, 5; information, 147; personal injury accidents, 14; mental subject, 27; 911 hangups, 69; PO service, 17; ambulance assist, 116; civil assist, 46; well-being checks, 88; residential alarms, 5; ATV complaint, 2; unknown problem, 2; details, 24; public assist, 5; missing person, 10; fraud, 4; ACO complaint, 12; lost property, 3; bail check, 1; animal noise, 2; violation of bail, 3; computer crime, 2; parking problem, 2; and speaking engagement, 1.

Front Page

FROM AWAY & BACK



By Paul Sylvain

Comment

Magical Memories About a TV Clown and a 'Little Old Toymaker'

Christmastime is a great time to dust off the cobwebs on some of your seasonal memories from back in your youth. Fort O'Brien School's recent field trip to the Penobscot Theater to catch a performance of "Cinderella" made me think back warmly to Christmas 1966, when I was still a wet-behind-the-ears 17-year-old high school senior in Nashua, New Hampshire.

My parents and I lived in a first-floor apartment on Broad Street there. The Thomas family rented the second-floor apartment above us. Their son, Steve Thomas, had graduated from high school a year before me and was working as a film editor at WMUR-TV — an ABC affiliate — in Manchester. Back in the pre-digital, analog days, it was Steve's job to splice in ads in the old movies the station used to air, among other things.

However, Steve's real talent was as a budding, young magician who used to travel around staging magic shows in southern New England. I remember he kept a number of doves and bunnies upstairs and, from time to time, he'd come and get me to try out one of his new magic tricks.

He also teamed up with Dwight Damon, a chiropractor from Merrimack, N.H. Dwight was a master magician in his own right, who appeared on TV and locally as Ring-a-Ding the Clown to the delight of area children. Dwight had enjoyed a long career and was one of several people to portray Clarabell the Clown on the nationally televised Howdy Doody show.

So, on Saturday mornings, Steve would go up to the TV station and pull some ads for the day, and then meet up with Dwight at the studio there at about 9 a.m. to rough out the weekly, half-hour "Ring-a-Ding the Clown Show," which aired live on WMUR around 10 a.m. on Saturdays. Steve played his sidekick, the ever gullible Sam-the-Tramp, and both he and Dwight would get the clown make-up and costumes on and then do the show. There was never any real rehearsal; they just did it and ad-libbed their way through the show.

Well, I tagged along with Steve most Saturday mornings. It was a hoot watching their antics play out in the studio. There was a weekly puppet segment, in which Steve worked the hand-puppets from behind a curtain barrier, while Dwight interacted with the puppets. What the TV audience never saw was Dwight reaching behind the curtain, trying to goose and tickle Steve, so he'd break up laughing on live TV. And on occasion, I'd get voluntold by Dwight and Steve to walk on stage for some sight gag or bit part in one of the show's skits.

That year, during the week or so before Christmas, Dwight and Steve put together a stage production called "The Little Old Toymaker," featuring lots of magic tricks. Steve portrayed the toymaker, Dwight appeared as Ring-a-Ding, and both I and Dwight's son were recruited as elves for the show.

In all, we did three performances, beginning with a Saturday morning kiddie show at the John Hancock Tower auditorium in Boston. We did a second show that afternoon at Hanscom Air Force Base in Bedford, Massachusetts, and a week later staged a show in Lowell, Massachusetts. I don't remember much about it, other than at one point I magically "disappeared" from a box on stage, which was pierced by numerous swords. Sorry, but I'm sworn to eternal secrecy on how that was done.

I had never done anything on stage like that before. I remember looking out, before the show, at the rows and rows of seats in the theater at the Hancock Building. All those seats were filled with tiny kiddie butts an hour later! Steve and Dwight were true pros and amazing magicians, and I remember how the kids loved the shows and filled each venue with such laughter. Truth is, I was pretty much still a kid, too.

I know Dwight passed away some years ago. For those with long memories, who used to watch the live feed of the Saturday Megabucks drawing on one of the Bangor TV channels back in the day, Steve Thomas actually did those live drawings for several years. The last I knew was that he was alive and well in Florida, and still doing some magic stuff, although he'd be about 78 now.

A big part of Christmas is not just about the new memories you make each year with family and friends, but remembering some of those cherished memories and special people — some of whom might have since passed on — from your long-ago past.

Here's wishing all of you a very Merry and Blessed Christmas, filled with the love and warmth of good friends and family.



Dwight Damon as Ring-A-Ding the Clown. (Social media photo)

DOWNEAST DISPATCHES

By Will Tuell

The Ghosts of Christmas Past

Whether it was coveting that Smurf toy on the first-grade Christmas Tree at Mary C. Burns School or singing along to "Grandma Got Ran Over by a Reindeer" — perhaps the most popular Christmas tune amongst the WMCS/WALZ Radio DJs back in the late 80s — I am in kind of a reminiscent mood this week, reflecting on those magical days of yore when Christmas was more than just "the holidays."

I don't remember much about Christmas until I was four or five. In the early eighties, the Care Bear cartoons were really big, and all I wanted for Christmas was a Care Bear playset. Joe would have been a baby at the time, but when I got up at 5:30 "to get a drink of water," I saw it sitting under the tree and didn't really care that there was a crocheted red, white, and green stocking stuffed with goodies sitting on the coach alongside my baby brother's.

I must not have cared much about getting that drink of water either, because the next thing I remember is begging Mother and Father to open the presents under the tree. Father was already up. He's always gotten up before the crowing of the rooster, and I suspect Mother anticipated the frenzy that would ensue as well, since my paternal grandparents — G and Grampy — arrived shortly after for the morning's entertainment. Possibly my aunts Brenda and Julie were there as well, though it was all quite a blur.

Fast forward a year, and our first-grade class had a Christmas party on the last day of school before vacation. The Smurfs ruled Saturday morning cartoons back then, and one of my classmates had gotten a Brainy Smurf toy that just sat on the tree for what seemed like weeks, just begging to be played with. I even remember telling my parents that I knew it was mine — even though most of the kids in the class liked the Smurfs — and them telling me not to get my hopes up too much.

Well, it turned out to be mine, and suffice it to say, I felt pretty Smurfy that Christmas.

Joe and I were also big into the "He-Man & The Masters of the Universe" franchise, and as he got a little older, we both started petitioning Mother, Father, and any relative who would listen for those action figures, play sets, and anything related to Skeletor, Orko, Teela, and He-Man himself. There was one really cool toy, Moss Man, covered in short fuzz that we had fought over one year, at least until the Castle Gray Skull playset from Santa was discovered under the tree.

It got so bad one year that Mother and Father caught Joe trying to use his He-Man sword to turn Perky, our cat, into Battle Cat, thinking the hapless feline was Cringer from the cartoons. Perhaps if his efforts had been successful, Mother wouldn't have thrown Perky outside for peeing in the toaster, a feat Joe gleefully told his second-grade teacher.

I don't really remember too many of the presents Dorrie, The Favorite Child, got growing up, as she was just a baby, and I was well past little kid stuff. But for the Oopsie Daisy doll drama I wrote about last week, there really wasn't anything of hers that



caught my interest — until the Beanie Baby craze hit in the late 90s.

Every week Father took her to breakfast at Helen's, and she would tease for Beanie Babies from the old Helen's gift shop. Apparently, Mother cut them off at one point, a couple of months before Christmas, so that she could take stock of what Dorrie had. Suffice it to say, the Favorite got Beanie Babies for several Christmases running, it seemed.

Time marches on, and the gifts went from simple treasures to more purposeful purchases. In 2003, Mother bought me an XM satellite radio and a year's subscription for it. I kept that subscription for a good 20 years and definitely got my money's worth out of renewing it.

Four years later — in 2007 — Dorrie, Joe, and I turned the tables on Mother and Father. We made arrangements with a photographer to have a picture taken of us three siblings. Dorrie had moved to Possum Country at that point, but was still coming home for Christmas on break from her studies at East Tennessee State. Joe arranged to take an afternoon off from work at the bank, and off we went to get the pictures done.

Oh, Mother and Father were very curious when I told them I had an appointment that afternoon and that Joe was taking me. I think they caught on to something when Dorrie also tagged along, but we held fast to our secret and got one over on them for once. That alone was worth the price of admission on Christmas morning.

Up to that point, I never saw Mother bawl her eyes out at Christmas, but she was really moved by those pictures just because it was so extraordinary that we would conspire to surprise her and Father like that. The picture is still on our living room wall to this day, and I have a smaller copy on my nightstand.

Of course, Christmases took on a whole new dimension when Joe's daughter, Hailey, the Princess of Marshfield, arrived on the scene in 2012. Since that time, we have done our presents with that branch of the family on Christmas Eve, usually after a piping hot spaghetti feed.

When the possums — Dorrie's Jacob and Elizabeth — came along a few years later, we started making occasional trips down south for Christmas. I'm not much of a fan of flying, and for at least two years when we flew down, I came home with a raging cold, but it was worth it to see the little ones unwrap their gifts and to spend some time with The Favorite Family.

All of those family Christmas moments are truly special, even more so as older family members have passed on and kids grow up. Next year, my siblings and I will all be in our 40s, far removed from the days of Oopsie Daisy, Care Bears, He-Man, and the like.

I won't speak for the other two, but give me a quiet Christmas Eve where I can sit and reflect on the birth of Christ, a simple Christmas dinner, maybe a cuddle with Misty, the British retriever, and a replay of the "Father Knows Best" radio show from the early 50s where the incomparable Robert Young hearkens back to a much simpler time.

Give me a spaghetti feed at my brother's house or a few minutes on the phone with Dorrie and the possums Christmas morning, and a calm, quiet, relaxing day, where I can quietly worship my Savior. And let me look back fondly on those ghosts of Christmas past that I was fortunate enough to have met a long, long time ago.

Front Page

OPINION

Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays, Maine

This is Governor Janet Mills and thank you for listening.

It was the night of December 24, 1914, mere months into World War I, and a light dusting of snow was falling on the battlefield. Men in trenches on both sides of the front started singing Christmas carols, a surprising source of joy on a cold winter's night during a war. And as morning broke on Christmas Day, the soldiers cautiously met in the No Man's Land between their two armies, lowering their weapons to share a meal with each other, even though they were enemies just the day before.

The Christmas Truce, as it came to be called, would never be repeated. But it is always remembered as a moment of shared humanity and hope.

This year has been difficult for many, and I know that some folks may be struggling this holiday season. Some people may be on active duty, unable to be home for the holidays. Some may be having a hard time making ends meet, never mind buying gifts for friends and family. Some may not have close friends or family nearby to celebrate with. Some may be mourning the loss of a loved one who'll be missing from their table. Some may even be worried about disagreements with loved ones in this time of divisive national politics.

This holiday season, may we hold our family and friends, neighbors, and loved ones close, and may we be grateful for the gift of our time together. May we remember that for all our differences as people of many backgrounds and beliefs, there's a lot more that we have in common as people who share this beautiful state.

And may we reflect on the many reasons we have to hope that the New Year in our state will be bright. Creative people in innovative industries across Maine are inventing new products to make our state more competitive, and to make it an even greater place to live, work, and raise a family. For the first time in generations, people are moving here to start new careers drawn by a quality of life unlike anywhere else in the world. Every day, people who once dreamed of starting a new business, of going to college, of starting a family, are able to make those dreams a reality because our economy is strong, our schools are affordable, and our communities are safe. We have challenges that we're trying to solve, like the high cost of living, but we also have strengths that other states simply don't have, including the many talented people who call Maine home.

This holiday season, people of all faiths will be spreading a message of generosity and goodwill, of hope and happiness, and of peace for themselves and for all.

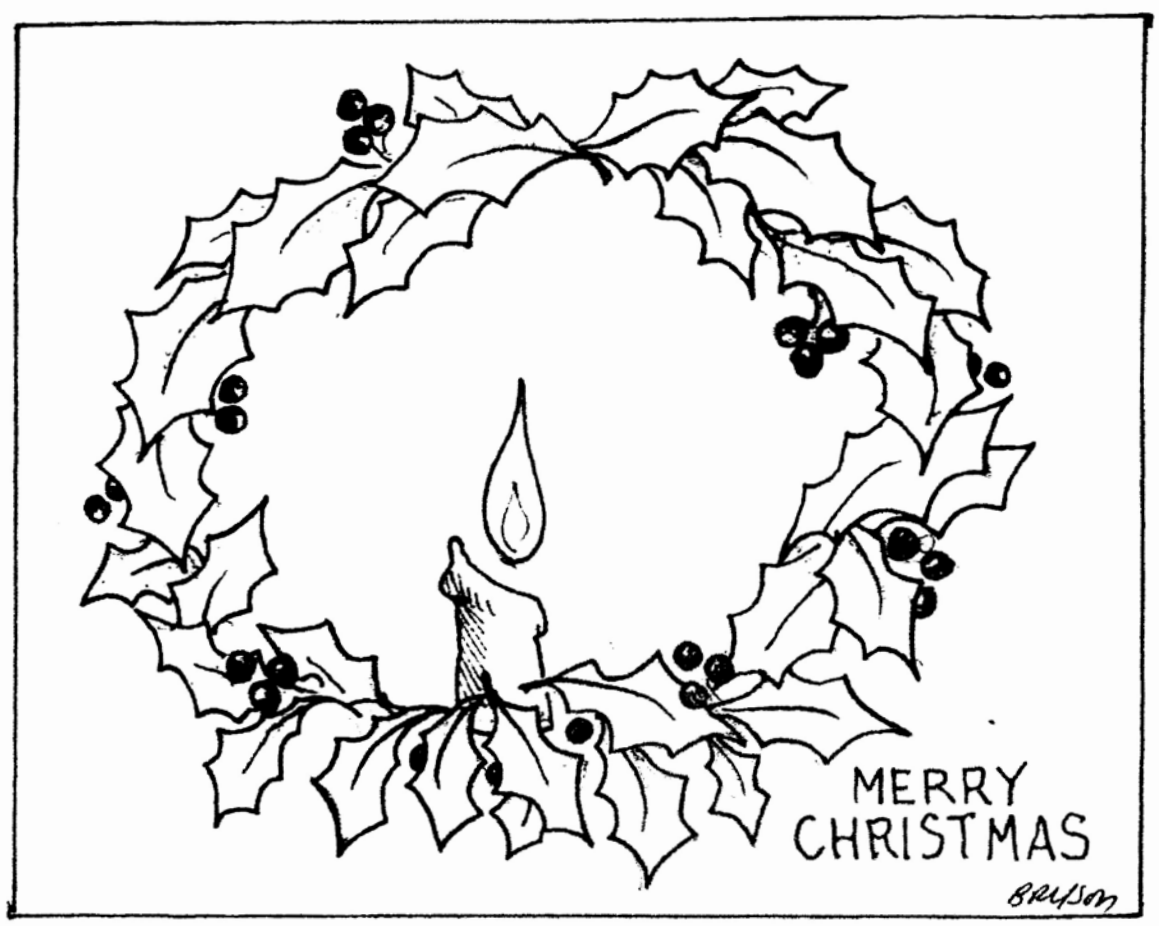
Whether you're gathering in a home warmly lit by the candles of a Menorah to celebrate Hanukkah, or by the lights on a tree to celebrate Christmas, or some other tradition, or if you're gathering with friends, family, and neighbors just to celebrate the end of another year, I want to wish you personally and all Maine people, a happy holiday season filled with joy and with love. Let's thank our first responders also, because they'll be on duty all through the holidays. And let's honor the sacrifice of service members and their families who keep us safe. And let the same hope of soldiers who sang Christmas carols a century ago to bring light to a moment of darkness uplift and unite us again.

So from my family to yours, I wish you a Merry Christmas. And to Maine's Jewish community, Happy Hanukkah.

This is Governor Janet Mills. Happy Holidays, and thank you for listening.

Letters Policy

Letters to the Editor: We reserve the right to publish or not publish a letter. You must be a paid subscriber- print or digital. We may edit for taste, clarity, and length. Letters that are potentially libelous, slanderous or written with harmful intent will be rejected. We do not publish form letters, petitions, quotations, or anonymous letters. Please limit letters to roughly 300 words, and send by email to editor@machiasnews.com, by fax 207-255-4058, by mail to Machias Valley News Observer, 41 Broadway, Machias, Maine, 04654. We prefer letters that beget letters — that offer sound opinions on current events, editorials on the community, city, state and federal matters. Please include your full address, and phone number, however, address and phone number will not be included if / when published.



Off The 'Beat'

Commentary by Will Tuell

Patrolling the State House at the Expense of Washington County is a Slap in the Face

Last week, several major media outlets reported that Maine State Police will be taking over security at the State House complex in Augusta and bringing Capitol Police under their proverbial wing, in an effort to provide better security for lawmakers, legislative staff, and the thousands of Mainers who visit the campus every day.

Having spent nine years in the State House, I have the utmost respect for these men and women. It's also no secret that threats against lawmakers, staff, and the people who come to participate in the public square have increased and/or escalated during that time. So I am thankful Governor Mills is taking things seriously.

However, you guessed it, there's a "but."

The Maine State Police should not be taking on the State House until it has increased regular patrol in rural counties like ours, counties that are struggling to hold onto what resources we have while keeping county and local property taxes from going through the roof even more than they are.

Even as Maine realizes a newfound $250 million surplus — much of it the result of overtaxation — two bills that could help reduce the burden on rural law enforcement languish on the Special Appropriations table.

They are Senator Marianne Moore's LD 461, which specifically dedicates four troopers to patrol Washington County, and a similar bill authored by Rep. Jack Ducharme of Madison to provide the same coverage for six of Maine's most rural counties.

Washington County's financial woes are well-documented. They are a result of poor decision-making and fiscal mismanagement by our previous county administration and a lack of accountability along the way. Because of those things, the county is at a breaking point, and critical services are going to be reduced simply because our friends and neighbors don't have the money, no matter what numbers a voodoo calculator may spit out at you.

Washington County taxpayers are stretched to the max and should not be expected to pick up 100% of the cost of these vital services, and each of us who represents part of the county in the Legislature has made that case time and time again.

This decision by the Governor Mills administration, which has supported our efforts to boost rural patrol, is the ultimate slap in the face. Not because every lawmaker is completely safe, but because lawmakers shouldn't be pushed to the head of the line.

Every one of you reading this deserves the benefit of increased rural patrol, and if the state is in a position to provide that when our own county has stretched itself well beyond its means, then you ought to be demanding that lawmakers and the administration prioritize the people they serve instead of themselves.

I have the rare opportunity of contributing to this publication on a weekly basis and working with our county delegation. I can tell you no group of people has worked harder to push for additional state police coverage in our area because we, and the Commissioners, knew this was coming even before the financial woes that have plagued our county hit.

Be angry. But focus anger in the right direction. Demand that if the State Police have the capacity to manage the State House complex, they also take some of that $250 million extra (and $1 billion from the rainy day fund) to provide permanent, reliable patrol in rural counties like ours.

Demand that my colleagues and I continue that fight. Demand that the commissioners, who have also supported increased state police in our area, continue to do so; and most of all, demand that a boosted state police presence in rural areas be a condition before any supplemental spending package is passed out of the Legislature this winter.

UPDATE YOUR CALENDAR LISTINGS

Are you affiliated with a church or group who likes to appear in these pages? We're seeking information to make sure our church directory and calendar listings are up to date. Please submit your information to editor@machiasnews.com.

Front Page

OPINION

FREEDOM STUDIES

BY JONATHAN REISMAN

Providential Reflection

The recent events at Brown, including the Keystone Cops investigation, were cause for reflection on both my time in Providence almost 50 years ago and the subsequent academic career that an Ivy League graduate degree enabled. I spent every fall from 1973 to 2021 on a New England college campus (Colby, Brown, Bryant, Wheaton, University of Maine at Machias). I can't say that I'm particularly proud of American higher education. The retreat from meritocracy and free speech in favor of identity politics, diversity, equity, and inclusion has made a mockery of Brown's "Veritas" motto. Throw in a dollop of antisemitism, and you pretty much have the current campus situation.

Veritas (Truth) seemed to be the last thing the hapless Brown investigators were pursuing. Included amongst the areas of investigatory malpractice/ misinformation:

• What the shooter shouted out. Reports of "Allahu Akbar" remain unconfirmed.

• Publicly identifying and detaining an erroneous person of interest.

• Failure to explain the lack of video records, or why Brown campus camera locations were broadcast to the public.

• The cumulative effect of the investigative malpractice, misinformation, and delays may well obscure the motive and connections of the shooter.

I started at Brown in the Fall of 1977 as an economics graduate student after graduating from Colby with majors in economics and environmental studies. I was a teaching assistant leading once-a-week study/review sessions, first for big Principles of Economics (Macro and Micro) courses, and later for Environmental Economics. My review sections were usually in the Barus and Holley Engineering building, which was physically close to Robinson Hall, which housed the economics faculty and graduate students.

Key thoroughfares on the Brown campus included Waterman and Prospect Streets, but most of us lived off Hope (Street). In my last year at Brown, one of my econ professors decamped to Europe and gifted his recently married graduate assistant with a house-sitting assignment. I started teaching at area schools near Brown and was hired by the University of Maine at Machias in 1984.

When the news of the Brown shooting broke nearly simultaneously with the ISIS-inspired Chanukah attacks at Bondi Beach in Sydney, Australia, I feared that antisemitism would connect the events. The investigatory malpractice does not lead to competence confidence, and in fact, breeds distrust and conspiracy theories. The apparent suicide of the shooter and continued lack of investigatory transparency will only make this murkiness and consequent lack of trust worse.

One thing I remember from Brown circa late 1970s — we had a large number of Iranian graduate students in both economics and engineering, courtesy of the alliance between the Shah of Iran and the U.S. and Iranian oil wealth. When the Shah was toppled and the Ayatollah's Shia Islamic believers took American hostages, the Iranian graduate students started to disappear. When Ronald Reagan was elected and took office in 1981, the hostages were returned, and the process of replacing Iranian graduate students with other foreigners, principally Chinese today, accelerated. In 2026, the question is what group of foreign students will American higher education exploit to replace the Chinese students/cash cow?

Taxpayers Deserve Confidence that Their Money is Being Spent Wisely

By Rep. Paul Flynn

This is Rep. Paul Flynn of Albion with the Weekly Republican Address

Recent federal findings of fraud in Medicaid, SNAP, and other welfare programs raise serious questions about how taxpayer funds are being distributed in Maine.

Sadly, these findings reinforce what House Republicans have warned about for years: we need a non-biased, independent review of how your money is being managed.

House Republicans — and our colleagues in the Senate — will continue to push for transparency and accountability. Because it is your money. It comes from your hard work. It does not come from some magic "free money" tree.

We have repeatedly requested information from the administration and asked that it be made public. Most of those requests have been ignored.

However, enough information has leaked out to raise troubling questions, including:

• EBT payments sent to deceased individuals

• Housing resources diverted to non-citizens while homeless Mainers wait

• Non-citizens registering and voting

• Individuals without legal status involved in crimes and car accidents

• Bundles of blank ballots discovered in an Amazon package

• An unexplained spike in deaths of children in state custody

And just last spring, Democratic State Auditor Matt Dunlap released a report that found:

• Lack of internal controls exposing $2.1 billion in FY2024 contract spending to fraud, waste, and abuse;

• A 100% failure rate for agencies following their own procurement rules;

• Sole-source contracts without justification;

• Contracts signed after work already began;

• Procurements with no cost analysis;

• Agencies splitting contracts to avoid competitive bidding requirements;

• Failure to conduct vendor performance reviews;

The Mills administration and majority Democrats in the Legislature have resisted calls to investigate the deficiencies identified by their own State Auditor.

Unfortunately, too many in Augusta seem to believe the public wants them to reflexively say "no" to any request from Republican legislators — or even from federal agencies — regardless of whether rejecting those requests harms the very people who rely on federal programs.

Just last fall, Maine's partisan Attorney General instructed state agencies not to respond to inquiries from the U.S. Department of Justice.

This kind of polarization does nothing to help Maine people.

Mainers are tired of the political games. They want their government to do its job. They want assurance that tax dollars are solving problems — not creating new ones.

The Mills administration and legislative Democrats should cooperate with federal officials to ensure laws are being followed, waste is eliminated, and benefits reach the people these programs were designed to help.

Anything less shows disregard for how other people's money is spent — or worse, suggests an effort to cover up fraud, waste, and abuse.

This has been Rep. Paul Flynn with the Weekly Republican Address.

Thank you for listening — and thank you for helping us change Maine for the better.

And God bless you all.

Union 103 Sets Central Office Personnel, Pay

By Nancy Beal

The Union 103 Joint School Committee, the governing body of Jonesport-Beals High School, met Dec. 16 and set the personnel and pay for the superintendent's office.

The board returned Joseph Swain as superintendent and fixed his salary at $84,562. Maintenance/ Transportation Director John Church will earn $60,000, and Special Education Director Kathy Beal will receive $75,000.

Morgan Monroe was returned as chair of the nine-member board, as was secretary Renée Chandler.

At a Dec. 1 meeting of the Jonesport Elementary School Board, JES Principal John Reese discussed the recent attendance award ceremony with Monroe, Chandler, and Kelton Beal.

The ceremony, recognizing perfect attendance, was the first of its kind. It had been restricted to only recipients of perfect attendance in grades 4 through 8, but Reese said he planned to involve all students in the next one. He also said he would consider changing the time of the ceremony from 8 a.m. to shortly before dismissal time in the afternoon.

Board members took home two proposed policies — one on Harassment and Sexual Harassment of Students, and the other titled Student Discrimination and Harassment Complaint Procedure — to study for future action.

New Jonesport Marina Garners $800K Northern Border Regional Commission Grant

By Nancy Beal

Jonesport selectmen recently learned that the Northern Border Regional Commission would be giving nearly $800,000 toward the new marina that the town plans to build on Henry Point, facing the existing state-owned marina in Sawyer Square.

The total project, including two ramps, three sets of floats, and a parking lot over much of the point, is estimated to top out at $1 million. First Selectman Harry Fish explained that the town will provide its $200,000 match from mooring fees.

In addition to the water-related fixtures, the project also involves raising the road to the area and preparing the ground, where a summer campground has existed for decades. The town has already secured $1.5 million in federal funds from Congress, which are being routed through the Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD).

Carver Construction of Jonesport was awarded the contract for the work last fall. Fish said that Jim Carver told him there was apt to be a delay in obtaining certain materials, such as the cement slabs needed for the ramps. "We have the money and the licenses," he said last week, and estimated the start time to be next fall.

In awarding the grant, the NBRC wrote that "the commercial working waterfront facility at Henry Point ... will support 250 fishers and 20-50 marine businesses, enhancing economic resilience and access to deep water ... [supporting] infrastructure, fisheries, and rural economic development."

Third-party requests culled

In other business conducted by the Jonesport Selectboard at its Dec. 17 meeting, the board voted to spread the $2,000 in third-party funding raised and appropriated at last March's town meeting among four of a dozen third party requestors, earmarking $500 each for the Eastern Agency on Aging, Life Flight Foundation, Community Action Program — which replaced the Downeast Community Partners — and Good Shepherd Food Bank, which delivers food to the Jonesport food pantry.

Letters to the Editor and Opinion Pages — Reminder to Readers

Readers are advised that Letters to the Editor and Opinion letters often blends verifiable facts with personal opinions, contested political interpretations, selective framing, and rhetorical contrasts, so approach it with careful attention to sourcing, precision, and the clear distinction between evidence and rhetoric because it can be possessed with more interpretive contrasts and selective framing. Be skeptical of hubris in any argument that claims exclusive ownership of truth while condemning others for falsehoods. Always research online to determine for yourself where the truth lies, as such certainty—often bolstered by selective framing rather than direct proof and can reflect the very biases it critiques; in today's polarized media landscape, cultivating intellectual humility and cross-checking claims fosters a truly informed citizenship far better than the persuasions of passionate convictions. We call this wisdom, and everyone should want to have this virtue.

Subscribe 255-6561

Front Page

Bar Harbor Bank Donates to Cherryfield Academy, Green and White Hope, RMCL

Bar Harbor Bank & Trust employees recently presented more than $21,000 in donations collected through the bank's employee-driven charitable giving program, Casual for a Cause, to 10 organizations serving communities in Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont. Local recipients of the donations collected during the third quarter of 2025 are the Cherryfield Academy Community Center, Green and White Hope, and Regional Medical Center at Lubec.



Bar Harbor Bank & Trust (BHBT) presents a donation from the Bank's Casual for a Cause program to Green and White Hope. Pictured from left to right: John Duddie, VP commercial relationship manager at BHBT; Mark Ahern, customer service representative at BHBT; Rose Bowker, customer service representative at BHBT; Susan Albee, VP branch relationship manager at BHBT; and Rik Michaud, secretary at Green and White Hope. (BHBT photo)



Bar Harbor Bank & Trust (BHBT) presents a donation from the Bank's Casual for a Cause program to the Regional Medical Center at Lubec. Pictured from left to right: John Duddie, VP commercial relationship manager at BHBT; Ashley Blake, personal banker at BHBT; Angela Stanley, personal banker at BHBT; and Tom MacDonald, CEO of the Regional Medical Center at Lubec.

Housed in an historic former school building, the Cherryfield Academy Community Center is a 21st-century hub for the local population, serving as a meeting place and event space that enriches the lives of those in the community with a calendar filled with a variety of activities and gatherings.

"The Board of Trustees at Cherryfield Academy Community Center wishes to thank the employees of Bar Harbor Bank & Trust for choosing us as the recipient of a generous donation through your employee-led Casual for a Cause program," said Lori Barbee, the community center's treasurer. "These funds will be used toward future programs for community members of all ages, especially our Cookies and Cocoa with Santa & Mrs. Claus and other holiday events. We appreciate your support."

Inspired by the tragic loss of the founder's 18-year-old nephew while working as a commercial fisherman in 2023, Green and White Hope is working to prevent fatalities among commercial fishermen. The organization does this through safety programs and technology advancement, while also advancing recovery capabilities in support of Maine communities that rely on the sea. Learn more at www.greenwhitehope.org.

"We're extremely grateful to the team at Bar Harbor Bank & Trust for their generous donation to Green and White Hope, Inc.," said Liz Michaud, founder and president of Green and White Hope. "These funds will immediately support our production of the Community Orchestration Guide, a best practices manual that enables our Maine harbor communities to establish an emergency response plan that can lead to saving fishermen's lives. Together, we are working to bring every fisherman home!"



Bar Harbor Bank & Trust (BHBT) presents a donation from the Bank's Casual for a Cause program to the Cherryfield Academy Community Center (CACC). Pictured from left to right: Russell Van Wyck, customer service representative at BHBT; Jamie McIntosh, customer service representative at BHBT; Andrew Somes, VP branch relationship manager at BHBT; Star Yeaton, CACC board member; and Lori Barbee, CACC treasurer. (BHBT photo)

Seeking to become a center of excellence within five years, and the provider and employer of choice for providing comprehensive, family-oriented, and holistic healthcare in Downeast Maine, the Regional Medical Center at Lubec works to promote, provide, and coordinate quality healthcare in the region. Learn more at rmcl.org.

"Regional Medical Center at Lubec wants to thank Bar Harbor Bank & Trust for its generous donation," said Tom MacDonald, CEO of Regional Medical Center at Lubec. "The funds will be used to support our mission to promote, provide, and coordinate quality healthcare for the Downeast Region."

Casual for a Cause participants dress casually on Fridays in exchange for a bi-weekly payroll deduction made to a pool of funds collected each quarter. The program participants then vote on which community organizations will receive the funds collected the previous quarter. More than $437,000 has been donated since the program began in 2018.

"The way that our Casual for a Cause program has evolved and grown really speaks to the commitment of my colleagues, as much as their generosity," said Jack Frost, VP director of Community Giving at Bar Harbor Bank & Trust. "These contributions each quarter show that giving back to the communities we serve, and empowering nonprofits across Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont, is a cornerstone of our Bank's culture."

Whitneyville Library News

By Pat Brightly

Our Whatnot Gift Shop has been busy these past few weeks with many coming to browse and do their Christmas shopping. The gift shop has over 40 local crafters featured. There is something for everyone, as each crafter has some beautiful "Maine-made" gifts for sale. So if you're looking for that special one-of-a-kind last-minute gift, then visit the Whatnot Gift Shop, which is nestled inside the Whitneyville Public Library and is open during regular library hours — 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. Monday through Saturday except on holidays.

It has been a great year for the library. Our suppers continue to be a great success, and each and every event that the library does sees new people come and check out the library. Last week, Ms. Pat visited eight classrooms at Rose M. Gaffney with books and read aloud to five of them. Ms. Pat read Lynn Plourde's book, "If I Could Give You Christmas," to kindergarten through third grade.

Living Innovations DSPs and their clients came to the library to play games, use the computers, and engage with others last week. They have a really great time at the library, and we here at the library are so happy to see them come and enjoy their visits every week. The library has three public-use computers available, and we have WIFI for those with laptops.

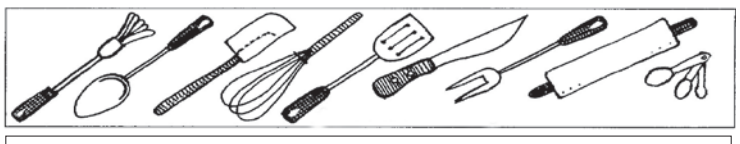
The library welcomes readers from surrounding towns to join the library. Since 1966, the library has never had a fee for a library card and no overdue fines for late returned books. We offer interlibrary loan for books requested that we do not own at no charge to the reader.

The Whitneyville Library and Whatnot Shop will be closed Dec. 25th for Christmas

and Jan. 1st for New Years. We here at the Whitneyville Public Library would like to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and a wonderful and bright New Year.

Call 255-6561 to subscribe

Dining with Diane



By Diane Lyon

WOW! These are delicious. The pretzels almost taste like graham crackers. The waffle pretzels are so attractive, but you can use other pretzel shapes. The waffle style gives an extra place for the sugar/cinnamon to cling to, though. These are special enough for a holiday treat. I found it hard to drizzle the melted white chocolate, so next time I make these, I might try a regular 10X sugar glaze to drizzle on top.

CINNAMON ROLL PRETZELS

4 heaping cups waffle-shaped pretzel squares
¼ c. melted butter
½ c. granulated sugar
1 t. ground cinnamon
½ c. melted white chocolate or vanilla candy melts

Preheat oven to 350°F. Line baking sheet with parchment paper. You may need two baking sheets. Toss the pretzels in a large bowl with melted butter. Coat well. Mix cinnamon and sugar in a small bowl and sprinkle over the buttered pretzels. Toss to coat evenly. Spread in an even layer on the baking sheets and bake for 12 minutes. Remove from the oven and cool for 10 minutes. Drizzle with melted white chocolate and allow to cool and harden before storing or serving.

Front Page

Commissioners Act on SCEC Economic Development Services and Downeast Wind Contracts

By Paul Sylvain

Sunrise County Economic Council Executive Director Charles Rudelitch met with the Washington County Commissioners at the commissioners' Dec. 11 meeting to present and discuss various contracts SCEC has with the county.

First up was a contract SCEC has had for at least the past decade to do general economic development work in the county. "This is separate from the contract the county has with SCEC to help administer the TIF [Tax Increment Financing loan program]," Rudelitch said, noting, "So there have been two contracts in place."

Rudelitch told the commissioners that the present contract for economic development services is paid for out of the county's general revenue. However, that contract was set to expire on Jan. 1, and Rudelitch presented a new contract, which he said, "Changes it to a contract that includes general economic development work, as well as support for the administration of project management around Downeast Wind."

According to Rudelitch, the new contract would only be paid for out of community benefit funds from Downeast Wind. "If for some reason in the future Downeast Wind didn't make a payment, we would just work to wind down this contract as quickly as possible," Rudelitch said.

According to its website, Downeast Wind is a 126-megawatt wind energy project consisting of 30 wind turbines located in Columbia and adjacent Unorganized Territories in the county, "operating and generating enough homegrown Maine clean energy to power more than 37,000 average homes each year."

The existing contract, which ended three weeks early with the commissioners' unanimous vote to approve the new contract, cost $24,000. The new contract, replacing it, is for $50,000

District 1 Commissioner Billy Howard questioned the executive director about whether any new businesses had been brought to the county through SCEC's efforts, to which Rudelitch replied that SCEC is working "with a few hundred people" who are interested in starting new businesses or have small businesses already up and running. Howard observed wryly, "It's pretty quiet on that front, then."

Reading from a document provided by SCEC, District 2 Commissioner Chairman David Burns remarked, "So the third bullet says you assist in securing and administering grants. How often does that happen with us?"

"With the county itself?" asked Rudelitch, before admitting, "Very rarely. A lot of what we do is to bring grants for economic development work in the county. The county is part of what built us through the years, through support for our endowment. One of our jobs is to bring in money from outside of the county into the county."

With that, Burns, Howard, and District 3 Commissioner Courtney Hammond approved the new services contract with SCEC.

That was followed by a partially related, lengthier discussion on what Rudelitch called a "community benefit agreement reallocation proposal" with Downeast Wind.

Referring to a one-page summary of the current payment allocation and the proposed changes in how the funds would be allocated under the new plan, the SCEC executive director pointed out that the county had received a first-year payment from Downeast Wind in October totaling $842,720.

The projected annual payment of $338,640 in April 2026 "is kind of representative of the next 19 [annual] payments that the county is going to receive under this agreement going forward, as the amounts are outlined in the current agreement," Rudelitch said.

The summary sheet also reflected that the county stands to receive nearly $7.3 million over the span of 20 annual payments during the lifetime of the contract. "So what's on the top half of the page is what happens if nothing changes with the allocation of the funds — if there is no renegotiation of the agreement," Rudelitch said.

"The grant committee, a few days ago, met to talk about the proposal to renegotiate the agreement with Downeast Wind," Rudelitch explained. "This comes out of some discussion at the [county's] budget committee meeting a week or two back. Several of you commissioners mentioned a desire to be able to use the money for capital investments in some of the buildings and equipment that the county is maintaining. And so the grant committee discussed this proposed allocation."

The executive director stated that the proposed changes have not yet been shared with Downeast Wind. "The process that I am suggesting is one to see if this is on the right track, and if there are any [other] changes that need to be made or we are considering," Rudelitch said, suggesting he could return at the commissioners' Jan. 14 meeting, "Then make a single proposal to Downeast Wind on how to re-allocate the money moving forward."

Rather than bombard Downeast Wind with numerous piecemeal reallocation requests, the company is requesting everything be rolled into "a single ask from the county that covers all the changes the county wants to make," said Rudelitch.

Continuing, he said, "There are two major changes between the current allocation and the proposed allocation. A minor one is that it would include emergency and capital investment funds with the help and emergency services line item into a single fire and EMS-related services and or capital investments allocation."

The current agreement shows separate lines of $50K for the Emergency & Rescue Capital Fund and $20K for Health & Emergency Services. Under the proposed revised allocation, they would be combined with a single, total allocation of $70K

"The amounts haven't changed," said Rudelitch. "It's $50,000 and $20,000, and would still be $70,000 a year. That just gives commissioners more freedom on how to allocate the money, depending on what the needs are, recognizing the agreement will last for almost another 20 years. There will be lots of changes in what the particular needs are in any particular year."

He went on to say the other major change is that, under the new proposal, the current allocation line for a scholarship fund, another line for a small business loan fund, and the Watershed Management & Infrastructure line, would be eliminated and then combined into a new "investments and county infrastructure to conserve energy, increase resilience, and or reduce operating cost" category. As Rudelitch put it, "Essentially it becomes a capital account for the county's buildings and other infrastructure."

"I think I'm good with this, but we need to be able to use some of this money for our own facilities, for improvements to our own facilities," Commissioner Howard said.

Burns followed by asking Rudelitch, "So we're committed to this for 20 years?" "Yes," replied Rudelitch. "This is a 20-year agreement that just began in October." He added that the agreement "can be changed as many times as the county and Downeast Wind agree to it. In this case, Downeast Wind said they'll consider it, but just make it a single ask."

Rudelitch is expected to meet with commissioners again at their next regular monthly meeting, on Jan. 14, to shore up the proposed adjustments in the contract before they are presented with Downeast Wind for consideration.

Remembering Our Veterans at Christmas



These wreaths were laid on the graves of U.S. military veterans and their eligible spouses at Acadia National Cemetery, on Route 1, Jonesboro, as part of the nationwide Wreaths Across America Day, Saturday, Dec. 13. (Robert Oliver photos)

Christmas Concert and Music

December 28, 2025 • 9 a.m.
First Congregational Church Fellowship Hall,
12 Cutler Road, East Machias.

~With the Beal family~

Enjoy music played using harps, violins, keyboard and guitar.

Come and enjoy fellowship with us.

MVNO000014103

Horizons Group
Karen L. Eldridge Broker (207) 271-0207
Nicole S. Ball Broker (207) 263-8218
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Front Page

Fort O'Brien Students All Abuzz for 'A Bugz Christmas' Production

Story and Photos by Paul Sylvain

The Fort O'Brien School gymnasium in Machiasport became center stage on Dec. 18, as an all-star cast of the school's students staged a production of *A Bugz Christmas* for family and friends.

The play, written by John Jacobson and John Higgins, was directed by teachers and staff at the school. Deborah Norman, who teaches music on Mondays at Fort O'Brien, helped with the production's songs. Seventh and eighth-grade students created the set, and FOB's staff designed the costumes.

The students — appearing as an assortment of loveable insects, from a praying mantis (Aurora Wood), a colorful dragonfly (Marija Razdrith), and termites (Emmanuel Hafford, Brylee Albee, Nathan Cayton and Elias Hinosa) to a soldier beetle (Ryker Polk), boll weevil (Destinee Decatur), and wood ticks (Adams Dowling and McKenzie Wood) — danced, hopped, sang, and, yes buzzed, through an entertaining 20-minute show.

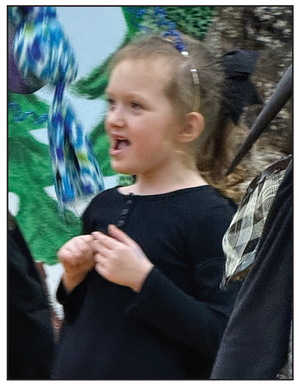
There was even a guest appearance by "The Beetles" (Gabe Moore, Lukas Link, Elias Cavan, and Renesme Vazquez). At one point near the show's end, the cast worked a little "Bugz" mojo, singing a song that ended with a Christmas tree lighting up.

A Bugz Christmas delighted the audience and was a fun-filled way for the young actors and actresses to mark the countdown to Christmas vacation.

FOB Principal Susan Almendinger joked with the audience at the end of the show, saying that the school might need to call in an exterminator the next day.

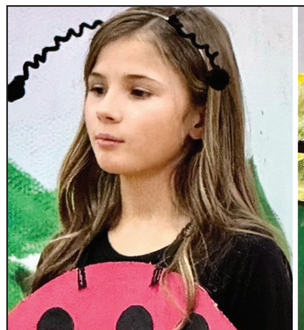
Other students appearing in the play were: Bailey Wood (butterfly); Alaina Dowling (queen bee); Emma Leland (housefly); Ellie Ingrish (ladybug); Peyton Bagley (Asian beetle); Jacob Ingrish (grasshopper); Everly Norton (yellow jacket); Leam Colbeth (cricket); mosquito (Athena Elwell); Kyle Thayer (glowworm); Ivee Albee (flea); and Madisen McNellis (hornet).















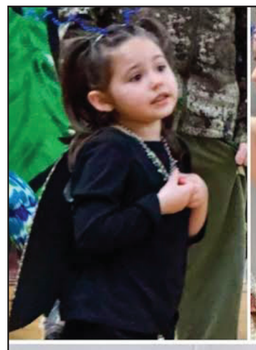








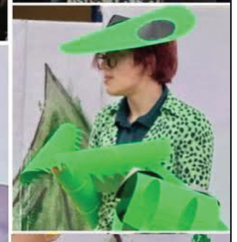




















Church Directory

Head of the Harbor Church, 2411 Cutler Road, Cutler. Sunday service at 9:30 a.m. cutlerhhchurch.com

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St. Aidan's Episcopal Church, 36 Dublin St., 255-4995, Sunday services at 9:30 a.m. in person and on Zoom, including children's chapel for ages 6-16. Our Tuesday evening spiritual gatherings at 5:30 p.m. for people of all faiths or none will resume in October.

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Reach Wesleyan Church, 207-497-2225 or 207-512-6718

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Bucks Harbor Baptist Church - facebook.com/Bucks-Harbor-Baptist-Church-142168602475898/.

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Machias Christian Fellowship meets on Sunday mornings at 8:30 a.m. and 10:30 a.m. Prayer meeting held Thursday night from 7-8 p.m. We offer a Wednesday evening service at 6:30 p.m. 3 Davis Road, Machias. FMI call 207-271-7847.

• • • • • •

Centre Street Congregational Church, UCC - Machias. 10 a.m. first three Sundays of the month in person and on Zoom; fourth Sundays Zoom only. January and February, Zoom only. Open and Affirming. Activity space for kids. FMI: www.centrestreetchurch.org, email CentreStreetChurchUCC@gmail.com, on Facebook, or 207-255-6665.

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Cherryfield First Baptist Church - facebook.com/First-Baptist-Church-Cherryfield-Maine-427258604284349/.

• • • • • •

Cherryfield First Congregational Church, 12 River Road. Sunday Worship is at 10 a.m. Sunday Services are streamed on our church Facebook page. Rev. Larry Zimmerman. FMI: 207-843-5656. Website: www.cherryfieldcongregationalchurch.org.

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Christian Science Society of Calais. 207-454-3409 or 207-454-2295.

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Christian Temple Church, 207-733-2887

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The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, 207-483-8055.

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Cobscook Friends meeting, 207-214-4988

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Columbia Falls United Methodist Church, 207-483-4094.

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Community of Christ - 497-5723.

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Comunidad de Cristo, 207-497-2618.

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Cutler United Methodist Church, 207-454-0142 or the church at 259-2097

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Dennysville/Edmunds Congregational Church - FMI call 726-3905.

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Downeast Baptist Church: Sunday Morning Worship Service at 11 a.m., Wednesday Evening Prayer Meeting and Bible Study at 7 p.m. The church is located at 393 Dublin St, Machias, ME 04654. Call 255-5822 FMI.

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Downeast Christian Church (Harrington) - facebook.com/decc.maine/

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Faith United Methodist Church, 207-483-4094

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First Congregational Church 20 Cutler Rd., E. Machias, ME. 259-2101. The entrance to the Fellowship Hall is the road behind the church.

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Holy Trinity Chapel, 207-726-5129.

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Jacksonville United Methodist Church, 9 a.m. Sunday Worship & 10 a.m. Wednesday Bible Study. 325 Jacksonville Rd./Rt. 191, East Machias. (207)-255-6282.

• • • • • •

Jonesboro Union Church - 24 Looks Point Rd. Sunday worship and Sunday School are held at 10 a.m., with choir practice at 9 a.m. The Praise Group meets Tuesdays at 4:30 p.m. Bible Study gathers Thursdays at 2 p.m., followed by the Grief Support Group at 4 p.m. Pastor David Gardiner 207-902-3314.

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Lifespring Chapel Church of God, 207-460-1392.

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Machias Valley Baptist Church, Sunday Service 10:30 a.m. www.machiasvalley.org.

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Machiasport Congregational Church, 378 Port Rd. Sunday School - 9:00 a.m., followed by Sunday service. Pastor Francois Akoa-Mongo. 207-255-0772. Watch us on Facebook live!

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Marshfield Congregational Church, 23 Church Lane, Marshfield, Pastor John Sprague, 8 a.m. Sunday service. Tel 271-0759.

• • • • •

Milbridge Congregational Church, U.C.C. - 10 a.m. Sunday in-person and on Zoom. Jack Lacey 207-745-1348.

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Milbridge/Wyman United Methodist Churches, 207-669-5220
Worship Service Sundays 9:00 am

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New Dawn Pentecostal Church, 207-546-7069 or 207-255-8621.

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New Dawn Fellowship, 207-255-8621.

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Pentecostal Lighthouse, 207-255-3577.

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Perry Congregational Church

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Roque Bluffs Community Chapel, Services begin June 15th at 6:30 pm

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St. Peter the Fisherman's Parish, 207-255-3731.

• • • • • •

Sawyer Memorial Congregational Church, 28 Sawyer Square, Jonesport. Sunday service at 9:30, followed by coffee fellowship. Rev. Phyllis Merritt, pastor. 207-497-2294.

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Steuben Union Church, 207-546-2656.

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Three Angels Seventh-Day Adventist Community Church, 207-263-4898.

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Unionville Church of God, 207-546-2668.

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Wesley Community Church
(508)450-9672

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West Lubec United Methodist Church, 853-4603; 207-733-2426; 207-483-4052.

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Whitneyville Congregational Church, 207-255-8640.

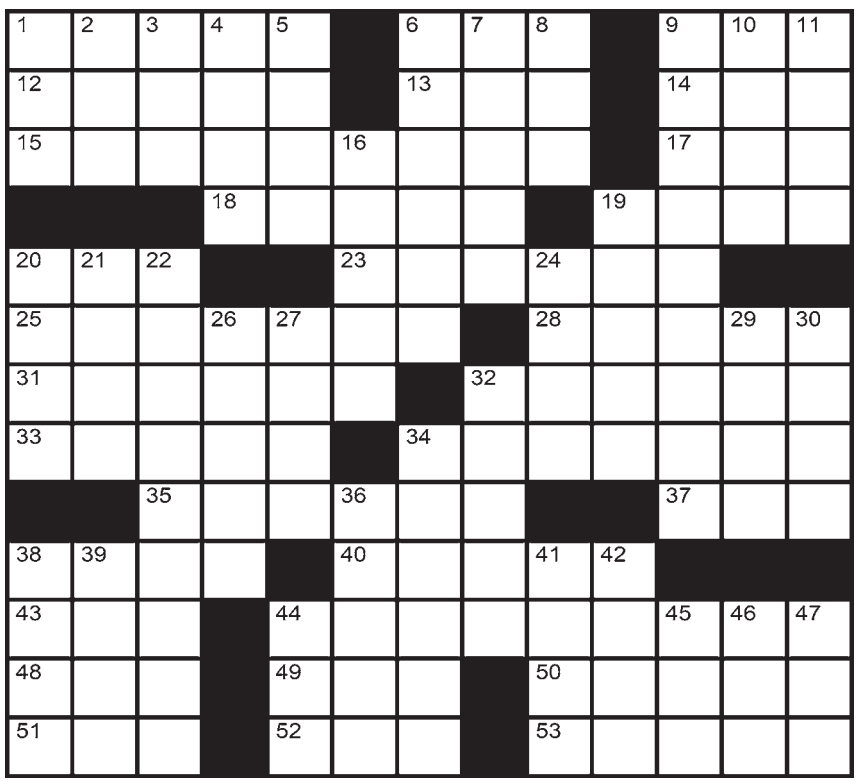
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Catholic services: www.portlanddiocese.org/online-Mass

FOR RELEASE DECEMBER 28, 2025

THE TV CROSSWORD

by Ricky Cruz



Created by Ricky Cruz 12/28/25

ACROSS
1 Gets ready
6 National economic stat.
9 Piece of fan writing, shortly
12 Garcia of "M.O.D.O.K."
13 "The 1% Club" host Mack
14 Altar words
15 Game show hosted by Colin Murray
17 "Ridiculousness" host Dyrdek
18 Amphion's wife
19 Spice Girl who is a panelist on 20-Across
20 Performance competition series on NBC
23 Stay off the radar
25 What Blue Öyster Cult needed more of on "SNL"
28 Going wild
31 Eerie
32 Radical, say
33 Brit's large weight
34 Muniz of "Malcolm in the Middle"
35 "Willy Wonka" character Mike
37 Ave. alternatives
38 "Happy ___"
40 Shaquille of "Inside the NBA"
43 Add-___
44 "American Bandstand" host
48 Demon in Japanese folklore
49 Nail, as a test
50 Malfunction
51 HBO ___, formerly ___, formerly HBO ___
52 ___ Moines, Iowa
53 "Rizzoli & ___"

DOWN
1 ___-Man
2 ___ de Janeiro
3 Certain flightless bird
4 "___ & Teller: Fool Us"
5 Alien research org.
6 Universal, say
7 Brother of Huey and Louie
8 Enclosure
9 Chinese drama "___ of My Heart"
10 "American ___"
11 Salad option
16 Singer Parton
19 Erin of "Joanie Loves Chachi"
20 Certain bank no.
21 Four-armed "Mortal Kombat" character
22 Number of "Doctor Who" seasons before the 2005 revival
24 Kristin Kreuk's "Smallville" role
26 Elaine played by Julia Louis-Dreyfus
27 Long narrow blade
29 Landed
30 Some bread varieties
32 Salad option
34 Uses a 27-Down, for instance
36 Singing series "The ___"
38 "Dimension 20" Box of ___
39 Kendrick of "Scott Pilgrim Takes Off"
41 Trendy berry
42 Some businesses
44 "American ___"
45 The Falcons, on scoreboards
46 McClanahan of "The Golden Girls"
47 Mess personnel (abbr.)

Solution to Last Week's Puzzle

D	A	B	■	■	■	T	T	S	■	S	O	N
A	L	E	C	■	■	O	H	O	■	H	U	E
H	A	N	O	I	■	B	E	D	R	O	C	K
■	■	C	I	N	D	Y	L	O	U	W	H	O
G	I	A	N	N	I	■	O	W	E	■	■	■
O	B	S	E	S	S	I	V	E	■	L	O	W
D	E	E	D	■	C	L	E	■	A	E	R	O
S	T	Y	■	I	L	L	B	E	B	A	C	K
■	■	■	A	N	A	■	U	M	B	R	A	S
S	K	E	L	L	I	N	G	T	O	N	■	■
A	I	R	T	I	M	E	■	S	T	E	M	S
M	R	I	■	N	E	O	■	■	T	R	E	K
I	A	N	■	E	R	N	■	■	■	S	L	Y

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SUDOKU

THE SAMURAI OF PUZZLES By The Mepham Group

Level 1 **2** 3 4

6	7							3
			3	9				2
9	5		7			4		1
					3		1	
5								4
	4		8					
4		5			7		3	8
3				6	2			
2							6	5

Solution to Tuesday's puzzle 10/20/21

7	6	8	3	1	9	4	5	2
9	5	2	4	7	8	3	1	6
1	4	3	2	6	5	7	9	8
8	9	4	5	2	3	1	6	7
5	1	6	7	9	4	8	2	3
3	2	7	1	8	6	9	4	5
4	3	9	6	5	7	2	8	1
6	8	1	9	3	2	5	7	4
2	7	5	8	4	1	6	3	9

Complete the grid so each row, column and 3-by-3 box (in bold borders) contains every digit, 1 to 9. For strategies on how to solve Sudoku, visit ***sudoku.org.uk***

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Boggle® BrainBusters!

By David L. Hoyt and Jeff Knurek

INSTRUCTIONS: Find as many words as you can by linking letters up, down, side-to-side and diagonally, writing words on a blank sheet of paper. You may only use each letter box once within a single word. Play with a friend and compare word finds, crossing out common words.



4-30-21

BOGGLE® POINT SCALE
3 letters = 1 point
4 letters = 2 points
5 letters = 3 points
6 letters = 4 points
7 letters = 6 points
8 letters = 10 points
9+ letters = 15 points

YOUR BOGGLE® RATING
151+ = Champ
101-150 = Expert
61-100 = Pro
31 - 60 = Gamer
21 - 30 = Rookie
11 - 20 = Amateur
0 - 10 = Try again

Boggle® BrainBusters Bonus
We put special brain-busting words into the grid of letters. Can you find them?
Find AT LEAST FOUR U.S. STATE CAPITALS in the grid of letters.

Answers to Thursday's Boggle® BrainBusters: JAR JUG BARREL BOTTLE THERMOS

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www.bogglebrainbusters.com

Front Page

Community Calendar

Upcoming events

• • • • • •

Marshfield Congregational Church will hold its Christmas Eve Service at 6 p.m. on **Dec. 24**. Our location is 23 Church Lane, Marshfield. Any questions, please contact Alexandra at (207) 271-0759, willoughbystudio@yahoo.com.

Recurring events

• • • • • •

Warm clothing donations are being accepted at the Centre Street Congregational Church in Machias. Drop off your gently used items from **10 a.m. to 1 p.m. every Thursday**. Items being accepted include sweaters, sweatshirts, winter jackets, boots, hats, mittens, and warm blankets. We're also seeking socks, facecloths, and toiletries for Mano en Mano. Items may be picked up from 9 a.m. to noon on Oct. 4.

• • • • • •

The Machias Arts Council is hosting an open studio from 1-4 p.m. **Sundays** in our Gathering Room at the Machias Arts Center, 277 Main Street, Machias. All artists are welcome to come and create with fellow makers. Bring your project and provisions and enjoy a convivial afternoon. Coffee, tea, and water provided, and you are welcome to bring snacks and your own beverages. Free, and supported by donations.

• • • • • •

The Machias Arts Council's Creative Writer's Circle meets at 6:30 p.m. the **first Thursday of each month** at the Machias Arts Center, 277 Main Street, Machias. Open to everyone over the age of 18 who is interested in developing their creative writing skills, and building a supportive literary community.

• • • • • •

Machias Rotary Club meets **1st and 3rd Thursday** at Camden National Bank- Dublin Street, Machias.

• • • • • •

Down East Quilters meet at 1 p.m. on the **first and third Friday of the month** at the Jacksonville United Methodist Church, Rt 191, East Machias. Email clg@twcny.rr.com and follow us on Facebook for the latest info.

• • • • • •

The Machiasport Selectboard meets at 5 p.m. on the **fourth Monday of every month** at the new town office building, 8 Unity Sq., Machiasport.

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The Machiasport Planning Board meets at 5 p.m. on the **first Thursday of every month** at the new town office building, 8 Unity Sq., Machiasport.

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Machias Arts Center, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, located at 277 Main Street, Machias, is offering these recurring events. There is no charge, but donations are accepted.

Open Art Studio – **Tuesdays**, 6-8 p.m. Build community and create alongside local artists and creatives. September's medium is Watercolor.

Textile Tuesdays – **3rd Tuesday each month**, 5:30-7:30 p.m. Bring your textile projects and connect with fellow fiber and fabric artists and crafters.

These events are free, but space is limited, so please let us know you are coming. To secure your spot, or for details and questions, please email mac@machiasartscouncil.org or visit us online at FB or machiasartscouncil.org.

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Machias-Area Community Suppers are served on the **2nd and 4th Thursdays** of the month from 5:00 to 6:00 pm (doors open at 4:30) at the Centre Street Congregational Church in Machias. This is a free meal for all community members to enjoy. The supper features creative menus based on weekly, surplus food donations, so we *do not accommodate dietary or allergen restrictions*. The meals are free and donations are accepted. If you would like to volunteer for a Supper or make a food donation, you can email Julie at rustik@mac.com.

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- Update -

Thursday Bingo games at the John E. Williams VFW Post 11553 in Harrington will pause for the Christmas season. Our last game this year is Nov. 20, and the first game in the New Year will be Jan. 8, 2026.

Join us for Bingo every Thursday at the Harrington VFW Hall located at the intersection of 1A and Wilson District across the street from Dollar General. Say hello to old friends and make new ones. Various foods, snacks and beverages available. Doors open at 4 PM with games starting at 6 PM. We're looking forward to seeing you there.

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The Machias Area Playgroup meets at 10 a.m. every Friday at Porter Memorial Library, Children's Library, 92 Court Street, Machias. For more information, please call or text 263-5270.

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Machias Area Community Suppers on **every 2nd and 4th Thursday**. Doors open at 4:30 p.m., meal served 5-6 p.m. The meals are held at the Centre Street Church -- 9 Center St, Machias. Meals are FREE and open to all. Donations are accepted.

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The Whitneyville Select Board meets on the **second Thursday of each month** at 6 p.m. at the Town Office.

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Story time and activity **Tuesdays** at 11 a.m. at Porter Memorial Library Children's Library at 92 Court Street, Machias.

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T.O.P.S., Maine: Take Off Pounds Sensibly 378 Port Rd., Machiasport. Tues: 10:10 a.m. Weigh-in Time, 11 a.m. Program Start Time. Max. Scale Weight: 500, Contact: 207-271-1689

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The Machias Historical Society and the MHS Revolutionary War Reenactors of Downeast Maine holds its regular monthly meeting on the first Thursday of each month at 6:00 p.m. at the Machias Bay Area Chamber of Commerce building at 2 Kilton Lane in Machias. The public is invited to attend.

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Maine Coast Sardine History Museum, 34 Mason Bay Rd. in Jonesport, now open from 1 to 4 p.m. Wednesday to Friday, and Sunday. Call ahead to be sure, 461-9200.

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Parenting in Recovery Art & Support

Join us for art activities and support! Share stories, find resources and get parenting information and so much more. Free and Open to the Public. No registration needed. For more info please call 255-8273. Calais Recovery Center, 311 Main Street, Calais, Every Tuesday from 12-1 p.m. Downeast Recovery Center, 11 Free Street, Machias, Every Wednesday, 12-1 p.m.

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Calais Area Playgroup at 10 a.m. every Tuesday, Lafayette Park, Calais. For more information please call or text 263-5270.

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Open pottery studio: Cobscook Institute in Trescott hosts open pottery studio hours for past pottery students and anyone with basic clay experience. Studio fee of $10 / hour. To sign up online visit https://tinyurl.com/yc2ayjza or contact Michelle Cousineau for help, 207-255-7246, or by email michelle@cobscookinstitute.org.

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Monday Night Music Circle. **Every Monday at 6 p.m.** the Cobscook Institute will host its Monday Night Music Circle. A cornerstone of Cobscook Institute events, bring an instrument, or your voice, or just come to listen. You're sure to have a great time. Donations warmly accepted. To join the event on a computer or smartphone: https://networkmaine.zoom.us/j/88596925274 or by phone: +1 (646) 876-9923, Meeting ID: 885 9692 5274.

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Porter Memorial Library Board of Trustees meets online and in-person on the **third Wednesday of each month**. For more information, call 478-4378. The library is located at 92 Court Street, Machias.

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Machias Board of Selectmen meets **bi-monthly at 6 p.m. on the second and fourth Wednesdays of the month**. The meetings are held at the Machias Telebusiness Center, Stackpole Road, Machias. FMI visit www.machiasme.org, or call 255-6621.

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Machias Planning Board meets at **7 p.m. on the first Wednesday of the month**, at the Machias Town Office, Court Street, Machias. FMI visit www.machiasme.org, or call 255-6621.

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Machias Area Food Pantry - **Mondays**, at 43 Kennebec Road, Machias; 1-6 p.m. **Wednesdays** 9:30 am to 1:30 pm For more information call 259-6044.

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Good News Club will meet in Addison at the Church Hill Community Center **Mondays from 3:30 to 5:00 P.M.** Children from ages 2 – 12 are invited to attend. For more information call Cathy at 483-4655 or Carol at 615-1602.

Support groups

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NA (Narcotics Anonymous) – Sunday, 6 p.m. at Cherryfield Congregational Church, 12 River Road, Cherryfield, Info: 207-460-2499

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Sunday AA Meetings: Downeast Group, Downeast Recovery Support Center, 11 Free St., Machias, 7 p.m.; Head of the Tide Group, Grace Christian Church, 10 Leighton Point Rd., Pembroke, 7:30 p.m.

Monday AA Meetings: Alcoholics Only Group, Personal Residence, 90 Boardman St., Calais, 7 p.m.; Milbridge Group, Congregational Church, 10 Bridge St., Milbridge, 7 p.m.

Tuesday AA Meetings: Crossroads Big Book Meeting, Grace Chapel, 10 Leighton Point Rd., Pembroke, 7 p.m.; Indian Township Meeting, Indian Township Meal Site, 8 Kennebasis Rd., Indian Township, 7 p.m.; Downeast Group Big Book meeting, 6 p.m. at the Machias DownEast Recovery Center 11 Free Street, Machias.

Wednesday AA Meetings: Pleasant River Group, Faith United Methodist Church, 444 US Rt. 1, Columbia, 7 p.m.; Brown Bag Meeting, Calais United Methodist Church, 849 Main St., Calais, noon.

Thursday AA Meetings: Machias Valley Group, St. Aidan's Church, 72 Dublin St., Machias, 7 p.m.; Bridge of Friendship Group, St. Croix Historical Society, 527 Main St., Calais, 7 p.m.

Friday AA Meetings: Eastport Step Meeting, Senior Center, 9 Boynton St., Eastport, 6:30 p.m.; Keep it Simple Group, Passamaquoddy Health Center, 401 Peter Dana Point Rd., Princeton, 7 p.m.; Downeast Group, Downeast Recovery Support Center, 11 Free St., Machias, 7 p.m. Eastport Step Meeting, Senior Center, 9 Boynton St., Eastport is at 5:30 p.m., not 6:30 p.m.

Saturday AA Meetings: Bar 30 - Recovery Center, 311 Main St., Calais at 8 p.m.; Buy Time Women's Group, Downeast Recovery Support Center, 11 Free St., Machias, 10 a.m.; Moosebec Group, St. Aidan's Episcopal Mission, 36 Dublin St., Machias, 7 p.m.

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Arise Addiction Recovery meetings — Monday 7 p.m. at Machias Christian Fellowship, 3 Davis Rd, Machias, ME. Paul Trovarello 207-271-7060.

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Downeast Sexual Assault Services — 1-800-492-5550, ext. 258.

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Intimate Partner- Violence/abuse 24/7 hotline 800-315-5579.

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Recovery Meetings: Paul Trovarello, 207-271-7060, paultrovarelloarise@gmail.com ; Lindsay Trovarello, 207-631-8382, lindsaytrovarello@gmail.com- Facebook: ARISE Addiction Recovery- Website: www.ariseaddictionrecovery.com

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Road to Recovery — FMI: 1-800-227-2345.

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Monthly cancer support and resource meetings — FMI: 207-726-5087 or 207-664-0339.

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Circle of Hope — FMI: 207-255-3530.

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NAMI Maine - FMI: Amy 207-726-0608 or 207-263-7889.

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Quoddy Al-Anon meetings — FMI: 207-733-2068.

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Arise Addiction Recovery - FMI: 255 5011.

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Sunrise Opportunities Prevention Council: Parenting in Recovery Support Group. Every Monday at 11:30 A.M. -12:30 P.M. via ZOOM. To register or for more information please call/text (207) 263-5270

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Sunrise Opportunities Prevention Council: Parents of Children with Special Needs Support Group. The 2nd and 4th Monday of the month at 5:00 P.M. – 6:00 P.M. via ZOOM. To register or for more information please call/text (207) 263-5270

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Sunrise Opportunities Prevention Council: General Parent Support Group. 1st and 3rd Thursday of the month at 4:30 P.M. – 5:30 P.M. via ZOOM. To register or for more information please call/text (207) 263-5270

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Sunrise Opportunities Prevention Council: Machias Area Virtual Playgroup. Every Wednesday at 10:00-11:00 A.M. via ZOOM. To register or for more information please call/text (207) 263-5270

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Sunrise Opportunities Prevention Council: Calais Area Virtual Playgroup. Every Tuesday at 10:00-11:00 A.M. via ZOOM. To register or for more information please call/text (207) 263-5270



Front Page

SPORTS

Elm Street Boys Grab Key Early Season Wins Against Calais, RMG

By Will Tuell

The second week of the new junior high basketball season saw the Elm Street Panthers of East Machias travelling down Route 191 to the border town of Calais, where the Panther boys bested the Blue Devils 46-32 to move to 2-0. A week later, Nick Wood's potent offense erupted for 35 first-half points to beat Rose M. Gaffney of Machias 59-34. While the Elm Street boys picked up a key early-season victory, it was not all smiles for Elm Street as Larry Davis's girls' squad fell 34-12 to a solid Calais program Dec. 9 and followed that up with a hard-fought 27-23 loss Dec. 18 at home against RMG.

The Calais defense had their hands full with seventh-grader Brantley Wood, who paced all scorers with 23 points for the Panther boys. Eighth-grader River Balyint poured in 11 more, while Wyatt Fritz logged six. Christian Robinson chipped in three, Jayden Stevens scored two, and Cyrus Meyer got into the scoring ledger with one point to account for Elm Street's offense. The Blue Devils were led by Noah Loring with 12 points.

While the evening ended on a high note for Panther boys winning, there were simply too many threats for Elm Street's girls to contain. Larrea Norris led the way for the Lady Blue Devils with 10, Haydn Seavey contributed nine more, followed by Baileigh Collins with seven, and Brylea Newman with a pair of fourth-quarter threes for six points. Gabby Remmington rounded out the Blue Devils' scoring with two points.

Elm Street's offense was stymied. Sarah Hennessey and Kendal Look led the way with four points each, while Lydia Hall and Naomi Favuzzi each tallied two points for the Panthers' 12.

With Calais in their rearview, Elm Street turned its focus to the RMG Bulldogs, their crosstown rivals. Rivalry games are always tricky, hard-fought, and emotionally charged affairs, but Coach Wood's Panther boys asserted themselves early and did not look back.

Once again, Brantley Wood led all scorers for Elm Street. The seventh-grader poured in 20 while eighth-grader River Balyint added nine. Jayden Stevens chipped in seven while Cyrus Meyer scored six and Chandler Harmon added five points. Parker Davis, Wyatt Fritz, and Christian Robinson rounded out the scoring for the Panthers with four points apiece.

Casey Fitzsimmons led the Bulldogs with seven points, followed by Luke Davis and Callum Mathews with six apiece. While RMG had some good looks offensively, the Bulldogs were no match for Elm Street's tenacious defense and ability to put up points in bunches. With the win, Nick Wood's side moves to 3-0 headed into a pre-Christmas matchup against the Lubec Hornets.

The Elm Street girls were hoping to rebound from a tough matchup against Calais when they squared off against RMG but came up just short after mounting a spirited fourth quarter rally to lose 27-23.

Both teams came out cold with the first points coming midway through the first quarter and neither side really taking control of the action despite RMG having the edge at half. The third quarter proved pivotal as Machias held Elm Street scoreless and led by as much as 13 at one point. Still, the Panthers took advantage of miscues and were able to put the basket through the hoop in the fourth quarter to make things interesting for both sides.

Leading the way for RMG were Jasmine Kneeland and Maddison Berry, each of whom scored eight points. Chloe Dahl added five for the Bulldogs while Charlotte Hennessey added four, and Anna Holmes chipped in a deuce.

Sarah Hennessey led all scorers with 11 points for the Panthers. Kendal Look and Kim Bragg each chipped in four for the Lady Panthers. Bristol Richardson and Aubrie Smith each added two points for the Elm Street girls, who head into Lubec for a double-header against the Hornets and Campobello before Christmas break, with a 1-2 record.

1,000 Point Club's Newest Member

By Phil Stuart

In order to score 1,000 points in their high school career, a player needs to average 14 points per game, based on an 18-game regular schedule, not including postseason play.

Most payers achieve the 1,000-point milestone late in their senior year. Mickey Fitzsimmons of Machias reached the 1,000-point milestone just three games into his senior season against the Woodland Dragons. Fitzsimmons became the 17th Bulldog player since 1972 to score 1,000 points.

Mickey joins former Bulldogs Shane Feeney, Jordan Grant, James Mersereau, Logan Wood, Mike Little, Chris Correll, Lucas Stuart, Kenny Johnson, Patrick Spencer, Mitch Nault, Dan Alley, and Wayne St. Pierre; plus Lady Bulldogs Coral Snowdeal, Christi Holmes, Tate Dolley, and Kristin Grant.

Many other high school athletes in the area have scored 1,000 points in their careers; however, statistics were not as accurate prior to 1970.

All four of our area high schools have had several 1,000-point scorers over the years, plus a couple of players from Machias Valley Christian School — Wayne Wood and Ricky Faas both scored 1,000 points for the Patriots. Jonesport-Beals, Jonesport High School, and Beals High School all had players reach that milestone as well. Beals High School, probably the most successful of all Washington County teams year after year until they closed in the late sixties, won three state championships and won more Washington County titles than any other school Downeast.

The Braves had 1,000-point scorers like Oscar Wallace, Stan Beal, Elliot Beal, Harold Alley, Wendell Alley, and probably many more.

Jonesport High School had a rich tradition as well. The Seahawks won one state title and a number of county championships, switching back and forth from Class S to Class M over the years. The Seahawks' top scorers over the years were Clarence Reed, Bob Feeney, Donnie Wright, Mike Beal, Steve Beal, and Mike Merritt.

When the two schools combined, it was lights out for the rest of the state in Class D for a while. With players like Garet Beal, Lindell Beal, Robert Alley, Ricky Fagonde, and Dwight Carver. Other 1,000-point scorers were Damon Beal, Skip Alley, Troy Alley, and Matt Alley, along with girls, Cheri Lakeman, Morgan Merchant, Coleen Libby, Sandi Carver, and Tricia Carver.

Washington Academy has had its share of scoring leaders over the years, starting way back in the late thirties with Tart Gardner, racking up over 1,100 points in his career. Others that followed were Wendell Libby, Wendell Davis, Dean Crosman, Jared Gray, Scott Porter, Kenny Albee, Ben Teer, Bobby Richardson, Nate Davis, Nick Reynolds, Chad Fitzsimmons, Thad Frost, Joey Hunter, and Gage Feeney, along with Lady Raiders Ashley Tilton and Taylor Seeley.

Narraguagus has had a pretty even mixture of girls and boys who have achieved 1,000-point status, led by Gladys Ganiel, the area's most decorated athlete. Gladys is joined by Anna Ramsay, Kaci Alley, Andrea Perry, Kelli Kennedy, and Janice Moore. Their male counterparts have been Aaron Beal, Chad Fenton, Blake Chase, Jared Look, and Robbie Worcester.

There certainly have been more than those listed above to reach the 1,000-point plateau, but records were not always compiled, and much has been lost over the years.



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WCCC Joins Yankee Small College Conference

Washington County Community College (WCCC) has been officially accepted as a member of the Yankee Small College Conference (YSCC), marking a significant milestone in the continued growth and expansion of the College's athletics and student engagement programs.

The YSCC is a Division II conference in the United States Collegiate Athletic Association (USCAA) that consists of two-year and four-year schools from Maine, New Hampshire, Vermont, and New York State. The YSCC is a respected intercollegiate athletic conference comprised of small colleges that emphasize competitive athletics, academic excellence, and student development. Membership in the conference provides WCCC student-athletes with expanded opportunities for regional competition, collaboration, and leadership development.

"Being accepted into membership of the YSCC is absolutely huge for the growth of athletics here at Washington County Community College. It will allow our student-athletes to have more goals such as playing for a league championship and being on an all-league team. Being in a league will also help us with scheduling games and not having to travel as far, therefore allowing our student-athletes more time in the classroom. I'm very excited for the opportunity being part of the YSCC gives us," said Seth Martin, director of athletics at WCCC.

"Joining the Yankee Small College Conference is an exciting and important step forward that strengthens our commitment to providing students with a well-rounded college experience that includes competitive athletics, teamwork, and meaningful campus engagement," said Dr. Tyler Stoldt, dean of enrollment management & student services.

WCCC's acceptance into the YSCC aligns with the College's recent investments in athletics and campus life, including the expansion of intercollegiate sports offerings, facility improvements, and increased opportunities for student leadership and engagement. Conference membership will allow WCCC teams to compete against peer institutions while maintaining a strong focus on academic success and student well-being.

"Conference membership creates a clear pathway for sustainable athletic growth and improves school spirit and diversity of the student body while supporting enrollment growth and reinforcing athletics as a powerful complement to the classroom experience," said WCCC President Susan Mingo.

As a YSCC member, Washington County Community College will collaborate with fellow institutions on scheduling, governance, and student-athlete support, further integrating WCCC into a regional network of colleges committed to access, equity, and student success.

Washington County Community College, located in Calais, Maine, is part of the Maine Community College System and serves students across the region with career-focused academic programs, student support services, and opportunities for leadership and engagement both in and out of the classroom. Additional information about WCCC athletics, including athletic schedules, can be found at www.wcgoldeneagles.com.

Front Page

SPORTS

One Game Scoring Explosions

By Phil Stuart

In this day and age, it is quite uncommon for an individual to have a 40-point scoring night. Last week, Woodland Junior Evan Monk erupted for 40 points in a losing cause against the Machias Bulldogs.

Years ago, high-scoring nights were rather common due to the size of the playing courts and a lack of defensive pressure like there is today. In the early days, the courts were small, and the games were really physical, due to only one official working a game. As the game started having better officiating, there were some high-scoring nights for high school basketball players.

The highest scoring game by an individual happened back in 1921, when William Perkins of the Morse Shipbuilders racked up 82 points against the Rockland Tigers. The girls' all-time individual scoring record is held by Anita Belanger of Mattawamkeag, who scored 81 against the Medway Rockets in 1955. Belanger would go on to score 2,209 points in her high school career. Belanger would score over 50 points, 11 different times.

Back in the early eighties, while working for J.C. Milliken Insurance Agency, I went down to Bucks Harbor to insure a small summer home owned by Joe and Marion Fernald. Joe and I talked basketball a little, and he had played for Milbridge back in the fifties, and also said he held the school individual scoring record. After checking the records, I discovered that Joe had scored 76 points against Jonesboro on Jan. 29, 1957.

As mentioned before, most of the high-scoring nights occurred in small gyms back in the 1950s and 1960s. Leroy Dugay of Columbia Falls racked up all but 10 of his team's points, scoring 75 of 85 in an 85-44 win against Cherryfield Academy in 1955. Thomas Heald of Cherryfield scored 66 against Jonesboro in 1957. Mike Plummer of Harrington scored 62 against Jonesboro in the same year. Elliot Noyes of Jonesboro racked up 61 against Cherryfield Academy in 1961. Everett Kinney of East Grand scored 55 against Jonesboro in 1965. Garet Beal matched that total for Jonesport-Beals in 2013 with a 100-47 win over Woodland.

Alfred Coffin of Jonesport High School scored 54 for Jonesport High School in 1967, matched by Jonesport Beals High School senior Farrell Beal in 1958. On Jan. 11, 1955, Wendell Alley and Vince Norton, both of Beal High School, each scored 51 points in a 145-85 win over Jonesboro. Lindell Beal of Jonesport-Beals racked up 54 against Machias in 1987. Cole Beal of Jonesport-Beals had a 52-point scoring night against Woodland in 2013.

Billy Brown of Princeton scored 50 points against the Oakfield Falcons in 1968. Aaron Beal of Narragaugus scored 50 against Washington Academy in 1984. BJ Alley of Jonesport-Beals scored 50 against Shead in 1998. Dustin Getchell of Machias racked up 48 against Bangor Christian in 2012. Jerry Quimby of Washington Academy scored 48 against Milbridge in 1955. Bill Shaw of Harrington scored 46 against Jonesboro in 1957.

A few female players have had big scoring nights as well. June Smith of Jonesport High School scored 54 points against the Bulldogs of Machias in 1974. Gertrude Peabody's 52-point night goes way back in time. Gertrude scored 52 against Machias on Jan. 25, 1930. Shelby Searles of Lubec broke this 40-point barrier by scoring 47 against East Grand in 2009. Emily Curtis of Woodland erupted for 46 against Machias in 2019.

In more modern times, the scoring binges have not been as common. The gymnasiums are a lot longer in length, and the athletes are much more agile. More aggressive defenses have slowed down the scoring to some extent. Forty-plus scoring nights do happen, but not nearly as often.

Tigers/Hornets County Champs in 1953

By Phil Stuart

Danforth High School and Lubec High School claimed County Championships in 1953 in their respective Class S and Class M divisions.

Danforth opened the 1953 tourney with a matchup against the Jolters of Jonesboro. The Tigers pulled away in the second half and eked out a 51-46 win over Jonesboro. Clark Whitney scored a game-high 19 for the Jolters. Frazure Schencks and Harry Davis both finished with 10.

The Milbridge Skunks faced the Princeton Bombers in the second Class S contest of the tournament. Nate Smith and Herbie Huckins combined for 41 points, and the Skunks advanced with a 69-49 win. Ronnie King chipped in with 12 more for the winners. Huey McArthur scored 17 for the Bombers. Gene Greenlaw and Ron Bailey each finished with 12.

Hartly Alley scored 23 points for the Beals Braves as they easily defeated the Vanceboro Railroaders 69-37 in game three. Elliot Beal chipped in with 15 more. Tommy Farnham led Vanceboro with 17, and Jimmy Cookson followed with 15.

The Harrington Hornets defeated their rivals from Columbia Falls 67-50 in the final Class S game of the day. Dick Randall scored a game-high 24 for the Hornets. Karl Brown and Joe White both had big games with 16 and 13. Ellis Pineo led the Trojans with 19, followed by Gerry Worcester's 17.

Danforth completely shut down Milbridge's offense in the semifinals with a 53-22 decision. The Tigers had a huge size advantage, and Les Wood scored 21 points. Larry Malone and Moose Boardman both finished with 12. John Nadeau led the Skunks' attack with eight points.

Beals made it into the championship game once again by defeating the Hornets of Harrington 54-43 in the semifinals. Elliot Beal scored a game-high 25 points for the Braves. Hartly Alley followed with 12 more. Dick Randall's 17 points led the Hornets

The Beals/Danforth championship game was a low-scoring affair, with Danforth handing the Braves a 46-40 setback. Les Wood and Larry Malonel led the Tigers' scoring attack with 17 and 12. Elliot Beal and Ray Buckman led the Braves with 13 and 12. Hartly Alley rounded out the scoring with eight.

Jonesport and Woodland kicked off the 1953 Washington County Class M tourney. The Seahawks pulled away in the last quarter to defeat the Dragons 44-39. Karl Farnsworth and Dick Randall were the Seahawks' top scorers, scoring 11 and 10, respectively. Jim Merrithew and Otto Miller led the Dragons' attack with 12 and 11.

Shead and Machias had another close game in the second Class M contest. Shead broke open a tight game in the third quarter and pulled away for a 43-26 win. Skip Kinney led Chick Norton's club with 12. Billy Kendall and Chick Mitchell combined for 17 more. Dale Whitney and Dick Ellsmore were the top Bulldog scorers with eight and six.

Calais and Lubec, the top seeds, drew byes in the first round. Calais played Jonesport in the semifinals and easily eliminated the Seahawks by a score of 58-39. Herbie Colson, Diddy Eagan, Bruce Sherlock, and Vince Carter all scored nine points for the Blue Devils. Dick Randall's game-high 12 points pulled the Seahawks' offense.

Big Dave Pressley scored a game-high 22 as Lubec advanced to the championship game with a 62-45 win over Shead. Teammates Ken Lyons and Tommie Morrison combined for 23 more. Billy Kendall's 11 points led the Tigers' offense. Chick Mitchell and Skip Kinney each finished with nine points.

The 1953 Washington County final match-up was Lubec and Calais. Lubec's great scoring balance kept the Hornets in front all the way, and Calais was never a threat. Lubec rolled to a 19-point win, 71-52. John Griffin led a trio of Hornet scorers in double figures with a game-high 22. Dave Pressley and Tommy Morriosn followed with 18 and 16. Don Cook's nine rounded out the Hornets' attack. Arlyn Leach led the Blue Devils in scoring with 14, followed by Bruce Sherlock with 10 more.

STUDENT NEWS

Jonesboro Elementary School First Period Honor Roll

Jonesboro Elementary School announced its first period honor roll last week.

Third-grade honors went to Aubree McManus and Saylor Buck. In fourth grade, Alex Sowers and Araya Williams earned honors. In fifth grade, Ethan Reyes earned high honors, while Nora Alley, Annika Farnsworth, and Dilan Chandler earned honors.

In Grade 6, Easton Appleby and Donte Chandler earned high honors. Isaiah Chandler and Acheron Lyons made honors.

In seventh grade, Brystal Alley made high honors, while Emmett Alley, Gavin Gill, and Liam Baker each made honors.

Eighth-grade high honors went to Mya Holland. Honors went to Kegan Bernatchy, Levi Rezendes, and Tyler Crockett.

Jonesport-Beals High School First Quarter Honor Roll

Joseph Swain, principal of Jonesport-Beals High School, announced the school's first quarter honor roll last week.

Seniors earning high honors were Aspen Alley, Riley Balicki, Sarah Crowley, Ethan Faulkingham, Macie Faulkingham, Trenton Hagy, Nathaniel Johnson, Mia Mills, and Brynn Robinson. Seniors earning honors were Kenton Alley, Owen Alley, James Brasted, Khloei Chandler, Nathan Faulkingham, and Ethan Reynolds.

Juniors earning honors were Adrian Alley, Keegan Beal, Trinity Frost, Janie Johnson, Bradley Kelley, and Isaiah Robinson. Makenna Kenney earned high honors.

Sophomores earning honors were Analeigh Beal, Emma Calderwood, Khinlei Chandler, Logan Emerson, Rozlyn Fenton, Lillie Fitzsimmons, Molly Gray, Gabriel Reyes, Koben Robinson, Owen Trumble, and Taya Woods. Anderson Alley earned high honors.

Freshmen earning honors were Aiden Beal, Landon Beal, Bella Durkee-Hartford, John Faulkingham, Harmony Johnson, Maddox Mills, Isabella Parker, Reagan Robinson, Jason Smith, Nancy Taccy, and Jayden White.



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Front Page

Devotional

By Pastor Doss Dennison

O Divine Night

Maybe I'm just a hopeless old romantic, but this time of year I find myself searching for that one magical moment that can transport me back to my childhood, when Christmas seemed almost magical. It can happen while gazing at the glow of twinkling Christmas lights, while watching a quiet snow fall like a soft blanket over weary streets, or while observing a child unwrapping a gift from beneath the tree. And sometimes it can be captured in the first few notes of a familiar carol.

There are only a handful of hymns that carry the spiritual weight of the carol, "O Holy Night." The combination of the melody and lyrics invites us to once again kneel before the manger and view it with fresh awe. There is an unexpected story behind this beloved carol that reminds us that God often uses unlikely people to proclaim His message to the world.

In 1847, in a small French village, a priest asked a local wine merchant to compose a poem for the upcoming Christmas Mass. The merchant wasn't a theologian; he was an ordinary businessman. Yet on a long carriage ride to Paris, he reflected on the nativity story and penned, "O Holy Night." The merchant later admitted that the poem came to him from a place beyond himself.

The priest then asked a composer, who was known for writing ballets and operas (not sacred music), to set the poem to music. The result was a dramatic, sweeping melody that feels inseparable from the lyrics.

Both the merchant and the composer faced criticism from church leaders of their day because neither of them was considered spiritual enough to have produced such a powerful hymn. We must remember that God can use anyone, even those we might overlook or disqualify, to tell the story of Jesus.

Though written generations ago, the words, "Long lay the world in sin and error pining," hit very close to home. We know all too well what it feels like for the world around us to long for peace and healing. We are also keenly aware of our own insufficiencies.

The hymn also proclaims a piercing truth, "Till He appeared, and the soul felt its worth." These words speak to those who feel forgotten, diminished, or overwhelmed. The birth of Christ is the declaration that every human soul is seen and valued by God. In the stillness of that holy night, God whispered that our worth is not measured by our achievements, status, or perfection, but by the love of a Savior who entered our world as a child. The infinite stepped into the fragile, the mighty entered the ordinary, and a Savior came, not to the strong, but to the broken.

In 1855, the song was translated into English by an American pastor and abolitionist. He was especially moved by the line, "Chains shall He break, for the slave is our brother." In a nation deeply divided over slavery, these words became a prophetic anthem of liberation for the oppressed.

One of the most remarkable moments in the song's history came on Christmas Eve in 1906, when a Canadian inventor performed what is widely considered the first AM radio broadcast in history. He played "O Holy Night" on his violin and read the nativity passage from Luke. Across the Atlantic, ship operators who were used to hearing only static and Morse code suddenly heard music and Scripture filling the airwaves. The first song and words, in human history, to be carried wirelessly into the night just so happened to be about the birth of the messiah.

This hymn invites us to "Fall on your knees," not in despair, but in awe; not in defeat, but in worship.

When we kneel before the manger, we kneel before the One who understands every fear we carry and every dream we hold. From that posture, we can remember what happened on that sacred night, so long ago. When we do, something wells up inside of us that makes us want to shout from the rooftops, "O night divine!"

The words, "A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices, for yonder breaks a new and glorious morn!" tell us that His appearing changed everything! The message of Christmas is not just a sentimental escape from the world, but a proclamation that Christ has entered that very world to redeem it.

Christmas, at its core, is about believing that light can still break through darkness. Not because we pretend the darkness isn't there, but because we know who entered it. Jesus was born into a world of political unrest, poverty, suffering, and uncertainty, much like our own. Yet the angels declared, "Fear not," because on that divine night, God Himself came to walk with us up every mountain and through every valley.

Wishing a Blessed and Merry Christmas to all!

A Christmas to Remember

By Peter Pinette

The year was 1944. The legendary Battle of the Bulge was being fought in the Ardennes Forest of Europe. It was on that Christmas Eve that Elizabeth Vincken and her 12-year-old son, Fritz, went into this very forest to get to the family's hunting cabin because their home had been destroyed by a bombing raid. Elizabeth wanted safety for her son and herself, and to share this very holiest of nights with her son. She wanted peace from that dreaded war.

Mother and son arrived at the cabin during the day and planned to have a peaceful Christmas Eve dinner that evening. Their day was soon interrupted by three American soldiers who were trying to find shelter for the night; one of them was seriously wounded. Elizabeth could see their predicament and offered them refuge and any aid she could.

Elizabeth welcomed the soldiers but not their guns or the reality that a war was going on outside. She had Fritz hide their rifles when they were tending their wounded comrade, which forced them to get Fritz to tell them where he put them.

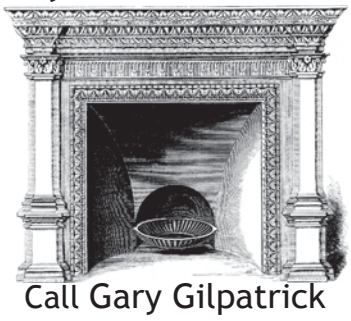
Outside, one of the American soldiers saw three German soldiers rapidly approaching the cabin. Because of the darkness, the American soldier was able to capture the Germans, making them think he was armed.

This is when the story takes on a very unusual twist of suspense. The American soldiers plan to hold the Germans captive in the cabin, and Elizabeth says that they are not going into her cabin with guns. They oppose this strongly, but Elizabeth holds her ground, and they decide that they will abide by her rules.

Needless to say, tensions were very high at first, but Elizabeth said that to keep the peace, all they would speak was English. The wounded American soldier needed medical attention, and it happened that one of the German soldiers had medical training. He cauterized the man's leg wound, stopped the bleeding, and saved his life.

Tensions started to ease some, and they started to plan the Christmas dinner. They all decided that a potluck dinner with Elizabeth's stew and a collection of everyone's K-rations would make up the meal. They started the meal with a prayer and talked with one another just as if the war were totally outside. Then they decorated a tree and sang Christmas carols in both English and German. The following day, they all shook hands and wished each other safety before going their separate ways.

This is a true story of a mother and her son who desired more than anything for peace and tranquility on Christmas Eve, and it may have been an answer to a prayer on this very special night. We all want peace and healing of relationships and divisions in our families and our nation, and if we pray for a Christmas to remember, we can trust in God to make it happen. Peace and Joy to all this Christmas.

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Obituaries



Trevor Gordon Hold
May 28th, 1975 - December 19, 2025

Trevor Gordon Hold, 50, went home to be with the Lord on December 19, 2025 after a courageous battle with cancer.

Trevor was welcomed to the world on May 28th, 1975 in Calais, ME to Elston "Greg" and Shirley Hold. He was in a hurry to be born, arriving three weeks before he was due, and he never stopped being in a hurry. As a boy, he was always doing something. He loved to be outdoors, building a bike or going waterskiing. He never let anything keep him down, which continued to be true throughout his life. From a young age, he knew one of his passions in life was helping and caring for others. At age 12, he helped out at a local nursing home and was presented the Volunteer of the Year award. He graduated from Woodland High School as a CNA and went on to graduate college with a degree in radiography. Trevor also had his own business as a contractor for many years before going to work for Spectrum. No matter what he was doing, he was always passionate and proud of the work he did.

Trevor also had a huge passion for racing, whether it was watching NASCAR or being on the track himself. He had a need for speed. At age 19, he and his father bought a race car to compete at Speedway 95 and soon formed their own team, Boyz n I Racing. Many memories were made on and off the track with whole racing crew. Over the past few years, he reignited his passion for racing with his daughter, Eden, and nephew, Lucas, racing go-karts. He looked forward to every weekend they got to race together. He even earned the name "Uncle Vroom" from his nieces and nephews.

Even during Trevor's battle with cancer, it was rare that he would sit still. He was always finding something to do; a project around the house, a trip to take, a friend or family member in need of help. His selflessness only grew after his diagnosis. His main concern was making sure all those around him were okay, all while he was fighting the most unimaginable battle. His strength, courage, and gratitude for each day on earth were an inspiration to all who knew him and crossed his path. He was a family man and a proud father who wore his heart on his sleeve, never afraid to show his emotions. He had a heart of gold, a zest for life, and a strong sense of humor. Through stubbornness, determination, and a combination of confidence and skill, he was able to accomplish anything he set his mind to.

To quote Trevor in his final weeks with us: "Don't worry about me. I get to go to glory, and I can't wait to see you there."

Trevor is predeceased by: grandparents, Elston Hold, Atwood and Mary Merrill, Gordon and Marlene Lord; his father, Greg Hold; his sister, Christina Hold; his uncle, Ricky Lord; nephews, Jacob Hold and Malcom Ross; and niece, Ashlee Gallant.

Trevor is survived by: his wife, Tova; his children, Carson, Delayne, Grayson, Valerie, Tristen, and Eden; his mother, Shirley; brothers, Jamie and wife, Sam; Brett and wife, Ann; sister-in-law, Eustacia Landrum and husband, Nick; brother-in-law, Houston and wife, Amber; his pets including beloved cockatoo, Charlie; and many nieces, nephews, and friends.

A Celebration of Life will be held 2 p.m. Saturday, December 27, 2025, at the Calais United Methodist Church, 849 Main St., Calais. Burial will be held at a later date. Arrangements by Mays Funeral Home & Cremation Services. We invite you to share your memories and photos of Trevor on his memorial page at www.MaysFuneralHome.com. Let us remember him as he was – full of life, laughter, and love. Your shared stories and pictures will serve as a comfort to his family and friends and as a lasting tribute to his beautiful spirit.

CA000013251

Front Page

UMaine Researchers Strengthening Mental Well-being Among Downeast Seniors

As an emergency medical technician in Machiasport, Hannah Maker has witnessed how chronic stress and isolation affect the well-being of older adults in Washington County, where population health falls below the state average. That's why she joined an initiative from the University of Maine to connect seniors in the area, including Passamaquoddy Tribal elders, with resources to improve their physical and mental health.

The Downeast Population Health Initiative aims to reduce isolation and long-term emotional stress from persistent challenges like anxiety, poverty, and food insecurity, all of which can lead to chronic illness and heightened risk of early death among seniors. Through the initiative, community health workers meet with older adults to identify needs, reduce distress, and strengthen community connections. Workers connect with seniors in person and through a digital platform run by the Community Caring Collaborative (CCC), a partner for the initiative.

Since joining the research team in September 2024, Maker has collected data and helped her colleagues form partnerships with local service providers. She has also deepened the team's understanding of what it's like to age in Washington County.

The initiative recognizes that health is shaped not only by medical factors but by community hardships, relationships, dignity, and access to trusted support. As a result, the team's efforts focus on the whole-person and whole community experience of aging. Maker said she thanks this research project for her understanding of patient care.

"You have to get to know your patients and get to know their circumstances to treat them individually," said Maker. "When you are taking care of patients, you are looking at all of their symptoms, not just their disease."

Led by School of Nursing faculty Jordan Porter and Kate Darling, the team began planning in early 2024 using a community-engaged research approach, avoiding solutions that don't work in the unique contexts of rural communities. They also recruited doctoral nursing students Bif Churchill and Cynthia Cushing and Maine Top Scholars Olivia Pelkey and Leilani Welsh to assist.

Early conversations with the CCC and survey and focus-group data revealed dignity, connection, and emotional safety are central themes, forming the foundation for the initiative's design.

"It feels so life-giving and powerful because it's really connecting with a lot of people because it is truly meeting the unique needs of older people in our community," Porter said.

The research team implemented a social care pathway in partnership with the CCC's Connection Initiative platform and tailored it to the needs of older adults in Washington County, whether it be for food, housing, education, mental or physical health. Community health workers conduct surveys with older adults and submit resource requests through the CCC to connect them with local resources. After extensive training to ensure interactions feel relational rather than transactional, the team began collecting and evaluating data.

The team is now interviewing older adults and community health workers and administering measures of distress, loneliness, and social connection. Maker and an interdisciplinary team of undergraduate and graduate researchers will review the interview transcripts and evaluate whether the pathway reduces distress, strengthens connection, improves time-to-resource access, or even decreases crises, such as emergency medical services. They will also analyze how older adults and community healthcare workers connect on the platform.

The initiative builds relationships between the older adults in Washington County and their community, ensuring they have people to reach out to in times of distress.

"The unique approach of this project is dignity is an intervention," Porter said. "Meeting an older adult with presence, respect and emotional steadiness during a moment of distress helps regulate the nervous system, builds trust and opens the door to connection."

Maker shared that participating in the initiative has helped her feel more connected to her community and able to give back to the people she personally knows in a meaningful way.

"It feels great to be able to do something for my community and make a difference to the people I personally know," Maker said.

The Downeast Population Health Initiative is funded by the Maine Community Population Health Initiative, a grant program of the Maine Medical Association's Center of Quality Improvement committed to supporting the health of Maine communities through research and community-based health interventions.



Machiasport native and UMaine senior Hannah Maker has been working with local community leaders, the area's aging population, and service providers to boost mental well-being in older populations Downeast since 2024. (UMaine photo)

New UMaine Machias Project Will Make Maine Coastal Fisheries Data Publicly Accessible

For years, coastal communities in Maine have collected valuable data on soft-shell clam recruitment and the spread of invasive green crabs, but much of that information has remained fragmented, difficult to access, or unavailable to the public.

The lack of a centralized, user-friendly system has made it challenging for clammers, municipal committees, educators, and policymakers to understand long-term trends, compare sites across towns, or use data to inform management and conservation decisions.

That gap is now being addressed through a new collaborative project led by Brian F. Beal, professor of marine ecology and director of the University of Maine at Machias' Marine Science Field Station at the Downeast Institute, and Georgios Boumis, assistant professor of civil and environmental engineering at the University of Maine, where he leads the Future Coasts Lab.

"Data is only valuable if people can access and understand it," Beal said. "This project is about breaking down barriers between science and the public, and making long-term ecological information available to the clammers, towns, educators and policymakers who depend on it."

The project — supported by a grant from the Maine Coastal and Marine Climate Action Fund — will create an interactive, publicly accessible web platform that compiles and visualizes long-term recruitment data for soft-shell clams and green crabs from 12 Maine coastal communities dating back to 2020.

"Communities have been collecting important fisheries data for years, but it hasn't always been easy to use or share," Boumis said. "By bringing it together in a single, open platform, we can help people see long-term patterns and make better-informed decisions."

The platform will standardize years of existing data into a searchable database, allowing users to filter by town, site, species, year, density, and size distribution, and to explore trends through interactive graphs and maps.

For coastal communities that rely on shellfish management programs, the platform will turn years of technical data into an accessible, practical tool for local decision-making.

"Easy access to this data will be so helpful when we prepare reports for Islesboro's annual town report and for our Shellfish Committee, which is composed of volunteers from the community, as we make decisions about what to do to protect 'our' clams from predation," said Janis Petzel, a volunteer shellfish committee member for the town of Islesboro.

Designed to serve a wide range of audiences, the web-based tool will be integrated into the Downeast Institute's website and will include explanatory content, glossaries, and tutorial videos. By making the data transparent and easy to use, the project aims to support workforce development in the clamming industry, strengthen local decision-making, and improve public understanding of how environmental change is affecting Maine's coastal ecosystems.

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(1951)
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Front Page

Mainers Can Now Renew REAL IDs Online

More than 70,000 REAL ID driver's licenses are due for renewal in the next year, Maine Secretary of State Shenna Bellows said in a press conference announcing the state's new online renewal portal Nov. 18. With this new online REAL ID service, most Maine residents with an expiring REAL ID will no longer need to visit their local BMV branch to renew their identification. AAA branches can now also help Mainers renew their REAL ID.

"We know Mainers are looking for easier, more efficient government services, and we are proud to launch online renewal of REAL IDs to save Mainers time by never having to go to the BMV," said Bellows. "Online REAL ID renewals will also reduce customer traffic to our BMV branches, helping to open up more availability for in-person services for those who need them and reducing wait times at branches."

Customers who are up for renewal in the coming weeks should check out the online services at the Secretary of State's website and can cancel an existing in-person appointment if they have one through the cancellation instructions in their appointment confirmation email or text, so that their reserved time will be made available to someone who may need it.

"If you are planning to travel by plane over the winter holidays and need to renew your REAL ID or obtain one for the first time, we urge you not to wait — go online or visit your local BMV soon," said Cathie Curtis, the Deputy Secretary of State for Bureau of Motor Vehicles. "We have seen record-breaking number of customers visiting our offices since early summer, and we hope that launching the ability to renew your REAL ID online at this time will help ensure that everyone who needs a REAL ID to travel this winter has the option to get one."

As of May 7, 2025, travelers are required to present a state-issued REAL ID, passport/passport card, or other TSA-compliant identification to fly commercially as well as to enter select federal facilities.

Maine residents with an active non-commercial license, motorcycle license, motor-driven cycle restricted license, or a Maine ID card — now including REAL ID — may use the online service at https://apps1.web.maine.gov/online/bmv/dlr_v2/ to process a renewal or replacement of their driver's license or ID card. You will need to know your Social Security number and provide a valid credit card to complete the online transaction.

Applicants using online renewal cannot change any information on their current license or ID card, and not all identifications can be renewed online. An individual would need to visit a BMV office if they:

• Hold a driver's license from another state.

• Are applying for a Maine REAL ID driver's license or ID card for the first time:

- First-time applicants must provide one document that establishes identity, date of birth, and lawful permanent residence/lawful status in the U.S.; a Social Security number (card does not need to be presented); and two documents showing Maine residency, such as a utility bill, pay stub, etc. Additional documentation may be required if an applicant has ever legally changed their name. Visit the Secretary of State website for information: https://www.maine.gov/sos/bmv/driver-licenses-and-ids/real-id.

• Hold a commercial driver's license.

• Changed their name since the last renewal.

• Have developed a medical condition or an existing medical condition has changed since last renewal.

• Wish to remove a restriction to corrective lenses.

• Are not a U.S. citizen.

• Require a vision examination. For information on when a vision examination is required, visit: https://www.maine.gov/sos/bmv/licenses/vision.html.

For more information, visit the Bureau of Motor Vehicles website at www.maine.gov/sos/bmv.

NOTICES / LEGALS

Town of Whiting

December 29, 2025
Public hearing: 6 p.m.
Special Town meeting: 6:30 p.m.
Whiting Town Hall

To discuss and vote on County TAN tax payment.

MVNO000014114

STATE OF MAINE
WASHINGTON COUNTY
PROBATE COURT

NOTICE TO CREDITORS
18-C M.R.S. §3-801 (1)

The following Personal Representatives have been appointed in the Estates noted. The first publication date of this notice is **December 17, 2025**. If you are a creditor of an Estate listed below, you must present your claim within four months of the first publication date of this Notice to Creditors or be forever barred.

You may present your claim by filing a written statement of your claim on a proper form with the Register of Probate of this Court or by delivering or mailing to the Personal Representative listed below at the address published by the Personal Representative's name a written statement of the claim indicating the basis therefore, the name and address of the claimant and the amount claimed or in such other manner as the law may provide. See 18-C M.R.S. §3-804.

ESTATE OF RICHARD PAUL ALLEY, LATE OF ADDISON, DECEASED. Eve M. Alley, 40 Airport Road, Addison, ME 04606 appointed Personal Representative. Docket #2025-236

ESTATE OF ROBERT B. GARDNER, LATE OF EAST MACHIAS, DECEASED. Donna-Jean Metta, 157 Port Road, Machiasport, ME 04655 appointed Personal Representative. Docket #2025-241

ESTATE OF TERESA M. HANNINGTON, LATE OF DANFORTH, DECEASED. Stephen W. Hannington, 668 Sandy Beach Road, Danforth, ME 04424 appointed Personal Representative. Docket #2025-238

ESTATE OF ALFRED DANIEL HEALD III, LATE OF MACHIAS, DECEASED. Jeanine M. Heald, 47 Deasey Road, Trenton, ME 04605 appointed Personal Representative. Docket #2025-237

ESTATE OF MARGARET M. HINKEL, LATE OF MARSHFIELD, DECEASED. Donna L. Reed, 29 Indian Hill Road, Marshfield, ME 04654 appointed Personal Representative. Docket #2025-246

ESTATE OF BARBARA ANN ROUSSELL, LATE OF CALAIS, DECEASED. RICHARD L. ROUSSELL, SR., 90 Boardman Street, Calais, ME 04619 appointed Personal Representative. Docket #2025-223

ESTATE OF CHARLENE E. SEAVEY, LATE OF MILBRIDGE, DECEASED. Alice M. Tucker, 12 Paddy Lane, Cherryfield, ME 04622 appointed Personal Representative. Docket #2025-243

ESTATE OF HELEN M. TRACEY, LATE OF STEUBEN, DECEASED. Judith L. Wilbur, P.O. Box 192, Hancock, ME 04640 appointed Personal Representative. Docket #2025-230

Date: December 11, 2025
Publish on December 17 & December 24, 2025

/s/ Darlene M. Perry
Register of Probate

MVNO000014107

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Interested parties may apply by sending their cover letter, resume, Town employment application, and three references to Marshfield Town Office, 187 Northfield Road, Marshfield, ME 04630 or via email to town@marshfieldtownoffice.com.

The position will remain open until filled, and review of applications will begin immediately.

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One-in-Three Mainers Wrongly Believe Eggnog Is 'Light Beer' Strength

Every December, Americans trade their usual drinks for something a little more "seasonal" — steaming mulled wines, cosy Irish coffees, spiked hot chocolates, and candy-cane martinis that feel far more innocent than they are. But a new survey by Bisnar Chase, polling 2,002 adults (21+), reveals just how badly people underestimate the strength of these festive favorites.

Respondents were asked whether they consider a range of Christmas cocktails — including eggnog, mulled wine, and hot toddies — to be as strong as low-alcohol beer. The results were surprisingly clear: on average, over 1-in-3 (38%) Mainers believe these holiday drinks are no stronger than low-alcohol beer — this compares to a national average of 38%.

More specifically:

In Maine, 39% of adults think eggnog packs no more punch than a light beer, while another 41% say the same about mulled wine. And in the Pine Tree State, 34% also mistakenly believe that hot toddies count as low-alcohol cocktails.

The wider data shows how deep the confusion runs:

• 20% believe holiday cocktails don't count toward the drink-drive limit.

• 57% admit they have unknowingly drunk more at a Christmas party because the drinks were "festive" or "didn't taste strong."

• 46% expect warm drinks (such as spiked hot chocolate, lattes, or mulled wine) to be weaker than cold cocktails.

And when faced with a menu item called Santa's Milkshake, almost half (48%) would assume it's alcohol-free.

The misunderstandings don't end there. When asked which Christmas cocktails they believed they could legally drive after having one, 23% chose spiked hot chocolate, 10% chose a sugar cookie martini, and 7% chose a snowball cocktail.

Perhaps unsurprisingly, 77% of Mainers think restaurants and bars should label the alcohol strength of these drinks — a sign that people know they are operating with guesswork.

The findings point to a cheerful but risky blind spot. And behind all the cinnamon, whipped cream, and seasonal novelty lies a serious issue: misjudging holiday cocktails can quietly push people over the legal limit, exposing them to criminal charges, licence suspensions, and long-term consequences that last far beyond Christmas Day.

"People don't set out to break the law at Christmas — they simply underestimate what's in the glass", says nationally recognized attorney Brian Chase. "Cocktails look fun and harmless, but their alcohol content doesn't magically drop because it's the holidays. Our concern is that this misunderstanding can put otherwise responsible people at serious legal risk. A single misjudged drink can lead to a DUI, licence suspension and consequences that follow you long after the decorations come down."

This article was provided courtesy of Bismar Chase, https://www.bestattorney.com/.

Front Page

Classifieds

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Front Page

Christmas Spirit on Display at Annual Washington County 'Feztival' of Trees

By Jayna Smith

The annual Feztival of Trees once again brought Christmas cheer to Washington County over the weekend of Dec. 12-14, drawing hundreds of visitors to Washington County Community College to admire nearly 50 beautifully decorated Christmas trees, each surrounded by an impressive display of gifts.

Held in Calais since its inception in 2016, the Feztival is jointly organized by the Schoodic Shrine Club, which serves northern Washington County, and the Washington County Shrine Club, which covers the southern portion of the county. The event continues to support an important cause, with all proceeds benefiting Shriners Hospitals for Children, which provides specialized medical care and critical services to children regardless of a family's ability to pay.



Saint Nick pauses to admire the decorated trees during the Feztival of Trees at Washington County Community College. (Photo by Jayna Smith)



Ian and Ericka Pratt present a $2,000 donation on behalf of Pratt Dealership to the Festival of Trees. The annual contribution helps offset event overhead so that more funds can be directed to the children's hospitals. (Pratt photo)

Admission to view the festive displays was just $1 for adults, while children 12 and under were admitted free. Attendees could also purchase tickets for a chance to win their favorite tree — complete with all decorations and gifts — adding an extra layer of excitement to the holiday tradition.

At the conclusion of the event on Sunday, winners were drawn for each tree and gift package. The drawings were streamed live on Facebook, and winners were also notified by phone.

Outdoors in Maine

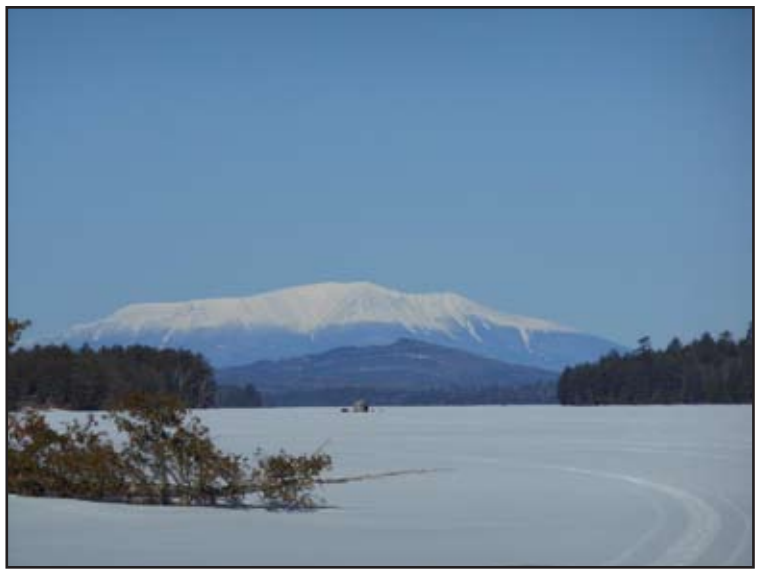
Back on the Ice

By V. Paul Reynolds

For many of us outdoor trippers, it's simply about the solitude — being out there in the Great Alone. Second only to deer hunting, ice fishing is for me the essence of solitude. Check out this photo of an ice fishing hut on Seboeis Lake with Maine's most famous mountain as a backdrop. The ice fishing hut is mine, and that speck is me drilling holes in the ice on a brutally cold January day about 20 years ago.

Ironically, despite the good fishing and wonderful times, it was not long after this photo was taken that I put my pack basket of tip-ups in storage, gave my ice auger to my sons, and escaped with my late wife Diane to the Florida Keys every winter for two decades. Let's face it, as you get older, there are some aspects of ice fishing that aren't so much fun, such as baiting the hook with your ungloved hands when the northwest wind blowing down the frozen lake nails the chill factor at 10 below. Or getting your snowmobile and tote sled bogged down in a "slush field" on the way back to camp and a warming stove.

Looking back, the memories linger, and they are all, thankfully, still crystal clear in my mind's eye. For the Reynolds, the ice fishing weekends were a family affair. Hauling a tote sled with all of our gear, including an English Setter, we snowmobiled 13 miles into our camp. We fished, played card games, and warmed ourselves with a seafood stew and buttermilk biscuits. The kids loved it, not only the food but the sheer adventure of it all.



The Reynolds' ice fishing hut with Maine's most famous mountain as the backdrop. (Diane Reynolds photo)

Unexpected things happened.

Once, when I tried to go around a cow moose on the trail, she side-swiped me, sending me and my gear-loaded sled down an embankment. Not long after that, son Scotty encountered two moose in the trail while on his way into camp at night. A bull moose charged his snowsled head-on. Scotty bailed and watched as the big critter took out his wrath on the snowmobile's windscreen and headlights.

As fate would have it, my ice fishing buddy and I got turned around on Schoodic Lake at night in the midst of one of the worst blizzards of the century. We eventually found our way to the shore and the treeline in zero visibility. It was one of my scariest outdoor experiences. A man perished on the lake that same night, presumably because he, too, could not find his way to the lake shore in the blinding Northeaster.

Life works in mysterious ways. Today, in the twilight of my years, the Florida Keys, with its warm breezes and swaying palm trees, is behind me. Wintering in Maine once again, I have dusted off my ice fishing tip-ups and purchased a good used snowmobile. When in Rome….

To my surprise and delight, snowmobiling into our camp and ice fishing last winter with my boys, one of whom is nearing retirement, is as much fun as it always was, cold hands or no cold hands.

Now, if we can just get an old-fashioned Maine winter with solid ice and a decent snow base. See you on the ice.



The author, a number of years ago, with his setter Sally packing into the lake for an ice fishing weekend. (Diane Reynolds photo)

The author is editor of the Northwoods Sporting Journal. He is also a Maine Guide and host of a weekly radio program, "Maine Outdoors," heard Sundays at 7 p.m. on The Voice of Maine News-Talk Network. He has authored three books. Online purchase information is available at www.sportingjournal.com, Outdoor Books.

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Front Page