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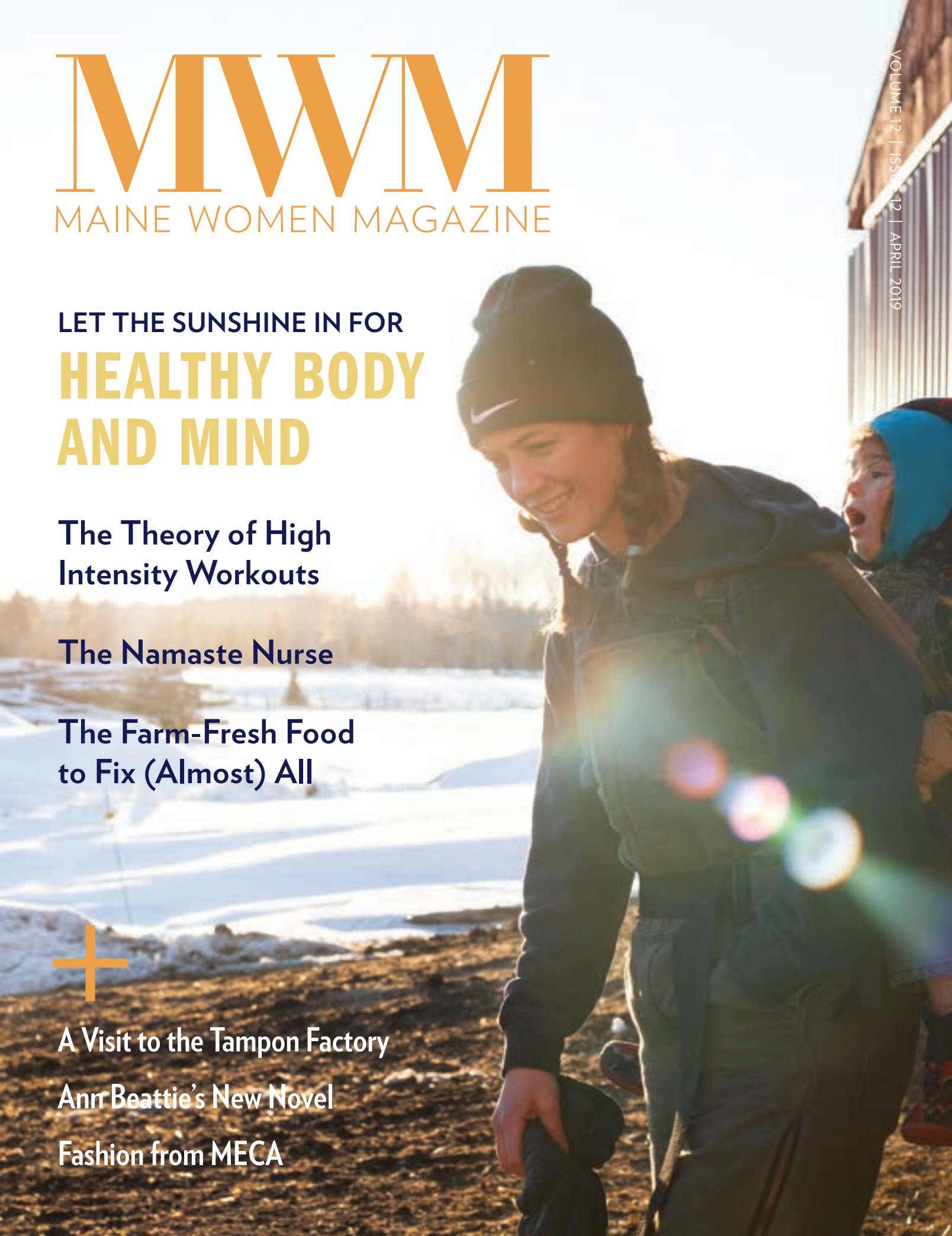
MWM
MAINE WOMEN MAGAZINE



LET THE SUNSHINE IN FOR

HEALTHY BODY AND MIND

The Theory of High Intensity Workouts

The Namaste Nurse

The Farm-Fresh Food to Fix (Almost) All

+

A Visit to the Tampon Factory

Ann Beattie's New Novel

Fashion from MECA

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32-year-old state trooper
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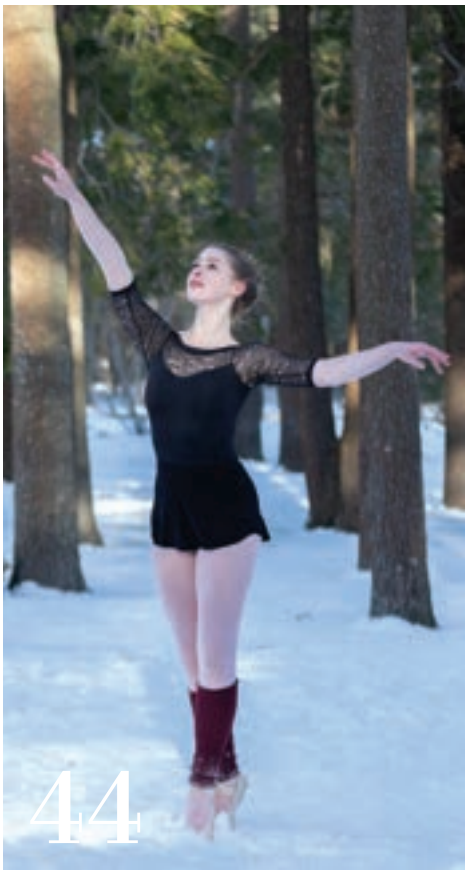
IN THIS ISSUE

ALL THIS AND MORE ORIGINAL CONTENT CAN BE FOUND ONLINE AT MAINEWOMENMAGAZINE.COM



FEATURED

IN EVERY ISSUE

Western Maine Health
MaineHealth

When doctors found a mass on her ovary, Rebecca feared her dreams of starting a family were over before they began. Her gynecologist at Western Maine Health wouldn't let her give up hope, and worked with surgeons at Maine Medical Center to restore her to health. A year later, Rebecca's same gynecologist delivered her a miracle. A miracle she named Porter. Compassionate care. Coordinated care. Through MaineHealth, you are connected to better.

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MaineHealth

MaineHealth

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Mary Pols

ON THE COVER

Farmer Caitlin Frame of The Milkhouse in Monmouth, and her son Linus, greet the day. The Milkhouse has successfully scaled up its artisanal, organic yogurt production and is now selling at Hannafords throughout the state.

Photo by Bonnie Durham

BEING WELL

In 2010, I had the good fortune to interview the writer Anne Lamott. She had a new novel coming out and I went to church with her, which was incredible, for the sermon and the opportunity to see how serene Lamott, recovering alcoholic, self-confessed sinner, political junkie, fast talker, was in this, her true sanctuary. Lamott mattered deeply to me. Her seminal book about single motherhood, *Operating Instructions*, had given me the strength to embark on unexpected single motherhood. When I was writing a memoir about my own motherhood a few years before, she had been my dream blurb (you don't always get what you want).

I also visited her at her home in Northern California. She offered me something to eat, which I declined, apologetically, explaining whatever diet I was on at the time. Maybe it involved snacks of carefully counted out almonds. Or rice cakes. In any event, Lamott nodded sagely and brought me something non-caloric, maybe herbal tea, instead. I thought we'd maybe dish about body image now that I'd confessed to a diet. We're both April babies, born a decade apart, and she was coming up on a big, middle-aged birthday. Instead she delivered what could have been a punchline, if she'd been looking for a laugh (she's one of the funniest women alive). But her tone was too cool and even for that.

"How much weight are you planning to gain back?" she asked.

I stared at her, questioningly. Lamott stared back. She has dreadlocks. She dresses like she's permanently on her way to a protest or a hike or the health food store. She has a beautiful and nimble mind, filled with dark thoughts she shares to make the rest of us feel both better about our dark thoughts and perhaps, more ready to let them go. "Because you always do," Lamott said. She was not expressing dissatisfaction or disappointment with this. It was matter-of-a-fact and it was self-accepting.

I think about that often, but not enough. Deep into the last edits for this issue, which is themed around healthy bodies and minds, I swung by the desk of one of my favorite former colleagues at the Portland Press Herald for a chat. There were Girl Scout cookies everywhere in the office, and I'd just spied the telltale foil wrapping of the legendary Thin Mints, and maybe that's why we started talking about food right away. We alternately bashed ourselves and self-deprecated, but I told her that I'd stepped on the scale that morning and thought, instead of trying to lose weight, how about I make sure I don't gain any more? How about I cut myself some slack and enjoy moving my body while I still can, especially in Maine's stunning landscapes?

Some of the reasons—besides Anne Lamott—for that self-acceptance come from editing this issue. This month we share the perspective of a New York psychotherapist, Maine native Catharine Baker-Pitts, who has patient who sees Maine as the ultimate geographic cure. We have stories about a nurse who runs a yoga studio and has special insight into the mind-body connection, as well as the latest fitness trend sweeping Maine. On the food side of things, we've got a story about the successful Maine yogurt producer now selling at your local Hannaford. And don't miss high school senior Eliza Rudalevige's story about how dance empowered her in her fight against anorexia or Chelsea Terris Scott's touching piece on how a pharmacist from Burundi lives under the radar here, without asylum, as a home health care worker. Here's to being well, whatever that looks like.

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Cut Your Alzheimer's Risk in Half

a new combination diet

As the prevalence for Alzheimer's and dementia heightens, many wonder what they can do to prevent this debilitating disease. Diet has long been touted as a manageable lifestyle adjustment one can apply to their everyday routine in an effort to improve cognitive function.

A recent observational study combines two popular dietary recommendations into one plan. Researchers at Rush University Medical Center in Chicago formed the MIND diet – combining the popular Mediterranean diet with the DASH diet (Dietary Approaches to Stop Hypertension). MIND stands for Mediterranean-DASH Intervention for Neurodegenerative Delay.

While the study cannot prove causation, the correlation is encouraging, and further studies are expected.

Participants in the study saw a **53% reduction in Alzheimer's Disease risk**, & even those who moderately followed the MIND diet had a 35% decrease in risk.

The MIND diet:

Vegetables: 6 or more leafy greens per week and 1 other non-starchy vegetable per day

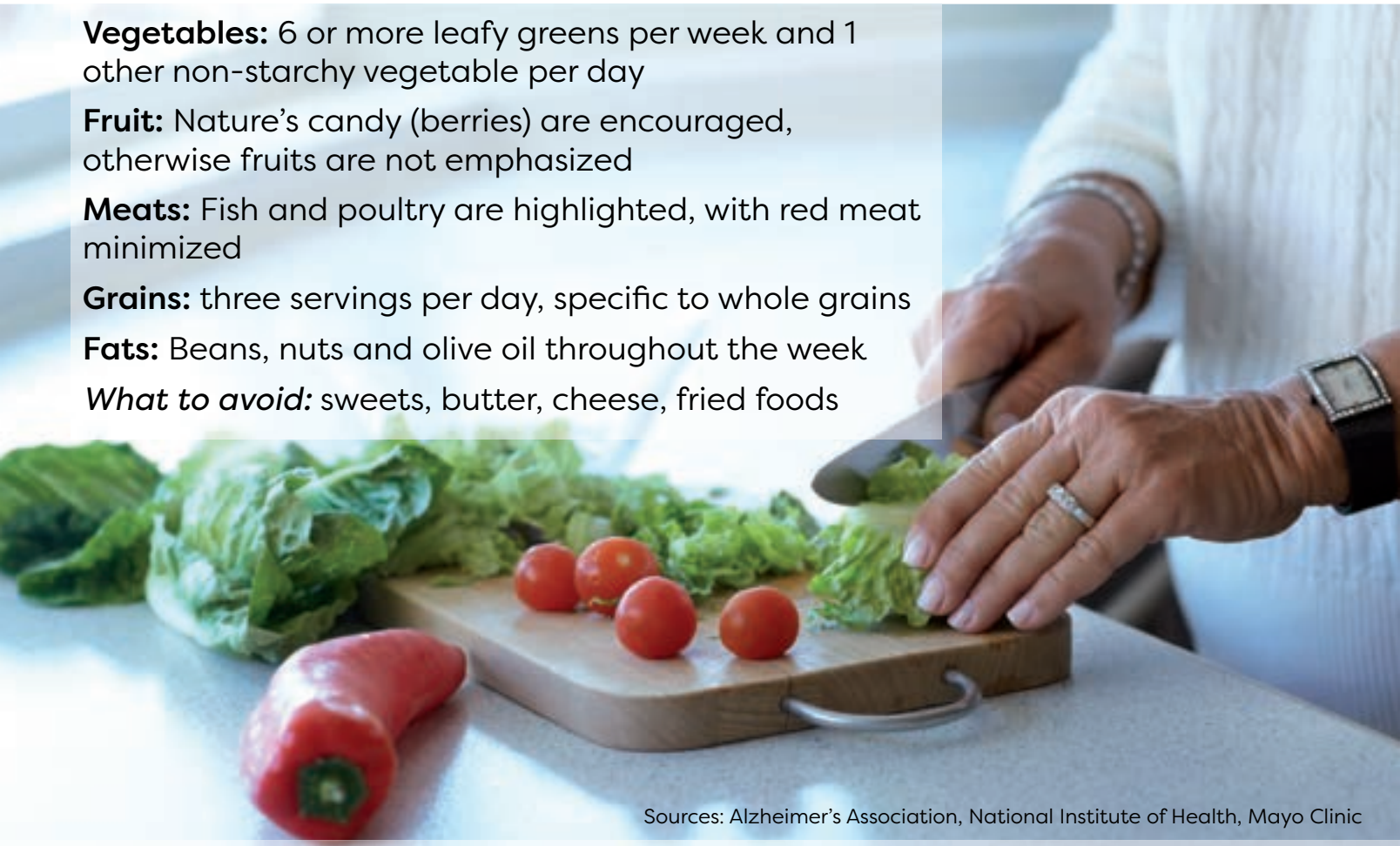
Fruit: Nature's candy (berries) are encouraged, otherwise fruits are not emphasized

Meats: Fish and poultry are highlighted, with red meat minimized

Grains: three servings per day, specific to whole grains

Fats: Beans, nuts and olive oil throughout the week

What to avoid: sweets, butter, cheese, fried foods



Sources: Alzheimer's Association, National Institute of Health, Mayo Clinic

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater in Alvin Ailey's *Revelations*. *Photo by Pierre Wachholder*

ROAD RACES, GALAS AND BIRDING; SPRING IS HERE.

BY AMY PARADYSZ

Maine Women's Fund Award Luncheon

Tuesday, April 2, 11:30 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Holiday Inn by the Bay, 88 Spring St., Portland

Maine Women's Fund, with a focus on the economic security of Maine women and girls, celebrates community leaders Kimberly Acker Lipp of educational nonprofit JMG, Gilda Nardone of New Ventures Maine, Susan Roche of Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project and Fowsia Musse of Maine Community Integration. *Tickets are $100 at mainewomensfund.org.*

EqualityMaine Gala

Saturday, April 6, 5:30–10 p.m.

Holiday Inn by the Bay, 88 Spring St., Portland

Maine's LGBTQ+ community and allies mark the 35th anniversary of EqualityMaine with this big bash, including a cocktail party, live and silent auctions, dinner and awards (and a *Just Dance* after-party at Portland House of Music and Events). Honorees include Ian-Meredythe Lindsey, who successfully challenged the state to add a non-binary gender designation on state-issued IDs and licenses; Joyce Maker, former state senator from Calais who has been a champion for LGBTQ+ equality in the Republican Party and state Legislature; and community activist Ev Norsworthy, a sophomore at the University of Maine Farmington. *Tickets are $100 at equalitymaine.org/gala.*

Driven Women

Thursday, April 11, 5:30–8 p.m.

On the Marsh Bistro,
46 Western Ave., Kennebunk

Business leaders at various stages of their careers will share stories of their professional journeys at this fourth annual women's event hosted by the Kennebunk, Kennebunkport & Arundel Chamber. Mingle, enjoy bites and beverages and be inspired. *Tickets are available at gokennebunks.com.*

Patriots Day Race for the Kids

Saturday, April 13, 9–10 a.m.

Ocean Gateway, Thames Street, Portland

Pick your course—5 miles or 5K—and register for the Boys and Girls Clubs of Southern Maine's 90th annual Patriots Day Race to raise funds for local youth scholarships. The first 250 to register get a T-shirt, and the first 700 runners to cross the finish line get a pint glass and a ticket to a Portland Sea Dogs regular season game. *Registration is $25 via bgcmaine.org.*

Goodwill's Little Black Dress Event for Veterans

Thursday, April 25, 6–9 p.m.

Ocean Gateway, Portland

Love to dress up and humble brag about your secondhand finds? Goodwill's down-to-earth annual fashion show doesn't take itself too se-

riously, but it does raise money for veterans in the Job Connections program who need temporary emergency assistance. *General admission tickets are $50 via eventbrite.com.*

Maine Spring LIVE: Wildlife, Science & You

Saturday, April 27, 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.
Maine Audubon,
20 Gilsland Farm Road, Falmouth

Enjoy bird and nature walks, presentations on citizen science projects, solar energy tours, live animal presentations and birdhouse construction demonstrations (leave with your own kit!). Add in food trucks, games and face painting and it's a festival. This free family event is hosted by Maine Audubon in partnership with Maine Public as part of a nationwide project with PBS and the acclaimed *Nature* series. (Watch for *American Spring LIVE* on PBS April 29–30 and May 1, with live broadcasts from around the nation, including from a sheep farm in Unity.)

Girls on Fire

Sunday, April 28, 9 a.m. to 1:30 p.m.
CoworkHERS, 411 Congress St., Portland

Sex therapists Jennifer Wiessner and Kristin Areglado Hurley lead this free annual forum for high school-age girls to ask questions and talk about healthy relationships, consent and anatomy of pleasure. It's a safe space just for females ages 14–18 (with anyone under 16 requiring parental consent). Parents can stay for the first hour for *Sexual Literacy 101 for Parents and Caregivers*.

Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater

Wednesday, May 1, 7:30 p.m.
Merrill Auditorium, 20 Myrtle St., Portland

Portland Ovations presents the Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater with an evening of distinctive choreography set to a wide range of musical styles, concluding with the beloved work *Revelations*, set to African American spirituals, song-sermons, gospels and blues. Before the show, Dr. Myron Beasley, associate professor of African American Studies at Bates College, will give a free talk, *Alvin Ailey and the Reinvention of American Dance and Performance. Tickets are $35–$75 at porttix.com.*

Amy Paradysz is a writer, editor and photographer who lives in Scarborough.

READING RAINBOW

Families that looked like hers weren't represented on her daughter's bookshelves. Here's how Alli Harper built a business to help others find picture books featuring diverse families.

BY MERCEDES GRANDIN | PHOTOGRAPHED BY MOLLY HALEY

Like many entrepreneurs, Alli Harper's business idea emerged from a very personal place. As a lawyer and community organizer, Harper worked on the 2012 marriage equality campaign in Maryland. She and her wife Jen Monti were the first same sex couple to be legally married in Baltimore in 2013. Their daughter Anna was born just a few days later. Soon after, they asked their friends and networks to recommend children's books featuring families with two moms so their bookshelves could reflect their family and values. "We were really surprised when we only found one board book, *Mommy, Momma and Me*," Harper says. Dismayed, she devoted herself to building a personal collection of diverse children's books including "every LGBTQ book I could find."

She wanted books that didn't treat lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer families as "issues" to be explained, but portrayed everyday representations of characters and families resembling her own. But by 2016, when the family relocated to from Maryland to Maine so that Monti, a cardiologist, could take a job directing The Innovation Cohort at Maine Medical Center, Harper was still frustrated by how hard it was to find these kinds of books. Harper, 40, decided to do something about it, putting her legal career on hold. She brainstormed, organized and did market research with help from readers of a website called M is for Movement, which advocates for social action and justice to be part of children's literature (a post Harper wrote about the issue for that site in January 2018 reached 55,000 people on Facebook). In November, she launched OurShelves, a subscription service that features regular deliveries of boxes filled with curated collections of books like the ones she and Monti wanted for Anna.

Harper was "blown away" by the immediate response, with 80 percent of OurShelves' early subscribers opting for a full year's membership. "I think it goes to show how urgent the demand is for these books that people were willing to prepay for a year after basically one blog post," Harper says. She anticipates that the more subscribers she gets, the more publishers will recognize the need to diversify the books they choose to publish. "Our belief is that a strong group of parents, teachers and librarians who are passionate about something can actually be very powerful and change the picture book industry," Harper says. She found that small publishers often don't have the sales and distribution power to focus on selling diverse books, or if they do, they're not reaching their target market. The less LGBTQ topics are mentioned outright on a book's cover and cover summaries, the less visible they become to search engines; OurShelves' goal is to make those books easy to find. Harper hopes publishers will listen. "Our message is when you create stories that our members want, we'll be here to support you with sales. We get the books to the target audience and give data back to publishers to help them make better, more responsive content." Her ultimate goal is "a world in which children look at their bookshelves, feel affirmed, and see many different children and families around them."

OurShelves has a volunteer curation team of four, in addition to Harper, all looking for diverse books. The team has collective experience in academia, literacy, child development and parenting, as well as "a common experience of being underrepresented and knowing the importance of being able to see themselves and their families in books," Harper says. The goal is for all the boxes OurShelves sends out to feature LGBTQ characters, characters of color, gender nonconforming and feminist characters, as well as characters with different religious beliefs and abilities. The more intersectional a book is in covering these topics, the better.

OurShelves' books are boxed according to three age ranges: the Sunshine Box (0–2 years), the Rainbow Box (2–5 years) and the Treehouse Box (5–7 years). Customers choose by age range and one, three or five books per box (three is the most common). Subscription rates range from about $80 to $300 annually for quarterly deliveries. Customers can also buy a one-time gift box. Each box also includes a conversation starter activity, although often, the books spark dialogue on their own. When her daughter Anna read *Mommy's Khimar* by Jamilah Tompkins-Bigelow, a story about a young Muslim girl who plays with her mother's khimar and turns the covering garment into a superhero cape, Harper explains "Anna connected with this girl and the idea of becoming a female superhero, which is beautiful. That's what we're looking for."

Since launching OurShelves, Harper's biggest challenge has been keeping up with customer demand. She stopped marketing temporarily to focus on building the business' technical capacity. Harper hired a full time employee to manage everyday operations, as well as two part-time employees to help with boxing and shipping orders. She's also moving the business from inside her Cumberland home to their newly renovated barn, which will double as warehouse. In the midst of all this, the couple welcomed a new baby, Isaac, in December.

Harper received support from Maine's startup mentoring programs, including SCORE, CEI Women's Business Center and the Maine Technology Institute's startup assistance program. "Between MTI funding and some early investors and subscribers, we covered our costs for a year," Harper says. As OurShelves grows and aims to triple its first year launch revenue in 2019, Harper says "the goal is to prove market demand as we grow. In order for us to make the change we want to make in the industry, our effort needs to be financially sustainable."

Mercedes Grandin is a freelance writer, editor, English teacher and tutor. She lives in Brunswick with her husband Erik and their chocolate Labrador Fozzie.

FOR MORE INFORMATION
go to ourshelves.com

Top row: Some of the books offered by Cumberland-based OurShelves, which Alli Harper's original customer, her daughter Anna (feet first here) gives her seal of approval to.

Left and below: Harper prepares one of the quarterly packages of books OurShelves sends to subscribers. The Cumberland entrepreneur aims to connect families with books filled with storylines and characters that resemble them.

Bottom left: Harper and her wife Jen Monti enjoy a picture book with their children.

Bottom center and right: Harper puts a final touch on a package before boxing it up. Subscription rates range from about $80 to $300 annually for quarterly deliveries. Customers can also buy a one-time gift box.

REFUGEE RESILIENCE

Trained as a pharmacist, this new Mainer with a PhD puts in many hours of overtime as a low-wage home health worker and waits to gain asylum, her key to success here.

BY CHELSEA TERRIS SCOTT | PHOTOGRAPHED BY HEIDI KIRN

"I'm so tired of my life," M.L. says with a sigh. She's just coming off a 12-hour shift, caring for adults with disabilities, and now she's been asked to recall the challenges she has faced establishing a life for herself and her sons here in Portland as a refugee from Burundi. Her first response was a long pause, her gaze penetrating the wall before her. Then this poised woman, who typically volunteers generous smiles and laughter, tears up.

Transitions are often difficult, but for M.L., 57, identified here by just her initials because of her legal status, change has involved one brutal awakening after the next. She immigrated with her sons to the United States in December 2014 to escape a political situation that made her afraid for her safety and for her children and their futures. Leaving behind what had been a happy upper-middle class life, M.L. arrived in Maine thinking that her husband would soon join her and their two sons, now 16 and 22. Instead his attempts to get a visa were blocked. M.L. was forced to adjust to single motherhood, immediate poverty and Maine's coldest season all at once.

"I never planned to leave," M.L. says of Burundi. "It's where I planned my life." She earned her PhD in pharmaceutical chemistry and pharmacognosy at Moscow Medical Academy in Russia. The two countries had a good relationship, and Burundi students sometimes receive scholarships to Russian universities. M.L. had the qualifying scores, the right major and scholarships to study in Moscow. When she returned to Burundi, she owned her own pharmacy and enjoyed a comfortable lifestyle. "I always went out with my husband, my kids; I used to go dancing, I had money."

But Burundi endured a 12-year, ethnic-based civil war. Although it officially ended in 2005, M.L. says the violence didn't stop. "Since then, there has been political turmoil and people have been killed, which led to many fleeing the country." When she received personal threats, she decided to go, arriving in Washington, D.C., first, then making the rest of the journey to Maine, where she knew there was a Burundi community. "I wanted my children to befriend them," M.L. says. (Neither the New Mainer Resource Center nor the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project could provide statistics on how many natives of Burundi are living in Maine, but M.L. has found a community.) As of this writing, her husband, J.N., a doctor, remains in Burundi, moving from place to place and working where he can while avoiding danger. He and his wife speak a few times a week via WhatsApp, but have not seen each other since she and their children settled in America. "The boys miss him a lot," she says, "but they don't show me that, because they know I feel bad already."

Portland has provided M.L.'s sons with culture and education, but the former pharmacist has not found financial security and her inability to gain asylum has been a critical factor in that. When M.L. and her family arrived in Portland, they received general assistance, including food vouchers and temporary shelter. "I didn't know what to do," she remembers. "They helped us with everything—winter clothes, addresses for soup kitchens, everything." The pressure to build a life for her family was constant. "You have to work. They

M.L., a native of Burundi, moved to Maine in 2014 and has been waiting for asylum status ever since. She holds a PhD in pharmaceutical chemistry but works a low-paying health care job, barely making ends meet.

> “[Because of my accent] people think I’m this poor woman, that I’m stupid.”

want you to get out of assistance.” She moved a few times and eventually found her current apartment, which rents for $1,200 a month. Even with general assistance support, she must work 60-70 hours a week to maintain and heat it. Her apartment, though she keeps it spotless, is frequently bug-infested, she says.

Today she works long hours as a direct support professional in South Portland, assisting adults who have brain injuries with basic daily activities. What prevents M.L. from attaining a higher paid position that would enable a better quality of life for herself and her family is neither a lack of tenacity nor a dearth of opportunities. After more than four years in the United States, M.L. has not yet been granted asylum.

Attaining legal protection as a refugee in the United States is rarely easy, and the reasons for delays like the one M.L. is experiencing are complex. Philip Mantis, legal director of the Immigrant Legal Advocacy Project in Portland, says that delays in asylum interviews and hearings are at an all-time high. Technically, he says, there is a law that administrative adjudication of the asylum application should be completed within 180 days of the application being filed. “This law of course has rarely been adhered to,” he says. According to Mantis, asylum offices changed their scheduling policy in March of 2018 to prioritize the most recently filed cases in what is known as the “Last In, First Out” policy. U.S. Citizen and Immigration Services puts it this way: “Returning to a ‘last in, first out’ interview schedule will allow USCIS to identify frivolous, fraudulent or otherwise non-meritorious asylum claims earlier and place those individuals into removal proceedings.” Applicants such as M.L., who filed before January 2018, are now backlogged, with no specific processing dates scheduled as the asylum office works through cases in reverse chronological order.

Without asylum, M.L. and others like her are ineligible to work in many professional environments. For her, this has meant functioning with employment limitations that hold her financially hostage. Her older son struggles within similar confines. He works and attends community college one class at a time because, without asylum, he does not qualify for financial aid. And his mother can’t get a loan. “[Not having asylum] affects everything,” she says. “I tell [my son] ‘take the maximum credits they allow you.’” She wants him to get his money’s worth.

The closest she came to working as a pharmacist was as a pharmaceutical technician at Maine Medical Center, delivering medications throughout the compound that, in her home country, she would have been measuring, dosing and advising patients about. While at the hospital, she says she worked up to 32 hours overtime per week, while simultaneously training for her current job through a program offered by Goodwill. Goodwill helped her get trained in CPR, First Aid, Non-Abusive Psychological and Physical Intervention and Certified Residential Medication Administration so that she could work with patients in Goodwill’s Residential and Community Support Programs. She cooks, assists patients with personal hygiene and transportation, much like a home health aide. Now in a field that fulfills her more, M.L. must continue working long hours at low pay to support herself and her sons, which sometimes means missing parent-teacher conferences for her youngest son. Often, “I feel like I am a bad mother,” she says.

Had she known she’d end up in bureaucratic limbo, she might have taken the risk from those personal threats and stayed in Burundi. Still, she’s convinced she made the right choice for her boys in bringing them to America, and specifically, Maine. She could move closer to her sister in Washington, D.C., but seeing her boys thrive here and have Burundi friends motivates her to keep going. “There are many young kids,” M.L. says. “They’re polite, they don’t smoke. I say, ‘I can’t move.’” M.L. has also found strong community at Sacred Heart Catholic Church in Portland’s Parkside neighborhood, where Mass is offered in multiple languages and immigrants find programs designed specifically for them. This has been a

comfort. She also found a friend and ally in Sheldon Tepler, a local attorney. They connected early in M.L.'s time in Maine, when she was caring for two boys from Burundi who Tepler and his wife adopted.

Tepler has watched her struggle. The child of Jewish Holocaust survivors who immigrated to the United States, he sees deep parallels between what his family experienced and what refugees face today. Asylum is one issue. So is acceptance. "People think you're dumb if you have an accent. That's a huge barrier," he says. M.L. agrees, saying her accent and the color of her skin have erected the highest barrier between her and the respect and opportunity she craves. "[Because of my accent] people think I'm this poor woman, that I'm stupid." Tepler urges people to ask questions of immigrants like M.L., to get to know their stories. "Let's start with the recognition that many of these people have fascinating stories," he said. "It's just interesting talking to them. Not pitying them is huge." So is recognizing where their priorities have taken them, including into a land of professional and personal limitations. "She is sacrificing her life and her happiness for her children," Tepler says. "This is a very common immigrant way of being. You have a [hard] life, but you want better for your kids.

Chelsea Terris Scott writes plays and short stories and is a freelance journalist. She lives with her husband and daughters in Portland.

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HEALTHY BODY AND MIND.

We all know it's hard to have one without the other, but in this issue of Maine Women Magazine we looked specifically for intriguing areas of overlap. You'll see the results in our profile of a nurse at Mid Coast Hospital who has a second career as a yoga teacher. We talked to therapists who take their patients outside to talk through their problems on a walk (or even a ski). A high school senior and recovering from an eating disorder shares her story of using dance to come to love her body as is, healthy and strong. Turn the page to learn about the big success of one of Maine's artisanal yogurt makers—this organic farmhouse product is the healthiest food in our fridge any day of the week—and take a deep dive with us into the fitness trend we've been hearing about for the last year. Finally, we know what a "splat" means and what an Orangetheory is, and you can too.

Psychotherapist Catherine Baker-Pitts writes in these pages, that sometimes it seems to her that Maine "has become a sort of refuge in our country's collective imagination." We get why, and feel lucky to live here.

Bangor counselor Katharine Appleyard, right, walks with a friend on one of the paths she sometimes takes her patients on.
Photos courtesy of Appleyard Counseling

Motion *for the* Emotion

Feeling blue? These therapists take to the trails with you to talk through your problems

BY KATIE BINGHAM-SMITH

Jenna Daly, a licensed clinical social worker, always sees new patients for the first time in her office on the border of Cape Elizabeth and South Portland. But if they're game for it, their second visit might involve leaving the office to take a walk. One of a small group of Maine therapists practicing Walk and Talk therapy, Daly uses open air settings—and movement—to help patients in her practice, Grounded Parent, relax and share. Another therapist, Katharine Appleyard of Appleyard Counseling in Bangor, has even been known to hit the cross-country ski trails with her patients.

Daly treats 15–20 percent of her clients, in their late 20s to 40s, with walking therapy and says it appeals to her clients regardless of gender. She finds this a particularly beneficial approach for those struggling with anxiety and grief issues. "Reducing sustained, direct eye contact can often lessen feelings of self-consciousness and the pressure to quickly respond," she says.

"In walking together, my goal is to combine classic cognitive talk therapy skills, awareness of thoughts, and how they influence our feelings, our bodily reactions and our behavior, while being mindful of our connection with the larger world," Daly says.

The decision to try Walk and Talk therapy, a trend that started in the last decade, can also be purely about convenience. Some of Daly's clients bring their infants or toddlers with them to a session, pushing them along in a stroller. They skip the sitter and get exercise at the same time. Fresh air can make a difference for someone struggling with an emotional issue or in a real crisis. In Bangor, Appleyard says her private practice clients express a longing to feel more connected and engaged in the world around them. Walking during a therapy session is a win-win, she says, because it gets their blood and the conversation flowing.

Appleyard is a native Mainer who studied clinical counseling at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Washington, and lived in the Northwest for 13 years. She practices mind-body connection in her personal life and her career has included stints in wilderness therapy, education and alternative dispute resolution and education. About half her patients choose to walk with her during the warmer months."Based on these experiences and the various settings in which I practice, I have observed the benefits of physical movement and time spent in the outdoors on overall well-being," she says.

This being Maine, there are limits based on weather. Currently Daly offers a walking and talking option only when it is comfortable to be outside, from late April when all the ice is gone to mid-October. "Incorporating winter movement is important to me as this is a difficult time of year for my clients. I need to be creative in how I adapt my practice to best support them," she says. Cait Farrell, a Portland-based clinical psychologist whose practice is actually called Walk and Talk Counseling, says some of her best sessions have been on Maine's trails in the midst of a snowy day.

Farrell uses this moving therapy as a natural extension of her own experiences. She spent time on a dude ranch in Montana as a child, and it was there, being in the outdoors, riding horses, exploring trails and mountains, that she discovered how easy it was to talk to others while moving. "It takes the mind off of trying too hard," says Farrell. Her sessions are about getting clients who aren't as comfortable sitting in a clinical office outside, which can help their flow of thought. Farrell, a graduate of Loyola University's master's program in clinical psychology in Baltimore, says she has 15–20 clients who prefer walking therapy, half of those being women.

These therapists point out that Walk and Talk therapy isn't intended to be a workout. Appleyard promotes sticking to a comfortable walking pace to allow for continuous dialogue during the session.

Getting outside with patients requires some cooperation from the weather, so licensed clinical social worker Jenna Daly limits her Walk and Talk therapy to the months from late April to October. *Photo by Bonnie Durham*

Farrell makes sure to keep the walks at a conversational pace. "We often pause on the walk to talk, be silent, cry, laugh, or stare into space," Farrell says. Daly says she never walks too fast with her clients. The purpose is to be able to talk and shortness of breath can trigger feelings of anxiety, she says.

Not everyone is a fan of walking therapy, including Karen Maroda, a Milwaukee psychologist who is a fellow with the American Board of Professional Psychology. "The benefits of exercise for mental and physical health are indisputable," Maroda says. But she questions whether the therapeutic impacts are the same outside of a private, unvarying space. "A sense of safety and continuity are considered essential to facilitating trust and the process of dropping defenses to experience deep emotion," Maroda says.

Morada also worries about the important, necessary boundaries that might be crossed. "It can be much harder for clients with boundary issues to accept that they can't have a relationship with their therapist in the real world if they are free to go walking with them," she says. She also wonders what happens when patient and therapist bump into someone on the path? "To simply stop talking when another person appears is disruptive and ineffective," Morada says.

Meeting in private also keeps the integrity of the confidentiality of the session. If you are out walking with your therapist, no one knows if you are going to run into someone you know, she says.

Appleyard always discusses confidentiality with her clients, reminding them to pause when they are in earshot of other people as it helps establish professional and ethical boundaries. She says this helps her clients feel safe. For Daly, a bigger challenge with walking therapy is gauging the time. She needs to determine how far she walks with her clients before it's time to turn around. She doesn't write notes during or after her walking sessions, but says there is something about walking that makes it easier to recall key concepts. She links them to where they are in the walk when they occur. For this therapist, physical landmarks create a map of the mind.

Katie Bingham-Smith is a writer, shoe addict and mother living in Bowdoinham. She pays her kids to rub her feet and never turns down anything with caffeine.


WOMAN
WARRIOR

Teacher Murielle Corwin strikes a pose (Warrior 2) at her studio, Sundara Yoga in Brunswick.

How nursing informs Murielle Corwin's yoga teaching (and vice versa).

BY GENEVIEVE MORGAN
PHOTOGRAPHED BY LIZ CARON

On a cold morning in Brunswick about 20 students—of all different ages and abilities—are standing in what is informally called "rag-doll pose" (or Uttanasana in Sanskrit), folding from the waist, arms crossed, head bent toward the honey-colored wood floor of the year-old Sundara Yoga Studio. "Notice if you are putting more weight on the outside edges of your feet," says Murielle Corwin, the instructor and owner of the studio. "If so, press the inner arches into the mat so that the weight is evenly balanced between the inner and outer soles of the feet." Her "r's" roll with a soft Quebeçois accent.

Later, she sits on a bolster in the studio, sipping tea and eating grapes, explaining how and why her life path has brought her to this moment, in this place. A former professional modern dancer who studied with famed choreographer Martha Graham, Corwin has extensive yoga credentials, from trainings in India to thousands of hours of study to be certified in Hatha yoga (twice). Corwin is also a registered nurse who has been at Maine's Mid Coast Hospital for more than a decade. In this sense she's at the crossroads of the highly pragmatic world of Western medicine and the holistic, more preventative-oriented world of Eastern medicine, where the practice of yoga can play a critical role. And the two inform each other.

"Yoga has instilled in me a sense of compassion for myself and for others, and it has shown me the importance of movement in healing," Corwin says. "I integrate these concepts into my nursing and vice versa. I try to understand the state each person is in—whether I am seeing them at the hospital or in the studio—and bring them back into what they are experiencing somatically (in their body). I try to reconnect the spirit of the person to their physical experience, since so many of us insulate ourselves by disconnecting, particularly when we are ill."

The word "yoga" in Sanskrit literally means "union" and in its ideal, it teaches how to yoke together the mind, body and spirit to create equilibrium—or harmony. As Murielle describes her past, a picture emerges of a life balancing contrasting energies, both in the fields of yoga and Western medicine and beyond, to find that equilibrium.

Corwin was born in Quebec to a traditional French Quebeçois family, the fifth of what would be nine children, eight girls, the last a boy. "It was a very busy household," she says, diplomatically leaving the challenges of growing up in the middle of such a large brood to the imagination, but the experience may have contributed to her effortless ability to manage a classroom that's regularly packed with students. "She is calm within chaos," says her daughter Mae Corwin, her co-founder at Sundara and the studio's director. "Maybe that comes from being part of a big family. It was being part of a community, al-

Murielle Corwin at Mid Coast Hospital, where she has worked for more than a decade as a nurse.

ways, and from an early age she had to be part of helping the family get along."

Corwin studied dance in Toronto in the early 1980s, and joined the Toronto Dance Theater. Traveling with the troupe was not quite what she had envisioned. "Most people think of the glory of dancing on the stage," she says. "But we were carrying the theater on our backs, building it during the day, dancing on it at night, and packing it up and getting on the bus to do it all over again the next day in a different town." In 1982 she left the troupe and moved to New York City to study with Graham, then went on to dance for a number of professional dance companies started by major choreographers including Pearl Lang, Faye Driscoll and Donald Byrd.

In 1984, Corwin married Matthew Corwin, a cabinetmaker, and then had Mae and a second daughter, Emma. The family moved to New York's Long Island in 1988 and she opened a studio attached to their home, teaching tumbling and dance. "We grew up with movement in our life from a very early age," Mae Corwin says. "When my mother was choreographing dance, she would sit me on the studio floor with a big cookie and the dancers would move around me."

Corwin also brought a yoga teacher in for classes. Rehearsal spaces and dance studios at that time often did double-duty as yoga studios. 'So I was aware of yoga back then," she says. "But in those days, like most dancers, I saw the body as a tool to shape to fit the choreographer's vision. I was pretty hard on my body, pushing it beyond what it was comfortable with or capable of. There was a lot of abuse—a lot of coffee and cigarettes." And with overuse and not taking care of herself, Corwin suffered the bane of all dancers: successive injuries.

She initially tried Tai chi as a means of grounding and healing herself. Then in 1996, a friend took her to the Iyengar Institute on 22nd street in Manhattan. The Iyengar school of yoga originated in India in 1936 and its founder, the guru B.K.S. Iyengar, is hailed as one of yoga's most important teachers. There's a component to Iyengar that is similar to physical therapy; with practitioners understanding and correcting their weaknesses. It's no surprise then that it was attractive to dancers. "It is like the ballet school of yoga in that it is very precise," Corwin says. "And they place an emphasis on the feet being parallel in many positions which feels really good and healing."

Yoga felt like second nature to Corwin after dance. "I'm obviously drawn to proprioception—feeding input into myself through body movement—so my interest in yoga was a natural extension from my dancing. I got really interested in healing 'me,' not just using my body to please a choreographer."

At the same time, she was raising children—both of whom were becoming gymnast—running her studio and commuting into the city to dance while growing increasingly tired of the instability and the craziness. She longed for more regular hours and a dependable schedule, and so, in her disciplined style, she let go of her dance career and began graduate school. She had planned to be a physical therapist but found her real interest lay in nursing. She pursued her degree slowly and methodically and graduated in 2003, landing a job in the cardiology wing at Stony Brook University Hospital. Her yoga practice grew sporadic.

"You know how life goes," she says. "I had a busy job, little kids, and one thing or another takes your attention, so my yoga practice moved in and out of my life. For me, if I spend too much time away from it, my body lets me know. I realize I'm out of balance, and that part of me is lacking connection—mindfulness to the body—and I am brought back by necessity more than anything." Aware she was getting out of whack, she began going on a weekend retreat once a month with a bunch of fellow yogis. She realized how much the rigors of nursing full-time were beginning to weigh on her. "I had been self-employed for much of my life up until I started working in a big hospital, and the move from art and movement to a more institutional environment was very hard." Corwin grew depressed and started questioning what this kind of work was really about and how healthy it was for her to never have any free time.

"I knew I needed change, something different, and my unhappiness and stress was impacting my family," she says. Moreover, New York after 9/11 felt different. "It began to feel very hostile and different from the place I had moved to. I wanted a simpler life for myself and my family."

Corwin's husband had a longtime connection to Maine, and the family vacationed here often, so it felt like a natural transition to make the move to Maine in 2006. They settled in Wiscasset and Corwin got a job at Mid Coast, which was and remains to her "a great place to

Clockwise from top left: Mae Corwin, Murielle's daughter and co-founder of the studio. The mother-daughter team work on alignment together. Basic props and a class in full swing.

work. Very personal and friendly." She's worked for many years in the intensive care unit, which is small enough (11–12 patients) to allow Corwin to nurse on an intimate patient-to-nurse ratio, sometimes even one-on-one. "She has some amazing intuition," says her longtime colleague at Mid Coast, Maggie Gardiner. "When she interacts with patients she's very calm; she goes to the core of the issue, and has soothing energy. She pays a lot of attention to what is going on in their psyche as well as body."

When Sundara opened last year, Gardiner, was quick to start taking classes there (other colleagues from the hospital do as well). "Murielle is a great instructor," Gardiner says. "I've practiced at a lot of different places, but I'm connected to Murielle and I really like her and the feel of her studio."

In a way the studio is a natural extension, or reinvention, of that space the Corwin family had on Long Island. A creative hub, where the family could be together (Emma Corwin handles social media and marketing for Sundara) in movement. "It feels so familiar," Mae Corwin says. Except now the small children visiting the studio are her own, Marlo, 4, and Rowan, who turns 2 this month. And their grandmother in middle age brings a different wisdom to her teaching than she did back in those early days. "She is very well-versed in how to care for humans," Mae Corwin says. Through thick and thin, and sometimes, terrible loss. "I often wonder how she does it," she adds. "Goes to work all day, has a patient pass away, comes home and makes a spaghetti dinner."

One way is moving steadily forward, through learning and growing her community. Corwin is a Certified Movement Analyst with the Laban Institute, a Shiatsu and Thai Yoga Practitioner and a Fully Integrated Yoga Tune Up Teacher. She's also studied with Jennifer Reis to teach Divine Sleep Yoga Nidra, a form of guided meditation. Sundara regularly welcomes guest teachers and in April will host a workshop on trauma-informed yoga, followed in May by a session with an expert in self-care through Ayurvedic medicine, an ancient, holistic approach to health that originated in India. But as Gardiner notes, there is also that grounding element of Corwin's Western medical training. "She is very body-based and concrete," Gardiner says. "As a nurse she really understands the muscles in the body; it helps in how she teaches yoga."

Not everyone who takes classes at Sundara knows about that medical background, but the ones that do tend to relate to Corwin differently because of her work as a nurse. "They will talk frankly with me about their concerns," Murielle Corwin says. "And I think they are willing to open to the exploration because of my training." She looks around the lovely room that her husband renovated and soon to be filled with another a large group of bodies (and minds) seeking balance. "When I opened this studio, I wanted to create a beautiful space and build a community of people interested in growing together," Corwin says. "I think the secret to a sense of well-being is feeling empowered—to change, to heal, to transition—and that takes trust. I'm grateful so many people trust me."

"You know, there's no limit to what people can do..." She pauses and smiles. And like the true student of yoga and life she is, adds, "...we can always make adjustments." Then, as if it's been called to punctuate the brilliance of finding just the right balance between contrasting energies, the sun emerges from a dark cloud, shining amber streaks of light across the floor.

Genevieve (G.A) Morgan is an author and editor living in Portland. She is a frequent contributor to various publications, with a special interest in health and wellness that began in high school after taking her first yoga class in the gym. She's been a regular practitioner ever since. Find her at ga-morgan.com.

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PUMP IT UP

High Intensity Interval Training comes to Maine in a big way

BY SARAH HOLMAN | PHOTOGRAPHED BY ENID ARVELO

Exercise trends come and go, but with the backing of some compelling science, High Intensity Interval Training, or HIIT, may be here to stay. This exercise model combines brief, very-high intensity bursts of cardio that significantly raise the heart rate, followed by equal or longer periods of moving rest (for example, sprinting followed by walking). Orangetheory Fitness in Portland, 9Round in Gorham and TRUEFIT30 in South Portland are among the specialty gyms responding to the trend, with workouts that combine HIIT with strength training and conditioning.

According to the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services' Physical Activity Guidelines for Americans, any movement is good for overall health, but optimal health benefits "require a little more effort." DHHS recommends at least 75 to 150 minutes per week of vigorous activity, or 150 to 300 minutes per week of moderate-level physical activity for adults. That "vigorous" zone is where HIIT workouts stake their claim.

Morgan Frame, 27, is the head coach at Orangetheory Fitness on Marginal Way in Portland. Fitness has always been a big part of her life. As a student at Waterville High School, where her father was the athletic director, Frame was on the state champ basketball and track teams. She later played basketball at the University of New Hampshire. After college, she went into pharmaceutical sales but soon decided to get certified as a personal trainer. "When Orangetheory opened, I came here to work out," she says. Frame used to go to bootcamps, but she always felt she needed to do more cardio after class. "[Orangetheory] is the only workout I've ever done that I feel like I don't have to do anything else," Frame explains. "I really bought into the program, and I started coaching as a second job."

When the head coach position opened up, Frame jumped at the chance. She's been in the role since April 2017 and has no plans to leave. There are plenty of opportunities within the company, which is the fastest growing fitness chain nationwide. The Portland location alone has over 1,000 members, about 70 percent of them women.

Founder Ellen Latham developed Orangetheory as a workout she claimed would "metabolically charge the body." The company claims it has mastered a way to make you burn calories after your workout is over, via what some refer to as "the oxygen debt" or excess post-exercise oxygen consumption (EPOC). By challenging yourself at a certain level of intensity, the kind that causes you to lose oxygen, the body then kicks into higher gear to recover that lost oxygen. This in turn revs your metabolism.

Lindy Grigel, owner of Fall River Health Center, an integrated health medical practice in Falmouth, agrees with the science cited by Latham and other HIIT advocates. "HIIT does provide maximum benefit in minimum time, especially for fat burning," Grigel says. "That science is physiologically proven."

This "intensity" piece of the HIIT equation is measured by percentage of maximum heart rate, a number calculated by an individual's age. According to Orangetheory, if a participant is exercising in the 84–91 percent "Orange Zone" (or above 91 percent in the "Red Zone") for at least 12 minutes of the 60-minute session, the calorie-burning rev can last between 12–36 hours post workout. To track progress, members wear a small plastic heart rate monitor, held snugly in place over the sternum by an elastic strap. There's also an armband option, but the chest version is more accurate. In the gym, the names of everyone in the class appear on a large screen mounted to the ceiling, and their heart rates, calories burned and accumulated "splat points" (minutes spent in the Orange or Red zones) update throughout the 60-minute workout.

Portland resident Karen Fisher, 49, has been going to Orangetheory for a year and a half. She says she worried about the publicly displayed stats at first, but after seeing the huge range of ages and fitness levels at the studio, she relaxed. Also, "everyone is just trying to breathe and get through it, so no one has time to compare!"

Everyone moves at his or her own pace as

HIGH FIDELITY TO HIGH INTENSITY: Melissa Harris-Rioux, co-owner of 9Round in Gorham, clearly practices what she preaches. She's also a nurse at Maine Medical Center.


ROUND
5
ROUND

Melissa Harris-Rioux, co-owner of 9Round in Gorham, takes a swipe turning a training session.

well, and workouts can be adjusted if needed. The coaches at Orangetheory have to be certified personal trainers, a requirement Frame feels sets them apart from other gyms. "It allows us to tailor workouts around all fitness levels and limitations, such as injuries," she says. The workout itself is divided into three parts: treadmills, rowing machines and strength-building floor work. Depending on the class, up to 36 people can be accommodated. Classes run throughout the day, and the most popular times are at 5 a.m. and 6 a.m., after work and Saturdays. Some members sign up weeks in advance for their preferred time slots. Depending on membership level, sessions cost between $8–$20 per class.

Orangetheory takes member commitment seriously. If you don't show for the class you signed up for—and you have to sign up in advance, via app or website—the studio charges you a fee. "Money is probably the biggest overall motivator for most people," Frame says. "If you're deciding to go [to class] or not, that fee will make you get your butt up." She also thinks Mainers have an edge in terms of good manners and are respectful of each other's time. "Members know if they don't show, they're taking a spot from someone else. The community here holds people accountable."

9Round in Gorham doesn't require class registration—members can jump into the circuit whenever they arrive, and 18 people can fit on the floor at once. This 30-minute kickboxing workout keeps members moving through nine stations, called rounds. Six of the rounds incorporate punching bags (large bags provide resistance, smaller bags teach technique and hand-eye coordination). Each round lasts 3 minutes, with the last 30 seconds meant to be an all-out, heart-pumping push, and then 30 seconds to recover. The gym also uses heart rate monitors and posts members' stats on three screens throughout the gym.

This "come anytime" model has worked well for owner and trainer Ted Rioux of Gorham, whose gym is one of the fastest growing 9Round locations in the country. "We've been so graciously accepted by the community," Rioux says. He, his daughter Terra and his wife Melissa Harris-Rioux, a nurse at Maine Medical Center, invested in three 9Round franchise locations (there are over 700 nationwide). Their Gorham gym has over 400 members (80 percent are female), they're about to sign a lease in Westbrook and scoping out a spot for the third gym.

Developed in 2008 by kickboxing world champion Shannon Hudson and his wife, the 9Round program is designed for busy people who don't have hours to spend at the gym. "You can get a great workout in 30 minutes with the right exercises, the right equipment, and the right intensity," Rioux says.

His goal is to keep members in the yellow zone, at 82–91 percent of their max heart rate, the ideal fat-burning zone. He says that above 91 percent (the "red zone") exercise shifts from aerobic to anaerobic, "characterized by insufficient oxygen to supply the energy demands being placed on muscles." For those who aren't as fit, Rioux says, they risk burning muscle in that zone. But with training, 9Round members can reach the anaerobic level without compromising the muscle, he says. "Exercise that incorporates both aerobic and anaerobic training, which the 9Round workout does, are ideal," Rioux says.

Frame agrees with the fat-burning power of

TESTING, TESTING

The three gyms featured here offer a free introductory class for local residents. All are members-only with annual or month-to-month payments options (Orangetheory does also offer a punch pass), all change their customizable workouts daily, and all utilize heart rate monitor technology with an accompanying app.

But maybe you want to work in HIIT at home without relying on a heart rate monitor or a gym membership?

The American Heart Association published these tips on how to know if you're in the zone while you're working out.

- **If you can converse and sing, your activity is likely low intensity**
- **If you can speak but not sing, that would be moderate intensity.**
- **Can't sing? Or speak in full sentences? You have arrived at high intensity.**

the 82–91 percent heart rate, but she doesn't worry about her members compromising muscle if they hang out in the red 92+ percent zone for longer periods. "We want to push you to work the hardest you can for those short bursts," she says. "That's why we have the recoveries after the all-outs."

And Fisher, now adjusted to the public stats at Orangetheory, uses the screen to her advantage. "It's motivating to see myself hovering between zones on the monitor. It makes me push myself. Without that visual cue I could easily take down the intensity."

TRUFIT30 is an independent gym in South Portland that combines cardio, strength training, and heart rate monitoring "to produce an effective total body workout in just 30 minutes." The creation of Lewiston native Colt Steele and his father, Clint Steele, a Gorham chiropractor who has trained professional and collegiate athletes, TRUFIT30 focuses on "real life fitness" for all ability levels and emphasizes correct, safe form.

Colt Steele played hockey at Liberty University in Lynchburg, VA. During his hours at the gym, he noticed an upsetting trend. "I kept seeing people doing [exercises] the wrong way, and that's a major cause of injury." At TRUFIT30, Steele makes sure members are safely maximizing their workout benefits. "We do functional, full-body movements," he says, which is different than going to the gym and only working one part of the body. "[By] allowing the body to move the way it's supposed to, it translates into daily life." Steele encourages members to keep their heads up, work on balance and improve coordination. "Things you can use when you walk out the [gym] door."

Steele also starts each new member off with an InBody composition scan, which breaks down things like muscle, fat and water masses, allowing the trainers at TRUFIT30 to more accurately track members' progress and adjust as needed to meet goals.

The South Portland gym has only been open since September, but already the Steeles have plans to double their equipment. Currently they can fit 20 people at a time moving through 10 3-minute stations. Most of their members are women, though Steele is quick to point out the workout is for anyone.

Back at Orangetheory, Fisher says, "For me, it's not about weight, it's about being strong and staying motivated. My agenda is to just keep moving."

Grigel, a lifelong athlete and coach, has seen many exercise trends come and go. "I call it the pendulum paradigm. If we do certain things, we're promised certain results." But eventually, she says, the pendulum swings away. "In my practice, I hold a place of moderation."

While Grigel fully supports HIIT as part of a fitness plan, she encourages people to look at the bigger picture of wellness and pay attention to slowing down. When workouts promise quick results and come with smartphone apps, they could become just another thing we're trying to do faster, with technology at the center.

"No question, there is a place for HIIT," Grigel says. "But it's important to balance with other types of exercise, especially being outside, and to think about what kind of lifestyle you're really trying to achieve."

Sarah Holman is a writer living in Portland. She is enthusiastic about cheese plates, thrift shop treasures and old houses in need of saving. Find her online at storiesandsidebars.com.

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Let's Dance

A Brunswick teenager fights her way back from an eating disorder with an unexpected ally: dancing

BY ELIZA RUDALEVIGE | PHOTOGRAPHED BY LIZ CARON

Eliza Rudalevige on pointe in the Bowdoin Pines in Brunswick. "Releasing emotion through movement feels so good because it's natural."

Next month will be the sixth anniversary of my entrance into the New England Eating Disorders Program. When I was admitted to Mercy Hospital in Portland for the program, I was 12 years old, loved to read dystopian novels and scribbled down the calorie counts of what I had eaten that day in the margins of my assignment notebooks. I denoted "healthy" low-calorie foods with a smiley face in purple gel pen. By the time I checked in to Mercy, I had stopped smiling myself.

The five-year anniversary of my dance journey is also coming up. I use the term "journey" instead of "experience" or some other comparatively vague noun to distinguish between when I began to dance and when dancing became part of my recovery. Before the anorexia and our family's move to Maine from central Pennsylvania, I had been a dedicated Irish Step Dancer, starting at age eight. I was forced to give that up slowly, first by the move to a town an hour away from any viable studios, and then by my failing body.

I was still chugging calorie replacement shakes in exchange for exercise—"earning" my exercise—when I became part of the dance club at Brunswick Junior High School, run by one of the art teachers. The club was short-lived, but afterward, I begged my mother to let me try out contemporary and jazz classes at a local studio, promising that the wall-to-wall mirrors and my perfectionist attitude would not throw a boulder in the stream of my recovery. I'd only go once a week.

My mother was hesitant. My therapist was hesitant. My doctors were very hesitant. I was told that any weight loss would immediately result in the cessation of my dancing experiment. I understand why the caregivers in my life were reluctant to release me into the world of skinny legs and figure-hugging leotards. When you see the words "eating disorder" and "dancer" used in the same context, a certain image probably pops into your mind.

There's a ballerina standing in the center of a practice studio, alone. Right off the bat, this is something of a fantasy—even soloists generally rehearse with the guidance of a ballet master or mistress—but I digress for the sake of the image and the stereotype it represents, which I want to dislodge. There are slants of evening light falling from the windows to the studio floor, indicating that our poor ballerina has been here all day with no breaks for food or rest. Her feet are stuffed into battered pointe shoes. She is bruised, elegant and painfully thin.

She begins to dance, and as she spins the camera cuts and the depth of field changes so that the only thing in focus is her angular face. Suddenly, she collapses to the smooth, wooden floor. I have seen this story told in books, television shows and movies such as *Dying to Dance*, *Black Swan*, and the questionably acted but addictive Australian TV series *Dance Academy*.

I will not claim that the ballet community is not, as a whole, an extremely competitive environment, one that may foster the development of harmful behaviors. According to a 2013 study published in the European Eating Disorders Review, ballet dancers are three times more likely to suffer from an eating disorder than non-dancers, particularly anorexia nervosa and EDNOS (eating disorders not otherwise specified). However, I think that ballet's overwhelmingly negative portrayal in pop culture scares some people away from the possibility of dance as a form of therapy.

I fell in love first with contemporary dance. That's an umbrella term often used interchangeably with the label "modern dance," encompassing dozens of disciplines and techniques—including those of Isadora Duncan, Martha Graham and Lester Horton. I am still very much in love with it, with its freedom, its flexibility.

The last class I took was in the style of Ohad Naharin, the founder of the "Gaga" movement language. For the entire 90-minute session, the teacher led us through a series of exercises that fostered a connection between the body, mind, music and environment. We were given a single word as a direction and a body part with which to complete the action. We were encouraged to face away from the mirror and focus on how each movement felt in our bodies, singling out the specific muscles that contracted and stretched when we moved one arm this way, how our breathing was affected when we tried to isolate the movement of our rib cages. At one point, the entire class was bouncing enthusiastically, arms flopping like possessed muppets.

We looked ridiculous. It felt great.

When dance is taken out of its role as an aesthetic exercise and into its role as a physiological one, we hit the jackpot. Dance, even the most classical of ballet, is meant to express emotion. Releasing emotion through movement feels so good because it's natural. Soccer players pump their fists in jubilation af-

Approaching the sixth anniversary of her hospitalization for an eating disorder, Rudalevige has reclaimed dance. And joy.

> *Dancing is simply an extension of the physical release of emotion, given a direction and some music to wiggle to."*

ter pounding a game-winning shot into the net. Married couples in the throes of a passionate argument clench their fists. We cry when we're sad. Dancing is simply an extension of the physical release of emotion, given a direction and some music to wiggle to.

It's my belief that dance as a form of therapy is particularly suited to people struggling with body dysmorphia, eating disorders or disordered eating because it turns the body into a tool for creating something rather than a finished product in its own right. A body is never a finished product. Physicality is ephemeral, which is why it is so harmful to think of the body as the end instead of as a means to the end. The body is for creating art, not for being art. It's not wrong to have a goal of complete body positivity, but difficult to achieve since the body is always changing. And sometimes, we have to take baby steps. Dancing helped me take those baby steps.

I do admit that my dance journey, especially concerning ballet, has been, at times, a struggle. For me the room full of mirrors is still a challenge. But, when I look in the mirror during a dance class, I see my body differently than if I was looking in a dressing room or bathroom mirror. I don't criticize my belly except in the capacity that I could use it to dance better. Dancing has helped me separate the worth of my body from how thin it might be and connect its worth instead to its strength. It has helped me to use the mirror as a tool to improve rather than as a means of mindless self-criticism.

I owe much of my success to the people I have danced with. I am extremely lucky to have found myself in the company of dancers who are overwhelmingly positive, accepting and progressive. At the Bath-based Resurgence Dance Company, which I have been with for four years, our artistic director Ashley Steeves is dedicated to the idea of dance as a healing power and to the mantra "Dance is for everybody." Our company addresses tough issues through dance by working with people who have actually experienced these issues, providing a healing and learning experience for all involved. My second year with the company, I danced a duet about surviving an eating disorder with another eating disorder survivor, choreographed by—you guessed it—an eating disorder survivor. About a month ago, we closed a show I wrote and choreographed, *The Girl Who Lost Her Shadow*. It's about domestic abuse and grief. I worked closely with New Hope for Women, which offers support and counseling to battered women in several Maine counties, to ensure that the production was appropriately portraying the struggles that many around us have experienced.

I have been training in classical ballet with Elizabeth Drucker in Topsham for the past two years. I am the only girl in my class who wears a sports bra. A friend told me that a visiting dancer recently referred to me on the car ride home as "the girl with the boobs." I am also at a place in my recovery where I can handle such things. The ballet industry may not be friendly to those with the audacity to grow breasts, but ballet itself brings me joy.

Whether or not you have ever struggled with your mental health, I suggest you go take a dance class. Best case scenario, you discover that you're a secret dancing prodigy. Worst case scenario, you find yourself more centered, in tune with your body—and slightly sore.

Eliza Rudalevige is a senior at Brunswick High School who plans on attending Columbia University in the fall. In her free time, she loves to dance, perform in musical theater productions, and write very long-winded poetry.

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THE TAMPON *Champions*

North America's most popular brand of tampons is produced at a plant in Auburn. Once upon a time, when something went wrong there, you called in a man. Not anymore.

Naomi Williams Pray, 63, a human resources leader at P&G Tambrands in Auburn, Maine. Pray has worked for Tambrands her entire career, for over 40 years.

BY AMY PARADYSZ
PHOTOGRAPHED BY MOLLY HALEY

Veronica Karlsen, 47, oversees Morpheus, the line that packs variety boxes, at Procter & Gamble's Tambrands factory in Auburn.

Tampons are something of a family business for Veronica Karlsen—her mother made them, she makes them and the Lyman resident even met her husband at Tambrands, Auburn's largest private employer with nearly 400 employees. Between Karlsen and her recently retired mother, they've been at the tampon factory for 46 of the plant's 50 years, witnessing an evolution in women's roles in the manufacture of this decidedly feminine product and in the product itself.

"When I was first hired as an operator, I couldn't even change a needle on an industrial sewing machine," says Karlsen, 47, a team leader on a robotic-operated line that packs assorted boxes (the line is called Morpheus, which translates as "the maker of shapes"). She didn't know how to, but even if she had, she wouldn't have been allowed to. The product was for women but the serious production was for men. "Now, new hires are technicians who do everything—maintenance, lubrication; you 'own' the machine."

Procter & Gamble bought Tambrands in 1997, accelerating the pace of change and modernization at the 565,000-square-foot plant 30 miles north of Portland where 9 million tampons are sewn, packaged, boxed and shipped each day.

"People don't know about this little plant in Maine, but this is one of the best manufacturing sites in a company known for outstanding manufacturing sites," says HR and Logistics Manager Rick Malinowski, adding that Tambrands has been named the P&G Plant of the Year four out of the past seven years. "But, when P&G acquired the company, it was kind of stuck in the 1950s and was very gender-based. There were mechanics, who were men, and operators, who were women, and never the two shall meet."

These days, the plant is more efficient and more egalitarian than when Karlsen's mother, Carol Holmes if Auburn, started as a combine operator in 1972. Back then she was making $1.85 an hour (25 cents above minimum wage) and Veronica, her first child, was 8 months old.

"My mom became one of the original supervisors who wore a white uniform and ironed it every day," Karlsen remembers. "It had to be pristine."

All the women wore white, as if they were nurses. Naomi Williams Pray laughs about how, earlier in her 43 years with the company, she "used to break the rules and wear some red or blue barrettes." The Mechanic Falls resident recalls the gender divide in the workplace in the 1970s, saying, "Women would be on the belt, and tampons would go by. If an issue arose, they would turn on a light—steady if it wasn't urgent, red if their line was

When Veronica Karlsen was a kid, her mother and other women worker at the tampon factory didn't touch the machines. Now, she says "New hires are technicians who do everything—maintenance, lubrication; you 'own' the machine."

down—and a mechanic would come over."

None of the mechanics were women until the mid-1990s. In those days, gender roles were more defined, more separate, more private.

"In the 1960s, you didn't talk about—" Williams Pray nods at a display of tampons. "The company kept it really low-profile. They used to make these discreet little boxes, but everybody still knew what they were, and you'd hide them under your sink."

Even truckers were reluctant to talk about what they were picking up at what they called the "plug factory." But the women who worked at the plant saw tampons all day and became blasé about them. Williams Pray used to take some of the fiber home to use in place of cotton balls when removing her bright red nail polish, and one time left wads of crimson-stained tampon parts on the kitchen table when she answered the door for the Avon lady.

For more three decades, Tampax made one type of tampon: the kind with the white cardboard applicators shaped like miniature paper towel rolls, not exactly anatomically correct. But regardless of how old-fashioned looking they were, those tampons brought women freedoms they'd never had before. Ads from the 1960s show a young woman at the beach in a red bikini, her tiny white box of Tampax discreetly stored in her purse, and the tagline "Women's World Remade."

In 1975, long before P&G bought Tampax, the multinational consumer goods corporation marketed a tampon brand called Rely. Made from carboxymethylcellulose and polyester rather than a cotton and rayon blend like Tampax and other tampons, Rely was super-absorbent—but soon was linked to toxic shock syndrome. In 1980, P&G recalled Rely. Public trust in tampons dropped, and Tampax stock plummeted.

To stay afloat, Tampax diversified, making pads, disposable diapers, diagnostic ovulation kits and even makeup. Because the word "Tampax" was synonymous with tampons, the company name was changed to Tambrands. As the Rely episode faded from public memory, Tambrands sold off its other product lines, focusing once again on Tampax. And, in 1997, Tambrands was acquired by P&G.

That acquisition would revolutionize the company culture of Tambrands, partly because P&G wanted to make a better tampon. Today, Tambrands makes tampons with rounded plastic applicators, pocket-sized versions and tampons that come resealable pouches for disposal, and tampons that are free of fragrances and dyes. Today, just 10 percent of the tampons they make are the original cardboard-applicator variety.

"Tampax had the best tampon in the world, with the largest market share, but P&G said we can do it better," says packaging material leader Angie Marquis of Scarborough. She studied mechanical engineering in college, and though she didn't expect to put those skills to work on tampon packaging designs, they translate. "It's not your mother's tampon anymore. We want to give the consumer a product that will delight. When I first started here, it felt silly saying that, and I kept thinking, 'It's just a tampon.' But when you see how much effort goes into designing these, it stops being silly. Think about the girls who have a leak at school and that's

traumatic for them. This is important."

P&G didn't only want to make a better tampon; they wanted to make a better workplace, one that was more productive and efficient but also more equitable.

"Here comes P&G with this new philosophy that everybody can do everything and have the same opportunities—man or woman," Marquis says. "The nature of the work has evolved from being more physical to more strategic, rather than just keeping the machines running."

By 1998, the plant was operating around the clock with teams on rotating shifts. Large numbers of workers—more women than men—left the company. Some didn't want to work nights. Some just didn't have the mechanical skills for the new expectations. Women dropped from half the staff to one-quarter. But some, like Karlsen, stayed and thrived in the more demanding roles.

"Everybody has something they can give," Karlsen says. "When I look at a new hire, I see a fresh set of eyes. Some are stronger in leadership, some are stronger technically, and that's how we form teams. It's definitely a career."

"I love my job here, because it is practical and it involves engineering and design, and I do everything from troubleshooting on the floor to having a say in product development," says Marquis. "I can be a voice between manufacturing and marketing."

For Tampax Radiant, the marketing department asked for a package that sparkled. But in early development, the manufacturing side couldn't get those sparkly boxes to stay shut. The glue wouldn't adhere. Marquis' job was to find a better solution—and she did, not only developing a better adhesive but also replacing the metallic boxboard used to make the containers with metallic ink instead.

"When you came in 30 years ago you would have that job for 30 years," Marquis says. You kept your uniforms white and your hands off the machines. For women at the 21st century Tambrands factory, it's a different story. "Now, you come in and you learn, and the opportunities are huge."

Amy Paradysz is a freelance writer based in Scarborough. She is reluctantly grateful to Dr. Earle Haas, who patented the modern-day tampon in 1929—after a female friend gave him the idea.

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High Culture *on the Farm*

Overcoming the economic strain on dairy farms, The Milkhouse creamery in Monmouth taps into the yogurt market and runs with it

BY CANDACE KARU | PHOTOGRAPHED BY BONNIE DURHAM

Somewhere around 6000 B.C., Neolithic herdsmen in Central Asia discovered that the milk they stored in bags made of animal stomachs reacted with the enzymes from the skins, causing the milk to curdle. But it tasted good. And just like that, yogurt, rich in nutrients and high in protein, was born.

Eight thousand-plus years later, the recipe is essentially the same. "Just two ingredients, milk and live active cultures," says Maine yogurt producer Caitlin Frame of The Milkhouse, an organic creamery in Monmouth. But yogurt has evolved in a myriad of ways. In Maine, consumer interest in local products, combined with dairy farmers innovating with new value-added products as their agricultural sector struggles, has given birth to a boomlet of new yogurt makers.

They're flavoring it with Maine-made maple syrup. They're straining it into thick, creamy Greek yogurt and mixing it with wild Maine blueberries. Any health food store or cooperative in the state worth its salt seems to have at least three Maine-made yogurts on its refrigerated shelves. And in the case of Frame and her partner, Andy Smith, their farmstead product is finding bigger markets. Last summer Milkhouse started supplying Hannaford, making Milkhouse a major success story in a time of dwindling returns for most dairy farmers.

Since 2000, Maine has lost more than half its dairy farms, dropping from 483 that year to a current level of 235, the bulk of which produce and ship milk to Maine's four major fluid processors in Portland, Westbrook and Houlton. At least 13 of those farms produce milk and process and sell it directly to consumers, including The Milkhouse. Milk prices continue to fall and it has become harder for smaller farms in more far flung corners of the state to find haulers willing to pick their milk. Adding to the pressure, says Julie-Marie Bickford, executive director of the Maine Dairy Industry Association, is consolidation of processing and retailing at the national level. Maine farmers have three choices in how they respond, Bickford says, try to gain efficiencies, exit the industry or diversifying.

Experimenting with value-added products is one way of diversifying. According to Bickford, Maine has over 150 licensed milk processors who make value-added products, from ice cream to buttermilk, cheese to butter. And yogurt. The Milkhouse lost its wholesale organic milk contract with Horizon right around the time it gained one with Hannaford to sell yogurt. Making yogurt is not a solution for all by any means (with 71 million gallons of milk produced in Maine in 2018, that would be a lot of yogurt) but for some it is a bright spot. Or as Jacki Perkins, Organic Dairy Specialist for the Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association (MOFGA), puts it, a "logical choice," particularly for small farms looking to take advantage of consumer passion for farm-to-table foods.

There is high demand for other locally sourced dairy products such as artisanal cheeses, Perkins explains, even as fluid milk consumption continues to drop in the United States. But aging cheese takes time while milk production, even in the smallest dairy, is unrelenting. "The micro-dairies needed income from the dairy before

The Jersey cows Frame milks yield a creamy, fatty milk, which makes for a richer yogurt. Plus, as Frame says "they're fairy-tale cows," big eyes, sweet faces.

the aging process of the cheese was complete," says Perkins. "Most other dairy products with short production time, like butter or ice cream, utilize primarily, or even exclusively, the cream, and producers are left with the conundrum of what to do with the skim milk."

Yogurt to the rescue. It's relatively fast and easy to make. For such a simple product, the health benefits read like a nutritionist's dream. Yogurt can boost the immune system, maintain blood pressure and calm an irritable bowel. It's said to help sick bodies heal and doctors recommend it to anyone coming off antibiotics, to rebalance the gut. Because it is rich in calcium, yogurt strengthens teeth and bones as well as helping to prevent osteoporosis. Yogurt has even been shown to increase longevity, in this case not just in those who eat it, but for the farms that make it.

At Hannaford markets throughout the state, The Milkhouse whole milk yogurt, including flavors such as maple and blueberry sit next to nationally known brands and costs almost the same as several of them (with a deposit for the bottle). The Milkhouse is the only local, farmstead yogurt Hannaford carries in Maine (in Vermont, Hannaford stocks Butterworks, a local Vermont yogurt) according to Hannaford's manager of external communications, Erika Dodge. But maybe not for long.

"We are seeing increased consumer interest in products like The Milkhouse yogurt, and are always exploring opportunities to work with more local producers," Dodge says.

There are plenty of them out there. Frame knows many of her fellow farmers and creamery owners. "Maine has a wonderful community of people who are working with milk," she says. She even collaborates with some, including Grace Pond Farm (they've kept their herds together, although Grace Pond is soon moving to Thomaston). Some of the milk from the farm, up to 400 gallons of milk a week, goes to cheesemakers, including Swallowtail and Fuzzy Udder in Whitefield and Winter Hill Farm in Freeport. Maine does have an embarrassment of riches when it comes to small organic farms producing high quality dairy products. *(See list on page 65)*

It's that quality, as well as the allure of local purveyors, that attracts retailers. At the Portland Food Co-Op, Kevin Gray, the store's dairy and meat buyer, carries yogurt from The Milkhouse, as well as Swallowtail Farm, Balfour Farm,Tourmaline Hill Farm and Winter Hill Farm. "It excites me to see local producers getting a larger audience beyond the farm stand or farmers markets," Gray says. "I love the fact that I know these farmers. They deliver their products themselves. If there's a problem I can call them."

Frame will pick up. She's managing The Milkhouse's growth carefully, but wants to expand sales, including to school districts and colleges. "I'm really excited about selling yogurt to more institutions," she says. "I love that we've had the opportunity to grow our business and feed more people in Maine. I really believe in the quality of the food we produce. I truly believe that milk is not just milk, a pork chop is not just a pork chop. The way animals are raised, the quality of they food that they eat, those things truly affect the nutritional quality and taste of the resulting milk or meat."

Many dairy farmers grow up on a family farm but Frame, despite her success, has been in this business less than a decade. Her first experience with working the land came

The Milkhouse turns out up to 600 gallons of yogurt a week during the summer and about 350 in winter. In 2018, the dairy started selling its yogurt at Hannafords throughout the state.

Farmer Caitlin Frame makes the rounds of The Milkhouse dairy barn and property with her son Linus. With her partner, Andy Smith, Frame runs a successful artisanal yogurt business from the Monmouth farm.

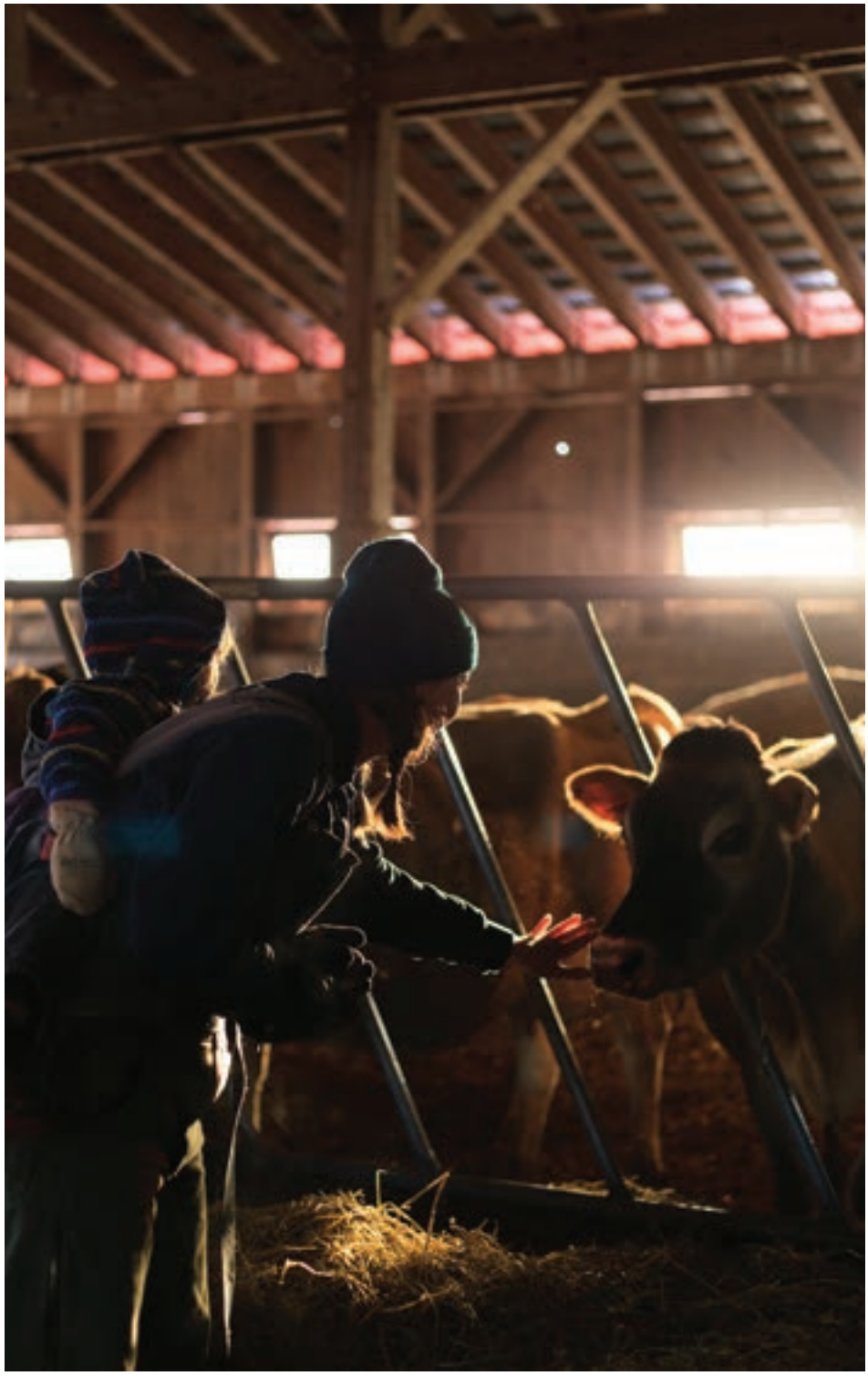
from gardening with her family growing up in Rochester, New York, her basic skills gleaned from working alongside both of her grandmothers' extensive flower and vegetable gardens. She went on to start a garden of her own when she was in middle school and worked it with her mother.

Her light bulb moment was at Skidmore College when she took a basic introduction to environmental studies course. It inspired her to look at the world around her in a new and more critical way, bringing the reality of environmental degradation into sharp focus, and honing her commitment to sustainable food systems. Her professional journey began at an organic vegetable farm near her college. "It was winter, so I worked in the hoop houses, gently removing layers of row cover and harvesting tender greens and scallions in the dead of winter," she remembers. "The sheer physicality of the work felt like magic. Plants became food as they were removed from the ground and passed through my hands."

During that time, Frame also worked the farmers' market, where she sold the farm's storage vegetables and greens from their hoop houses. "I was enthused, to put it mildly," she says. "I would cut open the blue and red potatoes for the children of customers, tell how I'd harvested this mesclun mix the day before. I would eat bags of greens plain on the way home from market. I may have been a bit fanatical."

In 2010 Frame moved to central Maine to work on a small vegetable farm where her enthusiasm was tempered by the vicissitudes of everyday farm life and the grinding work of market gardening. The realities of a life committed to farming were beginning to take hold. Her relationship with Andy Smith, who she met through mutual friends, was in its early stages. He was working on a diversified farm in Freedom. Among the animals he tended at the farm, Smith became particularly close to an ornery cow named Lucy and her calf Lupe. They taught Andy the ins and outs of working with bovines, including the fact that each cow has her own distinct personality.

"Andy and I went on to manage a micro dairy in Lincolnville," says Frame. "We were responsible for the care and keeping of a large vegetable garden, small apple orchards, 12 cows, a handful of sheep, three pigs, ducks, laying hens, a horse and a pony." They experienced a little bit of everything. "We were milking cows, making cheese and yogurt, bottling raw milk, as well as working with all these different animals."



In 2012 the couple moved to Two Loons Farm in South China, an organic dairy run by Paige Tyson and Spencer Aitel. Both are first generation farmers in their 60s, with plenty of received wisdom to pass onto Frame and Smith. They gave the younger couple the go-ahead to reanimate the farm's old milk room. After months of clearing, cleaning, painting and plumbing, Frame and Smith got their state dairy license. The Milkroom started selling yogurt to their first accounts in January of 2013. Not long after, they began looking for a farm of their own, where they could continue with the yogurt business, but also milk their own cows. In 2015 they made the move to Monmouth. Three years later, with the Hannaford account secured, their yogurt became the most widely distributed Maine-

made artisanal yogurt in the state.

Frame believes that the core magic lies in what kind of milk is used. The couple, who live on the farm with their young son Linus, milk Jerseys. Frame calls them "fairytale cows" for their relatively small size and their cartoonishly large, soulful eyes. Jerseys have high component milk, meaning it is rich in fat and protein, much more so than milk from their larger sisters, the Holsteins. "Fat is flavor," she explains. But it's not just the breed that matters. "Different levels of quality and taste depend on an individual's style of management and farming," Frame says.

There is a rhythm to the days at The Milkhouse, a rhythm dictated by the demands of each season and the needs of the livestock. There are usually four full-time and one part-time employees helping out at any given time. The cows are milked twice a day, at about 6 a.m. and 5 p.m. "We have a pipeline that diverts the milk from the cows right into our bulk tank, where the milk is cooled down to 35 degrees in about a half hour," Frame says. From there, "it drops into our vat pasteurizer, where the milk is heated, cooled and cultured, then put into containers to incubate for five hours. It then it goes into our walk-in."

Some of it gets bottled as milk for farm sales, about 150 gallons of milk a week. They make yogurt five times a week, about 350 gallons of it per week in the winter and up to 600 gallons in the summer. Additives tend to be things like maple syrup. "Most commercial yogurts use thickeners and stabilizers like powdered milk or xanthum gum," Frame said. A yogurt like the ones Milkhouse makes is a far simpler, purer product. "It doesn't have to be highly processed and it doesn't need sugar. It's the quality and unique flavor of the milk that makes it so good."

Frame doesn't hesitate when asked what she likes best about her life at The Milkhouse. "I love that we are a farmstead business. We produce milk, a raw product, that we turn into yogurt and bottled milk, value-added products. And I love that it all happens here on the farm."

Candace Karu is a writer and passionate home cook who lives and works in a tiny apartment on Portland's West End. Her life partners are three ill-behaved, exceedingly small dogs, who make up in attitude what they lack in size. When she's not working, you can find Candace in the kitchen, at the gym, or on Maine's roads and trails, running and photographing all the way home.

Know Your Yogurt

TRADITIONAL YOGURT
has a light, creamy consistency and a mild taste. It typically takes about one cup of raw milk to get one cup of traditional yogurt.

GREEK YOGURT
has a tangier taste and thicker texture. It also has more than twice the protein of traditional yogurt. It takes about 4 cups of raw milk to make one cup of Greek yogurt.

ICELANDIC YOGURT OR SKYR
similar in texture to Greek yogurt and has a similar nutrition profile—high in protein, but it is thicker and slightly less tangy.

KEFIR
is often sold as a beverage and has a much thinner consistency than traditional or Greek yogurt. It retains that distinct yogurt tang and is slightly effervescent. Kefir has more than three times the probiotic cultures than yogurt.

NON-DAIRY YOGURT
whether made with soy, almonds, coconuts, or cashew, non-dairy yogurt incorporates the same cultures that go into dairy yogurts. They have a similar nutritional profile to dairy yogurt, but have the added benefit of fiber.

MAINE CREAMERIES THAT MAKE SMALL BATCH OR ARTISANAL YOGURT

Balfour Farm, Pittsfield
balfourfarmdairy.com

Smiling Hill Farm, Westbrook
smilinghill.com

Swallowtail Farm, North Whitefield
swallowtailfarmandcreamery.com

The Milkhouse, Monmouth
mainemilkhouse.com

Tide Mill Organic Farm, Edmunds
tidemillorganicfarm.com

Toddy Pond Farm, Monroe
toddypondfarm.com

Tourmaline Hill Farm, Greenwood
tourmalinehillfarm.wordpress.com

Winter Hill Farm, Freeport
winterhillfarm.com

Photo by Heidi Kirn

DREAMING OF MAINE

A psychotherapist listens as her patient dreams of a better life in a land of lumberjacks and coastal breezes, and reflects on how the state feels like a refuge to so many, including herself.

BY CATHERINE BAKER-PITTS

As car horns bellow outside the window, just after 9 a.m., Sophie* sits across from me on an avocado-hued couch in my psychotherapy office in Manhattan, trying to connect. She recounts another vexing date with a near stranger, a night that ended awkwardly at her local Brooklyn bar. Still slightly hungover, she is clear that her social situation, more than the drinks she consumed, is the culprit behind her head spins. It's not her psychology, she insists. It's not her; it's here.

Deflated and isolated, Sophie languishes in the feeling that she is wholly responsible for herself. She prepares her own meals and eats them solo more often than not. She routinely scrambles to find companionship before her workday draws to a close, so that her nights won't feel empty. We sink into her feeling of loneliness. Moments later, in the silence between us, her face brightens.

"I wonder where that bearded Mainer is now," she pipes up. She'd gone to a College of the Atlantic "writers and hikers" holiday in Bar Harbor last summer, and while there, locked eyes with a man with two young kids and no partner in sight on a boat trip. He has become a touchstone in her imagination, a symbol of a robust land and friendly people. Sophie is not alone; it sometimes seems Maine has become a sort of refuge in our country's collective imagination.

"Maybe I should just go, and find my lumberjack," she proposes, only half joking. This time, she imagines an escape lasting more than a week. She would chuck the rent that threatens to swallow her paycheck whole, uproot her life and relocate to this coastal community in search of a cool breeze and familiar faces. My mind flashes to the dark afternoons of win-

ter and the homogenous whiteness that blends into the mountains of snow, but I refrain from disrupting her idealized view of daily living in the state I come from.

For one thing, Sophie's reveries of Maine, oriented towards the wish for connection as they are, mark therapeutic progress. Previously, her go-to jolts had a self-demeaning quality, involving endless aesthetic makeovers—juice cleanses, punitive nutritionists and hard-core fitness trainers. All of these "self-improvement" pursuits worked for her on one level. They conferred a feeling of caring for herself and of being cared for by the experts she hired. But her efforts to tamper with her appetite and discipline her body also reinforced her deep-rooted view of herself as flawed, fundamentally unworthy of love and attention.

I'm skeptical of Sophie's fantasy about a geographic cure, but I'm also intrigued at the possibility of shifting one's landscape as a catapult for internal change. After all, my Maine roots were originally planted when my own parents fled their racist-imbued Southern Baptist upbringing to settle in what their families considered to be polar—and foreign—conditions, when they both scored academic jobs at the University of Maine in Orono. They had to leave what they knew to discover themselves, as the family lore goes. Able to afford modest comforts and long summers, thanks to their academic schedules, we spent temperate months during my childhood swimming and fishing from the base of an A-frame camp they built without running water or electricity on Ebeemee Lake near Brownville. Traversing the state in a camper, they enjoyed a kind of freedom that I too felt as a child, zooming around Little City, Bangor, on a Big Wheel, with a solid sense of security and community.

It was not all idyllic, gentle living, at least not for everyone. When I was 12, in 1984, 23-year-old Charlie Howard, walking with a male companion in downtown Bangor, was harassed and thrown from a bridge into the Kenduskeag Stream; he drowned. EqualityMaine was born out of this hate crime and galvanized hard-won initiatives for gay rights, which have evolved alongside the now-famous restaurant scene, local food movement and thriving arts programs throughout the state. As a member of the Maine House of Representatives for three terms, my mother lobbied for the recognition of and reparations for Wabanaki people, co-sponsoring a law that requires Maine's native history and culture be taught in public schools. Now Maine is on our country's frontline in the struggle for transgender equality, thanks largely to strategic grassroots activism and the resilience of a transgender teenager named Nicole Maines, who successfully fought, with her family beside her, for her right to use the school bathroom that suited her gender identity. This transformation from within is all good for Maine. It also heightens the fantasy for people like Sophie, in search of an external salve.

The concept of starting anew is a ubiquitous preoccupation in New York City, at least for most of the city's residents who rent rather than own; they live in state of housing discontent. It happened to me as I approached turning 40. I'd moved eight times in my son's first eight years, and before I unpacked in my latest dwelling, my mother had a stroke. Hurricane Sandy was bearing down. I felt the thrust of doors—and life passages—slamming shut all around me. I traveled each week to Maine for three painstaking months, as my mother lay in a hospital, unable to eat, speak, walk or communicate with words. In the wake of her death, as if to affirm life itself, my sisters and I each began plotting house projects in the vicinity of Acadia National Park, where my parents had retired. Somehow pouring over architectural plans and scavenging for the perfect 80-year-old, 200-pound porcelain sink in a basement in Brooklyn helped me feel generative. Without my mother, we were all investing, doubling down, on the place that had been home.

Now, as Sophie envisions a move to Maine, her desire for community is paramount. For dreamers terrified about our changing environment, in search of clean air and less bustle, Maine has a special allure. The fantasy of open space alone inspires possibilities for personal renewal. Like Sophie, I hold onto the wish of being transformed, of letting go of existential angst. When I cross the Maine state line, after five hours in the car and with four still to go, my body instantly relaxes with the scent of pine trees. As anyone who has ever spent a winter in Maine can appreciate, however, being in quietude requires a certain level of internal calm. Whether or not she makes the leap, I remind Sophie that Maine, this paradise she dreams of, is more than a place. Just as social ills like racism are not only out there, but in each of us, Maine is a state of mind. I hope she finds it. I know I have.

**Identifying information has been altered to protect confidentiality.*

Catherine Baker-Pitts, PhD, is a psychotherapist in Manhattan. She grew up in Maine in a family of four sisters and spends as much time as she can in her house in Southwest Harbor.

FEEL LIKE A VIRGIN

Toast to spring health with these mocktails

BY JESSIE LACEY
PHOTOGRAPHED BY HEIDI KIRN

For five weeks I had been fighting the most epic battle against pneumonia that I have ever fought. If you are reading this, and it doesn't say "in memory of Jessie Lacey" somewhere on this spread, it means I have won that battle. I proved all the naysayers wrong though, I am not a hypochondriac!

Having been advised to avoid alcohol lest I feel ill effects from the antibiotics, and being encouraged to hydrate (yes Mom, I am hydrating!) this month seemed like the perfect time to mix up some mocktails. Whether you are forced to avoid alcohol for health reasons or you avoid spirits altogether, this mocktail article is for you. (I swear I didn't get pneumonia because the magazine's theme this month is Healthy Body and Mind.)

I chose recipes that are fairly simple and ingredients that are easy to obtain. If you want to be more creative in your drinks or make mocktails often, I recommend checking out Seedlip, a distilled, non-alcoholic spirit that comes in flavors (herbal, citrus, aromatic) intended to mimic the complexity of alcoholic beverages. If you're a whiskey drinker normally but something like antibiotics are keeping you from liquor, the first mocktail, featuring Seedlip Spice, might be just what you need.

Jessie Lacey resides at the heart of downtown Portland with her border collie puppy Josie, making cocktails and trouble.

VIRGIN CUCUMBER GIMLET

1.5 ounces club soda
4–5 slices of muddled cucumber
1 ounce fresh lime juice
1 ounce simple syrup

Combine ingredients and shake with ice. Serve in a rocks glass over crushed ice. Garnish with a slice of cucumber.

SEEDLIP SPICE & TONIC

2 ounces Seedlip Spice 94
Tonic syrup to taste
Tonic water to taste
Star anise
Cinnamon stick

Mix and pour Seedlip Spice, tonic syrup, and tonic water into glass over ice. Garnish with star anise and cinnamon stick.

MOJITO MOCKTAIL

juice of one lime
1 teaspoon simple syrup
a handful of fresh mint
ice
sparkling water

Squeeze the lime juice into a glass, add syrup and mint, fill the glass with ice cubes. Pour sparkling water into the glass.

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Dr. Catherine Krouse

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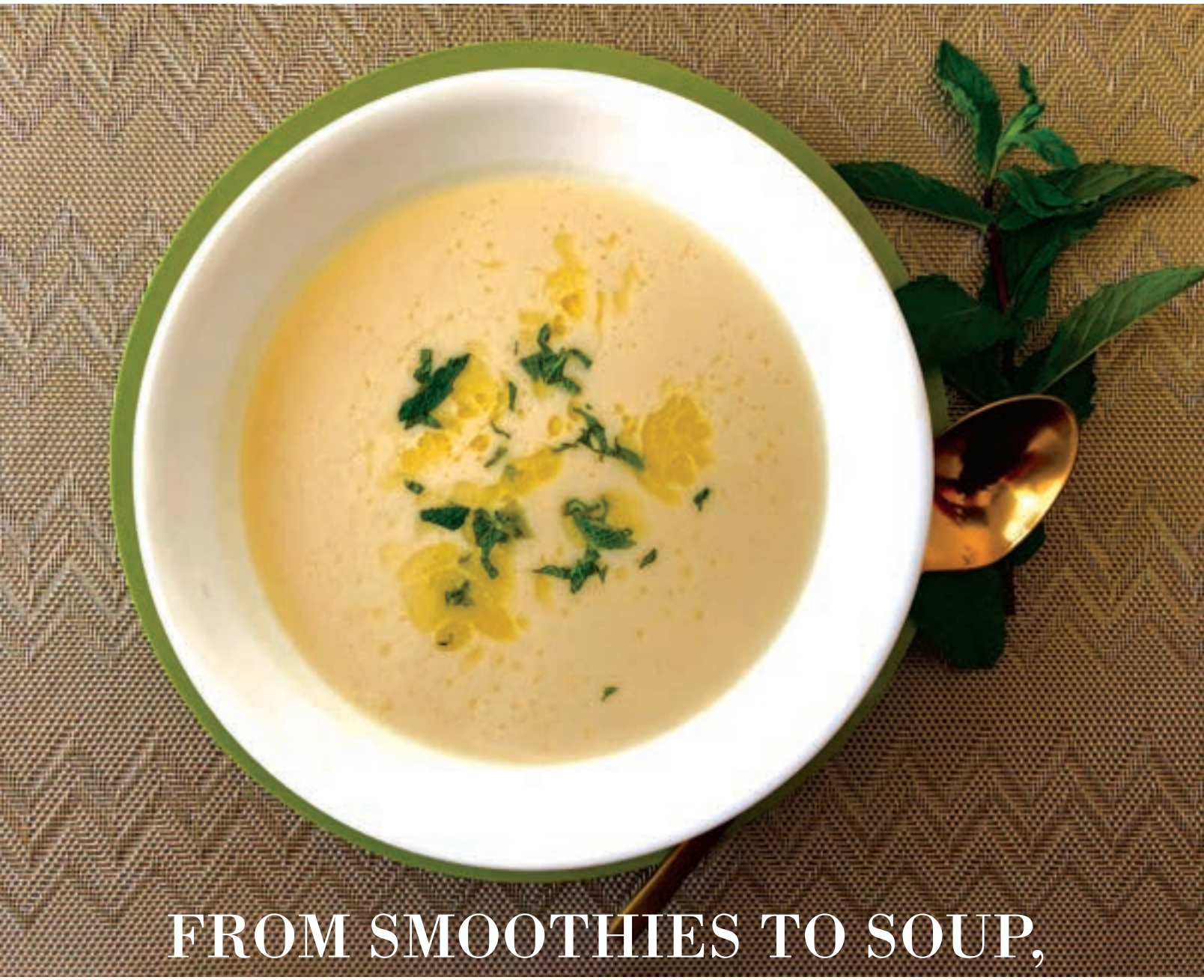


FROM SMOOTHIES TO SOUP, THE ESSENTIAL, HEALTHY INGREDIENT

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY CANDACE KARU

For thousands of years in cultures around the world, yogurt has been an irreplaceable food source. It's easy to make, simple to serve, loaded with nutrients and adaptable to virtually any cuisine. Yogurt can be a super snack food, a sumptuous spread or dip, or a mouth-watering marinade. Plain yogurt can be used in cooking as a healthier substitute for cream, sour cream, mayonnaise or butter.

My yogurt experience started modestly decades ago, with cups of commercial yogurt for snacks, usually during one of my "I have to lose 10 pounds" diet frenzies. Back then when choices were limited, eating yogurt seemed more like a job than an adventure.

My, how times have changed. The quality, selection and varieties of yogurt available at chain grocery stores, independent grocers, health food stores and farmers' markets are vast. From huge dairy companies to artisanal, small batch creameries, there is a yogurt out there for any palate and any pocketbook.

My refrigerator always contains a tub of plain yogurt. I use it when I whip up a smoothie after a workout. I use it in salad dressing. Yogurt is my secret ingredient in so many dishes, from potato salad to deviled eggs. It can even add tang and protein to baked goods.

Here are three of my favorite yogurt recipes.

YOGURT SOUP (YAYLA ÇORBASI)

I'm told that this soup is practically a national dish in Turkey, a comfort food that will cure what ails you. A handful of straightforward ingredients finished by rich, mint-infused butter make this an unforgettable change of pace from the ordinary.

INGREDIENTS

1/4 cup white rice
5 cups chicken or vegetable stock
2 cups plain yogurt
1 egg
2 tablespoons warm water
2 tablespoons all-purpose flour
2 tablespoons butter
2 tablespoons fresh mint, chopped
Salt and pepper to taste

INSTRUCTIONS

In a saucepan, bring stock to a boil and add rice. Reduce heat to simmer, cover and cook until rice is very soft, about 20 minutes. Not all the stock will be absorbed.

In a small bowl, whisk together the egg and flour. While whisking, add the yogurt until combined. Whisk in warm water to temper the egg.

Put the mixture into a saucepan and cook on very low heat, making sure not to curdle the yogurt. Continue cooking on low heat, while stirring constantly for 10–15 minutes.

Pour the rice and stock into the yogurt mixture and continue stirring.

Over medium heat bring the soup to a boil then reduce to a simmer and cook for another 5–10 minutes.

In a small sauté pan over medium-low heat, melt the butter and add mint. Do not let the butter brown.

Drizzle butter and mint over the soup and serve immediately.

ORANGE MANGO DREAMSICLE SMOOTHIE

I work out almost every day so it's important that before I hit the gym, I fuel up. Smoothies do the trick for me and yogurt is the foundation of all my smoothie concoctions. Here's one that's light, refreshing and slightly sweet without any added sugar.

INGREDIENTS

1/2 cup plain yogurt
1/2 cup orange juice
1/2 cup frozen mango chunks
1/2 cup milk
Zest from one orange

INSTRUCTIONS

Blend all ingredients thoroughly and enjoy. (I love my Magic Bullet for this. They are inexpensive, compact and efficient.)

Serve for breakfast or anytime you need a satisfying, protein-packed pick-me-up.

CREAMY AVOCADO CILANTRO SPREAD

This yummy spread is a workhorse in my kitchen. It takes a plain burger from ordinary to swoonworthy. It makes a standout dip when served with veggies, chips or toasted pita bread. And don't get me started on how great it is on fish tacos!

INGREDIENTS

2 medium avocados, ripe
2 tablespoons chopped cilantro
1/2 cup yogurt
1/4 cup finely chopped red onion
1/2–3/4 teaspoon salt
2 tablespoons fresh lime juice
Dash of Sriracha or other hot sauce *(optional)*

INSTRUCTIONS

Slice avocados in half, remove pit and skin and slice into a mixing bowl. Gently mash avocados until they are still a bit chunky.

Mix in yogurt, cilantro, onion, lime juice, hot sauce (if using) and salt.

Serve as a dip for veggies or chips, a spread on burgers or sandwiches, a garnish on tacos or anywhere your hungry heart desires.

Candace Karu makes her living writing about food, fitness and travel. Follow her on Instagram: @candacekaru or at candacekaru.com.

YOGURT SUBSTITUTION CHART

You can cut fat and calories and boost the protein in many foods by using yogurt as a substitute for many common ingredients. ***Here are just a few:***

USE THIS	NOT THAT
1 cup Greek yogurt	1 cup mayonnaise
1 cup yogurt	1 cup sour cream
1/3 cup yogurt + 2/3 cup oil	1 cup oil
1/2 cup yogurt + 1/2 heavy cream	1 cup heavy cream
1/2 cup yogurt + 1/2 cup butter	1 cup butter

STRIKE A POSE

Seniors in MECA's fashion program prepare to show their work on the runway.

BY AMY POWER | PHOTOGRAPHED BY AMANDA WHITEGIVER

Maine has become a brand in its own right, especially over the last few years, but as comfortable and iconic as wool socks and flannel might be, our state doesn't generally top the list of fashion meccas. And yet, nestled in the heart of Portland students have been studying and creating fashion at MECA, the Maine College of Art and Design, since 2013.

The Textile and Fashion Design program, which was started with funding from philanthropist Roxanne Quimby, attracts students from all over the country to study the design and fabrication of textiles, as well as a deep dive into fashion itself. For these 21st century makers in training, there's an element of very modern practicality there as well, connected to durability as well as beauty. "What does it mean to understand this material and all of its aspects, not seeing it as something that's disposable?" says Alysha Kupferer, assistant professor and chair of the department. "The younger generation that's coming into college now has a desire to see that. We want to make sure students graduating are completely engaged. We want to help them become engaged citizens within their medium."

Senior Jordan Carey takes that message to heart as he hones his craft at MECA, and works to prepare his senior thesis: a collection to be featured in the annual MECA Fashion Show. "My work is about transitioning globalized cultures," he says, "transforming in terms of how we interact with each other. I think unfortunately when cultures hybridize, they default to European British or Italian aesthetics. So that's what I'm focused on. I work a lot in reference to Irish sweaters, tribal motifs, and fusing them with African wax print patterns and color and making clearly nuanced references to tribe in that way." Carey mixes aesthetics n unexpected ways, like a down parka the color of

Opposite page, left: Alysha Kupferer, assistant professor and chair of Textile and Fashion Design at the Maine College of Art and Design. The program at MECA was started in 2013. Opposite page, right: MECA senior Jordan Carey mixes aesthetics in unexpected ways, like this down parka the color of a bright blue sea, stitched with seashells. "My work is about transitioning globalized cultures," he says. Above, left: The program at MECA includes classes in everything from pattern making to textile design, like this knit. Above, right: MECA senior Cal Murphy's thesis focuses on a slightly satirical take on the juxtaposition of old and new: she begins with classic designs, like a suit and tie, and reinvents them in mesh and a gym sock.

a bright blue sea, stitched with seashells, or pairing the vibrancy of dashiki with the warmth and texture of an Irish Aran sweater; in effect, "knitting" together his own heritage.

The program has been incorporating both new and old technologies, helping the students to understand not only the latest developments like digital drafting but apply older techniques when relevant to their aesthetic. One of their latest developments has been an initiative to grow natural dye plants such as indigo. The plants are started from seed in the studio by students in the Introduction to Textiles course and then grown in MECA's Green Space on Casco Street throughout the summer. "We love this new program because it emphasizes the deep, connected nature of the work we do to both material and history," says Kupferer. A typical spring day at MECA might see a student watering an indigo plant then printing their own fabric using the same dye or laser etching a new material in the lab. "This juxtaposition of new and old alongside meaningful connections and social collaboration is what makes MECA a unique place to learn and teach," Kupferer says. And allows students to access their full potential. "While still staying true to the ideals of engagement and citizenship that have long been the tradition within textiles practice globally."

Cal Murphy creates for the love of sewing and the process itself. Her thesis focus is a slightly satirical take on the juxtaposition of old and new: she begins with classic designs, like a suit and tie, and reinvents them in mesh and a gym sock. Of her inspiration, Murphy says "Most of my inspirations are really sociology based: I love sociology. Fashion itself is kind of a compact pre-existing a language. There are symbols that have meanings, and I like to see what happens to those meanings when I throw different things together."

MECA students hit the runway May 3 in the annual showcase of the culmination of their work. This won't be your standard fashion show, however. These MECA students are breaking away from the rigid mold of your traditional runway show and may well include some interactive components (last year's show included interactions with a piece of furniture made by a student with a minor in furniture studies). This exhibition opportunity is open to students of every major and grade level. Anyone whose work is best seen activated through movement, interaction, or performance can showcase their work for the live audience.

Amy Power and Amanda Whitegiver are co-founders of East Coast Inspired, a fashion and lifestyle blog. Amy is a mother of two who spends her days dreaming of the ultimate craft room and intending to go for a run. Amanda is a lifestyle family photographer who adores dark chocolate and singing with her two daughters.

SCREEN (TIME) SAVERS

For a healthier relationship with your smartphone, put it down—and out of sight.

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY SARAH HOLMAN

Last July the market-research firm Nielsen released a new study saying American adults are spending over 11 hours a day interacting with media. Another study by eMarketer says we're spending 3 hours and 35 minutes looking at our devices. That's a lot of screen time. Type the words "negative effects of smartphone use" into your Internet browser and behold the seemingly endless list of dangers, everything from neck strain to interrupted sleep to road accidents. The emotional consequences aren't great either. Device use has been linked to decreases in closeness, trust and feelings of empathy between individuals.

No wonder people are looking for ways to break the cycle. Apps like Moment and (OFFTIME) allow users to track screen time and specific app use. While it may seem counterintuitive to use your phone to limit your phone, these apps force us to face facts and provide self-imposed power-down times.

Seven-day digital detox programs are becoming as popular as seven-day liquid fasts. Steps include turning off notifications, removing social media apps and eventually leaving the house without your phone.

Not everyone has a toxic relationship with their phone. Or has to. "Smartphones are what we make of them," says Portland psychotherapist Dori Hart. "Instead of labeling as good, bad, right or wrong, I encourage an awareness of the motivations behind why we reach for something. What need are we attempting to meet by reaching for our smartphones, and is that need actually getting met or not?"

In our homes, screens should be secondary to human interaction and background elements in our decor. Tracy Davis, principal designer and owner of Urban Dwellings in Portland, says she has seen a trend in furniture design toward building USB ports right into pieces like end tables. Some of these decluttering solutions, specifically the out-of-sight-out-of-mind ones, may actually help you reduce screen time, too.

Attractive countertop charging stations can be purchased, but they can also be made. A simple DIY utilizes one of those decorative boxes, usually sold for storing photos. Find them at most stores that carry craft supplies. Cut a hole in the side for the power strip and holes in the front for the individual device cords. (Fancy tip: Use grommets to give the holes a finished look.) Plug all your chargers into the power strip, close the box, and decorate around it. If you want all electronics to disappear, load everything into the box and turn it so the holes don't show.

Need the fastest fix possible? A simple, open basket with handles built into the side, placed on a shelf by a cord, works well *(see photo 1)*. You sneak power cords through the handles. Conversely, if you're feeling super crafty, look online for tutorials on turning old books into hidden charging stations. (I found a great one on HGTV.com but marthastewart.com also has an idea if you're willing to butcher multiple books.)

For storing those easily tangled cords, the key is to wrap, clip and stash. You might have some of the tools to do so right around your home. Keep thinner cords (earbuds, phone chargers) in check with those little plastic squares that keep bread bags closed. Wind up the cords and use the tag to pinch the middle. Clothespins work too, especially when doubled up with a some hot glue *(see photo 4)*. For larger cords (computer charger, extension cords) hefty binder clips can work. Jazz up your cord keeper with decorative washi tape or ribbon, label as needed and designate a drawer or box to keep everything electronics-related in one place.

1. (previous page) This open basket works well as a way to stash cords on a shelf and requires no adaptation at all.

2. Those plastic squares used to keep bread bags closed are a quick and easy way to help thinner cords from getting tangled.

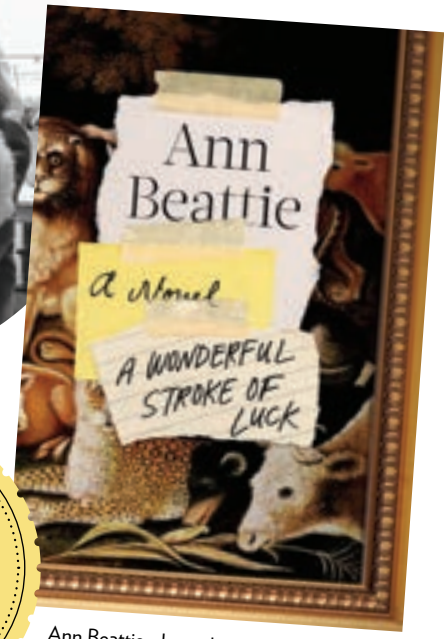
3. Use a craft box to hide cords and create a family charging station. Poke holes for the cords and hide them with grommets.

4. Have a couple of clothespins around? Sure you do. Clip cords together with these and pretty them up if you're so inclined.

Hart believes family phone charging stations, where everyone's devices are in a central location (say, the kitchen or front hall) are the best option. She says it is important to model healthy phone practices, especially for kids and teens. "Schedule phone-free times when the family puts phones away." She suggests you ask nicely, like this: "'I love our time together, would you mind putting your phone away so I can have your undivided attention please?'" Ideally, your phone stays at the family charging station overnight. This will help your sleep patterns. So will reading a book before bed instead of a screen. Turn on your Do Not Disturb function and put your phone out of reach in the bedroom, so you have to get out of bed to look at it. Phone is your wake up call? Alarm clocks are inexpensive.

The beauty of these changes is that they can be incremental. We all know we shouldn't text while we're out at dinner with friends. But what if we didn't immediately reach for our phones every time we have a spare (or bored) moment at home? If it wasn't right at hand, we'd have more of an opportunity to make a choice, says Hart. That "takes us off autopilot and encourages us to take an active role in the outcomes and experiences of our lives." Forgo that 15 minutes of browsing Facebook and use it for half a workout, folding laundry or taking a moment to write in a journal or fix a healthy snack. Plus side, if you need the phone, you know where to find it. It's stashed in the cute station you created.

Sarah Holman is a writer living in Portland. She is enthusiastic about cheese plates, thrift shop treasures and old houses in need of saving. Find her online at storiesandsidebars.com.



A Wonderful Stroke of Luck
Ann Beattie
Viking

Ann Beattie, shown here with her dog, lives in Maine part time. *Photo courtesy of Viking*

NOT SO LUCKY MILLENNIALS

Review: A Wonderful Stroke of Luck by Ann Beattie

BY AMY CANFIELD

Novelist Ann Beattie has turned her critical eye away from baby boomers and on to millennials in *A Wonderful Stroke of Luck*, and her findings are no less provocative. But do they ring true? Did 9/11 so impact a generation that it left it hopeless and anchorless?

Beattie would have us believe so, although her study group is less than representative of an entire generation.

At Bailey Academy, New England boarding school for "really bright kids who've screwed up," members of the Honor Society revel in the attention of their leader, the enigmatic teacher Pierre LaVerdere. He holds court over "LaVerdere's Leading Lights," engaging the students in witty banter with his challenging questions. He wavers between philosopher and blowhard, but the bright students at the center of this novel don't notice the latter, instead eating up his proffered wisdom and wondering about his personal life in their private discussions.

Among this circle is seemingly normal Ben, who's not really sure why he's at the school in the first place. The "Leading Lights" kids are troubled—one girl is having an affair with a married man, one boy has an eating disorder and another is in despair over a dying mother. They're intelligent, yes, but aside from the emotional immaturity of their acting out, they all talk like they're at least two decades older than they are. They share their innermost thoughts as if in group therapy sessions, telling mostly all but keeping some secrets.

When 9/11 happens in their senior year, they watch it on TV. LaVerdere is not among them and he is missed. "He was the person you'd expect front and center, he was the one who could be counted on to provide some perspective, to involve everyone in discussion," Ben thinks. In the wake of the attack"everyone at Bailey perfected staying out of other people's way, leaving them with their own thoughts. Attempts at false cheer had become depressing." The world was a place "where no one would care about minor breakage again."

After the clique graduates not even their Bailey bonds can keep it whole. Ben is adrift. He eventually goes to Cornell. He works in "claustrophobic" New York City. He has bad relationships, including tumultuous hookups with a former female Bailey classmate, and few friends. He leaves the city. He grieves his meaningless, floundering life, but settles into it eventually. Then he discovers a few things about his old mentor LaVerdere and some mysteries of his own past are unveiled as well.

Ben is the most sympathetic of the characters only because he's the one fully drawn. But even the drama of his revelations, while disturbing, fall flat. The ties to and the fallout from his Bailey days are supposedly ever present in Ben's life, but not clear enough for the reader to feel and empathize with them. As with Beattie's earlier work about boomers, broken homes and fractured families take a toll, and with her millennials, 9/11 only fuels the impermanence of life and the belief that "everybody leaves everybody." The award-winning author, who lives part-time in Maine with her husband, artist Lincoln Perry, is said to have defined her generation with her acclaimed short stories, many of which were first published in the New Yorker, and her novels, including *Love Always*, *Picturing Will* and *Chilly Scenes of Winter*. Millennials, however, even the most privileged (spoiled even) and brightest ones, have a right to feel slighted by her damning definition of them.

Amy Canfield is a writer and editor who lives in South Portland.

ALL THE FEELS

BY MAGGIE KNOWLES

I have a quiet kid. That's not to say he isn't loud, but he keeps his emotions close to the chest, which can be super frustrating to a mom who cries at every other commercial/song/movie.

Spoiler alert, this technique doesn't work: "What's the matter? Did something happen at school today? Does your stomach hurt? Are you hungry? Did you have a test? Do you have to poop? Was someone mean? Was someone nice? Why aren't you answering me?"

I would chalk his emotional muteness up to being an 11-year-old boy, except I have proof otherwise from his more babbly peers. Rewinding over past relationships with adult males, I suppose the endless faucet of "what-is-wrong?" didn't earn me any more information then either, except, "I'm going to sleep on the couch if you don't stop it."

LET ME LOVE YOU!!

That is where that is coming from. At 43, I finally realize not everyone needs to talk through all the feels in order to feel cared for. That said, it is our parental obligation to teach kids how to recognize emotions and know how to talk through them, should they wish, or process them in a way that fits their personality.

I know. Nothing feels quite as daunting to a parent who, on top of keeping the kids alive, now has to teach the nuance of imaginary things that we probably have yet to master ourselves. I mean, isn't that why we have wine?

Fear not, momma birds. I have worms of knowledge from people who DO know how to navigate the maze of emotional health and wellness.

"Instead of peppering them with questions, share a story or challenge from your own life from when you were about their age," says Sarah MacLaughlin, LSW, Maine parent and author of *What Not to Say: Tools for Talking with Young Children*.

"Watch a show or movie about the age and developmental phase your child is in and use that as a jumping off place for discussion," MacLaughlin told me. "*Wonder* can be used to talk about friendship and inclusion. *Sisters* relates to sibling challenges. With my tween, we watch old *Friends* episodes to talk about more mature topics like sexism, relationships and pornography."

Your kids will be so thrilled that they get permission to watch more TV they may not realize your ulterior motive until it is too late. It is bittersweet, this age of media, but luckily, there seems to be a Netflix show that matches pretty much any stage of emotional development. I love going old school with *Goonies* and *Stand by Me* to talk about the pressure to fit in versus the magic of being unique. I am counting the days until *Breakfast Club* is appropriate!

"There are so many picture books that lend themselves to this; the book is the bridge," says Matt Halpern, a kindergarten teacher in Freeport. "We read and talk about what the character is going through and feeling. In that process, we talk about our own feelings. We do this almost daily. The key is finding books with rich characters. I am a firm believer in not shying away from difficult topics. Kids yearn to hear and discuss these books."

This year, Halpern especially likes using Caldecott Honoree, *The Rough Patch* by Brian Lies. "We use this to talk about 'shades of feeling sad.' We talk through sad, upset, devastated and what those look and feel like," he says.

If your kiddo isn't able to talk through what they are feeling, when in

doubt, there's not much a good hug or snuggle can't heal.

Case in point, I was reading through a paper my son wrote about our dog.

"One reason I love you is because you calm me down. One time I was mad and you sat next to me and cuddled with me. It made me feel all better."

Sniff...

Know that not everyone needs to talk to feel heard. Never ever shame your kids (especially boys) for crying or being emotional—bottled up sadness turns into anger. They need to know exhibiting snot and shaky breath is all part of being a glorious human. Let your babies know you are there for them through smiles and ugly cries and everything in between. Let them see you snort laugh or bawl at whatever ridiculous meme or movie moves you.

And, if you can, run out and adopt a pet or spend time around animals, because that kind of love listens to even the quietest of souls.

Maggie Knowles writes about all things kid. She and her family live in Yarmouth, where she gardens, keeps bees and refuses to get rid of her stilettos.

Wordsmiths and photographers, send us your (short-ish) verse and images! MWM is taking reader submissions for inclusion in Verse and View. Send your entries to: verse_view@mainewomenmagazine.com.

Photo by Wren Davis Pearson

The Homeopathy of Love

By Wren Davis Pearson, Pownal

I want to tell you something about love

It doesn't break clean when it goes
but leaves you full of splinters

wood, glass, filings
and you're pulling it out for years
first the big shards but then smaller
and smaller and smaller
until you need a microscope or a telescope
to pinpoint exactly where that tiny feeling of sadness
is still waiting for extraction

because glass doesn't decay
shrapnel doesn't dissolve

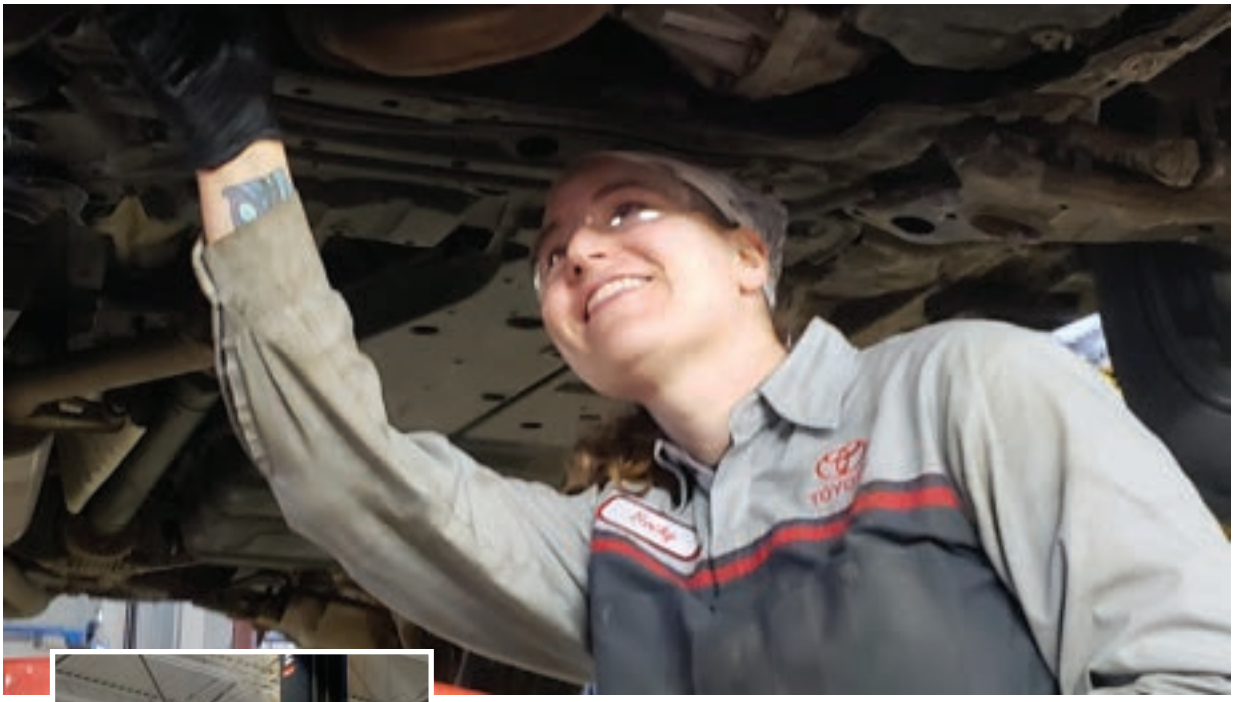
And even when you have removed that final thorn
sometimes the memory of it still remains
like the feeling of a lost limb

But it's the memory of a memory
intangible
twice removed
and it becomes remedy
an internal homeopathy now devoid of physical properties
of the original pain

Now it is essence
it is intention distilled out of sadness
and the beginning molecules of love

again

No, I wasn't raised in a garage...



No, I wasn't alone in a house full of brothers. I wasn't a tomboy. But when I finished college, I realized a job behind a desk wasn't for me. So the question isn't "Why am I a mechanic?" It's "**Why not?**"

Becky McInnis
Toyota Certified Technician since 2013

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