

MAINE WOMEN MAGAZINE

FEBRUARY 2020



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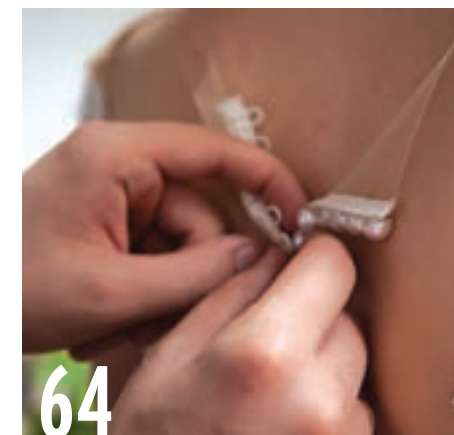
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Welcome to the first state-wide edition of *Maine Women Magazine*! We're very excited to present the magazine every month to women all across the state. Watch for new compelling content, new trends, thought-provoking topics and inspiration for our daily lives.

Our goal with *Maine Women Magazine* is to elicit excitement and fun every month. We want to be a positive influence, and to create smiles to help you on this wonderful journey of life.

As the magazine continues to evolve, we're asking you to provide us with feedback so that we're able to meet and exceed your expectations.

I'd like to take a moment to thank our staff for their contributions and hard work to launch the new, updated version of the magazine.

We also want to thank Mary Pols—our former editor—for her time and dedication to *Maine Women Magazine*. We wish her well in her new endeavors. So many women have come to love her writing. Hopefully we'll see more. For those who want a real treat in good reading, don't forget that her books are available on Amazon.

It's our sincere hope that you enjoy *Maine Women Magazine's* first statewide edition...and be sure to let us know how we're doing!

—Mary Barstow

Cover photo by Tom Bloom

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THE WINTER WARRIOR WAY

*Chances to challenge yourself, all over the state.
Plus a few quieter activities.*

▶▶▶▶ Maine Pond Hockey Classic

Feb. 7–9

Snow Pond Center for the Arts, Sidney

For hockey lovers, what could be more scenic than watching a pond hockey tournament in the great outdoors? For the fifth year this major pond hockey tournament, which typically lures about 70 teams from all over New England, is at the Snow Pond Center for the Arts on Messalonskee Lake. Watch from the shoreline as the competition unfolds over three days, starting Friday evening at 5 p.m., all day Saturday (8 a.m. to 7 p.m.) and wraps up Sunday (8 a.m. to 1 p.m.). Teams will raise money for the Waterville Area Boys & Girls Club and the YMCA at the Alford Youth Center in Waterville. (mainepondhockey.org)

▶▶▶▶ Acadia Winter Festival

Feb. 7–9

Schoodic Institute, Winter Harbor

Just because it's winter, that doesn't mean a trip to Acadia National Park is out of the question. The Acadia Winter Festival covers three days of mostly free fun, with cross-country skiing, lectures (including one on the ice age in Maine), forest bathing, lessons in building bird feeders and snowshoe basics and of course, a baked bean supper. It's at the Schoodic Institute in Winter Harbor, with some events held at the festival headquarters in Schooner Commons Lounge. Many events are free, and all are open to the public. (207-288-1310; schoodicinstitute.org/event/acadia-winter-festival)

▶▶▶▶ Beekeeping Lessons

Feb. 8, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

MOFGA's Community Education Center, Common Ground Fairgrounds, Unity

Yes it's the dead of winter, but what a great time to be planning for warm weather activities. The Maine Organic Farmers and Gardeners Association is hosting a basic beekeeping course with David Smith, past state apiary inspector and the owner of Sparky's Apiaries in Hope. You'll be promoting pollinators and making honey in no time. (\$55 for MOFGA members, \$75 for non-members; 207-568-4142; register in advance at mofga.org)



▶▶▶▶ U.S. National Toboggan Championships

Feb. 7–9

Camden Snow Bowl

Every year the Camden Snow Bowl hosts the U.S. National Toboggan Championships. While it might be too late to register (this three-day event fills up fast and at press time, over 300 teams had already signed up) it is not too late to head up to Camden and bear witness to the beautiful insanity of humans climbing aboard traditional wooden toboggans to willingly hurtle down a 400-foot long chute that has been lined with layers of ice.

Is there a trick to winning? "There are all manner



The U.S. National Toboggan Championships at the Camden Snow Bowl. Photos by Taylor Roberge

of theories," says Camden Snow Bowl assistant manager Holly Anderson. "Some people think the trick is to put the heaviest person in the front; some say you should put the heaviest person in the back." It also depends on how hardy your toboggan is. "And the coatings." Say what? Like waxing your skis, Anderson explains. The weirdest one she's heard of is muskrat oil. "I don't know if that is a rumor or the truth but I'm going with truth."

The first chute at the Snow Bowl was built in 1936 and started over time before eventually deteriorating beyond repair. In 1990 volunteers rebuilt it and the first U.S. National Toboggan Championship launched the next year. It's weather dependent but Camden hasn't missed an event since. To ice the chute they use a water-filled lobster tote, rope and pulleys to build up those layers of ice. Participants can build their own toboggans, but the rules call for them to be "solidly constructed." And yes, there are inspections in advance, along with stickers confirming you are safe for the chute. Proceeds are used to offset the Snow Bowl's operating budget.

Spectators are definitely welcome, Anderson says. "Once they are spectators they usually want to come back as racers the next year." Attendance is free. The parking lot (\$10) is often full up with racers but a shuttle (\$5) runs throughout the day from Village Green in the middle of town. (camdensnowbowl.com)

—M.P.

▶▶▶▶ Snowshoe Festival

Feb. 15, 10 a.m. to 2 p.m.

Roberts Farm Preserve, Norway

Norway has a rich history with snowshoe manufacturing, with the region's flexible white ash serving as the main material for much of the 20th century. The companies that made the snowshoes there have all left, but the town, led by the Western Foothills Land Trust still celebrate its history with its annual Snowshoe Festival. There's a parade (11:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.) with prizes, as well as games (check out the three-legged race). You'll also get a chance to race at varying levels (a 2K, a 5K and a 10K, sponsored by Dion Snowshoes). (\$10 adults, \$5 youth in advance or day of \$15 adults, \$10 youth; 207-739-2124; register at wflmaine.org)



Winter Carnival. Photo courtesy of Maine Audubon

▶▶▶▶ Winter Carnival

Feb. 15, 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Gilsland Farm, Falmouth

Maine Audubon throws a party in the snow, featuring outdoor activity stations, including a winter wildlife touch table. There will be face painting, snowshoeing with L.L.Bean's Outdoor Discovery School and a few indoor activities. (Members and children under 2 are free, \$9 for non-members; maineaudubon.org)

▶▶▶▶ Polar Bear Dip

Feb. 29, 11 a.m. for registration

East End Beach, Portland

Celebrate Leap Year by taking a frigid dip in Casco Bay to raise money for Camp Sunshine. The summer camp is hoping to raise \$20,000, enough to send eight children with life-threatening illnesses (and their families) to the camp in Casco. Miss Maine, Carolyn Brady, is already signed up to take the plunge. But if you really can't make it in the water, do the "chicken dip," toes only. Raise \$100 and more and get an "I DID IT" t-shirt. Registration is at 11 a.m., prepare to freeze at noon. (Register or donate in advance at campsunshine.org)

FEEDING WONDER WOMEN

Recipes for a strong, healthy heart

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED BY CANDACE KARU

February—a month of hearts and love. I'm looking at you Valentine's Day and National Heart Month. February is also my birth month, a time I use to take stock of my life and count my blessings.

One of my life's most treasured gifts is my *Running Girls*™, though these days the group is made up of women who are girls in spirit only. I've known these women for almost 30 years. For decades we have met for lunch regularly, usually to celebrate birthdays, holidays and life events. We are all in our 60s, and though on the surface, we look like an unremarkable group of women of a certain age, we are, if you ask me, extraordinary. In this group there is a real estate agent, a musician, a professional athlete, a college professor and a practicing nurse. And a writer.

Our original bond was a passion for distance running. We approached our sport with varying degrees of intensity and success (not naming names, but one of us has an Olympic gold medal housed somewhere in the recesses of a kitchen drawer and another made it to the Olympic trials), but we all bonded over the sheer joy running brought to our lives.

As age moderates our physical abilities, we still have much that keeps our circle connected. Our commonalities bind us closer with each passing year. At every meeting, we marvel at the beauty of our lives and the place we call home. We are all committed to the health of our families, our communities and our bodies. And while we indulge in wine and dark chocolate with gusto, we share a love of preparing healthy, nutritious food that will, with luck, fuel our bodies for decades to come.

Our most recent gathering was at my new apartment, celebrating all things new—the apartment, the year, the feeling of a fresh start. In a cunning stroke of self-serving luck, I made and photographed the food for this month's column and then served it to my squad. We nibbled on White Bean & Artichoke dip with pita chips while we caught up. Lunch was Rainbow Superfood Salad, Roasted Tomato Soup (frozen and reheated from last month's column) and Energy Bites with Dark Chocolate for a bit of sweet to punctuate the meal.

To say my friends inspire me would only tell part of the story. We have seen each other through chemotherapy and death, the birth of grandchildren, weddings, promotions and broken hearts. We have cried and laughed and lifted each other up. We have been warriors when warriors were needed and offered a soft landing place in times of trouble.

Sometimes it takes a village to keep Wonder Women in top shape. And my Girls will tell you; healthy, delicious food is the best possible start to attain WW status.



WHITE BEAN & ARTICHOKE DIP

As a food group, beans, peas, chickpeas and lentils are practically miracle food. Studies have shown that eating beans regularly is a heart-healthy choice that can reduce your LDL cholesterol (low-density lipoproteins, sometimes known as the “bad” cholesterol) levels by 5% and reduce your chances of heart disease by up to 6%. Beans are loaded with protein and fiber and are easy to add to a wide variety of recipes and cuisines. This one is a home run wherever I serve it. It has a fresh, earthy taste that makes it irresistible and it takes only minutes to prepare. I've been known to have this dip spread on a baguette for dinner, because Dip-for-Dinner...it's a thing!

INGREDIENTS

- 1 can (15 oz.) white beans (*cannellini*, *navy*) drained and rinsed
- 1 can (7 oz.) quartered artichokes, drained
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 teaspoon lemon zest
- 1 teaspoon fresh rosemary, chopped
- Salt and pepper to taste (*don't skimp on the salt*)
- 2 tablespoons olive oil

INSTRUCTIONS

Place first 6 ingredients in food processor and pulse several times to combine.

As you process, add olive oil and mix until you reach the desired consistency.

Taste and add more salt and pepper if needed.

Place in a shallow bowl, drizzle with extra virgin olive oil, garnish with a sprig of fresh rosemary.

Serve with mixed raw vegetables, pita chips or sliced baguette.

Use leftover dip as a sandwich spread with deli meats.



PICK-ME-UP ENERGY BITES

These tiny energy-boosting bites can get your mojo back during an afternoon slump. They're great to make with and for kids, and a sweet addition to lunch boxes and snack plates. And they couldn't be easier to make.

INGREDIENTS

- 1 cup pitted dates, packed
- 1 cup raw almonds
- 1 cup dried fruit (*I like a mix of dried cranberries and apricots*)
- Dark chocolate chips, shredded coconut (*optional*)

INSTRUCTIONS

Combine all ingredients in a food processor and process until a ball forms, about 1–2 minutes.

For energy balls, pinch off a small piece to form a bite-sized ball (or bigger for bigger appetites). Place on a baking tray covered with parchment paper. Sprinkle with shredded coconut.

For energy bites, place the processed ball on a baking tray covered with parchment paper and roll flat, forming a rectangle about 1/3 inch thick. You can then cut them into bite-sized squares or larger bars. Or use a cookie cutter to cut into fun shapes.

If you want to get fancy, microwave a half-cup of dark chocolate chips until they are soft but still formed. Place a chip or two under each energy bite and press so the bottom of the bite is chocolate-covered. A little oozing is perfectly acceptable.

Chill the balls or bites in the refrigerator for an hour to firm up (or, if you've gone down the chocolate road, until that adheres). Store in a covered container.



RAINBOW SUPERFOOD SALAD

INGREDIENTS & INSTRUCTIONS

There are no real rules or magic for this recipe. All you have to do is combine fresh, wholesome vegetables, proteins, whole grains, nuts, beans and seeds. Pull it all together with a flavorful dressing and you'll be ready to conquer the world.

Here are my go-to Superfood Salad ingredients and what they've got in them:

- **Baby arugula:** folate, Vitamins A and C, and K, calcium, magnesium and manganese
- **Red cabbage:** Vitamins A, C, K, and B6, as well as antioxidants
- **Green beans:** Vitamins A, C, and K, as well as folic acid and fiber
- **Edamame (frozen and out of the shell, cook first according to package directions):** Protein as well as Vitamin K, folate, manganese, copper, iron, riboflavin, and thiamin
- **Grape tomatoes:** Lycopene, an antioxidant which has been linked to health benefits, including reduced risk of heart disease and cancer
- **Raw nuts and seeds:** Protein, healthy fats, fiber, minerals such as magnesium, potassium, calcium, plant iron and zinc, and Vitamins B1, B2, B3 and E
- **Quinoa:** Fiber, protein, and a wide range of amino acids vital for supporting muscle development
- **Aged cheese:** Spoiler Alert—cheese aged naturally for more than 6 months contain no lactose, so if you're lactose intolerant you can enjoy a nice aged cheddar with impunity. Cheese is also a great source of calcium and protein.
- **Hard boiled eggs:** An excellent source of protein with a complete range of amino acids, plus vitamin D, riboflavin, zinc, calcium and all of the B vitamins.

The sky's the limit with a Superfood Salad. Add any kind of greens, veggies, nuts, seeds, and proteins (tofu, tempeh, tuna, chicken, shrimp, steak). Make and dress it any way that tickles your fancy.

I like to combine a half cup of plain Greek yogurt, 1 tablespoon of lemon juice, 1 tablespoon of orange juice and 1 tablespoon of olive oil for a super simple, creamy dressing, but a simple vinaigrette or just a drizzle of balsamic vinegar and olive oil works just as well.

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

THE SHOWCASE BOOKCASES

Young adult author Maria Padian has been waiting for these shelves her whole life.

BY MARY POLS // PHOTOS BY LIZ CARON

Author Maria Padian walks across the hardwood floors in her Brunswick living room, headed toward the east wall, which is lined with built-in bookshelves. Running floor-to-ceiling on either side of her childhood piano, this white-framed shelving is a new addition to the room, custom built by local carpenter Craig Gorman to hold both books and family keepsakes. “That was always the dream,” Padian says. “For the longest time this was just wooden bookshelves we stuck in here—they didn’t even make it all the way to the top and they were packed with junk—so finally we said let’s just do the real bookshelves.”

In front of the shelves is a leather wingback chair. Padian developed early rising habits 30 years ago, back when she was working in radio. Her overnight shifts at a station in Atlanta included reading the news at 2:30 a.m. and 5 a.m. Most mornings she’s in this chair by 6 a.m. “Early in the morning, this is where I will be, with my coffee and my quiet reading,” she says. The young adult writer’s fifth novel, *How to Build a Heart*,

Izzy, a Virginia teen who struggles with the socio-economic and cultural divides between her Puerto Rican family and her wealthy high school classmates, came out Jan. 28. It’s already gotten raves from the likes of Kirkus Reviews, which said Padian “masterfully portrays the internal struggles Izzy goes through in her Catholic faith.”

This, she says, has been the year of giving herself the equipment of a writer. “Why did it take me so long to take myself seriously?” After years of hand-me-downs, she bought her first computer. She used to tuck herself into any corner to write, but now the empty-nester has a big, textured wooden desk of her own, in her son Christian’s old bedroom. He’s 28 and off in Los Angeles, trying to make it as a screenwriter. Her daughter Madsy, 26, is in medical school at Dartmouth but comes home at crunch time, to study in the quiet of Padian and her husband Conrad’s woodsy home. As Padian leads the tour, it’s clear this space of hers—with its designated history, poetry, Maine authors and religion shelf—ends up being a refuge for the whole bookish family.



Maria Padian in her wingback chair, flanked by her books.



1 SHOWCASE
Padian's favorite knitting bowl sits on a shelf alongside a painting of a lobster made by her daughter Madsy. She uses the bowl, a lot, but when her knitting leaves the house, the bowl doesn't. "That is too nice a bowl."



2



3

5 SIT FOR A BIT
When the bookshelves were finished last year, the reading chair ("an old Großvater stuhl, which is German for old father chair") needed to be upgraded too. She and her husband picked out a wingback at Pottery Barn. "We wanted a real leather chair that we were going to read in."

6 NEW BOOK, WHO 'DIS?
Some of Padian's books, like *Out of Nowhere*, are set in Maine (in that one, Somali refugees join a high school hockey team at fictional Maquoid High School). She chose to set *How to Build a Heart*, which is themed partly around construction of a Habitat for Humanity house, in town much like Charlottesville, Virginia. "For no particular reason except I felt like locating myself there in my head...I was a reporter for the first time there."

4 HER BOOKS, HER SHELF
"I treated myself to a shelf," Padian says. Her latest book is lined up with her other books, like *Wrecked* and *Out of Nowhere* along with a handmade plate that came with an award for excellence in children's books from the Maine Library Association. "I won the Lupine Award once and the Lupine Honor twice and you always get this beautiful plate that is done by a potter in Portland called Toby Rosenberg." She flips it over to show the "TR" on the back. The shelf also has a small street scene that Padian picked up from a trip to Lisbon a few years ago.



4



5



6



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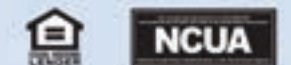
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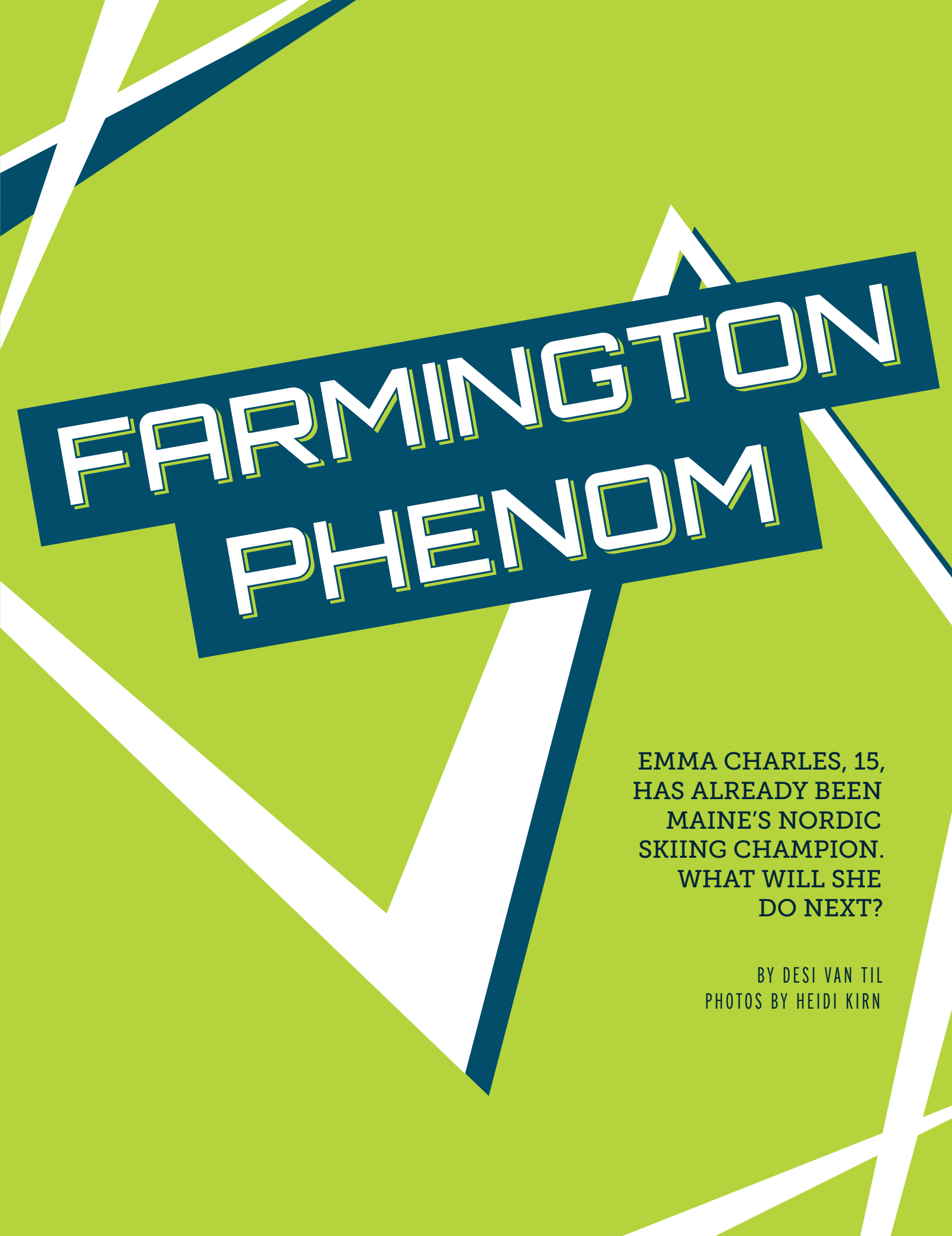
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KENNEBUNK • SCARBOROUGH • TOPSHAM

Emma Charles, champion skier, gets pumped up for her team's race at the Telstar Relays in Bethel.



FARMINGTON PHENOM

EMMA CHARLES, 15,
HAS ALREADY BEEN
MAINE'S NORDIC
SKIING CHAMPION.
WHAT WILL SHE
DO NEXT?

BY DESI VAN TIL
PHOTOS BY HEIDI KIRN

E

mma Charles doesn't have her driver's license yet, but if you're looking for her on a winter afternoon, check the fast lane—at Titcomb Mountain. As a Mount Blue High School freshman, Emma scorched the competition in the 2019 Class A Nordic Skiing State Championships. Her pursuit time, which combines her scores in two competitions—a classical cross-country race and then ski skating, both done on 5-kilometer courses—was a full two minutes swifter than the competition.

In a sport where the top two racers are usually separated by fractions of a second, it's not often that the winner can finish, remove her skis, greet some fans, have a snack and check the weather before the next competitor crosses the finish line. Her margin of victory in classical alone was 73 seconds quicker than the next fastest skier. Emma, 15, and now a sophomore, has been flying past mile markers while remaining unflappable. How did she get so fast? Does she mind the weight of expectation thrust upon her and her Fischer skis? And did some winter spirit put a spell on those Hannaford-brand gummy dinosaurs she scarfs down right before every race?

With a quintessential Nordic skier's build at six feet tall in flats, Emma is taffy-stretched, but she stands with the kind of slouch-free, upright posture generally unseen in teenagers. Her legs are bare six inches below the hem of her skinny jeans; it's not easy to find clothing that fits her string-bean frame. Chalk it up to earned strength in her core or good parenting, but Emma carries herself both regally and humbly. Besides parrying overtures from the various boarding schools and private clubs that want Emma to ski for them, she could just as easily be rejecting offers for modeling gigs.

But Emma is happy skiing with Mt. Blue and in her beloved hometown of Farmington. She gives credit to Farmington Ski Club coach Tony Ramsey for training her well. He gives kids "a solid base of proper technique at an early age, which is so important," she says. But it's her supportive Farmington community that sets Mt. Blue—and Titcomb Mountain, where the team practic-

es—apart. Though there are many Maine public schools with competitive Nordic skiing programs, Mt. Blue has been dominant since the early 90s. It's a point of pride for this university town of 7,500, nestled in the Western mountain foothills.

Over a 20-year stretch starting in 1992, the Mt. Blue Girls Nordic Team won every Class A States title. Emma is proud to be part of that legacy, and is unwilling to forfeit her pre-race nights in the Titcomb wax shack (where the team gathers to get their skis ready before a race) or its rigorous, hilly course. Not to mention the snack bar, where the recipe for and price of its French fries likely hasn't changed since before she was born.

Emma Charles is not the kind of athlete for whom practice is the vegetable and game-day victory the dessert. Mt. Blue Athletic Director Chad Brackett recalls meeting her when she was in elementary school, excelling in gymnastics. "Emma was incredibly athletic and coordinated even then," Chad says. "She trains and trains and trains. She just works. And she does it quietly, and without notice."

But even though she isn't seeking attention, she gets it. Mt. Blue's new Nordic ski coach Emmy Held says, "I enjoy seeing her leading a pack of our top boys around on intense workouts because she is pulling other people up with her. I think the boys are motivated because they look up to Emma and genuinely want to spend time together. There's something really satisfying about seeing a group of young men who train with and aspire to be like Emma."

Working her tail off in beast-mode is a four-season affair. Emma roller-skis on roads when snow levels disappoint—with her mother biking behind her for visibility. She runs cross country in the fall, and track in the spring. All these workouts keep her cardio strong and fast-twitch muscles firing. Though she made a point to say she loves XC running, she confesses, "I'm always thinking about skiing."

It all dovetails nicely with her need for speed, and her hunger for endurance training. "I love being strong." She recalled a time as a burgeoning gymnast in pre-school,



With Charles leading the charge in the neon shirt, skiers take off for the first leg at the Telstar Relays in Bethel.

when another little girl asked her mom "what those bumps were on Emma's arms." Emma said, "The girl's mom explained 'those are muscles!'" Emma laughed. "I like having that confidence."

Her favorite book is Laura Hillenbrand's *Unbroken*, a biography of Olympic-runner and World War II hero Louis Zamperini, who spent nearly three years in a Japanese prisoner-of-war camp. Having learned that Zamperini's athletic training included holding his breath under water for as long as he could so he could build up lung capacity, Emma began her own workouts at the University of Maine Farmington pool, doing more of her strokes underwater. Don't hold your breath if you're looking for the part of this story where Emma Charles decides *not* to do something because it's too hard.

Luckily, stamina and discipline are on tap at the Charles household. Emma's mother Anne, a health educator, has completed marathons and triathlons, run up

Mt. Washington thrice, and is preparing for a half Iron Man. She's not aiming to win any races, but competes because she "enjoys the training." Emma's father Ken was in the National Guard for 17 years, and works as a detective for the Franklin County Sheriff's department. It may sound like a recipe for teenage rebellion, but Emma gets along easily with her folks. She adores her older sister (and training partner) Meg, a winning Nordic Mt. Blue skier in her own right and one of Emma's main mentors in the art of staying humble. Meg left Maine for St. Lawrence University in the fall of 2018, leaving a significant hole in Emma's life. The sisters are close—best friends, really—but they're different. Meg, Emma says, could "fall asleep in a bed under a pile of dirty clothes," whereas her younger sister keeps her surroundings, and herself, under tight control.

Emma wakes at 5:30. She makes her bed every morning, uses a day planner and is committed to her studies.



Above: Charles enjoys brief moment before her leg of the Telstar Relays begin.
Right: Charles competing in her leg of the Telstar Relays with an opponent close on her heels.

According to her mother Anne, she employs wise time-management skills—tackling her hardest assignments first, saving the best of her brain for the most demanding work. She procrastinates about as much as she slouches. In the scant cracks between training and racing, there is much to keep her busy: her schoolwork (biology—animal behavior in particular—being her favorite subject), playing violin for the school orchestra and being a member of the Franklin County Fiddlers. She’s in her school’s Youth Climate Action group, seeking to reduce her school’s environmental impact and raise climate crisis awareness.

“Emma genuinely [cares] about these issues and the impact they are having on the environment and on humanity,” says Mt. Blue faculty advisor Tyler Brown. She says she can’t stomach the thought of a snowless Maine: “It makes me sad to think that in a couple of decades my favorite sport could be gone.” Which brings us back to the reason for the uncountable hours spent gliding over snow on skinny carbon-fiber sticks. That drive comes from a pure love of moving on the snow, Coach Held says. “She always has a little smile as she puts on her ski boots and is usually one of the first ones out on the snow, and one of the last to go inside at the end of practice.”

Her mother has noticed how quiet Emma gets before races.





“SHE TRAINS AND TRAINS AND TRAINS. SHE JUST WORKS. AND SHE DOES IT QUIETLY, AND WITHOUT NOTICE.”

Above: Camaraderie is a part of life for teammates and Charles is always supporting her teammates. Opposite page: Charles embraces her mother Anne post-race.

There are rituals—an intersection of habit and superstition to help her tame her nerves. She puts on her trusty necklace (two rings on a chain—one a gift she received at birth, one from her grandmother) and forces herself to dig to the bottom of her oatmeal. She doesn't like the porridge, but “I know it works.” She puts on classic rock, maybe the Beatles White Album. Occasionally, just before Emma gets in position to start the race, Anne will stand next to her daughter, silent by request. It's about just being present, a buffer from distraction while her introverted daughter prepares. The gummy dinosaurs provide the last bit of inspiration.

It sometimes seems, even to Emma, that her primary competition is herself. She's noticed that on races with staggered starts, she tends to ski less aggressively when she's in a later wave because she finds something psychologically discouraging about playing chase. She floors it when she's the front-runner with only a beckoning white trail before her.

Did winning States as a freshman changed her life in any way? “Not really! I mean, obviously it's an amazing thing that happened, but I don't wake up thinking ‘I was state champion!’” Every day is just another chance to push herself. She does admit that it felt very good “winning some of these New England

circuit races when I'm just from a small town in Western Maine that people haven't heard of.”

Her goals include qualifying for the Junior National team, which puts additional pressure on her final Eastern Cup performance. (She was ranked 7th in New England at press time.) She dreams of skiing in college, perhaps staying in Maine to do so, and then ideally, joining the U.S. Women's team. She'd love to go to Europe someday, to ski in Germany and see where her father was stationed years ago. Emma can envision coaching or working as a physical therapist. But for now, her dreams are caught up in those last pushes she makes for the finish line. The crowd is roaring. They've probably lost all feeling in their fingers and toes. Meanwhile, Emma has been generating her own heat, her cheeks flushed, her heart pounding, racing to the finish and imagining what it must feel like to be an Olympian. Her powers of imagination may not have to work that hard.

Desi Van Til is a Farmington native and screenwriter. She wrote the screenplay for the 2015 movie Tumbledown, set in and around Farmington. She lives in Portland, has taught screenwriting at Colby College and is currently casting her most recent indie feature scrip, Reversing Falls, set in Downeast Maine.



IN SEARCH OF THE COLD HIGH

THE POWER OF SWIMMING IN THE
FRIGID WATERS OF EGGEMOGGIN
REACH, THE COLDER THE BETTER.

BY MOLLY DWYER BLAKE
PHOTOS BY NICK CARTER



Molly Dwyer Blake, left, and
Brittney Carter, right, preparing
themselves for an icy plunge.



Molly Dwyer Blake enlists her friend Brittney Carter in a winter swim. It feels, Dwyer Blake says, almost meditative to prepare to get in the water. Wool socks are a must.



T

he first time I went cold water swimming, it was a New Year's Day lark. The night before, two friends and I decided we were going in the water. A childhood friend who regularly polar bear swims texted tips including that we go in with full bladders because it acts like a hot water bottle inside your body. "Make sure to breathe because it can knock the wind out of you," she texted. "But just wait, wait until you get a little rush. It will be worth it." It sounded both intriguing and horrible. I wanted in.

We met at the frosty boat ramp in front of The Brooklin Boatyard. It was about 30 degrees. We had a few spectators, all of whom predicted we were going to die. My husband hated the idea so much he stayed home to nap. One friend had her phone out, ready to call 911. Our kids

stood in the parking lot, holding the towels. Afterward, we went to a neighbor's house, and sat by the fire, celebrating the fact that we didn't die. We drank from a flask, marveling that it actually wasn't that bad to go into the Atlantic Ocean, in Maine, on January 1st. We felt like champions.

I didn't go winter swimming again for almost three years, until I heard about a person who went swimming once every month for the whole year. For some reason, that connected with a part of me that wanted and needed a challenge. My friend Brittney Carter and I swam in late October of 2018, on a cold, rainy day. She is a native Floridian who moved to Maine in the middle of a winter that was insanely snowy and harsh. That day our legs stung and ached with each step into the water. We stayed in for about two minutes and, as soon as we got out, we thought, "we can do that longer."

After that, we started to go every week. Every swim we made a quick decision—Brittney will jump into my minivan full of trash at a moment's notice—and every



Dwyer Blake, left, and Carter, right, do calisthenics to get their blood flowing before stepping into the frigid waters.

swim was radically different. Some days stung like mad, some days the chill sank in and required a long hot bath afterward. But the elation afterward was the same. We tried to figure out why some days the cold felt like a hammer hitting our fingers and toes and why other days we stood in our suits soaking wet and talked. It seemed that getting our blood flowing first made the swim less painful. We started doing calisthenics before we went in, kicking the frozen air, jumping on the snowy beach and laughing about how cold the water was going to be.

I live here in Brooklin because it is the “Boatbuilding capital of the World” and my husband is a wooden boat builder. We moved here straight from the other Portland, 15 years ago, right after I finished school at Oregon College of Art and Craft. The transition to no movies, restaurants and the million miles to an airport seemed, at first, more than I could bear. The boatyard is a family though, and I felt instantly part of a tiny community, there for me in a way that I had not experienced before. After my first son, Cyrus, was born I was quietly taken care of for weeks with dinners, brownies and pop-ins from people I barely even knew. They gen-

tly walked me through postpartum doom and showed up even when I certainly didn’t ask but needed them.

In gratitude I throw one hell of a party and try to give back in some of the only ways I know how, food, drinks and generally meddling in people’s lives enough for them to know I am there for them too. Now, Cyrus is almost 15 and I have two more children, Lola, 6 and Asa, 5. I am in a car constantly, making endless snacks, play dates and playdough. I also am positive that now is the time for me to learn and do all the things that I have not given space for the last however many years. The sudden, urgent need to sail, skate, play sports, make my own art and find my own way is overwhelming and exhausting. Swimming sometimes tempers that urgency or shakes me to wake up, snap out of it and go do all the things. Feel all the feelings.

I have developed a routine. I know to wear clothes that are easy to slip on so that when my fingers are frozen I can still get dressed. I try to go in without my suit as much as possible so that I don’t always have a frozen bathing suit corpse on the car floor. I wear wool socks to protect my feet from sharp shells and rocks and I always tell someone where and when I am swimming.

“WHEN I AM DRIVING ALONG TO BLUE HILL AND THE SUN IS HITTING THE ICE BREAKING APART ON THE TIDE, I THINK, “OH, I WANT TO PUT MY FACE IN THERE!” THEN I THINK WHAT THE HELL IS WRONG WITH ME AND I LAUGH.”



“WE DRANK FROM A FLASK,
MARVELING THAT IT WASN'T
THAT BAD TO GO INTO THE
ATLANTIC OCEAN, IN MAINE,
ON JANUARY 1ST.
WE FELT LIKE CHAMPIONS.”



When I first started cold water swimming, I had residual symptoms from contracting Lyme twice, chronic muscle pain, foggy brain and generally feeling like I was 900 years old. It didn't cross my mind that cold water swimming would be helpful. I had been taking antibiotics for a year and soon after, I stopped. Is cold water swimming the reason? All I know is that my body craved the cold water and I was less prone to colds, felt stronger and had more energy.

When I walk in, I relax my shoulders, feeling the cold creep up my legs, and take deep breaths to push all my thoughts out toward some of my favorite islands in the distance. This takes all my concentration. If I start to talk or laugh, I immediately feel the water sting again. I have to wait until I get a little bit of a high which I presume is from my body trying not to freeze to death. When I get out, I have a clearer mind, as if someone slapped me hard in the face. When I hear from friends who meditate, it sounds similar

to what happens to me when I'm focused on being in the water.

Maine's gray winter days can be filled with an overwhelming feeling of loss. I used to be more prone to uncomfortably coying up with those feelings during the grim months. Now I text Brittney and tell her that we have to jump in the water because I'm going to lose it. That quick, cold reset is now an essential part of my winter.

There are a few fishing boats moored where I normally swim in Eggemoggin Reach and occasionally the fishermen will be working on gear for scalloping season as I am getting ready to swim. At first, I would hide from them—I figured they would think I was drowning or trying to kill myself. Can a guy preparing for a day's work in the bitter wind and cold understand the middle-aged woman taking a moment for her very odd, brutal hobby in the water he's trying to stay out of? He may think I am an idiot. But I also know that he

knows intimately the peace and beauty found on that water and I am certain he would understand parts of me.

When I tell people about winter swimming, they react the same way I used to react when someone tells me they are running a marathon, half curiosity, and half disgust. Now I understand that everyone needs to have their own thing. The thing that gives them a flood of life. I don't care what their thing is; I believe them when they say it works.

Molly Dwyer Blake lives in Brooklin, Maine with her husband and wild children, making art, fun and work.

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NOT FOR THE FAINT OF HEART

HOW ROLLER DERBY IS HELPING WOMEN
GROW IN CONFIDENCE

BY LIZ GOTTHELF // PHOTOS BY JIM VERNIER



...eidi Kendrick was recently at a holiday party in Portland and mentioned that she played in a local roller derby league. When another partygoer asked what roller derby was, and before Kendrick could explain, someone else chimed in and likened it to staged wrestling.

Though it's not the first time she's heard the misnomer that roller derby is scripted, there probably isn't anything that could make a roller derby player like Kendrick cringe more.

"There's an old-school thought that it's fake," said Jessica Locke, and some think of it as a novelty item. Locke is a skater and coach, who, like Kendrick, is a member of the Maine Roller Derby, a Portland-based women's league with two home teams and one travel team.

While televised roller derby in the 1970s may have at times been scripted, modern roller derby

isn't about fishnets and gimmicks and putting on a show on skates. It's governed by the Women's Flat Track Derby Association, which, according to the organization's website, represents more than 450 member and apprentice leagues on 6 continents. The association holds leagues to a code of conduct and lays out safety regulations.

So how is roller derby played?

A game, called a "bout," is broken up into segments, called "jams," which can last up to two minutes. During a jam, there are two teams with five players each. Each team has one jammer, who wears a helmet with a star, and a pack of four blockers.

Jammers must make their way through the pack, with the first jammer to break through declared the lead jammer. That gives them the right to decide when the jam ends. The jammers then race around the track and try to break through the pack again, scoring points on opposing blockers.

"It really is a brain game," said Molly Sullivan, a Maine Roller Derby member and roller derby broad-

cast announcer. She has also played and coached the sport. "It's like playing chess on eight wheels, going 20 miles per hour. You're playing offense and defense all the time."

Like any sport, there are rules, and they are taken seriously.

Players must wear helmets, mouthguards, and other protective gear. Illegal target zones include the spine, head area, and below the mid-thigh. It's a family-friendly sport, and if a player uses foul language, it could land them in a penalty box.

Playing roller derby takes a certain amount of devotion—three-hour practices are held three times a week, in addition to bouts. The Maine Roller Derby is a non-profit organization and

Locke was first introduced to roller derby as a teenager living in New York when she saw a friend of a family member play. Years later, after the end of a long-term relationship, "I decided I wanted to do something for myself," she said. She emailed a local team, only to discover she had contacted them the day before the deadline to join.

"It was like kismet," said Locke. "So, I showed up, and joined the team."

Kendrick joined Maine Roller Derby at the age of 39, at a time when she said she wanted to do more of the things she loved in life, like roller skating.



relies on monthly dues from players in addition to ticket sales and donations. There are about 100 players and officials with the league, and 30 of the top players are chosen for the travel team.

Players on the travel team must also pay for travel costs for away games. Sullivan, Locke, and Kendrick and all others heading to Hatfield, Pennsylvania in February for the Battle of the All Stars will ride together and pool expenses. The tournament, which will feature players from across the country, is planned for Feb. 13-16 and will be streamed online by New England Roller Derby Report.

The sport attracts players from a wide variety of professions—Sullivan is a teacher, Locke is a real estate appraiser, and Kendrick is an artist.

"Roller derby, the sport and the community, they both empower you," said Kendrick. "The sport literally teaches you to get knocked down and come back up over and over again, and if that's not a good life lesson..."

Sullivan played sports in high school, but never roller skated until she decided, as an adult, that she wanted to try roller derby. She taught herself to skate at Deering Oakes park in Portland.

"I would hit Happy Wheels on Friday nights while everyone else was partying. I was very determined to make it into this sport and community," she said.

There are a lot of benefits to being in a roller derby league, say local players. The sport is accepting of all body types, and everyone brings a different strength to the game. Players come in all



shapes and sizes, and all are valued. Because Maine Roller Derby is a non-profit, members must contribute in different roles—for example, a nurse might serve as a required medical professional at a game, or someone with a marketing background might help promote the sport.

It's a team effort on and off the rink, and the league has become like a second family to many of its members.

"In our league, in particular, there is so much love. We choose to hang out together outside of the sport as well. We're all friends," said Kendrick.

Not only has roller derby made them comfortable with their bodies, but it's also given them confidence, say players.

"I've learned to use my voice. I've never been shy, and I can talk, but to actually make my voice assertive and strong was hard for me at first. You have to use your voice on the track, but it also teaches you to use your voice in the world," said

Kendrick.

Locke said, in life, women are sometimes told to "stay small," and not assert themselves. Roller derby has taught her not to acquiesce to others.

"One of the things I've gotten from Roller Derby is the confidence to take the space that I deserve and should have in other aspects in life," said Locke. "In roller derby, you have to be direct and get it done."

For Sullivan, roller derby has opened up the opportunity to do something she had always dreamed of—sports broadcasting.

The role of roller derby announcer is a volunteer gig. Maine Roller Derby isn't unique in that players and those in associated roles don't get paid. Opportunities for roller derby players are few; some make money by hosting clinics or selling merchandise.

Sullivan hopes that someday that will change, and in the future young skaters will be able to make a living playing the sport they love.

Right now, the Maine Roller Derby is at a crossroads. Happy Wheels skating rink, which has been home to practices and many home games, closed in December after being sold.

This leaves league members with no place to practice, and without a place to play games when the Portland Exposition Building is not available.

The Maine Roller Derby has a long-standing relationship with the Portland Exposition Building and has worked out a time around the Red Claws basketball schedule when the local roller derby league can play a game on Jan. 25.

Maine Roller Derby is hopeful to find a future home and the board of directors is scouting out potential leads. It's a challenge, but as members of the sport that, as Kendrick says, teaches players to "get knocked down and get back up" they are hopeful to find a new place to practice in the future.

Liz Gotthelf lives in Old Orchard Beach with her husband. She enjoys hula hooping, volunteering at a local horse barn and finding Fiestaware at thrift stores.

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ON EIGHT WHEELS,
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SNOW QUEEN

How Julie Mulkern helps Maine kids get outside in winter.

BY AMY PARADYSZ

Maine can't export winter to more temperate climates, but Julie Mulkern is working on exporting the WinterKids brand everywhere there's winter. Mulkern is the executive director of the nonprofit, which focuses on increasing outdoor physical activity in children from preschool through high school during what is typically a sedentary season for many.

In the nine years that Mulkern has led WinterKids, its reach has grown from 300 kids annually in Maine to 12,000 kids in Maine and New Hampshire. Now there are hopes to expand it via the year-old WinterKids App, which was built with the capacity to be licensed for use in other states. Mulkern says there's already interest from Colorado, Oregon and Utah.

"The vision should be that all kids are outside and active in the winter, not just Maine kids," she says.

The WinterKids vision started with founder Carla Marcus of Scarborough, a lifelong skier who worked with Ski Maine in 1997 to start a youth program that would feed the ski resort pipeline. Dubbed the Passport Program, it started as a way to reach fifth-graders through free ski lessons and then soon began to ex-

pand, including sixth and seventh grades in the free and discounted tickets program. The Passport program also grew to include other winter sports, including cross-country skiing and snowshoeing. Marcus retired in 2007, shortly before Mulkern joined the WinterKids staff as its development director, but the founder calls herself a tremendous fan of Mulkern's.

"She understands what WinterKids is all about," Marcus says. "And she is accelerating it far beyond what I was able to do."

Marcus says she knew from the early days of the program that it was ripe for expansion beyond downhill skiing. "Immediately, I started getting feedback from teachers and parents that it wasn't just about alpine skiing but about health and developing lifelong habits of being active outside in winter," Marcus says. "And study after study shows that children learn more effectively through experiential education."

Mulkern agrees. "I think WinterKids could have potentially gone in a different direction, but I was always very focused on public health and all kids," she says. "It has never been more apparent to me since becoming a



| AT THE HELM |

mom—I have a six-year-old and a three-year-old, boys—that kids’ default setting is to be outdoors and active. At WinterKids, we feel like it’s our job to nurture that. It’s a responsibility.”

With WinterKids’ alpine beginnings, people are often surprised that Mulkern isn’t a skier (she took lessons as a kid growing up in the small town of Burlington in Penobscot County, but it wasn’t something that stuck). Even so, she loves being out in the snow. With her own boys, Mulkern, 42, builds snow forts in her yard in Gorham, snowshoes Presumpscot Land Trust Trails and sleds Payson Hill. She tries to give them a childhood like her own, with an abiding love of Maine and of winter.

“Humans were not meant to hibernate,” she says. “We’re not suggesting that people be out all day long. Go for 10 minutes three times a day—anything. Shovel. Build a snowman. Make your own sledding hill. Winter is meant to be experienced, not endured.”

Mulkern has 20 years of nonprofit experience, including as the manager of development and volunteer resources for Spring Harbor Hospital, as a transportation network coordinator for the American Cancer Society and managing the mentor program at the Community Counseling Center. She moved into the executive director position at WinterKids in 2011.

“From the very beginning, everything I’ve done has included some element of resource development and fundraising,” Mulkern says. “What that is to me, and what I’m best at, is building relationships. You have to be able to speak to a homeless person, or the president of the organization, and everyone in between. Raising money has



Photo by Heidi Kirn



Above: The WinterKids team with mascot Blaze at the opening ceremony of the 2019 Winter Games at Oxford-Cumberland Canal School in Westbrook. Far left, bottom: Mulkern and Program Committee Chair, Sarah Long, kick off another WinterKids event. Photos courtesy of Mulkern. Left: Mulkern’s son Johnny readies a snowball to hurl at his mother. Photo by Heidi Kirn



Mulkern and her son Johnny enjoy the snow at Shaw Cherry Hill Farm in Westbrook. Photo by Heidi Kirn

nothing to do with asking for money; it's about relationships." Every single day at WinterKids feels different, Mulkern says. "You're meeting with a corporation. You're meeting with a volunteer group. You're writing a grant."

Or, asking, as Mulkern did, is there an app for that, something that might be more efficient and useful than the original Passport?

The WinterKids App, which offers discounts and deals on admission, rentals, classes and gear at recreational areas and retailers in both Maine and New Hampshire, came online last winter. Deals get added throughout the season, which the static Passport program, which had to be printed, did not have capacity for.

"Our app has 80-plus partners, and that isn't just skiing and snowboarding, it's tubing, ice skating, curling, anything you can imagine," Mulkern says. "They are offering free and reduced tickets to Maine and New Hampshire families." Families pay \$35 to register up to five family members for kids 18 and under.

"That fee helps to fund a lot of the stuff we're doing with kids in rural areas who are not likely to ever be at Sugarloaf

or Sunday River but certainly can be encouraged and educated to be outdoors and active in their own back yard and in their community," Mulkern says.

Another innovation she brought to WinterKids is the Downhill 24, a 24-hour ski and snowboard challenge with teams of 12—some teams more on the competitive side, some more interested in the rare opportunity to ski Sugarloaf at night, on slopes illuminated with equipment borrowed from construction companies. The eighth annual Downhill 24, slated for next month (March 6–7), is anticipated to exceed the 2019 fundraising total of \$384,000.

"Income from this event has changed the course of our organization and what we're able to do," Mulkern says. "When I started as executive director, our budget was under \$250,000 a year, and now our signature fundraiser, the Downhill 24, raises more than that. We were able to build the app because of that; no small chunk of change there. And the number of kids we're able to reach with WinterKids Winter Games has doubled because of the Downhill 24."

WinterKids Winter Games is a four-week series of outdoor physical activity, nutrition, family engagement and winter

carnival challenges, all based on lessons in the WinterKids Guide to Outdoor Learning. It takes a lot of volunteers, hundreds even, including meteorologist Sarah Long of WMTW, one of 17 members of WinterKids' board, as well as a frequent emcee for WinterKids fundraisers and Winter Games opening ceremonies at schools. "Julie's enthusiasm and ability to keep an army of volunteers active is impressive," Long says.

The Guide to Outdoor Learning is popular with teachers because the lessons are aligned to learning standards, making outdoor time count as classroom time, Mulkern says. "We're not going in and saying, 'Do more.' We're saying, 'Meld this into what you're already doing and we're going to give you amazing resources, tons of incentives, technical support and whatever it is you need.'"

In January, 32 schools—two from each county in Maine—competed in the Winter Games to accumulate points toward winning a cash prize of up to \$5,000 for their school.

"The schools we choose are generally in a lower socioeconomic region, where we can bring resources," says Educator Director Marion Doyle. "We're not going to turn them into snowboarders but we



Mulkern and two-time Olympic champion snowboarder Seth Wescott at a WinterKids event at Sugarloaf. Photo courtesy of Mulkern

"Our app has 80-plus partners, and that isn't just skiing and snowboarding, it's tubing, ice skating, curling, anything you can imagine. They are offering free and reduced tickets to Maine and New Hampshire families."

provide them an opportunity to get outside and have fun and enjoy the natural resources we have in Maine."

Participating schools are, without exception, rural—some much like where

Mulkern grew up. Burlington is so small she'd walk to school with her dog and he'd turn around and go back home.

"We were very active in the outdoors, including in the winter," she says. "We'd

sled down dirt roads covered in ice. I remember pretending I was on downhill skis on our cousin's huge hill, but I had cross-country skis on. Super scary. We did all sorts of stuff like that all the time. That's just what you did."

In contrast to that active—albeit daredevil—lifestyle Mulkern grew up in, today nearly 30 percent of incoming kindergarteners are overweight or obese.

"What is great about our mission that kids can try things. We can offer them the tools to get a discount or do something free and have the equipment and people there to teach them. The success rate skyrockets, and they'll be far more likely to be successful at building a habit and becoming a lifelong enthusiast."

Amy Paradysz is a freelance writer from Scarborough who has a love-hate relationship with winter.

FRIDGE & FOTO FEBRUARY

How to make the most of being
cooped up this winter

BY SARAH HOLMAN

Mainers are pros at finding ways to beat the winter slump. We're willing to go outside in just about any weather conditions to feel the sun and breathe the air. But even the heartiest among us can only last so long in sub-zero temperatures, ice storms and muddy mid-winter thaws. For those days when going outside truly feels like a matter of life and death—or at least misery and comfort—here are two house tasks perfectly suited for the coldest winter months.

Before I spoke to Joe Walsh, owner of Green Clean Maine, I was gearing up to run a self-cleaning oven cycle. That would warm up the kitchen, right? Not so fast, Walsh says. "When the oven operates at that high of a temperature, the burning actually emits some pretty nasty chemicals." They're just a byproduct of the caked-on stuff in the oven, Walsh explains, but still not something you want to be breathing in.

Instead Walsh recommends a thorough scrubbing of the refrigerator and freezer. "It should take about an hour total," Walsh says. "It's also a great time to sort and toss food." Like that those shriveled up dill fronds that lived and died in the back of the veggie drawer. Guilty.



FRIDGE DEEP CLEAN

>> CLEAR space on your counter for the contents of the fridge.

>> SET the fridge temperature to the warmest setting or the off position, depending on your fridge model. Don't unplug (that wastes electricity).

>> EMPTY, working from top to bottom, setting items on the counter in the order you take them out.

>> REMOVE all baskets, bins and shelving, but carefully because these parts can be expensive to replace. "If you don't remove everything, you're not going to get a deep clean," Walsh explains.

>> PRE-TREAT by spaying surfaces with all-purpose cleaner and let it soak for a few minutes. Soaking is critical for loosening up the gunked-on stuff. The folks at Green Clean make their own spray, just a bottle filled with water and a few drops of liquid dish detergent. "That's all it takes," Walsh says.

>> USE a light duty scrubbing pad to clean the inside.

Pro tip from Walsh: do not use the rough green side of the ubiquitous yellow sponge, which will scratch the interior. "Many people aren't aware that these [sponge] colors have meaning," Walsh says. "White is the lightest duty, blue is medium and green is heavy duty." White can be hard to find, but blue is commonly available and works fine here.

>> FOLLOW with a microfiber or cotton cloth to wipe everything out.

For nooks and crannies like hinges and gasket, use an old toothbrush.

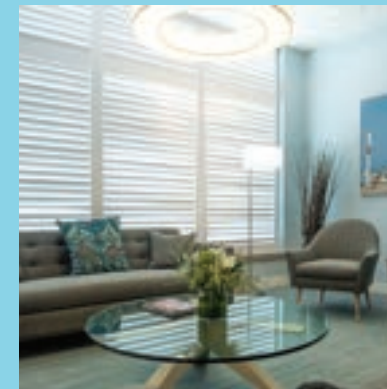
>> THEN SCRUB shelves, bins and drawers in the sink. For stubborn, sticky spots like old maple syrup, sprinkle baking soda on the area while it's wet to make a paste and let it sit. It will come off with the light scrubber. Then rinse, dry with a cloth and reinstall in the fridge.

>> FOR THE FREEZER, you have to let things warm up a bit so your cleaning liquid doesn't freeze on contact. Fifteen minutes with the door open and the cooling element turned off or up is enough. February is a great time to utilize your massive natural freezer, aka the outdoors, to keep food from thawing.

>> RE-ADJUST temperatures and restock the shelves.

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Now that your fridge is sparkling and your condiments are alphabetized, it's time to keep the organization train rolling along and tackle another great winter project: photo sorting. Emilie Sommer of emilie inc. is a wedding and lifestyle photographer and a committed photo organizer. Her method (detailed at emilieinc.com/organize) is not intended as a Weekend Warrior undertaking. "Starting a photo system at the beginning of the year and tackling one step per month sets you up to stick with it all year long," Sommer says.

PHOTO SORTING

>> FIND YOUR PHOTOS. Easy, right? Probably not. Sommer's is talking about old printed photographs, memory cards from digital cameras, USB drives, CDs and DVDs. Locate and collect physical photos and files in a box.

>> SORT THEM INTO THREE PILES.

- 1) Display, ie, what you want to frame.
- 2) Archive, what's either headed for album or archival box.
- 3) Recycle, which means you're either sending that great photo of Aunt Marge to her or tossing that picture of you with double chins. Keep going until you've got just two piles left.

>> INTAKE. Transfer all external digital images to your computer, creating folders on your desktop labeled by year and move photos into place while renaming them sequentially. For example 2015_001, 2015_002, etc. Apps like Photo Mechanic will do this or you can do it manually. Delete any images you don't want. No disc drive? Check stores like Staples, which can download and send you a file.

>> MAKE SURE YOU'RE NOT MISSING ANYTHING. Survey social media. Cute pictures out there on Instagram or Facebook? Both platforms allow you to download copies of your images to your computer. In Facebook, look for Your Facebook Information in Settings, then click Download Your Information. In Instagram click the settings gear icon, select Security, scroll down to Data Download. Follow the prompts to receive an email with all your images, ready to be sorted into your existing desktop folders.

>> BACK IT UP. Back files up on an external hard drive dedicated to your photos (a LaCie drive starts around \$120) or on a virtual cloud (Apple, Google, Dropbox, etc.)

>> LIVE WITH THE IMAGES YOU'RE THINKING YOU WANT TO DISPLAY. Print out favorites and tape them up. Don't worry about quality, just print as many as you want. Give in a month to notice which images you want to keep looking at.

>> NOW ORDER PRINTS FOR PERMANENT DISPLAY. There are plenty of online options to do this, but look locally for a shop that will talk directly about image resolution and retouching. You might think about ordering personalized photo books or calendars or coffee mugs with images on them. Spread the imagery around your home. Now that you've established your system, keep it up by sorting new images into the appropriate folders.

This project could easily take you all the way to summer. "I purposely let all my indoor projects pile up for winter so I don't feel like I'm missing the summer in Maine that we wait all year for!" Sommer says.

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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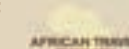
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STUDENT OF STYLE

The Fashionable Blanche-Neige Ingabire walks the halls of Mt. Ararat, not the runway, but her style is notable.

WRITTEN & PHOTOGRAPHED
BY AMANDA WHITEGIVER



Blanche-Neige Ingabire (yes, her name does mean Snow White) on the Bowdoin campus in a furry white jacket.

Translated from French, Blanche-Neige Ingabire's first name is Snow White. At Mt. Ararat High School in Topsham, where she is a senior, some classmates call her Blanche and some call her Neige. Most apparently, would call her seriously stylish but in an unusual way. Like when she takes what looks like a bright summer yellow shirt and ties it like a sweater over a winter outfit.

"She likes taking really odd clothing that you would never put together and they look like the best outfit ever," says Peggy Callahan, the English Language Development Coordinator and chair of the World Language Department at Mt. Ararat. "Everybody notices that."

Blanche-Neige Ingabire, 19, is from Burundi. She arrived in Maine on Christmas day in 2016, speaking essentially no English. "I would only know how to say hi

and good morning," she remembers. "It was really hard. I was really scared. I wondered, what am I going to do and say and am I going to make friends?" She came with her brother Billy, who is one year younger, her cousins and her uncle, who had adopted his niece and nephew. They started out in Westbrook and then moved to Topsham about six months later. Her mother, who teaches elementary school, stayed behind in Burundi. Her father died when she was only three. He's the one who picked her name for her, inspired by a song that featured Snow White. He loved the song so much that it was played at her parents' wedding.

After graduation, Ingabire hopes to go onto college and then pursue a career in fashion. Her brother Billy is interested in modeling, but she'd prefer to use her stylish eye to make clothing.

DESCRIBE YOUR STYLE IN ONE SENTENCE.

"My style is everything—I can wear anything and I don't have any brands I like or anything like that, I just like to put clothes together and what I wear just depends on the day and where I'm going to be."

IS IT "MAINE" STYLE? IF NOT, HOW DOES IT DEVIATE?

"No I don't think so. I guess I wear Maine style when it's winter because, you know, everybody has to wear warm clothes."

FIRST OUTFIT YOU REMEMBER PICKING OUT AND FEELING GREAT IN?

"I grew up with my auntie picking my clothes out for me. She's really fashionable and that's why I think I have a good vision for colors and seeing things that go together. I grew up wearing men's clothes. I never wore skirts or dresses or anything like that. But I remember there was a little skirt I liked and that was the only outfit that would make me feel like I was wearing something nice."

HOW OLD WERE YOU WHEN YOU FELT LIKE YOU DEVELOPED A STYLE OF YOUR OWN?

"I was 11. It was the year I started middle school."

LAST MEMORABLE OUTFIT?

"Usually I feel good when I like the color I'm wearing, even if the clothes aren't perfect. I don't care if my outfit is expensive or fancy, I just like when I feel comfortable in clothes. My last memorable outfit was just blue skinny jeans, a black shirt, black boots with medium heels, and a big, long, light pink coat." (That, she says, was a gift from someone who also got it as a gift and felt too much like a "bunny" in it to wear it.)

FAVORITE BRICKS AND MORTAR PLACE TO BUY CLOTHING IN MAINE?

"Garage in the Maine Mall."

DO YOU THRIFT? IF SO, WHERE?

"Yes. I used to work at Estilo in Brunswick and I like the clothes there." (Ingabire didn't buy much though; she's very frugal.)

BEST CLOTHING SHOES OR ACCESSORY BARGAIN OF ALL TIME:

"I bought a red winter coat at the mall for a big discount. It's really warm. I bought it right after Christmas so I think that's why it was so cheap."

MOST YOU EVER SPENT ON SOMETHING TO WEAR?

"The most I ever spent was on Jordans. They were about \$140." (They're black and red.)

WHO IS YOUR STYLE ICON OF ALL TIME?

"Can I say nobody? I've tried to wear what looks good on other people but then I never feel comfortable. I just like to wear whatever feels comfortable to me."

WHERE YOU DO GET YOUR STYLE INSPIRATION? MAGAZINES, MOVIES, SOCIAL MEDIA?

"My auntie, Bonne Année Felicite."

WHAT WOULD YOU REFUSE TO WEAR?

"Big clothes, or clothes that don't fit me right."

DO YOU OWN BEAN BOOTS? IF NOT, WHAT DO YOU WEAR IN THE SNOW?

"No I don't. I don't really like to go out in the snow!" (She did borrow a pair to play in the snow once, but she mostly wears her "regular" shoes in the snow.)

WHAT IS YOUR CURRENT "GO TO" OUTFIT OR ITEM OF CLOTHING?

"My red and black Jordans."

WHAT DO YOU CHANGE INTO AFTER A LONG DAY?

"Leggings and a sweatshirt." (Her answer



I've tried to wear what looks good on other people but then I never feel comfortable. I just like to wear whatever feels comfortable to me."

might downplay her unique look. During an interview, she was wearing red leggings, a fuzzy hoodie, a wrap skirt in a colorful African pattern, red and white socks and slides with an Asian-inspired pattern. And rocking it.)

Amanda Whitegiver is a lifestyle family photographer who adores dark chocolate and singing with her two daughters.

AMERICAN DIRT; MEXICAN SOUL

Jeanine Cummins' new novel about migration from Mexico will get you through the winter nights.

BY MARY POLS

One of last year's most memorable local news stories ran in the *Maine Sunday Telegram* in June. It had an international angle and the headline "Asylum seekers defy death for a better life in Portland." *Telegram* reporter Rob Wolfe had spent hours in the Expo in Portland interviewing asylum seekers about their journey to get to Maine from Central Africa.

Many of them had taken flights to Ecuador, gone on through Columbia and Panama and into Central America. They walked over a place they called "The Mountain of Death," a grueling journey through the jungle, with both natural and human dangers lying in wait along the way. Most were put on a bus at the Mexican border and then held at the Texas border. It was a powerful narrative that illuminated just how much those asylum seekers were willing to endure to get to safety and to a place like Maine.

Wolfe's excellent story came back to me as I was reading Jeanine Cummins' new novel *American Dirt*, which follows a mother, Lydia Delgado, and her son, Luca, 8, on a journey from Acapulco toward "El Norte," and what they hope will be safety in the United States. This isn't a spoiler, because all of this happens in the first, short chapter, but Lydia's family is slaughtered while she and Luca huddle in the bathroom, listening to the gunshots, hiding behind a partial wall of tile

while her mother, husband Sebastián, cousins and siblings die. The only reason mother and son survive is because of Luca's neediness; his cousin walked in on him in the bathroom at a recent family gathering. Lydia is there to guard the door. Her last words to her mother as they left the backyard party were argumentative because her mother thought she was overindulging Luca.

While she's guarding the door, she ends up guarding his life. Since Sebastián is a journalist, he's not a surprising target. In 2019 more than a dozen journalists were killed in Mexico, including three in one day, presumably because of their reporting on corruption and the narcos. Sebastián had just published a profile of the kingpin of the (fictional) Los Jardineros cartel.

The book takes off as the mother and son flee Acapulco. The ultimate vacation escape a Mainer might have craved in the 1980s is now a murder capital, overrun by drug cartels ("narcos").

As the story unfolds, we learn more about the head of Los Jardineros, Javier, and his surprising connection to Lydia and the bookshop she ran in Acapulco. She understands she has to leave not just her hometown but Mexico itself. Los Jardineros has a long reach, all the way to the border. She has some money, but no passport or proof that Luca is her child.



Author photo courtesy of Flatiron Books



American Dirt by Jeanine Cummins
Flatiron Books, 400 pages (\$27.99)

So instead of getting on a plane to exit the country, she has to go the way of migrants passing through Mexico, people like the ones that come through Central America on their way to the American border. This includes riding the roof of a transport train that everyone calls La Bestia ("The Beast"). "All the way from Chiapas to Chihuahua, they cling to the tops of the cars. The train has earned the name La Bestia because that journey is a mission of terror in every way imaginable. Violence and kidnapping are endemic along the tracks, and apart from the criminal dangers, migrants are also maimed or killed every day when they fall from the tops of the trains. Only the poorest and most destitute of people attempt to travel this way."

As this middle-class, grieving, incredibly determined woman considers her options, it seems insane to make a child climb onto—or drop onto—the roof of a moving train. As we travel alongside Lydia, going into both her head and to Luca's, we understand the desperation that would cause someone to make that decision. Luca is seriously precocious, a geography whiz who can stand up and deliver a soliloquy about distances and statistics for places he's never been. Like, what's the third largest city in America?

"Well that's easy, it's Chicago," Luca says to Rebeca, one of the teenaged sisters from Central America who they meet and begin to travel with. Rebeca is beautiful, but her sister Soledad is uncannily so, emitting a glow that means they are particularly vulnerable targets on the migrant trail. Luca goes on: "Once you get down to around the fifth and sixth largest it's a lot trickier because those populations are changing by a significant percentage year by year, but—wait, why?" He doesn't understand that Rebeca has been trying to distract him from a particular dangerous situation.

Luca is so sweet and smart that you start to worry that in the Hollywood version of this story, which was optioned before publication, that he'll be one of those movie kids you can't believe is real. He mostly works on the page though.

I don't throw around the word "riveting" but this book is seriously riveting. It held me rapt for hours early in January, hours in which I kept telling myself, just one more chapter and then I'll get up and take the Christmas tree down. Eventually I gave up, gave the tree another day in the living room, and allowed myself the pleasure of reading into the night to finish. I should have known from the Stephen King and John Grisham blurbs that it would be a page turner, but it exceeded my expectations because it also helped me understand a key part of the world better.

When I closed it I was overwhelmed by the power of fiction to do what journalism can do only in pieces and parts. Cummins began researching the book in 2013, before immigration became as hot button an issue as it is right now. Her author's note begins with a horrifying statistic, that a migrant died every 21 hours along the U.S. and Mexican border. Reading it, there is a constant fear that Lydia, Luca, Rebeca or Soledad, character we come to love, will be one of those statistics. Cummins also delivers an apology of sorts. She's of Puerto Rican descent rather than Mexican, and is second generation American. She married someone who came to the U.S. as an undocumented immigrant.

Still, she writes in that note that she debated whether or not she was capable of telling this story. "I worried that, as a nonmigrant and non-Mexican, I had no business writing a book set almost entirely in Mexico, set entirely among migrants. I wished someone slightly browner than me would write it. But then, I thought, *If you're a person who has the capacity to be a bridge, why not be a bridge?* So I began." I'm glad she did. Make this your deep winter read, it will enrich you while making the long, cold hours fly by.

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POETRY AND POWDER

BY MAGGIE KNOWLES

“Um, Maggie. What is this poem about?” my teacher asked, peering at me over her glasses in utter confusion. It was fourth grade and we were in the middle of the state-wide Maine animal unit. I had written about the KOUT.

*It began like this:
“Deep in the snow
lives the KOUT
If you’re skiing
Watch out!
He’ll grab your skis
And eat your knees...”*

She must not be a skier, I mentally scoffed as I launched into a description of this animal that lives in holes, mostly under chairlifts. You need to be careful of it because sometimes its long arms would reach up and grab skiers and eat them.

As my classmates stared up at me in horror, it occurred to me that there was a small chance that this KOUT my dad had been telling up about for years, might not be real. I burst into tears and fled the classroom.

The K’OUT sign (which I now realize meant “keep out”) that was under the Shawnee Peak double lift during my childhood is now gone, but I delighted in the day I got to tell my five-year old about that nasty being that would eat naughty skiers.

“That’s not true,” he said to me through his neck warmer.

I guess he did not inherit my gullible tendencies. But what he did inherit is his utter passion for being on the slopes. I was very fortunate that I had a father who, despite his proclivity for inventing skier-eating beasts, made us ski every weekend. Even on the tired, grumpy, teenager mornings, he bribed my brother and me with donuts (otherwise forbidden) and got us up to Sunday River.

Skiing was important to me because it was when I got to see my dad and be with my brother without the heaviness of our parents’ divorce hanging over us. Nature has a way of pausing the drama and stress of daily life, and it was a respite for a girl who felt she needed to shoulder the burden of

keeping the peace at home. It was a time to forget all the stuff that was waiting for us in the real world.

Up on the mountain, there weren’t screams over child support, overdue book reports, or fears about fitting in. The only thing we had to do was raise our skis high enough so the KOUT couldn’t grab us and drag us into his den. All of us would giggle into our mittens and try to be quiet so he would choose the family behind us. For surely, they were more delicious.

As soon as my son turned two, I was ready to create new memories. His father and I pulled him around on tiny skis in front of the Sugarloaf condo. Then at eight, he wanted to try alpine racing. For the past five years, he has spent his winters with the Carrabassett Valley Academy’s (CVA) weekend racing program.

To know my kiddo is to know he isn’t quick to share (even about what he loves), but he always wants to go skiing. He even watches videos of his CVA hero Sam “The Moose” Morse, who now skis with the US Ski Team, so that is enough to know he enjoys it. His father and I enjoy the fact he is out getting fresh air, exercise and meeting new people.

However, I found a school essay smooshed in his backpack that showed how much racing means to him. “At the top of the course, when I am in the starting gate and I hear the countdown I am so excited. It is just me and the gates down the mountain. It is icy and I am alone. Then I am flying. I can hear my parents yelling my name and that is what I need to go even faster. It is all I want to do.”

I cried when I read that. To know the passion this quiet kid feels meant so much. This sport, that teaches confidence, discipline, self-care and respect for the elements, has embedded into his soul. When he stares down a racecourse that shines with glare ice, his mind quiets and all his focus is on flying. How will he ever fear a math test or trying something new after facing that? I should have expected as much from the kid who scoffed at the KOUT.

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

Elizabeth helps to co-create focus, nurturing hopes into reality, to establish deep well being and contentment by living ones true purpose.



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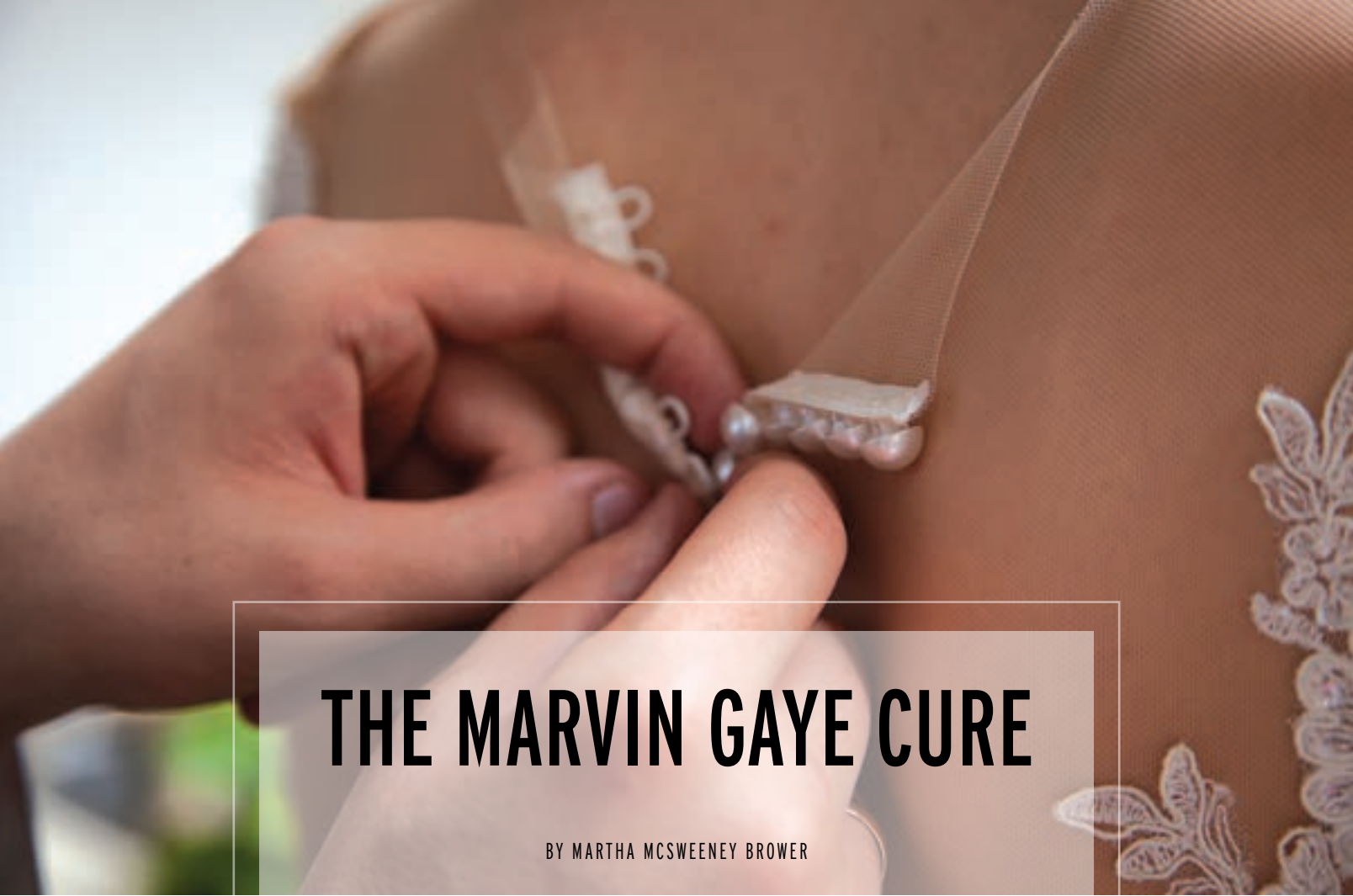



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BY MARTHA MCSWEENEY BROWER

*"It makes me feel so fine, it's such a rush
Helps to relieve the mind, and it's good for us." —Marvin Gaye*

Right around the time that Marvin Gaye came out with his song, "Sexual Healing," I had a change of heart about marriage. I was old before I could finally say the word "marry" without angst, because I was convinced that I wasn't the marrying kind. I had always been the one to need my freedom and was very busy with that mission all through my twenties.

As Marvin's song rose to the top of the charts, my view of myself dying an old maid started to fade. I was spending most of my time with a guy who was not only crazy about me; I was equally crazy about him. That Marvin Gaye sure knew what he was singing about. Sexual healing was making sense to me, so when I was 34 years old, I knew that I wanted to marry my best friend, Reade.

I had an idea for a wedding dress. It would be white cotton with hundreds and hundreds of colored polka-dots, the size of those little silver ball cake decorations. Of course, I'd have to make such a dress. I wanted to wear a colored polka-dot for each of the times we'd made love before our wedding.

I never did wear the dream polka-dotted wedding gown. I was too busy to ever make one. Reade and I had a struggling publishing business to run (one that would grow to include this magazine) with constant deadlines to meet and each of us

working over 100 hours a week. There was barely enough time to get to the laundromat to wash clothes, let alone make a wedding gown. As much as I wanted my dream dress, I settled on buying a simple cream-colored mid-length one for my new husband to unzip.

With no time to overthink things, I threw together a wedding for our families and friends. There were no theme colors or wedding dishes or flatware to fuss over. There was one bridesmaid and two red roses for flowers. Then our September wedding plans were completely thrown off-course by a dangerous hurricane that was roaring through our coastal town. It prevented a quarter of our guests from attending and we had to cancel our rehearsal dinner altogether.

Our wedding rings might qualify as the world's cheapest. Reade made them out of silver quarters, like the sailors and hippies used to make. He banged the ridges off the edges of the coins with a spoon until they were flat and wide. Then he drilled a hole in the middle the size of our fingers. We wore these on our right hands for a few years before realizing that we wanted to commit to each other and get married. The rings had to do for wedding bands, because they were all we could afford. Our plan was to switch them onto our left fingers at our wedding in front of our families.

And our honeymoon? We had to take it six months before we officially tied the knot. With our fledgling business on the rise,

it was impossible to squeeze in a honeymoon any other way. It was the perfect way for us to get married.

When Marvin Gaye's song was new, Reade's and my bodies were flawless, un-freckled, and smooth-skinned. Reade's was tan, dark, and solid. Mine had perfect breasts, curvy arms and a real waist. Our bodies were reliable and strong. Not an ounce of hamburgers, fries, or fast food was packed under the skin of our bellies or bums.

Our bodies were magnets for each other. Even when coming home exhausted from 20-hour work shifts at our business, we would still flop on our narrow little single bed and roll in each other's arms, grasping and reaching for one another, for that Marvin Gaye cure. It was our escape from the overwhelming bills and enormous expenses of our business that we had to keep afloat. All night long, our skin would touch somewhere on the other, with a foot or an arm, and sometimes Reade would grab hold of me.

When we fought, we worked it out because neither of us had anywhere to go. Long into the night, we would argue until we were exhausted. It was our bodies that lured us back to our senses, calling to us for healing in the most sensible, but wordless, way possible for us.

Our exhaustion from work canceled out our desires to keep score in arguments. Our bodies pulled at us and spoke to us in our deep secret language of fleshy closeness, smoothing any wrinkles left from squabbles that happened in another world, another dimension. When we were too tired to continue a tiff, the heated moments morphed into heated moments of another kind. Marvin Gaye's cure got us through, bringing us back to our senses, and calling to us for healing in the most down-to-earth way possible.

When "all things family" started to come about—children, setting up the house, and eking out a living—we were spread so thin that lying together for Marvin's cure was our finest comfort.

With the first pregnancy, my beautiful body doubled in size, and its mass was stretched into unbelievable proportions. After the birth, just when I thought my body had shrunk back to somewhat of its original shape, another baby came and again I'd lose my grip on having a firm form. The softness turned sloppy. Folds that I'd never expected came on me. I became floppy and sagging, until my beach bikini body was unrecognizable to me.

After the birth of our second child, I knew my body had changed for good. It hadn't wanted to let go of the baby boy inside of me. They violently grabbed him out of me. The doctor, with his foot up against the table, yanked and almost pulled my tiny boy's head off. My baby came out bathed in my blood, and it was horrible. Reade cried in the fragile, trembling way of a frightened father. My form went through a violent change, tearing the parts in me that had always given me joy. In the months

afterward, I went into our bedroom and cried by myself because something was gone from my body. I felt ashamed of the change for a long time. I cried because the force of pulling out our baby tore the parts of me that gave me joy.

A final baby came along, and having three babies within four years had me too busy to ever recover my lost, beautiful frame. But my sweet husband remembered who I was to him. He remembered the feel of me—my skin, the original me, the youthful me—each time that he crawled, exhausted, into our bed for the Marvin Gaye cure.

Bodies change with life circumstances and challenges. Our bodies certainly did. Reade's changed from long work hours, bad eating habits and stress. Mine changed not only from giving birth, but also from getting slammed with ovarian cancer in my mid-40s, while our kids were still young. Years of surgeries have disfigured my body. When I look in the mirror, it's no longer one that gives me pride, let alone a body that I recognize. But Reade and I still fall under the spell of Marvin Gaye's cure. We still call to each other in a deep irrational conversation that doesn't keep a tally in disagreements. Our bodies speak in a tongue made of promises and vows that almost always put an end to a spat.

In the many years since we first ran our hands over one another's warm skin, I've endured 62 inches of scars, bull-whipped by childbirth and cancer. All of my parts are gone now, even my real breasts, but he still reaches for me with hands that remember my beautiful body, and I take care of him without words, as I remember his firm form, with its tan, smooth skin. Sometimes when we see a young dark-haired woman somewhere, Reade will sweetly say to me: "That was you—and that's what I remember."

We never age when we fumble in the dark like blind people who know the familiar softness of each other's skin and the warmth of our tongues. Time never passes in the dark when we fit into each other's curves just like we have these 36 years. Our beautiful bodies are still there inside, while our hands wander over warm skin in the dark of our blankets.

I've counted it up—and now there have been thousands and thousands of times that we've reached to each other for the Marvin Gaye cure.

Martha McSweeney Brower holds a BFA and a Master of Science in Art Education from Massachusetts College of Art, and an MFA in creative writing from Stonecoast/University of Maine. Her writing has appeared in Guideposts magazine, Blunder Women Audio Productions and the Courier Publications as Dear Diamond advice columnist. She's an avid hiker, ran a marathon at age 56 and walked across Spain. Martha has three sons and lives in Camden with her husband, Reade.

"Sometimes when we see a young dark-haired woman somewhere, Reade will sweetly say to me: 'That was you—and that's what I remember.'"

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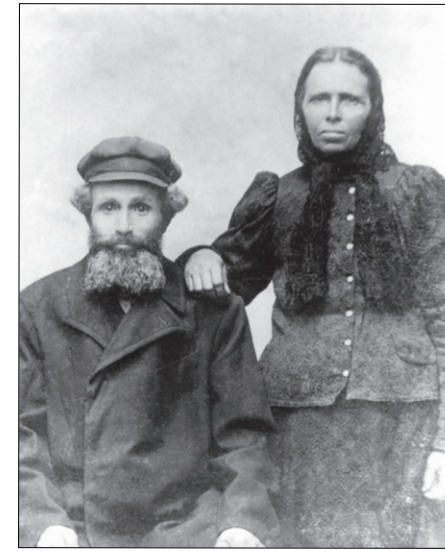
Photo by J.E. Paterak, Portland

In February

*Poem by Jennifer Lunden, Portland
(After a complaint to my acupuncturist before getting on her table.)*

There's not even reason for hope till April.
The robins will come, but they will be the Canadian robins,
Which come in February, and not the American ones, which come in spring.
I've heard rumors from points south that people have heard birds singing,
That snowmen are listing in the thaw.
But another polar vortex is on its way.
T.S. Eliot said April is the cruelest month,
But he had not lived in Maine in February.
Don't the lilacs bloom in April?
Don't the tulips burst through the dirt?
Or is that May?
I know that in the shade of our yard the snow lingers late.
But I remember the crocuses and the tulips and the white daffodils.
And I remember the snowdrops because they come first.
And of course the forsythia, its garish yellow
Forgiven because it is the first color of the season.
The Farmer's Almanac predicted this brutal cold, these heaps of snow.
But every year we forget what winter means
When the first snow falls in puffy flakes
And we put our hands to our cheeks and watch in wonder.
"It's snowing!" we say, like children, forgetting, for a moment, the shoveling.
The cars that won't start, the slipping on sidewalks.
We remember the snow forts and snow pants and snowball fights.
We remember tromping through the snow, the creaking of the snow.
We remember the hush of the city after a freshly fallen snow.
We remember, and then we forget.

We all come from somewhere...



Hoshea & Sylvia Lifshitz
Horodok, Poland
Adam Lee's great grandparents



Abraham & Bella Margolis
Vilnius, Lithuania
Adam Lee's grandparents



Donatilia & Natalia Eleuterio
Azores & New Bedford, MA
Diana Lee's grandmother & mother



Joe, Sylvia, Dorothy, Ethel Lifshitz
Minsk, Belarus & Lewiston, ME
Adam Lee's grandparents



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In April 2019, 25 members of the International Women's Coffee Alliance and coffee farmers from Brazil, Burundi, Colombia, Ethiopia, Guatemala, Kenya, and Uganda gathered in Maine.

Together we shared stories about our experiences, businesses, and coffee.

We lift our cups to our friends in the coffee community, here and around the world!



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