

The Cape Courier

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In the Spirit of Community

CEMS program honored with Advocacy in Action award

By Kevin St. Jarre



Contributed photo

5th grader Zubin Rughani with his flute at this year's 5th Grade Band Extravaganza.

The Cape Elizabeth Middle School band program has been recognized by Music for All for outstanding work in their field and community thus receiving an Advocacy in Action award.

According to Music for All's website, the Advocacy in Action program is "designed to collect, recognize and share effective practices and initiatives that support music education in our schools." The award celebrates the commitment of school administrators, community leaders, teachers and parents who believe in music education and are advocating to ensure that it is part of a comprehensive education for all children.

The program at CEMS is called, "Markings & Mini-Lessons," and is the brainchild of CEMS band directors Caitlin Ramsey and Melissa "Missy" Shabo. The team of two have quite a lot on their hands as the CEMS band program involves 230 students in grades 5-8 with four separate concert bands, and Markings & Mini-Lessons originally was a way to adapt to a specific challenge.

"We started the Marking & Mini-Lessons initiative in 2020 as a result of needing to adapt during COVID. That year, all band classes met 100 percent online. However, in order to try to make that experience successful for our newest band members, we rolled out the Marking &



Contributed photo

Cousins Anika Wark and Mia Sandals at this year's 5th Grade Band Extravaganza.

Mini-Lessons program, so we could provide at least one in-person one-on-one experience for each new band student," Ramsey said.

The success and usefulness of the program lives on beyond the initial hurdles created by the pandemic. Given the persistent challenges of large group instruction and limited instructional time, the goal remains to remove many of the barriers that impact the success, engagement and retention of our newest band members.

Ramsey said, "It was such a positive and successful experience for our students, we've continued the program ever since. Now entering its fifth year, this initiative has become both a tradition and celebrated highlight for the band program, our school, and community. It helps generate excitement about learning a new instrument, while also promoting the positive and collaborative culture of the band program. Since implementing this program, we've seen a significant increase in student engagement, confidence, and skill in our newest band members. The '5th Grade Band Extravaganza' is what we call our mini-lesson event."

-see MUSIC page 5

Young Cape writers honored with Scholastic Art & Writing Awards

By Kevin St. Jarre

Three young Cape Elizabeth writers have been recognized and are 2025 Regional Scholastic Art & Writing Award winners:

Claire Gaudrault, awarded a Gold Key in Poetry

Phoebe Evans, awarded a Silver Key in Poetry

Maddie Turgelsky, awarded a Gold Key in Novel Writing

The Scholastic Awards are annually open to grades 7 through 12. They accept various forms of artwork and writing, including short stories, novels, poetry, painting, sculpture and drawing. Works are first awarded regionally before some of those advance to national judging.

Poet Claire Gaudrault said of her work, "My poem, 'Tuneless,' is about the im-

portance of finding time for creativity. Amidst tight schedules and heavy workloads, writing often gets pushed to the bottom of my to-do list. Yet, despite it rarely offering immediate rewards, I've realized the value of the time I spend pursuing it. My Scholastic work highlights this balance between creativity and productivity."

Poet Phoebe Evans said, "My poem, 'The diamantaire,' focuses on the pressure felt from striving to live up to the expectations set by my sisters. As the third born, I've sometimes struggled with the high standards my sisters have set. This poem shows the explosion of stress this narrow-mindedness can cause and is a reminder that everyone struggles sometimes, and that's okay."

The Alliance for Young Artists &

-see WRITERS page 6

Cape Elizabeth Town Council hires Town Assessor

By Kevin St. Jarre

Nicholas Desjardins is the new Cape Elizabeth Town Assessor. The Cape Elizabeth Town Council voted to approve the hiring committee's recommendation. Councilor Stephanie Anderson led the hiring committee in its effort, which took months following the resignation of former assessor.

Desjardins is a life-long Maine resident and began his career in municipal assessing in 2008 as a field lister and personal property appraiser in the city of Biddeford. In 2016, he was promoted to the Assistant Assessor position in Biddeford, and in 2018 was nominated to Assessing Director for both municipalities of Biddeford and Saco. From 2022 to 2024, he took on the role of being the sole full time City Assessor for Biddeford.

Desjardins grew up in Saco and graduated from Thornton Academy in 2001. He began working and training in the real estate appraisal field in 2002 for a family-owned real estate appraisal business, and in 2006 received a real estate appraisers license, working for the busi-

ness full time until 2008.

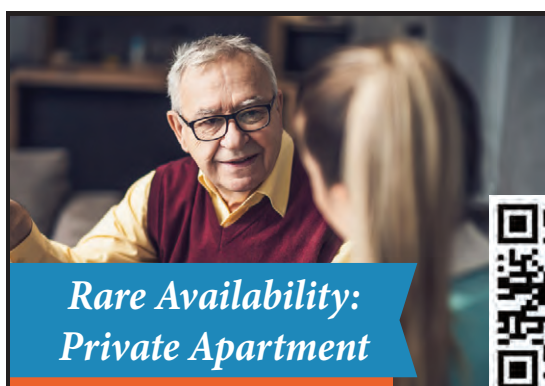
When asked what was rewarding

-see ASSESSOR page 8



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The Cape Elizabeth Town Council has appointed Nicholas Desjardins as the new Cape Elizabeth Town Assessor.



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NEXT ISSUE: March 12
DEADLINE: Noon, Feb 28

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Local litterbugs

To those hurling spent beer, soda cans and liquor shots from your cars and trucks — Where is your passion for respecting and protecting Mother Earth? What happened to the slogans, “Keep American Beautiful” or “Don’t Drink and Drive”?

As I walk along Spurwink Avenue, Bowery Beach Road, and even Shore Road, the gullies are targeted by litterers to avoid detection. Bud Light, Pabst Blue Ribbon, and Wild Maine Vodka Seltzer seem to be this year’s alcoholic beverages of choice. Food wrappers, wine bottles, and plastics of all shapes and sizes are tossed as well.

What is worrisome, given the quantity of littered alcohol containers I find, is the number of people who consume alcohol and drive, and then carelessly chuck the cans from their vehicles. On top of harming the environment, their actions represent a safety hazard for us all. Who are these litterbugs? Snowplowers, construction crews or local residents?

I’m baffled as to why anyone would consider dropping trash, but especially in an area that is bursting with beauty. Even as I walk down Charles E. Jordan Road, where one home is under construction, to see one beer can, if not multiple,

is discouraging and disheartening.

Earth Day is coming up in April. The Cape Elizabeth Land Trust and the Public Works department hold a week-long earth day cleanup, and the locations are throughout the town. Let’s take part in “keeping Cape Elizabeth beautiful.”

Gail Kolbe

Lantern Festival a success thanks to our volunteers

Despite the very cold weather, we had a beautiful, magical evening on February 1 at our second annual Lantern Festival. This event would not have been possible without the enthusiasm, dedication and talents of a team of community volunteers, spearheaded by Gabby Doane. Not only did Gabby manage to take on organizing the event, she led workshops at the library and in school classrooms, and constructed amazing lanterns and illuminated houses herself as well—including a replica of the Thomas Memorial Library (see photo below).

About 100 people turned out for a parade with homemade lanterns, culminating in hot

Judy’s Pantry- a community feeding itself

Judy’s Pantry operates at the Cape Elizabeth Methodist Church on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month from 3 – 4:30 p.m. Prior registration is necessary. Please contact Beth Owens: bethowens1@gmail.com. Please consider a non-perishable donation to the IGA drop box.

chocolate and treats on the library’s front lawn, where lanterns were hung in the trees and an illuminated village was installed on the grounds. Next year, we hope to have an even bigger event with even more community involvement—and more town buildings and houses for our illuminated village.

We will be forming a planning group in the next few months. If you’re interested in being involved, please contact me at the library at rdavis@thomas.lib.me.us.

Rachel Davis, Director
 Thomas Memorial Library

THANK YOU!

Your donations and other contributions help keep this community newspaper coming to your mailbox.

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Jay Evans & Martha Palmer

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Contributed photo

About 100 people braved the very cold weather on February 1 to attend the second annual Lantern Festival.

2025 Publication schedule		
Issue No	Ad/Copy Due	Issue Published
01	Jan 3	Jan 15
02	Jan 24	Feb 5
03	Feb 7	Feb 19
04	Feb 28	March 12
05	March 14	March 26
06	March 28	April 9
07	April 11	April 23
08	April 25	May 7
09	May 9	May 21
10	May 23	June 4
11	June 6	June 18
12	June 20	July 2
13	July 4	July 16
14	July 25	August 6
15	Aug 8	August 20
16	Aug 22	Sept 3
17	Sept 5	Sept 17
18	Sept 19	Oct 1
19	Oct 10	Oct 22
20	Oct 31	Nov 12
21	Nov 14	Nov 26
22	Dec 5	Dec 17

Let us hear from you!



We love feedback!

editor@capecourier.com

Time is Running Out. Have You Signed the Town Center Petition? Go to CapeNeighbors.com to Learn More

1) Town Center Ordinance Changes: Overturned by Cape's Voters, Council Leadership Puts Forward A More Radical Version

In the previous issue of the Courier (available at CapeCourier.com), Cape Neighbors detailed the Council's aggressive move to use a developer's proposal to revive the already rejected set of zoning changes that apply across the entirety of Town Center. At the time of this writing, we can only predict that the Council followed through with their plan and again passed the controversial amendments, likely in a divided vote.

Despite very clear challenges around circulating a petition in February, Cape Neighbors intends to support and partner with any potential citizen-led effort that will again give Cape's voters a say in the matter. **Please go to CapeNeighbors.com for updates that will detail where and when the petition will be available to be signed.**

The Town Center amendments:

- Eliminate the requirement of first floor non-residential use, giving up on the vision of a Town Center filled with small shops, cafes, and bakeries mixed with residential.
- Allow the 1934 high school building to be used for taxpayer subsidized apartments, right on on Cape's school campus.
- Create financial incentives for Ocean House Farm and multiple other Town Center properties to be transformed into apartment complexes up to five stories tall.

2) So-Called LD 2003 Supplemental (NOT REQUIRED) Amendments

When the new chair of Cape's Planning Board describes a provision in the changes as "squirrely," you best be paying attention. That's exactly what happened at the January 21 Planning Board meeting when the Board's Chair, sitting directly next to Cape's Town Planner said, **"This feels a little squirrely to me."**

That unsettling comment was in reference to a provision that would **allow for a 1600 sf (this in NOT a typo) "Accessory Dwelling Unit" (ADU)** to be built as an "accessory" to a single-family home - and then be **sold to a separate owner**. When the provision was exposed, the meeting quickly became uncomfortable, as Cape's Town Attorney and Town Planner scrambled to explain their reasoning. A primary justification shared was... People are "just going to do it anyway." Really. So the provision remains.

But the "squirrely" doesn't end there. Not only are they **not required**, their proposed changes also:

- Eliminate minimum lot size requirements so **developers can replace single family homes, in residential neighborhoods, with up to four-unit apartment buildings.**
- Remove site plan review requirements for those same apartment units, so **abutting neighbors will have no notice - and no say.**
- Make the radical ADU allowances despite the fact that Cape can no longer (by state law) require off-street parking for ADUs.
- Fail to require notice to be mailed to Cape's **hundreds of impacted property owners - and their (over a thousand) abutters.**

Further, what are the conflicts of interest? Do any town leaders stand to benefit financially from these changes? Have such conflicts been disclosed?

Cape Voters: Do NOT be Disenfranchised by a June Referendum

In the previous Courier, Cape Neighbors exposed the brazen push to schedule yet another (third) vote on the school building bond, **this time in JUNE.**

For many years, it has been acknowledge that **scheduling a vote for June effectively disenfranchises Cape's voters:**

"I tend to lean toward a... a November time frame, for a couple of different reasons - and one of them, of course, is turnout." **Councilor Penny Jordan, Dec 1, 2021**

"If we're really going to get the biggest, you know, take on what the town really thinks, you need to do this in November." **Councilor Caitlin Harriman-Jordan, Dec 13, 2021**

Both of these statements were made as the Council debated the timing of the referendum vote on the controversial Town Center zoning amendments - a vote prompted by a successful citizen-led petition effort to require a town-wide vote. That vote, and both unsuccessful school bond referenda, were each held in November.

So, why the sudden push today for a June school bond vote? Is this blatantly manipulative and divisive strategy truly the way to pass what would represent the largest locally-funded school bond in Maine's history?

Several Other Questions Remain Unanswered by the CESD

1) Once one of the top three school districts in Maine, the Cape Elizabeth School Department's (CESD's) performance vs other Maine districts has slipped dramatically under the oversight of the current administration. Has the unending focus (and millions spent) on the battle for costly new buildings contributed to the decline? Can the CESD learned from other districts like Cumberland/North Yarmouth, where Greely remains Maine's top performing high school, despite its 29 portable classrooms?

2) CESD's K12 enrollment continues to decline precipitously, down over 20% from its peak just 20 years ago. Cape's Middle School's enrollment has declined even further, **down over 25%** in that same time period. CEHS graduated 148 seniors in 2024, and Pond Cove has only 105 kindergartners enrolled this year. Forecasts shared by the CESD show that **the decline is set to continue.** Why are these data so hastily dismissed, ignored, and often replaced by demonstrably false claims of enrollment growth?

3) During the past election, a critical enrollment projection report was released by the CESD. The numbers in that report (completed by The New England School Development Council, or NESDEC), show that **the so-called "Middle Ground" proposal had been designed (and marketed) under a false premise of projected enrollment growth.** Per several members of Cape's School Building Advisory Committee (SBAC), the CESD appears to have delayed the production of the report by withholding (from NESDEC) data that was needed to complete it. **Did the CESD drag its feet in reporting its fall enrollment figures to NESDEC?** Did a majority (thousands) of Cape's voters in-fact vote (early/absentee) under this false pretense of future growth? Did the CESD have a legal and/or ethical obligation to correct the record in a timely manner?

4) How much did Cape's property taxpayers pay for the CESD's last one-sided advertising campaign? How much should Cape's property taxpayers expect to pay for the next campaign? Is it legal/ethical for the CESD to be using Cape's property tax money to fund one-sided political campaigns in the first place?

What is the Cape Neighbors Alliance?

We are a group of Cape citizens who believe that good governance happens when our community is heard, our government's processes are transparent, and personal agendas are set aside. We intend to stand with our neighbors and our community to ensure this vision becomes reality.

Pond Cove Elementary 2025 kindergarten registration open

Registration is now open for incoming kindergarten students who will matriculate at Pond Cove Elementary School during the 2025-2026 school year. To attend kindergarten at Pond Cove, children must be five years old on or before October 15, 2025. Registration is required before a child may attend school and participate in the kindergarten screening process.

How to Register

The registration process has two steps, outlined below. All forms and documents must be submitted online through a PowerSchool account for which you will register.

Step 1: Pre-Registration. To begin the registration process, follow the directions below. Please note: this step is pre-registration only.

- Visit the Cape Elizabeth District website at: <https://www.cape.k12.me.us/>
- Click "Enroll" on the right side of

the site

- You will enter demographic, household, and grade level prompts.

Step 2: Full Registration and Submission of Required Documentation. The pre-registration information will be reviewed and approved by the school, after which you will receive an automated email guiding you to create a PowerSchool account and complete the full enrollment process. (Be sure to check your spam/junk box for this!) Once all forms are complete, you must upload the following required documentation:

- Child's birth certificate
- Proof of immunizations
- Proof of residency

Need Help?

If you need assistance, contact the Pond Cove main office:

- Email: pcoffice@capeelizabethschools.org
- Phone: 207-799-7339.

Pet registration available in-person only

From Town Hall website

The deadline to register your dog without incurring a late fee has passed. If you missed this deadline, residents may only register pets in person at Town Hall during regular office hours; online registration is not available after January 31.

Please bring proof of your pet's rabies

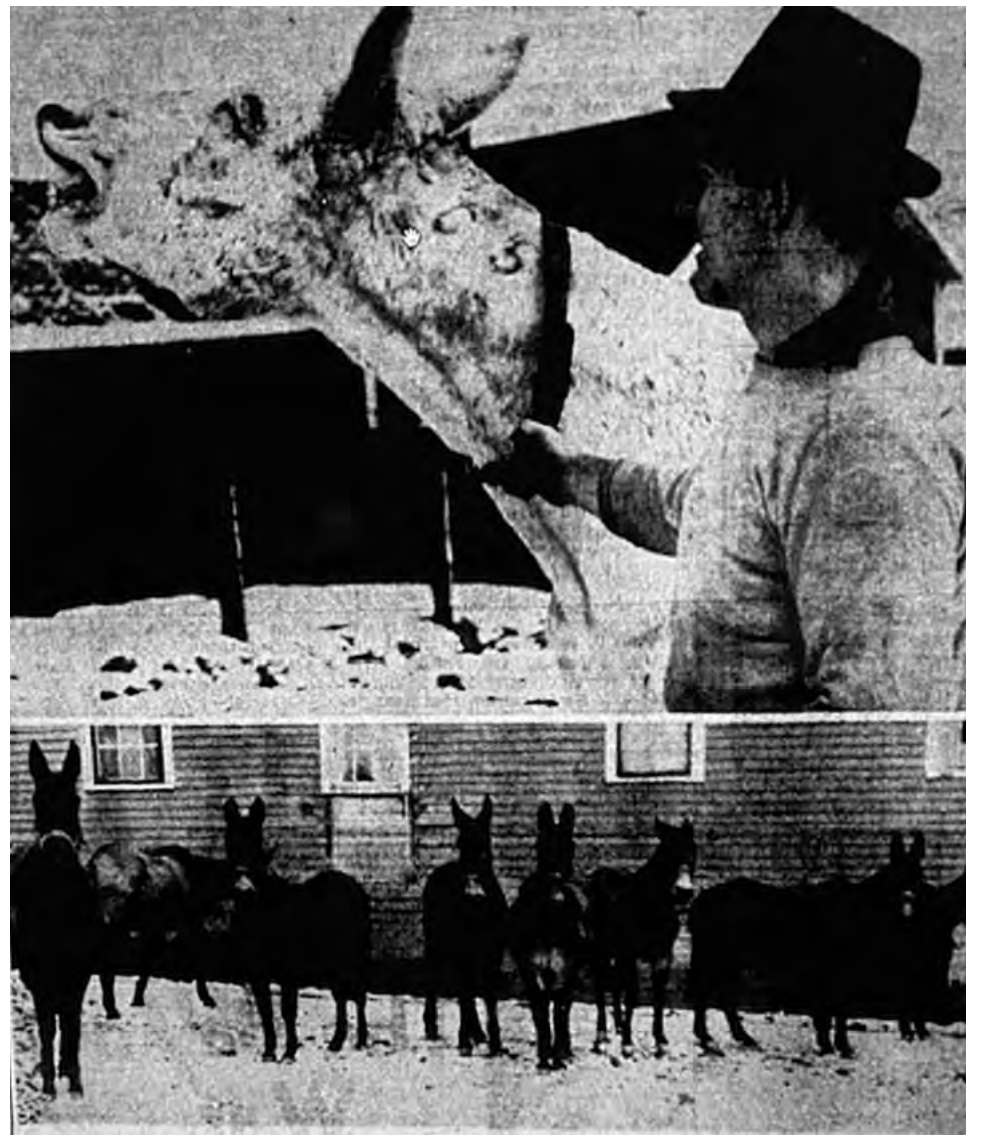
certificate and cash or check to register at Town Hall. An additional \$25 late fee will be added to the registration.

Office Hours:

- Mondays: 7:30 a.m. - 5 p.m.
- Tuesdays - Thursdays: 7:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.

Then and Now: Where have all the soldiers gone? (And the mules too!)

By Jim Rowe



By Staff Photographer. About to be cashiered out of the Army, 49 mules at Forts Williams and Preble were taking their fate with philosophic calm Wednesday. That's Old Charlie, giving the "horse laff" in the top photo. Charlie is a white mule, and oldest of the 49. In the lower photo are some of his hybrid friends.

Photo from "Staff Photographer," Portland Press Herald

Article from the February 8, 1940 Portland Press Herald.

In 1923, upon completion of its caretaker duties in Europe following the end of World War I, the U.S. Army's 5th Infantry Regiment became a primary occupant of Fort Williams (and other Casco Bay fortifications). When America's entry into World War II went from "possible" to "probable", the 5th infantry was reassigned to the Panama Canal Zone on October 23, 1939. Defense of, and traffic control at that strategically important gateway between the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans was crucial.

The 5th Infantry had relied heavily on mules to provide labor at Fort Williams. Teamsters and their mules hauled wagons and equipment around the grounds, as well

as men and gear for training maneuvers outside the Fort.

The unit's departure left the mules largely expendable.

This article from the February 8, 1940 Portland Press Herald reported that 49 mules were to be sold at auction. According to a followup article a few days later, they were. Most bidders were area farmers. The auction brought in a total \$3,423, with "Jerry," the former pet of Company D of the 5th Infantry drawing the high bid of \$120. Jerry's partner "Jenny" sold for \$80. "Old Charlie," the white mule shown in the top photo above, sold for \$50 (presumably due to his advanced age).

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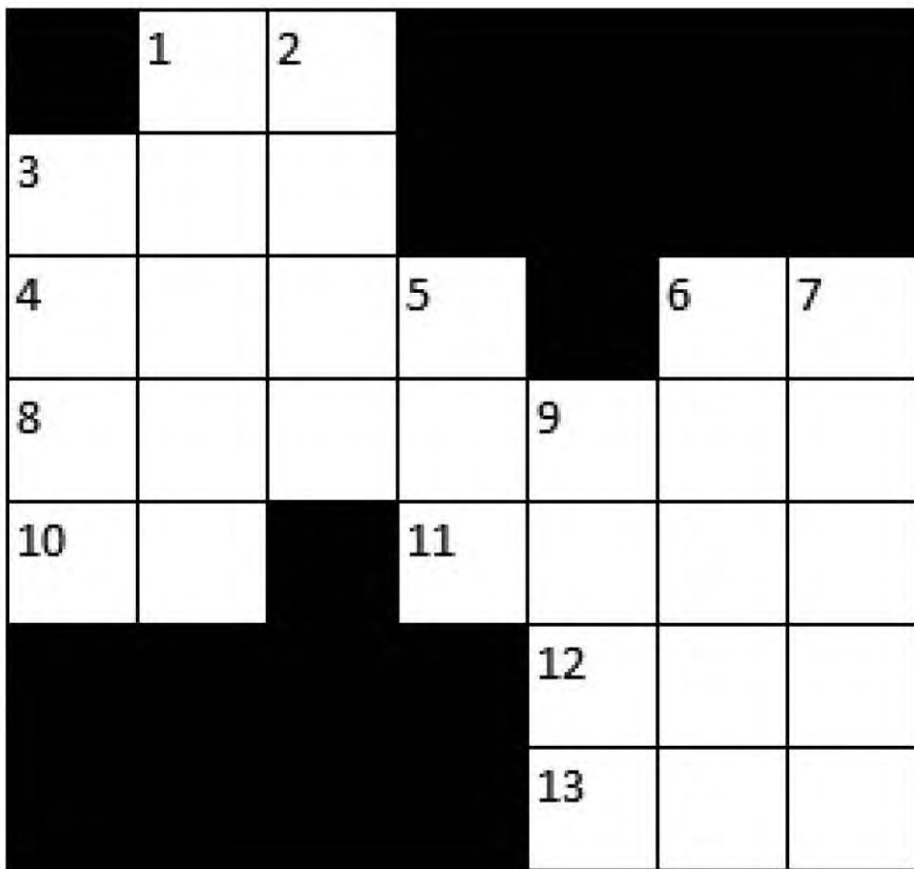
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Cape crossword puzzle

By Erik Svetlichny



See solution on page 13

Across

- 1 Measure of acidity
- 3 GOP Boogeyman
- 4 Valentine's day Emotion
- 6 IB Competitor
- 8 Clownfish's Home
- 10 Added to the subject line of a reply
- 11 Isolated
- 12 Diminutive word for a diminutive dog
- 13 Cell-Phone text messaging

Down

- 1 Pasta Type
- 2 Bee's home
- 3 Term of endearment
- 5 YAML File extension
- 6 Per
- 7 Easter Marshmallow
- 9 "Well, I done goofed!"

Music

Continued from page 1

The Markings & Mini-Lessons initiative focuses on three areas: Front-loading instruction before using instruments, using instrument specific markings to provide students with visual reminders for assembly/hand positions, and a mini-lesson event where students and parents receive one-on-one instruction to learn instrument assembly, hand position, embouchure and sound production.

Ramsey added that while the program has needed financial support over its five-year existence, they have received funding for annually from the Middle School Parents' Association and the Music Boosters.

Those who would like to learn more about the Markings & Mini-Lessons program at CEMS can go to:

<https://advocacy.musicforall.org/new-recipient/markings-mini-lessons>

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Scam alert bulletin board

By Jessica D. Simpson

Our Information is Already Out There

If we really want to keep ourselves - and our money - safe from fraud, we must all come to terms with one thing: our personal information is likely already out there. In a time where data breaches are increasingly common, safeguarding yourself from fraud has become more important than ever.

Here are three steps to protect you from the risks associated with data breaches and other identity fraud risks:

- 1) Place a security freeze on your credit accounts with the three big agencies (Experian, Equifax and Transunion) so no one can open a new credit line in your name.
- 2) Establish online access to your financial accounts and monitor regularly (you can set up text alerts for activity on these accounts as well).
- 3) Use strong and unique passwords for every online account; consider using a password manager that creates complex passwords and stores them securely.

Crypto Romance Scams

In recent years, cryptocurrency scams have surged, with billions stolen annually. Guess one of the biggest drivers of

this trend? Romance scams. By building trust and forging deep emotional connections, scammers can manipulate their victims into making financial decisions they would not normally consider.

If someone you've only met online claims they are making money with crypto and offers to help you do the same, it's a scam - full stop. It does not matter how genuine they seem or what "proof" they attempt to show you; encouraging you to invest and claiming that you can make extraordinary returns in cryptocurrency is one of the surest signs of a modern-day romance scam. These criminals often pressure you to act fast, making it seem like you are about to miss out on a golden opportunity - another big red flag. The safest way to invest is to research opportunities to ensure they are legitimate and that you understand the risk as well as the potential. A good place to start is at the SEC's site, www.investor.gov.

Be a fraud fighter! If you can spot a scam, you can stop a scam. Report scams to local law enforcement. For help from AARP, call 877-908-3360 or visit the AARP Fraud Watch Network at www.aarp.org/fraudwatchnetwork.

Cape Elizabeth Lions Club holding a public service presentation

The Cape Elizabeth Lions Club invites the public to a presentation by Cape Elizabeth police officers about the latest fraud and scam trends the Cape Elizabeth Police Department has observed. Detective Ben Davis and Patrolman Darin Estes will also answer questions about their operations and service to the community.

The presentation will take place on Tuesday, March 4 at 7:00 p.m. and ends at 8 p.m. The location will be at the Cape Elizabeth Lions Club, Bowery Beach School House1-Wheeler Road, Cape Elizabeth. Participation will be on a first come first serve basis; maximum capacity is 60.


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Cape teens raising money and awareness for school violence prevention

By Kevin St. Jarre

According to a press release from the Cape Elizabeth High School Students Against Violence Everywhere (S.A.V.E.) Club, CEHS students are hosting a benefit gala to raise awareness and funds for Sandy Hook Promise, a nonprofit dedicated to preventing school violence.

The event, An Evening Gala for Sandy Hook Promise, will be held on Friday, February 28, from 6 to 9 p.m. at Grace, located at 15 Chestnut Street in Portland.

Members of the CEHS S.A.V.E. Club are working to raise \$20,000 for Sandy Hook Promise's school violence prevention programs. They are passionate about educating and empowering students to recognize and report warning signs of violence—an essential addition to existing school drills that could save lives.

The event will feature gourmet food, and attendees can enjoy dishes prepared by renowned Portland chefs, using fresh, local ingredients.

Drinks will include beverages from Oxbow Brewing, Rising Tide Brewing, Kit NA and National Distributors.

There will be live music, provided by Love by Numb3rs, and a live auction where people will be able to bid on exclusive, one-of-a-kind items created specifically for the event.

Thanks to the generosity of local businesses, every dollar raised will go directly to Sandy Hook Promise.

According to the release, with the tragic reality that gun violence is the leading cause of death for children in the United States, these students are determined to make a difference. By hosting this event, they hope to not only raise funds but also spread awareness about the critical importance of violence prevention programs in schools.

More details about the event and tickets are available at:

<https://www.zeffy.com/ticketing/cehs-save-evening-gala-for-sandy-hook-promise>

Sandy Hook Promise is a national nonprofit organization dedicated to preventing school violence and creating safer schools and communities through programs focused on early intervention.

dinary level of skill and imagination, and we were blown away by the powerful pieces submitted across all categories. From breathtaking paintings and sculptures to thought-provoking poems and essays, your work reflects the diverse perspectives and unique voices that make our creative community so vibrant."

Writers

Continued from page 1

Writers is a non-profit organization that administers the Scholastic Art & Writing Awards, which is the longest running national recognition and scholarship program for creative teens.

According to their website, "This year's competition showcased an extraor-

News from the School Board

By Phil Saucier

The School Board has continued to work with Harriman Architects over the last month to refine our school building project by reviewing potential cost and scope reductions while ensuring that the project meets established educational objectives and community goals.

At our January 14 meeting and workshops on January 23 and February 5, Harriman presented updated revisions to the Three-School Phased Building Plan, and outlined the reasons why a new middle school is recommended. Importantly, one of those reasons is the need to reset the clock on one of our three schools to avoid a cliff that will occur in 10-15 years when all three schools would otherwise require additional significant renovation or replacement.

Other reasons include the importance of a comprehensive approach to safety and security, providing needed space to address our robust art and music programs, moving mechanical systems indoors to extend their life, classroom neighborhoods to enhance educational delivery, construct appropriate spaces to service special education, the need to address the sprawling layout of our current middle school, increase safe community access to town facilities, reduce risks encountered with renovation, and have zero disruption to learning while saving money that would be required for portables.

After hearing from building administrators and members of the community, the Board decided to retain the full scope of the new middle school gymnasium and music spaces, including sufficient room to support our robust middle school band and chorus programs and a gym large enough to accommodate high-school level athletic events.

The Board has, however, continued to "sharpen our pencils" and made other refinements to the new middle school project in order to achieve necessary cost and scope reductions. The Board held a public forum on the project on February 11 and there will be additional opportunities for public comment and review of the project.

Budget Update

The Board held its first Budget Workshop on January 28, where the District

Leadership Team presented their operating budgets for Fiscal Year 2026. The operating expense portion of the budget is within 1% of this year's budget. However, this does not include salaries and wages, which account for 84% of the total budget, and some costs are not yet known, including insurance and the outcomes of three ongoing contract negotiations.

One of the most significant challenges this year is a reduction in Cape Elizabeth's state allocation for FY26. We learned that our state funding is expected to drop by nearly 25% - a decrease of approximately \$800,000 - from \$3.3 million in FY25 to \$2.5 million in FY26.

The state's contribution to our school budget last year was already less than 10%, and for FY26, it appears to be even lower. Despite this challenge, the Board remains committed to crafting a fiscally responsible budget, keeping operating expenses flat, while continuing to provide an excellent education for our students.


The Board's next budget workshop is scheduled for February 25.

Transportation Policy Update

The Board's Policy Committee has been working with the district's Transportation Department over the last several meetings to evaluate our current bus transportation policy. The Policy Committee has concluded that Scott Dyer has become a higher traffic road in recent years and therefore only students who do not have to cross it or who have a dedicated crosswalk guard at their crossing will be designated as walkers. As a result of this determination, the Brentwood West neighborhood will be added to the bus routes sometime in the next four to six weeks. Parents should expect to hear details from the Transportation Department this month.

Our regular meetings are on the second Tuesday evening of every month in the Council Chambers, our workshops are held on the fourth Tuesday evening in the High School Library, and our committees meet regularly throughout the month with dates and times posted on our website. Please reach out to us at cesb@capeelizabethschools.org anytime.

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Second annual Community & Culture night



The second annual Community & Culture Night was held on January 30 at the Pond Cove/Middle School Cafetorium. Capers gathered together to celebrate the rich diversity of our community by trying delicious food from around the world and participating in interactive cultural activities. Photo credits: Meaghan Brus and Eliza Matheson.



Town Council considers IT privacy audit

From Town Hall website

The Ad-Hoc Privacy Advisory Committee is recommending that the Town Council consider a Request for Proposal (RFP) to engage a third-party consultant to assess the town's personal information (PI) handling and strengthen cybersecurity practices.

At the February 3 Town Council workshop, Privacy Advisory Committee members Greg Reid and Al Romano explained that the first of four charges assigned to the committee in March 2024—to “Audit current data collection, use, and disclosure policies, protocols, and practices of all town departments and report findings to the Town Council”—should be carried out by a third party to protect sensitive information from being accessed under FOIA public access laws. Chair Al Romano, participating remotely, stated, “While we had initially planned to undertake the work ourselves, it became clear that certain aspects, particularly those involving sensitive personal information, require an external consultant.” The audit, deemed “foundational” to the committee’s charge, prevents the committee from completing most of the remaining charges until the audit is finished.

The committee has met with the town’s IT staff, whose request for an external evaluation predates its own. Led by IT Director Jason Lund, a comprehensive audit would provide the opportunity to identify security gaps and enhance data protection measures. Town Manager Pat Fox explained that if the council decides to proceed with issuing an RFP, the language will be reviewed by the town’s attorney and IT Director. This includes details on safeguarding privacy information in the report and clear stipulations regarding who is granted access to the report’s findings.

The Town Council expressed concern about ensuring that the audit does not expose sensitive information and that the Privacy Advisory Committee itself does not have access to individual records. “We will never see PI; we will never see what is stored,” Romano said. The report will provide the committee with guidance on policy structure and procedures. Town Councilor Andrew Swayze, an IT professional, showed support for the audit to protect personal information from data breaches and outdated security practices.

Recognizing the audit’s importance, the council must determine not only if the project will be funded but also how and when. The initial \$20,000 budgeted for the committee’s work falls short of the \$40,000 estimated cost for the RFP. Estimating a 6-8 month timeframe, the committee is eager to initiate the RFP process as soon as possible. Starting this process before the beginning of Fiscal Year 2026 would require drawing from the unassigned fund balance, which has already seen multiple withdrawals this year.

Manager Fox recommended that the Town Council wait until the FY 2026 proposed budget is finalized in March. “We need to consider this in the context of our budget constraints,” Fox said. At that point, the council can better weigh the best course of action.

In the meantime, the Privacy Advisory Committee can focus on gauging public interest in surveillance technologies such as drones and security cameras through community outreach efforts, surveys and public discussions.

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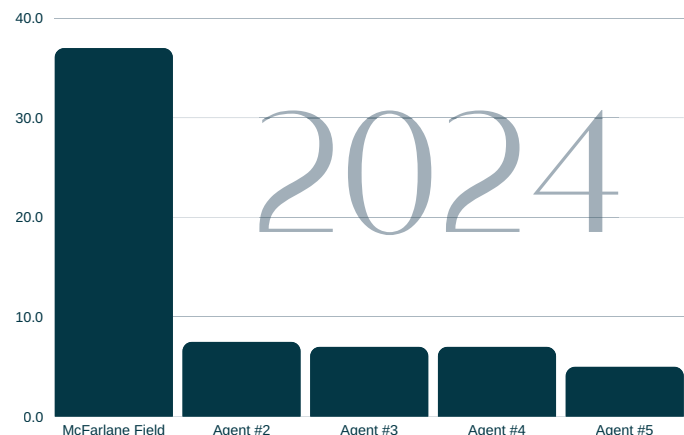
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Capetoon: Quake Elizabeth

By Jeff Mandell



Assessor

Continued from page 1

about doing this sort of work, Desjardins said, “The main challenge the assessing field presents, that keeps me motivated, is deriving innovative and creative ways to improve the apportionment of valuations fairly and equitably across a municipality, and maintaining this equity as the market dynamics are constantly changing. When improvements are made to this process this is rewarding to any assessor.”

When asked if there is something people sometimes misunderstand about property taxes and a revaluation’s impact on an individual property tax bill, Desjardins replied, “A great misunderstanding is that the assessor doesn’t raise property taxes, and only focuses on fairly apportioning the valuations. As a result, property taxes raised by the municipality, through its budget process, are distributed to each taxpayer in a fair and equitable manner. Many municipalities have taken different approaches to a revaluation process.”

Desjardins said that, for a number of municipalities, their general assessment

past practices have resulted in overall assessed valuations which have not been adjusted for a number of years while the market has fluctuated. Therefore, these municipalities begin to prepare how to tackle these challenges, which in many cases the decision to hire an outside firm to reassess a municipality with the intent to create valuation equity is the direction taken.

He said the impact on an individual tax bill through a revaluation is based on how an individual property value adjusts in comparison to the adjusted final mil, or tax, rate established.

As Cape Elizabeth residents know, property values have certainly fluctuated in southern Maine.

Desjardins said, “Most recently a global pandemic created much uncertainty in our daily lives. During these unique times many potential buyers who lived and worked in high density urban areas began to flock to southern Maine as their idea of living transitioned to a more rural setting, as a safer and healthier way of living.”

He also said that the ability to work remotely played a major factor in this transition. “Many existing southern Maine residents, who may have thought about selling their property, decided to remain in their homes. As a result, large imbalances between supply and demand started to take shape, with demand significantly outweighing supply, and this was the driving factor in the rapid increase of property values in our greater region. Since the height of the pandemic, demand continues to outweigh supply,” Desjardins said.

Asked if it is typically better for the individual taxpayers to have more frequent municipal revaluations, say every ten years or so, or if it is better to hold off as long as possible, Desjardins said, “Through my assessing experience, which includes a couple revaluations, I strongly believe it is beneficial for municipal assessors to build a structure to look closely at adjusting property values on a yearly basis. This structure would depend heavily on the composition of the municipality, meaning the diversity of property types and the relationship between the dynamics of contributory value components. In other words, being able to appropriately separate valuation factors by neighborhoods and building attributes, based on thoroughly analyzing market data. Property tax bills are frozen on a yearly basis so creating and maintaining equitable valuations yearly is the most efficient approach to a high-level assessment function. This is no question better for the community as a whole.”

In his time away from work, Desjardins said “I enjoy soccer, hiking, snowshoeing, cross country skiing, boating, four-wheeling, swimming and camping. Good local food spots, cooking and good times with friends and family.”

Desjardins closed by saying, “I appreciate the opportunity to come to Cape Elizabeth and provide assessment services. Creating a high-level assessment structure where we can competently and confidently make adjustments to property values on a yearly basis to provide valuation equity where residents have a greater level of public trust in the process is the main goal. As the newly appointed town assessor, to accomplish this feat will take a team effort. If we are to improve some of the challenges we face while we are building this new assessment structure, we welcome feedback from our residents. Thank you again for the opportunity and we look forward to building this process together as a team.”

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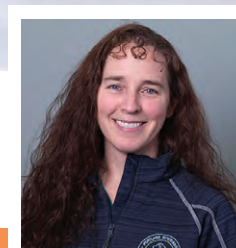
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CEMS 7th grade girls' basketball team goes undefeated

By Kevin St. Jarre



Photo by Ally Bruckner

The CEMS 7th grade girls' basketball team went undefeated this season, winning all 14 games they played. This season's team includes Madi Ross, Ashlynn Petsinger, Ruby Egan, Charlotte Mitchell, Emerson Mitchell, Rosamund Hussey, Betsy Greenfield, Sage Hughes, Azra Azis and Matilda Connolly.

At Cape Elizabeth Middle School, Coach Joey Doane's 7th grade girls' basketball team went undefeated this season, winning all 14 games they played.

Doane said, "This group of girls is a special group due to their passion for the game of basketball. Rarely do we have our girls' basketball teams produce strong numbers at the middle school level. However, this 7th grade group has 11 committed girls who play hard and are willing to learn and improve."

The coach said that a high point for the team was their overall ability to practice against the 8th grade team, which is also very strong. "Coach Jim Ray and I combine our practices so we can teach the same skills and concepts, and build a more fluid continuity. Our 7th grade girls had a great experience practicing against the older girls and challenging themselves to be even better at the things we asked them to do," Doane said.

This season's roster includes Madi Ross,

Ashlynn Petsinger, Ruby Egan, Charlotte Mitchell, Emerson Mitchell, Rosamund Hussey, Betsy Greenfield, Sage Hughes, Azra Azis and Matilda Connolly. Doane said, "These girls were a joy to coach. I am excited to see the work they will put in during this offseason and build towards next season."

Coach Doane explained the primary goals of the middle school program. "For our girls' basketball program, we focus on a lot of fundamentals: footwork, form shooting, positioning on offense and defense, etc.. There is a lot of teaching that goes on, rather than the girls just going through the motions and running up and down the court without a purpose. Winning is great, but winning counts and means more at the high school level. We try to do our best to teach the fundamentals first and not worry as much about the results so that kids are getting a better understanding of basketball."

Cape basketball history

By Steve Hill

In Maine, February is Basketball Month with hopes of making the tournament and going all the way in the minds of many basketball coaches, players and fans. As we entered the year 2025 it occurred to me that this year must be close to a significant anniversary in Cape Elizabeth basketball history.

This hunch was confirmed one cold night a while ago while I was exploring the Maine Public Television App and discovered a treasure trove of videos of old championship basketball games from years past. As I scrolled through the games my memory was confirmed and there was the game I was remembering. February 27, 2015 Cape Elizabeth vs. Medomak Valley. You won't know it by the title but this game, 10 years ago, goes down in history as one of the greatest comebacks in Cape basketball history and Cape's last basketball state championship.

Coach Jim Ray's Capers were looking for a state championship after 3 previous tries had fallen short. The 2015 game was a back and forth game with Medomak Valley leading 12-9 after one quarter and 17-15 at the half. Cape came to life in the third period

and led 34-29 after three periods. The wheels seemed to come off at the start of the fourth period and Cape went over 5 minutes without a point and Medomak crept back into the lead. Things looked grim with Cape trailing 42-37 with just over 50 seconds left in the game. Many saw the game slipping away but not coach Ray and the Capers. Young Finn Bowie hit a three pointer from the top of the key.

After a missed Medomak foul shot, Jack O'Rourke made a basket and all of a sudden the game is tied with 24 seconds to play and folks are thinking overtime. A missed Medomak lay-up made overtime seemed more likely until Eddie Galvin grabbed the ball and raced down the floor. He hit a cutting Ethan Murphy with a beautiful pass and Murphy laid it in at the buzzer for the comeback victory and Cape's first title since 1988.

A glorious celebration ensued and coach Ray looked on in pride and wonder at what the team had just accomplished. It was a victory to remember on a cold winter's night 10 years later. Cape would have another chance at a title in 2019 only to fall short to Caribou but that's another story for another time.

Maine Mariners event supports Project Graduation



Photo by Susana Measelle Hubbs

Local teacher and son win 50/50 Raffle supporting CEHS Project Graduation 2025, at the Maine Mariner's game on February 2.

The Maine Mariners dropped their fifth game in a row with a 5-2 loss to the Worcester Railers on Sunday, February 2 at the Cross Insurance Arena. And although it was a hard fought game, the loss did not dampen the spirits of all those who came out to support Cape Elizabeth's Project Graduation.

The committee for Cape's Project Graduation was able to raise money on a portion of ticket sales and a 50/50 Raffle promoted on

the big screen for the game. The winner took over \$500 home! Over 50 Capers showed up to support the Mariners and Project Graduation - a special substance free night of entertainment for CEHS graduates.

For more information check out: www.capeprojectgraduation.com. Stay tuned...the next fundraiser is a raffle for a stay at Cape Elizabeth's own Inn by the Sea.

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Repairing Fort Preble, preserving our history

By Senator Anne Carney

Here in Senate District 29, one of our greatest assets is our rich history, especially our naval history. This has often been preserved today with open spaces and trails that we use for recreation and transportation.

One example of this is the Greenbelt in South Portland, which passes over the historic Fort Preble on the Southern Maine Community College (SMCC) campus. Fort Preble has been part of the South Portland landscape in various forms for more than two centuries.

Fort Preble helps tell the naval story of South Portland and the Casco Bay Region. It was originally constructed to help enforce the 1807 Embargo Act, which prohibited American cargo ships from trading with the British and French.

Fort Preble continued to be used for the next century and a half. It played a role in Maine's only Civil War battle, the 1863 Battle of Portland Harbor. The Confederate soldiers who stole and burned the U.S.R.C. Caleb Cushing were imprisoned at Fort Preble following their defeat.

The fort remained in service through World War II, protecting the crucial Todd-Bath Iron Shipbuilding Corporation shipyard next door as Mainers made a crucial contribution to the war effort by constructing hundreds of Liberty Ships for the U.S. Navy. In 1950, the military decommissioned Fort Preble.

In 1952, the state of Maine acquired the fort for SMCC's predecessor. We are lucky that this important piece of local history is stewarded by an institution of higher education committed to protecting its legacy.

Unfortunately, this historic landmark is not immune to the dangers of climate

change, rising seas and intensifying storms. Last winter's storms caused major damage to Fort Preble and the Greenbelt Trail that runs over it. Stairways were washed away, fortifications were undermined and massive stones that had formed part of the fort for centuries were overturned. Due to safety concerns, SMCC made the difficult decision to close part of the fort and trail to public access.

Damage extends beyond the fort itself, to the entire eastern waterfront of the SMCC campus. SMCC and the Maine Community College System (MCCS) have been engaged in discussions about how to fix the damage in a cost-effective and enduring manner. Unfortunately, even the engineering study to understand the scope of the threat and what work needs to be done costs over \$100,000.

While SMCC is fully committed to restoring access to this important part of our shoreline and preserving our history, it does not have the resources to undertake such expensive repairs right now. That is where I hope I can help. I've introduced a bill in the Maine Legislature that would allocate funding to the MCCS to undertake shoreline fortification and rebuilding projects, with an emphasis on projects like this one that prioritize trail access and active transportation. It has just been referred to the Education and Cultural Affairs Committee as LD 457. I encourage you to testify or submit written testimony when it comes up for a public hearing. Find out how at maine-senate.org/testify.

Preserving and protecting Fort Preble is not just about fixing the Greenbelt or keeping the SMCC campus beautiful. It is about preserving an important part of South Portland's history for future gen-

erations. I am proud to be a partner in this effort.

If you want to get involved with restoring Fort Preble, please stay in touch. You can sign up for updates in my bi-weekly e-newsletter at MaineSenate.org.

You can also email me at Anne.Carney@legislature.maine.gov or call my Senate office at 207-287-1515 to talk further about this issue.



Contributed photo

Senator Anne Carney with Nate Grannell and his parents, Peter and Wendy Grannell, at the bench dedicated to Nate's grandparents on top of Fort Preble, showing one of the many ways this monument is important to the community.

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2025 winter CELT program listings

CELT Library Programs with Thomas Memorial Library

Marine Mammals of Maine Talk: A Seal's Journey

Join Marine Mammals of Maine (MMoME) volunteer and wildlife educator Jessica Woodend as she takes you through a seal's journey from stranding to release, and all of the obstacles in between. She will start with important seal basics, such as whether it's normal for seals to be out of the water, and why you might see a baby seal on its own.

Woodend will then dive into when and why seals need our help. As gray seal pups begin to appear on the coast of Maine in the Winter, she will discuss what you as a community member should do if you encounter a seal.

You will also learn about what MMoME is, what they do, and more about the animals they care for, including the famous 2023 Cape Elizabeth Gray Seals!

Date: Thursday, February 20

Time: 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.

Location: Thomas Memorial Library Community Room

No registration necessary

Library welcomes poet, artist and Instagram sensation Aleah Black

Library Welcomes Poet, Artist, and Instagram Sensation Aleah Black

Aleah Black is an interdisciplinary artist and educator. They create poetry and puppets, songs and stories, and a general ruckus. Aleah released a book of poetry and art in 2024 entitled "It Is Always a Circle." Aleah's most recent play, "Thicket," premiered in New York City in April 2023. "Thicket" is a large-scale puppet play that includes tabletop puppetry, mask work, paper mache giants and a full band.

Aleah's past playwriting/directing efforts include multiple full length plays (including "How to Eat the Thing That Eats You at Dixon Place") as well as multiple puppet pageant scripts that are now used by school communities around the country.

Aleah organizes large scale community actions; they host open to the public song circles and chant spaces in New York City. They run the online account "Gendersauce" for an audience of over a quarter of a million followers; Gendersauce is a meme page that fuses poetry, education and tomfoolery. Aleah is a Social & Emotional Learning teacher for children and adults alike. They have created a liberatory curriculum for several Waldorf Schools in the USA and have a consulting practice for schools that are working to create arts, theater, music or SEL curriculum. Aleah was a puppet apprentice to Amy Trompetter of Redwing Blackbird Theater. They currently live and teach in Lenapehoking/Brooklyn, New York.

On Tuesday, March 4 from 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. the library will host Aleah in an interactive Zoom workshop entitled, "Let Yourself Be an Artist" which will focus on self-permission and moving out of artist's block. Most adults have artist wounds - ways they were told they cannot be an artist. Learning to move through shame around art making helps us return to our baseline state as humans: artistic beings!

This class will be taught through lecture, activities and writing. It is appropriate for adults of all ages, artistic disciplines, and experiences (including people who have not seen themselves as artists before). Please visit the library's website to register. Aleah will also be visiting the library from New York for an in-person workshop on April 19 entitled "How to Make A Poem."

Both events are made possible by the Thomas Memorial Library Foundation. Please visit the library's website for more information.

PROGRAMS FOR CHILDREN

Please visit the library's website for information about recurring weekly story times. We have something for young children going on every day of the week!

Sewing Adventures: Little Bean Bears

Saturday, March 1, 1 - 3 p.m.
Advanced Level, for ages 9-17. Ages 10 and under must be accompanied by a caregiver.

Have you always wanted to sew an actual stuffed animal? Join us to sew your own 4.5" teddy bear in cotton fabric! Kids must be skilled with hand sewing little stitches, plus some machine sewing, to put together all the parts of these bears: three pieces for the head, two pieces for the arms, and three pieces for the body.

Then we'll attach eyes and embroider a nose and mouth.

Prerequisite: skilled sewists familiar with hand sewing and machine sewing. Registration required.

Winter Reading Challenge (for Children and Teens), January 13-March 15

Cozy up with a good read! Pick up a challenge card at the Children's Desk or in the Teen Center, and complete the challenge to win a book. For ages 0-17.

FOR TWEENS & TEENS Venture Club

Wednesdays, 2:30 - 4:30 p.m. (when school is in session) (Ages 14+)
Venture Club is a teen-led board/card game and D&D club, with an emphasis on board games. We'll try to play new games every week. No registration is necessary.

Maine Education 2050: Teen Voices Wanted

Coming in March, for teens 13 - 18
Maine Education 2050 is a project that aims to gather qualitative data through recorded conversations with community members across the state of Maine. In these conversations, we explore participants' experiences of Maine's current education system as well as thoughts and aspirations about what the future of education could look like in 2050 in order to meet the changing needs of Maine's students.

Maine Education 2050 is coming to Thomas Memorial Library to hear from Cape's teenagers in a 90 minute workshop (exact date TBD.) After participating in the workshop, teen participants will be invited to a "Sense making workshop" where they will be able to listen to recorded discussions and highlight aspects they find most important. If you are a teenager and interested in participating, please email Sierra at saceto@thomas.lib.me.us.

FOR ADULTS

For information on our regular recurring programs, please visit the library's website.

A Seal's Journey with Jessica Woodend from Marine Mammals of Maine

Thursday, February 20, 6:30 - 8 p.m.
Join Marine Mammals of Maine

-see LIBRARY page 15



Photo by Barbara Kelly

Cape Elizabeth authors Richard Cass (on left) and Kevin St. Jarre participated in an event hosted by Thomas Memorial Library. They discussed their most recent novels and writing in general, read short excerpts from the books, and answered questions from the audience. At the event, attendees could purchase copies of their books from Kelly's Books to Go.

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2025 Paint for Preservation seeking artists



Photo courtesy of Bob Harrison

South Portland artist Nathaniel Meyer, Spurwink Marsh, 2024 Paint for Preservation.

The Cape Elizabeth Land Trust (CELT) is accepting artist submissions for Paint for Preservation 2025, the organization's 18th annual juried auction and one of Maine's premier art auction events. We are seeking plein air artists working in all mediums and from all areas to participate in this premier event.

Over three days on the weekend of July 11-13, selected artists will paint en plein air (outdoors) at designated public and private locations chosen to highlight Cape Elizabeth's natural beauty. On Sunday, July 13, the newly painted artwork will be auctioned live at a tented reception in Cape Elizabeth. Proceeds from the auction are shared with participating artists and benefit CELT's conservation of the shore lands, marshes, farmlands and

woodlands that provide scenic beauty, recreational opportunities and important wildlife habitat in Cape Elizabeth.

Interested artists are invited to submit three images of recent original plein-air paintings in any medium for juried consideration. The artist prospectus and instructions regarding submission requirements are found on CELT's website. (www.cape-landtrust.org/paint)

The deadline for artists' submissions is Friday, February 21. Selected artists will be notified of acceptance by mid-March.

For more information contact info@cape-landtrust.org.

Join the Cape Elizabeth Community Gardens

Are you interested in growing your own organic produce in a sunny location with tools, water, and supplies provided? You can find all this at the Cape Community Gardens where you'll along with a friendly community to provide camaraderie, knowledge, and support!

Cape Elizabeth is home to two Community Gardens – one at Maxwell's Farm and the other at The Gull Crest Fields, both located on Spurwink Avenue. In addition to growing food and flowers in your own individual plots, the gardens also have plots dedicated to growing food for Judy's Pantry, where we get to volunteer to help our neigh-

bors with fresh locally grown produce.

We are looking forward to the upcoming season and anticipate having a few openings at both gardens. If you might be interested in joining or rejoining the Cape Community Gardens at either location, please send an email to Rachel Stamieszkin at rachel.piotr@gmail.com with your name, mailing address, phone number and whether you have a preference for the Maxwell Farm or Gull Crest Fields location. You will be added to the waitlist in the order in which your email is received. We hope to see you in the Garden!



Contributed photo

Maxwell Farms Community Garden fall cleanup day.

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Return of the Comfort Food Challenge

Please join us for the return of the "Comfort Food Challenge" to benefit the Cape Robotics program. Originally designed as a fundraiser to send qualifying teams to Worlds, the CFC was so much fun that it has been reimagined as an annual fundraiser for Cape Robotics as a whole. The robotics program continues to grow with 70 students participating at the middle and high school levels, and several teams already qualifying for states.

Join family, friends and local celebrity judges for a fun and lively culinary evening on Sunday, March 9 at The Cape Elizabeth Lions Club. Dinner will be served from 5-8 p.m., with the winner announced at the end. \$15 for adults, \$5 for kids under 12 to sample all of the comfort foods we have to offer. Drinks and dessert are also available for purchase. With so many delicious dishes, which one will you vote for?

Nature scene around town



Photo by Martha Agan

A Common Goldeneyes' head bobbing is a sign of courtship.

Dean's list announcements

The following students were named to the fall 2024 dean's list at the University of Rhode Island in Kingston, Rhode Island:

Augustus Frankwicz
Ryan Hillier

Andrew Perruzzi was named to the fall 2024 dean's list at Springfield College in Springfield, Massachusetts.

Charles Garvin was named to the fall 2024 dean's list at Quinnipiac University in Hamden, Connecticut.

Erin A. Volent was named to the fall 2024 dean's list at Clark University in Worcester, Massachusetts.

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Local birding report

By E. Brooks Bornhofft

In the fall of 2019, the journal “Science” published a startling study that showed North America has lost an estimated three billion migratory birds in the last 50 years. The study, which initially looked to be the spark that would ignite a flame, resulted in hundreds of other TV news outlets, newspapers and websites echoing the alarm bells about the published study.

Unfortunately, 5 years later, there has been no effective federal government policy responses. In 2022 another report was issued by 33 leading science and conservation organizations and published in “State of the Birds” that identified “Tipping Point” species, defined as steeply declining bird species that are not yet protected as endangered despite having lost more than 50% of their populations in the past 50 years. Making matters even worse, these Tipping Point species are predicted to lose another 50% of their remaining populations in the next five decades unless action is taken. This list includes birds that can still be seen in Cape Elizabeth at certain times of year like the Evening Grosbeak, Bobolink, Golden-winged Warbler, Eastern Towhee and Yellow-billed Cuckoo. If we believe it is important for our children and grandchildren to experience the thrill of seeing these birds, local action must be taken before the process of extinction reaches a point of no return.

There is a significant opportunity for Cape Elizabeth as a community to step up to this call to action by reducing window collisions in our neighborhoods and town center. Anyone that has a bird feeder and enjoys watching birds in their backyard should

challenge themselves to make an impact at a local level by taking the necessary precautions to ensure that homes windows are bird friendly.

The most effective, proven solution to providing birds a chance to see and avoid glass is by applying 2-inch grids of tiny stickers to the entire glass pane. Over the course of several years, I have managed to protect 2/3rds of the windows in my house including large glass windows facing our bird feeders. If anyone would like to learn more about how to get going with window strike prevention that works, please reach out to me directly at ebornhofft@gmail.com.

Additionally, as part of the planning process for building/upgrading new school buildings and large-scale town center developments that will inevitably be coming, our town should develop local regulations and standards requiring bird-friendly design for all construction and major renovations. New York City’s adopted Local Law 15 of 2020 requires that materials that reduce bird strike fatalities be installed on newly constructed or altered buildings and we should start to look to a similar model for guidance.

As for my notes from the yard and field in early February, on February 7 while looking for the female Pine Warbler that continues to visit my backyard feeders a male Eastern Towhee suddenly appeared atop the feeder! Catbird in size, this large ground dwelling sparrow is striking in appearance, with a white belly vest, cinnamon colored chest and flanks, jet black head/neck and white tail feather corners. Eastern Towhees are infrequent along coastal southern Maine during the winter and classified as irregular winter residents. As short-distance mi-

grants, most Eastern Towhees north of Virginia move to either the mid-Atlantic or southern U.S. come late autumn. Interestingly, so far this year, one other Eastern Towhee was reported to eBird on February 8 in the town of Cumberland. In 2024 according to eBird there were four total reported sightings in Cumberland County during the winter month. The towhee flew back into the tangles behind the house, and I could hear the birds “chewink” call over the next hour or so before it disappeared.

Eastern Towhees are known to breed in Cape during warmer months. Unfortunately, they nest on the ground or close to it, and consequently both the bird and its eggs are subject to greater levels of predation by reptiles, mammals and other birds. Additionally, towhees are not able to distinguish their own eggs from that of Brown-headed Cowbirds who heavily parasitize their nests. Although not yet considered a bird of special concern in Maine, between 1966 and 2019 the North American Breeding Bird survey estimates that a whopping 53% of their population has been lost, primarily due to loss of habitat and predation.

Encountering a bird that typically should not be in our parts during the dead of winter is like finding a rare wildflower, one which I may never find again at this time of year, perchance, like the Fringed Gentian that my grandmother pointed out to me many years ago in November along the edge of a woodland meadow in Jackson, New Hampshire. The encounter with this bird enhanced the wildness and the richness of my perspective for what is possible.

On February 8, tipped off by an eBird report earlier that day I made my way to the Spurwink River Marsh section of Sawyer Road where, after some effort, I was able to locate six Horned Larks hunkered down along a section of the tidal dogleg where marsh grasses were still protruding above the snow.

Although I had seen Horned Larks earlier in the year while walking the back dunes of Crane Beach in Ipswich Massachusetts, this was only the second time I have seen a Horned Lark in Cape Elizabeth. A species of special concern in Maine and the only native lark species found in North America, the Horned Lark is a subtly beautiful, long-bodied songbird. The male larks sport black masks set against a yellow face and throat. Atop its head are two tiny little tufts of feathers which resemble horns.

Once referred to as Shore Larks, this hardy little bird primarily breeds in the ar-

ctic tundra. Interestingly, there are annually confirmed reports of Horned Larks breeding in potato fields of the Aroostook County Lowlands and very rarely in the “back dune” areas of Cumberland County. According to the North American Breeding Survey, between 1966 and 2015 Horned Larks have experienced and estimated cumulative population decline of 71%. Loss of agricultural fields to reforestation and development along with human encroachment are the primary factors for decline.

Additional observations include: on February 9 a Hermit Thrush in Kettle Cove and along Crescent Beach State Park, eight Long-tailed Ducks, six Buffleheads, four Red-breasted Mergansers and two Lesser Scaup ducks. A solitary Northern Mockingbird was also spotted along Fessenden Road, guarding its Winterberry thrown.

Lastly, on several nights over the last two weeks I have heard Great-horned Owls calling from various locations across Cape Elizabeth including Robinson Woods, the parcel of land behind Town Hall and while cross-country skiing with my son on the back nine of Purpodock’s golf course. On one outing on the night of February 4, I noted dueting pairs of Great-horned Owls. As for Snowy Owls there was one unconfirmed report of a Snowy Owl sitting atop the facility shed in Kettle Cove in late January and a confirmed report of what likely was the same owl along Pine Point in Scarborough.

Cape crossword solution

	P	H				
D	E	I				
E	N	V	Y		A	P
A	N	E	M	O	N	E
R	E		L	O	N	E
				P	U	P
				S	M	S



Photo by Martha Agan

A female Barrow's Goldeneye, an uncommon visitor to southern Maine. The orange bill is a distinguishing feature.

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CAPE CALENDAR

By Wendy Derzawiec

Please see the town website, www.capeelizabeth.com for meeting locations

Instructions for joining video conference meetings listed below will be posted on the town website, www.capeelizabeth.com.

Thursday, February 20

Fort Williams Park Committee, Community Center, 6 pm
Energy Committee, Jordan Conference Room, Town Hall, 7 pm

Monday, February 24

Town Council Ordinance Committee, Jordan Conference Room, Town Hall, 4 pm

Tuesday, February 25

Board of Zoning Appeals, Town Hall, 7 pm

Monday, March 3

School Board Executive Session - NEGOTIATIONS, Jordan Conference Room, Town Hall, 3:45 pm

Tuesday, March 4

Planning Board Workshop, Jordan Conference Room, Town Hall, 7 pm
Riverside Cemetery Committee, Jordan Conference Room, Town Hall, 9 am

Thursday, March 6

TML Strategic Plan Working Group, Thomas Memorial Library, 6:30 pm
Recycling Committee, Public Works Department, 7 pm
School Board Building and Grounds Committee, Jordan Conference Room, Town Hall, 10:30 am

Sunday, March 9

Robotics Comfort Food Challenge, Cape Elizabeth Lions Club, 1 Wheeler Road, 5 - 8 p.m

Monday, March 10

Town Council, Town Hall, 7 pm

Tuesday, March 11

School Board Meeting, Town Hall, 6:30 pm
Conservation Committee, Jordan Conference Room, Town Hall, 7 pm

Ongoing each week

Al-Anon, 7 p.m. Fridays, First Congregational Church, 301 Cottage Road, South Portland. Parking in rear.
Alcoholics Anonymous, 2 p.m. Saturdays, First Congregational Church, 301 Cottage Road, South Portland; 7 p.m. Wednesdays, St. Bartholomew Church; 7 p.m. Fridays, St. Alban's Church.
Cape Elizabeth Historical Society, 9 a.m. - noon on Thursdays and by appointment, Fort Willimas, in the brick building closest to Shore Road ring the doorbell).
Cape Elizabeth Lions Club, 6:39 p.m., first and third Tuesdays at the Bowery Beach Schoolhouse (except July and August), Two Lights Road
Cape Elizabeth Republican Town Committee, 6-8:30 p.m. second Tuesday of the month, Cape Elizabeth Community Center. Contact: ccrcme.com for Cape information.
South Portland/Cape Elizabeth Rotary Club, 6:15 p.m. Wednesdays at 107 Preble Hall, Southern Maine Community College, 2 Fort Road, South Portland. sp-ce-rotary.org.

SERVICES

Cape Elizabeth Church of the Nazarene

499 Ocean House Road (Route 77)
747-1113

www.capenazarene.org
Sunday School for all ages: 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship Celebration: 10:45 a.m.
Services streamed live or on demand: watch.capenazarene.org

Cape Elizabeth United Methodist Church

280 Ocean House Road
799-8396

www.ceumc.org
Sanctuary Service: 10 a.m.
In-person Sunday services 10 a.m. For Zoom services, call 799-8396

The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints

29 Ocean House Road
799-4321

Sacrament Meeting: Sunday, 10 - 11:00 a.m.
Sunday School/Primary: 11:10 a.m.-12 p.m.

The Church of the Second Chance

Greater Portland Christian School
1338 Broadway, South Portland
641-3253

Sunday: 10:30 a.m.-12:15 p.m.

Rise Church

1047 Congress Street, Portland
874-9779

<https://www.riseportland.church>
Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m.
Sunday Adult Bible Study: 9:00 a.m.
Sunday School for children: 10:00 a.m.
Services streamed live on Facebook

Congregation Bet Ha'am

81 Westbrook St., South Portland
879-0028

www.bethaam.org
Worship: Friday, 7:30 p.m.
Saturday, 10:30 a.m.
Family Shabbat Services: Second Friday, 6:00 p.m.

Hope Community Church

879 Sawyer Street South Portland
799-4565

www.hopesopo.com
www.facebook.com/hopesopo
Sunday Morning Worship at 10 a.m.
Kid's Church for ages 4 through grade 5
Service videos available on our website

Promised Land World Reach Center

536 Cottage Road, South Portland
799-3152

Sunday Prayer & Intercession: 9:30 a.m.
Sunday Worship: 10 a.m.
Family Bible Studies: Wednesday, 7 p.m.
Sermon recordings available to download

Redeemer Lutheran Church - LCMS

410 Main Street, Gorham
839-7100

www.RedeemerMaine.org
Sunday Bible Class for all ages: 9:00 a.m.
Sunday Worship Service: 10:15 a.m.
Services are in person and streamed on Facebook and YouTube

Saint Alban's Episcopal Church

885 Shore Road
799-4014

www.stalbansmaine.org
Sunday Services:
Rite 1 with Holy Eucharist 8:00 a.m.
Rite 2 with Holy Eucharist 9:30 a.m.
Live Streaming on YouTube (stalbanschannel)
Children's Programs 9:30 a.m.
Celtic Eventide 5:30 p.m.
Room for all

St Bartholomew Catholic Church of Saint John Paul II Parish

8 Two Lights Road, 207-883-0334

Website: www.JP2me.org
Sunday Mass: 9 a.m.
Daily Mass: Mon. and Wed. 8 a.m.
Sacrament of Confession: Mon. 8:30-9 a.m.
Additional Mass times in Scarborough & South Portland listed on website

First Congregational Church United Church of Christ

301 Cottage Road, South Portland
799-3361

www.fccucc.org
Sunday Worship: 10:00 a.m. in person and streamed on Facebook & YouTube

First Congregational Church of Scarborough

167 Black Point Road, Scarborough
883-2342

www.fccscarborough.com
Sunday Morning Worship: 9:30 a.m.
Sunday School & Nursery Care

CABLE GUIDE

CETV CHANNEL 1302

Subject to change. Please see cetv.capeelizabeth.org for latest program guide and video on demand.

Board of Zoning Appeals

Feb. 25 - 7 p.m.

Town Council Workshop

Feb. 27 - 7 p.m.



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Upcoming Lions Club community dinners

Spaghetti Dinners:

February 22, 5:00 – 7:30 p.m.
March 22, 5:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Chicken Dinners:

April 12, 5:00 – 7:30 p.m.
May 17, 5:00 – 7:30 p.m.

Tamarro Landscaping & Property Services

Winter Services

With not much snow out there this year it allows us to continue with the following services:

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MUSIC LESSONS

Flute lessons: For beginners and intermediates of all ages. Call Kris: 767-3712.

Piano, Voice, Guitar, Ukulele lessons for all ages. Beginner through intermediate. Carey Rasco: 232-7015

Piano Lessons. All ages, all levels. Call Ora: 207-899-3014

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Part Time Personal Care Assistant: Disabled woman, with a full time job, needs part time assistance in Cape Elizabeth. No medical training required. Must be reliable, have references and a joyful approach to problem solving. If interested, please call 207-536-0619 and leave a message.

FOR RENT

Fully Furnished and newly renovated 3 bedroom 1.5 bath home at 4 Surf Road. Short term rental opportunity available from March 1 to May 31. Please visit Zillow for photos and more information on listing.

Library

Continued from page 11

(MMoME) as they take you through a seal's journey from stranding to release, and all of the obstacles in between. Starting with seal basics such as: whether it's normal for them to be out of the water and why you might see a baby on its own, and then dive into when and why seals need our help. You will learn what MMoME is, what they do, the animals they care for (with special stories from Cape Elizabeth), and how you can help.

Jessica Woodend has been volunteering with MMoME for the past 7 years. She helps with events and presentations, and is also on the response and animal care team. Jessica has built a career in wildlife education and has been able to connect communities to their local wildlife in locations across the country.

Film School, Get Out

Tuesday, February 25, 5 - 8 p.m.

Do you love watching movies? Have you ever secretly wished you had gone to film school? Here's your chance! Join Community Engagement Librarian Sasha Kohan each month as we watch a movie followed by a wide-ranging discussion, covering everything from costume design to lighting to star power (maybe with just a touch of film theory, as a treat).

This time, we're celebrating Black History Month with Jordan Peele's instant classic, "Get Out." This contemporary comedy-horror is a masterclass in writing, directing and tackling the diffi-

cult subject of racism in America. This haunting and satirical journey through the Sunken Place is sure to provide some laughs, some gasps, and plenty of discussion on modern microaggressions.

Come just for the movie and popcorn, or stay for the conversation afterward too. To stay up to date on future Film School screenings and receive post-discussion material, sign up for the Film School mailing list.

No registration required to see the movies. Open to all from movie buffs to casual viewers, and everyone in between.

Homes of Dead Writers with Tess Chakkalakal (TMLF)

Thursday, February 27, 6:30 - 8 p.m.

Harriet Beecher Stowe, Sarah Orne Jewett, Henry Wadsworth Longfellow, and Nathaniel Hawthorne are some of Maine's most celebrated literary figures. Join us for this talk with creator and host of the award-winning podcast "Dead Writers" Tess Chakkalakal to virtually tour the homes of these Maine writers and learn of their history, decor, gardens, and maybe even ghosts that bring these writers and their work back to life.

Tess Chakkalakal teaches African-American and American Literature at Bowdoin College. Her new book "A Matter of Complexion" was released on February 4. She is co-host and creator of the award-winning podcast "Dead Writers: A Show About Great American Authors and Where They Lived." She lives in Brunswick. No registration necessary.

Fireside Writing

Thursdays, 5:30 - 6:30 p.m.

Looking for a comfortable and cozy spot to join other writers? Come to TML's Fireside Writing program. Fireside Writing gives you the space and opportunity to work alongside fellow writers and reach your writing goals.

Bring your laptop or your favorite notebook and join us by the fire for tea and quiet writing time.

Meets weekly on Thursday evenings from 5:30-6:30 p.m. No registration necessary.

Senior Social Hour: Wednesdays, 1:00 - 2:00 p.m.

Come stop by for our usual coffee, tea, snacks, and conversation. Check our website for special guests and topics.

Songwriting Workshop with Jud Caswell

Tuesday, March 4, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m.

Join Jud for our monthly songwriting workshop—come to listen, or to share your songs-in-process for feedback. Please register on the library's website.

Let Yourself Be An Artist with Aleah Black

Tuesday, March 4, 6:00 - 8:00 p.m. via Zoom

See above article for description.

Big Conversations in 10 Short Minutes

Thursday, March 6, 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. via Zoom

Three conversations in an hour with other people in Maine. The prompts are simple. The conversations are non-political. What might you learn about (or from) your fellow humans? Let's find out!

Please visit the library's workshop to register. (This program is part of MECOLab, a collaborative programming partnership between libraries throughout the state of Maine.)

The "KID" Courier

Are you a young, aspiring writer or artist? We want to hear from you!!

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- Half of Lobster | Lobster Bisque | Fish Cakes



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Neighbors



Contributed photo

Caper Bruce Lockwood at Machu Picchu, Peru in South America on January 12. Lockwood traveled to Peru and Ecuador with Boston College Beyond Educational Travel and visited sites in Peru: Lima, Cusco, Sacred Valley and Machu Picchu and Ecuador: Quito and the Galapagos Islands. Of his trip, he said, "It was a once in a lifetime, fantastic trip."

The "KID" Courier



By Henry Fisher

Henry Fisher (age 8), drew this comic strip, titled "Lobster Dude."

CEHS students selected as candidates to be U.S. Presidential Scholars

By Kevin St. Jarre

Several Cape Elizabeth High School seniors have been selected as candidates to be U.S. Presidential Scholars. The scholars are selected on the basis of superior academic and artistic achievements, leadership qualities, strong character and involvement in community and school activities.

The 6 CEHS students nominated are:

- Henry Barraclough**
- Andrew Deniz**
- Sage Evans**
- Sebastian Francis**
- Wendell Lu**
- Story Straw**

In response, Henry Barraclough said, "I'm very grateful to be selected as a can-

didate," and Sage Evans said, "I am so excited to be considered!"

Wendell Lu said, "I was amazed when I was selected," and Andrew Deniz said, "I am extremely honored to have received this nomination. I put 100 percent into everything I do, and I'm happy my effort has paid off."

Caroline Straw said, in part, "I've tackled the academic challenge of a very

heavy AP course load through the help of CEHS's exceptional teachers, whether it be Mr. McNeely's statistics instruction, Ms. McKeown's calculus expertise, or Mr. Rue's hands-on physics labs."

Sebastian Francis said he was incredibly honored to be nominated and, "I look at every new challenge as an opportunity to learn."

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