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In the Spirit of Community

Judy's Pantry celebrates 15 years of feeding the community

By Kevin St. Jarre

Fifteen years ago, upon the passing of Judy Simonds, a fresh produce pantry was founded in her name. At that time, it provided service to about 8 families. Today, in 2025, Judy's Pantry is coordinated by Amy Lombardo, who took over from longtime chief Beth Owens, and serves over 40 families in Cape Elizabeth and, in addition to the fresh produce, provides meat, cheese, fruit, dry goods and more. Judy's daughter, Laura Simonds-Rumpf said, "It also provides Thanksgiving baskets to families in need together with another Cape effort."

The pantry's namesake, Judy Simonds, was a resident of Cape Elizabeth since 1971, and her passion was gardening. One of the founders of Judy's Pantry, and someone who previously coordinated the program for many years, Nancy Miles, shared, "In addition to nurturing her own beautiful flower beds at home while offering friendship and encouragement to passersby, and becoming a Master Gardener, Judy helped found the Cape Community Garden at Gull Crest Field in 2002. It is there where she and other community gardeners began the Plant A Row For the Hungry (PAR) Program, delivering hundreds of pounds of produce weekly to area food pantries. It was a goal of hers to help create a produce pantry to benefit Cape Elizabeth residents. Though she passed on shortly before the Cape pantry opened in June of 2010, she would have been thrilled to know of its birth and that her and others' efforts paid off."

In Cape Elizabeth, Simonds also volunteered as a mentor at the school gardens at Pond Cove Elementary, sharing her joy of gardening with children. She was also a Unit Leader in the League of Women Voters, a Girl Scout leader, Arts Committee Chairman, school board member, Thomas Memorial Library trustee and a recipient of the Gould Award for Outstanding Citizenship.

Miles explained more of the history of Judy's Pantry. She said, "In early 2010, Ruth Morrison, former pastor of the United Methodist Church of Cape Elizabeth, had asked Penny Jordan of Jordan's Farm if there were a way that fresh produce from Cape's farms could be shared with needy families in Cape. Penny knew me as one of the organizers of the Cape Community Gardens at both Gull Crest and the Cape Community Garden at Maxwell's Farm. Both gardens had several plots dedicated to the Plant A Row for the Hungry program to raise food for donation, but the pantries already operat-

-see JUDY'S PANTRY page 7

Wreath brings holiday spirit

By Stephen T. Lyons (Garda)

Photo by Stephen T. Lyons Garda

Past wreath atop Portland Head Lighthouse.

Portland Head Lighthouse (PHL) symbolizes guidance, strength and hope, acting as a beacon to guide ships safely through dark or dangerous waters. The placing of a wreath atop this iconic lighthouse during the holidays extends its traditional role of physical guidance to encompass the emotional and spirit often associated with the holiday season. Offering a message of peace and goodwill to all who see it, whether at sea or on land.

This holiday season, Cape residents and visitors will enjoy the return of the wreath atop Portland Head Lighthouse (PHL). Much like the wreaths illuminated in scenes of the fictional town of Bedford Falls, " It's a Wonderful Life", a 1946 classic holiday film that explores themes of life's meaning, love

-see WREATH page 5

The Cape Courier
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The mission of The Cape Courier is to foster a sense of community by presenting news specific and unique to Cape Elizabeth and its residents, and, whenever possible, to promote volunteerism within our community.

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News from the December Town Council meeting

By Hanna Gilley

Election of Town Council Chair and Oath of Office for Town Councilors and School Board Members Elected on November 4, 2025

All town council and school board members took their oath of office for service in the next term for 2026. Councilor Penny Jordan gave thanks to everyone "for the opportunity to serve for the past year as Chair" of the Town Council. Councilor Jonathan Sahrbeck nominated Councilor Elizabeth Scifres as the next Town Council Chair to which the council voted unanimously to approve. Chair Scifres extended a "heartfelt thank you" to the outgoing Chair, adding that above all, Councilor Jordan "prioritized citizen voices."

Town Council Reports and Correspondence

Councilor Anderson shared that she is a representative for the Thomas Memorial Library Foundation that was established in 2005. Its purpose is to raise funds for the library and its many services. Anderson and other Foundation members communicate with donors on the benefits of the Foundation and are "concerned with long-term funding for major unexpected needs the library may have." Anderson said that annual donations are around $50,000 per year with a current fund balance of $1.1 million.

Anderson added an editorial comment that the "library is too small – we're gonna need to do something about that." Approximately 1,500 residents go into the library each week.

Councilor Sahrbeck is a representative for the Cape Elizabeth School Building Committee. Sahrbeck said the design of the building and the site plan are being finalized which will then go through Planning Board review, then open for public comment before hopefully gaining site plan approval. The tentative dates for bids to go out for the school building project is from May 2026 to July 2026 when construction is scheduled to start and last for 24 months. The scheduled move-in date for the new middle school is August 2028 and that the old middle school will be removed after the students have moved into the new school. The entire project is scheduled to be completed by August 2029.

Cape Elizabeth School Building Committee meetings are held every first Wednesday of the month at 5 p.m. Meetings are also recorded and can be accessed on the town website. Questions for the committee can be sent here: schoolbuildingprojectquestions@capeelizabethschools.org.

Councilor Harriman, representative of the Ordinance Committee, updated the council that the committee has drafted language that will propose closing Shore Road during the summer season and restrict parking on side streets to residents only.

Town Manager Monthly Report

Town Manager Patrick Fox thanked Penny Jordan for serving as Chair and helping him transition as the new Town Manager. Fox shared with the council that there will be a stormwater retrofit bid opportunity going out and that the transfer station now accepts credit cards.

Public Hearing: Chapter 13 - Parking Amendments on Fenway Road and Miscellaneous Amendments for Zoning

Councilor Harriman updated the council that the Chapter 13 parking amendments for Fenway Road include "only parking on one side of the road" to alleviate the congestion on Fenway Road leading down to the pond. No members of the public gave comment and the issue will be included on the Town Council January agenda.

Councilor Harriman shared that the miscellaneous amendments part 1 and part 2 are proposed to be "combined into one." No members of the public gave comment and the issue will be included on the Town Council January agenda.

Town Council 2026 Meeting Schedule and Budget Review Schedule for Fiscal Year 2026

At the November 12 town council caucus, a 2026 meeting schedule was discussed. The council agreed to a different meeting meeting cadence than usual but that is "employed by many towns," said Fox.

The updated meeting schedule includes meetings on the first and 3rd Mondays of each month. A workshop will start at 6 p.m. with a regular council meeting starting directly after at 7 p.m. This will allow the public more opportunity to participate and share comments and allow the council to take action, or vote, on issues twice per month rather than once. The updated 2026 meeting schedule and budget review schedule was approved by the council.

Acceptance of Gifts and Donations for 2025

Finance Chair Councilor Swayze explained that "residents, community members and others" generously donated funds to town departments. Each December the council recognizes those who have contributed. The acceptance of gifts and donations for 2025 was approved unanimously.

Ad Hoc Advisory Committee Acknowledgement of Final Report and Recommendation

Kurt Kelly, member of the Ad Hoc Advisory committee, shared with the council their decision to "disband" the committee. Kelly offered background information to support the committee's decision including that the proposal the committee created to be put out for bid "became relegated to the IT department" and was no longer accessible to the committee. He added, "when proposals came back and we weren't allowed to read them, we decided it wasn't our proposal anymore."

The Town Council voted unanimously to

-see TOWN COUNCIL page 3

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2026 Publication schedule

Issue No	Ad/Copy Due	Issue Published
01	Jan 2	Jan 14
02	Jan 23	Feb 4
03	Feb 6	Feb 18
04	Feb 27	March 11
05	March 13	March 25
06	March 27	April 8
07	April 10	April 22
08	April 24	May 6
09	May 8	May 20
10	May 22	June 3
11	June 5	June 17
12	June 19	July 1
13	July 3	July 15
14	July 24	August 5
15	Aug 7	August 19
16	Aug 21	Sept 2
17	Sept 4	Sept 16
18	Sept 18	Sept 30
19	Oct 9	Oct 21
20	Oct 30	Nov 11
21	Nov 13	Nov 25
22	Dec 4	Dec 16

License plate stolen, report of an unattended death

Reported by Debbie Butterworth

PUBLIC INFORMATION

11-6 An officer checked out the Ocean House Road area for report of a vehicle operating at a high rate of speed.

11-10 An officer responded to a report of criminal mischief in the Spurwink Avenue area.

11-12 An officer met with a subject in the Oakhurst Road area regarding a theft report.

11-13 An officer responded to the area of Mitchell Road for a report of a car hitting a deer.

11-14 An officer responded to the lobby of the police station to take a harassment report.

11-15 An officer responded to the Broad Cove area for a report of an unattended death.

11-19 An officer responded to the Fowler Road area for a report of a theft.

11-20 An officer responded to the Scott Dyer Road for a report of an unattended death.

11-21 An officer met with a subject in the lobby of the police station for a report of a stolen license plate.

11-24 Two officers responded to the Mitchell Road area for a report of an assault.

11-24 An officer responded to the lobby of the police station to meet with a resident regarding a fraud report.

111-27 An officer met with a resident of the Spurwink Avenue area regarding a trespass complaint.

11-28 Two officers met with a subject in the Spurwink Avenue area regarding a domestic disturbance.

11-29 Two officers responded to a residence in the Mitchell Road area for a domestic disturbance.

11-30 An officer responded to a residence in the Mitchell Road area for a domestic dispute.

SUMMONSES

11-9 Old Orchard Beach resident, failure to stop at stop sign, Humphreys Road, $146

11-11 South Portland resident, speeding (60/45 zone), Bowery Beach Road

11-12 Cape Elizabeth resident, operating under the influence of alcohol, Route 77

11-15 Cape Elizabeth resident, failure to display inspection sticker, Ocean House Road

JUVENILE SUMMONSES

11–12 Speeding, (77/50 zone), Route 77

11-18 Expired inspection sticker, Ocean House Road

ACCIDENTS

11-9 Jennifer White, Gale Peterson, accident on Cottage Road

11-21 Richardson White, accident on Route 77

11-26 Thomas Loder, Donald Youker, accident on Wainwright Drive

11-28 Nicholas Dufault, accident on Fowler Road

11-30 Stephen Luft, accident on Eastman Road

FIRE CALLS

Fire calls: 11; EMS calls: 26

Town Council

Continued from page 2

acknowledge receipt of the final report and the recommendation to disband the committee.

Basketball Court Project - Additional Funding Request

Meredith Beauregard, Chair of Cape Hoops, provided "perspective, support and thanked the town for all of the time and effort" spent over the last several months on the basketball court project. Beauregard added that she understands Cape Hoops is asking for funding outside of budget season and that they are requesting funding so that contracts can be signed with project contractors in order for the project to move forward for construction in the spring.

The cost of the basketball court project is $165,000. Cape Hoops and the town collaborated on finding additional funds. Cape Hoops is requesting an additional $18,000 for the project which will be dispersed from the unassigned funds balance. The council approved the request and to authorize the town manager to complete contractor agreements.

Cape Community Arena Food Truck Application

On November 19, 2025, Cape Community Arena Group submitted a special use permit for the use of food trucks at the arena. A representative of Cape Community Arena shared that the request is "similar to the last two years" and will allow food trucks to attend community event nights at the arena. The council approved the request for 1-2

-see MEETING page 16

Scam alert bulletin board

Reported by Jessica D. Simpson

Common Holiday Scams to Look Out For

The holiday season usually means fun with friends and family, goodwill and giving. Unfortunately, it's also a prime time for cybercriminals to perpetrate fraud. Here are some common holiday scams to look out for this holiday season:

Online shopping scams. Criminals create professional-looking websites and ads promoting popular items at steep discounts, but what you receive may be different than advertised—if you receive anything. Be cautious of unusually low prices and avoid clicking on ads in emails, texts, or social media. For safer shopping, go directly to a trusted retailer's website or app and pay with a credit card for stronger protections.

Delivery scams. As holiday packages crisscross the country, scammers send out phishing emails and texts that appear to be from UPS, FedEx, or the U.S. Postal Service, notifying recipients about incoming or missed deliveries. Links lead to fake sign-in pages that request personal information, or to sites that may be infected with malware.

Gift card scams. Criminals steal gift cards in bulk from store racks, collect the information from the card, and return them to the rack for unsuspecting buyers. When the gift card is bought, criminals immediately drain the money. It is safer to buy cards that are kept behind the counter, or directly from the retailer's site.

Preventing Holiday Package Thieves

With holiday shopping—and shipping—comes the risk of package theft. Thieves — often called "Porch Pirates" — steal millions of packages from American doorsteps each year, totaling billions of dollars in merchandise. You can help protect your deliveries with a few simple steps. Opt into delivery alerts, allowing you to track your package and know exactly when items arrive. If you won't be home, ask a trusted person to pick it up, or instruct the delivery person to place it out of sight. Consider requesting a signature upon delivery to ensure your package is handed to someone directly. You can also use alternative pickup options, such as ship-to-store or secure locations offered by major retailers and delivery services. If you're going out of town, ask USPS, FedEx, or UPS to hold your mail and packages until you return. USPS can hold mail for up to 30 days, and FedEx and UPS offer similar vacation hold options.

Also, stay informed and work with your neighbors. Agree to watch out for each other's deliveries and offer to take in mail when needed. Community resources like Nextdoor.com, Crime Stoppers, and social media updates from local law enforcement can also alert you to porch piracy in your area.

Learn how to spot and avoid scams with AARP Fraud Watch Network™. Suspect a scam? Call our free helpline at 877-908-3360 and talk to one of our fraud specialists about what to do next.

Maine focuses on a robust health care system

By Michelle Boyer

It is well known that Maine's health care system is currently facing significant financial challenges. Over the last several months, news reports have highlighted the imminent risk providers and hospitals face due to a perfect storm of issues. This includes a significant amount of Medicare revenue lost due to Trump's "Big, Beautiful Bill" and insufficient payments from insurance companies that fail to cover the cost of essential services.

When hospitals and independent providers find themselves financially vulnerable, they can become targets for buyouts by private equity firms. At first glance, this might not seem like a concern; after all, the influx of capital from these companies could only benefit our hospitals and providers, right? Not exactly. For a time, perhaps, but the big issue is that the mission of these private equity firms is often to increase revenue at all costs. This includes cutting essential services which often excludes clinical experts from the decision-making process and potentially impacting the quality of care delivered.

To help address some of our health care system's problems, the Legislature passed a resolve to establish a commission to review how health care transactions are regulated and overseen in Maine. I was privileged to have been named co-chair of this commission by Speaker of the House Ryan Fecteau. I was able to work collaboratively with a group of diverse stakeholders, from fellow legislators to advocates, in order to ensure that resources are being used effectively to support our state's health care services across the state.

We met four times to discuss these issues, bringing together many perspectives from both sides of the aisle. Chairing my first legislative committee came with a bit of a learning curve, but it was ultimately so rewarding. Over the course of our meetings, we examined various aspects of healthcare regulation, including the growing presence of private equity in healthcare transactions, current certificate-of-need laws and the overall market oversight of healthcare practices in Maine.

The commission's recommendations to the Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee will be finalized in December. I am writing this reflection a few days before the report is made public, but I am proud of the recommendations that will be reported. The commission's reporting will be reviewed by the Legislative Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services Committee and will serve as the foundation for future legislation. I encourage all interested in reviewing the final report to visit the commission's webpage at www.legislature.maine.gov later this month to see our findings and learn more about how these discussions will shape health care policy in the years to come.

I joined the Legislature in part to fight for a more equitable health care system. Just because this commission will no longer be meeting does not mean that the work is finished. When the Legislature reconvenes in January, I will continue to do what I have always done, which is advocate for the expansion of health care services for all Mainers and to support the providers who deliver a high quality of care.

Representative Michelle Boyer is serving her first term in Maine House representing Cape Elizabeth. She sits on the Joint Standing Committee on Health Coverage, Insurance and Financial Services.

Get your skates ready: Cape Arena unveils 2025-26 winter schedule

By CCAG

The Cape Community Arena Group (CCAG), the 501(c)3 that funds and operates the Cape Ice Rink seasonally at Gull Crest, has unveiled its full slate of programs and events for the 2025-26 winter season, promising a jam-packed calendar of skating, hockey, and community celebrations.

Last winter, the rink hosted 600 hours of total ice time, with more than half of that dedicated to free public use and community programming. With the season opener just around the corner, the arena is set to welcome skaters of all ages and abilities, continuing its mission to provide a safe, outdoor, multi-generational gathering space for the community.

A More Sustainable Future: The Chiller Impact

CCAG has been working hard in the off-season, meeting their objective of purchasing a chiller this fall. This critical piece of infrastructure replaces the costly rental units of years past, signaling a shift toward long-term sustainability for the popular Gull Crest facility. In previous seasons, rental fees for the chiller accounted for more than one-third of the arena's total operating expenses. By purchasing the equipment with a combination of funds raised by the group's capital fundraising campaign and with financing from Skowhegan Savings Bank, CCAG estimates it will save over 85% on annual rental and crane costs moving forward. This strategic investment not only stabilizes the budget but also ensures the rink remains a reliable resource for Cape Elizabeth residents for years to come.

In addition to the chiller, the CCAG has teamed up with Mitchell & Associates to begin site design and engineering for a permanent facility, ensuring the facility continues to evolve to meet community needs while continuing the necessary fundraising in parallel.

Mark Your Calendars: Key Season Dates

The season officially kicks off on December 19 with the "First Skate" event, a community favorite that requires no tickets or registration. This opening celebration sets the stage for a festive December, followed immediately by "Skate with Santa & Friends" (a ticketed event) on December 20.

New Year's Eve will once again feature the "Sparkle Skate" on December 31, offering a family-friendly way to ring in 2026 on the ice.

Cap off the season with "Rink Fest" on February 27, another free community event with food trucks, open skating and a few fun surprises.

Skating Programs for Every Skill Level

Beyond special events and free public open skates, the Cape Community Arena continues to offer a comprehensive range of weekly programs. Whether you are stepping onto the ice for the first time or looking to refine your skating technique, there is a skating class for you. Registration for skating classes is available via the Cape Community Services website and includes the popular "Super Skate" program on weekend mornings with "Penguins" (ages 3-5) and "Polar Bears" (ages 6-10). Beginner and Basic Skills small group classes for adults and kids are also available for those looking to build confidence.

While the Cape Ice Rink does not have a skate rental program, it does have a fledgling skate loaner program. This program offers community members the opportunity to borrow skates for a few days or for an entire season, depending on availability.

Hockey for All

The arena's hockey offerings remain a cornerstone of its winter programming. In addition to a series of tournaments on the calendar, the season features the Espinal Youth Hockey Program (Grades 1-8), the Cape Hockey Club for adults, Ladies Pond Hockey and 60+ Pond Hockey.

Plan Your Visit & Help Out

Check out capearena.org for more information on free public open skate times, the skate loaner program, special events, skating and hockey programs, and the tournament schedule. Many community events like the First Skate are free and open to the public, but other programs and tournaments may require prior registration.

The rink relies on volunteers to fund and operate it. If you'd like to help out, you can contact info@capearena.org to get on the volunteer list.

Church of the Nazarene to hold Christmas service on Dec. 24

The Cape Elizabeth Church of the Nazarene will hold its annual Christmas Eve Service at 4 p.m. on Wednesday, December 24 at 499 Ocean House Road.

The service will feature carols, scripture lessons, and the singing of "Silent Night" by candlelight. All are welcome!

For those who are unable to attend in person, the service will be streamed live at the church's website,www.capenazarene.org, as well as on our YouTube, Roku, and Apple TV channels. It will also be available on-demand at these same locations.

For more information, feel free to contact the church office at capenazarene@gmail.com or 207-747-1113.

Judy's Pantry – a community feeding itself

Judy's Pantry operates at the Cape Elizabeth Methodist Church on the second and fourth Tuesdays of the month from 3 -4:30 p.m.

Registration is available on-site for new clients.

For more information, please contact: cejudyspantry@gmail.com

Please consider a non-perishable donation to the IGA drop box.

Got a story to share? Email us!

editor@capecourier .com

News from November Planning Board meeting

By Hanna Gilley

St. Bart's Childcare Center

On behalf of the applicant, St. Bartholomew's Church, Travis Nadeau of Platz Associates presented updates to the site plan review and conditional use permit to establish a 62-person day care facility located at 8 Two Lights Road.

Adjustments and updates to the site plan include a proposed one-way entrance that will "allow the traffic a wide mouth to enter the site"; installation of parking/no parking, childcare entrance, one way and do not enter signage; additional lighting at the daycare entrance and drop off area; and the note for a future optional sidewalk connection that would connect the sidewalk along the childcare entrance to the parking zone.

The water utilities for the proposed childcare center will remain the same as it is currently connected to city water. A septic acceptance letter from Public Works and Portland Water District is still in process and awaiting response. The applicant is proposing that the childcare facility be connected to city sewer by August 1, 2026, which would be "great for all parties." Nadeau said that water usage calculations are currently low, and a large increase is not expected.

Al Palmer asked about "adequate capacity" for the subsurface wastewater disposal system and said that it was in his opinion that the applicant has "not shown affirmative information to show adequate capacity based on information submitted to date." Nadeau responded that he provided a "bounty of information" on the existing system, water usage information and capacity and flow determination.

Town Engineer, Steve Harding of Sebago Technics, offered that he is "not anticipating there will be an issue here" in reference to the wastewater and septic systems. Town Planner, Maureen O'Meara, agreed with Harding and said, "I don't think we've ever had a situation where a project was proposed and did not have capacity."

The application was approved for completion based on the following conditions of approval: revised to address Town Engineer's comments from a November 11, 2025, letter; estimated sanitary wastewater flows for proposed use be submitted; and information submitted to demonstrate adequate capacity of existing subsurface wastewater system to temporarily accommodate wastewater flows until connection to city sewer is made. The Board voted 5:1 with Al Palmer in opposition.

2025 RP Permit Greenbelt Improvements

Town Engineer Steve Harding on behalf of Cape Elizabeth requested a Resource Protection Permit to alter 3,098 square feet of RP1 and RP2 wetlands to install boardwalks on existing trails located on Dyer Woods, Cottage Brook, Canterbury, Town Center, and the Highlands properties.

Harding explained that the project started back in 2020 when the Conservation Committee hired FB Environmental to catalog all 19 miles of the Greenbelt network system. From that catalog, priorities for improvements and areas of focus were established.

In 2021, the Town worked with the Conservation Committee to permit those improvements which have since been constructed. This request is the "second round of improvements." The improvements include extensions to existing boardwalks and new construction of boardwalks in the Dyer Woods, Cottage Brook, Canterbury, Town Center, and Highlands neighborhoods.

The Board discussed that the introduction of boardwalks is "self-mitigating" in a couple of ways including solving erosion issues from muddy conditions and boardwalks keep visitors on the trail which protects the natural habitat.

Chair Gilbert said the boardwalks will "improve trail conditions and the environment which seems like a no-brainer to me." The Board approved the request for permits unanimously.

Center Court Site Plan Amendment

John Mitchell of Mitchell and Associates requested that the Center Court Site Plan application change the project owner from Bob Goodreau to Joe Geohegan of TideMark LLC. Mitchell also requested to extend the amended subdivision plan by 90 days to allow the DEP to finalize their review and approval of the stormwater permit application.

Bob Goodreau addressed the Board and said it was "never in the plan" to remove himself from the project but is doing so for personal reasons. Goodreau explained, "I need to step back and that's why TideMark is here tonight. I believe they have a greater technical and financial capacity than me and I worked hard to make sure that this was going to be a unified and appropriate change off."

Joe Geohegan, Director of Development for TideMark, introduced the firm as a small, family-based real estate developer and investor based out of Hooksett, New Hampshire. Geohegan explained that he was born and raised in Cape Elizabeth and is a current resident with his family. He added, "I have always and continue to care very deeply for this community and want to see it grow, but only in the right way."

Geohegan showcased "community-

-see PLANNING BOARD page 15

Wreath

Continued from page 1

and community. The same can be attributed to the wreath atop Portland Head Lighthouse.

The wreath atop PHL is a holiday tradition since 2009 but has been missing the last few years. Curious of its departure, I explored what had happened to this holiday tradition my family and I had enjoyed for so many years. I met with Town Manager Patrick Fox as to the reason for the temporary cessation of the wreath. Fox said the wreath had been damaged beyond repair during a large storm, and some of the logistics of replacing and mounting of the wreath had changed.

I then met up with now-retired PHL Director Jeanne Gross to discuss how the wreath came about. Gross said she has missed the wreath during the holidays, and the joy it brought to all who visited PHL. She said the tradition of the wreath began in December 2009 as a community partnership between the town of Cape Elizabeth and the United States Coast Guard.

U.S. Coast Guard Sector Commander, Captain James McPherson of South Portland made a recommendation for a wreath atop of PHL to then Director of Portland Head Lighthouse Jeanne Gross. Captain McPherson proposed that the Coast Guard would manage the annual raising and lowering of the wreath, provided the museum fund the project. The Coast Guard would formalize this through a proposal detailing all the requirements.

A generous Cape Elizabeth resident and member of the Board of Directors for the Museum at Portland Head Light agreed to fund the proposal, allowing the project to move forward. Excited for this to take place, Gross and the U.S. Coast Guard went to work on purchasing a wreath and the logistics of placing the wreath atop PHL.

When the original steel frame wreath arrived and was raised for the first time, it was discovered to be too large for the lighthouse tower. After extensive discussions and recalculations, the team at the local U.S. Coast Guard Station South Portland worked to reduce the wreath size to fit the iconic structure. A slightly smaller version was successfully installed and has since become an popular holiday decoration and tradition.

Gross said she provided new garland and lights every year to keep the wreath looking fresh. She also worked closely with the Coast Guard each season to coordinate the wreath's refurbishment and schedule the specific date for raising it high on the tower.

Following the adjustment by the U.S. Coast Guard, the wreath was raised annually. Every year, all the garland and lights had to be replaced because harsh weather such as high winds, snow and sleet took their toll on the decorations. Fortunately, the steel frame proved strong and solid enough to withstand the severe coastal conditions each season until it was last raised in 2021.

Missing the wreath, Gross wrote a letter to Town Council Chair Penny Jordan asking if the wreath could return atop PHL . When Jordan received the letter, she too missed seeing the wreath during the holidays, and said she would fully support its return. Jordan gave the letter to the town manager and the wreath became a reality with the help of Community Services Director Kathy Raftice.

A wreath can evoke the idea of arriving at a safe shore after a long journey, symbolizing hope and a warm welcome during the holidays. The decoration can be a powerful visual metaphor of an enduring hope. The combination of the lighthouse tower and wreath signify a lasting source of guidance and hope that persists through all seasons and the challenges we all face.

This combination reinforces the lighthouse and wreath's role as a safe haven, offering comfort and a welcoming image to those traveling through our beautiful coastal town. And for many, the wreath can be a reminder to those who live in Cape Elizabeth, that it is a wonderful life. Happy Holidays!

The Cape Elizabeth employees and town department who helped put the wreath atop Portland Head Lighthouse up this year are as follows; Alex Quataert (Wreath Company Owner) Al Cardente Cape Elizabeth Facilities, Griffin Thoreck Cape Elizabeth Facilities, Dom Walker Community Services , Kelly Phinney Community Services, Rosanne Rogers Portland Head Lighthouse, Kathy Raftice Cape Elizabeth Community Services. Four Cape Elizabeth Departments collaborated in putting up the wreath, Community Services, Public Works, Facilities, and Portland Head Lighthouse.

CEEF partners with school district for new and improved CEHS weight room

Since becoming facilities director in Cape Elizabeth, Dave Bagdasarian has been on a mission to take old, outdated areas in the schools and bringing them into modern times. One such area that Dave took this step is with the weight room at Cape Elizabeth High School located off the hallway next to the gym. Only a couple of years ago, this area was seen as one of the most outdated areas of the high school. It was a weight room filled with 30+-year-old, mismatched equipment, which often left rust on users' hands and created safety concerns that old equipment can pose for users. The equipment did not accommodate all students, especially those new to weight training. It also, due to its age and state of disrepair, would discourage full participation from all students, especially those new to fitness. For some faculty and staff, they would dread showing the weight room on new family tours due to its dilapidated state. The space simply did not reflect the excellence that much of the rest of the school represented.

Dave knew that something needed to be done, especially after learning that many families were paying for gym memberships in neighboring towns because the facilities could not meet their fitness needs. Recognizing this urgent issue, Dave brought this matter to the attention of the Board of the Cape Elizabeth Education Foundation (CEEF). In May 2024, he applied for a grant with CEEF asking for $4,285 for new equipment for this area. He wanted to transform this space. A new fitness center for the high school, which would be open to everyone, would create a new environment that would promote health and wellness for the high school students, faculty and staff. It would help equip students with the habits and knowledge for maintaining fitness throughout their lives since regular use improves cardiovascular health, strength and endurance. Studies also show that there are benefits to mental health as well with consistent working out, such as stress-relief, mental clarity and emotional stability. The project was not just for athletes on sports teams, but rather designed for everyone. Whether student or staff, beginner or seasoned-fitness expert, the goal was inclusivity and accessibility. CEEF approved the grant application that month and with that the transformation began into what has been a vast improvement for the high school.

During the summer and fall of 2024, Dave upgraded the facility to now include:

- Three half-rack bench press setups, featuring both 33 lb (6.6 ft) and 44 lb (7.2 ft) barbells, deadlift bars, and Olympic bumper plates;
- Three racks of assorted dumbbells, emphasizing incremental weights from 3-25 lbs;
- Kettlebells, medicine balls, and rubber bands;
- A functional trainer;
- Three TRX kits and yoga mats;
- Cardio equipment: two air bikes, two treadmills, two Peloton bikes, a stair climber, vertical climber, and two rowers; and
- Assisted chin-up/dip machine.

The results have been remarkable. "I have been an active user of the new gym equipment at CEHS. This new set up is incredible; a huge improvement from the last equipment in that space. I enjoy having access to this gym as I am able to exercise each part of my body, from upper body, to legs, to core. Lastly, the new cardio equipment in the hallway is top-notch stuff! I am very thankful for CEEF for providing us with new equipment," said Nic Lops, an Ed-Tech at the CEHS. In addition, Doug Worthly, the CEHS Head Track Coach, said "The new weight room has been invaluable for the team's 80+ different athletes over the winter and spring seasons. The rack stations provide the flexibility and safety we need to create a positive strength training environment for all athletes."

Since its beginning in 2002, CEEF has funded 359 grants for the Cape Elizabeth School District, totaling over $1.75 Million. This is just one example of the collaboration between the two. Thanks to the partnership between CEEF and the school district more student's needs will be met with these updates to this weight room, and new students will be provided the opportunity to explore different paths to strength, fitness and health. In the words of Dave: "As Facilities Director, I've been proud to be a driving force behind this effort. I've used the new equipment myself and have seen a real increase in how often it's being used. It's been great to see the school community benefiting from it and enjoying the space more than ever. I am very grateful to CEEF for their support and sharing this remarkable transformation."

Contributed photo

With the help of a CEEF grant, Facilities Director Dave Bagdasarian recently upgraded the weight room at Cape Elizabeth High School.

PORTLAND HEAD LIGHT FORT WILLIAMS PARK

ANOTHER GREAT SEASON COMES TO AN END

Dedicated individuals make a visit to Fort Williams Park a truly memorable experience. We extend our gratitude to Visitor Services Supervisor Dom Walker and his team of rangers and greeters, as well as Public Works Park Foreman Scott Smart. We would also like to thank Andrea Southworth from Friends of Fort Williams, along with the food truck vendors—Bite Into Maine, Gorgeous Gelato, and C-Salt.

We especially appreciate the efforts of the museum and gift shop staff and volunteers.

Cyndi Alden	Marcia Doherty	Kerry Novak
Barbara Allen	Elizabeth Elliott	Megan Porter
Donna Allen	Beth Flathers	Steve Porter
Roni Barbera	Dale Gavin	Rosanne Rogers
Kelley Boero	Cynthia Gray	Tish Rzeszutko
Grace Brenner	Art Greene	Patti Shaw
Trish Brunet	Jacob Iorfino	Dana Staples
Marie Buckley	Laurie Jensen	Kim Swihart
Sheryl Byrd	Susan Laughton	Eileen Taft
Joan Cirbus	Susan Martin	Doreen Theriault
Bobbi Clapp	Thomas Miller	Nan Twachtman
Paddy Clark	Joann Mills	Sally Urso-Profera
David Connolly	Fran Minden	Rich West
Betty Craig	Connie Morse	
Denise Dixon	Sally Nason	

Judy's Pantry

Continued from page 1

ing in Cape had no way of offering fresh food, only non-perishables. In the early years of the community gardens, all the produce from the Plant A Row plots had gone to pantries in neighboring towns.

Soon after Ruth's initial query to Penny, Ruth, Penny, and I met along with a few others. Ruth generously offered a large room at the church to host the weekly pantry. I offered to coordinate the donations from the two Cape Community Gardens and Penny offered to coordinate donations from Jordan Farm as well as other Cape farms. The first year, the pantry served a relatively small number of families each week with fresh produce. Each year saw an increasing number of participants. When the pantry connected with Wayside Foods and began offering non-perishables along with fresh produce, the name was changed to Judy's Pantry as it's known today in loving memory of Judy."

According to Lombardo, they have some new updates for the pantry as they head into 2026. Lombardo said, "We now have donation drop-off bins at the Lions' Club IGA lobby box and a new bin located outside the [Cape Elizabeth United Methodist] church/pantry door. We have a Judy's Pantry page on Facebook, which we update with pantry needs.

Lombardo also said that Judy's Pantry accepts, in addition to pantry staples, nonperishable items and personal care products. They ask that people please be mindful of expiration dates.

"We are open on the second and fourth Tuesdays of each month from 3 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.," Lombardo said, and added that the hours may expand in the coming year.

Judy's Pantry now has over 20 volunteers who shop, help organize, set up and work out pantry openings.

Support is still strong. Lombardo said, "We have had an outpouring of food and monetary donations over the past two months."

She also said that Sarah Hansen, a counselor at Cape Elizabeth Middle School, is running a 6-week Explorers class at CEMS, where a group of kids are learning about Judy's Pantry and helping with some pantry projects. "I am helping her with this, and it has been great so far," Lombardo.

Judy's Pantry has had summers where Over 1000 pounds of 26 varieties of vegetables were distributed to pantry visitors.

Anyone who would like to participate in any way – as a recipient, as a donor of produce from your garden, or as a volunteer to staff the pantry during the growing season should reach out to Judy's Pantry.

For information on the pantry, those interested can now contact via cejudyspantry@gmail.com or go to the website at: https://ceumc.org/judys-produce-pantry

Contributed image

Contributed photo

For 15 years, upon the passing of Judy Simonds, a fresh produce pantry was founded in her name. At that time, it provided service to about 8 families. Now, in 2025, Judy's Pantry serves over 40 families in Cape Elizabeth and, in addition to the fresh produce, provides meat, cheese, fruit, dry goods and more. It also provides, together with another Cape effort, Thanksgiving baskets to families in need. Pictured above is Judy when the "Plant a Row For the Hungry" plots began. For more information, contact cejudyspantry@gmail.com.

Judy's Pantry annual Thanksgiving basket drive a success

By Megan Maturo

Contributed photo

Volunteers from Judy's Pantry who coordinated the distribution of Thanksgiving baskets

Thanks to the help and generosity of dozens of volunteers and donors, Judy's Pantry was able to provide 50 Thanksgiving meals and Hannaford gift cards to our neighbors in Cape Elizabeth this November. This was the 18th year of the Thanksgiving basket distribution, started by Cape residents Amy Lombardo and Jen Tinsman in 2008 to ensure that all members of our community can enjoy a plentiful holiday meal.

More than 80 individuals and Cape Elizabeth clubs and sports teams put together baskets overflowing with Thanksgiving staples and fun extras to help families celebrate the holiday. Jordan's Farm donated a true bounty of fresh local produce, which was placed in bags beautifully decorated by two longstanding (very artistic!) volunteers. Parishioners of the Cape Elizabeth United Methodist Church baked loaves of sweet breads that were added to each family's bag. Members of the Lion's Club delivered to recipients who were unable to pick their baskets up themselves. Truly, this was a community effort from start to finish.

The Board of Judy's Pantry is deeply grateful to the many volunteers and partners who made this year's Thanksgiving distribution possible, and they are also thankful for the outpouring of support for our little food pantry in recent weeks. The shelves have been stocked and restocked by food drives and donations, helping provide Cape Elizabeth residents access to healthy food in the face of rising grocery prices and increased food insecurity. Neighbors are helping neighbors, and Judy's Pantry clients are feeling that love and support.

If you have questions about Judy's Pantry, you can email cejudyspantry@gmail.com. If you're considering a food donation or drive, current pantry needs moving into the winter holidays include cooking oil, baking mixes, crackers, and personal care items such as toothpaste and shampoo.

Longevity Maine supports quality, in addition to adding years

By Kevin St. Jarre

Photo by Courtney Elizabeth Media

The Longevity Maine team (from left) are Michael Leary, Dr. Ben Hagopian and Kim McDevitt, RD, who together provide integrated medical, fitness and nutrition care focused on prevention and long-term health.

Longevity Maine is a preventive and longevity-focused integrated health practice based in the community, offering an integrated approach to help adults improve their healthspan — not just their lifespan. The team brings together medicine, movement and nutrition to bridge the gap between traditional primary care and cutting-edge lifestyle medicine.

The Longevity Maine team are Michael Leary, Dr. Ben Hagopian and Kim McDevitt, RD, who together provide integrated medical, fitness and nutrition care focused on prevention and long-term health.

Dr. Hagopian, an MD, is a founder, and a Preventive Medicine and Longevity Physician. He leads diagnostic assessment, medical oversight and preventive strategy.

Leary holds a Master's degree and is the Exercise Physiologist. He designs individualized strength, conditioning and movement programs.

Kim McDevitt, MPH, RD (Registered Dietitian) leads nutrition strategy, metabolic health interventions and lifestyle guidance.

With their team-based approach, they offer lifestyle-centered care with the physician, exercise physiologist and registered dietitian working together. They say that their focus on prevention over reaction, with early risk identification, data-driven monitoring and habit-based interventions. In this way, they offer support for adults looking to stay strong, cognitively sharp, metabolically healthy and active for decades to come. Their goal is "improving healthspan," the number of years someone lives in good health,

-see LONGEVITY page 15

Friends' news and notes

By Andrea Southworth

Photo by Andrea Southworth

Above, Friends' staff Betsy Tesh and David Iovino working at Cliffside this fall.

Even on the coldest days, when I walk through Fort Williams Park, I'm reminded of the care and goodwill that give this place vitality and heart. That spirit shines throughout the year: in the dedication of our staff, the contributions of volunteers and students, the hard work of town employees and the quiet moments of appreciation shared by visitors. The Friends are grateful to everyone who makes our work possible, and as the year winds down, we're pleased to share a few of the successes we accomplished together.

2025 was a remarkable year. Our staff contributed 2,600 hours maintaining gardens, tending trails, planting shrubs, and hauling mulch, with two interns bringing energy and fresh ideas to every project. Across the park, we added 425 native plants, from coneflowers in the Children's Garden to birch trees near Battery Garesche. Local volunteers stepped up in a big way, donating an incredible 750 hours to watering, removing invasive plants, and pulling weeds, with an additional 130 volunteer hours assisting programs and events.

The Friends also connected people to the park and nature in meaningful ways. More than 500 attendees joined our programs, from youth and family birding sessions to school group explorations, Four Seasons walks and other guided tours. Beyond the gardens at Fort Williams Park, over 400 guests enjoyed our garden tour fundraiser, which featured eight home gardens in our community.

Looking ahead, we're excited to build on this momentum. New seed frames will allow us to grow more native plants from seed, strengthening restoration efforts across the park. Along with caring for our own sites, we'll lend ecological expertise and hands-on guidance to upcoming Park Committee projects, including landscape improvements near the new playground.

None of this work would be possible without the generosity of our donors, the dedication of our volunteers, and our ongoing partnership with the town. Your contributions help Fort Williams Park to thrive, nurturing the spirit that makes it so special. For updates or to make a year-end gift, visit fortwilliams.org or follow us on social media. Thank you!

Capetoons: Spirit of giving

By Jeff Mandell

Mid Winter Classic is February 2

The Maine Track Club 2020 Mid Winter Classic 10 Mile Race, presented by Fleet Feet Maine Running will be Sunday, February 2. The race, now in it's 39th year, has 1,000 registered runners, and anticipates close to 850 finishers. Starting and finishing at Cape Elizabeth High School, the race directors are advising some traffic delays due to runners on the road, and brief road closures.

The course map is here: http://www.us-atf.org/routes/view.asp?rID=1226

The race starts at 9:45 a.m. The intersection at 77 will only need to be closed for probably 10 minutes at this time.

The intersection of Scott Dyer and Spurwink Avenue will be closed until the last runner is through that - approximately 15-25 minutes.

Eastman and Sawyer will be slow as runners will be on half of the road. The intersection at Spurwink Road and Spurwink Avenue will have potential delays from 10:15 - 11:15 a.m. Bowery Beach Road (77) will have a runner lane from 10:00 a.m. through noon or later, depending on when the last finisher completes the 10 miles.

100 volunteers will be on hand to assist at water stops, traffic marshals and the finish line. Anyone with questions should contact Race Co-Director Chandra Leister at chandra@midwinterclassic10miler.com.

The 2020 race beneficiary continues to be local high school running teams. $11,500 was donated in 2019 to 20 area high school cross country, winter and spring track programs.

The race finish line is located at the bottom lot behind Cape Elizabeth High School. Swimmers that utilize the Cape Elizabeth Pool between 8 a.m. - 12 p.m. on February 1 may be directed to park in a different location, and will be helped by the race parking volunteers.

Race Directors and the Maine Track Club are working closely with Captain Sinclair to ensure safe runners, spectators, volunteers and drivers.

More information is available at http://www.midwinterclassic10miler.com/

Cold moon at Kettle Cove

Photo by Martha Agan

The Cold Moon is the traditional name for December's full moon. The recent Cold Moon was the last full moon and a supermoon of 2025, appearing bright and large around December 4.

Happy holidays from the Recycling Committee

As the season of gift giving is upon us, it's time for an annual reminder from the Recycling Committee about what you can and can't recycle and how to have a sustainable holiday.

First, consider what you're gifting or wrapping. There are plenty of ways to have a sustainable gift-giving season. Cloth wraps, fabric scraps, great finds from the Swap Shop, and newspapers (comics sections are fun) all can be made to work as gift containers or fun wrapping paper. Try paper or fabric gift bags that you can store and reuse, and look for boxes and wrapping materials that contain post-consumer recycled material.

Then, after the gifts have been opened, please recycle what you can. Cardboard is definitely recyclable. Cards and envelopes can all be recycled (though not if they have glitter or are made from photo paper).

What about wrapping paper? Wrapping paper can be recycled if it is made from paper. In general, if you can rip it, you can recycle it! If you can scrunch it and it stays in a ball, it's paper-based and can be recycled. The exception to this is decorative tissue paper: that should be reused or put in the trash.

Other exceptions: Wrapping paper that is made from or contains plastic wrap, Mylar, or cellophane, or has wax coating, foil, or glitter cannot be recycled. If you can't rip it easily, it can't be recycled. The same applies to gift bags. If a gift bag has glitter, beads, or rope handles, it cannot be recycled. Ribbons and bows are also not recyclable and should go into the trash. See if you can find another use for these items!

Styrofoam, bubble wrap and plastic padded envelopes and mailers are not recyclable. Decorations like fabric or string lights are not recyclable; the cords in lights can become wrapped around sorting machinery at ecomaine, causing costly and dangerous delays.

Lastly, when in doubt, throw it out! If you're not sure, consult ecomaine's Recyclopedia at ecomaine.org/101.

CEEF grateul for a successful 2025

By Mika Reynolds
CEEF Executive Director

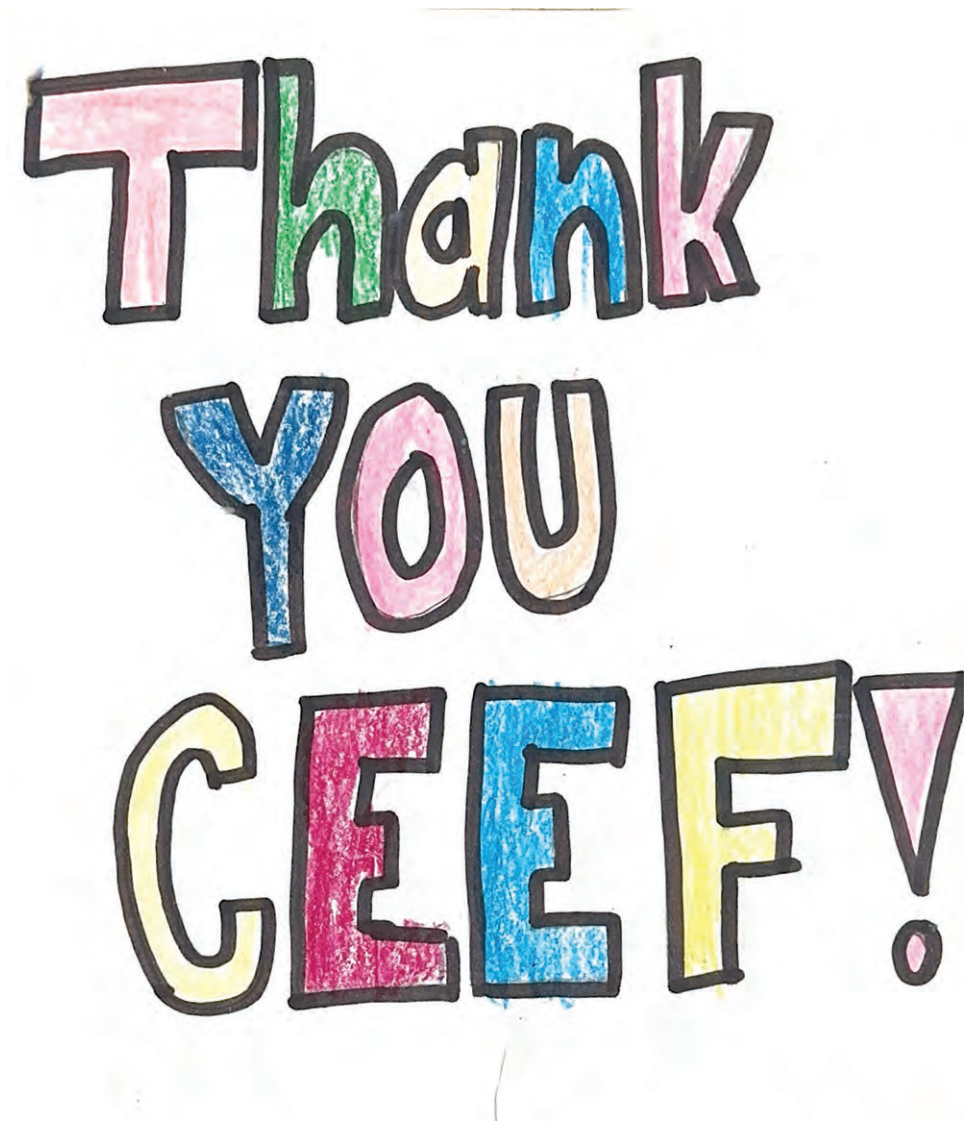
As 2025 draws to a close, it's a meaningful time to reflect and offer sincere thanks to everyone who made it such a successful year. In my first year as Executive Director of the Cape Elizabeth Education Foundation, I'm especially grateful to the school district for its partnership and the many volunteers who generously give their time to benefit every student in our community.

Our grant program remained at the heart of our work this year. In 2025, we awarded 11 grants totaling nearly $66,000 to the district. Highlights include "One School, One Book: Charlie Bumpers vs. the Teacher of the Year" at Pond Cove, CEMS's Math Competitions, and "Sewing Machines for Fashion & 3D Design Class" at CEHS, along with continued funding for our Signature Grant Programs—the CEMS Changemakers Program with Rippleffect and the Fourth Grade Telling Room Writing Workshop. These initiatives enrich the exceptional curriculum our district's dedicated faculty and staff already provide. We look forward to seeing what grants 2026 will bring.

I also want to recognize this year's CEEF award recipients. In June, Justice Julia Lipez of the Maine Supreme Judicial Court and CEHS Class of '98 received the Alumni Award on a picture-perfect day at Fort Williams. This fall, David Shields was honored with the Thompson Award following his remarkable 34 years at Pond Cove, where he taught countless students and later, their children. We also presented the Brownell Award to Dave Croft for his creative grant, Let's Go Gnome Around. We're privileged to celebrate those who've graduated from Cape Elizabeth schools and those who guide the next generation.

Finally, heartfelt thanks to everyone who supports CEEF. Your generosity makes our grantmaking possible. Our annual Play for Education Golf Tournament at Prout's Neck in June was another success, thanks to 128 golfers, over 40 sponsors and dedicated volunteers. In September, we hosted our first Secret Supper and Sweet Celebration, where over 100 guests dined at 12 host homes before gathering for dancing and desserts—an unforgettable evening of community and celebration. The secret is out: it won't be our last. And our Red Apple holiday campaign once again provided an opportunity to honor our hardworking faculty and staff. Thank you for showing such gratitude for all they do for our children.

On behalf of all of us at CEEF, thank you for another remarkable year. We wish you a wonderful holiday season and look forward to seeing you in 2026!



Contributed photo

A thank you note drawn by Cape Elizabeth students and sent to CEEF.

Cape Elizabeth fall season evokes feelings of nostalgia

By Stephen T. Lyons (Garda)

Contributed photo

Registered Maine Guide and Cape Elizabeth Resident Stephen T. Lyons (Garda) and a Great Pyrenees dog cook a meal in the cool air along the Atlantic Ocean in Cape Elizabeth. "Maine, The Way Life Should Be."

From the heart of the Maine woods, with the crisp autumn air, my friend and fellow Registered Maine Guide shared multiple venison steaks with me. He had hunted the deer himself, following deer paths worn smooth by generations of passage.

A few days later I carefully prepared the steaks and let them sit before cooking them over open flames, while listening to the waves of the Atlantic Ocean.

I seasoned the steaks with garlic, salt and Italian dressing. The air was rich with the scent of woodsmoke and fallen leaves as I cooked the steaks.

The first bite was a revelation: smoky, rich, a touch of garlic lingering on my tongue. The flavor, a testament to the bounty of the land and the quiet generosity of my friend.

I ate my steaks in silence, thinking to myself, "This was Maine the way it should be: simple, honest, deeply connected to the rhythm of the season and friendship."

The gift was more than just a meal; it was an acknowledgment of a shared life we live in Maine, a simple perfection of a fall evening, and a common bond known by those who understand friendship and love the wilderness. It was another day in Cape Elizabeth not wasted!

TML hosts author Caleb Mason and financial advisor Jacki Farrell

SPECIAL EVENTS

CEHPS Presents: Remembering Cape sports stories from the 1950s and 1960s

Tuesday, January 13, 6:30 - 8 p.m.

The Hot Stove League will be alive and well on January 6, 2026 when former Cape Elizabeth High School athletes gather at the library to reminisce about sports in the 1950s and 1960s in Cape Elizabeth. This story-filled evening is sponsored by the Cape Elizabeth Historic Preservation Society.

The 1950s featured a state basketball championship and the opening of a new gym as well as success in baseball under coach Durwood Holman. While girls sports were not as prominent in the 1950s, Cape did have a girls softball team and a bowling club as well as the Girls Athletic Association to offer "desirable physical activity." The 1960s saw more success in basketball and baseball as well as increased opportunities for girls.

The night's panel will consist of Carol Barber, Sue Weatherbie, Keith Weatherbie, Harold Pachios and Steve Hill. In the story telling spirit of the evening, other athletes from the 1950s and 1960s are urged to attend and share their memories. Sports fans of all ages are welcome. Contact Steve Hill with any questions or suggestions at stevenshill1950@gmail.com.

The presentation will be held Tuesday, January 6, 2026 from 6:30-8 p.m. in the Community Room of the Thomas Memorial Library. Mark your calendars. The presentation is free and light refreshments will be provided.

Retirement: Making Your Money Last with Jacki Farrell

Wednesday, January 14, 1-2 p.m. (Senior Social Hour)

Join us in welcoming back financial adviser Jacki Farrell for an information Senior Social Hour dedicated to the art and science of retirement savings. Open to all, with plenty of time for questions.

Author Event: Caleb Mason

Thursday, January 15, 6:30 - 8 p.m.

Join us in welcoming local author Caleb Mason as he shares insights and passages from his newest book. "Thickafog "(Publerati, 2025) is a mystery entangled in an octogenarian love story set on a remote Maine island inspired by Vinalhaven. A starred Publishers Weekly review hailed it as a "stunning literary mystery," and Pulitzer Prize-winning novelist Jane Smiley called it "insightful and beautifully written." A follow-up psychological thriller, "The Last Renter," is set to be released in April 2026.

Caleb is also the author of "The Isles of Shoals Remembered: A Legacy from America's First Artists' and Musicians' Colony" (1992), about which Allen Lacy of The New York Times said: "Provides a fascinating look at an important time period in the American arts." Caleb has also written the following novels under the pen name "Don Trowden: Normal Family "(2012); "No One Ran to the Altar" (2016); "All the Lies We Live" (2017), and "Young Again" (2022), co-authored with Valerie McKee. Caleb lives with his wife Anne Nadeau Mason in South Portland.

Dismantling Democracy, presented by the Holocaust and Human Rights Center of Maine

Thursday, January 29, 6:30 - 8 p.m.

The Dismantling Democracy program is a one-hour presentation with Q&A that explores how Hitler and the Nazi party were able to rise to power in Germany, and how, once in office, they effectively, and legally, dismantled democracy. Drawing on primary sources and grounded in historical context, the program presents an extreme yet instructive example of Germany's descent into dictatorship. While we often think of democracy as permanent and secure, history reminds us of its inherent fragility.

For the past two years, we've had the privilege of presenting this program to Maine lawmakers, and now we are eager to bring it to public audiences throughout the state. Join us for this meaningful chance to engage in thoughtful dialogue about safeguarding democratic values, drawing on lessons from our past history.

REGULAR PROGRAMS

Senior Social Hour

Every Wednesday from 1-2 p.m.

Fireside Writing

Every Thursday from 5-6 p.m.

Death Cafe, with Davinica Nemtzow

First Thursday of each month, 6:30 - 8 p.m.

Songwriting Workshop, with Jud Caswell

First Tuesday of each month, 6-8 p.m.

Recurring Programs - Children's

Messy Minis: Mondays @ 10:30 a.m.

Let your imagination run wild and join us for Messy Minis time in the Community Room. Let's color, cut and paste together to make magic! For budding artists ages 2-5 or anyone who enjoys creative play.

Baby Storytime: Tuesdays @ Noon

This program is designed for infants and toddlers from birth - 18 months old and their caregivers. Join Family Engagement Assistant Sarah Gabrielson for 15 minutes of short stories, finger plays, rhymes, songs, and movements followed by 30 minutes of free time to play and chat. Please note, capacity for this program is 25 people. No prior registration required.

Play Group: Wednesdays @ 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Join us for this drop-in play session for children and their caregivers. The Community Room is open for exploration during this time, with special toys and stations while you visit with friends. The capacity for this program is 25 people. Doors open at 10:25 a.m. Arrive early to secure your spot!

Toddler Story Time: Thursdays @ 10:30 a.m.

This program is for children who are not ready for a traditional story time but who love to sing songs, move their bodies and listen to stories. This gentle introduction to the routines and props of story time is great for curious, wandering wigglers ages 1-3 and their caregivers.

Preschool Story Time: Fridays @ 10:30 a.m.

Join us in the Community Room for songs, stories and Belinda the Bear! Geared toward children ages 3-5 or anyone who enjoys listening to a solid two stories.

Lego Club : First Tuesday of the month @ 3:30 p.m., January 6

Come free-build or pick up a challenge card to try something new. Masterpieces will be put on display until the next Lego Club meeting. No registration necessary.

Read to a Dog

Most Mondays from 3:30-4:30 p.m. & Saturdays from 11:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m.

Children in grades K-6, especially developing readers, are invited to sign up for 15-minute time slots to read to a certified therapy dog. Please sign up on our TML Events Calendar on the website for a slot with your child's name and your email address. Families with multiple children are advised to sign up each child separately, so each may have quality time with our reading dogs.

Venture Club

Every Wednesday from 2:45 - 4:30 p.m.

Venture Club is a teen-led board/card game and D&D club for teens 13 and up, with an emphasis on board games. We'll try to play new games every week. No prior gaming experience is needed. Snacks will be provided.

Library Squad

First Friday of the month @ 2:45 p.m.

Library Squad is a group of young people who advise on library happenings. Members of the squad have a designated book recommendation shelf. They help design displays, craft children's room decor, and provide feedback and ideas on library programs. Monthly meetings include snacks, social time, the occasional craft, and cool vibes with friends and librarians. For tweens and teens ages 11 – 13.

TLC: Teen Leadership Council, for ages 14+

Last Friday of the month @ 2:45 p.m.

Help shape the future of the teen space and…

- Earn volunteer hours
- Advise on library policies
- Design new programs

The Teen Leadership Council (TLC) will meet once a month on the last Friday of the month. Among other topics meetings will include snacks, chatting, and teen-led discussions about library programs and policies. Join us and build your leadership and advocacy skills while establishing

-see LIBRARY page page 14

Local birding report

By Brooks Bornhofft

As December settles in with snow and below average temperatures my backyard ebbs and flows with familiar winter activity: Dark-eyed Juncos chasing, White-throated Sparrows scratching, Cardinals glowing, Goldfinches clinging, Carolina Wrens creeping, House Finches and Chickadees dashing, White-breasted Nuthatches whacking, Titmice fluttering, Doves perching and Bluebirds watching.

Over the past several weeks, an array of winter visitors have arrived across Cape. Inland, the only winter finch with multiple reported sightings is the Evening Grosbeak. Along our rocky, windswept coastlines, seabird activity continues to heat up with eleven newly arriving species reported during the same period.

On November 23, along McKinney Point Road, I spotted my second male Evening Grosbeak of the season perched high in a leafless tree. Though swift in flight, these birds often seem unhurried when resting, lingering quietly for several minutes at a time. I also heard calls from what was likely a second bird nearby and noted in eBird that more than one might have been present. A few days later, a neighbor on the same road reported a female Evening Grosbeak at their feeder.

Then, on December 9, two males briefly visited my backyard, a moment both humbling and exhilarating, like witnessing a secret of nature hidden from most eyes. Sadly, their rarity reflects a troubling trend. A 2017 Partners in Flight Landbird Conservation Plan reported a 92% population decline since 1970, naming Coccothraustes vespertinus as the steepest-declining landbird in the continental U.S. While there are several distinct populations, recent data suggests small pockets in the Northeast and West may be showing signs of recovery. Originally confined to western coniferous forests, Evening Grosbeaks began expanding eastward in the late 1800s—likely aided by box elder plantings and abundant feeder seed—establishing breeding populations in the eastern U.S. and Canada by the early 1920s.

Additionally, on the snowy late afternoon of December 2 within Crescent Beach State Park, I observed four Greater Scaup, a Red-throated Loon and a Northern Mockingbird fiercely guarding its winterberry fiefdom. In comparison to a Common Loon, Red-throated Loons are smaller, with visibly thinner bills that almost always appear slightly upturned, unlike the Common Loon's thicker, straight bill that is typically horizontal to the water.

On December 7, scrambling along the rocky shoreline from Dyer Point to Two Lights State Park, I encountered three separate flocks of hardy Harlequin Ducks. A dozen females and half as many males doning striking blue, chestnut, and white masked were boldly foraging for mollusks and crustaceans by darting down to the depths of the tumultuous sea. As I crept closer, their squeaky calls—earning them the nickname "sea mouse" were audible. Despite the cute moniker, Harlequins are rugged birds; studies show they suffer more broken bones than any other species, with most adults living with multiple healed fractures.

Interestingly, Maine's coast hosts more than half of the eastern population in winter. At night, these ducks roost on open water far from shore. Other highlights at Two Lights included large offshore rafts of Black Scoters, Common Eiders and Long-tailed Ducks yodeling. Along the shore, I found a lingering Yellow-rumped Warbler and the inland forest was alive with Red-breasted Nuthatches.

Speaking of warblers, late-season reports across Casco Bay and its islands over the last two weeks included several Nashville Warblers, a Prairie Warbler and a Virginia's Warbler on Peaks Island. The Virginia's Warbler, a southwestern species, has only a handful of confirmed Maine records, all from Monhegan Island. Another rarity, an "accidental" MacGillivray's Warbler, was recently reported along the Royal River. This skulker of western mountains has just four accepted Maine records, the last in Cape (Kettle Cove) in November 2015.

As the sun began to set on December 5, I wandered through Hobstone neighborhood's protected forest—a 21-acre tract of spruce, fir and hemlock preserved in 1997 by the Cape Elizabeth Land Trust, local residents and the town. Though sightings were sparse, I heard several Brown Creepers and a Barred Owl called out a single, signature "Who cooks for you,?" likely a young male staking its territory.

For decades Barred owls were concentrated primarily in southern and central Maine. However as forests matured and adandoned farmland reverted to woodland, Barred owls moved steadily northward. Today, they inhabit nearly the entire state, including remote boreal regions where, not long ago, they were absent. Eight hooters prefer older forests with layered canopies, decaying logs, and dense undergrowth. These environments support high prey availability and ideal nesting cavities. As Maine's forests matured after 19th-century logging and farming decline, barred owls found near-perfect habitats. On the other side of the country, Barred Owls are causing a lot of commotion.

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service's plan to remove Barred Owls in the Pacific Northwest is controversial—and unfortunately, it's the only viable alternative. Owls often evoke strong emotional responses, and understandably, the idea of killing them sparks intense opposition. However, this plan is grounded in over 40 years of research on the Northern Spotted Owl and considers multiple alternatives before arriving at this strategy.

While some argue that culling is extreme, the facts tell a different story. Barred Owls

-see BIRDING REPORT page 15

December naturalist's corner

By Erika Carlson Rhile

December 21, 10:03 a.m. - Winter Solstice. This is the first day of winter in the Northern Hemisphere and the first day of summer in the Southern Hemisphere. The sun will rise at 7:11 a.m. and set at 4:07 p.m. The hours of daylight today will be 6 hours and 30 minutes shorter than the summer solstice. Time to hibernate!

Speaking of hibernating…Maine only has three animals that truly hibernate over the winter. The Little Brown Bat spends October to mid-spring in its hibernacula. Its heartbeat slows from 1,000 beats per minute to only five!

Your neighborhood groundhog has cozied up in its den where his body temperature drops to 38°F, heart rate to four beats per minute, and breaths to ten an hour. Meadow jumping mice often have a den beneath logs (hello, woodpile!). These mice fatten up before closing their tunnels with soil and sleeping through the winter.

It's always fun to go animal tracking after it snows. Prints aren't the only way to identify winter visitors, also consider an animal's gait. Rabbits and squirrels are "hoppers," skunks and porcupines tend to waddle, a single line often indicates a fox, coyote or deer. A tail dragged in the snow might be an ermine or muskrat. Scat and fur can be additional indicators.

January's first Full Moon will be one of 2026's three Supermoons. The Full Wolf Moon will be on January 3 at 5:03 a.m.

The "KID" Courier

"Mr. Bagel," drawn by Pond Cove fourth grader Beau Sahrbeck.

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, December 18

Fort Williams Park Committee, Cape Elizabeth High School, 6 p.m.

Friday, December 19

Energy Committee, Town Hall, 7 p.m.

Thursday, December 25

Christmas Holiday

Thursday, January 1

New Year's Day

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 Preservation Society, 9 a.m. - noon on Thursdays and by appointment, Fort Williams, 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.

CABLE GUIDE CETV CHANNEL 1302

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

Nothing scheduled

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: 10:00 a.m.
In-person Sunday services 10:00 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

Library

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connections with your community.

Family Engagement Special Programs

Special Story Time & Play Group: Sleep Solutions for Babies

Tuesday, January 13 Noon - 1:00 p.m.

For parents and caregivers of babies. Join Family Engagement Assistant Sarah Gabrielson and Certified Child Sleep Consultant Zara Jarrett for a special sleepy story time.

Sarah will read a book about sleep and sing some songs for the first 15 minutes. During the following 45 minutes Zara will lead a relaxed group Q&A about baby and toddler sleep while the babies play with toys and each other.

Come with your questions—or Zara will kick things off with common sleep challenges to get the conversation going. We'll chat together as a group so everyone can learn from each other. No registration required.

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

Drum Lessons: Any age/level. Flow technique, reading not required. Frank, 603.285.3032.

BUSINESSES/SERVICES

EXTREMELY CLEAN - Deep Cleaning Services. The Way Cleaning Should Be! References/Insured
25+years of experiences
Luz Carpenter - 207-329-3757

Paint Services offered. Indoor or outside. $35 an hour. Happy to help. David Shields. Email: ds8031@yahoo.com

Planning Board

Continued from page 5

minded" projects TideMark has completed or is in progress of constructing. Some of the residential projects shown were similar in size to the proposed Center Court project, others demonstrated a commitment to prioritizing important community infrastructure and visual appeal.

A letter of "financial capacity" of credit worthiness by M&T Bank was provided as part of the application materials. Matt Caton had concerns that the letter would not be enough information for financial capability.

O'Meara reminded the Board that their job is to "rule out the truly unsavory and shaky applications" and that further financial investigation would be done by Town staff to determine financial capability by the applicant to complete the project.

Caton added that based on the residential projects shown by Geohegan which "take up front funds and [Center Court] is a smaller project," he's "satisfied with the documentation presented.

The Board approved unanimously and wished Geohegan good luck with the project.

Longevity

Continued from page 8

and going beyond simply adding more years without regard to quality of those years.

Their clinical and diagnostic services include advanced cardiac evaluation, VO2 max testing and fitness assessment, full metabolic assessment, DEXA scans for bone density and body composition, bloodwork panels with deeper cardiometabolic markers such as ApoB, insulin, hsCRP, etc., and whole genome sequencing and interpretation.

Longevity Maine's lifestyle and performance services include nutrition counseling and lifestyle coaching, movement and strength training programs, personalized long-term health plans and support for weight optimization, muscle preservation, metabolic health and stress resilience.

The team at Longevity Maine says that chronic disease risk can be identified years before symptoms appear, and muscle loss, bone density decline, and cardiometabolic changes accelerate after age 40 but that those processes are highly modifiable.

They say their team-based model gives individuals the tools, data and accountability to stay healthier for longer.

Those interested can learn more at their website: www.longevitymaine.co or their social media: @longevitymaine.

Birding report

Continued from page 13

are not native to western North America; they expanded westward from the East Coast due to human-driven changes in the Midwest, ultimately invading Pacific forests. Habitat protection alone has failed; Spotted Owl populations continue to decline by roughly 12% annually where Barred Owls are present. Protected areas cannot stop Barred Owls from encroaching because they thrive in the same habitats as Spotted Owls and even in areas Spotted Owls do not use.

One of the most misleading claims is that 450,000 Barred Owls will be killed. In reality, that figure represents a worst-case scenario. The preferred strategy projects closer to 5,000 removals per year over 30 years—about 150,000 in total—targeting less than 0.5% of the population annually. This is not "open season;" removal will be carried out by trained professionals under strict federal oversight.

Beyond the Spotted Owl, 29 other species of conservation concern, including endangered salamanders, frogs, and small owls such as flammulated, screech, and pygmy owls, are being impacted by the Barred Owl's unchecked spread. Barred Owls are not harmless natives in this region; they are invasive competitors, displacing Spotted Owls and destabilizing ecosystems. If we value biodiversity and want to prevent extinction, science-based intervention is the only realistic path forward. This plan is not about favoring one species, it's about restoring balance and protecting an entire web of life.

The "KID" Courier

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

We are looking for artwork or stories for our new section, The "KID" Courier.

Send submissions to: info@capecourier.com

Have something to sell?
Having a yard sale? Want to spread the word about a new business or service?

Tell them here!
Classifieds in The Courier work!

Meeting

Continued from page 3_____

food trucks to be allowed during community events.

Library Site Improvement - Planning and Design

In accordance with the chapter 2 administrative code, Rachel Davis, the Library Director at Thomas Memorial, requested approval for landscaping improvements for a "more park-like atmosphere" with outdoor amenities including a poetry garden to enhance library services. In order to pursue funding opportunities, the library requires Town Council approval.

Davis added that the library wants to make the front lawn facing Scott Dyer Road to be a more landscaped area, as well as area on either side of patio area to have ecologically friendly, sustainable gardens and "potentially rain gardens" as a demonstration on how to incorporate native species into landscaping. Davis also suggested a shade structure over the outdoor tables. Davis said the library is "looking forward to pursuing a design that we can use to apply for grants." The council voted unanimously to approve.

Zoning Change Request for BA Zone - Bed and Breakfast provisions

Casey Prentice of the Prentice Group requested amendments for the Good Table property located at 527 Ocean House Road to allow for bed and breakfast provisions in the BA zone as they're allowed in the adjacent BB zone.

Councilor Anderson asked Prentice if the request was a "time sensitive issue" for the upcoming summer season. Prentice replied "certainly not" and that they understood the lengthy process to achieve their goal and wanted to "kick start" the process. The council voted to send the request to the Planning Board for the next step of the process which will include drafting ordinance language.

Property Tax Abatement - 368 Spurwink Avenue and 340 Spurwink Avenue

Two parcels on Spurwink Avenue have been assessed in duplicate and require Town Council approval to be corrected by the assessor's office. Corrections can be made without council approval if it existed for a year or less, with anything older requiring council approval.

Additionally, lots on 340 Spurwink Avenue that had been subdivided previously have differing acreage listings that did not add up to the total amount. The council approved both measures with tax abatement corrections coming from a specified fund balance that's "used for issues like this."

Zoning Change Request - Non-conforming lots front yard setbacks for porches and ramps

Councilor Sahrbeck suggested lessening the setback from 20 feet to 15 feet for non-conforming lots as it would "save staff's time" and allow residents "more opportunity to do something with their property, especially those with small lots already."

This setback adjustment would help property owners who wish to add safety and handicap accessible ramps, for example, be a more approachable and affordable project. Currently, a property owner is required to obtain a building permit and obtain a lot survey which costs several thousands of dollars and can "cost more than the project itself." The council approved the zoning change request and will move forward to the Planning Board.

Nature scene around town

Photo by Brooks Bornhofft

Brooks Bornhofft snapped this photo of two Evening Grosbeaks in his backyard on December 9.

Photo by Martha Agan

A Purple Sandpiper at Kettle Cove.